

INTERVIEW OF ALBERT BOWKER 5-15-through 17-1985 by Julius C.C. Edelstein

**NOTE: TAPE 1, AND CORRESPONDING TRANSCRIPTION, MISSING AS OF 7/2012**

**TAPE 2, SIDE A**

NOTE: EXCESSIVE WHISTLING IN BACKGROUND, POOR VOLUME

JE: The faculty at Park Avenue was very opposed. They liked the idea of once in a while going up there. But that's one of the points I was going to make. Let's see what you think. And that is that the City College, while it had the tradition and it had some of the faculty, from where it's located, could never have remained, never even have become the great...the north campus or south campus.

AB: Not without massive manipulation of the neighborhood.

JE: That's what I mean. Was massive manipulation of the neighborhood possible? Well, (inaudible) Could City College have become the kind of center of gravity of the City University with the professional schools, Baruch and John Jay, moved up there, and the graduate center there? Not without massive manipulation of the neighborhood. Was massive manipulation of the neighborhood possible? The University of Chicago did it, the University of Pennsylvania, very similar circumstances, and Columbia did it, not as successfully, but not as a total failure.

AB: I guess they never tried.

JE: That's a new thought. (interruption)

AB: Uncle Julius is recording my innermost thoughts. For his new novel called "The Adventures of the Boy Chancellor". We're still on tuition.

JE: Yes.

AB: There are no more free tuition institutions anywhere, are there?

JE: Are there any free tuition institutions? None that I know of, I don't think so. In this country?

AB: Yes, I talked about that.

JE: I think someone told me the Dutch institutions were still free, but then, they're stoning the Pope.

AB: How would you explain the passionate...you made some reference to it at one point a few minutes ago, the passionate attachment, of the Jardinos and the Dave Ashes, to free tuition?

JE: It's a matter of money, also a matter of supporting the institutions. Well, there was this tradition, back to Townes and Harris and all that, the free academy that's open, but I think it was basically a failure.

AB: (inaudible)

JE: It was basically a failure to understand the mechanics of financial aid as the way it's developed. Once the federal government decided, in a multi-billion dollar decision, \$10-15 billion at its peak, to support higher education in this country by giving money to students, the only way institutions could get it was to take the money from the students, and they just didn't believe it, didn't know about it, couldn't understand it, didn't want to.

AB: You know, in some (inaudible) Queens and some of the other colleges, students fees...you know, nickel and diming.

JE: Not big enough.

AB: \$100-200.

JE: Yes.

AB: Tuition is now what, \$1500?

JE: Well, it wasn't then, when we put it in, I think it was \$400.

AB: Seriously enough, the government of California reduced tuition symbolically this year.

JE: Really?

AB: There might be a little mileage there.

JE: Back in 1968, the New York Times carried a report that Moonies Investors Services proposed the abolition of free tuition as a means of improving the quality of the status of city bonds.

AB: Really?

JE: I'd say that the quality and status of the city bonds is nothing that ever (inaudible)

AB: Fascinating.

JE: ...or even interested me. (inaudible) such a dumb thing.

AB: What, in city bonds?

JE: No, I mean, these bastard bankers and brokers and percentages, they get everybody to borrow all the money they can.

AB: That's the international-national situation.

JE: Credit is what they live on. In 1969, when the state's executive budget for the first time proposed to...

AB: Where are you? I don't have that.

JE: 3C.

AB: You didn't do 18? Where are you (inaudible)

JE: Did you have any...no, you didn't. Let's go back (inaudible)

AB: Indeed I do.

JE: I just missed it. What is your recollection of the discussion of the status of CUNY at the Constitutional Convention of 1967?

AB: You were working hard to get the Constitutional Convention to adopt an amendment or a plank in the constitution giving higher education roughly the same status as elementary and secondary education, as a right of the citizens. And in order to do that, you had me endorse state aid to parochial schools, which I did, dutifully, on radio once, with a certain lack of enthusiasm. But I did do it. I remember it.

JE: I don't remember it.

AB: Tony was chairman, wasn't he?

JE: Yes.

AB: He appreciated it, he really did, and I went on the radio program with him and someone said how can we possibly do that? I said well, I just...the time has come. The deal was that we would support aid to the parochial schools, and they'd support us.

JE: Yes, I remember. And there was a large body of thought that, after the convention, that that deal would hold. You had your doubts?

AB: Well, a small body of thought, as it both turned out.

JE: Yes.

AB: All right, I did do that.

JE: In 1969, when...

AB: Incidentally, coming back to the issue of aid to the private schools, which had tuition tax credits and such things I proposed. The parochial schools do a lot better by minorities and poor people (inaudible)

JE: No doubt about it.

NOTE: EXCESSIVE ECHO

AB: My beloved Governor Lehman was the first one to propose to grant transportation (inaudible) to students at parochial schools, and it was put in.

JE: In 1969, when the state's executive budget would propose to cut the appropriation for CUNY, proposed to cut what we had asked for in the appropriations for CUNY, you said this would mean that the freshman class would have to cut back. Rockefeller replied publicly that there was absolutely no need for an enrollment cut. He charged that you and other CUNY officials were trying to frighten people in the hopes of getting more state aid. Do you remember that? It was really the first time they had ever cut back.

AB: Yes, I do. Rockefeller's diagnosis wasn't wrong (inaudible) CUNY eventually got more state aid. But it wasn't as bad...what year was it I proposed to cut out freshman admissions altogether?

JE: That was 1967.

AB: That was a tough one. No one believed me.

JE: I definitely remember I was one of the few who really urged you to do that. That was the Herman...what was her name again, do you remember her name, this woman, this young woman who was the leader of...Herman...Citizens Committee...that was terrific.

AB: One thing I never thought of doing though, which was done after I left by Jackie Wechsler, abolishing Hunter High School. That really (inaudible) the whole city.

JE: It really did.

AB: I was just cutting out the university (inaudible) indiscretion. I never had the wit to do that (inaudible)

JE: That's lovely. Now, you said something in 1969 that was reported in the Times, when you said, after a big rally that was somewhat organized, that a proposed cut, the proposed cut that Rockefeller would propose, would mean 3,000 fewer admissions to CUNY. You warned at that time, this was in March, that the tension between Negroes and Jews might explode if the university's forced to cut the size of its freshman class, because of budget cuts. That was in a radio interview which the Times picks up. Do you recall your espousal of this?

AB: I don't, frankly.

JE: I don't either, although (inaudible) I mean, we would be faced with the dilemma of...really would be faced with the dilemma of cutting back on freshman enrollment, and if we had cut back just on the basis of high school grades, we would have reduced minority enrollment substantially. The positive side of that was there were a lot of complaints, but if you look at us compared to the school system or to any other services in New York, we really didn't tear the city apart. The fact that we could expand fast enough... Quite the contrary, we were a unifying voice.

AB: Probably that's what I meant to say. I couldn't understand it otherwise. Yes, that makes sense.

JE: If you have to cut back, (inaudible) Well, there's no doubt that the university was a major, major unifying force, and aside from all of the other things, that was a plus, I thought, for the City of New York, which was having its problems. (inaudible) we better quit. (inaudible)

AB: At 4:00 in the morning on the way to the office (inaudible)

JE: Okay, that will do it. Three was really the most pregnant and exciting. There is a lot of literature on (inaudible) books.

AB: You mean as far as the City University structure?

JE: No, open admissions, pros and cons.

AB: None of it dealt with the political situation. There are some cons, how to destroy a college (inaudible) other historic...history professor at City College.

JE: I thought that little (inaudible) by Fred Hackinger (inaudible)

AB: Yes.

JE: I still bump into that everywhere I go. I remember last year I went to a meeting here of community college administrators. I said well, there's City University. (inaudible) somebody like Stanley Fink, who is a graduate of Brooklyn, he just thinks that's the only thing we could have done and that it was a good thing (inaudible)

AB: I think it was, but you know (inaudible)

JE: Well, I believe it. I already see some of it...I believe that now, 20 years from now, 15 years from now, you'll have comparable Blacks and Puerto Ricans saying well, I attended City College or Queens College, and (inaudible) here is what I am today. There is a lot of that already beginning.

AB: There is some. And the problem was that when I went there, I really didn't believe the high schools were a good screening device. Now, they may be better today.

JE: They're not much better.

AB: But I still remember (inaudible), a little incident that made a big effect on it, you mentioned that incident. He moved into the West Side, and his wife I believe filled out a welfare application, she applied to school, she registered the kid, a PH.D. from Harvard and a full professor (inaudible) his wife (inaudible) she dressed like a million dollars. How can you hand someone like that a welfare application? It's just that the bigotry in New York really is worse. I mean, it isn't worse, it's worse in Maryland (inaudible) this is awful, John was on welfare.

JE: Each time I talk to you you give me a somewhat different...

AB: Well, he gets along with Blacks, but he really doesn't believe...he doesn't hold them to the same standards as whites, which I think is the worst form of racism.

JE: Yes.

