



Interviews for 2010

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Lee Short

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Illinois Wesleyan University

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Meg: My name is Meg Miner and I am the archivist at Illinois Wesleyan and today is January 15, 2010 and I'm at the home of Lee and Phyllis Short. And this is actually take two on our interview with Lee. The first time we had a problem with the machine and operator error, so we're gonna give it a go again and talk to Lee about his association with Wesleyan, so Lee if you could go ahead and give us your full name and our location here today and then we'll get going.

Lee: Okay, thank you Meg. My association with Illinois Wesleyan started when I was actually in high school. A number of my friends who were in the band—I was musically oriented all the time I was in high school—and a number of them came to Wesleyan and kept telling me about all the things that were at Wesleyan and the Music School, which was very popular at the time. And—so when I graduated from high school, my senior year I won a national first division on the French horn and conducting. And at that time, there were national contests. We don't have those anymore. At that time they had district, state, and regional, and the regional took in Illinois and Wisconsin, Iowa, Indiana—that area. Then there was a national that was really not quite national. It was from the Mississippi East and the Mississippi West and those were called nationals. And I won first division in the French horn when I was a junior, but my senior year I won in the French horn and conducting. And at that time, music schools used winners of those two contests for their scholarship programs, so we had a lot of letters and offers to visit back in 1938 and '39—that's when it was. Well, anyhow, I ended up at Illinois Wesleyan University and it was quite unusual because there was no French horn teacher at Wesleyan. And it was merely—my interest was—as a young man I guess I was more influenced with my friends who were already there, and at that time there were no dormitories. There was a dormitory for women that were converted to houses, you know, but you lived in a fraternity or a sorority or private housing. And my buddies were in Phi Mu Alpha and they got me a job as houseboy there too, so I didn't have any expenses at all at Wesleyan. But when we graduated from school was—in the interim—of course was the Second World War and there is a great story there. You probably have some of it in the archives where—there were a number of us who were 4-F. We could not get into the service. I only had one eye and oh, several others that were local guys here too that had high blood pressure or flat feet or whatever, but we had fourteen instrumentalists from the School of Music—formed a band. That was the period of the big band, you know, the Tommy Dorsey and all those.

Meg: Right.

Lee: And we auditioned for the air force. Wayne King—you probably don't remember Wayne King the waltz king—but at that time he was the popular big band conductor. And we went into the service as a band. Well, let's skip back to—but when we came out of the service I only needed eight hours of Spanish to finish my bachelor's degree, so I enrolled in my master's degree at the same time. And when I graduated I—that's the period of course where I met Phyllis. I was the houseboy after the service when I came back at the Delta Omicron sorority and we met there and eventually got engaged. But when we—that was 1947 and we—I had always intended to play the French horn professionally and had played in a number of symphonies up to this time. And my teacher was an outstanding

horn player. He had been first horn player for the Boston Symphony and then the St. Louis Symphony before he came to Bloomington. And actually he came here as the organ teacher not a horn player, but he had left when I came back and so there was no—he had arranged when I graduated, to have me audition for several symphonies and one was the Denver Symphony, and I had a job offered to me as first horn player in the Denver Symphony. I thought maybe that's where I'd go but Phyllis and I got engaged and we decided back then—and my horn teacher told me, you know, there were no unions in the symphonies at that time and what they would give you is a list of students that would take lessons from you and you get a minimum salary at the symphony. But he said, "You know, they'll give you a list of 25 but by the time you get out to Denver and contact them, you'll be lucky if you get 15 of them." And he said, "Within a month or two, you'll have seven or eight of them." He said, "It's gunna be tough living off it." So we decided we'd teach school—get a teaching job instead, so that for that. Well we taught for four years in a little community, Atwood, Illinois, and I was music director there during the time three schools came together and we had a—the School District band was outstanding. They won first superior in the state for four straight years.

Meg: Wow.

Lee: And we started the first high school big band—dance band they called them. Now all high schools have them but at that time there was no other band like that from high schools. In fact, they called them the Short Notes.

Meg: [laughs]

Lee: And we played a lot at the junior/senior proms and dances at other high schools around. But we—kids couldn't be paid or they would jeopardize their amateur standing in the school, so they would make a donation to the Short Notes and we bought stands and microphones and all that kind of—well that's another—[laughs] another story.

Meg: That's great.

Lee: But what happened then was that when I was conducting the band one time, the—in the contest, the judge was the Dean of the Music School at Wesleyan.

Meg: Who was that?

Lee: Cuthbert.

Meg: Okay.

