

KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
INTERVIEW WITH LINDA M. NOBLE
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Interview with Linda M. Noble

Conducted, edited, and indexed by Thomas A. Scott, with final editing by Linda Noble and Patricia Wright (completed 12/10/2008)

Date of Interview: Wednesday, 5 December 2007

Location: CETL House, Kennesaw State University

TS: Linda, why don't we begin, as we do with everybody, by asking you about your background, where you were born, where you grew up and went to school, and things like that.

LN: I was born in Miami, Florida and spent most of my childhood there. We relocated to Atlanta in 1969 for my father's job. I went to a couple of different elementary and middle schools, but eventually graduated from Newton County Comprehensive High School in Covington, Georgia. In Covington, we lived on a seven acre horse farm. I raised horses and cows, attended a small high school, and had wonderful teenage years in a small town and a small high school. It was very different from what I experienced in Miami. I left high school and went to what was then Georgia College, now Georgia College and State University in Milledgeville.

TS: One of the prettiest campuses in Georgia.

LN: One of the prettiest campuses and it too was a small school. I liked that atmosphere. After undergraduate school I was fortunate enough to get accepted into the doctoral program in physiological psychology at UGA and eventually completed that program in 1985.

TS: Did you have a scientific background in the natural sciences at all?

LN: You know, I was a bit confused about what I wanted to do in life. In college I wasn't paying much attention to what I was really interested in. I thought I wanted to practice psychology. As I was going through undergraduate school, I was trying to position myself to be competitive for clinical or counseling programs in psychology. I thought I had done a pretty good job of that and applied to what I considered some top-notch clinical psychology programs around the country. I was rejected at each one. Most of the feedback I received was that my GRE scores weren't very competitive. Clinical graduate programs were pretty tough to get into—even in those days it was almost more difficult than medical school. So I was devastated, had no idea what I wanted to do with my life, and called my undergraduate major professor on a Saturday afternoon in tears. He said, "Well, now, Linda, let's think this through." I had been working in his animal lab and doing research with him on brain and behavior relationships. I had actually been doing very little applied work. So after a couple of weeks of thinking it through, he suggested that I apply to some science-based programs. I did and never looked back. I had, for some reason, set a career goal for myself, but I wasn't really engaged in that field during my undergraduate experience.

TS: Do you remember what his name was?

LN: My professor in undergraduate school was Dr. William (Bill) McDaniel. He was department chair there for a while, but it was a few years after I graduated.

TS: That's to his credit that he would give you that kind of advice. In several interviews recently female faculty members have talked about set backs where their professors would say, "Well, go home and have babies. You don't need to pursue this."

LN: No, he did not do that. We had worked very closely together. I was working in his animal lab with him, and we had published and presented a paper together. Honestly, although he's never said this to me personally, almost all psychology undergraduates want to be clinicians. I guess I was just a typical undergrad at the time.

TS: That's what they know.

LN: That's what they know, and that's all they think they can do with the degree. They see a career path and an opportunity to make a comfortable living. I think Dr. McDaniel was letting me play that out, realizing that I would always have what I was really engaged in to fall back on. I think he let me come to that realization on my own.

TS: He wasn't offering advice until you had a problem and came to him?

LN: No, but when I asked for advice he got right to it, and it was great advice.

TS: Was Georgia College still all women when you were there?

LN: No, it had been co-ed for several years. It was fairly gender-balanced when I was there. However, there wasn't a lot of diversity in the student population. Most students were from Georgia and most were white and middle class. I didn't get a lot of experience with minority groups or international students.

TS: A lot of Flannery O'Connor there.

LN: A lot of Flannery O'Connor—and history. Milledgeville was actually the capital of Georgia for a while. So there is an old governor's mansion there.

TS: They've recently completed a major restoration project on the governor's mansion.

LN: I have spent the night in the governor's mansion. I returned to Georgia College within the last fifteen years to talk to the faculty about integrating teaching, scholarship and service. They allowed me to stay in the governor's mansion and, of course, told me the story of the ghost that supposedly lives in the mansion. Have you heard that story?

TS: No.

- LN: There's apparently a ghost that cooks blueberry muffins every morning; so I'm sure it's a self-fulfilling prophecy of some sort that you wake up in the morning smelling blueberry muffins even though they're not there. When I was in school, we held honors receptions and other special events like that at the mansion. It's very nice and it's right across from the campus.
- TS: I've been on tours through there a couple of times when we've had a conference down there.
- LN: One of the history professors while I was visiting conducted a tour of Milledgeville, but it was, in part, a ghost tour. We ended up down in the graveyard near Flannery O'Connor's grave.
- TS: Well, they've got so much history there they don't need to be doing ghost tours instead of history tours.
- LN: No, they don't, but it was a lot of fun.
- TS: Our Georgia Association of Historians had a session in the old Capitol Building. It's a reconstruction, but a nice site even if it's not that old.
- LN: True. That campus has changed a lot.
- TS: It's still a pretty campus.
- LN: It is pretty and they've done a good job of integrating the new with the old.
- TS: Right. So in 1980 you go to The University of Georgia and enrolled in the Ph.D. program.
- LN: I did.
- TS: And they just gave you the master's along the way?
- LN: They did. We actually had to complete the degree requirements for the masters, and they had a graduation ceremony for master's students. Although you were originally admitted to the doctoral program, you had to complete the master's in order to be admitted to candidacy in the doctoral program.
- TS: So to do physiological psychology did you have to take a bunch of science courses as part of your graduate degree?
- LN: I did not. In fact, I didn't take too many undergraduate science courses beyond what you would expect for general education requirements. To be honest with you, in graduate school, I struggled a bit because I didn't have a good background in biochemistry, which

is a very important field for physiological psychology and the study of brain neurotransmitters. I had to do some extra work to keep up with my counterparts who had a stronger science background.

TS: So the physiology is basically the physiology of the brain.

LN: Yes, the program focused on physiology of the brain. We learned quite a bit of neuroanatomy, endocrinology, and related fields in the program. But it was all very much connected to behavior. Essentially, it's a functionalist approach to understanding the brain. It's all about what happens to behavior when a neuron fires and how neurotransmitter systems underlie behavior. So it was a nice blend of science and application.

TS: So if somebody has an injury of some type how it affects behavior—or strokes, things of that sort?

LN: That's right, absolutely. In graduate school I eventually got into more of the animal learning field and ended up working with Roger [K.] Thomas. Dr. Thomas is one of the leading researchers in the field of animal cognition. We studied different species in terms of advanced forms of learning.

TS: What kind of species?

LN: I worked with rats, pigeons, and squirrel monkeys—mostly squirrel monkeys in the end—very capable group of animals, those squirrel monkeys. We gave them some pretty advanced forms of numerical learning tasks, and they solved them. It was fun. In fact, I love to tell the story of the first year I started working here at Kennesaw. I was a little concerned because there was no animal colony here, and I had a research track I wasn't sure I could sustain. I decided I could continue the work with college students as my research sample. So I took the task I had given the squirrel monkeys for my dissertation project and gave it to college students. None of them could solve it, but it was because they are so advanced, they were imposing all kinds of potential solutions to the problems. They made it much more difficult than it actually was. So their advanced cognitive skills actually hurt them in the long run. But I loved to say to my students that my squirrel monkeys could solve these problems, so why can't you? [laughter]

TS: Try it out on the faculty and see how they would do.

LN: I didn't go that far. [laughter]

TS: Well, you got through your program pretty quickly in five years, I guess, from when you started.

LN: Yes, I was fortunate.

TS: You were a traditional aged student it sounds like.

LN: I was. In fact, my father loves to tell the story about when I would come home for a weekend, and he would ask me when I was going to get a job. College life suited me quite well, and I wasn't interested in doing anything else, which is why I naturally progressed into a faculty position. I've just always loved learning and being on college campuses.