AB: That's patronizing, and I guess I did some of that. I didn't really mean to, and I don't believe in it. I never had a Black to sit near the door for that.

JE: (inaudible)

AB: Advocates it.

JE: (inaudible) close to that, but I never had a vice-chancellor who couldn't perform, I never had a Black vice-chancellor.

AB: (inaudible)

JE: (inaudible) he did perform.

AB: Of course.

JE: Actually he wasn't too good.

AB: He was a better scholar than he was...

JE: (inaudible) you probably never heard of him, Jose Cabrenas.

AB: (inaudible) I know him. Joe. I wanted to make him general counsel and the board wouldn't buy it. He was general counsel at Yale, very successful.

JE: Good, Yale, general counsel is something. A dean at Rutgers Law School (inaudible) as white as could be.

AB: Talking about negotiations, I still remember the hoards who came later. I didn't mention it, but...

JE: Good morning, we're continuing the interview with Dr. Albert H. Bowker. We're on Series 4, although there are a number of things from Series 3 that I want to catch up with. Maybe we'll start with those. How did...did you have a voice in the appointments to the board during the middle period of your chancellorship?

NOTE: EXCESSIVE BACKGROUND NOISES

AB: I believe so, that John Lindsay was receptive (inaudible) student member.

JE: (inaudible)

AB: (inaudible) my suggestion. I can't remember now. I can't remember the mechanism for that...was the panel still in place then?

JE: No.

AB: Well, John was interested in making good appointments. That was during the Wagner years, the panel, and it was in place. We reset it up for Beame, and it worked to some extent, but in Lindsay's time it was temporarily out. (inaudible) chairman. But you made suggestions to this, because those two certainly were (inaudible) Who was the deputy mayor then, Price?

JE: Price started, then it was Sweet.

AB: I probably had more relations with Sweet than with Price. Price was just there for a year. My relations...I'd say I kept my distance, but I had relations with Elliot (inaudible) and (inaudible)

JE: (inaudible) Still talking about you whenever I run into him. Now, also during the 1967-8 period of tensions after Brownsville, but at the time you will recall that the time was past of the bill in 1966, the construction (inaudible) which we'll get into later. But one of the provisions in that bill was an authorization for the university to operate six high schools in disadvantaged areas. Now, this was, as I recall, your idea. What was your feeling, what were your thoughts behind it?

AB: Well, the university was operating Hunter High and had what seemed to me didn't have much use as a training institution. I always thought Hunter High was one of the few goodies in New York offered the middle class, and never was against it, although I thought something about abolishing it, but I thought all the pluses outweighed the minuses. As for the other high schools, it seemed to me both in terms of training, there has always been a kind of idea that a saturation of student tutors, student peers, student aids, teacher trainees in a high school might upgrade it now. We never did it, and I don't know how practical it was, but I really thought that the inner city high schools would be much more useful to our schools of education and the teacher practice arrangements they then had.

JE: Well, to refresh your memory, since I was very much involved, you appointed a task force.

AB: That's right.

JE: Consisting of one Timothy Healy, which was his first real assignment, and myself and Ben Rosner, Art Zinger and that high school and grade school principal, whose name escapes me at the moment. Seymour Gang. To go around and meet with our various colleges, see who wanted to do it. We did not meet with great success. Nobody wanted to do it.

AB: Well, Brooklyn with Ceraff was more willing, and of course Irene was there then, who was more willing than anybody else at that time. Nobody else really wanted to do it. Lehman did it, I remember, but then with that lack of enthusiasm from part of our administrators and faculty of the colleges with whom we met over a period time in great (inaudible) depth we met with the high school principals, and you were present at that meeting, the Association of High School Principals, and they didn't want it at all. It would have been a mistake to impose that from the top. I had more grass roots support certainly. I had seen a lot of mistakes made that way, including school decentralization, for one.

JE: Of course (inaudible). I mean, actually to some extent, it has come into being here. Well, I'll not say that if I look back on the City University days I feel my greatest failure was my inability to get a handle on methods of improving the school system. As far as I could tell in the eight years I was there, the schools steadily deteriorated, and as the principal consumer of its products and principal producer of its personnel, it seemed to me we ought to have a handle on it, but we never got that. I have been skeptical ever since in higher education in terms of doing anything, and I've been quite skeptical about the present well-publicized efforts of Harvard, Stamford and Berkeley, although they think they're doing something. We'll see if they have any long term effect. They're already discussing at Stamford whether the experiment is over, or whether it's replicated.

AB: Well, we're really getting into it now.

JE: The time is right. Of course, the union was fairly rigid in those days, too. I think though Shanker would have cooperated.

AB: Yes. And we met with him once, I remember, and he did...

JE: But it was a failure. There is no doubt that you have correctly identified the source of our problems and of everybody's problems in the City of New York in that trying to do something about high schools, though I suppose I believe that you have to start even earlier than the high schools. And I think there's becoming a general perception of the responsibility of higher education in this field, that the time when you saw it, it wasn't seen at all, not even in our (inaudible) Now, did...you said something yesterday, you emphasized it, mentioned it a couple of times. Of course I remember, I use that figure often in discussing education, that the high schools had been originally functioning as kind of a screen for screening those...that one of the things that you did in open

admissions was to abolish the requirement that they have a particular kind of diploma. You used to have to have an academic diploma or something like that.

AB: Yes.

JE: And we admitted anybody with a general one or anything else, any kind of vocational diploma. That was certainly essential in order to get broad based students into the university. Did you ever have any afterthoughts about that?

## **SIDE B**

JE: ...some kind of sense to reform the high schools, and to really make them prepare students for college. But there were lots of problems. In the first place, it was reasonably weak and ineffective leadership in the New York City schools. I was appointed about the same time as Calvin Gross, and he just never could control the system. Then Bernie Donovan took over, who really didn't have any ideals...

AB: Educational vision.

JE: Educational vision. I remember getting drunk with him one night. He says, I have 30 years service, what the hell do I care? And he would do anything he was pressured to do, or even that I wanted him to do, but he didn't really care. The union was gaining in strength enormously, and was a pretty conservative force. The racial tensions surrounding the schools were enormous, and to some extent open admissions was a result of being unable to rely on the schools for their traditional functions.

AB: That makes it more coherent.

JE: Take the history of those years. Everyone I think more or less admits that. We spoke yesterday of the...we didn't altogether agree, but we spoke yesterday about the importance of the City University becoming and remaining a more or less independent entity, at least independent of the bureaucracy of the state university, and the point...I would like your view on this point. The point is that the state university, with all the money that Rockefeller poured into its plant and into its operations stew, has never attained the academic levels of the City University in terms of attracting faculty. They attract students, but they don't attract faculty, and they never seem to have arrived except in individual departments here and there, and the recent report of the commission certainly upholds that viewpoint.

AB: Yes.

JE: If you step back and look at the last conference board evaluation of graduate programs, you see a certain amount of strengths in the northeast, strengths at Rutgers, strengths at Buffalo, strengths at Stonybrook, maybe some at Albany and Binghamton, I don't remember.

AB: No.

JE: And of course the great strength at the City University, and in fact it did better than I thought it might, but it certainly did very well indeed, better than any of those institutions, or about comparable to Rutgers. Not much past U. Mass, Boston, U. Mass Amherst, rather, the flagship, and some. Now, 20-30 years ago you wouldn't have seen any of that, now that's a new development. There is beginning to appear some quality high level programs in the public institutions in the northeast. Maryland would be in that category also, and Penn State, but they've always been a little bit ahead of those. Not much. This state is still closer to the traditional support of private higher education, sharply breaking as you cross the line into Virginia and North Carolina, and so forth, where public institutions dominate. I think it may be a little critical of SUNY, that SUNY has done pretty well at two campuses in science, which is the weakest part of CUNY. Well, I do think it's true that in the humanities particularly, and in the social sciences to some extent, CUNY can attract better faculty. They still have a hard time in experimental science.

AB: But isn't there something to the fact that it is in the city, and there are certain people...

JE: Who love the city.

AB: Who love the vitality.

JE: That's true. But that doesn't have to do with the independence of the university, that has to do with the attraction of the city. The question is, could the City University exist as an affiliated part of the State University? It could obviously at some level. You've always felt it wouldn't do as well politically, and that might be true, although as you point out, both Buffalo and Stonybrook did very well politically.

AB: Yes.

JE: But they still, with all their political clout, from the governor to the majority leader, to the speaker in the Assembly, they haven't, even though heavily favored, there wasn't the administrative leadership or the ability of the administrative leadership, as Johnny Toe will testify, to break through the bureaucracy. He says that.

AB: Yes, that's what the new report says.

JE: It happens to be something that I have a particular interest and concern with as a general idea, and that's why I'm pursuing the point with you.

AB: The problem I have with it always is (inaudible) so specific to New York City.

JE: One second. It's so specific to New York City, you say?

AB: I don't know of any case, though Wayne State may be a case in which a city identifies with an academic institution as an important priority. I mean, I don't think San Francisco could care, or the mayor of San Francisco would be as interested in Stamford and Berkeley as she would be in anything in San Francisco, and that just seems...in this country in general it's a kind of an unnatural unit for it to be interested in higher education, it's so strongly a state responsibility.

