



4-13-2016

Art Killian

Art Killian

Meg Miner

Illinois Wesleyan University, mminer@iwu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/oral_hist



Part of the [United States History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Killian, Art and Miner, Meg, "Art Killian" (2016). *All oral histories*. 105.
https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/oral_hist/105

This Article is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It has been brought to you by Digital Commons @ IWU with permission from the rights-holder(s). You are free to use this material in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/ or on the work itself. This material has been accepted for inclusion by University Archivist & Special Collections Librarian at Illinois Wesleyan University. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@iwu.edu.
©Copyright is owned by the author of this document.

Oral History Interview with Art Killian,
in Hansen Student Center, April 13, 2016
Conducted by Meg Miner, Illinois Wesleyan Archivist

Meg Miner: Good afternoon!

Art Killian: Hi.

Miner: This is Meg Miner. It is April 13, a beautiful spring day in Hansen Center's basement. I am conducting a sabbatical project of Minor Myers Jr. Uh the influences that he had umm through his collecting and has many varied interests umm on our campus and our community and of course, the people in it, and with me today is a probably gratefully retired –

[laughter]

Killian: Yep.

Miner: Member of our staff. Please, Art, introduce yourself; how long were you here and-and let's kinda have a conversation about all of that.

00:00:35 - Art Killian introducing himself and his time at Wesleyan

Killian: Umm let's see, I – it's easier to say when I came than how many years I was here. I – I –

Miner: Okay, when did you come?

Killian: I am not good with the math –

Miner: Yep.

Killian: But uh I came in June of 1984.

Miner: Okay.

Killian: So, I think it put me somewhere around 27-28 years of uh Wesleyan Employee, and I was on the Ground's Crew; uh various uh job descriptions I think. Uh anything from flowers to pruning trees to designing patios to whatever. So, uh... and that's about it.

Miner: And you retired in what year?

Killian: [sighs] See, that's –

Miner: That's a tough one. I think it's been about f–

Killian: Uhh I think four and half years ago or whatever that puts us –

Miner: I was gonna say it was about five.

Killian: Yeah.

Miner: Four or five. Okay. So, umm right around two thousand – let's see if I can do the math –

Killian: Yeah.

Miner: Two thousand umm ten.

Killian: Yeah.

Miner: 2011, something like that.

Killian: That sounds about right. Yeah, 11 or 12, yeah.

Miner: And so, you have, as I recall from our conversations uh way back when you have a design background.

Killian: Uh yeah. I was a – I was a – actually, I was an uh I am an art major uh uh undergraduate. And I did some uh – I did a year of graduate school at ISU in – I was a – yeah, my undergraduate was uh basically watercolor painting.

Miner: Okay.

Killian: And then I left that and uh – oh well, I finished that, and then I went to ISU uh in the master's program for weaving. So, I was a weaver for a while.

Miner: Wow.

Killian: And a guy in the program. [laughs]

Miner: Wow.

Killian: So-So, I was there for about a year, and then uh m- uh my wife got pregnant, and I thought it's time to become realistic. So –

Miner: Hate it when that happens.

Killian: Yeah. Yeah, well –

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: It was a – It was a good thing.

Miner: But you brought your artistry, too the work you did because the conversation I remember is the amazing umm program that you created – the map your created of the arboretum.

Killian: Oh, thanks. Yeah, I did that.

Miner: This is still as wonderful.

Killian: Thank you.

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: You know, that-that- In fact, I-I think last year, they hired me to update it, so it's updated now.

[Miner gasps]

Killian: Yeah?

Miner: Oh my gosh! I did not know this!

Killian: Yeah. Yeah.

Miner: We will need to have another conversation.

Killian: Yeah. They –

Miner: So, you took new pictures?

Killian: Uh there were some new photographs. I had to eliminate somethings that-that died, put in a couple of new species, and we up- updated the uh the map for-for buildings because up until we did this new update, the uh the new – what is it called? The State Farm building?

Miner: Aha.

Killian: And the atrium and the art building –

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: All those things were not there on the – on the last one, so that was updated.

Miner: And the whole Egbers quadrangle –

Killian: Yeah.

Miner: That had – That would have just gone in?

Killian: That –

Miner: Or have been going in –

Killian: I –

Miner: I mean you did that.

Killian: I did the umm I did an update on the-the street closing, so that's in there. But, I don't know if the-the sculpture shows, and I am not sure – actually, when I think back on it, I-I think that still – the-the street closing still had to happen, so I think I just put in the street closing but the trees, the plantings might not be on the new map.

Miner: Still have to hire you back. [laughs]

Killian: I know.

Miner: If you – If you'll come back –

Killian: I've got plenty of time.

Miner: -and go tomorrow, you'll be sick of it!

Killian: Yeah, I've got plenty of time.

Miner: Oh okay, good.

[Killian laughs]

Miner: Good.

Killian: Yeah.

Miner: Well, that's great.

Killian: Yeah.

Miner: Umm well, I will have to get uh get hold of you and see what kind of new pictures we need to –

Killian: Yeah.

Miner: -get hold of and–

Killian: There we go.

Miner: Get the new pdf and everything –

Killian: Alright.

Miner: So, -

Killian: You-You put the bug in the rear, and I am – I am happy to do it. [chuckles]

Miner: Alright. I will do that. So, when you got here – let's see 84, so that would have been five years before Minor.

Killian: Yeah, Eckley was still here.

Miner: Eckley was here, and that was umm – do the math again, like twelve years after the major quad redesign, so were they –

Killian: Yeah.

Miner: -developed the – they brought in alumni to do all of that.

Killian: Right, Noah –

Miner: So –

Killian: Andrew? A- Noah? I can never remember last name. We were just talking about it the other day. I can't think of it.

Miner: I think it's Sammons or Simmons or Sa- there was –

Killian: Yeah.

Miner: Something with double 'M's in it. Sorry, I-I don't –

Killian: That- yeah.

Miner: I am bad –

Killian: That's alright.

Miner: I am bad at that, too.

Killian: Yeah.

Miner: Umm so, what was it like then – what-what were – maybe we can get it before and after picture, right? Before Minor and after Minor.

Killian: Yeah.

Miner: I mean can you reflect on some changes? Do you wanna start with –

Killian: Well, I know the–

Miner: Thinking of what changed or?

00:05:00 - Art discussing the landscaping and building during Eckley's presidency and the changes that occurred afterwards

Killian: I know when I came here – it's-it's an interesting story, not about Minor but about me, but uh –

Miner: Please.

Killian: I worked - before I came to Wesleyan, I was uh I worked for a landscaping company on the west side of town, and my last day on the job, I sold all the trees and shrubs to Wesleyan to put in the new uh chapel.

Miner: Oh.

Killian: Which was the only building I think that uh Eckley built when he was here, and-and then I started work at Wesleyan on-on that following Monday in my very first job at Wesleyan was plant-

[Miner laughs]

Killian: -the trees and shrubs that I had just sold them. [laughs]

Miner: Were you regretting –

Killian: No!

Miner: Just recommending so many – [laughs]

Killian: No. No, I was a landscape for that. I just – I didn't recommend it. The design was done; I just –

Miner: Oh., okay.

Killian: I just was there to do the sale.

Miner: Oh that's funny.

Killian: Yeah. So, it is –

[laughter]

Killian: It was a pretty interesting – interesting –

Miner: Uh.

Killian: - uh turn of events there. But uh, you know, up until then from what I have heard, there wasn't a whole lot of building going on. The Eckley kind of built endowment and-and his final thing was to build this-this chapel. That's what he wanted to do.

Miner: He did the president's house, too I thought or no – was that –

Killian: Well, he might of. That would have been before my time.

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: I think.

Miner: I am just trying to think of what he built.

Killian: Yeah.

Miner: I think because – I think those are the two –

Killian: Might have been the pre- yeah.

Miner: They did a lot with landscaping I thought.

Killian: Well, you know, Mrs. Eckley was very interested in the landscape, and my boss at that time was uh Ron Trauber; his name was. And, I remember once a week he uh he had to get in to the – in the truck and drive Mrs. Eckley around because she wanted her say about what was happening on the quad –

Miner: Hmm.

Killian: And the campus. He had a little clip on tie on his desk drawer. He clip on his tie and get her in the truck and they drive around and-and uh and yeah – and that is one change that did happen when I came, and I-I noticed specifically because they-they kinda told me this, but up until that point, they did not have anyone they trusted to prune trees. And so – and-and that was the Eckleys that didn't trusted.

Miner: Oh –

Killian: And s –

Miner: Interesting!

