This is October the 24th 1979. I have with me today Dr. Paul G. Bulger, former President of the State University College at Buffalo. Dr. Bulger, it was with a great deal of pleasure I heard you were in the vicinity and I am very happy to have you be here with me to make a taped interview. Here are some questions that I should like to throw at you. Feel free to answer as much as you wish. Just for the taped record, could you say a bit about your background; you know, where were you born, where did you go to school, what made you decide to follow the teaching profession, and what degrees did you earn and where.

Dr. Bulger: Well thank you, Sister Martin Joseph, for the opportunity to be with you and talk about a college which is near and dear to my heart and to my wife's heart, Marion, who is with me today. As Daniel Webster said, you know, in regard to the famous Dartmouth College case, "she may be small but there are those who love her." I am delighted that the college has an archivist and always felt we needed one. Formerly it was not successfully done, but we worked at it a bit as you know. I am afraid some of the files got misplaced, which is very sad in any institutional setup. It is the State University College at Buffalo, right? I think you said State University at Buffalo in your introduction and that, frankly, Sister, gives me a very fine take-off to try to answer your question which will come into the picture in just a few minutes. I was born and reared at Lake Lucerne, New York in upstate New York on the Hudson River at the confluence of the Sacandaga on the Hudson--probably a poor boy, not that we didn't have a good home and good food and good clothes. My father was a skilled laborer in the paper mills, came out of a Irish Catholic background and married one of the Gutzner girls, one of the homemakers of the town. I went through the public schools there and didn't really learn the joy of scholarship until my junior year in high school. Can you imagine that? I majored in basketball up until that point. But through an English teacher, by the name of Charles F. Wilde, from Union College, who really took an interest in several of us, we acquired the joy and pleasure of English literature, grammar, speech and drama and what have you in that whole area. When it came time to graduate in a big class of 7, I was the valedictorian and gave the speech. The question came: are you going on to college? These were the depression years, and my folks were willing, with whatever resources they had, which were not great, to help financially. They certainly were great parents, and I pay tribute to them. Charles Wilde and Clayton Brown, the high school principal, said "Paul, I think you ought to go to New York State College for Teachers at Albany". This was toward...
the end of my senior year. The applications had been closed but a great president, (and I really mean this, as I will explain later) by the name of Abram S. Brubacher, Pennsylvanian Dutchman, a Yale Greek-Latin scholar, had come in as president at Albany in 1915 and put on the school the stamp of liberal arts along with teacher education. He said, "We want more men here, and I am going to open up the applications." They picked mine, and I was personally interviewed by President Brubacher and admitted in July, (I believe) and came down from Lake Lucerne to Albany as a freshman in 32. A great institution in my judgment. It was the counterpart to Buffalo. Buffalo and elementary education; Albany and secondary. We didn't have elementary. It was the difference in the situation. It was then called "the Harvard of the Hudson Valley." You had to have a very high average to get in there; it was in much demand. It was very inexpensive. I think we paid $50, didn't we Marion, for general fees. Marion won a scholarship. I didn't.

Sister: I was going to say, "Were you there too?"

Mrs. Bulger: Yes.

Dr. Bulger: Yes, but she's smarter than I am. She graduated in '34 and I graduated in '36.

Sister: Were you from the same town?

Dr. Bulger: No.

Mrs. Bulger: No. I was from Schenectady.

Sister: And you met at the college?

Dr. Bulger: Well, this is an interesting story in itself. We did know each other, but I had to work for a living. Marion was a social butterfly. She taught ballet actually all during her college. She was a very good ballerina. But I worked, and I participated in student government, was president of the student body and manager of my college house which was one of the first non-discriminatory group houses in the country I think--no question of race, religion, creed or place of national origin. If you had $8 each week, you could live there to the capacity of the house. Two meals a day and bread and butter; peanut butter and jelly for lunch if you wanted it. That was a great experience. In fact, that was one of the best experiences I ever had managing that house in my senior year. Tommy Barrington was my roommate who later became president at Potsdam. I'm getting far afield here in too much detail. I did go to Albany, graduated there in '36. I was sold on teaching as a profession. I didn't have to be sold; I guess I had a general feeling for it.
Sister: In literature or what field?

Dr. Bulger: In those days (in the depression) the men always took business and then a secondary subject. Mine happened to be English and history. So, if you couldn't get a job teaching, you could perhaps get a job pounding a typewriter. I was fortunate. I got a job teaching in Queens, New York teaching business subjects, boy scout master and basketball coach for $1,150 a year. I was taken off the bus that was on the way to Syracuse to play basketball for the interview, and Rem Furlong, (Marion knew him, St. Lawrence University graduate) hired me. So, I really had a real deep feeling for teaching and the value of teaching. I also had a great feeling that in order to teach anything you had to know the subject matter. I learned that you can't get water out of an empty well, and you can't teach history unless you know history. This I learned from President Brubacher, and I became very well acquainted with him as president of the student body.

Sister: Well how long did you teach before you returned to Albany?

Dr. Bulger: I taught until December of '36 when I was invited to come back to the college to teach and run the placement office. I became director of placement at Albany. In 1938 Herman Cooper asked me to come down to the State Education Department to help him with the teachers certification, but I decided I didn't want the bureaucracy; I wanted the campus. Later Herman came back, and he and Kate Butler (at that time Righter) Wallace came down to New York City where I was working at Teachers College Columbia and invited me to come to Buffalo to meet the board and some administrators. That's where this whole interest in teaching came in. I got my BS from State University College at Albany. It was called then New York State College for Teachers, actually, the same as Buffalo. Then I took my Master's degree there. Marion and I were married in 1938. I had to wait for my summer session check to get married. Where did we go on our honeymoon? Niagara Falls! Then I took my Master's degree in the school of administration. The war broke out, and I went into the army in July of '43. I spent 18 hours of kitchen police on my 29th birthday at Camp Upton, Long Island. After the war, I came back to Albany, briefly.