Lee: I can't remember his first name. Let's see, Dean—I don't know—Dean Cuthbert. I can't remember his name right now. But he—I don't know if you know, but in band contests you have four judges. Three of them judge prepared work usually an overture and a march or something. Then you have one that's for sight-reading. And you come in and the band sits down and they give you a piece of music that nobody has ever seen—

music and was composed for this contest. So the way it works is that the music is passed out to the band and the conductor and they get a chance to look at it for—it was three minutes, five minutes, something like that. Then the conductor has another five or ten minutes to talk to the band about parts in the music that you have to look for or watch for, and we had won first superior in sight-reading every year for four years. The kids were really outstanding and so we started playing and all of a sudden, I'm looking at the score, and they're playing something that's not on my score. And to stop in sight-reading meant you got lost or something, you know, but I had to stop and them. And oh—I remember my first clarinet player, this little blonde girl, she looked up like so sad, you know, that she couldn't figure out what was wrong, so I turned to the Conductor and I said—or the judge and I said—as I turned around, he's laughing. And I said, "I've got parts of my score is missing here." "Oh," he says, "yeah, here it is." And he took it out on purpose just to see what we would do.

Meg: Ugh.

Lee: And I could've killed him.

Meg: Oh my goodness.

Lee: Well, anyhow, after that then he offered me a job at Wesleyan and I ignored him most of the time but finally—made a very attractive offer so we signed a contract. And—but this story gets too complicated, but I came back then to Wesleyan.

Meg: What year was that?

Lee: 1951.

Meg: '51. Sorry, go ahead.

Lee: And Phyllis had a—she's a piano major you know—and so to make up all of the salary that we needed—to make it interesting for us to come, he gave her—I forget how much—how many, a couple hundred dollars or something to teach minor piano. Well she was pregnant at the time and expecting a baby in March and—"Oh that's alright, that's alright." Well, before we got to Wesleyan in September, he got in trouble at Wesleyan and got fired. He had not told the rest of the faculty or anyone that I had been hired.

Meg: Oh dear.

Lee: Well, that's a long story too. Anyhow, I had a contract—under contract and didn't have much to do because they had already assigned most of the things I was supposed to teach. So having been in the band business in the state for a number of years—and the enrollments were going down like crazy, especially the Music School and so I—the Director of Admissions at that time was Orville Nothdurft—was his name. And I went over to see him and I said, "You know, I've got a lot of time on my hands." Oh, I was just finishing my master's thesis at the time too but most of it had gotten down to the

point where it was turned over to Phyllis to type. Bless her soul. I said, “If you pay my gas, I’ll visit some of these places that I know the band directors or something,” and oh, he thought that would be great. Well, it worked out fine because we got, I believe, 31 music majors out of the freshman class that year.

Meg: Wow.

Lee: Well, so I was there a year and then that was when we were gunna leave and go to do something else, you know, with our lives and the—Dr. Holmes was President then and asked me to take over as Acting Director of Admissions and that was in September. And by the following end of the first semester, he and the board had offered me a full-time job, which was almost like a death toll [knell] because admission was way down and everything depended at that time from the college’s standpoint because the Methodist institutions for many years, you know, were supported financially heavily by the Central Illinois Conference. And there were two colleges in that conference—MacMurray and Wesleyan—and we had to split the takes so to speak. Well they just got down to the point where they couldn’t support either, so we were really laughing and scratching so to speak—

[Both laugh]

Lee: To keep the enrollment up and keep the university going. And that’s when I get started in the Admissions program.

Meg: And was Nothdurft still there?

Lee: No, he at that time had—I don’t know the true story except he left and became Dean of Admissions at Bradley University—

Meg: Okay.

Lee: Where he had gone to school.

Meg: So it was just you?

Lee: Yes. Well, no, I had two other people on the staff there—Marlyn Ten Boer and Jeanette Hershey the other lady’s name. She eventually went to Chicago and took over a Chicago office and then she was hired—she left that position to the University of Connecticut and became Dean of the Admissions there. Well, anyhow, we had to figure out some way to get students to come to Wesleyan and at that time, most it was by word of mouth, you know. And the Methodist ministers around would send a list of their seniors. Well nowadays, you know, kids don’t wait until they’re seniors—it’s way, way too late, but at that time—And we were supposed to contact them and get them to come to Wesleyan on that basis. Well, it just wasn’t working. We went out to visit high schools and go to what they call college nights and college days, and we’d go into a high school—we’d make a reservation to see prospective students. And back then they didn’t

have very many high school counselors. The counseling was done primarily by the—usually the teacher of the senior English or sometimes the principal himself. In one case—it's very strange—but the college counselor was the janitor of this little high school but he'd been to college. But it was not a developed program like it is now, you know, high school counselors practically tell kids where they're going to school if they don't know they can—and you do this through contact with the college or university Admissions Office. So, we had to figure some way that we could talk to students because we'd go into the high school at 10:00 let's say and the principal would meet us—meet me and he'd say, “Oh well, you haven't seen our new gym have you? Let's have a cup of coffee or something.” Well the thing was he didn't have anybody to see me.

