

**INTERVIEW WITH CHARLES WAGNER
FORMER DIRECTOR OF FACILITIES PLANNING**

April 28, 1988

Dr. Hartzell: An interview with Charles Wagner at his home in Fairfax Station, outside of Washington, April 28, 1988. Charlie this is a very fine set of answers that you have written out to the questions that I sent you. I think that the principal gap in our information thus far is in the area of facilities planning and construction, where did the initiative come from for each of the buildings, what was the nature of the pipeline and how did it operate, and how much facilitating did you receive from the Central Office and the Bureau of the Budget and the Construction Fund? Now you've mentioned Stevens, Elwin Steven, Mort Gassman, Adinolfi, who is no longer with us, Frank Matske; can you tell me what the functions of each of those four individuals were and how you dealt with them. You can start either with the persons or you can start with the program planning and development, suit yourself.

Charles Wagner: Let's deal with the persons. Elwin Stevens, when I arrived, was the University Architect for the whole State University of New York, and our contact was basically through Steve. Mort Gassman you might say was the Director of Planning or Facilities Planning, he handled the program and planning

Dr. Hartzell: In the Central Office.

Charles Wagner: In the Central Office, and they both served under Larry Murray at that time. Each one of these, Stevens had an entourage of architects that worked directly under him, and Mort Gassman had people that were involved more in the programming aspect that worked for him, such as Marty Phillips and another name I recall was Mike Rivera. But basically the contact was with Steve. And you have to understand, I came, Steve wanted to run a tight ship, in other words, I guess as Alec Pond would put it, they were acting like absentee landlords. They wanted to control, they wanted to say what we would build, they wanted to say how we would do it. Coming from West Virginia, where

I had no hierarchy in the whole state, it was difficult for me to understand this procedure at first. Needless to say, I got my knuckles rapped a few times by Steve's office for doing things somewhat unilaterally. However, in the ultimate, they gave Stony Brook a lot of space to work with, in that I mean that they let us do a lot of the control. Subsequent, a kind of a power struggle between the Fund and State University Central Administration, and the Fund started taking over many of these functions, and ultimately Mort Gassman and Stevens both became members of the Construction Fund. I guess it was a power struggle between Tony Adinolfi and Steve. I held both of the gentlemen in high regard. Mort Gassman I worked with much closer on developing the programs, and I always thought of him as really a fine architect and a good guy to work with.

Dr. Hartzell: Do you know where he is now?

Charles Wagner: He's retired.

Dr. Hartzell: I know that. Somebody told me he was on Cape Cod.

Charles Wagner: I believe he was or he is. He was a real bright architect, having gone to Cranbrook, it's unusual for Americans, very few are selected to go to Cranbrook, the school.

Dr. Hartzell: Where is that?

Charles Wagner: It's in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. It originally was really run by Eliel Saarinen, Eero's Saarinen's father; it was founded primarily for the arts. It had world famous contemporary sculptors, painters, music, it's quite a place to see, but he had gone there to school. I think his first school was South Dakota, it was some place out there, but he was a brilliant guy. The initiative for things, when I came, was originally, the ideas for, well prior to my coming, the initiative for what kind of facility came from the campus, and very early in my going there, Mort Gassman came down with Mike Rivera to sit down and write a program, I believe it was the science lecture center. So at that point in time they wanted to do the programming, to write programs. Subsequently, and with their blessing, we wrote the programs. Besides the initiative, the more detail is what the desires were, were now coming out of the campus as opposed to it coming out

of Central University. One event that I recall quite vividly was, I guess I think it was about December of 1967, it was mid-December, and I was summoned down to Dr. Toll's office, and Mort Gassman was on the phone with him. And you know how Johnny tended to broadcast his phone calls, and he had me hear what Mort was saying, and the message was that we want a compendium of programs for all the facilities that you require to meet your master planning goal, and he said, we need it on January 12. Don't tell Charlie yet because it might ruin his Christmas, and I was standing there listening to the whole thing. Well, we set about the task, and what we actually did was to write an outline program and summon more detail for every facility that was planned to meet the FTE enrollment of 17,500 students in all our facilities for the year 1975.

Dr. Hartzell: Where did you get the ideas for the program, how did you get

Charles Wagner: We sat down, Alec Pond, Bill Moran, Johnny and myself and

Dr. Hartzell: Did you consult the department chairmen?