Sister: Did you have any action over in Europe?

Dr. Bulger: No, believe it or not I ended up as a psychologist. You know how our army classifies people. I had some psychology, but not a lot. I worked in what we call the U.S. Army Air Force Air Corps in those days. Duties included visiting convalescent hospitals, counseling convalescent soldiers,
and airmen. We called it operation Fatigue because there were too many missions.

Sister: You weren't unhappy that you didn't have to go to Europe were you, Mrs. Bulger?

Mrs. Bulger: Not at all. Although, he almost did get to go.

Dr. Bulger: That was a story in itself. For the Battle of the Bulge. They were looking for ablebodied air corps men. We were in Santa Ana, California. Marion had just had an appendectomy. We were separated geographically but never in spirit. I was fortunate. A lot of my buddies didn't make it. I nearly got shipped out. I'd cleared the base at Santa Ana, California. Major Lee Travis, speech pathologist from Iowa years ago and then at Southern California, was in charge of the section in this particular convalescent hospital. He happened to be on the base, saw me, and said "Paul, I hear they are shipping you out"; no, he said "What are they doing to you Paul?" I said "Well they are shipping me out. I've cleared the squad room, and the scuttlebut is that we are going to be flown into Camp Bowie, Texas for refresher courses on rifle, I went through basic training and am a rifleman." He said "Well not if I can help it. I need you here." He called the classification officer and said "Look, if you don't take him off I'm not going to like it too much." The classification officer said "Well, I didn't know he was on." Major Travis replied, "he's an old classification and assignment man, and if you don't want him, I want him." So, who knows. The difference between the quick and the dead. Anyway, after the war, I came back to Albany briefly; then, I was invited to Teachers College, Columbia and started work on my doctorate and was executive assistant in their placement office with a very fine man, Dr. Arthur B. Linden. At that time, the state colleges, under Herman Cooper's tutelage, got the first break in an administrative job called "coordinator of field services" in public relations. Herman and John Sales, another dear man, wanted me to come back and do that. Herman never thought I should have gone to New York City in the first place. He signed my release. George Sherry was here in Buffalo.

Sister: He was the coordinator wasn't he?

Dr. Bulger: Yes, at the same type of job. We got acquainted that way through meetings. I commuted all the spring of 48 from Albany to New York to take courses weekends. I would go down Friday night on the train and come back Sunday. I went back the 1st of July, 1948, and had my course work done. Maybe not. Maybe, I had 8 points to go. That's right. I was going to do that the summer of 1948 and come back. The president
of Teachers College Columbia, William F. Russell, invited me to be assistant provost and associate professor of education, at about $6,000 more money. So Herman Cooper again as well as John Sales, who was president at Albany at the time and Bob Frederick who was director of teacher education. They said the old "saw" "we hate to see you go, Paul, but you had better do it". That gave me an opportunity to move our whole family, and we moved. I drove the truck with the furniture on the old east side of the Hudson and started in Teachers College and finished my doctor of education degree there in 1951. That is a long answer to that question.

Sister: That's all right that's exactly what I want. What were your professional activities before you came to this college.

Dr. Bulger: Well I covered some as you first heard, Sister, but I think just briefly ao you will have it on the record. I was provost and professor of higher education at Teachers College Columbia.

Sister: I probably have the answer to the next one. What brought you here? I suppose I should have said: Who brought you?