Meg: Oh, no.

Lee: Or—and then if we went to a college night, there were very few people who would stop at our table. They were all going to ISU or University of Illinois—the state schools. They had trouble too but they were—because they were so much cheaper. Well, to get the names of people, to get people to even learn about Wesleyan, was our problem at that time, and that's when we developed a program I call Merchandising Students. There was a man who taught the journalism courses at Wesleyan and we had some programs with the *Pantagraph* with writing programs for that profession. And we used to have coffee together all the time and I said to him one time, “You know, do you have a lab for these courses that you have?” “No,” he said “We just...”—not specifically, and I said, “What if I got a bunch of high school newspapers here once a week or once a month, whatever, would it be beneficial to your class to look at these and make comments on them because a lot of them are going to be in high schools?” And, “Yeah,” he said, “I think that'd be kind of interesting for a while.” So what we did is send out a letter to every high school in the state of Illinois and some Wisconsin but mostly Illinois and Missouri—we drew a little bit from there—and it was addressed to the sponsor of the school newspaper. That's how it was. And we said we would like to critique—we were doing a critique of high school newspapers and if you would like to have your school critiqued, all you'd have to do was put us on your mailing list and send us a copy. Well, spontaneously—it really came back—

Meg: Wow.

Lee: And these people were stretching, you know, to find places or things to do with them because they didn't want to do it anyhow—I mean being sponsor of the newspaper. So, these newspapers came back and we had—we formed an organization called Titan Council. And these were representatives from each fraternity, sorority, and dormitory that agreed to come and look at these—look through these newspapers, and what happened though is every six weeks in most high schools is the honor roll is printed—freshman, sophomore, junior, senior. Well—so we cut out the names of those people. Also, there would be articles in there about their star football player or trumpet player or whatever, you know. Well they would critique those and then make a list from that high school and we would contact an alum or a Methodist minister to get the names and address—I mean the address and phone numbers of these students.

Meg: Mhmm.

Lee: You couldn't do that now, you know, they wouldn't let you do that but back then every high school had a catalogue like with the names of everybody, the faculty, so they would get the names and the addresses and send it to us. And that's when we took these records that I showed you.

Meg: Yes.

Lee: Little vinyl records and that was kind of a funny thing the way that happened too because there was a woman locally whose son had started a business up near Chicago making those little paper-thin vinyl records. And back then it had started with General Motors—oh, about 19—early '40s I guess, or right after the war—General Motors did that for their employees to inform them about—if you had a certain job or something you'd get one of these little vinyl records that'd outline what you were supposed to do. And I had gotten a hold of one of those and then so—she was in our church and so one time I tried to talk to her and she said, I think his name was Paul, “is coming down to see me this weekend,” and she said, “Would you like to talk to him about your—” I was telling her about this idea. I said, “Sure, I'd be glad to.” So we talked about it and he had never heard about it before but he said, “Yeah, I can do it.” He said, “All you need to do is make a recording.” Well what we recorded—you think this is tough stuff here. You know what we had for recording then?

Meg: What did you have?

Lee: Wire recorder. Did you ever hear of those?

Meg: I actually—we have a wire recording—

Lee: Really?

Meg: In the archives. Yeah.

Lee: Well that's all I had was a—and then before that, they had these tubes, long tubes with wax kind of thing on them and you recorded on that.

Meg: The wax cylinders?

Lee: Yeah, but this one I had a wire recorder, which was terrible. They're terrible, but he agreed and gave me a good price. Well, I didn't have any budget or anything like that for anything like this. And I went to the President of the Board and he was a business fellow, a businessman here who was very conservative and I said I wanted to make some records to send to prospective students. “Well,” he said, “people don't have victrolas--” You remember?

Meg: [laughs] Yes, I do.