JE: Is there any reason for that? That's only tradition, too.

AB: That's tradition, that's true.

JE: Of course, once you have... I think it's a point to be made, once you have the responsibility, the primary responsibility as a unique thing New York City has for education at the lower levels, why there's no place at which it actually stops. I just wanted to get your reaction to that. What were your relations, the relations of the City University in your time with the privates?

AB: Well, somewhat mixed. I started out with Jim Allan to have periodic meetings with the spokesman for...there were four parties, the Gould, Bowker, Allan and Hester representing the project. We had a cooperation for a while, and Hester became very strident about competition, particularly the graduate center, and I thought was very much off bass, and I talked to Sawhill about not following in his footsteps, and he did follow in his footsteps. Brademus has not, and I think finally that lesson has gotten across. And I've talked to him about it, too. I got Jocko in when he took that job. I said, you've just got to cut that out. However, things are much worse than they were generally. I guess we're in for a big fight, because I really think New York State...

JE: Between the publics and the privates?

AB: Yes, New York State is putting an awful lot of money in the privates. Johnny believes that certainly the biggest effort in the country, and I think it's the biggest per capita effort, although it gets kind of technical when you add the tuition assistance program to the Bundy aid, to various kinds of tax exemptions and this and that. I don't know, Maryland may even do more for its private institutions. There's an awful lot. It has something like Bundy aid, but it doesn't have anything better than Bundy aid, in my opinion. It doesn't have anything like the tuition assistance program, but actually provides capital directly to private institutions, and builds buildings for them. Johns Hopkins has the best political operation in the state, and makes ours look kind of amateurish really. But be that as it may, you put a lot of money in, yet if you look at the great universities of the country, none of them are in New York any more. Columbia aspired to that category, but it's kind of been pushed aside by UCLA and Texas, Rochester and Cornell. In some ways Cornell may be the most interesting place that none of them have achieved, say Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Stamford status among the privates or Berkeley, UCLA, Michigan, Texas status, among others

JE: The publics.

AB: They're just not in the top, and there's a hell of a lot of money going into...not much to show for it, and it's pork barreled out on a per capital basis, to mediocre institutions, which I just feel the whole policy has been wrong, I think Bundy was wrong. I'm more sympathetic to tuition assistance than I am to the Bundy aid, and I proposed a different plan myself. Jim Allan more or less agreed with me, but the privates wouldn't hear of it. They got what they wanted, and they got a big dose of state control along with it. Talk about bureaucracy, they gave into the bureaucracy as a price for money.

JE: There's a tendency in that direction.

AB: That was poor judgment on their part, it hasn't worked out very well in my opinion. New York is not an educational leader, it just isn't, in terms of top quality research, with one exception maybe, medicine. Those great medical schools combined with Rockefeller University make New York probably as good as anyplace in the country as a medical research center. But otherwise there's nothing tops there.

JE: Is your judgment...this is a definition question, but is your judgment of the eminence and worth of an educational institution its research track record?

AB: I'm talking about state support of private institutions. What does it want to accomplish? Access, I would think the record of private institutions on access is fair, but the public institutions really provide the big access to minorities. Variety, okay. Quality. And when you're talking about quality, it's hard to measure. The present plans in New York do not enhance quality of undergraduate education in my judgment. If you ask Hamilton or Vassar, they don't really care, there's such a drop in the bucket that goes to them. My plan, what was actually given them, one of my ideas was to have the state match the first say half a million or million dollars a year that people raise. That's a formula that's nonpolitical. That would have meant a lot to these small liberal arts colleges.

JE: Yes.

AB: Now they get practically nothing. Columbia College, okay. So the present plan encourages degree production, the production of large numbers of mediocre degrees, and so no, I mean, I think the City University provides a very, almost a central role for New York. It's not the only worth, but the question is, and it's a state supported, and publicly supported institution. The question is, why should public funds be used to support private institutions, what do you get out of it? You don't get top quality out of it. If you ask them what they want, they'd say that's what they want. Nowadays everybody's off...I may be exaggerating, everybody's off on a high tech R & D kick, and did not have a first rate engineering school in New York State, and it's ridiculous with all the money they're pumping into it. But they don't.

JE: The Rensselaer affair, but not top.

AB: Well, it wouldn't compare with MIT, Berkeley or Stanford, Illinois or Michigan. Actually, the best engineering schools in the country are mostly public, with a few privates, MIT being an exception. The reason for that is it's the old land grant tradition, that's where the engineers came from, and the large ones are public. The big sources of engineers are public institutions.

JE: That's interesting.

AB: You never hear much about Harvard, Princeton and Yale engineering. They have it, but it doesn't amount to much. Numerically it's pretty good what they have.

JE: Now let's go to series 4, I mean, the questions in series 4. What is your recollection - we mentioned it yesterday - but what is your recollection of the significance and the impact of the position you took in 1967 that you would not admit a freshman class?

AB: Wasn't that 1965? Let's talk about dates a minute.

JE: 1965? No, it was 1967, because I'd just joined you, and I was in the middle of that. I just joined you in 1966.

AB: When was the City University construction fund signed?

JE: It was signed in July 6, 1966.

AB: Then it must have been the September, 1966, class over which I created that crisis.

JE: Yes.

AB: It's not 1967.

JE: You're correct.

AB: Well, I had decided, and I'm apparently off a year, let me go back. I was appointed...

JE: 1963.

AB: 1963, and I precipitated my crisis with the board in...

JE: 1965-6.

AB: It took me two years, instead of one. It just seemed to me that the university had a physical plant that was so marginal that it had to risk everything, or I had to risk everything, to lick that problem. And I devised a scheme, analogous to the State University construction fund, which involved a levy of tuition to finance construction. I called it a dummy tuition because in fact there could have been student aid adequate to cover all the tuition and still permit issuing of bonds. The capital budget of the City of New York was simply not adequate to do the job. It was at that time around \$500 million, but not really spent, and so tied up in red tape and bureaucracy that it makes even the State of New York look like a speed demon. And the state didn't have adequate bonding authority either, because of constitutional limitations. So the big notion of construction in New York, starting even with Moses, was to find some way around this morass, and the way was to generate an income stream, in some cases imaginary, but still using it as a basis for bonds. And something like that had to be done, and something like that was done in the end. But I proposed it, and that led to the Board of Higher Education meeting without me, and I submitting my resignation, finding that unacceptable. They really wanted to fire me, and I beat them to it.

JE: Who were your principal supporters on the board at that time? Ray was for you.

AB: Ray, Rochamp, Border. Ruth, really, she would call me from a phone booth and tell me to go out to a phone booth and call her back. She always thought Gus (inaudible) was having my phone tapped. I wouldn't be surprised, those guys were really capable of almost anything. I think (inaudible) supported me.

JE: Yes, they did.

AB: But it was a pretty wild scheme. The thing that infuriated me was not even so much that they turned it down as that they refused to discuss it. I mean, I'd say, we have these needs, and they'd say well now, that would annoy the governor, that will annoy the legislature. You can't get your needs fulfilled unless you articulate them. That was the real problem, as I said yesterday, with Gus. He really would rather not pressure the political figures. He came in and said to me, he says, I don't understand you. I said, well, you're paid \$40,000 a year, and you cause all this trouble. Look at me, I do this all for nothing. I don't know, Gus, there's something wrong with this.

JE: That's wonderful.

AB: All you do is cause trouble. That's what I'm paid to do. I mean, Ronald Reagan evidently detested Charlie Hitch because he would decide how much money to give him, and Hitch would say it's inadequate. No department head would say it's inadequate, the Department of Labor, the Department of Highways. They all said, that's fine. The president would say (inaudible) Reagan would get furious. I said, but that's his job, Ronny.

JE: What were the considerations, to go back a year, what were the considerations which entered into your development of the master plan of 1964, which projected the two track open admissions policy, to become effective in 1965...1975?  
How did you get into that?

AB: I don't remember exactly what you mean by "two track". Community College?

JE: Community College.

AB: Yes. As I said, that probably was modeled on the California plan, and it was modeled on what we finally did in open admissions. It was some division based on measures of ability...

JE: I'm not emphasizing the two tracks. I'm just emphasizing the...

AB: Open admissions?

JE: Yes. The open admissions as a goal.

AB: It was in the wind, it was a goal of the State University, it was a goal of the state, it was the goal of progressive looking states around the United States, to have open admissions. California, as I said, adopted it in 1960. It seemed more startling in New York somehow.

JE: Yes. You know why that was, because we had all those Blacks. Who gave you the idea, what gave you the idea...you've already told me, but if there was any other proposal to establish a construction fund for CUNY?

AB: It was modeled after the state, but it wasn't...just the State University construction fund. The notion of separate authorities to build public buildings in New York, beginning with the Triborough Bridge, I mean, that was the way New York did public construction.