Charles Wagner: Yes, what happened was, Alec called in every department chairman, and based upon the studies that Bill Moran did on what our space should be by discipline, by cohort, the whole drill, we had what the square footage should be for that discipline. The department chairmen or in instances of Engineering, the Dean, Tom Irvine, they were called in, and said well this is how much space you generate with the master plan as we see the numbers. First, do you agree with the numbers for your development, basically the numbers of the students by cohort, etc. Of that space, so much of it is boilerplate; there are things, so many faculty generate so many offices, and the clerical support is somewhat of a ration of one to seven, and other things that are boilerplate to that; this is what you get there. There is this other residual of space that you are entitled to, how do you want that divided? What types of research laboratories, support facilities, that type of thing. And I must say that the department chairmen were most cooperative. Mind you, this is mid-December with Christmas and vacation, intersession coming up. And we generated the thing, put it together, nice bound copy -- this is before the day that we had the computer that we do the work on today and word processing would have been so

much easier in producing material -- and I delivered the thing to Mort Gassman's office, I think it was two days before the deadline. And he was absolutely shocked, and that's when I told him, Mort, I heard your telephone call. So, you really, you might say this is the generation of telling the planning group in Albany this is really what we want. The Physics and Chemistry Buildings were really; those programs were written prior to my arrival, and I think Biology, Graduate Biology, a lot of that was done by Misty Fogg, kept on for the summer. But the rest of it was generated out of the campus. And when we had a new project, we were going to go for a project, we had the outline or even more detail, so it became somewhat easier to develop the facility programming. That's not to say we didn't revisit it and go back to the user, that's what they call it here, the user to see what they want. It was always important that we found out the needs of the department. I don't think the planner can put his mark of the imprimatur on the research things. We had a difference of opinion here. We get put in a catch-22, you're not supposed to talk to the user, then when the user talks to the President, then he gets made because you didn't talk to the user. So, but here it was clearly, we had to find out. And Alec worked very diligently on this, and it was just setting up one meeting after another, getting these things resolved. Meanwhile, Bill Moran was cranking out the numbers, it was always somewhat playing the numbers game. The drive for space, how many students can we, or what can we put with engineering because they get bigger guideline, and so things like mathematics might be lumped in with engineering, so you get more guideline space, and consequently more space for the campus. So it was a constant massaging of the numbers. And those programs, the Fine Arts buildings came out of that program, Social-Behavioral Sciences, Library

Dr. Hartzell: How was it that no building for the Humanities ever developed. You have the Humanities now in about five different places. English is in the old Humanities Building, the languages are in the Library, Philosophy is in Old Physics, and Religion is now in Old Chemistry.

Charles Wagner: That I would say probably came about because, there was a Humanities planned. The campus is divided a sector approach in the Master Plan. And we had it laid out that there would be a Humanities and Fine Arts sector, and part of that was going around the Library. The original concept was a building, one was building around the old Humanities building like we did around the Library. That was Damaz, Pokorny's concept of hiding all the red brick buildings like this. It worked with the Library, but I'm not sure it would work with that little two story building. There was another concept of a tower. I participated in coming up with a conceptual scheme for building a tower that would be in that main plaza area that would be for Humanities. A couple of things happened, we programmed the Library for its ultimate growth, which was a struggle to get it to the size it was built.

Dr. Hartzell: A struggle with whom?

Charles Wagner: Actually, with, I'd say it was a struggle with the State University and also with Budget, that it was the time that Don Axelrod was the Director of the Executive Division of the Budget. At the same time that we were wanting to build the Library, of course, Buffalo was planning their master planning approach, and they wanted a Library, Binghamton, etc. And Axelrod and company had a study made, and participating in this was Marty Phillips and Mike Rivera from Gassman's outfit. We first, I believe, wanted to build a two million volume library or library system. That library system as we defined it was the Main Library, the Physics-Math Library, Chemistry Library, Earth and Space Science Library and Biological Science.

Dr. Hartzell: No separate social science library?

Charles Wagner: No, it was just as I defined it, that was the concept and plus the Health Sciences Library. We finally got an agreement, I think it was for a million and a half volume library. And the approach to planning a library was very logical. You plan a library building or build it for say a twenty year life period. Needless to say, you have space within the structure. You utilize that space for interim space use. So all of a

sudden our Library became titled Library/Humanities, and we provided the space for the Humanities within the Library.

Dr. Hartzell: You have the History Department there for a while.

Charles Wagner: Yes, correct. And the concept was that as the Library grows, this was another kind of surge space, the Library being the surge space, but very rational, very, very rational approach, to build the damn building to the size it should be for your master plan, but put other people into it. The proof of that is Firestone Library did this, other institutions did it.

Dr. Hartzell: Firestone at Princeton?

Charles Wagner: At Princeton, right. When I did my thesis, I did a Library and I learned things from that, that's the approach to take. We had the Humanities then in the Library.

Dr. Hartzell: Except for English.

Charles Wagner: Except for English, right. One of the things we tried to avoid like the plague, and it was a pet thing of John Toll, we build big buildings, we don't build buildings, small buildings with the name English Building, History Building on it. You build a big building

Dr. Hartzell: But you did that for the sciences.