Killian: And so, they uh – the trees, all the trees on the quad were hanging down on people's faces and you had to kinda duck around things. And uh apparently, they gave me a chance to prune it, liked what I did, so then that became the standard procedure to prune trees on campus after that, so.

Miner: So, you essentially had to audition in front of –

Killian: I guess I did. I w- I at the time, I wasn't aware that I was uh auditioning. I just thought "Well, this is what you do. We gotta prune", and they sent me out to prune, and apparently I was auditioning.

Killian: I know. But they were happy with it, so the way it went. Now, it's water under the bridge.

Miner: There you go.

Killian: Yeah, so.

Miner: Well, campus really looks great.

Killian: Well, I am afraid I have nothing to do with that now.

[laughter]

Miner: Well, it did when you were here, too.

Killian: Well, thanks. [laughs]

Miner: Yeah. So, uh so landscaping, umm pruning; you said you-you did some... I mean –

Killian: We did a lot of flower beds.

Miner: Flower beds.

Killian: Uh we used to do a lot more flower beds than – uh I can't speak for what they are doing now, but I know they uh, you know, with budget and time and – and I guess budget affects everything because uh we had - lack of time because we didn't have enough people to get certain things done, but I know when I've started, we used to do tulip beds, lots of tulip beds.

Miner: Hmmm.

Killian: And tulips are... I mean an essence. They call them annuals because they are only really good for one to two years. I think we usually kept them in for three, and then they started to fade,

and that was such a procedure; we had to dig, tulips go in at-at six, about six inches deep, and- and everybody wanted them informal and that. So, we used –

Miner: Hmm.

Killian: -to dig out the flower beds to - the entire flower beds six inches deep, and then place all of the tulips in, and then gently throw the soil back over the top of them, so that they come up in grids. And uh we had tulip beds all over campus, and uh that was one of the first things to go when we decided we only have to cut back, and this is one extremely labor intensive thing that has to go.

Miner: When would that have been?

Killian: Well, –

Miner: Cutting back of that?

Killian: We probably cut back... might have been after Minor came. Now let's see, it was Eckley who done those. Anderson for a very short time.

Miner: Right. Right.

Killian: And then – And then Minor came, and uh – [laughs] I th- I think that's an interesting thing though that talk- talking about this I say, I can't go with Eckley, then there was Anderson –

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: And then I went to Minor. Said it's-it's last name only until Minor –

Miner: Until Minor –

Killian: -comes along and then Minor is uh –

Miner: Huh.

Killian: Yeah. And I – and the – is funny because with Wilson - I, you know, I always said he wanted to be called Dick, but I think it w- I always refer to him as Wilson.

Miner: Interesting.

Killian: But I never mention Minor as Myers.

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: Never occurs to me, you know.

Miner: That's funny.

Killian: So, yeah but other than that, I think the flower beds changed quite a bit. Umm, you know, when the money was flowing, you know, we really – we were the ones who decided what trees needed to go in and-and how many trees and new- and that and uh – and then-and then when the money stop flowing quite as much, then that became more of uh, you know, almost - I mean I guess that probably was a committee thing for a while. I don't think it's quite like that – bad anymore, but-but it-it-you are cautious about how many, and you are cautious about what size, you know, we used to buy larger trees-

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: And we-we've cut, scaled that back and that.

00:10:55 - Art discussing tree donations

Miner: What about donors? People who wanna do-donate a tree; do they-do they consult you or?

Killian: You know, not that many people donated trees.

Miner: During your time. But I have seen a few.

Killian: Yeah. There were – There were a few. In fact, there was – there was a - three or four trees that uh umm – Reddow Tree Farm – his name is George Johnston. His daughter went to school here.

Miner: Huh.

Killian: And when-when she started school here, he said he'd like to donate some trees. But he asked us what we wanted and we said "hey, these would be great." We went out to his nursery, and he-his plant was still there on the uh, they are on the uh south side of the library.

Miner: Nice.

Killian: Yeah. Some nice umm, what were they? Dawn redwoods –

Miner: Does –

Killian: Or –

Miner: And the place really, seriously does always - I mean, you know, then now, I mean I know it's a heck of a lot of work! [chuckles]

Killian: Yeah.

Miner: And you see –

Killian: Yeah.

Miner: You do see people allowed pruning all the time and that's - yeah.

Killian: It's a lot of work.

Miner: It's important.

00:11:47 - Art discussing how Minor appreciated plants

Killian: It's a lot of work, but Minor did, I think uh coming back to Minor, I think he appreciated that. I – he liked plants. He liked plants a lot. He wasn't always realistic about the plants he liked.

Miner: Like what?

Killian: Well, he loved uh he loved English uh perennial gardens.

Miner: Okay.

Killian: And he – and that w- and the-the handful of times that he actually showed me some books uh usually I wou- at that time, I was the flower guy, and I took care of their-their back yard. We had quite a extensive flower bed in his backyard which has changed a lot over the last few years, but uh uh I was the guy who did the flowers, so I was the guy that he al- usually talk to about that.

Miner: Ah-huh.

Killian: And –

00:12:42 - Art discussing changes in the President's house landscaping

Miner: And did that change a lot too, like the stuff that was more visible or were these just more –

Killian: Well, -

Miner: -perennial?

Killian: I think while Minor was here, I think – you know, I am - I get confused on dates but I think Minor's the one who extended the back fence but that might have been Wilson...

Miner: Hmm.

Killian: That extended the back fence of – but uh we had – when he first moved in, the-the yard-his backyard was smaller, and we had basically flower beds that ran across the back and up the side and-and then there was quite a few around the patio and uh and all of those changed; that different times, different periods, and I know Minor extended the uh I guess the dining room –

Miner: Ah-huh.

Killian: And put an extension on the house and sold the patio and had to change then, so – I can't-I can't really remember if we took it out and just put a small one in or if we just took out a part where the new building was going.

Miner: Hmmm.

Killian: And because it's not like that anymore because once Wilson came, we expanded that-that patio quite a bit.

Miner: You did that whole big stone work.

Killian: Yeah. Yeah, we did. That was – That was uh what I-I think Carl Teichman likes to believe, came from old North. I don't know if anyone has ever approved that. [laughs]

Miner: Ah-huh. Where have they been? Where were those –

Killian: They had been stored in our storage facility down at, they-they call it “funks” down by the soccer field.

Miner: Yeah, that they –

Killian: And –

Miner: - the big department, right?

Killian: Yeah, right.

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: And they-they were there for the longest time, just these big curved stone stacked on pallets, and I think I had the idea of uh, you know, I said we gotta use these for something and at first, we started talking about doing uh benches, curved benches, around some of the major trees on-on the quad.

Miner: Hmmm.

Killian: And the more we talked about it – I think the more we talked with uh with president Wilson about it, the more we thought wouldn't this be a good idea to incorporate them into a

patio of some kind. I-I think Wil- the Wilsons were interested in developing more of a backyard... uh venue for fundraising.

Miner: Hmm.

Killian: I think that was the ideas that we could bring people. They could have little outdoor parties. I think it one time they even wanted a - and they may have got it, they uh – pizza oven back there.

Miner: Oh. [laughs]

Killian: But they wanted uh, you know, that-the – you know, So- Sodexo could come over and –

Miner: Make –

Killian: Yeah, so called –

Miner: -stone fired –

Killian: -Saga. [laughs]

Miner: Yeah. [laughs] Everybody does.

Killian: I know, yeah. But uh - but yeah. So, we – so that's when we re- uh -evaluated –

Miner: Huh

Killian: the-those and-and so I designed the patio around those stones uh to be the kind of curved seats around the edge of the patio.

Miner: Aha.

Killian: And that's – so that's how those ended up back there.

Miner: That looks nice.

Killian: Yeah, well thanks.

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: But that was under Wilson not under Minor.

Miner: Yeah.

00:15:24 - Art discussing Minor's love for the English Perennial Gardens

Killian: But Minor was – yeah, Minor was very big on the-the eh- I – he was - seemed a little bit obsessed with the – with the English perennial gardens, and-and as many times as-as – I and we talked to him about... this is not the climate. [laughs]

Miner: Ah-huh.

Killian: We don't have enough – we don't have enough you know, rain, and it's-it's too hot, and there's long periods of dry spells and this and that and there – they just don't grow here.

Miner: Ah-huh.

Killian: That plus, you know, not to mention the soils, you know, different soils. And, h-he was not a guy that took “no” for an answer.

Miner: So, what would a conversation like that be like then?

