

**Interview with Paul Dovre**

**Interviewed by William M. Jones for the Heritage Education Commission**

**Interviewed on January 25, 1988**

**Paul Dovre - PD**

**William M. Jones - WJ**

**WJ: Today I am interviewing Dr. Paul Dovre, president of Concordia College. Paul, let's first just get the essentials of your biographical data.**

**PD: I was born on a farm near Minneota, Minnesota, which is in west central Minnesota, in 1935. We moved from that farm to a farm near Porter, Minnesota. I went to country school and then went to high school at Canby, Minnesota.**

**WJ: Was it a one-room country school?**

**PD: Yes, yes. Not many people have those stories in their biographies.**

**WJ: Was it a good experience?**

**PD: Yes, oh yes, very good, very good.**

**WJ: I guess, as with all school experiences, it rises and falls on the strength of the teacher.**

**PD: Sure, sure. But it was interesting. I remember back when we came to the country school, I was in third grade and there were fourth graders and there were fifth graders and there were seventh graders. There were not any eighth graders that year, but it was always fun. They would go up for their science lesson or their history lesson--it was like the whole school was in on it. It sort of universalized the learning process.**

**WJ: And that can be disconcerting, but it can be stimulating. So then you went to high school?**

**PD: At Canby, Minnesota, and then from there to Concordia. After two years at Concordia, I was in the military two years, and then back.**

**WJ: Was that during the Korean thing?**

**PD: No, it was just at the end of it--'54 to '56, and Korea was over in '53, or something. I was in Ft. Bliss, Texas, for most of my service in a communications radio unit. I returned and finished at Concordia in '58.**

**WJ: What was your major at Concordia?**

**PD:** Speech and economics. I decided during those last two years that I wanted to go to graduate school in speech, so I went to Northwestern in 1958-59, and did my masters there. One idea I had, always in the back of my mind, was the possibility of going to the seminary, going into the ministry. That had always been on the edge of my thinking, really, since I'd been in high school. My graduate school advisor and I talked about that, and he said, "Why don't you apply for a Rockefeller Fellowship? It's designed for people like you who don't know that they want to go into ministry but are serious enough about it to go and try it for a year."

I did that for a year and it was good experience. I was at Luther Seminary, now Luther Northwestern, and I think it was a very pivotal experience in my life in that I had had the heady experience of graduate school. I was able after one year of that to go to seminary for a year, which in a sense intellectually kind of brought me up to speed theologically. I think that has always been of great benefit to me.

**WJ:** I imagine you made some friends there that have been very helpful, too, as long as you've stayed within the Lutheran circle of activities.

**PD:** Yes, that's true.

**WJ:** After seminary you went back to Northwestern?

**PD:** Back to Northwestern, right, in 1961, and did my Ph.D. work there. At the end of it I stayed on a year on the faculty while someone was off on leave. I came to Concordia in '63 as a faculty member. That same year I had an invitation to go back to Northwestern as a permanent faculty member, and you can imagine the difficulty of choosing between a professional track, where one would be publishing and working with graduate students and all of the rest, over against a liberal arts track with teaching emphasis. It was not easy to make that decision. I'm sure I made the right decision, but it was not easy.

**WJ:** At the time, I'm sure that it was not easy because Northwestern is a prestigious institution. So you were opting out of institutional loyalty and some professional preference for that kind of image.

**You came to Concordia as a faculty member, and how long did you serve in that capacity?**

**PD:** I was a full-time faculty member four years, I think. In 1967 or '68--I get the years mixed up; it might have been '68--I became associate academic dean, and continued teaching part-time all through those years as associate dean and then dean. I followed Carl Bailey as dean in 1970 and was in that position for five years, until '75.

