

Dr. Charles LaMorte

Interview, September 25, 1990

SMJ: Good afternoon. It is September 25, 1990. I am in the Director's conference room and I have with me Dr. Charles LaMorte. I am not going to say for what he is famous (or infamous for lots of things) but we will find out in this tape. Greetings, Dr. LaMorte. I am happy to have you here. We will get right into the questions.

SMJ: Question is "What is your background?" Give me a little information. Where did you come from, etc.

LaMorte: My father was born in lower NYC near City Hall in a place called little Italy. His father came from Europe. My grandfather, his father, had a push-cart and was an entrepreneur. It was exciting. He moved from there to Hoboken, NJ where my grandfather set up a grocery store. Across the street from that grocery store lived Mr. and Mrs. Sinatra, parents of Frank Sinatra. My father met my mother in Hoboken. She had come from a little town only 90 miles east of Rome, Italy, a town that existed in Roman days, even before Christian days, and called Suomo where Ovid the poet was born. Ovid's works are still used in Humanities courses. The town now is called Suomona; they changed the name a little. I visited there in 1969 and saw her birthplace. It is in the foothills and is a lovely, small community of about 20,000 people. She came here in 1906. I remember her telling me that she was on the deck of a ship when it arrived in NY harbor. As they

broke through the clouds and fog, they saw the Statue of Liberty, and they all were weeping with joy. She called that the Statue of Liberty and Hope. She was a remarkable woman, who had four sisters and a brother in Europe. One of them came here, and she got to meet her sister, Anna. One of her sisters went to Sao Paulo, Brazil; one went to Buenos Aires. Her brother did come here, but she lost track of him. One sister came to the US and returned home to Italy. She was a hard working person. She knew how to read and write, as she went to elementary school. She quickly became street smart, working as a seamstress to bring up three kids, because my father died when I was not quite four years old. He had tuberculosis which, of course, today would not even exist, but in those days it was very bad. She was left with three children, of whom I was the youngest. My sister was 5 years older than I and my brother 7 years older. We lived with my grandparents after my Dad died.

SMJ: Your mother never remarried?

LaMorte: Later in life. She left my grandparents home when I was about 5, and we moved to the town where she was working to save herself a trip back and forth by trolley which cost her a nickel. But it was the time. She wanted to be with us. So, I had to spend a short time in a nursery. My sister went to St. Joseph's elementary school; my brother went to number four school in West New York, New Jersey...which is right across from Manhattan. We lived on the escarpment. I went, I guess at the age of six, to St. Joseph's school and there had 12 wonderful years with the nuns. I

attribute so much to them because they were upbeat all the time. They were anxious to help you, even though you did not understand why they were pressing so hard. They were very good for my formative years. In fact, my peers were also very helpful. I just attended a 50th high school reunion with them and got to meet them, and it was a very nice event. Sad in some ways too because we lost 16 or 17 of our graduates from that class of 1940. I remember my days at St. Joseph's so well because I considered the nuns and peers as my second family. They really were my life. Most of the nuns were gone...but I remember as if it happened just like yesterday. It was a very significant kind of experience.

SMJ: Did they encourage you to go to college? Did you go to college right away?

LaMorte: No, you didn't go to college too often in those days. In 1940 the war was right around the corner, of course. Right after high school, I worked at F.A.O. Schwartz, the toy house on 11th Avenue in NY, maybe for a year or a little more. By the end of 1941, we had the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. I was struck by that and wanted to go into the service immediately. I wanted to go into the Airforce, but you needed two years of college, and I didn't even have two days!!! I wanted to go in because my mother had such a strong belief in this country, the land of opportunity. She was optimistic, even though there were problems here. She said we have the system that can help get rid of those problems. Our systems of government is good, although it does takes does work. She was s person who was very aware. She had an accent in the

beginning, by the time I got through school, her accent was gone. She was bi-lingual and could easily move back and forth through languages.

SMJ: Did you speak Italian with your parents?