JE: Yes, that's a good analogy, with Moses. How did you happen to get Fred Ohrenstein to be the prime sponsor of the legislation?

AB: Well, I believe he was the chairman of the relevant committee. Was there a joint education committee at that time, between the Senate and the Assembly?

JE: There was, and he was chairman.

AB: He was chairman of Brooklyn College Alum, a New Yorker, a liberal thinking person, interested in education. I didn't pick him. He was there.

JE: I see. I mean, you didn't have any special connection with him?

AB: No, I did not then. I did later as we grew.

JE: He says today (I interviewed him) that that was the high point of his interest in higher education. That he really enjoyed his officeship and then his sponsorship of those hearings.

AB: I think it was his idea to have the hearings. And he got a lot out of it. I mean...

JE: He looks back on it with a lot of satisfaction.

AB: Yes, pretty good. Daily publicity. It was a big mess that I had created, and somebody...the only other possibility was for the regents to step in and mediate the mess, somebody had to do it. Fred did it. More or less.

JE: Yes.

AB: The regents helped.

JE: Well, that's important. How did Gus Rosenberg react to those hearings, do you know?

AB: Well, he was nervous about them, but it never I guess occurred to them that they would lose them, and when they put on their big gun, Charlie Tuttle, and he didn't know the first thing about the university or its needs or construction, that was really devastating to them. I mean...

JE: Fred didn't mention that.

AB: I have a tape of those hearings somewhere, and they lasted several hours a day for several days, so that I've probably thrown it away. I never actually listened to any of it, except Charlie Tuttle's humiliation.

JE: If you could find them...

AB: They're probably around CUNY somewhere, I don't have them here.

JE: So my next question is not based on any information, but just on logic: did he try to reach Ohrenstein or anybody in the senate to call the hearings off?

AB: Not that I know.

JE: How and in what way do you remember Mayor Wagner's intervention in the struggle between yourself...

AB: Well, Mayor Wagner was in his last year in office, the last months, when I had the final showdown, and he intervened with the board, appeared before the board and urged them to reconsider my resignation, and to call me back. And it turned out that they were circulating a lie about me in a way which...Cy Rifkin's law firm was counsel to the Center for Urban Education, and in the Center for Urban Education, as part of the proposal, I had pledged a certain fraction of my time and saying that was worth \$15,000 or something, which is a way you generate matching funds when you get proposals, and I was board chairman. It was a plausible if slightly exaggerated commitment on my part. And they circulated the story that I was taking \$15,000 secretly from the Center for Urban Education, which was a government project under the university's sponsorship. There would have been nothing wrong with my doing that if I had cleared it with the board, but doing it behind their back would be, if not illegal, at least unethical. And that was a direct lie, and it was a violation of confidentiality. I mean, I consider it myself a flagrant violation of legal ethics, and I have never really been friendly with Rifkin since, although I've seen him some socially, and he has admitted he was in the wrong. Not on that, but...and it the (inaudible) who told me that this lie was being circulated, and they said they couldn't support me if it was true. I said well, it isn't true. And once they knew that, and Wagner knew that, he came and set the record straight.

JE: First he called for a meeting up at his house.

AB: I have to break now briefly. I'll be back.

JE: We're continuing after a brief suspension, and we're on section 4. I did want to ask you one more thing from last night. Would you mind retelling the story of your exchange with Lindsay in Harlem, and Copeland?

AB: This was after Copeland was appointed acting president, and one night, quite late at night, Lindsay called me and said that Copeland was creating a riot in Harlem. I believe the incident involved people who were sitting in or otherwise doing something to the ROTC area at City College.

JE: Yes. (interruption)

AB: It doesn't seem to me entirely reasonable that Black students would be so involved in that. That was more a white radical thing. Anyway, he was going to arrest students, and Lindsay called and said I should call him off because he would create a riot. His community workers in Harlem had said we would burn Harlem down, or some very dramatic...so I called Copeland and I said, how is it going, what's going on? He said, don't worry, I'm going to catch them, I have got them surrounded, boy oh boy. I said, don't you think you ought to slow it down? Don't you worry, Al, I'll get them. So I called Lindsay back and I said well...

**TAPE 3, SIDE A**

NOTE: LOUD WHISTLE IN BACKGROUND, POOR VOLUME

AB: That...we're talking about turning the school system over to the community boards entirely, and that actually went farther than we ought to have. Now, there was a different (inaudible) There was another, different dynamic in Brooklyn, and that was the Bed-Stuy Corporation (inaudible) Frank Thomas, the head of CBS...

JE: Paley?

AB: Paley and all those people around Bobby Kennedy were pushing me to do something in Brooklyn, the community...

JE: Yes, I remember that.

AB: (inaudible) Bill Birenbaum was their consultant. Well, he was working on it, and he had been pushed out of the Brooklyn campus of Long Island University and so they wanted something done in Brooklyn. They didn't say that they wanted community control necessarily, but they did in a way. They were another reason that we were looking at Brooklyn, and it seemed hard to do something without community involvement at that time.

JE: I'd forgotten about that.

AB: Big pressure from the Kennedys.

JE: Yes.

AB: And the forces that they represented. I think that was what John Lindsay resented basically, that Bobby won one. But he worked on it. He came to see...had me to breakfast with him, he visited Brooklyn with me.

JE: Bobby?

AB: Yes. Is that political pressure? I suppose in a way.

JE: (inaudible)

NOTE: EXCESSIVE ECHO IN TAPE

AB: We were committed to an institution in downtown Brooklyn. We had to start one or...and that was the deal that was made in return for Kingsborough. Maybe I should have moved Kingsborough to downtown Brooklyn. Somehow...

JE: It was there once upon a time (inaudible)

AB: (inaudible) start another institution. And Medgar Evers. The reason I'm a little hesitant about it is more hindsight. At the time I thought it was a very good idea. It hadn't worked out too well. You may be interested. I ran into Willie Thompson. Remember Willie?

JE: Yes.

AB: He was a councilman at the time. He's now a member of the appellate division of the Supreme Court, very highly regarded. And his son is now the deputy borough president of Brooklyn. And we had a big embrace, and he said, I keep in touch with Medgar Evers, he said. After a year we should have burned it down and started a new one. When we reached the impasse with the...on Roddy McCoy, that committee was discharged.

JE: Just exactly what was your feeling at the time, based on your feeling about Roddy McCoy, or about community control?

AB: Partly Roddy McCoy and partly less community control, but then obviously it was a problem for us. You probably engineered it, but at that time we turned back to the political leadership, including Shirley Chisholm and Willie Thompson, and we said well (inaudible) unless there will be no college, and you have to choose. The problem with the community board was it just fell into bad hands. I don't know that it would have to have, but it did (inaudible) You had Sonny Carson and Jack Cammigan and Al Van. Remember they made that trip to Malta to try to talk to a fellow who was the ambassador to Malta? Hugh something.

JE: (inaudible) well, we got somebody to take it. Why was the Hostos search an easier process?

AB: Well, they were really not as demanding of control as they wanted to help pick the president, we picked someone who was reasonably acceptable to them, was acceptable to me. Well, there were a lot of meetings, and I remember Joe and I attended, and they were loud, but they were not this insistent. In neither case was I myself in any particular faction of the board. I just want to get a president who will make the college. I think in a way some of the people on the search committee in Brooklyn believed me, but there were people who wanted someone who would be beholden to them. (inaudible) the Bronx, I didn't see it that way. (inaudible) to look for a person who would be a good president.

JE: (inaudible)

AB: What?

JE: That's the way I remember it, too.

AB: We had a similar thing at the time in Oakland. Merit College was downtown. This was before I got there, but it was very similar, and the Panthers wanted it, and they wanted someone who played along with the Panthers. They didn't want the best Black candidate at the time, and so it aborted. Merit College was moved out of the city (inaudible) essentially on a hill top which no Black can get to. (inaudible) there's still two good community colleges in downtown

Oakland. They did it to get rid of the influence of the Panthers, and they put in Norville Young, and the president did a very good job (inaudible) vice chancellor of student affairs in Berkeley. So I suppose that that was the difference, the people in the Bronx trusted us that we wanted someone, and I said we wouldn't appoint anyone that wasn't acceptable to them, but I didn't want anyone to take control. First we had...Herman was very good, Herman Badillo was there.

JE: Well, let's go to open admissions, which is such a major focus. When you were formulating your proposal on open admissions, as best you can recall, what were the options that you considered?

AB: Well, the board...I had already put in the master plan which called for the ultimate establishment of open admissions.

JE: And the two track system.

AB: On the two track system, and the question first was whether to go, to accelerate that enormously or whether to go slower. Then the other question, and it looked as though it would go slower for a long time. As you well remember, the governor was dead set against going as fast as we did.

JE: But there was...it was your feeling...