Dr. Bulger: I think that's exactly right, because I was going along very happily. Marion loved New York and we had two children by then, Cindy and John. We lived on Morningside Drive. We lived there 13 years in all, when Hollis Caswell, a very dear friend and president at Teachers College was paying me good money, ($18,000 a year) plus a free rent apartment, 4 bedrooms. It was very comfortable. It looked over Laguardia airfield from Morningside Drive. Of course, with the very sad slum conditions of Harlem, it reminded us of our obligations. We were having a good time in New York, and I was working hard but enjoying it. One day, I got a call from Herman Cooper who asked, "Would you have time to have lunch with Kate Butler Righter Wallis and myself if we came down?" I had an idea why they were coming and I said I'd call him back. I called them back and said "Yes, I would like to see you". They came in and we went over to the Columbia University faculty club and had lunch. They told me they would like to have an opportunity to consider me for the presidency here in Buffalo and they asked a lot of questions. Herman, of course, had known me since I was a young man at Albany, and Kate asked some very good questions. Then they said to me "Do you have any questions". I said, of course. I knew Dr. Cooper and his interests and had known him a long time and knew how dedicated he was to Teacher's Colleges at the time. And I said, "Mrs. Righter just what is your interest, and why are you interested in the colleges". She said "Well my grandfather was (I guess you have the picture on the wall here) Chairman of the College Council." Her father had been chairman of the same council and Kate the
third generation. I said "I guess that answers my question". So Marian and I came up; they flew the two of us up in February, just for the day, as I recall. I think frankly, as I got the story afterward, the local council and the faculty were not seeing eye-to-eye on participation in the recommendation of the new president. No one explained this to me at the time. Ralph Horn was Acting President, a very fine fellow. Ralph wanted to retire; he didn't want the presidency. They brought us in, and we had a good going over in the board room of the Buffalo Evening News on Main Street. A lot of good questions were asked to both of us. We were both interviewed actually. Then we came up to the college and met a few people but not many—a few. Afterwards they took us to the Saturn Club for dinner. Also present was Judge Reid S. Moule, who had been the Chairman of the Board—he was chairman before Kate—and both Rockefeller appointees. Of course, just parenthetically, you know Nelson A. Rockefeller was very instrumental in the development of the State University. There is a very key point in what I learned pretty much after I came. Anyway, we had a thorough look at them, they had a more than thorough look at us. We flew back to Laguardia with the Northern Lights coming over Lake Erie. It was a beautiful night, and we both looked at each other sort of saying what are we doing here. We were happy where we were. The next morning I had to go to Chicago to American Association of Higher Education meeting. That was February of 1959 actually and the first part of March. Kate said she would wire me as to their decision. They asked whether we were interested, and we had said yes, we would like to be considered. We didn't say we would take the job, but we would consider it because I hadn't touched base with anyone at all. The wire came when I was in the old Congress Pick Hotel in Chicago with a friend of mine from the National University of Chile. We had been down there in 1958 and then a return visit was sponsored by the State Department. I will never forget looking at it. We were resting in our room and, I said "Elvaro, I don't whether I want this job or not" and in Spanish, in essence what he said "Better the head of a rat than a tail of a lion". You might as well be a big frog in a little pool as being provost at one of the colleges even though a large college at Columbia. So we bantered back and forth and I said, "well, I can't make a decision till I get back and talk with Marion and the children. So, I guess that is the way it happened. I did the usual things of talking to some friends—including, Herman Cooper who, of course, was very instrumental in the whole thing. He was it, really. Herman had a fine relationship with Kate. Kate liked Herman and Herman liked Kate; they saw eye-to-eye on many things. I met with the whole Board of Trustees in Albany. Frank Moore formerly of Kenmore and Lieutenant Governor of the state was Chairman. Frank conducted the meeting, and at the appropriate time, I came in and sat down. Frank gave the background, and Herman Cooper talked
about my qualifications. Frank said "Are there any questions?" I didn't know what was going on. Frank said he had just one question, "Do you know Nate Crowler?" I said "Yes, I know Nate Crowler. His family lived next to my family. A very fine family, the Crowler family. The Crowler family were of the Jewish religion, and the Bulgers were Catholic and they got along just great." Frank said that was the only question he had. He said, "Paul knows the small town, he knows the importance of people and the relationship with people. I am glad to recommend him. That is how the job was offered." I called Caswell and said I would be home and would like to talk to him. Cas said, "Well, Paul, I hate to see you go." He said "I have $20,000 in the budget for you"—that was $2,000 more than I was getting and $3,000 more than this job was paying. This was $16,753 at the time. $500 you had to pay back for the rent here on the campus for the maintenance. So that came down to about $16,200. Cas said, "Well, to thine own self be true". He said "I hate to see you go". Recently, we were with them, he and Ruth, and reminiscing about this up at Lake Winnamesakie. Cas was 78 two days ago. We came to Buffalo here the 29th of June and stayed in one of the dormitories. Charlie LaMorte and Miss Lilly Pruitt, were very kind to us. The house had been used as a classroom, and it was a mess. When we moved in there the 1st of July, Marion had all sorts of things to do. In those days you had to furnish your own home. The state would provide some monies for what they called the Public Room, the reception area. Someone asked why did you take it. I said I wanted to be a college president. And he said, "Why didn’t you let us know—you could have been president in several places." I said, "Name one. Buffalo asked me. Herman Cooper asked me. I always felt as though Herman wanted me to come with him in 1938 and now here in 1959."

Sister: And besides that, Dr. Bulger, the college had a good reputation it was no little thing to be the president of the college.

Dr. Bulger: A friend of mine said, "Paul waited for the right one." I don’t think this violated any confidence. Oswego was a possibility. Plattsburgh was a possibility. Geneseo was a possibility. This was the largest. It was larger than Albany at the time, and it had a wonderful reputation. Top-notch which we found to be true when we got here.

Sister: Did you find what you expected? I am sure you heard things about it. Did it live up to your expectations.

Dr. Bulger: Very much so, I would say in every respect. The people couldn’t have been nicer to us could they, Marion? And to our children, Cindy and John. I had had good mentors. I
had a chance to observe Abram Brubacher, John Sales, William Russell, Hollis Caswell and worked very closely with them. So, I had a pretty good understanding of what a college president

Sister: Your experience at Columbia, which was much larger of course, gave you the training ground.

Dr. Bulger: And for Marion too.

Mrs. Bulger: Actually I had good training. All my experiences led up to what I did.

Dr. Bulger: So the answer is yes, it lived up to our expectations; I exceeded it really.

Sister: As president now, what was your role toward the community?

Dr. Bulger: Well Sister, this is interesting. One faculty member who later became a very important official here and a very close friend after a little rough start--Carlton Bower, (who is now dead) said "they got the right man with the wrong method". In other words, I learned that the faculty had not participated so much as I thought they had. And I wasn't told whether Ralph Horn wanted me to know. Ralph was a very open man. I don't think he thought it was anything of importance frankly.

Sister: Probably, maybe the system hadn't been used before anyway.

Dr. Bulger: I think that's right. They were learning this whole participatory thing. So as I got acquainted with Walter Greenwood and Carlton Bower and, of course, Bob and Vivian McVittie, tower of strength--which is another story of losing him. (Did Bob tell you that? How I had to recommend him? People from Geneseo came in with three names, all friends of mine, but I said the man they wanted was just down the hall. He did a great job.) I found out that (1) the faculty here wanted the community to take more notice of the college. Put another way, the college should become closer to the community and more an integral part of the community; (2) That the alumni had not been organized, and, (3) That a new look at the governance of the college needed to be undertaken. I was President of a growing college. I frankly had heard, in the course of conversation, that under what was called the Heald Commission, (studying the whole role of the state university), that they were probably going to recommend that this institution become a university center. Earl McGrath, who was a very dear friend and still is a Buffalonian, stopped by on the 4th of July. He was our first visitor in 1959.
Sister: Earl McGrath is he a lawyer?

Dr. Bulger: Earl is an educator, former U.S. Commissioner of Education.

Sister: Did they live in Hamburg or Orchard Park?

Dr. Bulger: They were Buffalonians and his sister was a tremendous here.

Sister: This doesn’t have anything to do with you. The McGrath family given a great deal of money to Hilbert College and the McGrath Library.