Charles Wagner: We did that with the sciences, correct. We actually did that in a sense with the Social and Behavioral Sciences Building.

Dr. Hartzell: You grouped them.

Charles Wagner: So we grouped them. Well, these disciplines were to grow, and the Library was to grow. And as that growth happened, we would build a building for them. The other side of the coin is

Dr. Hartzell: For the Humanities.

Charles Wagner: For the Humanities. The other side of the coin is, it was not the intent in our original concepts and master plan that Old Bio building, Old Chemistry, Old Physics would be used as they are apparently being used now to house Humanities

departments. The concepts had all been written up, that the Old Chemistry was to be really remain as Chemistry and the new building was to be addressed more a Graduate Chemistry, and the old building was to in reality house undergraduate labs and office facilities. Similarly, Old Physics building was to serve that function, and the Old Bio building would be turned over to that or maybe an adjunct of Biology, such as perhaps Marine Sciences or something in that order. Now, when you don't follow through on that kind of thing, you've got the space and you've got to use it. And so therefore the one always gets the butt end of everything on the campus is generally the Humanities. Here at George Mason, we had the English Department scattered hell and gone in temporary structures. We had the Mathematics Department stretched, History Department, it's significant we had them in the Library vacant space such as we had at Stony Brook.

Dr. Hartzell: Is the top administrative staff at George Mason composed of scientists?

Charles Wagner: No, no. The President is an English major, if you want to use that terminology, the Academic Vice President is a Psychologist, some of the other administrators were not academically oriented at all. Here it's difficult to get people to understand this kind of a concept. But I think that's what I can conceive of as being the reason. Each year we did a net area study, it was like a bed sheet of long matrix

Dr. Hartzell: Total buildings or individual buildings?

Charles Wagner: What we did was, every building was listed on the top of the matrix, all the existing buildings, the buildings under construction, buildings in planning, buildings in programming, and then we had a stretch out there called "the Future." The square footage for every building was listed, the net assigned square footage. As you came down the matrix, you had all the academic things, the classrooms, laboratories, and then the departmental things, the biological sciences, chemistry, engineering, etc. The very next column said, this is what your entitlement is under the master plan by FTE and by the cohort, this is the space your program generates.

Dr. Hartzell: The FTE's were guesswork.

Charles Wagner: Basically at that point in time. It was the best you could do was generate it, the growth pattern. And what you did on this matrix is you put in each building where these people were, and how much square footage they had. Then below a line, what we called “below the line,” were the other items that make up the space bank of a university, organized activities, which takes in the research, student activities, libraries fell below the line, the gymnasias, etc. The bottom line is that everything has got to add up. Now that is the most valid method of planning the thing. On the last net area study I participated in still showed something like 72,000 square feet hanging out there as unprogrammed that would be Humanities space. I don’t know, I haven’t kept up with what the FTE growth rate is, and particularly by discipline so it’s hard to say, but I’m conjecturing that’s what happened. See, one thing that always remains in my craw is something that Johnny said to me once when we were going up or coming back from Albany, and he said, you wonder why I keep fighting so hard for those four big buildings, this is very early, he said, a Graduate Chemistry, Physics, Biology and the Library. He said, if I get those four buildings, I’ve got enough space to run an excellent University. So, whatever you got over and above that was gravy, and he’s right if you sit down and think about it, he’s absolutely right. That was the push, and that push got it; plus we got the Fine Arts, which I think to get that was superb. And John fought for that as hard as he did for anything else.

Dr. Hartzell: Who kept you from getting a 1,500 seat auditorium?

Charles Wagner: That was a fight I had with State University with Marty Phillips, I had come off having built the 1,600 seat auditorium, multi-purpose theater, that’s what that is, it’s a multiple-use, not multi-purpose, which my theater consultant said, that’s what you should build, and I agree. Marty and company based everything on the FTE enrollments in departments of music, drama, etc. And he was also looking at a model that he was publishing, or about to publish, for what spaces campuses should have, and in his model it said from, I think, it was something like 12,001 FTE to 20,000 FTE or some figure, I forget the exact figures, that you should have a 1,200 seat theater. I said, but Marty,

when you get up to 20,000 FTE or 18,000 FTE, you can't add, it's the most ludicrous thing, you can't put 400 seats onto that theater and make it function right.

Dr. Hartzell: What was his background?