**WJ:** When you took the presidency. Obviously, your life has been pretty consumed by this one institution which is, amongst other things, my alma mater. I think it would be of very great interest if we could touch on several themes while you give a review of the changes that you've seen, a sequence of trends that you've observed as you've been involved with

**this institution. Let's first think about students. What were they like when you were a student, and what has changed as we move on through the decades?**

**PD: I'm supposed to be from that quiet generation of the '50s. I suppose it was true if you talk about activism; there wasn't any activism to speak of in the '50's. But on the other hand, I think the commitment level of students was pretty high. Students took quite seriously their beliefs, and we talked a lot about that. We talked about religion and politics at coffee or late night coffee and popcorn or whatever conversations we had. That was certainly a focus, I remember.**

**WJ: Not preoccupied with parties and women then! [Laughter]**

**PD: No, that wasn't the case either. But I recall having political speakers and theologians and others come to the campus, and I remember the kind of student attendance and faculty attendance at those events. It clearly was of some importance to all of us to be engaged in that way. The people in my generation, I would say, were on the whole pretty hard-working people. I think we were born in the '30s and we grew up in the shadow of the depression and therefore we were quite conscientious and serious about our business, pretty conservative from a financial point of view, and cautious in many ways, it seems to me. But we were also committed to doing hard work. I think a lot of us, when I think about it, did not have high aspirations for ourselves.**

**WJ: Teaching, preaching, sort of the natural outgrowth of education.**

**PD: Yes, and even at that, I think we didn't think about becoming leaders in the church or in business or in education. People went into all of those areas, but people didn't by and large think in very ambitious terms about their future. I think that was another part of the shadow of the '30s.**

**WJ: Security was the be-all, end-all.**

**PD: To have a good job, to have a secure future--that was really quite important to all of us in those years.**

**You know, I felt when I came to the college in the '60s--that's when Sputnik had really had its impact--and I sensed students were more academic then than they had been when I had been a student. In fact, I think I had some of the best student work I'd ever seen in the '60s in terms of the projects students would undertake and the kind of investment they would make. I was impressed by the students of that period in terms of their willingness to really dig in. I'm referring to the period beginning in 1960 because I was teaching undergraduate students at Northwestern from that period right through the more chaotic period of the late '60s when the students were distracted in a number of ways.**

**WJ: Did that sort of ethos affect the Concordia campus in the late '60s and early '70s?**

**PD:** Sure, I think in different ways. You know, Concordia wasn't a hotbed of radicalism in that sense. Most institutions in this part of the world weren't; but you had the shadows, I'll use that term, the shadows of it were there. We saw it in the cry of students for courses that were relevant. We were at that point in the late '60s, and in the process of reviewing our curriculum. When we came out of it, the end result certainly reflected a good deal of the upheaval that was going on in education. No question about it. Dropping a requirement for the study of language, I think, would never have happened at another time in our history. I think it happened then because we weren't sure we could make a good enough case for it in the logic of that day.

**WJ:** One of the high priorities was student freedom of choice and that became more important than us imposing on them our pre-conditions of what college curriculum should be.

**PD:** I was in the middle of a lot of the things that were happening at that time. I remember, for example, the consciousness about racism that occurred in the '60s; and I remember serving on the campus committee that was trying to develop a campus-wide program of awareness and education about those issues. I remember developing a bibliography and study guides that had use across the campus, developing an exchange program with what we then called a Negro college--a black college in the south, Virginia Union University. I remember those exchanges and I remember all of the tensions that were fostered by the growing presence at that time of black students on our campus. I remember trying to arrange constructive expressions of concern and dissent on Vietnam, whether it had to do with putting parades together so that students who were protesting could do so in ways that wouldn't upset the rest of the student body, who largely were opposed to them, or whether it was making arrangements for some kind of a truce for a walkout at a commencement, or working on curriculum offerings that would focus on black studies and on the civil rights movement. As the associate dean in those days, I was just in the middle of all that, and it was in retrospect a period that had profound influence on me. I'm still not quite sure I've taken its measure, but I know it did.

**WJ:** Heady times.

**PD:** They really were.

**WJ:** Then we move on into the late '70s and into the '80s. What do they look like now, these young people that are your students?