Dr. Bulger: This was an expectation. Some of the faculty knew about this that this possibly might be a university center. But, that’s a story in itself which I think probably I ought to get on here, Sister, because it might get lost after I’m gone. But, in general, the academic level of the college was solid. The faculty worked at their business. They were well educated themselves. They wrote, they studied, they taught. They liked one another and they pulled together. You mentioned Louis Callan. A tower of strength Marion and I just sort of "cottoned after them," and I think most of them after us. But, of course, you can’t win them all, as the fella says. In general that was what was outlined to me and I don’t know how you do these things. My last few years here I have been trying to teach youngsters; help them to learn how to be college presidents, deans, registrars and archivists. The above were in general the areas that the faculty, the council, and Hermann Cooper wanted reviewed.

Sister: You knew when you came, I’m sure just as Dr. Johnstone knows, or he should know, what are the strengths of the college and the weaknesses. I think this idea of the faculty not participating in activities was the weakness of the college.

Dr. Bulger: They wanted it reviewed. I don’t think it was a particular weakness. I think they were more concerned about the organization of it. And we put more attention on that in our discussion of the bylaws. We had many on that.

Sister: Of course in those days you didn’t have the conflict with students either, did you?

Dr. Bulger: No. My friends accused me of knowing a good clear crystal ball as to when to get out before that hit. However, we had some, as as mentioned earlier, before we taped, I met with students pretty regularly. Stuart Sandow, (you remember Stuart). Had just written a book that was used on the
Johnny Carson show the other night of how many minutes does it take to do thus and so of hummingbirds wings going so many... I'm sure it's the same Stuart Sandow. He later sent me *The Making of a President*. White's book, with very fine inscription saying how much I had taught him in the way of student participation. No I didn't have a lot of that. I tell you what we did have that I think cuts into the contribution we made. That is this paper I just handed you. I suggest you might want it for your file. As I referred before, the expectation was that this would become one of four of the university centers. They were talking five at the time, but they settled on four--Albany, Stonybrook, Binghamton and Buffalo. But the University of Buffalo, independent university, good reputation, pretty much municipal in nature, was having a rough time financially. I think over the protests of Cliff Furnas, who was the Chancellor at the time, the proposition was made that the state buy the University of Buffalo and make that its university center here. I got promoted and educated. The people that were supporting this for years getting tired of putting, as you can understand, the cost of education going up. So with the very good help of Walter Mahoney, president of the Senate, (Walter J. Mahoney is a very dear friend of ours.) That was successfully brought about. Tom Hamilton was president and we didn't call them Chancellor's in those days, it was president.

Sister: Were you sorry that that happened?

Dr. Bulger: That's a good question. No, not sorry. I thought it was a smart thing to do. My disappointment came in this way. As you see from this memorandum I had outlined, with the help of many people, this is a list of possibilities. I had proposed to Herman Cooper, Harry Porter who was Provost at the time, and Tom Hamilton; (Frank Moore was still Chairman of the Board), that we become the college of education and call this whole setup the State University of Western New York. I said I had been Provost once. It was a good title, no one knows what it means, and therein lies its great strength. I would be very happy to be Provost of this campus. Bob Fisk was the Dean of Education at the time on Main Street. He could be the Dean of the Graduate School of Education, and Cliff Furnas could be the President of the whole situation. We sat around in a conference room over in Rockwell Hall and Cliff said, "Well you're asking me, Paul, to give up one of my own children." I said, "Not at all, I'm just telling you that you are going to have a bigger child if you incorporate us". Bob Fisk? I don't know; he wasn't too keen about it. Lester Anderson was the Vice President at that time; he wasn't keen about it. I fully don't understand it. I am disappointed to get to your question. Herman and Frank Moore and Tom Hamilton? Tom didn't know the situation. Frankly they were concerned that the Butler family and the Knox family might not
appreciate this proposal. They said, "Paul, I think you’re right, but politically, I don’t think we can do it.

Sister: Isn’t that amazing though how a history of an institution can be by five men sitting at a table and nobody knows?

Dr. Bulger: Exactly. And this is the way that went. I said it is a mistake, and I said it again over in Cliff Furnas’ office. I said from where I sit, I think this would be a good way to go, but they wouldn’t buy it. I may as well throw this in now because, as you know from my biography, I have done quite a bit of work for the State Department and other countries and for the U.S. Office of Aid in Far East Development. I had agreed to go to Viet Nam in May of 1966 to work with the Buddhist university there--Von Honn University. The state department had to postpone that trip until the fall of 1966. I wasn’t too happy about going in 1966. In Honolulu I met someone from Buffalo. Kate Righter and Katey her daughter were there just by chance, and we had dinner together, I got on the plane in Honolulu for Saigon. Kate saw me off. From a newspaper, I learned that was the first time the VC had shelled the center of Saigon. They hit the Bascilica, and a ricocheting shell killed one of our naval officers. I got there the next morning, and Marion had quite a start. How did that go, Marion?

Mrs. Bulger: The State Department called me, and my heart went down into my shoes because I thought something had happened; but they were calling me just to reassure me that Paul was alright.

Dr. Bulger: That was a rugged experience. I did what I could there. At that time the government was very anxious that the Buddhist be sympathetic to the United States. I went on to Indonesia to do some consulting there and also to get a young man into this country, Ismael Ismael. We fixed him up with a scholarship here, and he went on to UB. I took him by the hand and went over to see Doug Surgeon. He did very well. He became a medical doctor. But anyway, I had that thing to do in Indonesia and so forth and a couple of other things for the State Department. I got back here to find out that a meeting had been called by the Board of Regents, representatives from them. Do you know the story? Representatives from the Board of Regents and Sam Gould, Seymour Knox, Manley Fleishman, Martin Meyerson who was still UB President, Kate Wallis. I can’t recall the rest of them sitting at the table. But it was an attempt, really, a very blatant attempt, in my judgment, to bring about this situation that I had proposed in 1962 of consolidating these two institutions. Kate did not realize what they were up to, but she did after the meeting. I came back, and I said it’s too late. We were an institution then by about 10,000 students, and
we had over 600 faculty members. I took it to the faculty. 2 or 3 thought well let them go anyway, but the majority felt that it was too late, that we were too big, we had our own constituency, had our own alumni. In other words, it was sort of being dealt with as a business merger, not with any sensitivity that this was an institution of integrity and so forth and so forth. It was going to be done with a sweep of the pen. Anyway, we managed to stop that. And here we are today. I think it would be ridiculous, size wise and geographic wise and so forth. I always felt that this institution was unique. I called it the Acropolis on the Scajaquada. I found out that none of the heads of these institutions had ever met together so I started a little luncheon club; McKinley High School, the History Society, the Science Museum, the State Hospital, which I had a great respect for, and the college. We met about once a month just to talk about general things and exchange ideas.