Charles Wagner: Marty had been a, he had been the facility program coordinator for Potsdam, and I guess involved in the physical plant at the same time. Now, I am convinced that he would go ahead, go with the 1,600 seat, however, it was a deal, a compromise. Drop out one of these rehearsal rooms, we had a band rehearsal, choral rehearsal, orchestra rehearsal, and that type; he said if you drop out one of those, because of the overall space, you can have that. I tried on with the departments, I talked first to Sid, Sid says good idea, but the Music Department, Billy Jim Layton, he didn't want to give up a square inch of space, let alone a rehearsal hall of 2,400 square feet. Let's see, a theater 1,600 seat is, according to George Eisenhower, the theater consultant, that's a good size space. We're building one here for 2,000, that's, I had to talk the President down from 3,500 here -- 3,500 is ludicrous, I mean, you might as well take binoculars and go. But it should have been 1,600; but other people thought it should be bigger, but you can't make it too big because you lose the personal contact. The idea of building something bigger so all students can get together is crazy. That's like designing a church for Easter Sunday, and it sits vacant the rest of the time. You just increase the number of performances as opposed to, and I don't think they've ever had any problem filling the 1,200 seat.

Dr. Hartzell: We have only 1,100 and the theater, the main stage is what they call it, will accommodate a fairly good sized orchestra, but it's very tight.

Charles Wagner: Well, the stage plus the stage lift, that's one of those stages that has four different positions in elevation, it's a lift stage but you could bring it up to full level and increase the thing. The concept was you wanted to be able to do full orchestra, full opera, try to do everything except Mahler's Symphony for 1,000. And it's interesting the technology has changed recently somewhat. I write, I have George Eisenhower on a project here, and I had George on the job at West Virginia University, which was 1,600

seats. We never had a problem in accommodating that. One other thing is the rehearsal, the recital hall is for 400, a nominal 400. If we were to give up and said it's for 340, you pick up that space that you would drop out of that portion of the program, you put into the multiple-use theater. So if you reduce that requirement to say 300 or 360 or whatever for the recital hall, plus one rehearsal room, you had your 1,600 seats; but the departments didn't want to yield on those things. Plus at the time we were programming the project, I have to be perfectly candid, the chairman who was chairman at the time, Bill Bruehl, gave us a hard time. His actions, and I think Sid Gelber will recall the shouting match meeting, delayed that project over a year, well over a year in the planning stage. He didn't want any kind of a theater that you could make into a proscenium theater, he was, just give me a number of surge buildings, 40, 60, 80 feet high, I can do anything. That held up the project, but that's how it got to that, that's the maximum net assignable space, that's how we used it. And I was upset about the 1,200, but Marty was totally intransigent on it. It's not like if it was being built in Potsdam, yes, 1,200 would be fine.

Dr. Hartzell: Marty?

Charles Wagner: Marty Phillips, he was the czar of space for Mort Gassman's office, and we used to have some go-arounds, and Alec and Bill and myself trying to understand, we'd say, what are you trying to say Marty.

Dr. Hartzell: Did John Toll get into the act.

Charles Wagner: Oh, yeah. It was

Dr. Hartzell: Did you have any help from was it Ernie Boyer then or Sam Gould?

Charles Wagner: No, it was at that time, it was after Sam left, so it would have been Boyer. No, you had to fight this whole thing, the space guidelines that Marty Phillips and Mort Gassman's section was publishing, and they were, they really wanted to get this thing published because it was a race between State University of New York to get theirs done before City University did, and their guidelines were lower, and the concern was that if, I can't think of the guy's name, Arnold Arbeit, if he got his out first, we would

have probably been living according to those standards, because the Division of the Budget would have looked and said, well, City University with 26 campuses, they can do with this amount of space, why do you think you need that much more space. We always had the question raised with us. We'd always say that Stony Brook is different than the other campuses. And the question always came, what makes you different. Well, we're different, the programs

Dr. Hartzell: Your sights were higher.

Charles Wagner: You can't equate, I don't think you could equate State University to Albany and Stony Brook in the same package. It's different animals, different clientele. Question 10, it seemed that every big building we had to take on a fight to get it, and we had good support from Mort Gassman. He would indicate to us, this was before the combination of the State University and the Construction Fund, he would indicate that the Fund was undercutting us. Dr. Toll thought that Tony Adinolfi was a big supporter, perhaps he was. Tony had his own reason for doing this; Tony was trying to build a super agency that Adinolfi had proposed that the State University Construction Fund become the super construction agency for every agency in the State, not just for universities, to take over what OGS was doing, prisons, you name it; and unfortunately, Tony became very ill, and it came apart.

Dr. Hartzell: OGS is what?

Charles Wagner: Office of General Services, or DPW; see

Dr. Hartzell: Department of Public Works.

Charles Wagner: Yeah, Public Works did the first buildings at Stony Brook, and that was taken away from them and Construction Fund was created. And it's very interesting that the Construction Fund creation by legislation was a very small organization. It had the chairman or whatever the title was, a treasurer and legal counsel. In the legislation there were only three positions spelled out Well, George Dudley was the State Architect.

Dr. Hartzell: The State Architect.