TS: Yes. One question we ask everybody is about mentors along the way. You mentioned one for your undergraduate years and your major professor Thomas in graduate school.

LN: Sure, Roger Thomas.

TS: Talk about him a little bit, or would you consider him a mentor?

LN: Absolutely. He was one of those professors who was extremely intelligent but also very personable. So even though he walked around with a kind of brilliance that kept you in awe of him, he was almost like talking to a father or an uncle. He was very capable of bonding with people and building relationships. I was very fortunate to learn from him and work with him. I struggled to meet his standards; he was pretty tough. But, at the same time, felt like he was a friend and a mentor. He was always very supportive. At the end of my program when I was struggling with deciding between strictly research, post-doctoral positions or primarily teaching positions, what I valued the most about him is that he did not push me in one direction or another. I think that's rare in graduate school, especially given the research we were doing.

TS: They have a bias for research.

LN: Most do. And we were working on some innovative things in animal cognition. I regret that I never submitted my dissertation for publication. I imagine there had to be a little sense of loss for him when I did not choose one of those research positions. But he never made me feel that my decision to teach at Kennesaw College was the wrong choice or less of a choice. He was very open to me doing what I wanted to do, and that takes a good mentor. It really does.

TS: Any other mentors along the way?

LN: In graduate school I had a peer graduate student, Janice Steirn. She is currently on faculty at Georgia Southern University. I recently had breakfast with her after not seeing her in probably fifteen years. She and I were in the same field of animal cognition, but she was doing a different type of research with pigeons. She was also very bright. We collaboratively designed the methodology for my dissertation, and it was a methodological answer to a question that had been raised in the literature by my major professor, Dr. Thomas. She was a wonderful support mechanism in graduate school, but especially in getting my dissertation designed.

TS: What did you conclude on your dissertation?

LN: Actually, my results went against what my major professor had suggested in the literature. I found a way to demonstrate that the squirrel monkeys were capable of two types of numerical concept learning. He had speculated that we might not be able to differentiate between the two types of learning from a methodological standpoint. So it was kind of a culminating moment for me in graduate school.

TS: What were the consequences of discovering, I mean, not personally but for the field?

LN: Not much. He had just raised it as a discussion item at the end of one of his articles, and the field probably didn't give it two thoughts, but for me it was a challenge. So it probably meant more to Janice, me, and Roger than it did anybody else in the field. It really didn't have any tremendous impact.

TS: Okay. Were there any women in the psychology department on the faculty when you were going through?

LN: There was a female faculty member in the social psychology program, and there were a couple of women in the clinical program, but in my field of study there were no women. There were a few women graduate students, but no faculty. I imagine the science focus attracted more males. I had very few female mentors in graduate school. There were a few women faculty I took some courses from and I could talk to a bit, but not that I would call significant mentors in my life.

TS: Did you feel that you were at a disadvantage or discriminated against in any way as you went through?

LN: I never felt discriminated against. There were comments and jokes that in today's climate probably could have resulted in a lawsuit or a grievance, but in 1985 I tolerated more than I would now. There were times when I felt uncomfortable, but, no, I never felt discriminated against. I felt like I had a lot of opportunities and was valued for the work I was doing.

TS: That's good. You had mentioned a lack of diversity at Georgia College; what about UGA?

LN: It didn't change much—still a lack of diversity. In fact, I can't even remember a single graduate student of color. I do not remember any African-American colleagues in my program.

TS: And not on the faculty, I guess.

LN: No, not on the faculty. It was a very white world. In fact, I remember in one course we were assigned an article called "Even the Rat Was White." Have you ever heard of it? [Robert V. Guthrie, *Even the Rat Was White: A Historical View of Psychology* (New

York: Harper & Row, 1976; reprint, Boston: Allyn & Bacon Classics Edition, 2d ed., 2004)].

TS: No.

LN: It was basically a chastising of the field of psychology for the homogeneous research subjects that had been used for most of our findings about human behavior.

TS: Well, I was a few years before you, but I look back now in amazement that all of the faculty members that I had all the way through graduate school were white males. They were liberal white males, but they were still white males. So I guess that was just the way the academic world used to be. But things have changed.

LN: They have changed quite a bit.

TS: Yes. You got through in '85, and as you said earlier you had applied to several different places. What made you decide that you preferred a teaching institution more than the research?

LN: That's an excellent question, and I'm not sure that I could put my finger on any single thing. I was fortunate enough that in graduate school I had the opportunity for both research and teaching assistantships, so I had literally been the instructor of record for some courses in psychology, and I had been a teaching assistant in others. I had done lots of research as well. I remember struggling with my decision quite a bit. There was a post-doctoral opening for a grant funded project at the University of South Alabama that involved working with squirrel monkeys to investigate Parkinson's disease. They wanted someone to come in and look at the cognitive deficits associated with that disease, which was exactly my area of expertise. This was a very attractive position. I would have had my own lab, funded by a major pharmaceutical company that was also funding the pharmacy school to investigate drug treatments for Parkinson's disease.

At South Alabama, one of the things that I would have had to do was create animal models of Parkinson's disease. That involved injecting them with a particular drug that destroyed the portion of their brain just like Parkinson's disease. There was a side of me that struggled with that. I walked into that lab, and the monkeys would be holding onto the cage and shaking. I remember a very distinct moment where my heart just wrenched, and I thought to myself, "I'm not sure I can do this kind of work." I think the animal lover in me took over. I mean, they were obviously housed and well taken care of, but it was still a dilemma for me.

I did know I did not want to teach somewhere where I could not do research, and I knew I did not want to do research and never teach. I wanted a place where I could find balance. I was fortunate to also have a couple of offers for primarily teaching positions from Kennesaw and one other institution. One weekend I finally said, "If I have to rank in order what I enjoy, teaching is just a notch above research." I have always enjoyed working with students. So I decided on a primarily teaching position which Kennesaw

was in those days. I have never doubted that decision and I never looked back. It's been exactly the kind of career I wanted.

TS: Right. You mentioned that you had other offers from teaching institutions; why did you choose Kennesaw?

LN: When I interviewed at Kennesaw State there were not many faculty in the psychology department. I could probably name them all. [G.] Ruth Hepler was the Department Chair.

TS: The psychology department was very small.

LN: Very small. The bachelor's degree program had only been approved by the Board of Regents a few years prior. Patrick [J.] Devine was here as well as John [R.] Paddock, who is no longer here. Of course, Bill [George W. Hill, IV] was here. Grace Galliano was here. It was a small group, but there was something about the dynamics of that group of faculty and the non-traditional aged students at Kennesaw. In fact, I was actually interviewed by the students.

TS: They were older than you.

LN: Most were older than I was. I was fortunate in the sense that I went straight through graduate school pretty quickly. So when I walked in the interview room, I looked across the table and thought, "Oh, my goodness, these students are probably looking at me thinking, 'What could she possibly know at her age?'" There was just a combination of the way this department felt to me that made me think it would be an excellent place to start a career.

TS: Right. You must have been all of twenty-six or twenty-seven at the time.

LN: I was twenty-six when I received my doctorate, but I had turned twenty-seven when I started teaching here. In fact, I've been reading some of the recent literature about what to do with your career after retirement. My thirty years with the University System will be here pretty soon, and I will, hopefully, be in good health and still relatively young. I am not sure what I'm going to do for the next phase.

TS: You're going to quit just because you've got thirty years?

LN: Well, I don't know what I'm going to do. I might leave after thirty years and go live somewhere else, try something completely different. Who knows?

TS: I started when I was twenty-five, but I didn't have my doctorate at that time.

LN: I was very fortunate. I had a lot of financial support from my parents and was able to go straight through school.

TS: Right. This semester I have a class where I have two students older than me. That's the first time in a long time I've had anybody older than me.

LN: That's good though, Tom.