Sister: Well that explains something Dr. Bulger because I think Dr. Sherry who was a loyal professor here told me that. It was in my mind, you had had this idea, but you went against it later. You just explained the reason. It was not so much the idea; it was when it happened, and how it happened.

Dr. Bulger: I think more when and how. How I didn’t like, but I thought they were just mistreating an institution of good age and good integrity and so forth. It was more the timing, I think but you see, at that time, I had agreed to become Jim Allen's righthand man in higher and professional education, so I was leaving in February. They didn’t expect me back from Viet Nam. My picture was in the paper and so forth. Charlie Millard called me and said, "Paul, I see you’re back in town. Are you going to the meeting?" I asked "what meeting?" He told me, and I called Kate. I had a very bad "far east bug," and I was sick actually and came back tired out. It was a real hard time, and my judgment wasn’t that good at the meeting, but as I got stronger, I picked up steam, and recalled the old addage that I was still president, and I was going to be president until the day I walked out of here. This is an old fashioned idea, perhaps, but one that Hermann Cooper understood. That's the story. That type of thing, Sister, sort of shadowed, in a sense, my years as administrator here. Trying to reassure the faculty that we were not going to be gobbled up, that we were not going to be down graded, that we were not going to be the country cousin. I would have to go out in the halls about every third Thursday and say "Now look, don’t worry. We are going to be here; and we are not going to close up a department; we are not going to loose jobs. The rumors we got were that the departments at UB had already carved up our faculty; these they’re going to take, and these they weren’t and so forth. Frankly, whether it’s creative administration or not, it was necessary to reassure them with some
integrity; we couldn't kid them. You had to give them the facts, they had to know the status of that situation every bit of the way. That was a hard job.

Sister: Yet, didn't they feel that there was a duplication at the as far as education?

Dr. Bulger: Oh yes they did but my argument there was you had had your chance. And frankly this faculty at Buff State, combined as we have been, liberal arts and professional education, was far superior to what they had at UB. Nothing against individuals, but they just didn't have the horses. We had the mass.

Sister: You had the tradition and you had the experience.

Dr. Bulger: Exactly and we had the faculty who knew the business. Take Walter Greenwood teaching English. Walter had a great respect for the professional people, which isn't true in every university as you know. The teacher educationist had a hard role but this institution was unique in that as was Albany.

Sister: Well, they're having a difficult time now too. It's liberal arts now, professional fields, vs. the educators. It's that conflict. I shouldn't say conflict; there's a tension and there may be a healthy tension because it keeps everyone on his toes. But with a large institution, I haven't any idea. I thought we were in the upper 600's. They've retrenched though, of course, and someone quoted 690 plus professors. I was thinking its not much more than you had. It's the largest college. What goals did you set for yourself when you came. Did you have any goals or did you just come and say, "well I'm going to find out?" You had some ideas in your mind didn't you.

Dr. Bulger: I think someplace along the line both by learning through precept of these people I mentioned, above and college presidents (and at teachers college I met hundreds of college presidents from all over the country, all over the world). I gave examples of how a college president should behave, and I had a strong feeling, wherever I got it, as a student at Albany up through my life, that a president is only so effective as his faculty and that a faculty member is probably the most precious thing, item, person that a college can have, and that the job of the college president was to do everything that he or she could do to help that faculty perform and support and so forth. So I definitely had that in mind.

Sister: To have a relationship with the faculty that would strengthen the school.
Dr. Bulger: Absolutely. And then the physical condition here was atrocious. I remember going through what we later named Ketchum Hall. It had Home Economics, Science, Industrial Arts. I couldn't believe what was going on there. And they really turned out some wonderful teachers in those conditions--Ruth Sugarman is an example. This was a part of what I was told that we were going into--the growth--and I knew this. In fact it was connected with one of the first appointments, and I didn't actually make it. I think Ralph Warren signed the papers. I did subsequently, for Charles Ball as coordinator of physical facilities. He died recently. I gave his eulogy this summer. They are printing it, and I would like you to have a copy of it. Here's a fellow who did a great deal for this college. He had integrity and knowledge, and drive.

Sister: He was on my list, Dr. Bulger, to tape and I saw him at Dr. Czurles testimony. I gave the prayer. Before dinner I saw him. He had been sick and I said "Mr. Ball, I've got to see you." And he said, "Oh, I'm going to be around." "Well," I said, "you haven't been well, and, I replied, "Oh, I'm fine, I'll be around." That was the last time I saw him.

Dr. Bulger: Well, I would like to emphasize something that for the history of the place if it hasn't come before. I would like to say that Dr. Charles E. Ball did a great, great deal for this institution in many, many ways. Not only the buildings either. Our son was at Brown University, and we went over to visit. It was my first real contact with a college radio station, and John did some work for them announcing. When I came back, I said to Charlie "I have just seen a radio station in operation. Would you mind seeing what you could do about getting one established here." Charlie took it and ran with it. It took quite a bit of time to get a license, but that was the origin of the radio. Charlie Ball took that thing and he would keep me posted; he was like that. Ruth Sugarman was another one. Phi Delta Kappa. Did she mention this? She often wondered why I ever asked her to do that. A woman doing a man's job. Ruth did a great deal of Kappa Delta Pi and I thought we ought to have this graduate Phi Delta Kappa. I called Ruth and said, "Ruth, I know this doesn't seem quite womanly, but I want to see what we can do about organizing this men's fraternity. She got that established. So goals, Sister, I don't know. I think in general, just to be a good president is important and I never considered myself a boss. I think I've been accused, I know I have, of what's the old of "Iron fist in a velvet glove". At least I think someone's told me that.