AB: We had to do something. Yes, we had to do something. The other question was, given open admissions, how would we...given you were going to do it, how would we divide the students between senior colleges and the community colleges, and certain special admission centers we had to set up? At the time, integration seemed important. When I say at the time, it didn't last. Ten years later, the colleges are less integrated than I would have preferred. But if we had done it strictly on the basis of test scores or grade point averages, we would have continued the system of white and Black institutions, or we would have instituted the system of white and Black institutions. So we mixed, and we considered other variables (inaudible) standing in class and grade point averages, weighted in such a way as to achieve some degree of integration (inaudible) for that reason (inaudible) We also judged that the SEEK programs could be enlarged, could be integrated (inaudible) and also was a special admissions program with the SEEK program, which people could have as large as they wanted.

JE: When you say people, you mean (inaudible)

AB: So the mixture of all that was to try and increase the Black students in Brooklyn and Queens and Hunter, keep some of the community colleges from being all Black or one minority. It lasted for a while. The population shifted in New York (inaudible) coming in now because of the immigration of all sorts of people, Mexicans, South Americans, Greeks.

JE: (inaudible) tells me that fifty percent of the SEEK program is now Korean.

AB: Yes. In California, the person in charge of the sheltered admissions program spent practically full time trying to keep the Orientals out and the Blacks in. It wasn't easy, no matter

how you changed the definitions. But that was the thinking. Advised them not to go faster. I don't know, it was partly strike while the iron is hot. We were under a lot of pressure in the cities - student violence, minorities, and backlash. You can't ignore the fact that the SEEK program is larger, because we were practically in the position of giving preferential treatment to Blacks in the City University at the time. I still remember Harry Van Arsdale, and it finally dawning on me that we were not doing very well by the ethnics in Queens, and coming in and demanding open admissions, so the children of labor union people who were Catholics could go, they were great beneficiaries.

JE: You still feel that way?

AB: Yes. Well, he was right.

JE: He was a big supporter of open admissions.

AB: Yes. So certainly from the point of view of the city, it was important. I think what people don't realize very often when you think about public institutions is their budget is enrollment, and the people were kind of hungry for students. There were new buildings for the budget that came with them. I think that it would be unfair to say that large numbers of students were forced on any college that didn't want them. I just never had that feeling at all. Maybe we should have kept City College smaller and more (inaudible) many people think we should have, but we didn't. And certainly there was no pressure from the president himself. Quite the contrary, he was a builder. He wanted more money and more students every time.

JE: It certainly enabled him and other presidents to get some quality faculty.

AB: New faculty, new buildings. If we hadn't had any money, that would have been bad, but we did get money (inaudible) reasonably. We could always use more money. But we had funding, we really did. Had pretty good formulas. The other thing that always bothered me about New York is that the school system itself had become almost racial (inaudible) by the time I got there, I just (inaudible) I'm not absolutely sure of that, but I might be talking about money.

JE: You know, just as a figure to keep in your head. In 1960 the budget of the city colleges altogether (inaudible) the budget was \$45 million, total budget. In 1974 (inaudible) already left, it was \$665, in Los Angeles ten times that.

AB: We have had all that money (inaudible) fat chance. I mean, we had to keep the New York delegation behind us, and in order to get the delegation behind us, we had to have the Black caucus behind us, and they were behind us. They really trusted us after a while.

JE: When you are recalled and the New York Times recalls that when you came in 1970 with a budget that was something like 30% greater than the previous budget, why, Rockefeller nearly fell off his stool and said, this was absurd, and he finally, after being convinced a little bit, he agreed.

AB: I remember that vividly. I can't remember the year it actually happened. One weekend in Pound Ridge I got a call from Carl (inaudible) why don't we drop in. He was a neighbor of mine in an elegant mansion in Purchase. I dropped in, he dropped the message (inaudible) got to split the difference or do something else. I said (inaudible) consulted Charlie thereafter (inaudible) the message went back no. I don't know.

JE: What they didn't think, if you remember that, they didn't think John Lindsay had a prayer of being elected mayor, and when it became clear that although all three candidates supported open admissions, I think Prococcino and possibly Marchi also...

AB: If they both did.

JE: Yes. But might have been talked into going slower when the real enemy is John Lindsay, but like when he was winning they decided not to make an issue of it 100 million dollars or whatever it was (inaudible) As I remember the politics of it...

AB: That's supported by both my memory and researches.

JE: Do you have any afterthoughts about the way in which the open admissions policy was proposed?

AB: We had that meeting of the board, the retreat, the board went along, they passed a six point program that opened admission.

JE: Well, all the political leaders said later that they should have consulted (inaudible) brought him in earlier, and if they all felt that way, I suppose there was something to it.

AB: As I look back on it, it seems to me I was doing everything I possibly could physically do at the time. I was under enormous pressure. I had to consult all the constituencies in New York as I remember.

JE: So was a show of strength. Because it failed.

AB: I guess. What can you say? Well, we did have every mayor came out for it. We had the men we talked to, we explained it to them, we had every New York legislator, we had the Black leadership. We didn't have the people from whom we were trying to extort all the money. But we had John (inaudible)

JE: I can see we really were putting it on him. Peter Goldmark did it right. I interviewed him recently. (inaudible) we did it, yes. He was in London.

AB: He was executive.

JE: And he was a party to it. He still says it worked (inaudible) Did you consider that you were sacrificing quality for equity and access? I mean, did you think of it in these terms?

AB: No, but I think I have always felt that a lot of the sentimental attachment to quality at City College was based on a wonderful generation (inaudible) talked about earlier, bright academics and bright scholars who came about. City College essentially had a monopoly on the children of the Jewish immigrants to this country in the late twenties and thirties. But that had already gone, even by the time that I was appointed chancellor it began to erode after World War II. I mean, when I went to Dartmouth, Dartmouth didn't take any of the Jews before the war. I still remember when I transferred to mathematics, the math department chairman at MIT in 1938 said, well, come in, Bowker. Why do you want to transfer to mathematics? Are you Jewish? No, not really.

JE: Know a few.

AB: He said oh, well, in that case, you might have a good career. Well, I mean there were a couple of Jews around MIT, mostly in the math department as it turned out, (inaudible) over there studying plastics which he later turned into a multimillion dollar clothesline. They didn't take any poor kids particularly. Nobody did. It began to change after World War II, that's all. The Jews began to move out of New York, and the bright ones went to Harvard, or MIT or wherever.

JE: Even Princeton.

AB: I think it is true that quality of an education institution depends to some extent on the quality of the student body. It's also true that the tradition of institutions that were founded at the time City College was (inaudible) was to take everybody. That's never been pointed out. Wisconsin did, Ohio State. I mean, City College is elitist, and to do this was different than with the land grant movement. I never saw myself quite the trade off, but others did. That has always been my answer. I felt I had a chronically underfunded, chronically...an institution much smaller than it had to be to serve the needs of the city, and I just...

JE: That's a very good answer.

AB: What?

JE: That's a very good answer. I don't think it could have been anything else. The only question (inaudible)

AB: We could have gone slower, and we could have held City College down and made it have higher standards and kept the size of the SEEK program there down. We really gave...I really think it would be unfair to say I forced that on them. On the other hand, I probably should have (inaudible) I was desperate (inaudible) somebody was willing and able. We turned John Jay into a liberal arts college kind of overnight (inaudible)

JE: It worked out all right.

AB: We had a big liberal arts (inaudible) at Baruch. The minus was that it was impossible to sustain all of that.

JE: What do you mean, to sustain it?

AB: Well, liberal arts students are falling off (inaudible) specialize (inaudible)

JE: But it's falling off everywhere.

AB: Well, I might have been better off (inaudible) I don't really think so, it's a cut back didn't come for that reason, it came because of lack of money. Everybody was cut the same percentage.

JE: Do you recall the critical support (inaudible) which the regents gave to open admissions when they formally rejected the recommendations of their staff, which was for a delay in the implementation of open admissions? Remember that crucial weekend?

AB: Indeed I do.

JE: You were in the middle of it. Max Ohrlof talked about it, Max Ruben, Ken Clark and Steve Bailey (inaudible)

AB: He was convinced it was part of the triumvirate to put it over in the region.

JE: What was your judgment, and I know it's good, but I'd just like to get it on record, of Harry Gideon as president?

AB: Well, I always thought he was very, very good. I regretted that he wouldn't come back after that (inaudible)

JE: Why wouldn't he come back?

AB: He just had it. And he didn't believe. I think he saw it the way it was. He probably wouldn't have been a great supporter of open admissions (inaudible) it always puzzled me that he didn't go farther (inaudible) he had potential.

JE: Why didn't he?

AB: A little too stormy, (inaudible) putting a good face on their relationship (inaudible) well, we finally got his attention when we had grandchildren.

JE: Did you think at this time that you made a good pick in your selection of Jack Norris?

AB: Yes, I did.

JE: Certainly there's no argument about Bob Marchak.

AB: Yes. I didn't trust him, but he was a good (inaudible)

JE: (inaudible)

AB: I really don't know why. Brooklyn has never...of course you had a terribly strong president on many, many years. It was tough.

JE: Irene brought dinner (inaudible) when the veteran member of the Brooklyn faculty, chemistry, who was about to resign, who was about to retire, and who remembered Gideon with such warmth and such a glow, and now with such contempt.