Lee: “Victrolas to play them on. How are they gunna hear them?” And I said, “Well, I think they’ll hear them.” “Oh, we can’t invest in something like that.” So, I did get enough money from other budgets that I had to get—I forget how many we had to start with but we—I made this after everybody went home, I—so it was quiet and in my office and turned on the wire recorder and you could hear what it said. “Hello, my name is Lee Short. I’m Director of Admissions so and blahblahblah and I’d like to talk to you about your college plans.” Well, I offered them to send them material on any areas they were interested in like—most high school kids have a little concept of—you know, I want to be a doctor. Well what do you have to do to be a doctor? Well you got to have a lot of Chemistry, you got to have Biology. Oh, I don’t do well on that. Well, then I’d give you counseling, or more of the normal kind is self-counseling. So, we sent this little card out with all the majors and then we got all of the department heads at Wesleyan to do mimeographed outlines of a four-year curriculum—freshman, sophomore, junior, senior if you wanted to be an accountant lets say.

Meg: Right.

Lee: And we sent that along with this record and they would send it back if they wanted material. Well we were inundated with cards coming back. Now when we went to the high school—you know, we got—we don’t have anybody interested in Wesleyan—well, here’s about a dozen from your high school. That’s the way the program started.

Meg: Well, I want to take a minute to take a minute to describe the record that you’ve been talking about for the audio recording here since people aren’t going to really see it when—or understand maybe what the record is. So, these are to be played at 45, right?

Lee: Mhmm.

Meg: 45 RPM and they are really very flexible, paper-thin, something that could easily be mailed with very low postage.

Lee: Right.

Meg: And they’re in their own folder—

Lee: Right.

Meg: That has some information about the school—

Lee: Yeah.

Meg: And the program probably and then financial aid, entrance requirements—we’re reading now off of one of them—and then inside of it is a 3” x 5” card that has these

descriptions of courses, majors that they could then send to you and you would follow-up with them on it, right?

Lee: Right.

Meg: Okay, so I just wanted to make sure that we described that adequately for the audio audience.

Lee: Yes.

Meg: But really a very clever idea and you say you got that because of an album or a record that you'd seen for—

Lee: General Motors.

Meg: General Motors. That's amazing—

Lee: Yeah.

Meg: To make that connection.

Lee: Well, it worked because where we had only maybe a couple of hundred prospects in our files, all of a sudden we had 2,000—2,500, something like that.

Meg: Wow.

Lee: 2—Well, just processing larger numbers, even if you're only going to get 1% of them—

Meg: Yeah.

Lee: You're going to have more students come—the more prospects we have. And then we had all kinds of stuff to attract kids—the programs that we started—Methodist Youth Day. I don't know if we talked about that or not but—

Meg: Tell me again.

Lee: Well because we were a church-related institution and a lot—tried to hang on to that relationship because it was getting thinner and thinner. The less financial support, the less they had to say about the school, and so we were trying to keep that continuity between the university and the church—Methodist church. So we—in the Methodist church, there's called a MYF, a Methodist Youth Fellowship, and it starts—one of the most important times is when school starts. Then the church has something that tries to build a good program to attract these high school kids to come to church—the Methodist church. So, we suggested through—in fact, there is a man now, here, he's a minister. His wife just died recently but he's out in the McClean County Nursing Home—Dees, Reverend

Dees—was the District Superintendent back in those days down in Southern Illinois, which helped promote this for me. But what we did was we sent out a letter inviting juniors and seniors to come to the campus for this one day, Saturday, and you came and you—first thing you got off the bus or car or however you came, we had them from the Titan Council, gave tours of the campus and ended up down at the stadium. And we didn't have the old gym or anything in fact that—so we had a great big tent that one of the alums that one of the alums has the Tent and Awning Company here at that time. And we had a tank. I don't know how to describe it. It was probably 4 foot wide and it probably was 12 foot long filled with water and they had these little gas pipe—gas heater like things, blades, flames that came up, that heated this from the bottom. Well the photographers locally here owned that and they used to go around and—oh, for parties and stuff and cook hotdogs and stuff like that. So—and we often got the faculty involved where we had an enormous, big pot of beans and we had potato chips and we had a wiener and a bun. Well, we took boxes of these wieners and we put it in this tub-like thing and we put a board on it so we knew that—by the time we got to the other end, we took them out whether they were done or not.

[Both laugh]

Lee: And faculty came and manned the chow line we called it. They all had aprons on but—oh some of them are still living here that did that kind of thing—not many of them but remember they're on the faculty. But they had the aprons on, then one would put the beans on, then one would put the potato chips and the wieners, and we'd have an apple or something on the end. And the kids then would go from there to the tent out onto the football field, and on the opposite side of the Wesleyan side we had the cheerleaders out there. And it's this group from lets say Albany, Illinois or somebody who comes through. They'd introduce themselves and, "Do we have any cheerleaders in this group?" And a lot of times they would, well they'd set them up there, give them a copy of the Wesleyan cheer song and so they'd teach them—have their own kids work with us so they all got a dose of Wesleyan's cheer songs and got—

Meg: Oh, that's great.