Sister: I've heard too though that you were very popular with the students, and that you spoke to the students frequently.
Dr. Bulger: Yes. We've always had good students here, and I think of Charlie LaMorte, who incidentally I sent here to be assistant to Harvey Rice. Did Harvey ever mention Charlie. Well Charlie was a student at Teachers College. He was on his way to Stevens College in Missouri to be interviewed for an Admissions job there. I called him and said, "don't sign that contract until you get to Buffalo and talk to Harvey Rice." It was about 1956. Harvey hired him as an assistant to the president.

Sister: You were a very busy president, weren't you? Just in your first year you know I'm recalling the things you did. You built up a public information service and encouraged alumni activities. You improved the bylaws and supported that. You improved the administrative structure, and you set up an office of plant development. Then you appointed a new dean. That wasn't Dr. McVittie, was it?

Dr. Bulger: Yes, in the sense that he was acting dean. I looked him over and decided that I couldn't do any better. How right I was!

Sister: Of course, you had your regular duties. But you visited East Africa in 1960 by the request of the State Department.

Dr. Bulger: That was in Kenya and Tanganika and Uganda.

Sister: You didn't go with him, Mrs. Bulger?

Mrs. Bulger: No it was too short notice.

Dr. Bulger: I gave speeches all over there and worked with the school people and met Marion later. She flew over, and we met in Rome. The olympics were on.

Sister: You inaugurated the mid-year graduation, too.

Dr. Bulger: We had to because of the size of the classes. I think we were having three at that time.

Sister: Yes, you had February or January, the May and then August.

Dr. Bulger: Talking about graduation, Robert Kennedy was our commencement speaker June 5th 1965. I just saw his picture. Elsie Kay sent me the two of us together down at Kleinhans. Our daughter Cindy graduated that year, and Kathyrn Graham's niece, Connie graduated.
Sister: You were honored, of course, as the outstanding citizen of Buffalo in 1965, and the same year you moved to the mansion. You were the first one to live in the mansion. Did you have to pay rent on that too.

Dr. Bulger: Yes, oh yes. I would like to get this on tape. Have we got time? Let me tell you about that house because I think it's important. As I understand it, there's a little ripple. Why does the president at State College have to have such a big house? Let me tell you how we got the house. This house on the campus is a very lovely house, and every time we drive by it now we think of it with great affection and so did the Rice's and the Rockwells before them. Kate Butler Righter Wallis said to me, "Paul you've got to get a bigger house. This college is getting bigger and it's just not going to serve the purpose." I had my gall bladder out like Lyndon Johnson in 1963. I came back from the hospital and they had finished the Scajaquada Expressway. It really was a mess and noisy. I said, "Let's go back to the hospital." Kate's wisdom on that was very very sound, as it has been on many many things. Let me put it on the record like Al Smith. Kate Butler Righter Wallis has done a great deal for this institution. Many people never knew about her good common sense ability. People sometimes don't realize that, but Kate was a fine woman. I know she's had marital problems, but through it all, Marion and I love her. She's a wonderful person, and I like that right where it is. I was serving on the Buffalo-Erie County Board of Directors of the YMCA and sitting at lunch one day at a regular meeting Ray Stevens, (who was of the chemical family, the Stevens family of Buffalo) said, "you don't want to buy my house do you, Paul?" I said, "Ray, if you had asked a year ago I would have immediately said no, but right now, let's look at it. So Charlie Ball, Marion and I went over and looked at it. We could see all sorts of possibilities of this being the social center for the faculty and staff and students in the and making private quarters on the top floors. I think George Sherry had a lot to do with that, too. George mentioned that. Stevens wanted to sell it because he wanted another house, had two or three children at the time, and the price was right--$65,000 I believe, it was from Lincoln Parkway to Penhurst with a swimming pool, a garage, and an apartment over the garage. It would take some money to fix up. It's a very well built house. It was built by the oil money from Pennsylvania--the early oil money. Cliff and Sparkle Furnas had a chance for it when they were closing that estate. They gave some of the estate to Strong Memorial Hospital in Rochester and some to UB. But Cliff and Sparkle didn't want to live in a home. That's when it was a private university. So, there had been some thinking about it as a President's home, and that may be why Ray mentioned it. I don't know. Anyway, we got in touch with Herman Cooper, Otto Teegen, who was the state architect at the time for the
state university, and Frank Moore who was Chairman of the Board. They all looked at it and said, "Paul I think this is right." They moved it through, got the money from the legislature and bought the house. Marion, bless her, took that and redesigned the whole interior at the lowest bid. You know you had to get bids on everything.

Mrs. Bulger: I didn't redesign it exactly. Some of it but we had to redecorate it and furnish it.

Dr. Bulger: This is the life of a wife of a college president. A president's sister is only a tenant, and this I learned a long time ago. And while you emerse yourself in there, you know that someone is going to follow you. So it wasn't too big. Our children were growing. John was still at home--no, he was at college. Cindy and Paul were out on the west coast where Paul was taking his master's degree. So, it was big but, whoever is going to follow, fortunately, the Fretwells used the whole place. And now, the Johnstone's--they've got two children, haven't they? Well it may seem large to them, but the next one through may have 8, 9 or 10 children. I doubt it too but sometimes.

Sister: Dr. Fretwell. I was over there for a couple of things and he used the whole downstairs for reception. With a large faculty you need it.