TS: I suppose. Well, so let's see, in '85 did we even have search committees at that time?

LN: I don't remember. Grace Galliano met me for my interview. I drove to campus, and she took me to breakfast at the local Arby's.

TS: Near campus?

LN: Near campus. In fact, Grace met me, and escorted me around to meet people and be interviewed. I'll never forget my interview with Dean [George H.] Beggs. If it's appropriate to tell stories. . . .

TS: Sure.

LN: I interviewed with Dean Beggs. Of course, you knew Dean Beggs, so you remember his military, formal style. I had spent my last dime on a Navy blue business suit, skirt, jacket, and high collared lace blouse. It was very uncharacteristic of my style from graduate school, but I knew I had to have something more professional. As a graduate student at UGA I was teaching classes in jeans and tennis shorts. It was much more laid back there.

TS: Like most of our faculty now.

LN: That's right. But I knew I wanted to look professional, so I bought a new suit and felt professional and ready to go. I sat down across the desk from Dr. Beggs, and he spent the first five to ten minutes of the interview talking about how it was imperative that faculty at Kennesaw State dress professionally. I remember almost beginning to perspire. I thought to myself, if this is not professional enough, I can't work here because this is about as good as it gets for me. But at the end of that talk he said, "But I can tell by looking at you that we won't have to worry about that with you." So that's how he started the interview process, and I remember being very panicked thinking I don't know how I could dress more professionally than I was that day.

TS: Right. I remember we sent one person in for an interview that we were really concerned because, I forgot how he dressed, but something was lacking in his attire. When we asked Dr. Beggs about it afterwards, after he got the job, he said, "Well, I didn't notice his clothes because of his hair." [laughter]

LN: It's good to have distracters sometimes.

TS: Of course, I think he operated on the assumption that it was a matter of respect for students and for the community to dress professionally.

LN: I agree. It's interesting how the mind set of a campus leader really does translate down to faculty and to the classroom. I know in the first few years I was teaching here I dressed much more professionally than I do even now. I go to class today dressed more casual than I did in the early years.

TS: I guess it internalized on me. I still dress the same way. But, at any rate, you got the job here in '85; at that time were we even hiring people in specialties or were you just hired because of a general ability to teach introductory psychology?

LN: They were hiring for specialties. I believe that was a strategic decision by the Psychology Department to do that.

TS: Ruth was the chair?

LN: Ruth was the department chair at the time. I remember the advertisement for this position listed specialty courses to teach. I don't know that it necessarily said a Ph.D. in physiological psychology, but the courses that I would be teaching were all from that field. Actually, I think that one of the strengths of that department is that they were able to do that from the beginning and carry that forward. When I would go to national teaching conferences and meet colleagues from similar sized institutions, I was always surprised that they had to teach so far outside their area of expertise. So I was fortunate in the sense that I could build on the strengths of my preparation in graduate school.

TS: Yes. I guess that's true by '85. We actually started our upper level classes in '78, so we had had about seven years by that time. It was great in '78—because none of us [who arrived before then] were hired because of a specialty, and we just pretty well got to divide up the curriculum and say, "I want to teach this course," and somebody else would say, "I want to teach that," and we created specialties for ourselves over the next several years.

LN: That would be fun.

TS: I guess by '85 everybody was probably hiring for specialties.

LN: Yes, and it may have been a function of the fact that the degree program was so new. Although, I was a replacement hire.

TS: Were you?

LN: Yes.

TS: Was that Duane [E.] Shuttlesworth?

LN: It was Duane Shuttlesworth.

TS: You replaced him?

LN: I replaced him. I don't remember if anyone told me why he left.

TS: There may have been more than I knew about, but I thought that he was probably less teaching oriented and more service and scholarship oriented than Dean Beggs appreciated.

LN: There may have been a tension between what he wanted to do and what the department wanted him to do. He had an entire psycho-physiology lab with equipment to measure brain waves, heart rate, and respiration. It was outdated equipment by the time I was hired. I took a course in graduate school about how to operate that equipment. I don't know if that pushed me to the top of the applicant pool, but when they asked me if I knew how to work that equipment, I said, yes.

TS: Maybe so.

LN: Although I knew how it worked, I never had any interest in it and actually rarely used it.

TS: What did they tell you when you came in? Was there anything to the effect, well, we're not going to encourage scholarship; we want you to put your time in on your classes; what was the message?

LN: That's a good question, Tom. I don't remember a message in that specific direction, at least a clear message about that. They put my office next to Bill Hill, which I have often said was the best thing that ever happened to my teaching and my career. I just began to look around at what other faculty were doing and started doing those same kinds of things. Bill and Ruth Hepler have been the two most significant mentors in my life. They each mentored me in different ways. Bill and I taught most of the same courses— Research Methods, Statistics, and Experimental. As early as I can remember he walked in my office with folders of course materials and lecture notes and offered his help. He never made me feel like I had to teach the courses his way. It wasn't that kind of thing. He just walked in and said, "I don't know if you need any of this; feel free to look through it, copy, use, revise, whatever you want." That was such a gift for a brand new faculty member who was teaching a lot in those days. We taught three 5 hour courses in a quarter on the quarter system (some with labs). Probably two or three of those I had never taught before, so it was a tremendous gift. Within those first few years Bill took me to a teaching conference.

TS: That's about the time he won the Distinguished Teaching Award.

LN: He won it in '85. He had just won the Distinguished Teaching Award when I joined the department, so it was a gift just to have someone that talented right next to me as I began teaching.

TS: Which of the conferences? Was it the one at Southern Indiana?

- LN: It was at the University of Southern Indiana, the Mid-America Conference for Teachers of Psychology. In fact, our Southeastern Conference for the Teaching of Psychology is modeled after that one. Bill really introduced me to a national family, for lack of a better word, of teachers of psychology—again, a really important mentoring thing for him to do to immediately include me in the national network he was building.
- TS: Also, this may be before the publication of Ernest [L.] Boyer, *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate* (Princeton: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1990). But it's introducing you to that Boyer model of scholarship of teaching and learning.
- LN: That's right. And most of my scholarship, especially in those years, was around teaching and learning.
- TS: I say pre-Ernest Boyer. He hadn't come out with *Scholarship Reconsidered* at that time, but I guess he was probably presenting at conferences.
- LN: Probably. But, yes, certainly the landmark publication of his had not yet come out. The KSU psychology department always honored teaching, scholarship, and service in a very integrated way. I don't ever remember hearing, "You're not focusing enough on your teaching." Or, "You need to do more research" or "more service"; for some reason I just kind of settled into a pattern of professional life that was well received in the department and at the institution.
- TS: You mentioned how Bill was a mentor; how about Ruth? What did she offer?
- LN: Ruth Hepler is one of the strongest women I've ever met—strong in a number of different ways. What I mean by that is she is wise and intuitive. She was able to—in the middle of a discussion—point out the elephant in the room that no one is talking about. Also passionate about what she does and will sometimes argue to her own detriment to advance a point. But from Ruth I learned the importance of integrity. I learned the importance of quality. I learned the importance of speaking the truth. In fact, I think some of my leadership skills were molded by her because of the kind of person she was.
- TS: Did she go from department chair to CAPS [Counseling, Advisement, and Placement Services] or was it the other way around?
- LN: I think she did all that at the same time.
- TS: Did she?
- LN: If I'm not mistaken; I don't know that she ever left the chair's position to help develop CAPS. I think she did that on top of everything else she was doing. Of course, the chairs in those days were in nine-month teaching positions. I assume they paid them a little extra to keep working over the summer, but the department chairs still had to be a faculty

member, still had to do all the personnel evaluations, and then whatever other service obligations they had. Certainly, the work she did with CAPS was instrumental in getting that off the ground. I believe she worked pretty closely with Cary [Carol L.] Turner and Bowman [O.] Davis. I'm probably missing some others who were involved.