AB: It may be that people who don't have big system experience aren't very good (inaudible)

JE: What did you learn from your selection of Bob Weaver as president of Baruch?

AB: Well, I don't know, I guess the problem was he wasn't hungry enough to do what had to be done. He certainly had the ability, but he didn't (inaudible)

JE: But I interviewed him and he said, well, I've had a lot of tough jobs in my life, but that was just one that I...beyond anything that I had ever anticipated.

**TAPE 4 SIDE A**

AB: I said well, that's great, Joe I called the Mayor back and I said, you know, John, you can't change generals in the middle of a battle. If he fucked up, why we'll have to remove him as we've done some others, but he's in charge, and I can't second guess him at this time of night. He worked it out with the Harlem police to do whatever it is that they were doing. He was really furious, and I think drunk. I was a little bit under the weather myself.

JCCE: You were entirely without input.

JE: That's a lovely story, both the intensity and the perspective of those times. One other thing. Were you aware, and was it policy, or what was your thought of the increasing number of students who were taking education, and in fact almost the majority of the total student population - this was I think before open admissions - were majoring in education.

AB: Oh, yes, and very much on my mind, and in fact one of the things that I did, the one person who noticed and gave me a lot of credit in the book was Eli Ginsburg. I really developed as many other public sector employment alternatives as possible because teaching is often the first generation. Most of our students were from parents who had not gone to college, and the first generation is often in public employment, heavily teaching. But it was clear to me, crystal clear, that teaching would have to go as a major source of enrollment, and if you have employment, therefore all kinds of things, that was part of the thinking in John Jay, correction, probation and police, and it was certainly the major factor in the massive expansion of nursing both in the community colleges and in the senior colleges and medical technology.

JE: Makes a lot of sense.

AB: The whole other profession, that was a very explicit part of our academic planning.

JE: I've never heard it rationalized so. All right, get back to the questions in section 4: what did you...you told me a little story last night, personal story, but what did you expect the outcome to be when you and John Mangham, Harry Gideons, and Harry Levy too resigned along with you? That's one question, another is suggested that you hide out at the Graduate Center.

AB: Well, the Center for Urban Education had an office at the Graduate Center and as Board Chairman, I had kind of a natural hang-out there and I really didn't want to go inside the 80th Street, having resigned.

JE: What did you think the outcome would be?

AB: I thought I would leave.

JE: You thought you would. So, Rositto suggest...

AB: We went out to Santa Cruz and talked about going over there Christmas time, and Hester had made me an offer, and other offers had come in in time. (interruption and introduction to JCCE's Cousin Esther) I belong to the club over there.

JE: That's right, you did that a long time ago. I remember your telling me that.

AB: That's all. I don't play golf.

JCCE: Do you play golf? Oh, I see, you don't. I never knew you to play golf.

AB: No.

JCCE: Did you realize at the time what a lucky break it was when Charlie Tuttle invoked the word "fealty" in that struggle?

AB: No, I didn't, although, Harry Gideon made a marvelous comeback in that. It was mentioned even in his obituaries.

JE: I noted that. Well, it is still remembered.

AB: Harry Levy, in his apartment, has a copy of the New York Times front page on the table, he resigned, he had it labeled: "Fealty Pictures".

JE: That's wonderful. I don't think I ever heard that. That's one of the best. Better than nuance. Jumping a little in time, how important, significant and critical, would you consider your action is in securing the appointment of the Citizens Committee for the future of the City University?

AB: Well, you had a lot to do with that. I thought it was very important. That was a lobby, union, parents, university, some of the other alphabetical agencies went along with the Parents' Association and Union. The (?) part of it that shows strength is what I think, really.

JE: Well, the report had quite an impact at the time.

AB: Yeah. And as a legislative force.

JCCE: The City University has come to be regarded, in recent years certainly, as a special responsibility and concern of the state legislature, particularly the state assembly. Did this relationship begin to develop during your time as Chancellor?

AB: Oh, yes. I think in a way it was natural because the leadership of the assembly is typically the leadership of the Democratic Party and that typically is from New York City, so that was natural. But certainly Travia, who you cultivated on my behalf was a strong supporter and pushed the bill. Carlino actually, was a good speaker. I guess he was a Republican when he came in, but he was helpful.

JE: Yes, he was from Nassau.

AB: From Nassau. He was helpful.

JE: He was helpful on College Discovery?

AB: College Discovery, yes. So that yes, I believe the assembly relationship developed while I was Chancellor, maybe a little less strong under the next speaker.

JE: Steingut.

AB: Steingut. Who is now a pal of yours but still he was in favor of the City Colleges.

JE: Yes, in recent years, it's been terribly important.

AB: But even under Steingut, your Higher Education Chairman was usually a New Yorker. Shirley Chisholm, for example, had her interest in the University, who came sort of naturally to serve on the Assembly Committee on Education, and many such...even when the speaker wasn't as friendly, there were others who were.

JCCE: Yes.

AB: And Senator Marchi was a major spokesman on the Senate side.

JCCE: Yes. But he always had the support of Bridges.

AB: He got the support of Bridges.

JCCE: Well that's a better way, more accurate way of putting it I'm sure.

JE: In your time, the leadership of the legislature, while it was the executive office, was almost entirely non-CUNY. In more recent years the leadership of the legislature and city government too, has come to consist of CUNY alumni, such as Stanley Fink and Hevesi, Manny Gold, Sadowski, Beame, Koch, Mel Miller. From your experience in California as well as in New York, how significant is the influence of the alumni of an institution in advancing the interests of the institution?

AB: Well, quite, although the only Governor I ever dealt with who was an alumnus of Berkeley was Jerry Brown, who I would like to rescind his degree.

JE: That's right.

AB: And I did better with Reagan who so... But it's helpful as you go back to Berman and Melavine, this whole crowd who are now in Congress or in the Assembly, they were helpful to us and... It depends. Here they're not very helpful. The assembly, the legislature doesn't have any power here, this is the governor's state. They can cause trouble.

JE: Do they have a lot of alumni?

AB: The governor is one.

JE: Oh, he's...Oh, Hughs is one.

AB: I wouldn't mind rescinding his degree, either. What seems to me different, more the ethnic changes in the Democratic Party and the leadership of the Party was almost all Jewish when I was in New York. And in the early days even when Lehman was Governor, the leadership was almost all Irish. And the Irish in New York never took an interest in public higher education. They had their schools. So in fact, almost all of the good things for public higher education were done by the Republicans. Dewey (inaudible)

AB: Stanley used to tell me emotional stories about how his father had founded it. I never knew anyone else who thought that.

JCCE: I never heard that.

AB: Well, he apparently signed a bill of some sort and then when the Jews began to dominate the Party, they really were interested in higher education, they valued higher education, they respected it. Because, I think, the significant thing was the ethnic change.

JE: That's interesting, it conforms to the general theme, one of the themes of the book I'm trying to write, the impact of ethnic politics.

AB: Well, I think certainly the strong support of the New York City delegation, I mean, Ohrenstein was an alumni, a lot of people like that, they took an interest in their alma mater. The Irish were more interested in hospitals than in their schools.

JE: Nobody has been a stronger supporter of the City University than Fink, and he acknowledges it, and he acknowledges that he's an alumnus. He says, that's my College, that's my University.

AB: He's Jewish, isn't he?

JE: Oh, yeah. Just in case you didn't know.

AB: On his mother's and father's side.

JE: Thank you very much, we're up to number 5, we just have one left. And just a few follow up questions.

JCCE: This is a continuation of my taped interview with Chancellor Bowker. This is series 5 and we're doing this at 14:55 on Thursday, and this starts with you. As I recall, Dr. Bowker, Al, I don't know why I'm getting so formal just because there's a piece of tape in the way - as I recall you were in something of a quandary as to whether to accept the offer from the University of California at Berkeley to become the Chancellor. Tell the story of your consideration and then your decision. We've got little pieces of that in earlier...

AB: Well, I had pretty much...the interesting part of the story is I had been getting a good deal of pressure at the City University and really began to have perhaps more anxiety than was necessary out of my trips to Albany. In fact, I remember thinking one day I just can't keep this up, I can't stand the place, the people and the pressures and the politics. The Carnegie Corporation had given me a grant practically when I first came to CUNY to take a trip anywhere in the world I wanted to go. But preferably Third World, the notion was to give College Presidents some R & R, but also to expose them, and I was invited by the Institute for International Education to attend a very interesting Conference in Africa, so we went to Spain and to Greece and to Africa, and I took the trip, the first time I'd ever been away from the University for any length of time, and I was away about 6 weeks on a very fun trip with a lot of interesting people, and met a number of prominent African educators, many of whom have since been executed, particularly those in Uganda and Tanzania.

JCCE: I wonder how that happened?

