

KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH DEBORAH S. WALLACE

CONDUCTED BY THOMAS A. SCOTT AND DEDE YOW

EDITED BY SUSAN F. BATUNGBACAL

INDEXED BY THOMAS A. SCOTT

for the

KSU ORAL HISTORY SERIES, NO. 56

WEDNESDAY, 19 JULY 2006

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KSU Oral History Series, No. 56
Interview with Deborah S. Wallace
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Wednesday, 19 July 2006
Location: CIE/CETL House at Kennesaw State University

TS: Deborah, why don't we just begin by you talking a little bit about where you were born and schools you went to, and a little bit about your background.

DW: I was born in Columbus, Ohio. I'm a Buckeye.

TS: I noticed Ohio and Ohio State in your degrees.

DW: I went to undergraduate school at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio, and my major was elementary education with a minor in math. [In] my freshman and sophomore years, I really didn't know if I truly wanted to be a teacher then; and, literally, my sophomore year, I was flunk out material.

TS: That's hard to believe!

DW: I was flunk out material. In fact, I almost did flunk out. The thing about it was I think I became extremely down at the time. It wasn't that I couldn't do the material; I just wasn't going to class. I was sleeping a lot. Of course, my parents thought I was partying, but I wasn't even doing that. It was like a wake up call at that point for me. Then my junior and senior years I started getting 4.0 grade point averages—although if you mess up your freshman and sophomore years, it's hard to get your GPA back where you'd like to have it. It wasn't until I did my student teaching that I realized that teaching was what I wanted to do. Back then they didn't have a lot of early field experiences, so my real first field experience was my student teaching. My cooperating teacher was a wonderful lady that was teaching second grade, at the time, in a school in Lancaster, Ohio. What was different about my student teaching experience was that I was one of the few minorities—not that lived in Lancaster—but was considered at that point “semi-professional” because I hadn't gotten my degree yet. So I was one of the few minorities in that capacity and the only minority who was even working in any capacity at that school that I was student teaching at.

DY: Was the school itself predominately white?

DW: Yes.

TS: Let's see, you got your bachelor's in '69 so we're talking about late '60s when you were student teaching?

DW: Yes. And even when I went there at that time, the public swimming pool wasn't open to everyone.

TS: You're kidding! In Ohio?

DW: In Ohio, yes. So it was an interesting time to be there. Well, I wasn't even finished with my student teaching, and the superintendent actually came over to observe me in the classroom, which I guess is a different experience. Most superintendents don't come to observe someone.

DY: Yes, did they observe the white student teachers?

DW: I don't know, but they offered me a position, see, so that was okay. They offered me a teaching position, and I accepted. Then I truly did become the only African-American professional that actually lived in the city. Once I took the position, I moved to Lancaster, Ohio, from Columbus.

TS: Did you have any problems being the only one in town?

DW: There were just a few isolated instances. They weren't really giving me a problem. There was an African-American gentleman who worked at Anchor-Hocking, although he did not live in Lancaster.

TS: Anchor-Hocking?

DW: Anchor-Hocking Glassware. He did not live in Lancaster. He lived in Columbus, Ohio, and drove back and forth to work every day. Literally, once I got there, I was almost taken under their wing, so to speak, but the African-American gentleman wasn't as welcomed. So there were some instances where some other gentlemen said things to him, and in essence, "Left me alone." It was a strange time. It was a strange time all over, wasn't it?

DY: It was a strange time all over. Did you enjoy your students?

DW: Oh, yes. I did.

DY: That finally is it, the classroom itself.

DW: I remember them to this day. Other things escape my memory, but those students—because what was interesting, since I was going to be the only African-American teacher in the system, literally the superintendent drove me around and said, "Which school would you like to teach at?" Now, how many people have that kind of [experience]. And I told him, "I don't want you to move anyone for me. I don't want to start out that way. Do not move anyone to place me in a school." He took me to this one school, West Elementary School, and I met the

principal, and he said, “We would like to begin what we like to call an Individualized Intensive Instruction Unit.” It was for children who would have been retained in the first and second grades, who were having difficulties or who, at that time, were on waiting lists for special education services. See, this was prior to Public Law 94-142, which came in 1975, so there were still waiting lists. I had two young ladies who were on a waiting list to go to the [Alexander Graham] Bell School for the Deaf in Columbus, Ohio, at the time, in my class. I said, “I want that job,” even though my background was elementary education and not special education at the time.

TS: Was there even a field of Special Ed in college at that time?

DW: Yes.

TS: Okay, so you could have gone that way?

DW: Yes. But my major was elementary, and I didn’t have any background in special education, and I began teaching, and that was my heart. I loved it; I loved the children; I loved the families. Literally, at some point in time during the year, I visited every family during my teaching time there. I stayed there four years. The last couple of years, what was very interesting, especially the last year, I had almost 375 visitors in my class throughout the year. In fact, what I had to do was set up a procedure for all visitors. I had to train the students and literally have a handout for visitors because, believe it or not, adults can be rude and think when they come in that this is their time. I tried to explain to them, “No, this is not your time; this is their time.” So I would prepare the students, “We’re going to have all these visitors.” They got used to them very quickly, much more so than I did, and I had handouts for them. I had a place for them to sit, and I told them they could move around and talk to the students about what they were doing, et cetera. The students would explain. That was some of their jobs for the day, or for the week, that they could earn in order to escort the visitors around.

TS: Why were so many visitors coming, do you think? I mean, were you doing something totally unique that nobody else was doing?

DW: I didn’t think so, but I had one supervisor come who then brought, I can’t tell you how many teachers to my classroom, who were already teaching in the system. I don’t know what I was doing that was special at the time.

DY: It sounds to me like you were honoring and respecting those students.

DW: I hope it was just good teaching. They brought [Dr. Thomas M. Stephens], the department chair [of the Department of Special Education] from Ohio State University to visit. She [the supervisor] was a friend of his, and the next thing I knew he came to visit me.

TS: That explains why you went to Ohio State then, I guess.

DW: Yes. At one point they asked me if I had thought about getting a master's degree, and so forth and so on, so that's what I did. I went to Ohio State for my master's degree. I did it in special education, learning disabilities and behavior disorders. Once I finished the master's degree I was thinking about moving to San Francisco to teach out there. So I had gone to the department chair, Dr. Tom Stephens, and I had asked him if he would mind being a reference for me and writing a letter, and he said, "Oh I'd be happy to." But he said, "Have you thought about a doctoral program?" I said, "No, I hadn't really." He said, "Well, the deadline has just passed for applications, but I'll give you a week to think about the doctoral program." I said, "Okay." He said, "All you have to do is have your information transferred, write a letter and fill out the application form, and write a letter to the registrar's office and have your things transferred over here," which I did. Then I interviewed, and they accepted five doctoral students that year, and I was proud to be one of them. I can remember during the interview—because they always interview you for the doctoral program—and during the interview they said, "Well, how long have you thought about pursuing doctoral work?" I looked at them, and I said, "What time is it?" That was my answer. Because I never knew anybody, other than the professors I had at undergraduate school and here at Ohio State, I never knew anybody with a doctorate. I was the first one in my family to have a bachelor's degree.