Killian: Well, [sighs] I would try to argue with him about well, these are beautiful plants. There's no doubt, but they won't work here, and he said, “Well, I think if you do this and you do that”, and I would say well, I really don't think so because they, you know, the-the honest truth of the thing was is that, you know, he's trying to talk us into doing something that is – that is really going to become a chore for us to k- to continue to do.

Miner: Right.

Killian: Uh I know when Eckleys were here, and I think it extended in to Minor's time; they had -they loved uh tea – uh you know, this regular tea roses. You know, they loved –

Miner: Ah.

Killian: -the-the regular, you know, not the multi-flora. You know, more the wild roses, they wanted, you know – and those things were – I mean you treated them once a week for mildew and spot and –

Miner: Oh my.

Killian: And uh you had to insulate them every-every winter to keep 'em from, you know, freeze and all. They were a-a big chore, and it was always kind of a-a compromise about how well they made it through.

Miner: So you did do that?

Killian: But we did that.

Miner: You maintained that.

Killian: Yeah, we did maintain those.

Miner: Oh wow.

Killian: I think those came out – actually I think they finally came out when-when Minor expanded the building because they were right there along the wall where the new –

Miner: Oh.

Killian: -where the old building was.

Miner: So, these wouldn't have been out on the quad somewhere.

Killian: No, no, no.

Miner: These were just for their –

Killian: Yeah, those were just for their –

Miner: - atmosphere. [laughs]

Killian: -backyard. Yeah, just in Minor's backyard. Yeah.

Miner: For all of that –

Killian: The president's yard.

Miner: -entertainment.

Killian: Yeah. Yeah.

Miner: Wow. Well, that's kind of what I was thinking about when you talked about tulips, and we have so many quad squirrels; I would think of tulip bulb –

Killian: Oh, they dug them up.

Miner: -would be – [laughs]

Killian: Yeah. They dug up – yeah, the squirrels would dig them up all the time.

Miner: No wonder we have so many quad squirrels!

Killian: Yeah. I know –

Miner: How many years do we have tulips?

Killian: Yeah, I know.

Miner: If they are still

Killian: Now, they are up to the daffodils I think!

[laughter]

Miner: That's funny!

Killian: Yeah.

00:17:44 - Art discussing Minor with books about plants

Miner: Well, so-so he would have a book and say, –

Killian: So, he bring out the books – yeah.

Miner: “I love this design” or “these plants” or both?

Killian: No, it's mostly plants.

Miner: So, it's planting.

Killian: I think – yeah. I don't think he was that interested in design.

Miner: Okay.

Killian: I honestly never got that-that impression from him. He never really discuss design. He was more of a plant man.

Miner: Okay.

Killian: You know, that was – that was collections. You know, you are –

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: -talking about collections –

Miner: Right.

Killian: -and he-he liked the collection of plants. He was uh – I think he liked to nurture them. I think, you know, in fact you know, there was one story where-where uh we were weeding and uh – and uh there was these little tiny oak trees that had started up in-in his bed.

[Miner laughs]

Killian: And we get weed trees all the time that just self-sow, and-and I – and I don't know why it occurred to me while I was pulling 'em out, but I thought "hey, I'll take a couple of these home and see if I can get them to grow in my yard." So, I-I dug them out, hauled them away, and like two days later, Minor calls out and says "Hey, somebody took my oak trees!"

[laughter]

Miner: Oh no!

Killian: And I'm like "Oak trees?". They were like little sprouts! And – but he want them back.

Miner: Oh my gosh.

Killian: Yeah, and I had to – I had to bring them back and replant them and –

Miner: It's a good thing you saved them I guess.

Killian: Well, I would – yeah, that's – yeah I – well, and that did not always happen because –

Miner: I know.

Killian: -we had a guy that went out to weed whip some areas in the back, and he weed whipped off a couple of – I don't know, some kind of heirloom tomatoes that were just barely out of the ground. But, you know, when you are weed whipping and as much as we-we would weed whip, you-you don't look at tiny little details like that.

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: But-But he would go in and he would take a plant that he had some love affair with, and he planted into the – into the most odd places, and then we always suffer the consequences. And- And in that particular case with the tomatoes, he-he – I think uh my boss got chewed out really badly, and-and he complained about the idiot that – whatever we whip a tomato plants and this and that, and it was – yeah.

Miner: Was he just sticking them in like a garden – like a flower bed or –

Killian: Just along – it would be –

Miner: -he just –

Killian: No, it would be just tucked –

Miner: He would just –

Killian: -along under the fence, you know, near the f- the edge of the fence, and uh –

Miner: Not marked off under.

Killian: Right! Well, and uh - and our complaint was always, you know, we will be happy to let you do whatever you want to in the backyard.

Miner: Yeah.

[laughter]

Miner: I was gonna say, yeah.

Killian: But if you stick things in that-that we don't know about, -

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: -it's-it's really difficult for us to... maintain, you know, the way you want it maintained.

Miner: Ah.

Killian: So yeah. There was a little battle about that back and forth, and-and I know he uh, in front of Presser, you know, where some of those really surfacy rooted trees are the n-

Miner: Ah.

Killian: -uh the Norway maples. Uh those are always difficult to get grass growing under because the roots system is so close to the surface; they suck all the moisture, and they are dense shade on top of that. And so, there was a lot of dead g- you know, no grass there. Just open-open ter- uh soil, and Minor wanted stuff in there in the worst way, and he's constantly telling us about it, and we were constantly saying, "Minor, there's no way we can get anything to grow in there!"

Miner: Hmmm.

Killian: It's just too much competition... the- with the trees there and-and he's - and-and basically the more we argue about it, the more he just dug his heels in and said, "I don't care what your arguments are, you will make this happen." And -

Miner: [gasps in surprise]

Killian: Yeah, and so we-we went through -

Miner: You, mother nature -

Killian: Well, we -

Miner: -look it out!

Killian: Yeah, we went through a series of things in there and – [pounds the table] and uh that we ended up with some uh some little uh bulbs - that we scattered the blue things that of kind of taken off. And –

Miner: I love those.

Killian: Well, I-I think they look great in there.

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: But, that doesn't satisfy the-the majority of the year.

Miner: Right.

Killian: You know.

Miner: They are pretty short lived, but they are always such a nice treat to see.

Killian: They are. Yeah, they are. I like those.

Miner: Makes me smile.

Killian: Yeah.

Miner: So, he would really be then completely unimpressed by facts.

Killian: Yeah, he-he had what he – he knew what he wanted, and that was, you know, my guesses from the stories around the shop and that uh physical plant. My guess is that extended beyond just plants. [laughs]

Miner: Okay.

00:22:03 - Art describing Minor's personality and how that got new buildings on campus

Killian: So, he uh he uh he wanted – he knew what he wanted, and-and they didn't want an argument about, and I-I think that was, you know, we got a lot of beautiful buildings. Uh well, you've got your beautiful library and uh and – but it-but it was –

Miner: It's not my library.

Killian: Well –

[Miner laughs]

Killian: For the record, yeah.

[laughter]

Killian: It's not my physical plant either –

Miner: Damn right! [laughs]

00:25:27 - Art telling a story of Minor when he first came to Wesleyan

Killian: But I'll say it. [laughs] But uh – yeah, but I-I think that was the-the problem is that uh – fact that of one of the stories I heard umm when they wanted to build a new uh - a field house. New uh, you know, the Shirk Center.

Miner: Aha.

Killian: That Minor wanted this – he wanted all these other things instead, and they said “well, this is what we are going to get any”, and I – and I had always heard that he approved – he signed off on the new field house uh if he got a new science center.

Miner: Ah.

Killian: Yeah. It was – It was all this little bargain stuff, and I don't know how much truth there is to that –

Miner: Sure.

Killian: But that's what we always heard, and-and I know uh, you know, he-he does have a mixed... review from a lot of people over that kind of thing. I know, you know, a lot of people really loved, I think probably uh admissions, probably more than anybody loved the idea pf new buildings and renovated buildings and all the money going into this and that, but uh we were on pins and needles at the shop knowing that maintenance was suffering because the m- there was no money there to-to fix the things that needed to be fixed, and we kept seeing all these buildings springing up with what appeared to be no money to pay for them. And – And uh so yeah, so there-there was some – a mixed bag there, but that's why they say he – my impression was he-he-he was used to getting what he wanted.

Miner: Huh.

Killian: And uh and he got it most of the time. I mean –

Miner: Huh.

Killian: I-I think going back to the-the English perennials, [chuckles] I think sometimes even if I dug my heels in and said “Minor, I don't know if I can do this, but I can look around or this or that and try to do some stall tactics,” and then come back later and he'd have gone down to KC's or one of the other garden centers, and he'd have bought them and put them in himself.