LaMorte: No, I did not speak Italian; however, I did listen! My ear was attuned to the language. People made fun of you if you spoke any other language. My mother knew that, and she said to speak English and learn the ways of the country. I was the baby, but when it came time, she knew she had to put her money where her mouth was. She had to sign the papers for me to go into the service because I was underage. I was on the bus one day to go to work at F.A.O. Schwartz, and I was reading the paper. It said that the Airforce would now accept a written test in lieu of two years in college. When I saw that, I got off the bus, skipped work, went over to the subway and went down to 39 Whitehole St. and said "Here I am, I want to take that exam." They gave me a date to take the exam. I came back and passed the exam, not telling my mother what I had done. I watched the mail and got a letter from the government. I went down and took the physical. Then, they said that my mother had to sign the paperwork. I told the man there that she would sign the papers for me because she believes so strongly in this country. My brother and sister helped encourage my mother to sign. In one of her letters to me after I have gone away, I could read just how apprehensive she was. She told me not to go into one of those airplanes unless they were "fixed" right. I was still in training at the time I approached a big sergeant of

Irish extraction and told him that my mother said I could not get into one of those airplanes unless they were fixed right... what should I tell her? He laughed and told me to tell my mother I was in the best Airforce in the entire world. She was a tremendous person.

SMJ: Was your older brother in the service, war?

LaMorte: He was married by then, was a tool and dye maker, and was very valuable for defense work, so between marriage and his specific trade, the military did not call him.

SMJ: Where did you see action?

LaMorte: I was a navigator. The class before us and the class after us went to England. Our class, for some reason, went to India to fly the hump over the mountains. It was just pure luck. The class after us, I recall, lost half of its members. Our group was flying the Himalayas from Hassan, India to mostly Cuning, China where the terminal was. We were carrying munitions, oil, gas, medical supplies; no food. It was too expensive to carry food. We flew in converted B-24 bombers, as they took the guns out of them and converted them to transport planes.

SMJ: And you learned to drive one?

LaMorte: I learned to navigate one. Later on, I left and came back to the States and was assigned to "the ferry" command, which meant that I was stationed in the States but took planes to India, North Africa, and to England. We were delivering them all over the place. We learned that route. We would drop them off, and the navigators would get them on one plane and come back, pick

up a new crew and plane and fly back. Sometimes we went into China, and sometimes we went into India. That portion was the second phase. The first was the hump. The second was called "the ferry" and the third was when I wanted to fly from Bangor, Maine to England over the north Atlantic... or go to California and fly to Australia. It turned out we didn't go to Australia. We were flying to the north Pacific and south Atlantic. I was stationed at what is now Tavis Airforce Base. We would fly to Hawaii, Guam, Philippines to pick up the wounded and then fly back. Near the end, we went to Okinawa when we ended up picking up the wounded there and flying back. There were so many wounded at the time, that the military was using hospital ships to accommodate all of them. It was a mess. We flew some airborne into Japan for policing duties. Then, the military said I had 46 months of service. I said I wanted to get out and go to school. I was saving my money to go to college. I did not get into gambling as some of the high rollers did. I did like to play cards but not at the stakes some of the men played. In the meantime, the GI Bill passed, and I got out of the service as fast as I could. I had plenty of points for being in the different theaters during the war. I came home and realized I had no civilian clothes because I had given them to my brother. I went to Sr. Rosemarie and asked her to send my papers to Fordham. She did and about a week later I asked her to send them to Columbia!! I went to Columbia in my uniform to interview as I had no clothes. In ten days, they notified me that I was in. I got into school and just kept going,

finishing in 3.5 years. Right after that, I went for my MS.

SMJ: You were motivated weren't you? And you were also a good student weren't you?

LaMorte: I learned to be a good student at St. Joseph's which was probably accidental. I won a spelling bee in forth grade. The prize was a Holy Picture which I proudly took home to my mother. Well... she carried on so, you would have thought that I had won the Nobel Peace Prize. But she was using good psychology as a mother for reinforcement. I was so taken by what I said to her "Gee ma, if you really like that I can get you some more." It was like a game for me. The people with whom I was in school with, and whom I saw at this reunion, incidentally, were so bright and mature for their age. You really had to work to win those holy pictures. The women were so good; the men weren't supposed to do well in school. With some of them, I even had to defend myself. One kid was supposed to study, but that was for girls. He really didn't know me because he felt that if I won the Holy Picture that I wasn't one of the guys. He called me names which I ignored. The nuns used to tell us that fighting was a sin. My mother told me not to fight... so I had to ask the nuns to walk me home from school. One kid, Jimmy threw an apple core at me. I said "OK, Jimmy that does it." We started to fight. We had a benevolent policeman, whom we called him Joe the Cop. He sensed when there was trouble. He was a great big man who came lumbering down to the other end of the street when he saw us throwing swings at each other. He never came down to protect me after that, because then

he realized that I was not a sissy since I was in the fight. So, having positive reinforcement, I went on.