TS: I wanted to ask you about that, whether your parents pushed you toward the field of education, or whether there was a strong educational background in your family.

DW: No, they didn't push me towards Education. Although when I was a child, I can remember playing a teacher with my younger sister and others in the neighborhood, but they never pushed me. They pushed me just towards education, period. I can remember going to my father's high school graduation three years before I graduated from high school. Then when I was in undergraduate school, he took a few courses himself at a local community college there. My mother had graduated from high school, but my father worked for Ohio Bell [Telephone Company] and my mother worked for North American Rockwell making airplanes, B-52 bombers. That's the reason I love planes. She used to bring home photographs of these planes that she was working on and she. . . .

TS: What did she do? What was her job on the plane?

DW: Wings. She worked on the wings.

TS: Great. So you were saying your father got a GED while you were already in high school.

DW: Yes, he graduated. I went to his graduation ceremony. It was three years before I graduated from high school. It was a great day.

DY: What a good role model too.

DW: Yes. He worked at Ohio Bell for forty-two years before they broke apart and became AT&T and other things. So, anyway, once I had the interview I started the doctoral program. In fact, I hadn't told my parents that I had even applied, nor been accepted. I had graduated with my master's, and Mom said, "You still going up to Ohio State? What are you working on up there? What are you doing up there?" She thought I was just helping with some project or something. It was my neighbor—we had neighbors who, well, during this time my parents had moved to Westerville, Ohio [north of Columbus]—and the lady who lived next door had her doctorate, and she was a professor, and she was teaching at one of the local colleges. I had told her I was accepted into the doctoral program. I had almost just completed a semester, and she told my parents. And I was living at home! I had moved back when I went back to Ohio State to go to school. She told my mother, "I bet you're so proud that Deborah is in the doctorate program!" My mother didn't know at the time, and she was a little upset with me that I hadn't said anything.

TS: Why hadn't you said anything?

DW: I think at the time my mother was really wanting to see me get married. I had heard her say, "You know, well, if you continue to go to school, the chances of your getting married are much more diminished." Oh, how true that was! I am still single.

TS: What are your parents' names by the way?

DW: Richard and Mary Wallace. Both of them are deceased now.

DY: That's typical for women of that generation.

DW: Yes. I had a wonderful family life, wonderful parents. Both of them are deceased I'm sorry to say.

TS: Pushing you toward getting married instead.

DW: I said, "See, I told you!" And she mentioned it again, once she found out, and I said, "See, Mom, I told you, this is what you would have said." This is what she would have said.

DY: I'm sure they were very proud of you. Well, I remember when we were working together and you talked about them, they just adored you, Deborah!

DW: Yes, they were on KSU's campus.

TS: Right. Any mentors that you'd like to talk about along the way that kind of pushed you in a direction or were especially influential?

DW: I think John [O.] Cooper. He's still a faculty member at Ohio State University. I remember him. He was one of my professors in the master's program and my mentor in my doctoral program, even though he wasn't my major advisor. He had been the major advisor back in Kansas to the gentleman who was my major advisor, who has also passed away. But John Cooper. . . .

TS: You say in Kansas—did I lose something?

DW: University of Kansas. John Cooper had come from the University of Kansas to Ohio State. I'm the kind of learner that I need to have the information relate to me in a variety of different formats: visually, auditorily, and on so and so forth. But all he had to do was say something to me, and I would remember—whatever it was, at any time. There are very few people—and this is over a span of several years—who could just say something to me, and I would just remember it. He was a man of short stature, bald head, played jazz saxophone, yes! He and his family—every once in a while we'd go and visit him. He didn't live that far from where my parents lived—he and his wife, Bunny, and he was just a special person. He just meant a lot to me: kind, sincere, and a person with integrity.

DY: It sounds like he cared about you.

DW: Yes. In fact, I was very surprised. I had come home when my mother passed away; she passed away in 2000. At the funeral home during the memorial service who came in? John Cooper. And I didn't even know he knew my mother had passed away, and there he was.

DY: Oh, that's very touching, Deborah.

DW: Yes, yes, there he was. It was amazing.

DW: And Dr. [Betty L.] Siegel was another mentor—officially a mentor, but unofficially a mentor, too.

TS: Why don't you talk about why, what she did that made her a mentor for you?

DW: Well, just observing her; her enthusiasm is—I'm searching for a word now.

TS: Inspirational?

DW: Inspirational, infectious, you know what I mean? I'm thinking, how can she do all this with all the demands that were made of her and on her? But I can

remember when I first came to Kennesaw, which was actually my first time here. I had not known of Kennesaw State University at the time, and this was twenty-one years ago.

TS: I've got '85 down in my notes.

DW: Yes. Twenty-one years ago. I had come here as a Regents Administrative Fellow because I was a faculty member at Georgia State at that time in the Department of Special Education. I came here as a Regents Administrative Fellow, and it was my first time meeting Dr. Siegel. I was assigned to her as a mentee, and she just afforded me all kinds of opportunities and experiences during that time.

DY: Was that around the time when Janice [C.] Epps came too? I was in Dr. Siegel's office as an intern when Janice came. Was it on the same Regents' program?

DW: She did. No, she was a fellow. What is the title of that fellowship? It was a couple of years later because I was already here.

DY: You had already come in full time.

DW: I had already come here as an Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs.

DY: I remember that, right.

TS: You did your fellowship a year and then. . . ?

DW: I went back to Georgia State for one term, a summer term. I applied for the Assistant Vice President's position for Academic Affairs, and I came here.

TS: So the 1985 in the catalog may actually be when you came here to be Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs. You were trying to say twenty-two years earlier, maybe it was '84 that you came on that fellowship.

DW: Yes, I think it was in '84 when I came on the fellowship, and then I came here as an Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs. I realize I've jumped ahead a little bit.

TS: No, that's okay, we asked about mentors. Just to go back, what did you do your dissertation on?

DW: I did my dissertation on data collection procedures for the classroom teacher. I actually had several schools and classes that I trained teachers on how to collect data in their classrooms. They got to select the behaviors, and using the data collection systems that I had developed, collected data on student behavior and student performance in the classroom, and so forth. I had reviewed the *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis* from its inception, every article, and I developed a

grid. It turned out there had been 365 or 375 articles already published in the *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis* from its inception. I did a grid in terms of the data collection procedures they had used. This was just one citation from my literature review—all of the charts and everything—but it became fifty-six pages of charts indicating for every article what data collection procedure, what was the target behavior identified, [and] what were the results of the study. It was all in chart form for every article in the *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, up to the time I completed my study.