Miner: In his home, but not out in –

Killian: In the – yeah, in his yard, yeah.

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: He didn't really talk that much, you know, uh the-that one exception, you know, in front of Presser. He – I don't recall him talking that much about the campus, you know, as a whole and what trees or-or shrubs or this or that. I-I think, you know, probably the biggest changes that the campus went through under his administration were probably not his doing – I mean I know it was during that time we took out a lot of the large uh yew shrubs that were around some of the dorms be- uh for security reasons –

Miner: Hmmm.

Killian: And we –

Miner: Sure.

Killian: And we-we gradually faded shrubbery off of main campus for-for trees, so that there wasn't a lot of hiding places that kind of thing. But uh, yeah, I – he seemed to stay off it although there's an interesting story with him when he first moved town. Uh I can't remember if we had to go up to the yard for something, or if we just wanted to stop and welcome him to campus; I-I can't remember those couple of us that went up there.

Miner: From the physical plant –

Killian: From-From grounds crew.

Miner: Okay.

Killian: And uh the-the moving van was still in front of the house.

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: So, they were-they were hauling furniture in, and uh Minor grabbed us and-and had us go up – walk up to-to campus, and I can't remember what it was for but it was – I-I remember distinctly it was on the east, no the west side of Presser there over by - what do they call it, Munsel beach or whatever. I-I – what did they used to –

Miner: McPherson beach.

Killian: McPherson beach.

Miner: Ah-huh.

Killian: I had lost track of the-

Miner: Behind the theatre.

Killian: Buildings or what now but –

Miner: Yeah. No, that's fine.

Killian: But uh I remember him going over there specifically to talk to us about something while they are moving the furniture in. Well – I mean the very first meeting we had with him, so I uh and I can't remember what it was and I can't remember that happening very often, but very first day on the job –

Miner: He had seen something that he–

Killian: He had seen something that he wanted, yeah. And I can't remember if it was a positive or a negative. I just remember –

Miner: Huh.

Killian: -that walk over there thinking “what on earth is going on here?”

Miner: Who's welcoming who? [laughs]

Killian: Yeah, exactly. So, yeah. But that – But other than that, I don't-I don't – he certainly was not like uh Nell Eckley where she wanted a constant input about what was going on-on-on the quad on campus. In fact, that's why I think, eventually that-that quad was rededicated to her.

Miner: Ah-huh.

Killian: Because of her-her constant interest in it.

Miner: Ah-huh.

Killian: And I wouldn't had say – I mean other people might have... had a different opinion, but I wouldn't say that her interest was troublesome for us. You know, I don't – I don't recall, but I certainly not the boss – wasn't the boss, and I don't know what kind of restrictions were put on him because of that, but I never got the impression that-that was ever an issue. But yeah, most-most presidents have not been that... you know, outspoken about what we did –

Miner: Aha.

Killian: -on-on main campus which is actually very surprising when you think about it.

Miner: Is it?

Killian: Yeah.

Miner: Okay.

Killian: I mean I-I think it is; I – you know, faculty like to say, you know, which tree should come down and which tree should stay.

Miner: Really? So, you get faculty input?

Killian: Oh, ye- yeah. Yeah.

Miner: Ah.

Killian: Faculty like to, you know – yeah. Now, when Minor was here, there was an issue... that I think – I think he probably had the most influence on which could have become a very tragic situation, but uh we had a big hackberry on the main quad, sitting right next to the main center walk that ran between uh memorial center and uh whatever that – what-what is that, the –

Miner: Shaw.

Killian: Shaw.

Miner: Ah-huh.

Killian: A-A giant, giant hackberry, and we had watched it for a while and f- and felt that it was not a safe tree. I mean it was – it was big, big tree.

Miner: Huh.

Killian: And we had gone to Minor about it and-and said, “We need to take this tree down,” and he said, “No, I like that tree there. We are gonna keep it.” And so, we still got nervous about it, so we-we called an arborist uh thinking “well, if he doesn’t trust us maybe he will trust an official arborist, licensed arborist.” And we called him in, and he said “this tree needs to come down –

Miner: Wow.

Killian: -as soon as possible.” And we went back to Minor, and we went to Ken Browning

[Miner laughs]

Killian: And –

Miner: For the insurance perspective.

Killian: Well –

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: We told him –

Miner: Liability.

Killian: -we cannot trust this tree, and Minor said, “No, that tree is fine. Leave it there.” And we were there, working one winter, and we had had a major ice storm, and I-I can still remember I was on the steps of Buck Hall, and we were scraping and salting; getting ice off the steps, and we heard this loud crack. I mean really loud like – not like a branch breaking but something – and we looked over, and that hackberry had fallen.

[Miner gasps]

Killian: It-It completely fell over right across that main walk.

Miner: Oh my goodness.

Killian: Fifteen minutes before students would have been coming to class.

Miner: Oh my goodness!

Killian: Yeah. I mean it was just a huge boom. I mean you can imagine this giant tree falling over at the roots, and-and landing on its sidewalk, and it was just by the grace of god that nobody was walking on that sidewalk.

Miner: Oh my goodness.

Killian: Yeah.

Miner: That’s incredible.

Killian: It was a – It was pretty wild! [laughs]

Miner: Well, had he been here for a while at that point?

Killian: I think so, yeah. Yeah, I think he had been for a little while at that point.

Miner: Huh.

Killian: Yeah.

Miner: Wow.

Killian: Yeah. I can't give you dates, but –

Miner: Sure.

Killian: But uh, probably –

Miner: Well, so there were consequences for one person who weed whipped uh tomatoes –

Killian: Tomato plants! [laughs]

Miner: And-And-And so, if you said – you said – and you told another story about him going out and getting his own plants –

Killian: Yeah.

Miner: But I mean he – did he ever like get so angry, they'd say, you know, fire somebody or?

Killian: No, you know, I [sighs] I don't think he – I mean – I mean we certainly wouldn't have done that. I know my boss got his ear chewed for – and the guy – and-and-and the thing was is that the guy that was weed whipping, was generally not our plants person.

Miner: Hmm.

Killian: I mean he was generally and operably would consider him an operator. He would be on a mower most of the time.

Miner: Hmm.

Killian: But if there were, you know, if we were under the gun, had to get stuff done, we'd send him to do other things, and –

Miner: Sure.

Killian: So he rarely went in to the president's backyard, so he wouldn't have even known.

Miner: Sure.

Killian: And uh – and so, yeah. But - I mean I – Minor, from what I gathered, I didn't hear the conversation, but what – from what the boss repeated to us, there was an awful lot of name calling.

Miner: Hmm. [chuckles]

Killian: You know, just be gentle about it. [laughs]

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: Yeah, about that –

Miner: Well –

Killian: -one particular guy, and-and he didn't even know who he was.

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: He just said it was just stupid, idiotic, you know, this and that.

Miner: Well, uh I guess, you know, even if you had been an experienced ground person, you might not –

Killian: I would –

Miner: Tomato looks like – [laughs]

Killian: I would've weed whipped it.

Miner: You know –

Killian: I would've weed whipped it, yeah.

Miner: there's a difference between a vegetable gardener and a –

Killian: That's right, yeah.

Miner: And a perennial.

Killian: Yeah.

Miner: Well, so - but there were no consequences for you saying –

Killian: No, no, no.

Miner: _ I am gonna look into this other thing.

Killian: No.

Miner: Did he – Did he suggest things like that and then let them go or was he pretty on it—

Killian: Uh sometime-sometimes – I am sure he – i-if he let it go, I don't remember it now.

Miner: Okay.

Killian: Because he let it go. But, uh you know, I would say probably he would get a burro under his saddle once in a while and push it and push it, and uh – but in general, I mean if I had to say in general, I would say he-he took a pretty hands off approach to us, he at other bigger fish in the fry.

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: And uh, you know, and most of it was confined at the backyard which you know, I mean I would be the same way if it was my job.

Miner: Your home, yeah.

Killian: Yep.

Miner: So, he didn't uh like send you any thank you note or anything er- or sorry after the tree came down or – [laughs]

Killian: No, no, no, no, no, no. [laughs]

Miner: [laughs] Nothing like that.

Killian: No, no, no.

Miner: So, it didn't go the other direction.

Killian: No, it didn't. [laughs]

Miner: There was just –

Killian: No, it didn't go the other direction.

Miner: -quietly forgotten.

Killian: Yeah, it was quietly forgotten and –

Miner: So, do you remember anything about the book he showed you about the English gardens?