SMJ: Did you, from the beginning, concentrate on education? Or, did you have ant other plans?

LaMorte: I wasn't sure. The one thing that did help me through was that when I finished my work, I was given permission to go over and help someone who was having a hard time of it. Peer teaching!! Some of the students, I think, were afraid of the nuns because they were stern. So, this is where I got my first dose of teaching. It was gratifying to see a peer understand fractions because I had no trouble learning them. That is how I think I passed the exam to get into the Airforce. I retained a great deal in fundamental arithmetic and algebra and geometry. There were many who did not do well and did not pass the Airforce exam because they could not recall all that they had learned earlier.

SMJ: Your BA was not in Education, was it?

LaMorte: No, it was a BA in Liberal Arts. I had a lot of science, and I was thinking of possibly medicine, too. But for medicine you had to invest a great deal of time, money, etc. I wanted to be in a "helping" profession.

SMJ: So you went to Teachers College then?

LaMorte: After the Masters. Then through personal administration. I was married while I was finishing. I met my wife in school. She was from Iowa. After one year, she got her Masters and went off to Colorado Springs. I stayed and was working at Pace College which is in lower NY near City Hall. She worked a



year in residence in Chicago. At that time I asked her if she would marry me. She said "yes," and we were married in Iowa and came back to live in NY, the first summer in an apartment of a French teacher, who taught at a private girls school. Each summer, she would go to Paris and let us rent her apartment. It was in a nice section of Fifth Avenue. Then we moved to Queens on Casino Blvd. which was not far from Queens College and the World's Fair of 1939. From there, we moved to Queen's Blvd. which is like the expressway almost. Right around the corner was the subway. In the meantime, Marsha, my wife, had a job in personnel at Fireman's Fund Insurance Company. We were only working three blocks apart. However, we had very different schedules, and it continued until 1955. At the time, Harvey Rice was president of this college, and he was looking for an assistant. At this same time, I had an appointment out at Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri, which is where my wife had gone. I went out there for an interview for the position, and it looked pretty good. However, Paul Bulger told me not to take the position until I talked with Harvey Rice.

SMJ: How did you know Dr. Bulger?

LaMorte: He was a associate provost at Columbia.

SMJ: So you met him while you were in Columbia?

LaMorte: Yes, I was in one of his classes. With Sy Molyneau.

SMJ: Was Dr. Bulger a good teacher?

LaMorte: Oh yes, he was a very participating type of person in the classroom you know. Sy Molyneau was in the same class, and he would come to class with his uniform on.

SMJ: So is that the connection with the college then? Dr. Bulger suggested that you come in and talk with Harvey Rice!

LaMorte: Yes, I came up in August to interview. It was the hottest in August that I can recall to this day, August of 1955. I liked this college. He offered me the position. I said to myself that I would learn a lot in that position, more than I would in the other position that was offered to me. It was more money at the other position, however.

SMJ: You were hired as his assistant? As an assistant to the President of the College?

LaMorte: Yeah sure. By then, I had experience and self-confidence which was a maturing experience. I came here, and worked with him. He was a marvelous fellow, very understanding, very conscience about the college, very scrupulous. He would sent his personal mail out with his own stamps, he would not use college stamps. He had been a Dean at Oswego College. When he left here he became President of McCallister College in Minnesota, which is a very rich school.

SMJ: It is a religious school, isn't it? Perhaps it isn't, I just thought it was.

LaMorte: I was with him for three years then became Associate Professor. I had been an Associate Professor when I came here, teaching Growth and Development, part time. After three years he left, and I left the position and went to the Department of General Education. It was a new exciting program. I was teaching courses that were comparable to Sociology 101 and 102.

SMJ: Who was the man in charge of that?