Lee: Got a little feeling psychologically.

Meg: Right.

Lee: And we had—the first year, we had over 3,000 people come. They had to seat them on the ground all around the football field.

Meg: This was at one event?

Lee: Yeah.

Meg: Wow.

Lee: Saturday—on Saturday. And then—added more people interested and—but that was another way we got the Admissions Program started. And then, of course, it developed further and further but even today, some of the basic philosophy and the actual working of the Admissions Office is based on this same way but now they have lists that they can buy, you know, from New Jersey and from all over which we didn't have then.

Meg: Oh, really?

Lee: They have similar ways of getting names now and, of course, you've got more of a reputation to build on now too than we had then.

[Short break taken. Audio recording edited, approximately three minutes removed.]

Meg: Lee was just offering to tell us about the start of the Admissions Office as a whole and that goes back you said to about 1938, '39, right? When you were becoming a prospective student?

Lee: Yeah.

Meg: Okay, so take it from there.

Lee: Well, the entrance of a student or the acceptance of students was done through the Registrar's Office. The Registrar approved the application. The Registrar sent out the letter of acceptance, but in the late '30s, there was a man that worked with the Registrar—by the way, the Registrar was the head of the Math Department. Her name was Dr. Mildred Hunt who also served as Registrar but she was head of the Math Department. Well, the man that she got to help—that started calling Admissions—was a man named Ray Dooley. And he—Dr. Ray Dooley taught some Social Science courses but he also had what was the beginning almost of the admission program at least at Wesleyan. And he was—when I came to Wesleyan, I never even saw him. I dealt with the Dean of the Music School when I came here. I never knew Ray Dooley at all until I was in school. Well, then when he left, there was a man called Orville Nothdurft who was Director of Admissions then. They didn't call it Dean then but it had gained that stature in the administration by that time. You could still call him Director.

Meg: And so it was separate from the Registrar's Office then?

Lee: Yes.

Meg: Okay, okay.

Lee: It was a separate office, separate budget, everything. Well, when—I followed Orville Nothdurft and I was followed by Jim Ruoti and Jim Ruoti—well it goes on then until where we are today. But the same basic principles that we established back in the early '50s when all the G.I.'s had left, we had to do something different other than just sign up veterans, you know. And the program has evolved into much more high-tech than

what we—we thought we were really high-tech when we had these vinyl records, you know.

Meg: [laughs]

Lee: But—well that's just a little idea of how the program evolved at Wesleyan. The President back in the 30s was—Dr. Shaw followed by Dr. Holmes.

Meg: Was—

Lee: Then Dr. Holmes who was Vice President took over as President and then Dr. Bertholf came and then Dr. Eckley from then on so that a lot of this development happened during the time of Dr. Holmes.

Meg: Okay.

Lee: He was a wonderful man. He was a minister actually but had such charisma about him just—completely bald man but such a loving man that he was very well accepted—faculty, everybody really backed him to the hilt, as was Dr. Bertholf—you didn't know him either, did you?

Meg: I did not, no.

Lee: Well—

Meg: I met his daughter but that was it.

Lee: Yeah, she's a nurse. Well, Dr. Bertholf is probably a near-perfect living Christian that I've known in my life—

Meg: Is that right?

Lee: Outstanding man. Well, that's enough of a sidebar on that.

Meg: Well—but it speaks to, I think, your ability to be innovative, that you had people who would allow you to do things that were not done.

Lee: Well that—

Meg: I mean it sounds like you were able to take the ball and run with it.

Lee: Well, that's why I give the credit to Dr. Bertholf—I mean—yeah Dr. Bertholf and Dr. Holmes but Dr. Bertholf was the one I served the most years with. But I'd take some idea to him and he'd listen and listen and he said, "Well Lee, I don't know but I guess we could try it." You know, that's the way he would always respond.

Meg: That's great.

Lee: He never stopped the wild ideas that we had from time to time.

Meg: That's great.

Lee: Shall we break here?

Meg: Did you wanna stop there?

Lee: Well, where do you wanna go from here?

Meg: Well, where else is there to go? We've taken us through the—a couple of the innovative programs that you had to start people off with. We also have these flipbooks that you told us about last time. It's a similar sort of a thing—was that after the records?

Lee: We were talking about innovative ideas. Maybe we ought to talk about some of those that were—

Meg: Sure.

Lee: Were different. One of them was called Room at the Top and this is at the time when women—movement was gathering momentum. And for many years, if you were in high school or even kids coming to college, if you asked a girl what her favorite courses were, they wouldn't say Physics or—Math.

Meg: Business.