TS: In developing CAPS?

LN: In developing CAPS; a significant contribution to this institution that's still here.

TS: Absolutely.

LN: Ruth is a strong nurturer. She loves you and nurtures you dearly, but she's clear about what should be done.

TS: You must have found it attractive to have an institution—given your background of all male faculty members—with a woman who is the department chair and a woman who is president of the University.

LN: I had never seen anything like it—and other strong female colleagues as well. Grace Galliano, of course, was a talented woman in her own right. It was completely different for me; although I must say at the time I'm not sure I appreciated it as much as I did later. I'm not sure I even noticed how unusual it was. It just seemed so natural. When I joined the faculty at Kennesaw it has always felt like home to me. Almost every day I get in the car and drive to work, and regardless of what position I've been in, I've always felt grateful to be here—like it was a place where I was supposed to be in life. I've always had that bond with this institution and the people who are here.

TS: That's an interesting comment, I think, and I have to think about that a little bit, but I never thought that we were all that unusual either although we were. Ann [Ellis] Pullen was my department chair for a long, long time, and it just seemed perfectly normal.

LN: Well, women were in leadership positions here and certainly with Dr. [Betty L.] Siegel. I didn't realize how impressive that was to be the first woman president in the University System of Georgia. My awareness about those kinds of things in those days was not nearly what it is now. The thing I felt the most at Kennesaw was my youth, I felt relatively young.

TS: The faculty was younger then than it is today too, twenty years ago, on average.

LN: That's true.

TS: But you felt your youth.

LN: I still felt young.

TS: Sure. Well you were.

LN: I was often confused for a student by my students.

TS: It came out in one of the interviews that a young faculty member over in Math parked in the lot next to the science building, and [Dean] Larry [Laurence I.] Peterson saw him getting out of his car and said, "This is only for faculty here!" [laughter]

LN: That's a good story.

TS: Some of the young faculty members are looking younger and younger to me.

LN: That's right.

TS: Well, you started teaching. Of course, a lot of survey classes everybody was doing then, and a lot of methodology classes.

LN: Right, and physiological psychology. I was able to develop some new courses as well. I developed Drugs and Behavior, which was a good course on how psychoactive drugs work in the brain. It was very popular. In fact, it was about the same time that Dr. Galliano developed a human sexuality course, and she often teased our curriculum committee that if somebody would do the Psychology of Music we'd have sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll! [laughter] But I don't think we ever developed the music course.

TS: You'd just need a recruit for that.

LN: That's right.

TS: So you're on the faculty a few years, and it doesn't take long at all before you're also a department chair. Let's see, you came in '85, and you became chair in '94.

LN: In '94 I became interim chair.

TS: So you had been here nine years I guess. It seems like people who become chair of the Psychology department nowadays are intimidated by the fact that there are so many former chairs of the Psychology department that are still on campus.

LN: Yes, it has been a significant launching pad for many of us.

TS: Did you replace Bill as chair?

LN: I did. Bill briefly came out of the Chair's position back to a full time teaching position, but the institution tapped him for another leadership position very soon. Dr. [Edwin A.] Rugg invited him up to his office to serve as the first Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs.

I know this probably sounds less strategic than it should, but I had no real interest in being in an administrative position. I had been serving in some faculty leadership roles on campus. I was involved with what is now the University Senate for awhile, had been on the UPCC [Undergraduate Policies and Curriculum Committee]. I was also involved in Tenure and Promotion committees and those kinds of things, but I don't ever remember waking up one morning and saying, I'd like to be a chair or a dean.

TS: So you were involved in a bunch of committees.

LN: A lot of service, yes. In those days it was just part of the life that we led. I had also been doing some scholarship, but mostly in the form of conference presentations. I had published a few textbook ancillaries. I had somehow gotten into that market, so I did some study guides and those kinds of thing.

TS: Maybe before we get to the period when you were department chair, we ought to talk a little bit about the atmosphere on campus—the intellectual life on campus for students as well as faculty. How would you describe the students that we had at Kennesaw in those days, particularly in psychology?

LN: I may be misquoting the exact dates, but I know the Psychology Department began to survey its students long before program assessment became a requirement. We were doing so for self-improvement, but we were in the assessment mode. We just didn't call it that, and we didn't think about it as that. It just seemed like as psychologists it was a way to get answers about the effectiveness of our degree program, our advisement program and those types of things. Most of our majors in those days were nontraditional-aged women. The average age was about twenty-seven or twenty-eight, and probably close to 70 percent of our majors were women. In fact, I can remember teaching classes where there were maybe one or two men in the classroom. It was very dominated by women, which was reflective of what was going on nationally at the time as well. Women were entering graduate programs in psychology in unprecedented numbers in the late 1980s. These women were here to learn and they were a dedicated group of students. They were like sponges. They would take everything you could give them. They were even disappointed if class was cancelled. Relative to the student population that I had been exposed to at the University of Georgia, it felt like heaven. I don't mean to downgrade the University of Georgia students. They were just younger and had lots of competing priorities at an institution that size in a town like Athens. It was just wonderful working with these students because they were all very serious about their degree. Very few of them were in it for a career. In other words, they weren't there to get a college degree for a particular job. They were there to learn. Many of them already had careers and some had already raised families. It made the classroom environment very stimulating for me. Their life experiences brought a lot to the table. I just enjoyed it.

TS: I think it was very similar in the History & Philosophy department with lots of non-traditional students. Actually we had a big post-baccalaureate program until the School of Education got into a problem with NCATE [National Council for Accreditation of

Teacher Education], and was even more non-traditional students. I always did feel as though our students may not have had the SAT scores—of course, we only measure the SAT scores of those that are right straight out of high school, and they may be a hundred or two hundred points below those at UGA—but still the non-traditional students brought so many life experiences that it didn't matter what their SAT scores had been at one time. That motivation . . .

LN: Many of them had been in college for a year or a semester at some point in their lives and had not done well. So they were committed to repairing the poor grade point average they had produced years ago.

TS: Right. You've got to counsel with them that, "Oh, I'm so upset; I only made a 92 on this test; why didn't I make 100?"

LN: That's right.

TS: What about the people in the survey classes where you get the general campus audience; how did that compare?

LN: I think the survey classes were more like the freshmen population at UGA. You know, my memory may have faltered over the years, but I don't see a lot of difference in the talent and the potential of today's student population, but I see a real difference in the commitment. I'm probably framing that inappropriately, but it seemed to me when I was teaching full time the students in those days put college ahead of everything else.

TS: Even those in the survey classes?

LN: Even those in the survey courses. They tried hard and missed very few deadlines. Having been out of the classroom for so many years and returning to the classroom in the last four years, it feels like today's students are struggling with many more distractions than they were in those days. I don't know why it feels that way, but I have students today who not only don't show up to take an exam, they don't call or e-mail. That was not my experience early on. When I was teaching full-time and those students missed something, they panicked about it.

TS: So we're getting a different student population today?

LN: I think we're getting a different student population today. It's a student population that's working much more than they were years ago. I don't know why it feels that way to me, but it feels as though more of today's students are less committed, or are less able to commit, to their college obligation. Of course that does not describe all students. Many are very committed.

TS: Well, I think we probably need some research on it. Maybe there is some being done. Now that Kennesaw is increasingly becoming a university of choice for people right out

of high school is the selection of students we're getting out of high school different than it was a few years ago?

LN: It may be. Since returning to the classroom I've noted the classroom has far more traditional aged students than it did when I was teaching full time. It's also a much more diverse classroom, with international students, and students of color. It's much more like the real world, which is wonderful. Diversity brings a number of different perspectives to the classroom that are really helpful. And I see some very talented freshmen today.

TS: Oh, yes.

LN: I think many of them are going to be very successful.

TS: Yes, and some of them need a kick in the pants.

LN: Some of them do.