DY: That would be a useful reference tool.

DW: Yes. If you want to go back now, it's dated right now, but. . . .

TS: We're talking thirty years ago now—'76 [you] got your doctorate.

DW: Right, I got my doctorate in '76 and I've been in the university system for thirty years now. It's hard to believe.

TS: Did you come straight to Georgia State?

DW: I came straight to Georgia State. I had interviewed at several different institutions, including the University of Kansas. I enjoyed that interview. I interviewed at Rutgers. I interviewed at an institution in Illinois and at Indiana University. I had not applied in Georgia, but we had a SACS [Southern Association of Colleges and Schools] visit at Ohio State and I was one of the doctoral students that the SACS team interviewed.

TS: The Southern Association goes all the way up to Ohio?

DW: Yes.

TS: I didn't know that.

DW: It was interesting. (Gene [Eugene]) Ensminger came. I don't know whether it was SACS, now that you mention it, but it was an accrediting agency. Anyway, Dr. Gene Ensminger came up as part of the team. I was one of the doctoral students that they interviewed at the time, and the position opened up at Georgia State. He called me at Ohio State and asked me if I would be interested in applying. I said, "Yes." We talked on the phone for a few minutes, and I talked with a few other faculty members at Georgia State. He asked me to fax him, or did I fax it at the time? I don't know whether I faxed it. It might have been express mail at the time [laughter]! I sent my resume, and, in fact, I made plane reservations to go and interview the very next day, because they called me the next day. They hadn't received my resume yet, but they called me the next day and asked me to come for an interview, which I did. I got to meet Dr. ([William M.] Suttles), who was the provost then, and Dr. [Noah] Langdale, [Jr.], who was

the president. I interviewed for the position, and they offered me the position that day. I had an opportunity to think about it. What was so funny at the time—you know, that's the reason I said I've been fortunate in my life. Things just seem to happen for me. They were calling me from Indiana because they did offer me the position at Indiana University, and they said, "Well, we're one of the Big Ten." They were thinking that since I was coming from Ohio State with Woody Hayes and the football team, and Georgia State was apologizing for not having a football team! I'd been to one football game in my life!

DY: It's not one of your priorities.

DW: It's not one of my priorities! But I thought it was quite humorous. So they called back and forth. I thought Indiana—Bloomington; I thought Atlanta, Georgia. With my being single I thought Atlanta, Georgia! And at that point, I left the day after I graduated with my doctoral degree. I left Ohio and moved to Georgia. My parents brought me down here, and I moved into an apartment. My father at the time wasn't very pleased.

TS: Too far away from home?

DW: Well, he thought it was too far away, but . . .

TS: Also going south?

DW: South. You're right. The last time my father had been south was when he was in the army. He and all the other African-American men were in one part of a train and were let off at one place, because they couldn't stay where the other soldiers were staying, and so forth and so on.

TS: While they were on their way to the base?

DW: Yes. My mother didn't even think he would even come and visit me. She even said this to me.

DY: Where was he stationed, Deborah, in the South?

DW: I don't remember. But because of his past experiences, he didn't want to come. But after awhile he did come and visit me, and he came often. And later he belonged to a golf club, he and some other African-American gentlemen. They would go to Callaway Gardens [Pine Mountain, Georgia] once a year and spend a week. I'd go down and visit and eat dinner with them, or they'd stop here—I lived in College Park at the time—they'd stop in College Park and visit me, and I'd fix them dinner when they were on their way to Callaway Gardens for a week of golf.

TS: Was that like maybe during World War II that he would have been down here?

DW: Yes.

TS: It was a different world then.

DW: Different world. And when my parents did come and stay with me, it took several years, believe it or not, he would always sit—I had one chair in the living room where the back of it faced the door. He would not sit in that chair. He told me, “I’m sorry, but I cannot sit in that chair. I have to see who’s coming through the door. I cannot have my back to the door.” But he got to the point where—I think it was probably three or four years before he passed away—he wanted to move here.

DY: That’s interesting.

DW: But before that, when he first started coming to visit me, he didn’t want to sit with his back to the door because he wanted to see who was coming through the door.

TS: I used to notice in my early years of teaching here that black students would never sit in the middle of the room up front; they were always against the walls. That’s changed I think big time, but that’s thirty years ago. It was kind of the way it was. So you’ve got all these interviews at what we used to call Research I institutions, and I guess Georgia State was an aspiring Research I at the time. It’s in the South, and so there are a number of reasons not to come, but you wanted to come for the social scene?

DW: Right. I thought, “Bloomington? No, I don’t want to be out in the cornfields. I want to be in a more metropolitan area and maybe meet some people.” So I came to Georgia State, and I’m glad I did. My experience at Georgia State was a special time in my life.

TS: So you got there in ’76, so you’re there a little bit less than a decade and teaching Special Ed, I guess.

DW: Learning disabilities and behavior disorders, mostly courses in behavior disorders, classroom management, behavior modification, things of that nature. About four years there the person who had been coordinating the special education administration program was retiring. The chair at the time looked through all the resumes of all the faculty, and he was looking to see who had administrative background, educational background and/or experience. I did not have the experience, but I had the course work because when I was doing my doctorate I chose as a minor, not just a cognate, but I declared a minor in education administration. I was the only one, although I had even told my major professor in my minor area that I never aspired to be an administrator. That’s what I said to him back then.

DY: Well, you loved the classroom.

DW: Yes, that was it, and I never thought about being an administrator, ever. So then after he looked at all the resumes, et cetera, he said, “Deborah, would you like to coordinate this Special Education Administration program?” So I said, “Okay,” and so that meant gearing up again in terms of administration. For the last five years that’s what I did. I coordinated the Special Education Administration program.

DY: Were there changes going on in the country about special education at that time? I know you mentioned earlier a particular act, or provision, in 1975.

DW: Right. That was the Education of All Handicapped Children Act in 1975—in terms of making sure every student had a free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. But the least restrictive environment at the time, in most people’s thinking, was not being institutionalized, but being in the public schools. Even though many students were then served in self-contained classrooms. And then it switched to providing services in a resource room with allowing the students with special needs to integrate and be a part of the general population for art, music, [and] lunch, because at one point they were even eating by themselves. Over the years, it has truly transformed to what is now inclusion where the students with special needs, who have mild and moderate special needs, are in the general education classroom with a general education teacher. And then they have a special education teacher who comes in and provides support to them in that particular setting, or whether it’s the speech therapist or whomever, and provides support within the general education classroom setting. Those are things that are happening now.

DY: Well, it certainly enriches the general education classroom.

DW: Yes, it does.

DY: I know that from my experience in teaching here.

DW: It benefits both the disabled and the non-disabled.

DY: It does. It certainly opens the world to students who have no special needs.