Lee: Geometry or something. It was more like English and Literature so—but as this evolved, so many businesses were very anxious to get on the track, you know. So we started this idea that we would present a candidate—well, first of all, the business had to donate \$1,000 a year to sponsor one of these women, one of the top girls.

Meg: Wow.

Lee: And we would select people. They would interview and they had the option of accepting or not but what would happen was that this girl would work 12 hours a week for this company and she would get paid for it, which helped with her expenses too. But if she stayed with them, they took her through all the different parts of their company, you know, so that by the time they hired her as—come time for her to get a job, she was, you know, well-trained with this company and they could offer her a much higher starting salary than if she were just sending out applications, so we got a number of the telephone company, banks, State Farm, a number of local businesses who thought this was a pretty good idea. Besides hiring them while they were in school, they hired them full-time in the summertime—had a job that most kids, especially girls, at that time were not gunna make that much money but they did with them. They paid them their regular

salary if they went full-time, so it was a new idea, a different idea—that no other school had a program like that.

Meg: And is that something that you came up with with your staff or is it something else that sort of an idea was sparked somewhere?

Lee: Don't ask me.

Meg: Hard to say.

Lee: Just, just—

Meg: Okay.

Lee: It was just different things we were thinking about. We would talk to different people, “Do you think this would—” well, Dr. Bertholf for one, “Do you think this would catch on?” “Well, try it Lee,” you know.

Meg: Give it a try.

Lee: So—and then they had—oh, lets see, what are the programs that we had at that time?

Meg: There was college credit-in-escrow that you told me about.

Lee: College credit-in-escrow was another thing at the time—was good because of the time lets say.

Meg: Okay.

Lee: But you know what Advanced Placement is?

Meg: Mhmm.

Lee: AP courses that kids take now in high school. The senior year in most high school students is kind of a dead year—that most of them had finished their basic requirements that the state requires for graduation, so most seniors are taking, you know, Literature or advanced courses of something like that or they're getting lazy and they don't do much of anything.

Meg: [laughs]

Lee: Well, in the Bloomington-Normal area at this time, Advanced Placement was only in the East coast and the West coast. No high schools anywhere around—well New Trier and a couple of the larger high schools around Chicago had started—so that's what we did. And we would enroll students locally who, at the end of their junior year, their senior

year they could come to the campus and take different courses—maybe only one. Usually we started them out with one and if they finished that course—you know you can't transfer college credit unless you have a high school degree or a GED, so we would hold it in-escrow—you see that's what we meant. We would hold the credit that they made at Wesleyan. If they came to Wesleyan, fine. If they went to Northwestern, it's a transferrable course. So it was a—it was kind of a thing that we filled up a need around here that later came to—with the Advanced Placement. We have it with all our high schools here now of course.

Meg: And was—then was that a program that was available at the same time as the Room at the Top?

Lee: Oh, yeah.

Meg: Okay, so this timeframe is early '60s?

Lee: Oh, yeah. I would say late '50s, early '60s—in that area.

Meg: And men and women could apply for—

Lee: Early admission.

Meg: Early admission based on the escrow program?

Lee: Well, yes. I mean that actually—the escrow program didn't have anything to do with—in their application. It was wherever they went, they already had some college credit.

Meg: That's great.

Lee: But now kids come with Advanced Placement with 25, 20 semester hours, you know, to start right out and to put in their whole first semester. But—well, it was something of the time I guess you'd say.

Meg: Indeed, yeah.

Lee: It filled in a gap but it gave Wesleyan recognition academically. We have innovative programs. We actually had programs you could point to that were different and attracted attention and attracted applications. In the first year, we had that record thing. Our enrollment increased 19%. It was the only school in the state of Illinois that had an increase in enrollment. IIT in Chicago I think had a slight—but it was most unusual because all the—well, as I said, high school students were not graduating. There weren't that many. There just wasn't the prospect. Well, I don't know—there are other programs we had. You probably heard of Festival—we had many, many years ago where we'd invite prospective students down to the campus to spend a weekend and this was, again, supported by the Titan Council, which later got to be quite a burden on them, but they

would take so many prospective students into the sororities or into the dormitory and we'd have the ball game and then we'd have a—we had a dance at night and these high school kids—they would get a date with a college—well, or they could've—whichever they wanted. If they wanted a date with a college boy they could. If they wanted to date a high school boy it was—but it—and that was a social thing and we got into some problems from time to time with that because these high school girls were not ready for college men.

[Both laugh]

Meg: Imagine that...