LaMorte: It was William Baker. We had a core faculty of six. We tapped all groups. It was a very different kind of General Education Program because it stretched out over the course of four years. I had an opportunity to teach at least six of the courses. There was Communication 105 and 106, Sociology 101 and 102, there was a course, Ways of Knowing which is now in Philosophy, Marriage and Family Living. One summer, I taught Man and His Ideas in Literature, which was like a course I had taken in Humanities A and B at Columbia College. We would discuss the ideas in Literature, not the plots.

SMJ: Dr. LaMorte, I would like to back track a little. You mentioned that when you came you worked under Dr. Rice, and that the campus was quite different than it is now.

LaMorte: Oh yes. It had, I think, under 2,000 students. We could all meet in the faculty in the old union which had two activities rooms with a sliding door.

SMJ: The library was here.

LaMorte: The library was here but it was a one floor plan, as was the union. When we had faculty meetings there may have been one or two people missing at the most. It was expected that you go to the meetings. It was as a family. We were very close. We were jammed in. There was not a lot of posh space to be had.

SMJ: But the college still had a very good reputation didn't it?

LaMorte: Yes, officials came here from all over the country

to recruit our people, and they came and went all over New York State.

SMJ: After Rice, it was Bulger, wasn't it?

LaMorte: Yes, Bulger followed Rice. I knew him. I was in the General Education Program, and at the time of the first Dean of Students was Gordon Kolph(?) Prior to that there was a Dean of Men and a Dean of Women. Ray Fritz, a biology teacher was the Dean of Men, and Miss Reed was a biology teacher and a Dean of Women (Kathern Reed). That was it. When Harvey Rice came, he brought in Gordon Kolph as Dean of Students. He had an associate for women and an associate for men. I remember him saying "Gee, your background is right for our department." I said "I know; however, I'm going over here with Harvey." So I immediately struck up a good conversation with Gordon, and I would go to their events because it was my cup of tea. Gordon left when Harvey left. He went to Bank Street School in New York to teach and do research. They brought in an interim person from Columbia. In fact, I knew her. They had a committee for a regular search. Someone had asked me to put in my name. I answered that I didn't think I should because I knew the person who was the interim. I knew for a fact that the person wanted the job permanently. But in about a year it was apparent that they were not going to hire that person permanently. Once, I felt sure of the fact, then I would put my hat in the ring. I remember going before the committee saying giving my background. I came in as an assistant which was a little different route for a student personnel type that and teaching, but

I said all those things did help me, and did help me become a better Dean of Students. I think it did because the thing that I was impressed with was how you learn something every single day that you live. Three years with Harvey Rice and three years in General Education Program was a fantastic experience of learning all of the time, and then I became the Dean of Students. That was an exciting time because there was a turn over of the staff. I was replacing most of the staff. In the process, I went to Paul Bulger and said, "A very sharpie, nice person who happens to be Black is applying for associate job." I have seen him, and he looks good. I would like you to meet him, and I recommend that we hire him. This was Jerry Bartow, who is at Columbia also. Bulger said "Go ahead". I said "You might get some flack because he was the highest ranking administrator in the whole system." An associate Dean of Students, can you imagine? We hired two more Blacks. Ray Dye who is now VP of Student Affairs at Bin Ghamton(?), but was hired with us as a Residence Hall Director. A woman named Robbie Lucky who was a Residence Hall Director. I lost track of her because her husband was going south, and she was going with him. We had hired three Blacks before the Affirmative Action. We lost them because the Telephone Co. took them out to lunch and they could out bid us. After a couple of years, it was decided that they were going to make the Deans into Vice Presidents. The Dean of Students would become Vice President of Academics. Interesting enough, I spoke against it. I said, "Don't do it." They wanted to know what was wrong, saying that I was going to be one of them. I

said not to get too many layers between the troops and the top. When there are too many layers of administration, you lose touch. They had to do it because of the salary and that sort of thing.

SMJ: Didn't increasing enrollment play a part in the decision?