TS: The intellectual life of the faculty, we've touched on this and you were saying when you came in there wasn't any clear prejudice for research or teaching—that they didn't push you in one way, although the teaching load may have pushed us in one way, but what about the intellectual climate on campus? How would you describe it when you came here maybe even compared to today?

LN: That's a good question. I think we have evolved into a different institution of higher education. When I first came here it felt more like a community college atmosphere. The intellectual life was there, but it was not there around research in the way that it is today. It was there around curriculum development, professional service and building programs and building this institution. I think that if you look at the faculty, yourself included, that were here and built this place, they were very scholarly about how they did that. Some turned some of those service activities into scholarship, but it wasn't a requirement, and so I think the way we talk about our professional life has changed significantly. We have become more like a traditional institution of higher education with raised expectations about producing research and scholarship. Working as closely as I do with the new faculty, I'm beginning to feel generational gaps. Many of them have a very clear sense that they need to be doing research and publishing. I did not feel that pressure as a young faculty member.

TS: Right. They're hearing that.

LN: They're hearing that. And they want to do that. They're still struggling with the teaching and service load, especially in some colleges. There's also a mindset with the newer faculty that I don't remember us having when I first came to this profession, and that mindset is that if you work hard your salary should reflect it. In other words, there's a financially based incentive mentality with this generation of faculty that I don't remember having. I don't ever remember saying no to President Siegel or Dean Beggs when they called and asked me to do something. I don't ever remember looking at our

work, or my work, and saying, how is this going to pay off for me in terms of tenure and promotion and money? It was a culture where everybody was just working. I think the work ethic on this campus has always been pretty impressive. It's a fast-paced, dynamic institution. I think we realized that we just had to do it. I sometimes hear new faculty make comments about "what's in it for me," but I can't imagine saying that to Dean Beggs.

TS: Right. And you wouldn't to Dean Beggs!

LN: You might have, but I don't think you would have stayed long.

TS: No!

LN: So there's a real sense that this generation of faculty want a better balance between their personal and professional life. I don't know that they want to give up the personal life in order to accomplish professionally as much as previous generations were willing to do.

TS: That's interesting. So we may have been working harder in the old days than today?

LN: We may have been, but I would argue that we worked more for the collective good than for ourselves as individuals. Certainly, our work was less focused in the old days. I can't think of anyone in the first ten years of my teaching here that wasn't doing teaching, service, and most were also doing a little scholarship.

TS: But if you really wanted to be a great scholar and publish a lot of things, you wouldn't have been at Kennesaw in the first place or you would have been very frustrated.

LN: It would have been a mismatch. I think the faculty that we have hired and some of which we have subsequently tenured who have more of a research interest have not been as content here as others who have not been driven by research. The reality of what we do in servicing our students and meeting our program demands, is going to put teaching at the forefront no matter what you really want to be doing. You've got to find a way to be content with that.

TS: I think some times just from being on faculty search committees we put such a heavy emphasis—and have for probably a decade—on scholarship when we go to recruiting new faculty members that inevitably the faculty is going to change from the way it used to be. We don't really honor service that much when we go out to hire somebody nowadays.

LN: No. And I'm not sure we're even looking for evidence that they're capable of providing good service.

TS: We just assume that they will.

- LN: We just assume that they will be. My sense is that the institution is at a very—pivotal is not the right word—but it's at a very interesting intersection of its growth and direction. We are an institution of over 20,000 students that has managed to get to that point without completely abandoning a small college learning experience for students. Our class sizes are still relatively reasonable. Our faculty are still very committed to good teaching, very committed to mentoring and advising students, and we are continuing along that journey at the same time that we're raising the bar around scholarship. We also are very committed to professional service. In fact, we are probably building systems that require institutional service more so today than we ever have with our new advisory councils at the department and college level. So it feels like we're still trying to do everything and do it well. I'm not sure that we're going to be able to stay on that trajectory without it becoming a recruitment and retention issue for faculty. If our new faculty start getting denied tenure and promotion because they don't have the publications that people are expecting of them when they are still on 3-4 teaching loads and we are still calling on them to serve on committees, I think it's going to require a real cultural shift in our work load model or it's going to be tough to recruit. In some disciplines it already is. I remember interviewing history candidates often who would question me about the teaching load given their interest in research and the kinds of research that historians sometimes do. It's very time consuming. So it's going to be interesting to see how this all works out. I think we will come out of it in a very good place, but it's an interesting time to be living through that transition.
- TS: I was going to say you've got a unique perspective on this too, not only being a former chair and dean, but with the work you're doing with CETL now because you've been working with promotion and tenure guidelines too as well as with mentoring new faculty.
- LN: That's right. It has been an interesting twenty-two years. I think one of the things that I've valued so much about my role here at CETL, especially working with the new faculty and the department chairs is having the perspectives of a teaching faculty member, a chair, and a dean. All those perspectives have been helpful as I try to help faculty be successful and help move the institution forward with these new tenure and promotion expectations. I do believe that this institution has evolved into a different type of institution than it was twenty-two years ago, and I think our guidelines have to reflect that and the expectations have to change as the mission of this institution changes.
- TS: A lot of the people I've interviewed have been people who have been here a long time, and I think a lot of them are nostalgic for the old days in many ways and not so necessarily happy with the directions that we're going now. But one of the things that has come out is that a lot of people have said, "Well, we used to know people across campus and don't any more."
- LN: They don't. In fact, some of the departments are as large as the entire School of Arts and Behavioral Sciences was when I first joined it. It's difficult nowadays in some departments to even know you're departmental colleagues, let alone colleagues outside your department or outside your college. We have grown a lot.

TS: It has indeed.

LN: We've been in such a fortunate faculty recruiting position in the last six or seven years, Tom. At new faculty orientation we have anywhere from 70 to 120 new faculty every year. Now some of those are replacement positions, but if you look at the percentage of tenured faculty on our campus, in the last seven years it has almost completely reversed itself. We used to be about 60 percent tenured, and now we're about 60 percent untenured. So for those of us who have been here a long time and were able to build those kinds of relationships, it's a very different place to be.

TS: Right. Well, you became chair in '94, and how did you become chair? Did they just ask you to step into that interim position?

LN: They did. We had a new dean at the time, Lois [E.] Muir was here. We had just hired her. And, if I remember things correctly there was no search, and I don't believe any of the other more senior faculty must have been interested in the position. I don't know the politics of all that, but it seemed to me as though I was kind of recommended by the department in some way or everybody just said it would be okay if Linda would be chair.

TS: You were probably about the youngest chair on campus.

LN: I had to be one of the youngest chairs. I know sitting around the college table I was definitely the youngest chair. Joan [E.] Dominick was interim chair of Communications at the time. That was also a leadership transition period in the department of Communication. She and I were pretty close in age, but I certainly felt like one of the younger administrative faculty on campus, that's for sure. I definitely was when I was attending conferences for campus administrators. I don't remember exactly how it happened, other than Bill wanted to get out of the full-time administrative position, and I was a likely person to succeed him. I stepped in as interim, and towards the end of the interim year, sometime in the spring, Dean Muir went in and talked with the faculty, and there was a lot of consensus in the department that I should just be appointed to the position. So she went ahead and did that with their endorsement. That's how it happened. After a year I was a department chair without much planning or training.

TS: So you were in that position four years.

LN: Four years.

TS: One year as interim and three years full time.

LN: And one of those years, Dr. Ed Rugg asked me to come up as an administrative assistant to his office for 50 percent of my time. That was actually the precursor to the assistant VPAA that Bill ended up doing a few years later. I'm not sure the reasons for his request, but Ed's workload had been getting pretty extensive, and he needed someone to liaison between his office and the faculty.