**PD:** I'm in a discussion group on Alan Bloom's book, *The Closing of the American Mind*. It's a group primarily made up of faculty members, and one consensus we've all come to is that our students are indeed committed to relativity, to openness. I mean it isn't that they don't think beliefs are important; they do. But they don't want to use their belief as a standard of judgment on anyone else. So the morality of individuals is certainly alive and well among young people today including those who come, as most of our students do, from strong religious backgrounds. They maintain a strong religious commitment, most of them, themselves and talk openly about it. But it's not to be applied, nor are any other moral

strictures, necessarily to someone else who sees it a different way. That's something that our whole society, I'm convinced, is experiencing. It's one of the reasons that this society, I think, has such a hard time getting its act together about such fundamental matters as balancing the budget, for heaven's sake.

WJ: No, and of course, there's both a lack of commitment and a lack of courage that's represented there.

PD: Right, right, right.

WJ: And the word "commitment" has a different kind of meaning now; it certainly is far from absolute. It's a tentative sort of thing, and of course that is what Bloom is inveighing against.

PD: Yet there's a kind of openness we commend to our students, which is the openness to new ideas and to entertain all questions. It's fundamental to the academy, but the kind of openness that says one idea is as good as another idea is not quite what we had in mind.

WJ: That really leads me into the next theme, which we've touched on. Concordia has been, it seems to me, remarkably successful in retaining its identity as a Lutheran college, has had close association with the church, and has maintained some of at least the conventional trappings that we associate with such an institution--chapel consistently every day, and required religion courses. Do you see changes as you look back over the past in that particular dimension?

PD: In terms of the college and its commitments to the church and the church's commitment to the college, I think that's remained very strong. It's been kind of a mutual admiration, and I think one of the reasons for that is that old Scandinavian polity, if you will, where you sort of like and trust each other and deal with each other in a kind of consensus context almost all the time. So the college has been spared, in a remarkable way, tension and confrontation in its relationship to the church. It has been a positive evolving matter.

WJ: The sort of thing to differentiate you, for example, from Valparaiso, I would guess, were caught in some of the schisms that the Missouri Synod has had to go through.

PD: Yes, that's right. We've really been spared that. It's partly the sort of Norwegian style of things. I think the other part is simply the theological position of our church in which we have emphasized our unity in essential matters and cultivated a great respect for diversity in other matters, so there's room for more than one theological point of view in the church and at the college. There's room for more than one polity, if you will, and room for more than one piety, if you will. I think that respect for diversity within the context of an overarching unity is really the reason that Concordia and the church have retained a really strong tie and a really strong commitment over the years.

**WJ: I've had professional experience with several schools that have had a church relationship and commitment along those lines and, of course, one of the difficult things is to balance the concept of academic freedom with the expectation of some kind of commitment on the part of the faculty, and it seems to me you've done very well in that respect. Do you have any magic formula that would help anybody in that respect?**  
**[Laughter]**

**PD: No, I certainly don't. I think that one of the advantages that we have coming out of our tradition is the fact that the Lutheran denomination was born in the Academy, and therefore Martin Luther and Melanchthon in particular had a strong commitment to academic freedom and the Reformation was really based on the premise that any idea ought to be subject to examination. So Luther put forth his 95 theses because he said, "Here, this is what I believe and I'm willing to have this examined." I think that spirit, that scholastic spirit, if you will, which was part of the early Lutheran tradition, has continued to influence the style with which we look at matters of academic freedom, and for that reason we have felt that it is possible to have conviction and still regard matters as being open to debate and examination. Commitment does not preclude, indeed it invites, examination and analysis. So I think that's been a kind of residual strength of institutions like ours.**

**WJ: What proportion of your student body is Lutheran?**

**PD: Seventy percent.**

**WJ: Seventy percent. So you have a pretty homogeneous campus.**

**PD: But, you know, interestingly, the next largest group, ten percent, is Roman Catholic. I think that reflects the ecumenical tradition of this area. You know, before it was really stylish to be ecumenical, this community was. I mean, a lot of people don't pick that up, but back in the '50s, St. Ansgar had a fund raising campaign, and Joe Knutson was the honorary chair of it. Imagine that in the '50s--a Lutheran clergyman, president of a Lutheran college, chairing a fund drive for a Roman Catholic hospital. That was only one of many examples of dialogue that was actively under way as early as that. I think that's continued, as we've had Roman Catholics teaching in our Religion Department, and we've had a Roman Catholic scholar in residence on a couple of different occasions. Father Bill Mehrkens is over on our campus with some frequency from the Newman Center here at Moorhead State University. I think those things have all helped.**