DW: Right. And the thing about it is, over the years, see, that act that was initially passed in 1975 has now gone through several reenactments. In 1990, it was actually changed to IDEA—Individuals with Disabilities Education Act—and then in 1997 it was once again re-enacted with a lot of different provisions provided. Then in 2005 they had open hearings here in Atlanta for the first time that I can remember since being here where people came from Washington to get feedback from individuals in the South and Southeast. And so we had people from Tennessee, Alabama, North Carolina, South Carolina who came to speak

- in—and Georgia naturally—to the representatives, who were going to take back information for changes in IDEA. I took my graduate class; we went down for the hearings and sat and listened.
- DY: What a fascinating experience for them!
- DW: Right. It was an opportunity to participate in the process. I told them to generate questions, and one of them presented a question to the panel, which was good.
- TS: Right.
- DW: It's been an interesting time.
- TS: Let's go back and talk about that program that brought you to Kennesaw in '84.
- DW: Yes. The Regent's Administrative Fellow, it was a year old program.
- TS: Tell us about it. Do they still have it today, or was that just something twenty years ago?
- DW: I think they only had it for three years, and it was a program, I think, initially established by the Board of Regents because there were so few African-American administrators in the university system as a whole. So there were fifteen or eighteen of us who were selected from a variety of different institutions that came together. We had a three-week retreat at the University of Georgia and a lot of training workshops and presentations were made. I was the person selected from Georgia State—we had to apply—and it was my dean at the time who asked me to apply, and I did. I was Georgia State's representative for this, and various individuals were placed, not at their own institutions, but at a variety of institutions throughout the state.
- TS: Was anybody from Kennesaw in the program?
- DW: Yes. Pete.
- TS: Pete was in the program?
- DY: Pete Silver ([Joseph H. Silver]) was?
- DW: Not the year I was, but a year later. Pete Silver was a Regent's Administrative Fellow. So I was assigned to Kennesaw State, which was my first time at Kennesaw. I met Dr. Siegel, and I think there were only about 5,000 students enrolled at Kennesaw at that time.
- TS: That's right—5,821 in Fall Quarter, 1984. Even though we were growing rapidly in the '80s.

DW: Dr. Siegel had been here just a few years.

TS: It was 4,195 when she came in '81. We think of the administration in Kennesaw Hall nowadays, but you were in the one-story building that the Police Department is now about to take over. They moved in actually last week.

DW: Are they really? I remember it well. Dr. [James W.] Kolka was the Vice President of Academic Affairs then.

TS: Right. So your job was to be in the president's office and do whatever Dr. Siegel asked you to do, or follow her around and see what she did?

DW: Part of it was to observe and follow all aspects of the institution and to participate in everything I could at the time. We also had to do one project, and my project ended up being a survey of the community in terms of program needs in Special Education.

TS: In Cobb County?

DW: And all the surrounding counties to see if there was a need for a program offering in Special Education.

TS: And I'm sure that you found that there was a need, didn't you?

DW: Yes. We had just begun our master's program in Education when I came.

TS: That's right, at Kennesaw, '85 was the year that started.

DW: Right. We had just started the master's program in Education at Kennesaw at that time, and so I developed a survey instrument and sent it out to all the surrounding systems to see what the need would be for a program in special education.

DY: A valuable service to the community.

DW: So, ultimately, little did I know that I would be dean at the time when we actually began the Department of Special Education and developed and was approved for the master's degree.

TS: Okay, so you're on—was it called a fellowship?

DW: Yes, it was for a year.

TS: Okay, fellowship for a year and then you go back to Georgia State?

DW: It was almost a year. It was an academic year. I went back and taught at Georgia State during the summer and during that time I applied for the assistant vice president's position here. It was the first assistant vice president's position that they had.

TS: And had Ed [Edwin A.] Rugg just become vice president?

DW: No, Dr. Kolka was the vice president. In fact, what they were talking about was making this position the assistant to the vice president. I had told Dr. Siegel, "I possibly would consider applying for the position if it was an assistant vice president's position, but not an assistant to the vice president." They then made that request to the Board of Regents, and it was approved, and that's how they advertised for the position. I think there were about 100 applicants. That's what Jim Kolka told me at the time. I applied, and I got the position, so I came here and I've been here ever since!

TS: Okay! So, you were assistant vice president all the way until you became dean in the early '90s, is that right?

DW: Well, I was Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs and Director of Academic Services. This meant the library reported to me, the registrar's office reported to me, CETL [Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning] reported to me.

[Editor's note: CETL was created in 1984 with Diane Willey as acting director. Janis Coombs Epps became CETL director in 1987 and instituted a campus publication entitled *Reaching through Teaching*.]

DY: When Janice Epps was hired to direct CETL, she stayed a year before she went to Atlanta Metropolitan [College], so I guess CETL had started morphing at that point.

DW: It had, it had. And I can't remember exactly which year I became dean of graduate studies.

TS: That's right. Before you were dean in education, you were dean of graduate studies, weren't you?

DW: I was dean of graduate studies. When I first became dean [of graduate studies] we had just gotten our third master's program, and that was in Public Administration. Of course, we had the master's degrees in Business and in Education and then in Public Administration. At that time it was just an additional responsibility for me because I still had all of the other things. So I was Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, [and] Director of Academic Services, with these groups reporting to me. By that time, Admissions reported to me also, on a half time basis, and so did CAPS [Counseling and Advising Program Services]. Then I

became Dean of Graduate Studies. I also handled all space on campus. I can remember going to the library—remember when there used to be a ramp in the library from one section of the building [the second floor of the Pilcher Building] to the other [the Sturgis Library]?

TS: I can't remember.

DW: There was a ramp. It was taken away. In fact, I said, "There needs to be a door here; this ramp needs to go. This all needs to be one." I'm not sure who was housed in that portion right now. . . .

TS: Are you talking about the Pilcher Building, the old library?

DW: Yes, the old library.

TS: That's where we actually have our history office on the second floor. [Note: The Department of History & Philosophy moved from the Pilcher Building to the new Social Sciences Building in December 2006].

DW: There used to be a ramp.

TS: Were you the first Dean of Graduate Studies? Did we have one before you?

DW: There was one before me for one year. I think he was here one year in that role.

TS: Art [Arthur N.] Dunning, maybe.

DW: Art Dunning.

DY: Art Dunning. I thought Art was an assistant to the V.P.

DW: He was for one year, and then he went from there to Dean of Graduate Studies.

DY: Okay, I had totally forgotten that Art had done that.

DW: Then he went down to the Board of Regents. Then I became Dean of Graduate Studies.

TS: Then you became Dean of the College of Education. I guess it was School of Education, at the time still, before we became a university.

DW: Yes.

TS: Was that '92 or '93?