- TS: So you might have been the assistant VP if you wanted to.
- LN: I might have been, but I don't ever remember him asking me to do that. My position was temporary and he probably wanted somebody more senior on a permanent basis.
- TS: That must have been interesting.
- LN: It was challenging at times. Ed has very clear ideas about curriculum, and that often created tension with the faculty because they considered curriculum to be their area of expertise. So there were times when I was probably more of a mediator as we tried to design a program and bring people together around the table. But it wasn't anything intense; it all worked out eventually. It gave me a much wider university perspective. I went back to chairing, and at some point Bill went up and took that position.
- TS: I guess really, especially at that stage, and I think it's still true today, once you go into a department chair position any thought of scholarship is pretty much out the window except for scholarship of teaching and things like that, or scholarship of service.
- LN: I managed to finish a few projects I was working on, but after that my scholarship record was never overly impressive. I was on a teacher/service provider model anyway, but what little I was doing very quickly fell by the wayside. I ended up shifting my focus to the scholarship of administration for lack of a better word, so I was able to do some presentations around effective strategies for chairing a department, and issues related to leadership.
- TS: When did your involvement in that Division 2 [Society for the Teaching of Psychology] of the APA [American Psychological Association] come about?
- LN: That started in the late 1980s when I was still in a full-time faculty position. Joe [Joseph J.] Palladino, who was the founder of the Mid-America Conference at Southern Indiana and STP President at the time asked me to work with a colleague, Drew [C.] Appleby, on a special project. Drew was at the same [Marian College, Indianapolis] small private college for many years [1972-99]. He's now at IUPUI, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis. But he asked Drew and me to build a repository of strong syllabi in different courses in psychology that people could use as models. It was called Project Syllabus and it's still there today. We literally built a library of peer-reviewed syllabi. That was my first involvement in Division 2 of APA, and from that I got on the Long Range Planning Committee. I eventually was elected secretary. Again, that was part of the networking that Bill brought me into very early on.
- TS: And Division 2 Society for the Teaching of Psychology. Then you became president of the Society.
- LN: I became president in 2003. I was actually in the dean's position when I did that. In fact, that was part of my awareness-raising of how much I missed teaching. Although I had stepped in for a faculty member who became ill in the middle of a semester while I was

dean, I had not been an instructor of record while I was in the dean's office. And I really missed working with students. I missed that connection to the teaching of psychology. The experience as STP president and working with such a committed and dedicated group of teachers of psychology nationally made me aware of what my world had become in terms of budget management, personnel, and the kinds of day to day things that deans are involved in.

TS: Right. When were you editing the methodology part of the journal?

LN: The Methods and Techniques Section. I'm not sure the year I started that, but I believe I was department chair at the time. When I moved to the dean's office in '98 I turned that over to someone else. However, I returned to that position when I moved down here to CETL in 2004.

TS: Have you?

LN: I have. It's called the Methods and Techniques (M&T) section of the journal *Teaching of Psychology*. The previous section editor had to come out of the position for some reason at that time and Randy [Randolph A.] Smith, who was then the KSU department chair in psychology and the main editor of the journal, asked me if I would mind stepping in and doing it for two years.

TS: This is recently?

LN: This is recently, within the last couple of years. So right now I'm once again the editor of M&T but that term ends at the end of this year. In fact, in a couple of weeks, somebody else who is very talented will take over.

TS: I was just thinking, in terms of scholarship that's certainly scholarship to be an editor.

LN: It's certainly advancing scholarship. I wasn't doing much scholarship production myself, but as a journal editor you certainly are advancing the scholarship of teaching and learning in psychology. I tried to learn as much as I could since I wasn't the author of articles.

TS: Any accomplishments as department chair that really stand out, big changes in the Psychology department or new programs or anything?

LN: We went through semester conversion while I was chair, and we revised our curriculum in a really impressive way. But, it didn't last. Bill chaired the curriculum committee for us during semester conversion, and I thought we built a very impressive undergraduate experience in our new semester program. We built labs into courses we'd never had labs in before, and the program was modeled after fairly recent nationally recognized standards in psychology. I was really pleased with the work we did around that curriculum; I was very disappointed that it had to change when the major grew so much.

TS: Why do you think that was so?

LN: Primarily because the students couldn't find a way to take all the courses and all the labs in a timely manner. The class size needed for laboratory learning was hard to maintain with the growth in majors. I think it was partly because the students were pushing back on what it took to arrange their schedule to complete the program. So the department began to drop out some of the labs and make some other changes, and I was sad to see those go. But at the time, getting through semester conversion was one of our more significant accomplishments. We really revised our curriculum; we didn't just simply convert what we were doing into a semester-based program.

TS: I think that was the whole purpose of going to the semester system, maybe, was to force everybody throughout the state to reconsider every program.

LN: Although many didn't. But, yes, it certainly was an opportunity to do that if people took it, and I think KSU's psychology department did that.

TS: Lois Muir was the dean your first year as chair, but she didn't stay long, and let's see, did Don [Donald W.] Forrester step in immediately?

LN: Don Forrester stepped in when she left.

TS: And so he stayed dean until you took over?

LN: He did. He was a long term interim, and I was actually, interestingly enough, on two search committees that we ran trying to recruit a new dean. By the time Don got ready to retire and they were looking for an interim, I'd actually learned an awful lot about what the college was looking for in a dean.

TS: I'd forgotten. I knew he was interim for a long time, but he had cancer, and I just thought maybe they were not trying to replace him. I forgot that we had some search committees.

LN: Oh, yes we had two. I know I served on two different search committees; I'm pretty sure it was two.

TS: I did know that. Judy [Julia L.] Perkins headed those committees.

LN: Judy Perkins headed the search committee that ended up with my appointment.

TS: Why did the searches fail?

LN: Mostly match, I think, Tom. We didn't have a large applicant pool to begin with. We felt like the people we brought in just weren't a good fit. I think for the first search the Arts were still in the college. The failed search actually helped Ed [Rugg] facilitate some big discussions within the college about reorganizing. Do you remember those?

TS: Yes, and Arts pulled out [in 1998].

LN: We had the one failed search, and then we split out the School of the Arts, and then Judy chaired the next search committee. I know it was in October of '98 when they approached me about stepping in as interim dean. I think somewhere in there we did another search with the Arts actually being separate.

TS: We did a search while they were still part of the college, and then did another one after they separated.

LN: I think so.

TS: That was part of the problem I guess the first time was we were too much . . .

LN: We were too diverse.

TS: Yes, and they were much more oriented toward fund raising. It was easier for them to raise funds because there are lots of ways for people to give to a music program and things of that sort. Okay, so did we actually offer the job to somebody and they turned it down?

LN: I don't know. I'm not sure that we did.

TS: We couldn't ever pick anybody. At any rate, after that second search, that's when they approached you?

LN: I think so. I may be adding a search in there that we didn't do.

TS: But at any rate, after a failed search they asked you if you would take it.

LN: Don really needed to step out of the role, and they approached me about serving as interim, and to be honest with you I was shocked. Shocked may not be the right word, but I was quite surprised.

TS: You weren't expecting it.

LN: No, because if you looked at the department chairs that were around the table at that time, there were many that were far more experienced and senior. Apparently they were not interested in the position, at least that's what they told me, because I remember being a little uncomfortable with considering the job when my senior chair colleagues weren't.

TS: I guess the chairs at that time would have been Ann in history, Helen [S.] Ridley in Political Science, who would be foreign language, I guess Elaine McAllister?

LN: Elaine McAllister had been there for a while.