**You know, naturally, religious practices change the way that attitudes change, and we have noticed that, too. Students used to be much more loyal about going to chapel and being active in religious life than they are today. Those overt behaviors are certainly not what they were, reflecting the secularity of our cultural in general. There's no doubt about that.**

**WJ: Concordia obviously has occupied a very special place in this community and in this region. Do you see any sequence of events or trends in that dimension of the life of the institution?**

**PD:** Yes, I do, I would say going back to my earliest years on the faculty. Our commitment to the community was seen primarily in terms of the education that we offer to young people and the presence of our faculty and staff in various activities that normally occur in any community. I would say that what has happened since then is that we really have branched out and have moved our understanding of involvement and service in the community in a variety of other areas as well. I would mention, for example, the CHARIS Ecumenical Center which functions in a broad service way throughout this area, primarily to clergy, but increasingly to lay people, too. The F-M Communiversity, which was really a child of our institution, has a pretty long history now. There is a rather broad movement to be involved in a variety of ways in the community by members of our faculty and staff, whether it's the YMCA or the United Way or whatever. Our involvement in the arts, of course, is longstanding. Music events that have been offered to the community by the college for a long, long time, and participation in the Plains Art Museum and the F-M Symphony in a variety of different ways. More recently, I think of the education consortium that's going on with the rural based, small schools in this area, a venture in which both Moorhead State University and ourselves are involved as partners, as well the West Central Regional Development Council. I served on the planning committee for that and Morrie Lanning continues as a member of the board. We've just recently established a leadership center which is intended to provide resources for leadership development to this entire area. So I guess I would say that we have been more active in regional service activities in the past 20 years than we were before that. I expect that trend to continue.

**WJ:** You know, when we talk about branching out from the campus in various ways, the Tri-College University is an obvious example. You must have been involved in the birth pangs of that particular effort. Do you want to give us your sense of its beginnings and its state of relative maturity now?

**PD:** That was a really exciting time back in '67-'68, I think, when I was first doing administrative work. You know, there was a Tri-College--I forget what they called it--there was something in place at the time. Three deans had gotten together--Carl Bailey, Seth Russell, and I forget who it was from Moorhead State at that time--I don't know who it was.

**WJ:** It might have been Bob Hanson, but I'm not sure--or even Roland Dille.

**PD:** They had met together and agreed on some plan so that students could go back and forth, and it had been publicized in a modest way. But in that year, '67-'68, we posed a more dramatic question about extending our partnership, and certainly we were urged on by many federal and state agencies who were encouraging greater cooperation, so it isn't that we took that act in isolation. There were certainly a lot of things that were encouraging us, and that was evident in the higher education coordinating boards and the Board of Higher Education in North Dakota, both in Minnesota and North Dakota. The chairs, Bud Sinner in North Dakota and the commissioner in Minnesota, Dick Hawk, were personally interested and saw the potential here so we started really moving on it and taking it seriously. It was a great education for me because I was a rookie administrative person and I was intrigued by all of this. so I was kind of the scribe, if you will, that first year. I was the

point person for developing the proposals and bringing them to this group of presidents and deans and other people. I must say, it was a very heady kind of experience for a person as new to this kind of work as I was. So in some sense I kind of cut my eye teeth, if you will, as an administrator in Tri-College business. I was involved in the grants that brought us the start-up money for '69-'70 when Al Anderson came on board as the first full-time person to move it.

WJ: Quite a move at that time.

PD: Yes, it sure was. And, you know, the delightful thing, there was never any question. All three institutions put their money down from day one. It wasn't ever a question of whether or not they would be involved. Everybody said yes.