Killian: I don't. You know, and uh I mean he had some pretty obscure stuff.

Miner: Aha.

Killian: That uh I don't – I am not sure where he got them if it was, you know, in buy big batches and he'd accidentally find something he really liked or if he went searching, he could've went searching for something.

Miner: Ah.

Killian: Uh he, you know, he might have – I cou- I can't remember, but he might have said hey this was – this is a very important book from, you know –

Miner: Sure.

Killian: Perennial book form back in the day.

Miner: But the point was the species that –

00:33:41 - Art talking about his personal job on campus

Killian: Yeah, that's what I think. Yeah, I think if you are gonna take anything from that, I would say he was, you know, I've always said about myself that I, I am not a c- I am not a caregiver, and I am really not a gardener. I don't like to garden. To be honest with you, I never really liked specifically what I did.

Miner: Ah-huh.

Killian: As far as grounds keeping goes. My, uh you know, my satisfaction from the job was more from the - my art background. I-I looked at trees like, you know, they were forms; they were textures, they were colors, they were lines. And-And I - and-and – and I had a... you know, I-I tend to be – I-I tend to be more of a craftsman than a – than an artist which –

Miner: Hmmm.

Killian: You know, that's a whole other discussion. But-But crafts people I think in general well that's changing. Crafts people in general tend to be more detail oriented in terms of, you know, how things are put together; -

Miner: Ah-huh.

Killian: -the structures and this and that. So, when I – when I got satisfaction from my job, it was more the uh, you know, making sure things were neat, organized, uh presentable. I always had this weak link theory and all of that, you know, you could... you know, like if you went to the baseball field and had it perfectly mowed and infield groomed and all the lines good, and then the outfield fence had, you know, uh shin high, weeds growing on it –

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: Then nobody notices the-the nice field. They notice the weeds.

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: And so, my feeling was always I wanted some satisfaction out of making things look the way they were supposed to look, and uh and keeping them neat and that. And-And from that

perspective, you know, I-I think Minor – I think he was happy with the way things were and we – I think we – in general I think the-the crew did pretty decent work given the - some of the restrictions on time and money.

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: So –

Miner: I-I remember being constantly amazed that the umm tulips in front of Shean and then the switching out into - was it mums that they switch out to in the –

Killian: Yeah, the mums –

Miner: -or was it something else?

Killian: Yeah, the mums always went in for graduation –

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: -or uh homecoming.

Miner: Yeah. They just always –

Killian: Yeah.

Miner: -astounded me that-that you guys would do that work, you know? [laughs]

Killian: Yeah. Well, there's some of those things were uh dictated to us.

Miner: To us, yeah.

Killian: And some of them are –

Miner: I would have imagine that wouldn't be recommended –

Killian: Yeah.

Miner: But –

Killian: I mean we used to before graduation, before May term, uh when graduation was later –

Miner: Mmm.

Killian: We uh we could get our annual beds in before graduation, but then when they switched that around, they uh the frost free dates just didn't align, and-and –

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: -we could've spent lots of money putting annuals in and then have them die from frost. So... by default, graduation was flowerless.

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: And I think that's when – I think we started uh putting in mums just so they wanted something in there, and we knew we couldn't put annuals in, so we putted- put the mums in and then gave them away.

Miner: Hmm.

Killian: Uh then I think they like that enough that we started putting fall mums in for –

[Miner laughs]

Killian: For uh homecoming.

Miner: Be careful what you suggest.

Killian: I know, that's the way it is. [chuckles]

Miner: They'll expect you to do it. [laughs]

Killian: I know, that's the way it was. [laughs]

Miner: Wow.

Killian: Yeah.

Miner: Well, that's great.

Killian: Yeah. So –

Miner: Well, what else should we talk about here; we talked about some of the strictual things around the house...

Killian: Ah I am trying to think.

00:37:32 - Art explaining his relationship with students and how students treated the campus

Miner: About trees... you feel like the students are pretty respectful of the grounds or –

Killian: Uh –

Miner: -are there any good stories in there we should –

Killian: Well...

Miner: Not related to Minor, but to your–

Killian: It's not related to Minor. I uh – to be honest –

Miner: To your experiences.

Killian: -with you, Meg, I umm I would have to say, when I first started, you know, I – my son was like a year and half old, and I was, you know, early thirties, and uh I related to students like-like pals, you know.

Miner: Ah-huh.

Killian: They were – They were friends. I had, in fact I still am in contact with a g– with a student, a girl that worked for us our first or second year that I was here.

Miner: Huh.

Killian: Uh I mean she's married and has three or four kids now. She was an art major, and I was an art major –

Miner: Right.

Killian: -so I – we related –

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: -on that. And-And I still – I mean I uh – w-we saw her a couple years ago, went up to Leo Cocky concert up in Woodstock.

Miner: Oh.

Killian: With her, and uh and I had some friends that would come over for dinner and this and that. But as I got older and they all stayed the same age –

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: Which is I think a real... paradox about working at a university that –

Miner: Sure.

Killian: -you age and they don't.

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: Uh I got less and less – I guess I would say, you know for lack of a better word, I got less tolerant –

Miner: Ah-huh.

Killian: -of-of them. I, you know, I-I guess you wanted them to grow up, [laughs] you know. And they didn't seem to grow up, and-and – and I would say too, this the – this university uh probably manly universities like Wesleyan, where it is a uh highly selective and uh and thus a lot of students are – they have been told all their lives that they are – they –

Miner: Oh, yeah.

Killian: But you know, and uh and-and-and money, you know, and this and that entering into it; that we had plenty of times where the students just showed; wasn't no respect for the campus, it was like no respect for you, you know. I mean I can – I can tell you one story where one of these g– one of our guys was mowing the quad, and you know, we have certain – even though probably to anyone else, it doesn't look like there's an organization to it. There's an organization to when things get done, and a lot of that happens based around classroom time and that, so the professors think we are not [laughs] respectful of their time. We-We actually did get out and mow very early some areas that we, you know – but-but this one time I remember, and I don't know why this story sticks with me, but we had a guy, and he was the nicest guy in the world. He still works there, I won't tell you he doesn't.

Miner: Okay.

Killian: He still works here, and uh on- only he's not a grounds anymore. Uh but he-he was mowing; he was a main mower, and he was mowing the quad, and there were – there were two girls sitting on this one section of the quad playing chess. Just sitting in the middle of the grass playing chess, and he mowed the entire quad around them. And then, very respectfully he turned off his mower and walked over to them and said, you know, "I hate to interrupt, but I [sighs] I am almost at the end of my day, and this is the only little section I have to mow, so when you finish your game, could you maybe take the board to the next one that I have already mowed so I can finish this up?" And they looked at him and said "No".

Miner: Oh my gosh.

Killian: And he had to shut the mower down and go back to the shop and go back the next day and finish the thing up, and that-that happened not horribly frequently but not in frequently enough that it didn't start to get ya.

Miner: Oh man.

Killian: And uh and you know, I mean we've had students that were working for us that refused to go. Every morning we would go out in a "litter run" –

Miner: Oh!

Killian: -we called it. Pick up all the garbage that happened overnight.

Miner: Right.

Killian: And we had students, fraternity boys, that would say that's degrading work, and I am - and I refuse to do it.

Miner: Did they stay employed?

Killian: Yeah. Well, they were work study.

Miner: Ahh.

Killian: You know, so the - yeah. So yeah, they just - and you know, my boss has a tendency to - he has a - let's say he has a warm spot in his heart for frat boys. [laughs]

Miner: Okay.

Killian: And in terms of uh, you know, I think he was always a frat boy wannabe maybe.

Miner: Ah.

Killian: So, I-I think he related to the-that thing and he gave - cut them more slack than the majority of us on the crew did.

Miner: Huh.

Killian: But yeah, that kind of thing and I remember - it's so weird that when you work with these things, but uh I remember I was on a litter run one morning, and one of the professors came walking out of - I was in front of uh the science building. He's coming from the parking lot into the science building, and he sees me there, and he gets this incredulous look on his face like "what are you doing?" And he's uh, you know, and then he finally asked, I go I were picking up litter, and he goes "You do this every morning?"

[Miner laughs]

Killian: I said, "Yeah!" [laughs] And had - you could see he was - he was legitimately puzzled by thing -

Miner: Ah.

Killian: And he goes "I just as- assume that our kids were just naturally cleaning -

Miner: Oh god!

Killian: -that they never –

[Miner laughs]

Killian: He literally did not think that the students threw litter around and garbage.