Charles Wagner: That's right, that's what I heard. Really, we were always, we were supposed to have our Master Plans approved by George Dudley. I think the Master Plan that was done by Damaz, Pokorny and Weigel had been approved by Dudley, but subsequent to that Dudley was never in the act. Nobody presented anything to him for approval. His position was like the Capitol Architect in Washington, who has tremendous force and influence.

Dr. Hartzell: What about the different architects that we had on the campus, Damaz Pokorny and Weigel started out as just one architectural firm?

Charles Wagner: Damaz Pokorny and Weigel was a joint venture that was put together by the State University Construction Fund. You have to understand, I think, it's more than 'I think,' but a lot of the architectural engineering awards were politically made. As a matter of fact, Newsday published an article once that showed what each one contributed to the party. Damaz Pokorny and Weigel were put together as a firm. It was Jan Hirt Pokorny was his own firm, Paul Damaz and Burke Weigel were together as a firm. Jan Pokorny besides having his own firm, he headed the night architectural program at Columbia University; he had a joint venture called

Dr. Hartzell: Knight or night?

Charles Wagner: Night program. He had a joint venture, a firm called Pokorny and Pertz, I think he was involved with another one called Polhemus, and then he was involved with Richard Thom. Now I don't know how the man could do all these things at once. And Jan was the partner in charge for the design of the Library, and I think Paul was on the Fine Arts. At one point in time the firm wasn't doing what we wanted on the Fine Arts Center, they were listening to somebody else, probably were being dictated by one of the lower coordinators of the Construction Fund. And I became flaming mad about this, because they were making unilateral decisions, they would cut program spaces in areas that we didn't want cut, etc., etc. So I went to Mort Gassman. I told him what was going on, and I said quite frankly, Mort, I want them off the job. I think they should be thrown off the job, being incompetent. And Mort, bless his soul, after listening to the

whole story, gave full support. The next week I was summoned up to a meeting in Albany with Burke Weigel and Jack Fitzgerald from the Construction Fund. And Jack laid it out in spades to Burke, and said Wagner and Stony Brook want you off the job, and he stated the reasons why. Now, we don't want to have to do this, and this is what has to be done. It's their facility, and you've got to design it the way they want it, and you don't have the right to cut program except, from that day on Burke Weigel and I were very good friends, and we got the ultimate cooperation. And I later learned that nobody had ever gone to the Fund and said the guy is useless. But we felt we were pretty candid with them. Another engineer one time, Mel Bartholomew, who is now the square foot gardener on TV, he had all the utilities, and we didn't think he was very competent, and he was recommended for a project, and we wouldn't second the nomination. And it was a known fact what our feelings were about him. He all of a sudden picked up and quit the firm; and he's now the expert on Channel 20 on gardening. But the other firms, see, the Fund had put together joint ventures on other campuses, I think in Old Westbury they put together two real fine architectural firms -- the O'Hansons and Victor Christianen -- both good firms, but each having its own ego; that didn't work. Damaz Pokorny and Weigel went belly up; they actually went broke. And the Fine Arts project was finished by Shisken Hennessey, who was their mechanical consulting engineers. We couldn't figure out how they could go broke on the fees that they had collected, except that the extravagance; Jan Hirt Pokorny rented a white Rolls Royce every time he came to a job. It's very classy. These are some of the humorous aspects of the thing. I didn't think they did a good job on the Student Union Building; I wouldn't sign off an acceptance of the project because of certain code violations that I felt existed, and others felt they existed. There was a fellow named Stan Grunell, who headed up the maintenance and that portion for State University, he was the one that came down and made the final inspections. We stood there that day and discussed it for maybe two hours, sign off, and I said, no, I wouldn't sign off. I would not jeopardize my license, I could not take third party responsibilities if those situations existed and someone was

injured, etc. etc. And just by holding our own, they yielded, so to speak, yielded and sent back to the Construction Fund and said it's got to be corrected. The Student Union Building wasn't finally accepted until maybe three and a half years after it was completed. The best architect, I would say, the best architect we had on the campus was Smith Inchman and Grills, the Detroit firm.

Dr. Hartzell: What did they do?

Charles Wagner: They did the Graduate Chemistry Building, they did the Surge buildings. Now that firm came about, Phil Mead was the Mead in Mead Kessler did the Lecture Hall and the Lab Office Building and IRC Building. Bill Kessler is an internationally known architect, designer. These guys did very, very well, they came out of Janasaki's office. They worked together, they started their own firm. Bill Kessler is doing work at Harvard and all over. He did the whole Grand Rapids College, and Phil Mead was really the nuts and bolts guy for the thing, and he had this opportunity to become the chief executive officer of Smith Hinchman and Grills, which is an old line, very well known firm, and he wanted Bill to go with him, but Bill wanted to do his own thing, so Phil took it over. But that was the most responding architectural firm; there was no problem, there was no problem because they were in Detroit. If there was a problem in the project, you called them late afternoon, the next morning somebody would have landed at LaGuardia at 8 o'clock in the morning and meet you on the site and go over it. They'd bring the people with disciplines that had to be involved, you'd get a resolution, bingo. That's what the name of the game is. Other firms, Goldberg on the Biological Sciences and on the Health Sciences Center, that is a very deep thinking architect, research oriented, he likes to do things with round corners, etc., etc. And we had problems with him; he also didn't like brick, so as a consequence he didn't like the Biological Sciences Building because it was brick. We made him do it in brick. He wanted to do it in slipform concrete, but there were problems with him.