Lee: But—so they had to keep—the sororities had to keep pretty close watch on them but it was a lot of fun—kids had a lot of fun but it got to where it was being sponsored financially by the fraternities and sororities who were keeping these people over the weekend so—so that was one—I was trying to think of—

Meg: Is that the one that—did that eventually morph into the Suitcase Weekend or the Sleepingbag Weekend? Is that the same thing?

Lee: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Meg: Okay. I have heard of that.

Lee: Spring Festival they called it.

Meg: Okay, yes.

Lee: Yeah, it was a—they dropped it for a long time and then they picked it up with this program.

Meg: With the later one. Okay.

Lee: But I think then the university paid the fraternities and sororities—

Meg: Yeah.

Lee: Something for feeding and housing them I guess.

Meg: Interesting.

Lee: I was trying to think—offhand it seemed like there were some other ideas we had that were directed toward admission and attracting students to the—well, no that goes way back and these—there was a tape that went with these and there were, as you can see, there is book one and book two but there was a cassette that with them and you

turned on the cassette and it would speak to this picture and that picture and then we'd have a little clicker and you'd turn the page and it'd speak for this one, this one, this one. It was just a really—thing that some kids maybe in that were maybe New York and New Jersey or places like that—Oh—

Meg: Well this is—predates the record albums or is it after that? I guess it would be after the record albums.

Lee: It was after and it ran concurrently because you used this or you wouldn't use it but—so it was special.

Meg: Okay.

Lee: It had some special student or maybe a grandpa would want some pictures or want something to give to his daughter or granddaughter or someone. We'd use these kind of things.

Meg: Okay and the thing we're pointing to now—I'm just gunna say for the recording—is two small booklets with photographs of the university—different scenes around the university and the title of it is called *Window on Wesleyan* and they are cassette books—is the other thing that it says on the cover, so the idea is you'd look at a picture and hear a narrative to go along with the pictures in it. So then did you send these to people and they sent them back or did they just—

Lee: Yes.

Meg: Keep them? Okay.

Lee: Well, they could—we made a bunch of these.

Meg: Yeah, okay.

Lee: But they usually sent them back.

Meg: So there are different campus scenes and different scenes of people, just to give you a feel for the institution—a lot of what we would do now online.

Lee: A lot of the other things—people would be sitting in the waiting room at—

Meg: At the Admissions Office.

Lee: At my office—these were there with little earplugs.

Meg: Great.

Lee: And they could sit there and listen before they talked to me.

Meg: Oh, great.

Lee: It was used in a lot of little junkets like that.

Meg: Different ways, okay.

Lee: It never was too successful—

Meg: Well—

Lee: I didn't think but who knows.

Meg: You try a lot of things and a few things stick and you call yourself a success, right?

Lee: Yeah.

Meg: That's a good thing.

Lee: Yeah, another thing that was similar to that was the—in the church—this goes way back when we were very close to the church again but they had meetings of the officers of the NYF in their church—there would be maybe five or six kids who were president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and so on—they held throughout the conference and there were—several hundred of them would be there. We set up a thing that attracted attention quite a bit at that time but it was a display with three boards, one facing you and two on the side, of all kinds of pictures and stuff on it and then in the middle was a cut-out and we had a little machine that WJBC donated to me that you put the slides—colored slides in it and put it in and it would go on maybe five, eight seconds. Well, then we had a bunch of these little earplugs, you know, just like little white plugs that would come down with a string from that hanging over the end of the table. Well, kids come by and they're looking, you know, inquisitive as heck.

Meg: Yeah. Something for a gadget.

Lee: Yeah, it's another gadget.

Meg: Gadget, yep.

Lee: Another—another attempt to get some attention—

Meg: Sounds like it worked.

Lee: Positive attention. Well—

Meg: [laughs]

Lee: But there were a lot of little things like that that weren't as meaningful as the records—produced as much response. Methodist Youth Day got a lot of response. You'd get 3,000 on that campus. Of course back then we didn't have all you we got now either, you know.

Meg: Right.

Lee: It's quite different. The logistics of what you're dealing with now and what you were dealing with back in the '50s lets say.

Meg: Right.

Lee: But it was a lot of fun and actually, when Dr. Eckley came in 1968, he wanted me to take over the development program against my wishes because I had gotten—I had served on two national boards—the ACEC Association and also the Registrar's Association and had my—actually my work for the last 15 years at that time or so was in Admission and I was recognized more in Admission than to start out in this—but it was supposedly a need at the time and so I became Director of Development. Now it's—I forget what it is. What is it—Vice President for University Advancement.

Meg: Advancement, right.