Miner: Oh my.

Killian: Yeah, it was really – it was pretty bizarre. But uh but that's kind of the way it was is that we were sort of those guys that you were supposed to not see and you were not supposed to hear.

Miner: yeah.

Killian: Certainly, but uh everything was supposed to be in its place and uh, you know, as a landscaper, that was okay. I didn't mind that. You know, la- I mean I've worked landscape jobs where, I mean uh back in the old days, but uh you were not allowed to go to a front door. You had to go to the backdoor to knock.

Miner: Mmm.

Killian: You were the back- backyard servant.

Miner: Hmm.

Killian: And uh that obviously has changed over the years, but-but I w- as a landscaper, you knew what your job was. You went out, you did the guy's house, they paid you the money, you know, and that was that. But, when you came to campus, it was basically the same kind of work, but you were – you were not working for a client anymore. The client was administration.

Miner: Mmm.

Killian: The client was faculty. The client was students.

Miner: Alumni.

Killian: Alumni, and –

Miner: Vendors.

Killian: Yeah. And so, -

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: So, your job was to satisfy all of them, and-and-and n-no – none of them were lesser than us; I mean I - we were told constantly by our super-

Miner: Huh.

Killian: -supervisor that-that anytime anyone tells you what something to do, you do it. And that was that, student, -

Miner: Oh dear.

Killian: Teacher, and in fact we had a –

Miner: Oh dear!

Killian: We had a-a guy that was - when I was - we had divided the campus into different kinds of tasks, and my particular thing was, for a while, was what we call maintenance. I didn't do any landscape. I didn't do any flower beds. I didn't do anything. All I did was run a crew of three students, and all we did was mow, weed whip, hedge, blow off walks, and I took great pride in that

Miner: Ah-huh.

Killian: As I said earlier, I-I-I wanted campus to look as good as it's ever looked, and I had – we had wedding at the chapel, and I was off that day. You know, uh it was a Friday, and I was off that day, and I had one of my guys uh mowing the chapel, and it had to be mowed. And you know where the chapel is –

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: Is, you know, and-and we had a professor that came out – I found this out the following week on Monday. Uh we had a professor that left his classroom and came over to the chapel from Shaw. Shaw, right?

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: Came over and told my guy to shut off his mower, and uh because he couldn't hear himself think in the classroom.

Miner: Oh my goodness.

Killian: And uh you know, my guy was like “hey, my boss tells me to turn off the mower, I will turn off the mower, but uh tell uh - my boss tells me that I am not gonna do it,” and this professor walked downhill to physical plant –

Miner: Oh dear.

Killian: -till he found-found my supervisor and walked back up the hill and told the guy turn off the mower, and –

Miner: With your supervisor? With him?

Killian: Yeah, with the supervisor.

Miner: Oh my goodness.

Killian: And my supervisor said turn it off and go back to the shop, and then he got his butt chewed because he w- because he said when a professor tells you to do something, you do it. So, I am a belligerent, son of a bitch I guess –

[Miner laughs]

Killian: But I – I uh I went - I told him I – in fact I almost got ripped up over this, but uh I told him; I said “hey, we had a job to do.”

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: There’s no way in the world th-that mower was bothering that professor in Shaw hall. He was pulling rank, and we had to get it done because if it doesn’t get done then the wedding party shows up, and the-the place is half mowed.

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: And he jumped all over me and told me that’s – you-you – every single person on this campus is your boss.

Miner: Wow.

Killian: And you do what you are told to do.

Miner: That’s a little bit –

Killian: And that – yeah. And that-that I think was probably my biggest struggle, working here and probably - and I - I would say that probably within the last five-six years before I retired, I kinda sick come to that. I-I got to where I didn’t – I was tired of the arguments. I was tired of defending what I thought was the most logical –

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: -uh position to take, and – And-And I got very, very tired of the students who I think have gotten worse all over the years in my opinion. They-They got less respectful and more uh-uh, you know, everything is supposed to be handed to them. They are-They are – They are just it just got to me.

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: And so, after five years I just have that. I-I sat on the mower for five years, and I just said I can't do this anymore, so the-the nice deal with the insurance, the health insurance came up, and I said "You are out of your head!"

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: So, and that-and that I think – but I think some people, for me it was a - it – that was a struggle. That-That whole cast and system thing. I, you know, uh I mean I-I get along well with faculty. I have uh played soccer with a bunch of 'em. I – actually I have seen quite a few of them. I am – I am on a committee or on the board for, you know, Mounib and Rebecca Gearheart.

Miner: I do, yeah.

Killian: Yeah, I am on the board there for his uh his clinic in Bloomington

Miner: Ah-huh.

Killian: And so, I-I meet – uh I see them all the time, and we get along great. You know, we get along fine, but-but I have - I've always told them soccer and this and that [chuckles]. You know, they-they start giving me this whole deal about a PhD and this and that and I should be respected for that. I-I remember many conversations where I said, "hey, I work just as long as you, just as hard as you for just as little pay as you."

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: And just because I decided to be a g- landscaper, grounds keeper through all of that, and you decided to be a philosophy professor, you know, don't go busting my chops over that. [chuckles]

Miner: Wow. It's –

Killian: You aren't gonna get any more respect from me than uh anybody else, you know.

Miner: That's really sad.

Killian: Yeah it is, and I – and I – that was my biggest struggle I endured was that-that – like I say I-I enjoyed them. I enjoyed the university setting. I enjoyed uh - I enjoy good-good uh intellectual dialogue.

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: I-I think that's probably one of the biggest problems I had at physical plant is that I-I tend to wanna talk about issues, and –

Miner: Hmmm.

Killian: And that's why I liked students early on is that you could have really interesting discussions with them, but physical plant in general I think they-they just wanna do their job, and they do it well, and they uh and they do it as happily as they can. But I – really bothered me that whole – I've-I've felt a little schizophrenic, you know, when I worked here.

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: So.

Miner: That would be very –

Killian: Yeah.

Miner: -troublesome.

Killian: Yeah.

Miner: I think to be treated –

Killian: Well, –

Miner: - that way for, you know, a job –

Killian: Yeah.

Miner: -that's vital to ...

Killian: Yeah. Well, it is vital. Everything –

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: I mean – and-and I think that's –

Miner: And to attracting students.

Killian: Yeah.

Miner: To attracting donors. To, you know, making the community happy to have us here. I mean –

Killian: I agree, and I. you know, uh it goes all the way down the line. I mean I, you know, I mean you don't respect somebody who cleans your toilet, but until they stop cleaning the toilet.

Miner: Exactly.

Killian: And uh so people do what they have to do to make a living, and I-I just really – it always frustrated me that that-that respect wasn't given then.

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: And uh an- and I think that we were working on that under Myer – Minor. I think uh I think we uh I think there was a real effort to, you know, only put – when I first started at Wesleyan, I used to ride my bike through campus on my way to ISU. And I remember thinking of Wesleyan as more of a community college.

Miner: Oh.

Killian: I just always thought of it like that. It was a different school with small, and it-it made no real... puffed up statements about itself, and then I think Minor came along and sort of made that-that whole thing about being a selective, you know, ranked university. And I think, through that focus, I think campus w– the campus environment I think went downhill for a while. Then I think we really started working hard at overcoming that, and uh –

Miner: So, the-the environment went downhill during Minor's tenure and then came up –

Killian: Well, it ca-

Miner: -again or?'

Killian: It – I think – I think it went down enough that I think that people realized that what was going on, and I-I think they were frustrated by it. I mean I – the people I talk to felt frustrated by it, and uh...

Miner: Because of the image sort of kind of –

Killian: Just the –

Miner: -picks out the details; the –

Killian: Yeah, the image –

Miner: The work load –

Killian: Well, I think - I think it was just a-a lack of respect. It was the-the-the place became a – a US news and world report institution, and you know, I-I just think we focused on the wrong things. We focused on less of a family community kind of situation which, you know, it's always

hard to come up with something like that, but I - but I think we had more of that before Minor changed the emphasis.

Miner Okay.

Killian: And uh, you know, and I-I think people bought – a lot of people bought into it, and uh you know, maybe faculty m-more so than others because I think when you work for a university that you are – you are the ones who were doing the teaching, I think you – I think you – that's an ego boost.

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: You know, it's –

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: -a big ego boost for-for us, you know, not so much, you know.

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: It doesn't – It was - there was no bragging rights there for us, so you –

00:52:57 - Art discussing the pay under Minor

Miner: Wasn't reflected in the pay? [chuckles]

Killian: Well, it certainly wasn't in the pay. Uh we did better in pay under Eckley I think.