DW: That was in '93. I became Interim Dean, and I can remember it was December. We had lost our NCATE [National Council of Accreditation of Teacher Education] accreditation at the time, and I can remember Dr. Rugg asking me if I would consider going over to what is now the College of Education and help regain the accreditation. The reason it's so vivid in my mind is that at that time my father was terminally ill. Ed told me to think about it overnight and give him my answer the next morning. So I had a few hours to consider this—and I told him, “Yes, I would.” I said, “But my father is terminally ill, and I would like to be at home to talk to him before he passes away.” We had pulled everybody on campus together who either taught in the teacher education program or was interested in the teacher education program. That's when Teacher Ed became a university mission and not just a School of Ed mission. We were talking about the need to change the governing structure of the teacher education program. That's when it became the PTEU—Professional Teacher Education Unit. We had a four or five-day almost-like retreat, where all the faculty and staff came together and we literally talked about the collaborative professional teacher education unit and developed the conceptual model. We finished with the retreat. I left the next day to go to Ohio, and my father passed away the following day. And my sister told me, “Deborah, I think he was just waiting on you to get here.” After the funeral—he was buried on December 23—one of the things my mother said to me was, “Deborah, one of the last things he talked about with me, he wanted you to be able to get everything reaccredited at Kennesaw.”

DY: And you did!

DW: While I was gone, the ladies, including Luan [M. Sheehan] and [the other administrative assistants in the office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs] packed up everything in my office and moved it over to the School of Ed and they unpacked. I walked over to the School of Ed January 2nd and never walked back into the little one-story building that we were in before.

DY: Where were you then? Were you over in the Joe Mack Wilson building then? Where was education then?

DW: No, I wasn't in the Joe Mack Wilson building. It was . . .

TS: Probably Willingham Hall, wasn't it?

DW: It was right across from . . .

TS: Social Science?

DW: From Social Science.

TS: The old Humanities, Business Administration building; Willingham Hall nowadays.

DW: That's where it was.

DY: Well, that was a good thing, that PTEU organization, because I know we hired Sarah [R.] Robbins in 1994, and since, I've been on several search committees when we were looking for English Ed faculty, and that's a big selling point of our institution that we have that kind of collaborative working relationship with the academic units. It's wonderful. It's the only way I can imagine working.

TS: So when you say that they lost accreditation with NCATE, as I remember, it had something to do with student-teacher ratio, didn't it, with that huge post-baccalaureate program that we had at the time, and also the lack of any kind of multi-cultural specific course. Was that an issue?

DW: You know, I don't recall whether that was an issue or not, although that was one of the things that we did add along with technology. When I went over to the College of Ed, I can remember asking the dean's secretary, "May I see everything that was in the evidence room?" Nothing did I get.

TS: Nothing?

DW: Nothing.

TS: Because nothing was in there?

DW: I don't know what was in there. Something had to have been in there, you know what I mean? I knew that they were scheduled to come back and review us to see if we could be accredited again, not only NCATE, but the [Georgia] Professional Standards Commission. Otherwise we would have lost our programs. They were coming back in November. The self-study report had to be submitted in September, actually Labor Day. So I had nine months to try to. . . .

TS: From January, when you took over.

DW: From January 2nd to Labor Day, to bring about this change. It was to continue to work on the conceptual framework, it was to modify all the curriculum and the policies and procedures within the School of Ed for all twelve undergraduate and graduate teacher preparation programs. We incorporated the technology into it, multi-cultural courses, had to change everything and inform everybody of the changes. So even towards the end I requested in that summer that there be a mock NCATE review. We invited five people to come from around the country to participate in that mock interview. They made a lot of suggestions and recommendations, and in a month's time we tried to make those corrections and changes and then submitted all the paperwork, et cetera, to NCATE and to the Professional Standards Commission. Then I can remember Diana [G.] Poore doing this, who is the director of TRAC [Teacher Resource and Activity Center]

now; she was the chair of setting up the new evidence room, because, literally, like I said, when I had walked in there and asked to see what evidence was in the evidence room, I was shown nothing, zero, nothing. Where it went, I don't know. What happened to it, I don't know. I thought maybe it was best that I don't see it—don't know what went before me and just move forward. I held twenty-six sessions with students, faculty, and the community to explain the new program, the new conceptual framework, et cetera, and believe me, we couldn't have done it if the faculty and staff hadn't all pulled together and worked, worked, worked extremely hard to do this. I didn't do it; they did.

DY: It's interesting to think about how that would go today, if we had something like that to do today.

DW: I told them, when I first walked in there, the very first day I met with all of them, I said, "Listen, even though many of you already know me, normally when a new dean comes in, they take time to assess; they take time to establish rapport." I said, "My name is Deborah Wallace. That's all the rapport I can establish with you right now. We don't have time. This is what we've got to do. This is our charge." They had to rework every syllabus. We used to have teacher education council meetings that now probably meet every other week, maybe every three weeks for an hour. We met once a week for three hours. I would chair that meeting just to get the approval of all the curriculum changes that we were making in every teacher education program on this campus.

DY: Well, you did it very collaboratively, Deborah. It's very commendable.

DW: We were able to do that. Like I said, we all came together as a team, and people worked extremely hard to do that. I was proud of them. We were accredited, and, in fact, I do believe that it is the only time since we've had the teacher education program, where in the NCATE report, there were two commendations. I think I've served on fifteen university SACS committees, and never have we written a commendation, but we did receive two. One in terms of our conceptual framework—because this was before most of the country was going to that collaborative endeavor where you bring in all of the other content faculty, math science, history, social studies, English, all of these people together. So it worked out well. I was pleased and proud.

DY: So, that was baptism by fire.

DW: Yes.

DY: Coming into a new job!

TS: Is that what you're proudest of while you were dean of the college?

DW: Yes, yes. That's just one of the many things because we started the Department of Special Education and the master's in special education. We had also, my final year there, invited a lot of community and educational leaders in. We were looking at a doctoral program, which is now going to be, but back then we were looking at it as offering educational specialist in a doctoral program. Certain things happened during that time, so we just weren't able to move forward on that. I stepped down and then we had two acting deans: Jane [H.] McHaney, who was the associate dean at the time, became acting dean, and then Ann [D.] Smith.

TS: What year did you step down?

DW: This was in '99. I was interim dean when I first walked in—and then I applied for the position and I got the position. Then I was dean for four or five years. [In] total, I was dean for six years. Then Jane McHaney was acting dean. After Jane, was Ann Smith as acting dean, and then Dr. [Yiping] Wan became dean.

TS: Well, you had already won the Preston Award [Philip Preston Community Leadership Award] as far back as '91. Let's see, '91, maybe you were Dean of Graduate Studies?

DW: I was Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of Graduate Studies in '91.

TS: Why don't we talk a little bit about the kinds of service that you had been engaged in that would explain why you won the Preston Award?