Dr. Bulger: We had 3-4,000 people there at times. I don't think the house is too large. I think it's very nice. Elsie Kay's son would put on a magic show on the third floor for the little kids, and we had good times there. The spruce tree in front and the side entrance is the first christmas tree that we had in that house, and Charlie Ball said if you just put that in the ground, it will grow and it grew. Marion did a great job.

Mrs. Bulger: Well, I tried to make it neutral, so that the next person wouldn't hate it.

Sister: There was an article written about it in the paper and I don't know whether it was with Mrs. Fretwell or was it with you. Just last month when Dr. Johnstone came, one of the girls over in Miss Fink's office had to babysit with the children, and they're small. Mrs. Wallis took the Johnstones out, and I asked little Marilyn "How are the children behaving?" She said, "they're so well behaved but were so excited about the big house and wanted to take her all around and show her because it was a bigger house than what they had lived in in Pennsylvania. It was so good to know that they were excited about it, and they'll be happy.
Dr. Bulger: We had a young couple living in the apartment--Bob and Sandy Blake--and I would like to pay tribute to them. Bob earned his keep and then some. He was the handiest man I've ever known. He could do things, and Sandy was a great person, too. The other side is the food service from the college--a tribute to them because they just kept those social functions going. Marion would work with Dorothy and talk it over. We had great times there.

Sister: That was included in your budget from the college though wasn't it?

Dr. Bulger: Not it my day. This was included in the Faculty Student Association. When we first came here, we paid for our own entertainment. It was Charlie LaMorte who said, "Paul, I don't think you can afford to do that. I'm going to bring it up with the joint meeting of the Faculty Student Association," and they voted a fair sum of money to pay for that type of thing. But that didn't come in till I was out of it, frankly. The Faculty Student Association paid for a lot of those things and we always included students.

Sister: Have you been inside the old house lately? I went there for the first time this summer with Dr. LaHood.

Dr. Bulger: Two other things sister. The naming of buildings had not been pursued to the extent of actually naming them. We built several new ones, we had a big job to do and you probably know that in 1963 we dedicated them. We had big goings on.

Sister: There was a special issue of the Record. I have a tremendous amount of material on this.

Dr. Bulger: Edna Lindeman did a lot of work. She's still going strong. Edna and the beautification of the campus and Charlie Ball did a great deal on the Birchfield Center. The faculty didn't really appreciate the Birchfield Center. They thought I should have put the money some place else, but I felt that they were wrong.

Sister: I don't know whether they even agree on it yet because it's not so popular.

Dr. Bulger: But, I think its made a tremendous contribution.

Sister: It put the college on the map and we certainly have some very valuable paintings.
Dr. Bulger: It was not the most popular thing we did. The other thing is the logo that you use. I don't know if anyone told you this or not, but it seemed to me that we had to (in this whole business of maintaining our identity and integrity and going forward as an institution) get something distinctive on our letterheads and on our publications. I asked Earl Wolfgruber if he would design a logo and he came up with several. We had a committee to select the logo so the one with the flame and the dove in it, that's Earl Wolfgruber. He's responsible for the design of that. Has anyone told you about the Great Lakes Laboratory?

Sister: Oh yes, Dr. Senghusch and Dr. Sweeney. I had the impression that Dr. Senghusch was the original.

Dr. Bulger: Charles LaMorte, a rotarian in Kenmore, Dean of Students, sat next to someone in the sea scouts and learned that that property was going to be available, that they were giving it up. Charlie came in and asked if I had interest in that. Just at this time this whole business of lake conditions and deteriorating and so forth, and I'd had an interest in this from my days in Chile back in 1958, and remembered that tremendous oceanic study place there. I said yes, I think we do, and I found out that that was tied up in the State of New York. I got Charlie Ball "on the ball" with Albany. I got in touch with Walter Mahoney. A long story--but that land was deeded to the State University of New York for the use of the college as a great lakes laboratory. We dedicated that, Earl Bridges, (Walter Mahoney had been defeated in that landslide for Lyndon Johnson) and Earl Bridges was president of the Senate. So I got Earl to come out and dedicate it. I charged them to get grants and I expected a 10 story building but I think, I said I would settle for 5. Howard came in the picture because he was Chairman but not in the beginning. John Urban came in the picture but not at the beginning either, and I wanted to set the record straight because Charlie LaMorte had the sense to think that maybe this property would be of interest to the college. Then Charlie Ball came in with a lot of the leg work in Albany. I came in coordinating the thing. Walter Mahoney was very helpful in getting the political side of the thing straightened out for us, and I think its made a tremendous contribution. I feel good about that.

Sister: Yes, it's national. And Dr. Sweeney has been there from the very beginning. He has received a lot of grants. He has moved around. He was in the campus school for awhile but I think he's packing up to do more. They have their own boat.

Dr. Bulger: See, that's one of the little things. Peter Andrews? Did you ever get this story?
Sister: Isn't it in the paper, wasn't it printed. Because we have the story on the boat when it was dedicated and all that business.

Dr. Bulger: Peter was a good friend and he gave us the first painting for the Burchfield Center. He gave us the first boat for the Great Lakes Laboratory.

Sister: The college has had some loyal friends. I'm not aware of them right now. When you left though, what do you consider your outstanding contribution? There's so many though I don't know how you can pinpoint it. You can't, can you.

Mrs. Bulger: Didn't you tell me that the board didn't want us to bring the community in closer and I do think the relations between the community and college were better.

Dr. Bulger: Well I think I feel good about that. Our roots got deep personally.

Sister: Did you leave with a good feeling?

Dr. Bulger: Oh yes, very good. Excellent feelings. We hated to leave the people. The real reason I had thought that if they wanted me to stay or for us to stay 10 years, that's about long enough for a college president, very frankly. In my judgment it is. You get stale.

Sister: I always think of like stability like Dr. Rockwell.