Miner: Did you?

Killian: Yeah. But uh – But Eckley had a – I think Eckley had a uh a umm realistic view that, you know, we don't want unions, so let's look at what people get paid in the trade and see what we are compared to what they are paying us. I-I think my first or second year here, I got like a – a thirteen percent raise.

Miner: Wow.

Killian: Yeah, that brought me up to what people in the trade were making at the time, and I-I wouldn't expect that to happen again. [laughs]

Miner: But that didn't continue – that kind of –

Killian: No.

Miner: What Eckley did, didn't continue with Minor then.

Killian: It, you know, it-it was more realistic which it needed to be.

Miner: Ah-huh.

Killian: You know, but – and-and I don't, you know, I mean everybody always complains about pay, but... I mean not me so much because to be honest, I have to say, money has always been like-like a almost an abstract thing to me. I –

[laughter]

Killian: Much to my wife should know.

[laughter]

Killian: And I – you know, I – I just never thought about it. I couldn't tell you – I couldn't tell you – when I retired, I couldn't tell you what my paycheck was.

Miner: Ah-huh.

Killian: I never really thought about it as long as I had enough to keep this going, and I didn't care. And so – so, they could have been shorting me for years, and I wouldn't know. But, it was always adequate, and-and-and for me it was-it was less about how much money I made and more about what my job performance evaluation was.

Miner: Ah-huh.

Killian: Because I-I-I took more offense in that than I [confusing words] than lesser pay, but under Myer – Minor, I think we held our own pretty well. I-I -we didn't take any big jumps like Eckley did, but I don't think they were rewarded. Umm but, you know, as we built and built and ran out of money, then we all know what's-what's happened since then.

Miner: Right.

Killian: You know, the no pay increases and threats of losing jobs and – I meab I can't tell ya how many people when I go back to the shop, which I do fairly frequently. I was on there before I came up here. They all say – argue “you got out at the right time!” [chuckles]

Miner: Yeah. Yeah.

Killian: So, and I – and that's a shame.

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: Because it's a nice place, and it – and it was a – it was a great place to work, and it still could be a nice place to work. But uh you know, I mean it-it's just what you choose to

emphasize. It's uh, you know, I graduated from Greenville college, you know, that little, little tiny school. And –

Miner: I don't know what – no.

Killian: You know, that's down - it's uh actually, it's a religious school. It was a free Methodist –

Miner: Oh!

Killian: -college.

Miner: Ah-huh.

Killian: And it was fifty miles from Saint Louis.

Miner: Oh my!

Killian: But uh one of the things – and they, you know, when they talked family down there, they actually meant it, and I didn't buy into it all of the time –

Miner: Wow, interesting.

Killian: - as a student because well, you know, I was a hippie back then and you know –

[Miner laughs]

Killian: -you don't buy into authority, but-but you know, plenty of your sense to-to look back on it, and I – and a couple of things that I took form that – from that college experience that I tried to get people involved in here, and I – and it was just laughed off. Really was – I mean one very in particular is that, you know, they used to complain about us blowing leaves uh, you know, and mulching leaves in the fall –

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: -which was of an extremely time consuming and-and uh, you know, needed to be done by certain times, and uh they were always whining and complaining about the noise and dust and –

Miner: They being faculty.

Killian: Well, faculty and students.

Miner: And students, okay.

Killian: I mean students, you know, ob- obviously wearing dust masks and goggles and this and that and we can't always say "hey, we are going to mow here, so you can't –

Miner: Sure.

Killian: You know, and so they were – they were walking by going like this –

Miner: Ah-huh.

Killian: -and scowling at us and stuff, and I suppose I probably would have to. But-But when you talk to faculty about, you know – the students would never talk to you. They just give you a look, but the faculty would say can't you do that at a different time and this and that, and I said you know the thing is when I college, said we waited till the leaves dropped. They cancelled classes. They got a bunch of rakes, and faculty, administration, and students all came together and we all raked leaves.

Miner: Right. Yeah.

Killian: That was – That was a day of le- of – and-and it was a – it was quite a community builder. You know, and I mean you might rake for an hour, two and somebody else takes over and this and that.

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: But it was a – it was a fantastic thing, and-and I just didn't see that happening here.

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: And uh – and one other thing I suggested to him which I would really love to see happen because it was for a guy who is not that into symbolism, and [laughs] and pop and circumstance. When we graduated at Greenville, the thing, the day of graduation; all the seniors met in their cap and gowns at this one spot, and there was ivy, like here there was ivy growing all over the place, and you know, I am sure somebody from physical plant did this but they went out and pulled a bunch of ivy off the walls and wired it together in this great big loop. And we all walked out silent. It was you met like early in the morning, like just after sun rise. Everybody met. We all grabbed ahold of this-this ivy, and we walked out to the quad, and then – and still silent, nothing being said. The president was in the middle, and he walked around and snipped the ivy.

Miner: Awww.

Killian: Yeah.

Miner: Oh my.

Killian: I thought it was – and-and if you were planning on getting married, or staying with the person then you held hands, and he would skip the-the-the snip.

Miner: Awww.

Killian: Yeah. I, you know, and I suggest- I don't remember I suggested that the moment Hurwitz, and she thought that was the most ridiculous thing –

[laughter]

Killian: I thought, you know, the tea, you know, scones and strawberries!

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: That's what we do here, but-but it didn't –

Miner: Did that happen just when Minor came or was that before?

Killian: The scones and strawberries –

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: -were Minor's thing.

Miner: Minor, okay.

Killian: Yeah.

Miner: So, go ahead. So, you are –

Killian: Well, that was it. That was it, and I suggest to him because I said that had such a way of bringing the – you know, you know it was a – it was a silent, no big lectures and this and that. It was all about the students and about them leaving.

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: And –

Miner: And reflecting on...

Killian: Yeah, and reflecting on what I meant.

Miner: -being together and –

Killian: Yeah.

Miner: -not being anymore.

Killian: Exactly.

Miner: I get it! [laughs]

Killian: Yeah.

Miner: I understand symbolism! [laughs]

Killian: Exactly. See, so that's it, and I uh – so I, you know – but the-but those two things for me was kind of the uh that was a symbol to me of how the university really was not going the direction that it could. You know, the - to really build community.

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: So – and I, you know, I say that and I don't – I don't mean to say I didn't form really good friendships here.

Miner: Sure.

Killian: I mean I-I still got very good friends here and I –

Miner: That's great.

Killian: And I come back and visit all of the time, but-but there's not a single moment in the day that I wish I was back here.

[laughter]

Miner: Imagine – I can well imagine –

Killian: Yep.

Miner: Now, you have certainly done –

Killian: When the snow is falling, I put another log on the fire and reached out and pet the dog.

[laughter]

Miner: Worry about – So when you walk – when you are darn well ready done.

Killian: When I am darn well ready to do it. Yeah.

Miner: Good for you. Well, I could imagine you certainly in your –

Killian: Well –

01:00:28 - Art discussing the landscaping of the library

Miner: -fair share here. But, where you involved in landscaping of the library? Because I know there were some controversy about that –

Killian: Yeah, I was. Yeah, there was –

Miner: And you guys wanted to work for that.

Killian: Uh –

Miner: So, let us not be reminiscent saying that.

Killian: Yeah. That – That was designed by the landscape architect o- uh hired by the-the – the architect of the library, and they were out of Boston, and uh... with another, you know, thing like with Minor, with his perennials. Things that grow in Boston don't necessarily grow here.

Miner: Right.

Killian: And so, we uh, you know, I was at that time, I was still – uh me and, you know Ken Detloff?

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: Yeah, me and Ken were basically the guys that did the landscapes stuff. You know, my boss was a parks and rec guy, and he would, you know, you could put him on mower down at the baseball field and let him mow all day long, and he'd be happy.

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: So, he was happy to let us deal with that stuff, so Ken and I used to go up uh to Browning's – Ken Browning's office and do conference calls with the landscape architect.

Miner: It's good that you were involved in that.

Killian: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, it was.

Miner: Was that a year instigation or –

Killian: Umm –

Miner: -was that Ken's?

Killian: Well, I think it was kind of – we saw the plans. The plans were all drawn up, and we knew certain things would not work.

Miner: Okay.

Killian: Certain things should change, not only in design. Uh you know, as a landscaper... you- you just know that landscape architects and landscape designers; they – what looks good on the paper does not always work well for the guy that has to maintain it.

Miner: Ohh yeah.

Killian: And so, yeah. So, we uh so we – we kind of poured over those-those uh plans and made notes, and the we go back and talk to him on the conference call.