LaMorte: Yes, enrollment was increasing. Here is what happened. I'm sure someplace in your file you have this. In 1945 when Dewey set up the State University System he said there would be a ten year moratorium. Excuse me, that was in 1948. A ten year moratorium on building in this thing, because the private school did not want us to grow. I can understand why. So, in 1958, right around the time that Paul Bulger came, the moratorium was off. As a matter of fact, they had a committee and the chairman of the committee raised 250 million dollars in the bond issue. He was Ralph Peo of Houdaille Industries(sp). I think his grandson was later on the faculty. He was Ralph Peo the 2nd or the 3rd. Ralph Peo who was the senior CEO of Houdaille Industries was the chairman and I used to sit on those meetings. What a wonderful learning experience it was. These were all sharpie guys in the way they thought, and how they were going to go about raising the money. A 250 million dollar bond issue passed without any trouble. That was just a drop in the bucket!! We were off and running. They started building here and other places when Rockefeller was in. When Harvey Rice was here, he had anticipated Nelson Rockefeller being Gov. and he invited him here to speak before he became NYS Gov. I recalled this because I was behind the stage, helping with the

commencement, and I read his speech at the same time Rockefeller was giving his speech. He really should have thrown the speech aside and spoken off the cuff because he was very good that way. Anyway, Harvey Rice read the handwriting on the wall. Rockefeller did become Gov." the Education Gov." because the State University just blossomed. From that moment, when they put the spade in the ground in 1958, we have been building. We are digging to this day!! We are digging the new arena, and it will never stop I guess. I remember that we had wooden walks to protect us from the mud. We had been hiring Faculty so fast, in waves, it seemed. We had to try and find a spot for them. We had "gang offices", and sometimes there would be 5 people in an office.

SMJ: No!! Didn't people complain?

LaMorte: Didn't anyone complain? Yes, there were some who did, but they were so busy being on the frontier, a little grousing, but a lot of fun. I did plead with Paul to slow down a little and not grow too fast. Problems will grow exponentially. You don't double your problems; you quadruple them. When we started with the Dean of Students, we were doing the entire Scajaquada Complex, I had students in on committees and saying what was needed in the new residence halls. We wanted one residence hall for apartments which would be great for graduate students. It couldn't be done. We wanted separate kinds of facilities, special facilities for home economic students, industrial arts, etc. They took a lot of notes on the issue, but they never did anything, and it was depressing. When they built

the Scajacquada Complex they would not let us behind the fences. It is like when you build your own house, you are afraid they are going to change things. But I was concerned that we weren't going to be able to get in, in time for September. Somehow we got our spies in the system, and we found out that there was a certain time when you need to put on the plaster. They sent the plaster up to the upper levels with hoses, as they don't carry them up like they used to do. That was the key, because that had not been completed yet, and the spies (my spies) said that they are behind schedule. I had nothing in writing, so I went to the President and said "I'm afraid we are going to be late, and you know when September comes the kids are going to be here with their Mothers and Grandmothers and we will be out on the lawn." The President said "Oh, you know they promised." And I said "Oh, yes, they promised!" In the meantime I asked Angie Palmeri who was a dynamo, terrific person, an associate, to make calls and to have lunch with the manager. We went down and said "How would you like to have 300 or 400 students? Could I house them here?" He said "Sure, only women, I do not want men." Those men they break every thing up." So I said "OK, there, will be women, nice quiet ones." In the meantime I was going back to find the smoking gun. One day I was going through some material at a meeting, and there in front of me, was a list of beds to be delivered to SUNY units. And I said "My God" I looked down at the paperwork, and it said Buffalo State College. That 300 beds will arrive on October 15th, I said "That is it!, Excuse me." I left the meeting showed Paul Bulger and he was livid! He said "Oct.



15th, that is a month after." He called a meeting of all the people involved and said that no one person was to blame for this. Many fingers were pointed, but no one was to blame. Paul was very upset, but he was a nice guy. He also knew that there was a serious problem. He said "You know we got to do something." I informed him that we had set up a Starter. The only thing we didn't have was transportation. We needed transportation, you couldn't ask the kids to pay their own fare back and forth. He got it, but he had to because everything was moving so fast in those days.

SMJ: I bet the girls were thrilled, weren't they?

LaMorte: They were. But you know girls. When they come for a semester, they come prepared for a year. So racks were put up in the halls for extra clothes. You know boys- two pairs of jeans, a couple of sweatshirts and a pair of sneakers. But they ruined the place, and the manager didn't want them. But the girls had an interesting experience, and they came through it very nicely, and were understanding of the situation.

SMJ: You can not pin-point the exact year of that, can you? That is alright, I will look it up. I don't know if that is recorded. That is very interesting.