DW: Okay. I was very honored to be the first person to receive that honor. At the time, I was president of the Cobb County YWCA, and we were doing a lot of things in the community in terms of women of achievement, battered women's programs, daycare center for the homeless, and so forth.

TS: Was Barbara [J.] Bruegger there?

DW: Barbara Bruegger was the director, yes. She was the Director of the YWCA. I had been on the board also of the Tommy Nobis Center, Center for Rehabilitation Services for the Disabled, and I had been on that board for eleven years before it built the new facility on Bells Ferry [Road, Marietta] that exists today because it used to be in the basement of an elementary school years ago.

TS: Was it in Marietta?

DW: No, it wasn't in Marietta. It might not have even been in Cobb County. I think it was actually in Atlanta when it first started. I was on the board and on the committee when we were first looking for a piece of land to have the Tommy Nobis Center, and then we selected this piece over on Bells Ferry. At one time I

was also President of the Board of Directors of the Tommy Nobis Center. Later, I was on the board of trustees at [WellStar] Cobb Hospital. I'm trying to think of all the things that we did, we did so many different things. I can remember with the YWCA, it almost became a second job, because we were developing curriculum for the little ones in terms of the daycare program that we were offering for the homeless. It was almost like a pre-school curriculum for them.

TS: For the children of the homeless?

DW: Yes, while parents were out looking for jobs or going to classes or something to try to assist them. It ran from infants up to toddlers. It seems like there were a lot of other things, committees and boards I served on. This is terrible to lose your memory!

DY: It just says you've done a lot, Deborah, and it's hard to recall.

TS: Well, you know, the Preston Award is unique in that we have a service award that's really kind of professional service, the things that are a natural outgrowth of whatever your discipline is, and this is different in that it's community service in the broader sense. It can be partly based on your expertise, but I guess like being on the board for the YWCA, it's more of just service in general. I'm sure you were invited to be on a lot of boards as an administrator here at Kennesaw.

DW: Right, right. I also served for four years as a state commissioner of the Professional Standards Commission. Governor Zell Miller, appointed me as one of the state commissioners for that and that's when I also got involved with the Hazardous Waste Management Board, serving on that [as vice-chair of the Site Selection Analysis Work Group that evaluated a proposal to put a hazardous waste facility in Taylor County]. I don't know how I got involved, and I don't know how that came about or why they thought to ask me.

TS: It was after Zell Miller became governor and there was already a huge controversy and they actually restructured that committee. It used to be the main politicians in the state. The governor, I guess, was on it, and the lieutenant governor. They took all the politicians out, and then one of the things they wanted [on the Site Selection Analysis Work Group] was a few people from the academic community. I think you were one and maybe somebody from the University of Georgia [Dr. Wade L. Nutter, who chaired the work group].

DW: Yes, yes. I had never been to Taylor County, and it was during that same time frame that I was asked to be one of the state commissioners at the Professional Standards Commission, because they have a couple of deans who serve as commissioners. Of course, when I stepped down [as dean], I stepped down from that role as well. But I became involved in that hazardous waste management facility issue in Taylor County where we had a lot of hearings. It went on for about a year.

- DY: It must have been incredibly time consuming.
- DW: It was. They would send the materials to me to read in boxes—they would ship them in boxes to read before the hearings, and we had to go visit the sites, et cetera.
- TS: And then issued a report that basically said they didn't need to put it down there, I believe was the conclusion.
- DW: Right. I'm trying to remember, there was endangered wildlife in the area and foliage [the Fringed Campion was on the federal and state endangered plant list].
- TS: Some real questions about the underground water supply (aquifer).
- DW: Right, and the table level.
- TS: We're more familiar about this than you are right now, because in the Georgia History/Georgia Literature class the students read about it [in a chapter of *Cornerstones of Georgia History: Documents That Formed the State*].
- DW: Yes.
- TS: But that was an important service to the state to try to resolve that issue.
- DW: And we would have our hearings at one of the federal buildings in downtown Atlanta.
- TS: And the commission chair down in Taylor County at that time [Rufus Green] was associate superintendent of the school system down there.
- DW: Right. See, you're reminding me of these things. When I first came, I actually became involved in a variety of different things. I became politically involved, initially, when I first moved to Georgia.
- TS: Okay, talk about that.
- DW: I was on [Mayor] Maynard Jackson's issues committee. When he was running for his second term I served on his issues committee. One morning, it was about a quarter till seven in the morning, I got a call from Maynard; and he asked me to be his communications director. I thought to myself, now Maynard has only got four more years that he can be mayor!
- TS: Right, no tenure!

DW: No tenure in this. I'm not quite sure why, but he thought my major was communications, and I said, "No, it's not." I thanked him for offering, and I turned him down, but I worked on several people's committees.

TS: Campaigns?

DW: Campaigns, et cetera at the time. I became the president of the Fulton County Young Democrats. In fact, [future mayor] Bill Campbell was one of the members at the time. I'm sorry to see what's happened to him lately, but he was one of the members at the time of the Fulton County Young Democrats. I became alternate national committee-person to go to the convention, and it was just an interesting experience.

DY: It was an interesting time in politics.

DW: Yes, yes.

DY: I wish it were that interesting now!

DW: Then I was nominated to be a member of Leadership Atlanta in the 1986 cohort. In fact, I'm on a committee now because it's our twentieth reunion because I was in the class of 1986 of Leadership Atlanta. I think it was 1991 for Leadership Cobb. I went through both programs

DY: Did you enjoy those?

DW: Oh, they were absolutely wonderful! It was just amazing. In Leadership Atlanta I did a ride-along with the police department one Friday evening, the Friday evening shift.

DY: What a way to get to know the community!

DW: You really get to know the community. It gives you an opportunity, also, to do a lot of networking, and hopefully, in whatever role you play, you have an impact on what happens in the community. All through my life, in all these organizations I've gotten to meet wonderful people who have made so many contributions to the community, to the state, to the nation, to society and humanity as a whole.

TS: What kind of community services do you engage in now?