- TS: Communication was a mess.
- LN: It was a mess. I'm not sure who led that department at the time. It might have been Denis Vogel. [He came in 1998].
- TS: And then who am I forgetting? Sociology, Geography, Anthropology.
- LN: I assume Lana [J. Wachniak] was in that position at the time.
- TS: It would have been Lana, wouldn't it?
- LN: And Laura [S.] Dabundo was the chair of English. Harry [Harold K.] McGinnis was leading the Burruss Institute.
- TS: Right. Some good people in the different departments.
- LN: And Psychology was me. There were some very gifted and more senior people available for the job, so I was a little surprised when they approached me about that. But, frankly, having talked with each of them most were very supportive of me doing it. Again, I agreed to do it as an interim with no intention of applying. When the search started, apparently, I got a couple of letters of nomination. The search committee chair contacted me and said you've been nominated, would you like to apply. One of the nominations was a letter drafted by several of the department chairs, which meant a lot to me because those were my colleagues endorsing me. I was just minding my own business and enjoying myself. One of the things I really loved about the dean's job was learning about the different disciplines because it was really the first time that I was pulled out of psychology. So I learned a lot, especially about the humanities. And the international initiatives we were working on were wonderful. I was having the time of my life. I really enjoyed it and I was learning so much. When I got the nomination it made me think twice. There seemed to be some support for my leadership from some in the college. So I thought, well, I'll give it a shot. Again, the move felt much sooner than I would have anticipated. It seemed very early in my career to be moving into a dean's position. I was fortunate enough to be offered the job, and I was able to stay there for about four or five years beyond the interim year.
- TS: Yes. I guess I've got 1998 to 2004.
- LN: Yes, so counting the interim year it was six years. And it was a really exciting time for the college. We were hiring lots of new faculty, we were building programs, especially graduate programs, and it was an exciting place to be. It was also a lot of personnel responsibility.
- TS: I guess we were by that time decentralizing things on campus too weren't we? When we came in the president and vice president were involved in interviewing us, but by this time they're out of it aren't they? So it stopped with the dean.

LN: That's right. I began in the dean's job under Dr. Rugg, and then Dr. [Lendley C.] Black was hired [as Vice President for Academic Affairs in 2002]. So the last few years I had the opportunity to work with him. But it was just a really exciting time for the college—a lot of international things going on. We were building some strengths around that and around the faculty we were hiring and the programs we were building. I'm trying to remember the numbers; I think when I stepped in as interim, we had about 90 faculty in the college; and by the time I stepped out we had about 170. So we had almost doubled in size, and it was putting a tremendous load on faculty performance review and personnel issues. We were hiring a lot of new faculty. Departments were, in a sense of community, struggling with integrating new faculty and senior faculty. So almost every year we had what I would call a hot spot of conflict. In a college that size almost every year there's going to be at least one unit that is struggling with something pretty significant. It was true for every year that I was there and it was a different department every year. So I spent a lot of my time mediating, trying to bring people together, and helping faculty broaden their perspectives. Now the dean's office has three assistant or associate deans, which are very much involved. Remember that for tenure and promotion reviews I sat in on all the college level committees, every meeting, and I had to evaluate every individual portfolio. We reviewed anywhere from thirty-five to forty faculty a year.

TS: We had not divided into the two [areas for tenure and promotion review], the Social Sciences and the Humanities.

LN: We did during the time I was in the dean's office.

TS: You did, okay.

LN: But I sat on both of those. So the college had grown to a point where it really needed more than just one assistant or associate dean. It needed a stronger infrastructure for just managing everything that was going on.

TS: And you had one assistant dean?

LN: When I first came on the job [E.] Howard Shealy was my assistant dean. One of my greatest gifts in the world was to have worked with Howard. He was so wonderful to have in that office. He's always just so steady and calm, and I would be upset about this or that, and Howard always had a way of getting me to see the bigger picture and help me through the issue. Then when Ann [Pullen] was near retirement she came up to the Dean's office. She and Howard actually switched places, and she came up for a year. It was also great to work with her. Then I guess when she left, [Akanmu] Adebayo came up for awhile. I think he replaced Ann, if I'm not mistaken. We never had two assistant deans at the same time. Then, of course, he left to take the executive director's job at the Institute for Global Initiatives, when our college's international center was elevated to a broader university-wide role.

At that time Helen Ridley became my associate dean from department chair's position. Helen and I were actually a good team. Her style is very different from mine. I'm a very process-oriented person, and Helen is a very strong decision maker. So I think we complemented each other in ways that were good for the college. There were times when I needed to move off of process and get some decisions made, and there were times where I helped her see the value of process. So we actually balanced each other very well. I love to tell the story of when I was in the interim dean's position and several of the department chairs wrote this letter of nomination for me to apply for the job. I never saw the letter, but apparently Helen did not sign it. She came into the office to tell me that this letter was going forward, and she had not signed it, and wanted to tell me why, as Helen is prone to do. She's not one to hide behind a curtain. I said, "Well, I appreciate you being honest with me, and I don't know who has signed it and who has not, but I certainly value the relationship that we have for you to come up and tell me that you weren't signing it." She said, "I just wanted you to know." I said, "Okay." Then she ended up being the associate dean and ultimately stepped in as interim dean when I moved to CETL. We worked together so closely, and it was just a wonderful kind of turn around. I'm very proud of that because I have a lot of respect for Helen, and it means the world to me that she ended up having respect for me too.

TS: Great. I guess we were planning the new Social Sciences building while you were dean too.

LN: That was one of our biggest accomplishments; getting the funding for that building. Again, being process-oriented, we put together a big task force of faculty and staff to design the building. Students were represented, and the architects worked well with us. In fact, when I drive by I still call it "my building." The college has grown so much, we have probably already outgrown that building.

TS: We've got all our offices in history filled.

LN: Yes, it didn't take long.

TS: It was unimaginable when we first started talking about that building to think that we were going to get to capacity so quickly.

LN: Well, we also had the new English addition that was built during that time. We also had the first endowed chair in the college in the Fowler Distinguished Chair in Communication, and then subsequently the Shaw Endowed Chair in History. So there were some significant firsts for us during that time period; it was very exciting.

TS: Why did you decide to step down as dean?

LN: I had been talking with Dr. Black about doing something different for the institution. I really felt like the majority of my work was just being consumed by personnel issues. I happen to believe that dealing with personnel situations relies on my strengths. I don't mind conflict, and I like to try to build resolution. Unfortunately I felt like I wasn't doing

anything creative or new. I was spending my time either reading annual reviews or writing tenure and promotion letters, and it had gotten to a point where I was just spending my time doing things that didn't feel as creative as I wanted to be. So I had said to Lynn, [Black] if another position becomes available on campus, and it's appropriate for my experience and something we might consider me for, maybe we'll start looking towards that. I'll be honest with you, Tom, the college, I think, was ready for a dean with different background than I had. That college is always as a microcosm of what's going on at the university. We really needed to start looking at research, grants, and external funding, which were not my areas of emphasis. So I really felt that in order for Humanities and Social Sciences to stay competitive with the other colleges at KSU, which were definitely going in that direction, we needed a different dean. Business had been there for a while. Dr. Peterson was taking Science and Mathematics in that direction. Even the WellStar College [of Health and Human Services] was looking at those kinds of things. So I really felt like I had contributed what I could. Does that make sense?

TS: Yes.

LN: In order for that college to advance it was really time for a different kind of dean. I felt that very strongly. So it was a combination of personal interest and feeling like change would be good for the college. My CETL position was originally conceived as a faculty fellow position. Bill [Hill] had offered it to someone on campus who ultimately had to say no because they felt like they couldn't do the 50 percent split time that the CETL faculty fellows did. I don't know what possessed him to call me, but he called me one day, and he said, "What would you think about coming down here?" We went up and talked to Dr. Black about it, and he needed somebody to lead the revision of our tenure and promotion guidelines, which I could not do as dean. So he saw some opportunities with me coming down and filling this role, and we just did it. It happened very quickly. We talked about different timeline scenarios but I was pretty convinced that once I announced that I was going to leave I would not be able to accomplish much. We would have done that pretty early so that we could launch a national search for my replacement. I felt like I wasn't going to be able to do much in that kind of "lame duck" year. So I said, "Let's just go ahead and do it quickly." The downside of that is that some people felt like I had been forced out from above.