LaMorte: In fact, they were building so much it was in the range of 9 million dollars. The other thing that bothered me was that they put the door to the bathrooms in the middle. You had to go through the bathrooms, just like the army. The men didn't care if they went back and forth. I thought it was gross. It was done,

and we had to do the best we could. I didn't want that. I wanted apartments with special facilities. In the meantime, we were also building a lot of things and I said "Why don't you think of putting parking under the buildings because right now we have room for parking, but in the future we will run out." Besides, cars are ugly unless you own a brand new Mercedes or Cadillac. Charlie Ball said that it would cost too much, but in the long run it would have been better.

SMJ: That fact is interesting. Well you certainly did become involved in your positions. After you were the Dean of Students, you became Vice President.

LaMorte: I had an opportunity to work with plan of government. They had a faculty council and an administrative council. And I asked: "Why don't don't you have a student personnel council. Of course, Gordon liked it and we ended up changing from bi to tri camoral (sp?). When Gordon left, I became the Dean of Students. I was chairman of that council by virtue of office and a member of the other two. It was apparent to me that I was going to three meetings. You could communicate with memos and minutes, but it was not the same. I said to somebody at the administrative council meeting, "Why don't we have a Senate, a college Senate with students, faculty, staff and administrators all together. One person was shocked! Students?? Sure, that is how they get to learn. Get them involved now. We started that and then, EK came in 1968. We should have organized right away, but there was some reluctance on the part of the faculty, who claimed

that students were transient. I said, "Well so are some faculty members." They were worried about students voting as a block, but they vote all over the place. I remember pushing hard for that, so at one point, the faculty said "OK, we will have the students. However; you are not on the Senate then." They said that I was the mouth piece of the students. I said, "Yes I would do a fairly good job, reflecting their feelings." It wasn't the same as A and B, if you get the students on what they are learning. Then there was the principal from campus school. He was a nice guy but he went along with them and convinced them the world has come to an end ... that the VP for student affairs wasn't "on the set." They believed him and put me back on. That took five years to bring that to head, and if we had moved the first year, we would of been way ahead of the other places. But EK was reluctant because of the faculty opposition. Finally, one day, I remember we were in Burchfield Center (where the center is located now). We were having a meeting of an administrative group. Steven Sherwin and I had been pushing for the student representation and I think they were tired of us. We wore them down, and they asked: "OK Sherwin and LaMorte, what is it you want? Would six be alright?" We answered: "No, twelve would be better!" So we had 12 students out of 50. In the meantime, there had been some problems at the college where the students wanted 50% representation! I went and told them that they had better not mess it up. We are having a hard time getting 12 out of 50 and that alone is a big break through. "Right now you students have zip... nothing..." of course they were getting their

que from student leaders at UB.

SMJ: That was in 1968. The late 60's and early 70's were bad years.

LaMorte: Yes. About 1967, Ted Ewing, Angie Palmeri and Ralph Quatroche and I sat down and we said: "Do you know something we have spent a lot of time recruiting, because we had 50 professionals on our staff. Secondly, we can't keep minorities. We found them, then lost them. Then we went trying to steal them from other people. We cut down on our recruiting and got more minorities in, more women in because of course there were more men in the field then. We could do better if we had our own program, and there was something that we know that we would like in a program. We sat down and put together a 36 hour program. It started through the committees. The faculty got it and said every other MS Degree has 30, why do you want 36? We want 30 plus 6 hours of internships. Well, they did not want us to do it. It went through, and it got to Albany. In Albany it took about 2 years. They sent a visiting team, one was from Michigan state, one was from Queens College and the other one from the Univ. of Albany. They came in and we sat down with them. And they said: "Right off the bat, you are going to have trouble with the faculty because they only want 30 hours and we want 30 plus 6. They said not to worry about that. They said they would not approve it unless it was 36 hours. They knew it was a leverage so they changed it.

SMJ: They were thinking of the students, I guess. What was going to come if they had to do six extra hours?

LaMorte: And they were thinking also, why should you be different? We had a good reason. Because we believe in internship very strongly.

SMJ: Well you were out of administration then in a sense for a while after you...