WJ: It really was a remarkable effort. I wasn't involved until 1972, but it took a lot of courage in some respects from all three institutions, and maybe more from Concordia because the differential in tuition is considerable, but the benefits were all so clearly in evidence.

PD: There were certainly some in our shop who thought that this was not a good thing for us to do,

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PD: but that was a minority opinion. Most people thought it was a good thing to do. I was always impressed, from the very beginning, by the remarkable support from the presidents. Neumaier was president at first, and then Roland Dille, and Laurel and Joe Knutson. It was just always clear that they thought this was an idea that we needed to implement. It makes a lot of difference when that attitude is clear at the leadership level.

WJ: You're dead if you don't have it.

PD: Everybody just really pitched in behind it.

WJ: That's always been an impressive accomplishment, it seems to me.

The institution has done remarkably well, it seems to me from an administrative point of view, in this terrible, terrible struggle of keeping quality up and still developing the resources to guarantee that quality. How would you describe the progression of trend as far as Concordia's status in that respect? I lost track of Concordia for awhile, and I have no idea of how they were fixed as far as enrollment and resources as compared, for example, where you are today.

PD: I must say it was fairly humble, but then again it's all relative to where everybody else is, in comparison to today.

WJ: The campus was far from complete at that point.



**PD:** Yes, yes, most of the major building occurred in the '60s and '70s. When I arrived they were just on the front end of that building splurge and the enrollment splurge. We had, I'm thinking, 1700 or 1800 students when I arrived. We had Phase 1 of the library in place. I think we had 25 percent of the faculty with Ph.D.'s and enrollment was splurging, and where do you find people? In the early '60s, it was a real struggle. The salaries for the beginning teachers were competitive, but not for anybody else.

**WJ:** You had to depend on institutional loyalty.

**PD:** The faculty understood it and supported it, but it was not easy going. That salary range--from bottom to top--was a pretty short range. And the book collection. The impressive thing to me when I came was the kind of foresight that I found at Concordia. I'm sure I would never have come had it not been for Carl Bailey's vision for the college. He showed me the blueprint that he and a group had put together for the future of Concordia. It talked about program and it talked about faculty salaries and faculty benefits, but mostly it was about program and about buildings and about mission and it was a far-sighted piece of work. What impressed me from the first day I was on the campus was the future orientation of the college, because the fall faculty workshop was about where we've come and what we have to do next. It was always that sense of momentum about where we're going and the things we've got to do. There was this incredible faith that we would find a way to get there. I think that brought a lot of us here and carried a lot of us--that sense of expectation for the future.

**WJ:** Was Joe Knutson president when you were here?

**PD:** Yes.

**WJ:** Remarkable stability as far as administration.

**PD:** Joe had that gift for picking good people and then just saying, "Here, do this job now," and then supporting them. [Laughter] And that's really the track.

**WJ:** That's the key, all right.

**PD:** Yes, it was. I think having Bill Smaby, who knew numbers, and Carl, who was the master planner. He was the one who gave the logic to it. But everybody else believed it. I mean, everybody else was behind it. That really made a tremendous impact.

**WJ:** What's your percentage of Ph.D.'s now?

**PD:** Sixty, I suppose, sixty-two.

**WJ:** That's very respectable.

There are so many different dimensions and obviously I'm focusing on Concordia. But I suppose we really ought to say a little bit about your family and your own personal life and

what you like to do outside of Concordia, so we get the whole Paul Dovre down here.  
[Laughter]

**PD:** There are four of us, and Marde was a teacher when we were married. She's a Concordia graduate, too. We met here. We always joke that we met at Oak Grove because she was practice teaching at Oak Grove High School in Fargo and I was the debate coach over there, just a few hours a week. That's where we literally met. She has been a teacher more or less all of her life except for a few years and continues as a half-day teacher at Fargo South High School. We have a daughter who is an attorney in Minneapolis and a son who's in medical school at the University of Minnesota. Our son is married.

We have a lake cabin on Bad Medicine Lake, and that's been a kind of family center for us for years and years and years. Everybody likes to be there, and we have a family tradition of going skiing in the Christmas holiday period and did it again this year. We don't know how many years we can make it work, but that's gone well.