Dr. Hartzell: What about the elevators, we've had all kinds of problems with elevators in the Library.

Charles Wagner: That is the saddest situation, the elevators, the famous Warren Elevators. They are not only the Library, they are in Graduate Physics. Those elevators we had great problems with them from the outset in the Library. But, first in the Administration Building.

Dr. Hartzell: How did you get them in the first place?

Charles Wagner: Low bid. They were literally made on the street in Brooklyn, and that's another story. Based upon the Administration Building, we wanted them rejected in the Library, and then for darn sure we didn't want them in the Graduate Physics Building. The architect Roland Thompson from Gruzen Partners called our Purchasing Department because, to see what problems they had with the elevators, and they were told, oh no, they respond, they come out right away. And Roland was concerned because he went to visit their plant, and that's how I know they were literally assembled on the streets in Brooklyn. And what he was, he bought parts from say Eastland Elevator Company, parts from another, and you know, you can easily go out and get the brass plaque made that says 'Warren Elevator,' you put it on all this assembled garbage. I remember vividly when Mrs. Moore, the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees, she was coming for a visit, the meeting was on the fifth floor of the Library. Those elevators quivered to make it to the fifth floor. So the word went out to shut down all the elevators but this one elevator so we maintained the oil pressure; they are hydraulic, that's the problem, and you shouldn't use an oilraulic or hydraulic above two floors. Five stories is just too much to get that piston to raise it. So the other elevators were shut down so that when Mrs. Moore had to go up on the elevator, it worked fine, took her up to the floor. But Purchasing had said we had no problems with Warren Elevator, the Purchasing Department at that time.

Dr. Hartzell: The local Purchasing?

Charles Wagner: Our Purchasing on campus, and it was in writing. I saw the letter to Roland Thompson.

Dr. Hartzell: Who signed it?

Charles Wagner: I'd rather not say. It's

Dr. Hartzell: Kosstrin?

Charles Wagner: No, no. And as a consequence the architect says we have no basis to reject it, and so that's how they got in the Physics Building. We didn't want them; nobody ever heard of them before. And of course the fire in the Library, you know, from the oil sump. At that time I was both Director of Planning and Director of the Physical Plant, was serving that function to reorganize the Physical Plant, establish the preventive maintenance programs. I was out on that fire, I know that. But the elevators are, I wanted to what I had done in West Virginia, and that's in the bidding document, to put an allowance in for the elevator. And then once the contract is let, the successful contractor, after he received his contract, was obligated to bid the elevators, and get three sealed bids. So if you really wanted, let's say Haughton, that was a good one at that time, and their bid may be higher than the other two, but within that allowance, that made it perfectly legal to award it to them. This is one method of establishing some kind of proprietary item. I did it at West Virginia, and there the concept is that everything has to be made in West Virginia first, second in the United States, etc. etc. It worked there; I'm trying it here because of similar problems that you had with things that you get on low bid. But those elevators were a fiasco. We had a whole study

Dr. Hartzell: They still are.

Charles Wagner: They still are, that's unfortunate because in, I would say, let's see I left there in 1981, we were still in the, my office was still in the Administration Building, probably about 1978 the Office of General Services made a whole study and they recommended replacement of the elevators. And I don't have my, I brought my last budget that I submitted at Stony Brook with me, I have that up in the office, but in there was replacing the elevators -- full blown report from OGS, what's wrong with controls, etc., etc., get them out. And I guess the State just didn't want to, at one time we were getting a lot of the bad stuff on the campus; and I was asked to put together a paper, which I did, that showed things -- valves, the wrong valves -- we wanted gate valves, but

no butterfly valves and that kind of stuff and some other things in areas where you can't afford to get a lower quality, the distribution system for the high temperature hot water that the valves should be cast steel because the others just erode out in nothing flat. I was asked to put all this stuff together item by item, and to confront the Fund with this. I was a participant in, there was a whole study made about the Construction Fund, I was interviewed where I guess I had to testify to a Legislative Committee on Expenditures Review, they wanted to know all these problems. We were perfectly candid and told them all these things. Oscar Lanford was totally disturbed by the study, because it was totally unfavorable to the Construction Fund.

Dr. Hartzell: Lanford was then what?