DW: I haven't been doing as much lately and part of it was because I went through a period of illness and surgery, et cetera. I haven't gotten back into that. I can remember a couple of years ago, because I was going through a period of illness, when they asked me to be on the board of the Cobb Library System I had to decline at that point. I cannot say that I've been actively involved although I'm still, on the periphery, involved in some of the things that I have been, for

- instance, the Red Cross. I was on the board for the Atlanta Red Cross. See how things just keep coming back to me, you know, Katrina, some little volunteer things I did on the side in terms of that. But at one time I was on the Atlanta Red Cross board, and this was during the time when I was on the boards of several other organizations, such as the YWCA and the Tommy Nobis Center.
- DY: That's a lot of work considering what you were doing at Kennesaw.
- DW: Right.
- DY: And the kind of explosive growth that we were having.
- DW: Yes. And so now I'm just serving on some sub-committees [laughter].
- DY: Well, you've earned that, I think.
- DW: I'm now serving on a sub-committee, like for our Leadership Atlanta class reunion and things of that nature.
- TS: How does service fit into the big picture of what Kennesaw State is all about? Do you feel that your service has been honored at Kennesaw State over the years?
- DW: Yes, I do. Yes, I do. I think it was acknowledged not only in terms of annual reviews and things of that nature and tenure, because that's all I've gone through is a tenure process and post-tenure review, here at Kennesaw, but through such as the Philip Preston Award, and just acknowledged in general. I do believe service is extremely important. The thing about it is we at Kennesaw, the entire time that I've been here, have gone through tremendous growth, tremendous change, and that takes time and effort on every individual's part. We've been going through this growth and change while still needing additional resources. So that puts an even bigger strain on people in general. It demands so much more of everyone, leaving little time, I'm sorry to say, for the kind of service that I think can be given by individuals, not only individuals but groups of individuals as well, organizations within the institution. I know, as a faculty member now, and this is my sixth year back in the faculty, and I truly love what I do in terms of teaching, et cetera—but when you are developing new programs, Ed.S. programs, doctoral programs, bringing in new faculty, with so many changes and so many professional things to do in terms of academia, it truly leaves little time if you want to give some to your family and religious endeavors. Time is quickly taken up with a variety of things. I wish we could do even more because I think it's vital to the community as a whole.
- DY: It is, without a doubt. What is your different perspective from the administrative and top level administrative positions that you've held and now simply, well, when I say simply, complexly, being a teaching faculty member?

- DW: See, I'm going back and forth. I started as a faculty member, went in administration, back to as a faculty member now.
- DY: Maybe there are no clear areas of demarcation for you to answer that question, I don't know.
- TS: Not everybody can make that adjustment back easily, though. I mean, Gene [Eugene R.] Huck did a great job of it, going from administration back into the history department, but not everybody can do it.
- DW: Right. I remember Gene well. You know, the responsibilities are distinct and different yet sometimes I do believe that administration can lose sight of all the demands that they might be placing on faculty and the time constraints and restraints. I'm not saying all administrators. I'm just hopeful that as an administrator, no matter which administrative role a person would play, that they would keep in mind that even though the ideas might be new, innovative, and needed, even though you have the idea or even though the faculty maybe have the idea, it takes time, it takes effort to implement. It doesn't just happen overnight. Somebody has put in the effort, the energy, the commitment to bring something to fruition, and in that case it takes time, and that needs to be recognized. I can remember when I first came here, we were talking about all the committees that people served on, and we talked about ways in which that could be changed, working smarter, better than—you know what I mean? Well, see, I don't think we've found our way yet, we haven't found it because people are still serving on as many committees if not more, completing this report, that report, and other things.
- TS: The College of Education seems to have an unusually large number of committees.
- DW: Yes. It's amazing, all the paperwork that is involved. A lot of the paperwork asks for the same thing, but only in a different format, so you're just repeating yourself over and over again. I find that even in meetings. I'm hearing the same things over and over again. I'm hearing some things that I know we talked about fifteen years ago.
- DY: Me too, Deborah!
- DW: You know? I'm thinking, "I know I've heard this before. Are we still talking about this? Hasn't this been resolved yet [laughter]?" Maybe it's just academia, itself, you know, maybe that's it.
- DY: Where do you see us going at Kennesaw? I mean, we don't stop changing; you can't come up for air.
- DW: We will continue to thrive.

DY: Oh, I think we will.

DW: Yes.

DY: But there have been some faculty expressing concerns that we're going to lose our focus on service.

DW: Yes.

DY: What do you think about that in your perspective?

DW: Well, I do believe that our mission is changing. I would hate to see us lose our focus on teaching; that's what I'm best at. I'm not best at research like the two of you are doing. You know, that is not my forte and I know this.

TS: I think we all put teaching first.

DW: I'm best at service and teaching. I was even that way at Georgia State even though I was promoted.

TS: I guess the question is, in the future, do you think that the people that are best at teaching and service are going to have a happy home at Kennesaw? Are they going to be able to get promoted and tenured if that's their emphasis?

DW: I realize there has to be some research, but I believe there are different kinds of scholarly activity. It doesn't always have to be a refereed journal article or a book. I would hope that their contributions will still be recognized, that is my hope. Although, I think with the doctoral programs—but then I think there could be different roles for different people because I think we need all of these contributions coming together to make us the best we can be. It's not just the researchers that are going to make us the best we are. It is those people who are providing the best instruction in the classroom, those people who are out in the community providing the best service possible, in all areas, for humanity in general.

TS: I think Ernest [L.] Boyer's *Scholarship Reconsidered* [*Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1991)] came out about 1990. Were you all discussing this in the administration?

DW: Yes.

TS: It became the Bible around here pretty quickly, but at the time that you were dean of graduate studies were you all talking about Boyer as the model for Kennesaw State?

DW: Yes.

TS: President [Betty L.] Siegel always promoted the Boyer model. Do you think that is the model at Kennesaw now, or has it ever been fully accepted here?

DW: Not to the extent that it could be, although I do believe the Boyer model is what we're striving for right now. Even with the introduction of our doctoral program, I do not think Kennesaw is destined to be a Georgia Tech kind of institution or a University of Georgia.

TS: Research is not going to be our number one mission?

DW: I don't think research is going to be our number one mission; even because our doctoral program that we have right now is more of an applied doctorate. I think it should be to better serve the community as a whole. Like I said, I do believe there are so many scholarly avenues that can be addressed and be of benefit, not only academically, professionally, but to the community at large. Yes, I do.

TS: Are you doing any scholarship of particular interest right now, or things that you're excited about?

DW: I cannot say, right this moment, other than working with a group of my graduate students. We are looking at peer tutoring, that in particular, because in the past year we've been working on the task force for the doctorate. I developed the courses for the Special Ed Administration licensure and the rubrics and everything else that goes along with those courses and proposals. In our department alone, in the past year we have developed the M.Ed. and TESOL [Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages].

TS: Explain that.

DW: Teacher education for English as a second language, a master's degree in that; developed the Ed.S. and doctoral portion for the collaborative doctoral program in teaching and learning, but ours is with a special education administration emphasis. We have developed the add-on licensure for Special Ed administration, and we have done all this with only five people in our department.

TS: You stay busy.

DW: It's been a load. And I've developed four courses just in the past eight months.

DY: It's very time consuming and involves research because you have to know what is going on in that area to develop courses.