Marde and I also like to travel and have had a chance to do a fair amount of that over the years. Much of it has been in connection with the job, of course, on this side of the Atlantic and also on the other side--Norway, on two occasions with the choir on tour. So it's been a good experience for us.

**WJ:** Had you ever imagined as you thought about your career when you were in college that this might be your eventual destination--as president?

**PD:** No, and I think in that respect I'm representative of the '50s. We didn't have those kinds of aspirations. I know the first time someone talked to me about being president of the college was, I think, in about 1970. It just scared me. I said, "Don't talk about it," because it wasn't anything I had ever thought of doing. I certainly wasn't ready to do it, and so in a sense I backed into it. Truly, it's not a job that I had planned on. I think I just happened to be at the right place and get the right kind of experience so that the college, in a sense, thought I was a logical successor to Knutson. I knew the institution, and yet I'd been in other places, too, so it was just kind of coincidence.

**WJ:** As you look back on this career, I think it would be worthwhile for us to benefit from your sense of what has given you the most satisfaction. As you look back, are there some landmarks along the way, some events, some people, some programs that come to mind?

**PD:** The most satisfying things are the people things, and yet you can't put a handle on that so well. Seeing graduates and finding out what they're doing and just tracking them a little bit is, I think, the most satisfying thing any person in education finds. I feel the same way about the faculty, watching faculty that you had a part in selecting and nurturing along and watching the impact that they've made and the future impact that they'll make. These are the things that I think give you the most personal satisfaction, but they are not as visible.

I would say that on a program side, on the side of the things that you can touch and talk about, when I became president, we had a substantial hurdle in terms of our physical plant. We had desperately needed a science center for a long time, and yet we were trapped into thinking that we couldn't ever build anything that cost more than a million dollars. The C-400 Club was our major fund-raising vehicle and they liked projects of seven hundred or seven hundred fifty thousand or a million dollars at the most.

WJ: Things that are doable within a reasonable length of time?

PD: Right. We needed a science hall, and we knew that would cost four or five million dollars. How in the world could we get that done? The lack of it was a real impediment for us, so we figured out we had to find a way to do it. Our constituency was not used to the idea of a major giving effort or a major campaign. It was anathema, in fact. We said, "We've got to do something," and did a study. What did the study say? I guess we said we needed ten and three-quarter million dollars to do the things we needed to have done in a three or four year period. And the study said, "You ought to have 25 percent of the commitments before you undertake such an effort." Well, that would have been two and a half million dollars or more. Even that was a very liberal statement--25 percent, because a lot of people say half. We came to our Board of Regents with a recommendation to go forward with that and I think we had \$220,000 committed to it.

WJ: And leaped into the unknown!

PD: And I remember, I gave that speech to the Board of Regents--I said, "You know we've never done this and there isn't any indication that we can do it, but we need to do it. This institution needs to do this if we're going to keep on course with our destiny. We simply have to take this kind of a leap of faith." And they voted unanimously to do so. I've sometimes thought that if I'd known better, I probably wouldn't have done it.

WJ: [Laughter] You were early in your administration.

PD: I was. I was too innocent to know any better. But, obviously, it worked. There was something about doing that, something about taking that kind of a move and doing something big that kind of stretched everyone's imagination for what the institution really could do and I think that got us moving. I think we continue to experience that kind of momentum as an institution. Now we're talking about a centennial effort in large numbers--forty some million dollars possibly. We dare to talk in those terms now because our people have been able to think and talk in larger terms. So I think that has been of signal importance to us. There have been many kinds of benefits from it. I think the people at the college have developed a sense of well being and I think it's developed a sense of pride and self-consciousness that has really helped us as an institution.

WJ: You don't have to apologize for anything.

PD: That's right. I think as we've been able to strengthen our faculty and the faculty compensation and all of the growth and development opportunities that are now available

to our faculty, numbers of faculty have become prominent and productive in ways that extend beyond the campus. All of that has been good for the well being of the college. Seeing additional curriculum change and seeing the language village program just absolutely explode are things that have happened that have really been very encouraging.