Charles Wagner: He was then the Vice Chancellor for the Construction Fund; first became Vice Chancellor at the University, and then he was party to the overall thing where the Fund took over and he became the general manager of the Fund. He wore two hats then. Also our legislative man, George, I guess he's Senator now, a local from the area, from Port Jefferson area, George, what was his last name? Well, anyhow, he was sympathetic with

Dr. Hartzell: Costigan?

Charles Wagner: No, not Pete, no. Too bad Peggy's not in the room, she would remember, he was a very nice guy, a Democrat. Well, anyhow, he was very concerned about these, the quality of stuff. He may have been the one that started the, but there was this committee and committee aides that came, they not only talked to me, they talked to other people. And I talked to colleagues at other campuses, and they had some similar problems. I mean the whole episode of the chilled water line

[end of tape 1]

Dr. Hartzell: You said you left in 1981.

Charles Wagner: 1981, right. I came to George Mason August 1st of 1981.

Dr. Hartzell: I see, and

Charles Wagner: Now, let me explain something. I had received some inquiries, and I responded, and I also responded to some ads. And I felt very fortunate that I always had a very positive response, much like I put in the paper that I had the thing with Harvard, Wesleyan or Stony Brook, I had even Ohio State at one time, and I felt it was, there's a message there. I had the opportunity for the job as Director of Facilities Planning for the whole state of New Jersey, which encompasses Rutgers and all the other campuses, Keen, you name it, and I had a very successful interview, and the head of the group was trying to talk me into it as he took me to the railroad station. I wouldn't give him a firm figure on what I wanted, salary; I wouldn't, of course, in three hours tell him what I wanted in salary, to move my family back to New Jersey where my roots were, so I had that one. I had a positive response from Yale for their Health Sciences Center; I had a positive response from the University of Florida Health Sciences Development Gainesville. The day I came to the interview at George Mason University, I had the offer in my pocket from the University of Missouri for the Director of Facilities Management and Operations, which is the job, in essence, that I had applied for at Stony Brook. I think you have to admit that the University of Missouri was a bigger campus, bigger institution, than Stony Brook. Peggy didn't like Columbia, Missouri, and I don't blame her. The salary was much, much higher than Stony Brook; and higher than what I took the job for here, but I had the firm offer there, and after accepting a job here, I

Dr. Hartzell: You mean here at George Mason.

Charles Wagner: At George Mason, I also had a positive response from the University of Virginia at Charlottesville, which I would have liked, but my observation of UVA is that, in my dealing with my colleagues down there, they're very aloof, UVA is a state institution, but it prefers to maintain that so-called image of an Ivy League school. Even in recent times here I've had some inquiries from other institutions, but you know, you sit and think that you don't even get a response from your own institution. Even if I did have some problem, talk to me. And when I met with Dr. Marburger, I personally met with him and gave him, handed him my resignation, he opened it up and said what's this;

he started reading it and said, oh, no. He said, won't you reconsider, and I said, no, when I make a decision like this, I won't go back on my word to that institution. I told him I was upset that I didn't get any kind of a response, and he seemed to be upset about that, he took notes down on it, and I would say about a week later, I got a letter from the search committee, kind of a standard, pat letter that we have received so many top candidates, etc., etc. You know, I don't know what the problem was but I think it maybe was time to move on. I think if you don't along, if you have problems with our immediate supervisor, one or the other has got to go; and it doesn't work out. I found that, I thought that we were in a dilemma there, not just me, but my counterparts in the Physical Plant operation. If you're a good manager, you don't dip around, you don't go around the Director of the Manager of a unit to staff, draftsmen or whatever, and tell them to do specific things. If I don't know what they are told to do, I can't be held accountable, or have me doing something, having the Director of the Physical Plant doing something, the Assistant Director, and the Assistant to the Director, is like checking up on the Director of the Plant. This creates problems, and my feeling was things were starting to fall apart. We had a good program, but Kevin Jones, who was Director of the Plant was a superb individual.

Dr. Hartzell: Where is he now?

Charles Wagner: He left that position as Plant Director because those kinds of problems. He's a mechanical engineer, he's a facilities engineer. I hired Kevin, he was a young mechanical engineer, I hired him out of a private firm. My goal was to set that office up like any consulting firm or architect engineering firm, that was my objective, and I did it -- two architects, an electrical engineer, mechanical engineers and so forth. As a matter of fact, I even had a line approved by the State for a landscape architect. I had positions approved that mechanical engineering that other campuses could not get approved, and Mort Gassman would tell those people to call me to see how to write that position description up to get it approved. And we had a fine office, we had a great office; we did reviews on the plans of the architects that was more detailed than the