TS: I had not heard that.

LN: Yes, I had a lot of people call me and say, "Is something wrong? Did they force you out?" It wasn't anything like that. In fact, frankly, it took Bill and I a couple of weeks to convince Dr. Black and Dr. Siegel that it would be a good thing to do. I think, ultimately, I have probably contributed to the institution in some ways even more so in this position than I did as dean. I've had the time to do some things to really help new faculty be successful.

TS: Well, you're doing some interesting things here. Why don't you talk about those things a little bit? What do you do in terms of mentoring for instance?

LN: Well, one of my main areas of responsibility is what we call new faculty orientation. That's a two part program: one is a two-day campus retreat we do at the beginning of each academic year. That requires a lot of coordination with different units and people on campus. But it's very well received and we get great evaluations every year. I think it helps the new faculty at least get a jump start. Then we run a series of yearlong workshops specifically for faculty in their first and second years. We call those new faculty success workshops. In those workshops I am typically trying to help them understand performance review, tenure and promotion expectations, and introduce them to resources on campus, like the Office of Sponsored Programs. Adebayo usually does something around internationalizing the curriculum and the last couple of years we've introduced them to our QEP, Quality Enhancement Plan, for SACS [Southern Association of Colleges and Schools]. I have the Library come in and talk about all the different library resources. So some of it is their own personal success, and some of it is, "Here's what's available to you at the institution." Over the last four years a good portion of my time has been spent around the revision of our tenure and promotion guidelines and working very closely with Dr. Valerie Whittlesey, as the associate VPAA, and all the colleges and departments to try to help them through the transition to implement the new expectations.

TS: And Valerie is another former chair of the Psychology department.

LN: That's right. I've worked closely with Dr. Black to try and help our faculty understand our new guidelines. One of the things in my position that's easy to do is to see where the disconnects are between the actual guidelines and the interpretations being made by the different colleges and departmental disciplines. One of the things I've tried to do is bring some of that awareness up to the level of Dr. Black and Dr. [Daniel S.] Papp, so they can see how the campus is struggling during this transition period. One of the things I'm very pleased with is I've been able to do that without breaking the confidences of faculty. One of the things that happens in my position is that department chairs or faculty will call me who are going through tenure and promotion decisions, and they may say, "I've not been recommended for promotion from 'X,' and here's the feedback I received. I'm not sure how to respond to that; could you give me any advice." So I'm playing kind of a backseat role. One of those roles especially around promotion decisions is to try and help the faculty understand that promotion is not required. The most important news is you've been recommended for tenure. My advice to them is to look at this feedback and certainly strengthen your work in that area, so that next year or the year after you might be more successful. I play that role a lot, and I really value the fact that people trust me to talk about those kinds of things, and that I'm able to see trends and themes that are coming out of some of this. I value the kind of relationship I have with Dr. Black and Dr. Papp that allows me to just pick up the phone and say, "I think this is going to be an issue; or faculty are really struggling with this," that kind of thing.

TS: Well, I imagine that mentoring the new faculty, and then they're going to be coming up for third-year review, they're going to know you, and you're going to know them, and it

really puts you in a great position to hear how the system is really working at the grassroots.

LN: Right. Or not working.

TS: Or not working, right.

LN: One of my regrets about leaving at the end of this semester for the University System Office is that I feel like I've built relationships with some of these newer faculty, and I will miss them. I worry there won't be someone, at least until Bill replaces me, with the time to do the kinds of things that I was trying to do with them. That's been a huge piece of it. I also am the liaison from CETL to the department chairs council. So I try to do workshops and other professional development for the department chairs. Val [Whittlesey] and I do new chair orientation in July with the group of new interim or appointments. And I also work to some extent with senior faculty projects, and part-time faculty. I've tried to build some web-based resources for all of those groups, but especially for the part-time faculty. CETL now has a web-based Resource Center for those faculty.

TS: Tell me about the new job that you're taking at the Board of Regents; what's that job, and how did it come about?

LN: That's an interesting story. The title of the position is Assistant Vice Chancellor for Faculty Affairs, which has a nice ring to it. I'm not sure exactly what it means, but it sounds very good.

TS: It could be taken several different ways.

LN: That's right. You may remember that, about twelve or thirteen years ago, the University System Office at the Board of Regents, set up an internship opportunity for faculty. They could take a leave of absence from their institution and go down and work on various system-wide initiatives. The then KSU chair of biology, Dorothy [D.] Zinsmeister, applied for that program and was accepted, and they never let her come back to KSU. I am, essentially, Dorothy Zinsmeister's replacement. She retired at the end of June, although she is now back in a half time capacity holding down the fort until I can get down there, and I think she's going to stay awhile after that.

TS: That's a coup for Kennesaw to fill that position.

LN: It's a coup, and, in fact, it's a point of contention from a couple of other institutions. They see Kennesaw as having an in, although it doesn't really work that way. Dorothy has been working on lots of different projects, and they reconfigured some of what she was doing to be the position I'm taking. My area of responsibility is going to be focusing on professional development for faculty around the state. As you probably know, the Board of Regents just recently revised its policies and has decentralized all tenure and promotion decisions to the presidents of the campus as the final decision point. So I'm

going to be working with the campuses to strengthen their tenure and promotion guidelines and processes, which will be a very nice segue for the things I've been working on here at Kennesaw. I'll be doing some tracking of tenure and promotion decisions, but because the Board of Regents will no longer be involved in those recommendations, I want to do some database building around the demographics of who we're tenuring, who we're promoting, looking at it by sector type for example. I want to do some system level, big picture kinds of things. I'm very excited about it. There's been a tremendous turnover at the University System office, and very few people that were there when Dr. Papp and Frank [A.] Butler [Interim Dean, Bagwell College of Education] were there are still there.

TS: That's just a year and a half ago.

LN: Just a year and a half ago. Of course, we hired a new chancellor toward the end of their work down there. Chancellor [Erroll B.] Davis [Jr.] is from the business world. So he has a different mindset about customer service and accountability and things that I frankly think will be good for our State. So I'm going to be working with a lot of people that I'm either just meeting or will soon meet. My biggest focus is going to be around anything related to faculty personnel. I'm also going to be one of the points of contact for campus problems. If a campus is having a significant problem that looks like it's escalating, I'm going to be one of the people they call to help them resolve it. I'll also be working with the legal affairs division of the system office around some of these kinds of things. I'm hoping that my experience here, especially in my administrative roles, will help me. It will be nice to be a consultant for that without actually having to be in the trenches doing the personnel work. Dorothy has called on me over the years to do various things down at the system office, so I have met some people there. I used to tease Dorothy that I would like her job because I live in Decatur, and, of course, the system office is right near the Capitol. So when I would go down and do things with her I would jump on MARTA and go down to the system office. I would say, "Gee, it took me twenty minutes to get to work this morning." So I often teased her about it, but within the last few months she had told me about the position and I thought pretty seriously about applying. When the position was advertised, she actually called me and said, "I just want to let you know the ad is out if you're interested." I talked to Bill, of course. I would have talked to him even if he wasn't my supervisor. And I talked to Dr. Black, Dr. Butler, and Dr. Papp and tried to find out what life was like down at the system office; the pros and cons. I went ahead and put my hat in the ring, and lo and behold it will be the next leg of my journey.

TS: Well, we're going to miss you on campus.

LN: Absolutely. The hardest part will be leaving the people. I have twenty-two years here and a lot of friendships. But it's going to be a tremendous opportunity to see higher education from a different perspective, and I think that's what I'm most attracted to — the opportunity for the experience.

TS: Great. Well, I appreciate the interview.

LN: Thanks Tom. I'm sorry if we went too long. If you get me talking, I go on forever.

TS: That's fine. Thank you very much.

LN: Thank you.

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