DW: Right. I hadn't coordinated the special education administration program since I left Georgia State, and I had to retool, if you will to gear up to develop the

courses. When I coordinated the special education administration program at Georgia State I had twenty-six doctoral students whom I was major advisor for during the time I was there. Most of them had been Special Ed and some of them still are Special Ed directors in the state and have held a variety of administrative positions in the state. Many of them have been directors in South Georgia, only because during that time we had a cooperative doctoral program with Valdosta State. Valdosta State was trying to start up their doctoral program, and so I took the Special Ed Administration program to Valdosta State, and we had a cohort of almost twenty people even in that program. So once a week I would go back and forth to Valdosta, stay a night, teach a course, then mentor the doctoral students the next day and then come back to Georgia State.

DY: You've gotten around the state, haven't you?

DW: Yes, I did. So we're looking forward to beginning the doctoral program in January of 2007, here on this campus.

TS: Not long off.

DW: I will teach my first doctoral course on this campus next summer.

TS: What course will it be?

DW: Would you believe it's not one of the courses that I developed, so I'll have to retool again [laughter]! The course is Creating Culturally Responsive Classrooms. That's the title of it.

DY: How interesting!

DW: So it's retooling again. Our department is changing its name to the Department of Inclusive Education. We threw out a variety of different names, but nothing has been approved yet, and that's because we are including ESOL [English to Speakers of Other Languages] and we have faculty in our department whose major area is ESOL.

DY: You've got five faculty members in your department?

DW: Let's see, Dr. [Barry L.] Bogen [Jr.], Dr. [Patty] Crawford, Dr. [Karen] Harris, Dr. [Karen] Kuhel, [and] [M.] Leigh Funk is part-time with us. She does the data management for the College of Ed as well, and Dr. [Judy] Holzman.

TS: That's right. Judy's over there.

DW: That's right, Judy's there, but she's going to be leaving us I think.

TS: Oh really? Leaving to retire?

DW: Leaving to retire, some point in the near future.

DY: Judy is wonderful.

TS: Yes.

DW: Oh, absolutely. Yes. And we've got a new department chair.

DY: Who is that?

DW: Dr. Toni [S.] Strieker.

DY: Right.

TS: We oftentimes ask people what has kept them at Kennesaw for so long.

DW: The people.

DY: Good answer.

TS: That's probably the most common answer that we've heard.

DW: Really? Well, it's the truth. It's the people, you know, because . . .

DY: I'm sure you've had many opportunities to go.

DW: Yes, I could have stayed at Georgia State, I didn't have to come here, but my being here as a Regent's Fellow—it wasn't just, like I said, the administrative position, because when I said that as a doctoral student, I meant it about being an administrator. That's the reason I do believe that fate has brought me to the many positions that I've had. It's been the people.

TS: How would you describe the intellectual climate at Kennesaw now with regard to students? Have students changed in the twenty years that you've been here?

DW: Oh, yes, yes. I do believe that they are much more demanding of us as professors, instructors, and they should be. I do believe that they are much more inquisitive and that they too want to give to the people, being in education. I know in my graduate classes, the candidates want to give to their students. In the undergraduate course that I teach—which is Exceptional Children's course, the survey course—I ask them to reflect on a lot of different things in that particular course. When they reflect they say things like, "I want to be the best teacher I can be. I want to be sensitive and aware of people with special needs. I want to be able to give." It's that kind of attitude that you appreciate, that you try to foster in the class, and when you hear it coming back—and when I read these things, you

know when somebody's trying to pull the wool over your eyes, you know what I mean. These people aren't trying to pull the wool over my eyes. Any time they will sit with me because I've kept the class an extra fifteen minutes, you know, and it's late at night anyway, and they're not trying to hurry home, it makes a big difference. I think our student body wants to make a difference in whatever role they assume, whether it's in business or education. The students I come in contact with are positive and appreciative of every extra effort that their peers and that their professors and the administration go to, to make it the best possible education that they can receive. Not just education but experience. It's not just the academics, but it's the other experiences as well. They really do. They really do make an effort and give to whatever endeavor they're asked to do. And they have many demands on them as well, family, jobs and. . . .

TS: There's got to be a lot of Kennesaw grads, now, who are out doing special education in the schools. Could you just reflect for a minute on what you think the state of special education is in this area? Are the schools doing a good job of special education or have they dropped the ball, or how would you describe it?

DW: I don't think they've dropped the ball; I think they're doing a great job. The thing about it is, you see, we're moving into an era of inclusion: inclusion into the general environment and society as a whole. Our candidates, who have graduated in the past, are assisting us now by serving as resources for us. They serve on our advisory board; they also serve as field experience sites for the people to come and visit and observe. It's extremely important, number one, that administrators in schools within our community, regarding those with special needs, set the tone for what happens in their schools. If inclusion is not accepted by the administration, then sometimes the General Ed and the special education teachers are hesitant, but we're finding that more and more inclusion is being accepted. Because in part of No Child Left Behind and in part because of IDEA [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act], it has become mandated that when placing a child with special needs that inclusion in the general education environment is your first option that you consider. It might not be the best. If it's not the best, then you put them in whatever environment would best meet their needs, but it's the first option you have to consider. I do believe, because we have been promoting, fostering, and facilitating inclusion when there have been some other academic institutions that haven't from the very beginning—they are now because it's being mandated—but we were promoting that years ago. It's, I think, going to make a difference in the long run in terms of making persons with special needs feel a part of the community as a whole, providing them employment opportunities, so they can have feelings of self-worth.

DY: And they can make contributions to the community too, very important contributions.

DW: Oh, so many contributions up and down the line; it is so important, yes.

DY: Everyone benefits, all around.

DW: And the earlier you intervene the better.

DY: That's a good word, Deborah. That's very important.

DW: It's rewarding work, that's what it is, to see that you've made a difference in some way.

TS: I am about out of questions. Do you have some questions, Dede?

DY: I think you asked the ones that we usually conclude with or like to conclude with.

DW: This has been a positive journey for me. I just want you to know this. It has been, at Kennesaw, in Georgia as a whole, at Georgia State, wonderful. My entire life has been a positive journey. I just wonder at times, and I have said this many times over my lifetime, what am I going to be when I grow up? [laughter] What am I going to be doing when I grow up?

TS: Have you decided yet?

DW: I haven't decided. I asked that the day I graduated with my doctorate. I asked my dad, "What am I going to be when I grow up? I don't know."

DY: Well, one thing that you clearly have been is that you've made positive contributions to any environment you've been in. It's very true.

DW: Thank you, I appreciate that. This has been an honor for you to even ask me to do this. I'm almost in tears!

DY: It's been very delightful. I'm glad you're still doing your good work and you seem to have your heart so in it.

DW: It is. I could be tired, have a headache, not feel well, but when I walk into that classroom, that's it for me.

TS: When you walk into the classroom do you even know whether it's eight o'clock at night outside or whatever?

DW: No, not me. And the time flies by so fast that I'm amazed. I have wonderful students.

DY: Thank you, Deborah, for your time today.

DW: Thank you.

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