Construction Fund. People like Gassman, Elwin Stevens and I became fast friends. They thought very highly of me; John Buchoff did, he became Assistant Vice Chancellor, he was in charge of the maintenance things for the State. He had been Director of Planning at Albany, but they thought we were doing a good job. That's why I put in that thing, I was appalled at the conditions, and Peggy started to say something to you about it, but she was shocked herself. She said, we ought to write to somebody this, because you know it's heartrending to know that you spent so many nights, weekends, etc., doing something and planning something, and then to see it get kind of seedy. I have a problem here with some things, here the grass is mowed, it looks good, the President doesn't think there is anything wrong, he doesn't know what's happening -- the boiler's down, the chiller's down. The Physical Plant sits next to me, that becomes a problem but I really told Dr. Marburger, I really wanted to stay here till I was 62 at least, I said that would be another six years, but I'll tell you quite frankly, I like Virginia. We used to vacation down here, but that's a foolish reason to take a job because you like to vacation down there. I didn't take it for that, I took the job here, which is for less starting than the University of Missouri because it's a growing thing. Missouri, there is growth, but not at the same rate as here.

Dr. Hartzell: That's one of the attractions that Stony Brook had.

Charles Wagner: That was a big attraction. But when I started inquiring, I was shocked to find how many places I could go. The kids liked it, we liked living up there, it was a great place to raise kids. But, you know, you can't, well, when I first went there, I thought seriously that the program will be over in about ten years. Peggy and I have often about talked about what we, well, I really don't know, I'm still an architect. Right now, people are asking me to do consulting. Do you remember Wes Brown, the black fellow?

Dr. Hartzell: Wes Brown.

Charles Wagner: Well, maybe you wouldn't, he first came as our first Director of Safety. He's the first black graduate of the Naval Academy, and he worked for the

Construction Fund. I was talking to Wes three weeks ago; he's been the Director of Facilities at Howard University ever since he left up there. Strange, in seven years we haven't gotten together. But I come across a lot of people who know of my work at Stony Brook, and it's through people like, say Phil Meath, George Eisenhower -- George is a world renowned theater consultant, and he's had people call me -- and it's, well, with George it's because of our work in West Virginia, but there are so many people who know of me from Stony Brook, or they'll meet somebody who'll say, yeah, Charlie Wagner, he did Stony Brook. So, I feel that rewarding, believe me, that's rewarding. But I really, I don't know whether, I might have left anyhow. But campuses, even here, they want to bring in somebody from the outside in different areas here, and up there, I guess that was the same thing; don't bring anybody from, promote from within. I know Mitch Gerstel was a candidate for the job; I know he was interviewed; Kevin was interviewed. I guess they interviewed some retired military guys that were Corps of Engineers.

Dr. Hartzell: Have you ever talked with Bob Francis?

Charles Wagner: No, he came after I'd left.

Dr. Hartzell: He's down in Sarasota.

Charles Wagner: Yeah, that's what I heard.

Dr. Hartzell: And he's in a private firm that does contract work with

Charles Wagner: Maintenance consulting. Somebody told me, I can't remember who, Kevin or, I occasionally talk to Kevin, I talk to the fellow named Art Wecker quite a bit; well, we were friends from church. I hired him as a temporary at one time, he was architectural construction oriented, I got him started there at Stony Brook. People like Kevin and Bob, they are good, excellent people. They knew their business, that's what you need. I've seen too many, particularly retired military, that come through, retired Colonels, they worked on a base for a while, so now they want so many more thousands of dollars more than anybody else. You know, a retired Colonel is 30 years, he's retired at about \$47,000 a year, that's more than a lot of people make their main salary, and want \$60,000 to come to work here. I have a situation now that the guy that became head of

the Division of Engineering and Buildings for the Commonwealth of Virginia, who we have to go through on plans, I rejected for a job. Basically, he was overqualified for a systems job, but it's strange, because he didn't want to move from Fairfax, but he's in Richmond now. There's a big difference here, I don't have a Construction Fund, I have the Division of Engineering and Buildings that we go to; however, they handle every agency in the State, not just universities, there's no such animal here. So, the buck stops here, decisions, selection of the architect, the bidding, the entire budget is handled through the capital outlay; we're operating right now at about \$80 million. That's all handled in my office. The change orders, the whole thing. And you've got to believe that's a responsibility. They hired me here because of the work I did at Stony Brook, and it's very evident; I mean, I was told that, it was because of Stony Brook. I'll be quite frank with you, I liked what I saw here, and I told them up front and honest that I, as I was exiting, that I had the offer from the University of Missouri, and I gave them the exact dollar. I said I don't expect you to meet that dollar, I would make a lateral move to come here, but I won't take less. And that's what I did, and it's worked out well. The greatest thing was for Peggy's career; I mean she's gone from a Planner 1 to a Director in a very short period of time.

Dr. Hartzell: Okay, all right. Thanks a lot.

[end of interview]