WJ: Let's talk about one other thing that I find very interesting. A liberal arts college is a very fragile institution, really, because society has not really embraced liberal arts graduates to the degree that we think it ought to. Thus, to respond to both the needs of society and the demands of prospective students, you introduce programs that probably are not pure liberal arts, which has certainly been true of Concordia.

PD: Oh, sure, historically it's been true.

WJ: Right. Of course, we can say that teaching is the first such effort. How do you see that balance now and in the future? Is the direction ultimately towards a comprehensive university of some kind with the variety of specialties dignified by being more than just programs, or where are you going in that respect?

PD: I think for awhile we were moving in the direction of the comprehensive university and college in the sense that the applied programs were growing just by leaps and bounds. I don't know that people really stopped and thought about where that was taking us. But then about four years ago we did a major self study of our academic program, called an Agenda for Concordia's Academic Life. Out of that came a very strong reaffirmation of the centrality of the liberal arts to what we are as an institution and the sense that we need to define any new program initiative out of that context. Historically, we have not said "no" to applied fields. Indeed, given where our students come from and where we are, kind of on the edge of the frontier and the rural area, there's no other way to do it because people are going to say, "What's the application of what I'm doing?" So, we've always had to answer that question. We'll still have to, but I sense our faculty has a stronger view on the centrality of the liberal arts to what we are than we've had in the past. As interesting as that idea has been, nurtured among our faculty and staff, we find the students also are kind of harkening to that. It's just kind of fun to hear students when we talk to them as they leave the college and then as we survey them years after they've attended the college. We have an active survey of our alums every few years in which we ask them to evaluate their experience, and as time passes, their affirmations grow even stronger about the validity of the liberal arts in their preparation. I guess I feel better about the place of the liberal arts at our college, and I think I would say that about higher education in general, than I felt just two years ago. I think there's a certain kind of renaissance-

WJ: he popularity of Bloom's book, for example, which is obviously an apology for liberal arts defined about as pure as you can get, demonstrates that there is an undercurrent.

PD: To talk just a bit more about this commitment on the part of the faculty, almost all of our faculty people, I think 90 percent, came out of an academy that was specialized. To say that all of a sudden you're going to come into a liberal arts college and you're going to be a renaissance teacher, that's just wishful thinking. I think that's been one of the problems of

liberal arts institutions. We have been giving lip service to a myth. One of the things we've neglected is, as members of the academic community, to come to terms with what it means for us to be liberally educated people and liberal arts teachers. I mean, I think that's a tough one. We've been trying to address that, and the faculty has really engaged themselves in that exercise.

**WJ:** Faculty are caught, too. Professional advancement, unfortunately, is still dependent on specialized research and if you have a commitment to a discipline, it's still fun to be able to do the advanced things with advanced students and not have to do some of the other things that seem more onerous, at least to some of them. But if the institution really is committed and finds the right kind of faculty and then nurtures them, that's what you're trying to do.

**PD:** Certainly, I don't want to underemphasize or ignore the fact that the tensions are there and they're going to be.

**WJ:** Yes, it's inevitable. But you can live with tension if it's reasonably creative.

I think we've covered everything that I felt was important to ask you, but if I've left anything out, the agenda is open. Are there other things that you think ought to be perpetuated on this tape?

**PD:** One thing I think that you would hear from many of the college presidents here is the very unique relationship between the academy and the community. This is just a unique arrangement that we have in this community. It's hard to find an academy-community relationship that has as many parts to it and that is as uniformly mutually affirming as this one is. That should be said for posterity to hear. [Laughter]

**WJ:** That's really very significant, there's no question about that. That's been true almost from the beginning?

**PD:** Almost from the beginning. It really has.

**WJ:** Religion is a part of that because the predominant religion is Lutheran. Certainly that's a very supportive part of it, but I guess it's not exclusively that, by any means.

It's been a pleasure.

**PD:** I've enjoyed it, too.

[End of Interview]