LaMorte: At the time I was in, and it was "in" when one day Bob Simpson (when he was our Dean) met me in the hall and said: "Albany has approved the program. However, we have no co-ordinator." I said: "Oh, yes you do, I want that job." So I left the Vice Presidency. In the meantime, I had a semester on sabbatical administrative leave, and spent it in Europe. In 1969, when I came back I said: "Gee, you can cut the tension with a knife." I suggested that they take time out, cancel classes for a couple of days and start talking. Now what are we trying to do? But I could not sell the idea. A short time later we had trouble. In the meantime I was headed for another spot, so it didn't matter. I wanted that co-ordinator job. That is the culmination. When you have done it, you want to teach it. I taught the first class in the Union. 616 was the higher education class: Problems and Practices in Higher Education. There were 11, and I called them the "Gang of 11". That was the first and last time we had class that size. After that, we were off and running. It immediately caught fire. I had no help. Dave Rogers was head of the Graduate Area. He had himself a secretary and two work study people. I had been in admissions work in Pace and at Columbia so I set up a kind of satellite admissions office with about 12 form letters. He

would send me something, and I would answer "I am happy to receive your letter of application. We need this, and I would put a check and send them out. I was running it out of the basement of Rockwell Hall. Dave was very good, and he was trying very hard but it did not help. It kept growing, and then Angie Palmeri got a graduate assistant for me, and that person helped. In the meantime I had the position as Head of the Union. The same year I was Head of the Union, I was president of Kenmore Rotary. Everything was happening. It was fun though. I just kept going, and there was never a dull moment. I felt good, and things were happening.

SMJ: You have been happy here, haven't you?

LaMorte: Oh yes, absolutely. In fact I am going to miss it. The students really give you the spark because they represent the new wave of future.

SMJ: Can you give me off the top of your head, some professors, or other colleagues whom you admire, or respected very, very much?

LaMorte: Oh Yeah!! Gee we were a family in those days. We are not quite like that now. The mission has changed as well. Oh, Hal Peterson, John Urban, Brunger, Buck Weaver, I could go on and on. I can even see their faces.

SMJ: Dr. Sherrie?

LaMorte: Sherrie? Oh, George Sherrie. He was a deluxe, premier teacher. He should have received the Chancellor's Award for Teaching, He was outstanding, not only as a teacher but as a person. We were Vice Presidents together. We never had to write

memos to each other. It was all by phone, or word of mouth, always above board, never bickering.

SMJ: Do you feel, as many people, that we have been very fortunate in having excellent Presidents, and that each one has contributed something different and unique to the institution?

LaMorte: Yes, each one has been different. I think some... Harvey Rice was very conscience pulling it together when we were small. He was very anxious to have quality, recognizing that we were not drawing the same caliber of students Yale and Harvard were drawing. Paul Burger, of course, was more into human relations. He came in at the time of building. Here is a human relations forte guy and they give him all this building!! But he handled it with the help of people like Charles Ball and others. They were exciting times, even turbulent.

SMJ: Fretwell probably would have enjoyed that building thing more than Bulger did.

LaMorte: It was probably, yes, his cup of tea. He was a very bright man. But Paul Bulger felt like the campus was family, and he related the community to it. He described us to the community very well and there was a link, which I don't think the other Presidents had.

SMJ: President Johnstone tried to do that. He was interested in the urban community. He couldn't connect the two, could he?

LaMorte: No, because Paul felt it on the inside, you have to feel it on the inside. I say that to the students all the time "You can not go through the motions. It has to be inside of you to

be able to come out." I constantly tell them "Don't ever try to fake it with students because they will see right through you. It will be inside of you and it has to come out." I had no trouble because I grew up with that feeling, that my peers were like a family.

SMJ: That is your contribution to the college, isn't it? The personnel in your department, then your teaching the values of life.

LaMorte: And trying to maintain a family which we once had. Even though it was tough, we kept reaching and struggling not to lose it. Sometimes the administrators would be unhappy when I would say "Look, we are known for being close to students and teaching. Don't lose it. Otherwise, we will be a pale version of UB. We can not match them for money because they will out-do us all the time. They have the money. We have what they can't have. They have tried but they just do not have it."

SMJ: But you know that is true. We are the largest right now, aren't we? What are we? 12,000?

LaMorte: We have lost a lot of family. As we lose the people...

End of tape, no tape 2 to be found.