AB: Anyway, while I was away it began to occur to me that if I really was so tired, maybe I ought to leave, and pretty much on the trip I decided to look for another job. And I had two alternatives. I was recruited by Sid Marlin, then Commissioner of Education, to become his Deputy for Higher Education, and I had also asked and had some negotiations with the White House, George Schultz, was then Domestic President, about forming a cabinet committee, because it always has bothered me that so many agencies are involved in support of education in Washington, and Elliot Richardson, who was then secretary, was very, very anxious to get me. Then I heard about the Berkeley thing, and...

JE: Had you known Marlin before?

AB: Yes, I had been on his board in New York. Not well, but Sid knew me. And then I heard about...at the same time the Berkeley thing came along and the search committee recommended me unanimously, and the regents were in something of a dilemma.

JE: Had you gone for an interview?

AB: Well, I went for an interview, and I went for an interview with the faculty student committee and the alumni committee and the regents in northern California and southern California. Before that I had a long private interview with Hitch, and the dynamics of that was that while the right on the board of regents is a little uneasy about me, they had been screwing around in San Diego for a long time and were being criticized for not appointing a Chancellor. And to the extent there was any common ground among them Stamford graduate, so they all called Stamford,

which is the one place in the world where I have an absolutely superb reputation. So all of the conservative regents were kind of ambivalent. Anyway, they decided to appoint me, and I was to be appointed in June, and I accepted and told Sid that I would withdraw. Part of the reason that I took Berkeley, although I always had a kind of yen to be in Washington, was that I couldn't bring myself to work in Richard Nixon's administration, nor could I get any feeling from anyone that I talked to whether they had anything in mind in higher education. Moynihan had done a little bit, he had left the White House by this point. But they didn't seem to have anything in mind, although they thought it would be nice to have a prestigious person as Deputy. And I might have been able to do something, who knows? Anyway, the agency...I'm trying to think why...this must have been after Jim Allen's death that Sid was appointed, of course, that whole removal of Jim Allen as Commissioner had left me with kind of a sour note, although I always had a good deal of respect for Sid, and certainly L.A. Richardson and George Schultz were people with whom I could work congenially. Anyway, so Charlie Hitch called me the night before the regents meeting and the regents then had a habit, the conservative regents, John March, Katherine Harrison and so forth, had a habit of having dinner before the regents meeting in order to plan how to harass Roger Hines in particular, and other people, and how they could misbehave with Ben Campbell. And he said some of the regents were beginning to act funny. He didn't know if my appointment would go through or not, and I said well, if there is opposition, I want to withdraw my name. I don't intend to go in on a close vote. So he said all right, I'll call you first thing in the morning. The first thing in the morning came around, no Charlie, no phone call, no Charlie, no phone call, so I phoned Berkeley, and they were meeting in LA, and I phoned LA and I asked for Charlie Hitch. They said oh well, he had a heart attack and has gone to the hospital. Goodness, I said, well, what's going on with my appointment? Let me talk to the Executive Vice-President, Chet McKurkle, and he said...I got hold of Chet, and Chet said I don't really know anything about it. I said, you know you've really got to take my name to the regents, I've told my board here I can come back, but its rather awkward. I just have to know. Give me the chairman of the search committee, there was a chairman of the regents, who was Dean Watkins, a rather well known California industrialist, who had been a colleague of mine at Stanford, and he was a protege of Fred Terman's, and he would find it very difficult to oppose me. Fred would never forgive him, and so I got Dean on the telephone, and I said, Dean, do you intend to go in there and support me and work for me in the regents or not? Because if you're not, I'll withdraw my name right now. He said well, humph. Obviously they had gotten to him. Let me ask you a couple of questions, he said. Do you believe in open admissions for the University of California? I said no, California has a satisfactory system. The second question: Do you believe in collective bargaining? I said no, I'm opposed to it. He said all right, I'll go in and I will work for you and ensure your appointment. I said, if that's the case. Now they took my name up and they make these motions in executive session, and nobody ever knows what happened. A reporter for the Los Angeles Times, who always knows what happens in executive sessions, told me that four people voted against me. He gave me their names. Two of those people later told me how glad they were that I was Chancellor and that they voted for me. But there essentially wasn't any opposition and I came to Berkeley. Then I called John Lindsay and said, I'm leaving, I'm going to Berkeley. If you remember, just a year before the regents had turned down an honorary degree for him, giving him ten times as much publicity as any conceivable honorary degree would ever give him. Anyway, I said, the regents have just elected me chancellor of the University of California at Berkeley. He said, well you have better luck with the regents than I did. Then I told everyone, though the board knew it.

JE: The board knew it?

AB: The board knew it. Berkhart knew it, sure.

JE: When did you tell the board that you were thinking of looking or looking?

AB: I probably told the chairman, who was Fred Berkhart, in February when I came back from my trip.

JE: Were you...I of course remember our discussions when you came back from your trip. It wasn't 60-40? Was there any feeling on your part that on the one hand you'd like to stay?

AB: I wanted to leave. And if you look at my career, it has been in roughly ten year spurts, ten years as a scholar, maybe ten years...the first part may be 8 years as an administrator at City University, 9 years as chancellor of the University of California at Berkeley. A lot of people put in 20 years. Very few do actually, nowadays, but my feeling is 8-10 years is about the right time for a job of that sort. And you get kind of staid.

JE: That's very good.

AB: Milton Eisenhower thinks that when the mistakes you make have to correct the ones you made, it's time to leave.

JE: Say that again?

AB: When the mistakes you have to correct are ones that you made, it's time to leave.

JE: (inaudible) What would you say were the highlights of your 8 years, aside from open admissions? Obviously it was.

AB: Well, I think the creation of the graduate center, the administrative model I set up was a very important thing, and even though I didn't do it at first, before I left, I made sure I institutionalized it by making it a separate institution (inaudible) president, and I think that was important. Otherwise the wolves might have devoured it later. The City University construction fund has always seemed to me to be one of my greatest achievements, the capital improvements in New York have been major. The creation of new institutions is also of major concern, although a decision to create them had been made before I was chancellor. It was true in fact that Rose Birman had Kingsborough open their doors during my chancellorship. There were five units when I first went there, and when I left, there were 20: Lehman College. Some of them were formed by separation, Lehman College, Baruch, and then in a way John Jay, although that was almost a new institution because it was a very fragmentary program. LaGuardia, Hostos, the graduate center, Medgar Evers were new institutions which I founded in New York City. Community College, now New York City Technical College was an existing institution (inaudible) by merger and affiliation with Mt. Sinai School of Medicine was a major, significant one, I believe. There really was a lot going on.

JE: Just in order of priorities, aside from open admissions (inaudible) principally remembered (inaudible) at least as a great builder of new institutions, and of course a great builder of the office of the chancellor.

AB: And I proposed sort of the primacy of the chancellorship, infallibility.

JE: I mean, that's what my question is. In your summary, what would you give the highest priority to? What are you proudest of?

AB: I guess the general building, probably, although I'm certainly proud of the graduate programs. I think the new institutions and the physical facilities.

JE: The third question is implicit in the question I just asked: do you think the City University will shrink and contract in the years ahead?

AB: I suppose some, although the chancellor...the attrition is so high that the City University might be able to sustain enrollment by a fairly modest increase in attrition (inaudible) but I don't know.

JE: Go on.

AB: On the other hand, as the colleges are more attractive physically and as morale improves, anything may become more attractive institutions. Hunter, for example, has really been revitalized by the new buildings and will be increasingly popular.

JE: And bright, new leadership.

AB: And bright, new leadership. I don't know. I think there's many of the mediocre private institutions are going to be in for a hard time, because there's no point in paying a lot of money to go, I mean even going to NYU is going to (inaudible) compared to going to City College, but that's not Long Island University and lots of other places. No sign of that yet, but economics are such that...

## **SIDE B**

JE: Talking about 2% or 3%. I'm talking about a shrinkage which would also involve the abolition of some institutions, and I mean, the general consensus of people whose opinion I respect is that...is the same as yours, but they are closer to the situation, and you have the advantage of some perspective, national perspective. I've already asked you 5, now the big national questions: the number of students enrolled in institutions of higher education is about 11-12 million. Do you think that number is going to become cut back drastically?

AB: I tend to, by about 15%, but the people who disagree with me think there's a lot more adult, older, part time enrollment out there, and I don't really have much instinct. My guess is that it isn't there, but I don't know, I might be wrong. If I had to guess, I would say a 10-15% drop by 1990. It's going to be fairly slow. Maybe 1992 is when the lowest point will come.

JE: Will that be largely in terms of disadvantaged?

AB: It's just demographic, the change in the age group. The college-going age group, the number of high school graduates in the country is dropping and will drop in New York State 20-25% by 1992.

JE: But isn't there a massive enrollment, either on a part time or full time basis, of people returning to school?

AB: That's what I said, that's what people who disagree with me think. CUNY, you see an awful lot of that right now, how much more there is out there, talking about declines from 1985-90, I don't know, I think there will be a decline.

JE: I find this interesting, for your judgment to be put in perspective. Would it have been possible in practical political terms for the senior colleges of the City University to remain almost entirely white and highly selective? You've answered that in part.