Dr. Bulger: In those days, perhaps. And Harry Rockwell gave it that stability. I only met him once in Albany when I was running the Placement Office. He was a great friend of John Sales who later became president at Albany and I can still see him standing there. Dapper young man, not too young at that time but not too old either, 1937 or 38. But that's the only time I ever met him. But I had a great respect for him.

Sister: Everyone did. He knew his business.

Dr. Bulger: A great speaker, a very dedicated man and what I learned after I got here and that was one of the great satisfactions. We did name a lot of the buildings and we named the administration building Rockwell Hall, and I got that going, and I can still see us putting up the letters. Harriet Wolfgang and Helen--We had a memorial service when Harry died, and we had a good party at the house on the campus. I guess one of the first times the family had been in, if not the first time. No, we left with a very good feeling and very warm feeling for many many people.
Sister: Have you kept in contact with many of these people?

Dr. Bulger: Quite a few.

Sister: And of course you have come back now.

Mrs. Bulger: We haven’t written. We still feel close to a great number of people.

Sister: When you come back now, do you feel at home or do you feel it’s a different campus?

Dr. Bulger: I haven’t been back very much actually. I haven’t really been invited back. The real first direct invitation that I felt had real warmth and feeling was Barbara Frey’s invitation to the two of us to attend commencement. It was the first time I had ever been invited back.

Sister: I had just assumed that you had always be on the mailing list for functions.

Dr. Bulger: Not really. Joyce Fink has done a fine job of keeping us supplied with the publications. We get those including the directory which has been very helpful. I guess I would have to say, Sister, and I don’t care if it’s on the record or not but it’s the truth. I feel more comfortable back in the last two or three times we felt since we left. Wouldn’t you agree with that Marion? And we really have not been invited to the president’s home. I bought out of my own money, (and I would like this on the record) a little plaque to put on the wall over in the conservatory in the president’s home and I made a smaller duplicate and I gave it as a Christmas present to Marion for the first Christmas we spent there saying how much I appreciated and everyone appreciated her work and that this was the home for the president’s of the state college here. Marion has been wonderful for 41 years we have been married and has been willing to move around and do what I wanted to do.

Mrs. Bulger: It always seems to be my fate to redecorate and refurnish. Although it’s hard work I enjoy it.

Dr. Bulger: To answer your question directly. I see that fireplace, (he pointed to the fireplace in the Conference Room) the Mark Twain fireplace from his home here in Buffalo, for the first time. Herman Cooper used to have conferences at the various colleges. This one was in Oneonta at the state college. We lived in dormitories and then going to the men’s shower room so forth. Here I was shaving one morning next to Paul Smay. He used to be here, and lived down in Pennsylvania. Paul says, "You don’t want Mark Twain’s fireplace do you, Paul?" I said, "we sure
do and I know exactly where it ought to go. We are building a new library and it ought to go in the rare books room of the new Butler Library." Paul says, "I'll see to it that it gets shipped to you."

Sister: How did he have it?

Dr. Bulger: He bought it when they tore down the house. I'm delighted to see it here because it's a rare piece.

Sister: Everybody knows it, of course. Everybody comes in and says this is Mark Twain's fireplace. It was from the original house where the Cloister is. That painting is supposed to be famous too.

Dr. Bulger: That's Bob Blair, I noticed.

Mrs. Bulger: Is that Don Quixote?

Sister: I am not sure.

Dr. Bulger: Well I'll tell you the faculty, the staff, the students, the townspeople were very generous with us when we were leaving, and when we've come back and I would like to put it on the tape. We thank each and every one for his kindnesses and the generosity and real love and we hope we have returned it in some measure.

Sister: What are you doing now?

Dr. Bulger: That's a good question. I retired in 1975 from the professor of Higher Education at Albany. My official title is Professor Emeritus, State University New York at Albany. In 1972 I was asked to run a workshop in Harleton Manor in Harleton Lincolnshire England for the University of Edmonsville. Marion and I went over and lived in this manor house for a month. In 1975 in the spring, they wrote to me and asked if I could possibly go over and run that place for them as president of the college. They were trying to do some things there and establish a social arts degree, liberal arts college with British tutors. I had planned to retire in two years anyway and so Marion and I looked at each other and said why not. We went down to the University of Evansville, Indiana and met with them. So I ran that for two years. In the meantime, I got acquainted with some people at Cambridge and was invited to be a visiting fellow there for a year. Then in Cambridge, I had a letter from the Dean of William Joe College, Gordon Kingsley, Liberty, Missouri saying after we finish there, how about being scholar in residence out at William Jewel? So we got back home and talked to our children and ended out in Liberty for
a semester with the idea that we would both take a look. We spent second semester, a whole year there. We have a summer place over at Taconic Lake. It’s east of Troy and 20 minutes from Williamstown, Massachusetts which we hadn’t lived in very much. This summer we’ve been working with that and getting it in shape. I built a dock which I haven’t done that type of thing in years with my hands. Marion said she was surprised I could do these things and I surprised myself. And then in the meantime we decided we like this part of the world so much and our daughter and her family, 3 granddaughters and our son John, a lawyer in Rochester and 2 daughters, we thought this is the place. So we have a small townhouse that we lease out in Orchard Park so we are just getting our roots back into the familiar soil that we very much like.

Sister: Are you committed to anything this year?

Mrs. Bulger: We could have gone back to William Jewel.

Dr. Bulger: Well you would have to make a commitment. They wanted me to head up their Education Department. I helped them with some long range planning and ran what we called conversations in education.

Mrs. Bulger: We also wanted to establish a home. You see we stored all our things. We want to get everything together and have a home.

Dr. Bulger: And we want to see some of the people we know and like. We’re not getting any younger. We like it in this part of the world.

Sister: Is there anything else you would like to add.

Dr. Bulger: I ran through some notes I made here and your very good list too I’ve read several times.

Sister: I have, as I said, all the information on example #9 on professional activities. We have all that. I certainly have enjoyed this.

Dr. Bulger: Well the same to you Sister. The college is very fortunate in having you doing this, very very much so.