Lee: Yeah...but at that time—and they've got quite a staff—at that time I had one man who was in charge of deferred-giving, another man who headed the alumni, and another man that handled the annual gifts. And those four of us handled the whole thing. Now I don't know how many they got on that staff there. They got them out—stationed out in different places like—oh, the girl in Arizona, what's her name?

Meg: Uhh, I know who you're talking about and it's escaping me right now.

Lee: Yeah, well, it has come a long way. Of course, that's a long way's too. I retired in 1978—that's a long time back.

Meg: It certainly is.

Lee: But it continues to be an institution you can be proud of. You can be proud of being a part of it whether it was back 50 years ago or whether it's now. It's something you can look back and think that it has had a purpose—

Meg: Indeed.

Lee: And it made up or overcame, I guess, a World War, Second World War and it overcame the problems with financing private enterprises, like the church went through its problems and couldn't really support and that's when we starting finding our own ways. And sometime maybe we can talk a little bit about the development program some. When I took over the development program, we had some programs too that were

innovative and different that helped us. I remember the first multimillion-dollar gift I ever got for the university, which is—now it's—they get them all the time, you know.

Meg: Yeah. [laughs]

Lee: But this one was—we asked for a million and a half and we got two million.

Meg: Oh my goodness.

Lee: We can talk about that some time.

Meg: Do you want to continue another day then?

Lee: Yes, but, you know, you'll never end with this stuff.

[Both laugh]

Lee: I think sometime if we—maybe you'll want to do something on the Development Office.

Meg: I would love to.

Lee: And—

Meg: That would be great.

Lee: Involve more of the—because I was there from '68 to '78.

Meg: Okay.

Lee: I was over ten years.

Meg: Well if you want to talk a little bit about that now that's fine. If you want to take a break and pick it up another day, we can do that too.

Lee: Yeah, I think so because—

Meg: Very good.

Lee: It's really not—what I really want to see and hope that you can promote this some way is I want to see some recognition given to the understanding of the development of the Admissions Office because I don't think so many people realize that that period from 1951 to 1961 was really tough. And we were handling—well I guess I told you, at one time I had five jobs.

Meg: Yeah.

Lee: It was—I was Admission and Registrar and—I mean they were not piddling jobs, you know.

Meg: Right.

Lee: But people did this because—well, I wasn't the only one, you know, you got the Dean of Students, Anne Meierhofer, did all kinds. She and I split Financial Aid and now look at the financial aid—

Meg: Right.

Lee: They have. We had nothing. But—and the Business Manager did all kinds of stuff and we had one academic head, the Dean, and he did all the Dean work and then some. Now they've got chancellors and they've got, you know—it's another world and it's altogether—you can't hardly bring them together, you know, and it's hard to understand why in the world would anybody take on those jobs, you know, and do that? Well, as I say, it wasn't just me but it was a period where we had to do that if we were gunna keep—

Meg: Right.

Lee: They couldn't afford a Registrar and an Admissions person and a Financial Aid. They all kind of went together. Financial aid—we never had anything until Anne Meierhofer and I shared that for a long—you know who Anne Meierhofer is?

Meg: Yes, I do.

Lee: Okay. I handled all the freshman financial aid and getting students there and making up their financial aid package, and then Anne took over the upper classmen and we did that until Nicholson, who just had a big feature—

[Both laugh]

Lee: He was hired as Associate Dean or Assistant Dean of Students in Anne Meierhofer's office and didn't—the job wasn't defined very well. Anyhow, we went to Dr. Bertholf to ask him to see if we couldn't—financial aid is something we're gunna have to have, you know, we're gunna have to do more than we can do now and find ways to get money to give aid. We didn't have any money and \$50 was the biggest scholarship back in those days.

Meg: Wow.

Lee: \$50.

[Both laugh]

Lee: Of course the tuition was only about \$650 then.

Meg: Right.

Lee: But Nich worked with me for a couple of years and we get a big laugh out of it because Nich was a smalltown guy who had never been anywhere. I took him to New York City to a meeting and it was a like a kid in a—he'll still tell you about that—was the biggest thrill he ever had.

Meg: I will remember to ask.

[Both laugh]

Lee: Yeah, when you see him sometime, say, “Oh, what is this story Lee Short tells about you in New York City?”

[Both laugh]

Meg: Will he leave the room if I ask him that? [laughs]

Lee: No.

Meg: Okay, good.

Lee: He'll know.

Meg: Okay, good.

Lee: Are we still on?

Meg: We're still on—

Lee: Oh!

Meg: But we can go ahead and end it there.

Lee: Yeah.

Meg: And we'll pick all this up another day then. I thank you so much for your time and talking to me and telling your stories about the developments of Admissions and thank you for all of the wonderful programs that you started.