AB: I don't think so. I never thought that was a real alternative, or a particularly desirable one. What's the point of your public investment in higher education?

JE: Well, that's an important thing to say because there are some people who tend to dream about how...I think mostly in terms of...rather than of the particular mission and responsibility of a public university, and especially one in New York, they think of how nice it would be, if.

AB: I sent you a marvelous article about one of the early impecunious students, R.R. Bowker.

JE: Yes.

AB: At least the faculty were gentlemen in those days if the students weren't. How they used to go to people's drawing rooms for tea.

JE: I've heard it's an aphorism of some currency that college...the public perception of its quality is based on those whom it turns away rather than on those whom it graduates, than the quality of those it would graduate. I suppose there's some truth to it, but how much real substance is there?

AB: Well, I think it's unfortunate, but it is true, if you look at the college, the four of them right there, if you look at the manuals that advise you how to go to college, like Lovejoy and Kass and Birnbaum, and the New York Times Guide to Colleges and the Yale Guide. And the Guide to Black Colleges. I have five of them which I've read a couple of years ago. Every one of them emphasizes in their presentation the SAT scores of the incoming freshmen. That's the major objective criterion they give besides the cost. Some of them classify causes as to highly selective, selective, medium and so forth, and the New York Times does that too, and this guy, which isn't as good as some of the others, well, it's a judgmental guide. It's not too bad. So it is a kind of view

that the best colleges are those with the best students. Strange. It certainly wasn't true before World War II. When you went to the University of Virginia, I still remember talking to a famous Southern psychologist. He said it was your family and your position, certainly true when I went to college. You asked me whether MIT took me. Of course they took me because my cousin was chairman of the MIT Club of Washington. It would have been unthinkable not to take me. One of the things that I argued occasionally in person with some of the public interest crowd who seem to think that the meritocracy, that people were judged on the basis of grades, was handed down from heaven with the tablets. It really wasn't, it was actually quite a new idea in America which started after World War II. Conant did a little bit at Harvard. Well, he did more than a little bit. He was one of the greatest college presidents in this country, but he did indicate that family and position were not the only criterion for admission to Harvard, and began to look outside of New England and New York for students, so he had nationalized it, and began to look at students' grades. But it's still funny when you look at it. His last administrators, Rhineland, Bundy, Koepfel, the notion that you could be a dean at Harvard without coming from a ritzy family, was never part of the Conant (inaudible)

JE: He didn't go that far.

AB: Goodness, no. James Bryan Conant? In fact, I think Koepfel and Bundy were the last gentleman deans. They actually were appointed after World War II. Now they have (inaudible) all kinds of foreigners and God knows who they are...

JE: ...where they came from. You know who they are.

AB: But that's all rather new. Now, the West was never so much like that. I think Stamford was always reasonably egalitarian, and wasn't anti-Semitic particularly when I went to school. All the New England colleges had strict quotas on New York Jews.

JE: Yes.

AB: So the meritocracy...I'm not saying it isn't better than what was before, but when we came to think that we ought to have Blacks in the colleges because it would be a good thing to have Blacks in the colleges, they never understood that there was anything else but grade point averages. There's one thing about a person as aristocratic as Porter Chandler that he couldn't see any difference between Jews and Blacks, and couldn't understand what (inaudible) was all about. That's a little unfair.

JE: I heard you say it. There's truth to the fact that he had that perception.

AB: And Koepfel, too, was really very elitist in his personal tastes and associations. Burkhart was actually a Brooklyn born boy, not to the manor born.

JE: That's a very good distinction.

AB: Porter came from a very...well, he didn't have or didn't come from, but he married into a very large Catholic family who was related to the famous Catholics on Long Island. He knew the Arkansauces, or his wife was, and the architect who was shot...

JE: Harry Kefau or Sanford White?

AB: Sanford White. And all those people, and they have a lot of children, many of whom ended up in faculty positions, as the children of upper class people often do, and he said he didn't know how they'd support all those big families without public higher education, not that they would think of going there, or working there.

JE: After all your years of observing and participating in the building of higher education in the United States, do you think that higher education is at any sort of water...landmark or watermark, any possibilities of a major change? We do see a very substantial decrease in at least consumer interest in liberal arts, and I recall one of your aphorisms of the many that I've adopted as my own, is that enrollment follows what the students want. I mean curriculum. But do you see any...we're at a certainly very high point of enrollment, and a tremendous investment, and a federal disinclination to invest much more.

AB: Well, I guess to take the demographic decline will cause some drop, some closure, continuing closure of small, private institutions, and maybe some fairly big ones will go under. The recent reports, the Bennets Report, and the task force that's given the name of the faculty member in Pennsylvania.

JE: Yes.

AB: NIE Report have decried the professionalism of the colleges, and I guess I kind of agree with them, but I don't see any dynamic to change it as relying on the academic profession. You see, it seems to me the situation is quite different in the schools. Parents were really mad that their kids were not teaching...were not learning much in school, that they didn't have enough homework and they weren't achieving and they weren't learning how to write. They were mad, and Dave Gardner capitalized on that in the report, "A Nation At Risk". Kind of usefully, perhaps, I don't know. It seemed a little late in the game, many of the reports were underway, but be that as it may. But I don't see that. I mean, our colleague, Joe Mangham, ran the Culinary Institute of Technology for a while, and I had a daughter of one of my friends went there who had graduated from Stamford and drifted around a while. When I was there, their parents weren't sitting around bemoaning the fact that she wasn't studying classics, thank God the little darling is finally going to earn a living. We have a bachelors degree in poultry technology. When I talked to the parents of those students, they don't say, My God, I wish they were studying the humanities and Latin. They think, Thank God their kids are going to be able to get a job. Poultry is a big industry in Maryland.

JE: Quite well known. I patronize them.

AB: So I mean, I don't see that the consumers...in the first place, when you go into a college program, you do go by choice, you don't have...you can study all the liberal arts you want. And I don't see the elitist institutions changing very much, and this is a profession where the major

graduate schools turn out the college teachers, and what they do has a lot more influence than any other trend. You know Bennington puts in a photography management option in order to survive. It isn't because they want to. I don't know. I don't see big changes.

JE: Isn't there, for instance...it sounds reasonable as so many things you have said are, but for instance, isn't there a very particular place that will become even more important as time goes on, for an institution like the City University, which is to a very large extent at least career oriented, not entirely professionally, but to enable people to get jobs, and in many cases first employment in Civil Service, as you have often said in other connections. And that's a function that some institution has got to do.

AB: Yes, but what City University is doing now, you're asking if there are going to be big changes.

JE: Yes.

AB: It's a reasonably vocationally oriented institution, yes. I don't see it shifting well.

JE: No.

AB: Enrollment shift, is all the rest of the world getting more like that? Well, yes, particularly in the women's colleges some response to the fact that women are more likely to work in business than they are to become teachers, and have different kinds of careers, you see that all right. Is it big? I don't know. This is a problem with the liberal arts core in our elitist colleges. And then it was really kind of appropriate, it started out really training ministers and what they ought to know, and then it kind of evolved into liberal arts, and it was appropriate for a small number of people, but it never had the mass appeal that every institution should do it. The city colleges were reasonably vocational all of their lives, weren't they?

JE: They perform a function.

AB: Yes, it's a function.

JE: One last question...

AB: I'm just amazed at how basically conservative educational institutions are. If there are changes, they are absolutely forced on them from the outside, they don't emerge spontaneously.

JE: You said that before. By God, it's true.

AB: They're not going to change unless they have to. Why should they if they don't have to?

JE: Well, there's one field that everybody's concerned about, and that is teaching.

AB: Yes.

JE: And the fact that the least prepared or the least skilled and least educationally achieving people are the ones who go into teaching. Is there any way, I mean aside from things like merit pay?

AB: This needs a massive increase in pay to turn that around, in my judgment, and I don't see any likelihood, so we have essentially abandoned that as a national commitment to have good schools. In spite of all the money being spent on it, they're not spending enough. You've just got to double teacher's salaries, approximately, and you begin to get good people there. But the problem, when you ask someone at the end of his career, to look ahead with optimism, we always look back with optimism, and ahead with gloom. I could be wrong. But most people think that...there are people who think that modern teaching technology can come in and take over. There hasn't been any sign of it yet, but some of the new stuff is really much more interesting than anything. I see some stuff over here in one of our classified research projects, which we don't have since we don't do classified work, but anyway, we seem to have this one: it's a very interesting interactive laser disk combined with computer assisted instruction, visual stuff. Now it's used to teach people how to bomb and do important social functions. It would be much too expensive to use in the schools, but some of them, they are very far out technologies. It's possible. But it's a long way.

JE: This has really been wonderful. I mean, you've given some new thrust to my thinking about this book, and before...you can be assured, as I assure everybody, before you are quoted, you will see what you're proposed to be quoted on, so that you can have a second thought about it and you don't have to be concerned that anything you've said will embarrass you. Though I can't think of anything that you've said that would embarrass you. You don't embarrass easily.

JE: You know my famous response: I didn't do it in the first place, and I won't do it again.