Miner: Uh-huh.

Killian: And-And we got him to change a few things, not everything. Umm you know, we got him to change some plants that we felt certainly would not grow well around here, and he was understanding about that. Umm most things – it was actually a very good design.

Miner: Okay.

Killian: I thought it was a very interesting, you know, it was creative but not over the top, you know, not so creative – the –

Miner: Self-conscious.

Killian: -the bookdom. Yeah, right.

[Miner laughs]

Killian: Self-conscious is a great word for me. Umm but there were a couple of things; there's – and-and you've seen this uh being at the library, but when they first – when that planting first went in there with those big trees with the wells around them.

Miner: AH-huh. Yeah.

Killian: And I – I-I remember – uh I think Ken was gone. I was walking the site with-with Ken Browning and-and Bud Georginson and I said “This a waste of time, and t's a waste of money. Those plants are gonna die.” You – those – that you know, they - “Well, I build a well around there!”, and I said you can't put soil on top of roots, and they said, “Well, we're gonna have this big well.” And this – this landscaper, this landscape architect knew this beforehand. He – what they wanted was good photographs.

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: They wanted things that looked mature form the very beginning.

Miner: Mmm.

Killian: And, you know, but I – I am walking around, and we are talking about this, and-and I remember Ken Browning coming back and saying to me. You know, we were kind of got off from the side, and he came back and said “What do you really think about this?” And I said, “You’re gonna get five-six-seven years out of these trees, and they are gonna die.

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: You-You – then you have not only the cost of taking the tree down, but you’ve got the cost of building those walls, that well, and you have to completely change that, and you gotta buy new trees.

Miner: Ah-huh.

Killian: And I said it’s gonna happen on at least two or three of these. I can’t remember how many there were, and –

Miner: It’s two.

Killian: They went back to the architect, and he said that’s what they wanted so that’s what they got.

Miner: Ah-huh.

Killian: And of course, you know, they are all dead now, and –

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: But that’s just the way it is; I mean the root structure goes out way farther than –

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: - that little well is gonna be. But that was an issue, and the other issue I took with him was the planting of the street trees along Empire.

Miner: Aha.

01:05:49 - Art discussing his time on the re-accreditation committee and the community

Killian: And, you know, that... you know, everything, and landscape is not excluded from that; everything has their trends, and for-for a while the-the trend was street trees. You know, these big line of-of trees. And first of all, we hate mono-stands of anything.

Miner: Ah-huh.

Killian: And, you know, you get a disease like the ash – if that was all ash trees, we would have nothing there now, but uh but my complaint was not a- so much about the-the mono-stand as it was that when those trees became mature, you would not see the library from Empire.

Miner: Hmm.

Killian: And I said if you really believe that this – you want this-this campus to be part of this community, you-you’ve already put the entrance on the quad side.

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: You’re – it’s like you’ve turned this big –

Miner: Your back.

Killian: Yeah, you’ve turned your back on the-on the community, and now you’re putting trees in here that are in essence fencing the university off from the rest of the world, and you know, I–

Miner: So interesting.

Killian: Yeah. I mean I – there was a lot of people who would come to walk a dog or walk through, and they would stop us and say because the gates which are in every corner –

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: Or every entrance. They would say, “Are we allowed to walk in here or is this private?”

Miner: Ahhh.

Killian: And you know – and I remember having a – I was on that c- committee, that reav-reaccreditation committee. It has the first staff that was ever owned that.

Miner: Is that right.

Killian: Yeah. And we had a conversation one time about – it was a big issue one time about uh the Wesleyan bubble.

Miner: Yes.

Killian: You’ve heard that, Wesleyan bubble.

Miner: Yes!

Killian: And-And I said uh that Tony would – Tony Banks, was on the committee at the same time as me, and I-I was talking to him; they were talking about this Wesleyan bubble and this and that and I – and, “what can we do about it? We’ve gotta change this.

[Miner laughs]

Killian: We've gotta do this and that." And I said Tony I am gonna tell you something: we have students that work for us; that when I said - that we were talking about pizza or something, I said did you ever been up to Lucas? And they said, "Lucas? Never heard of it."

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: And I said, "It's-It's just Downtown Bloomington." They go "There's a Downtown Bloomington?"

Miner: Oh my god.

Killian: I mean we are three or four blocks from downtown and they – and I said this to Tony, and-and he said aren't we feel that we can provide everything the student needs right here on campus. And I just looked at him, and I go "Well then Tony, don't talk about the bubble!"

Miner: It's your bubble!

Killian: You want the bubble. [laughs]

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: The bubble is here because you wanted it to be here.

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: Don't – Don't try to talk around this-this, you know.

Miner: I wonder if it was the year after that we took all of our first year students and walked them to the downtown.

Killian: I don't know. That would be nice!

Miner: Because we did-we incorporated that is part of the summer reading, you know, conversation –

Killian: Yeah.

Miner: -with those new students gone on campus. We-We all walked, and we had conversations in Downtown businesses.

Killian: Yeah. See, that's a great thing. That's, you know, to me when you bring freshmen here, you should show them –

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: -what the community is, and think we were just talking about it last week uh because uh I guess Tari Renner is – is contemplating, probably more than contemplating, but-but where the- the old hospital came down, -

Miner: Ah-huh.

Killian: I-I talked to him not too long ago about it, and he said that they are looking at putting like a – a super Kroger in there. Get rid of the one that's down here –

Miner: Mmmm.

Killian: -and do a bigger –

Miner: Ah-huh.

Killian: -Kroger store. And, you know, I-I think we were talking about it at-at the last uh uh meeting about the clinic, and Rebecca and uh Monib and Jim Simeone was there, and-and they were so excited to hear that because they said now, campus will go this direction – [laughs] Instead of away from downtown, they are actually moving you closer to-to Bloomington –

Miner: Interesting.

Killian: -and maybe it will be less likely to get uh ignored.

Miner: Marginalized, yeah.

Killian: Yeah.

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: Yeah.

Miner: Huh.

Killian: And Jim would know that because I mean that's – he's one of the few people I know of that professors who are trying to get the students involved in the community.

Miner: Oh yeah.

Killian: Yeah, him and Monib

Miner: I think it's – I think there's a shift –

Killian: Good.

Miner: -that's happening.

Killian: I am glad. I-I – I would hope – I would hope there would be. You know, I don't ever communicate with students anymore, so I don't really know. I just - physical plant is all I talk to. And – all the friends there–

Miner: And gratefully so. [laughs]

Killian: Yeah, yeah.

Miner: Well, you mentioned ash trees little bit ago so that – and-and I am now reflecting on the ash trees that were around the parking lot uh by the-the west gate.

Killian: Yup. Right.

Miner: They all had to come down –

Killian: They all had to come down.

Miner: And those were growing up in your time too, right?

Killian: Uhh –

Miner: Or were they –

Killian: Most of those were there–

Miner: They were there, okay.

Killian: And we had replaced –

Miner: You worked around them.

Killian: -some here and there. Yeah. Uh –

Miner: Because that-Because that parking lot didn't go up until... the library, right?

Killian: No, that library – I think the parking lot –

Miner: The parking lot was there?

Killian: -might have expanded.

Miner: Okay. Okay.

Killian: Because that parking lot used to be when-when Wesleyan uh still had a uh – they used to do marching band camps for high school.

Miner: Aha. Aha.

Killian: And that was where – that was laid up. They marched.

Miner: Oh really?

Killian: They practiced their marching on that parking lot.

Miner: Oh fun.

Killian: Yeah. We had to close that when those camps were gone on now. They kind of did away with that.

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: I don't know if they have gotten back to it, but now they do it on the football field since it's artificial.

Miner: Sure.

Killian: But yeah, they-they used to – that in the practice field, Norm didn't want them on the – on the main field, but –

Miner: Mmm. He couldn't stand it.

Killian: -we didn't want them on the main field!

[laughter]

Miner: Yeah, I understand that.

Killian: Yeah, Norm wouldn't want them on there because it looked bad we'd have to fix it, so we didn't want them on there.

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: But uh yeah, I think that parking lot was - at least most of it; I think it might have expanded some. But it was always called uh I think we called it Franklin parking lot just because it was close to Franklin park.

Miner: Well, there was a building there I think, too. That was a Franklin school.

Killian: Oh that could be.

Miner: It was just eight years ago.

Killian: Oh there you go. Yeah,

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: Yeah.

Miner: Huh.

Killian: So yeah, so uh those ash trees came down. Actually, the only ash trees I think on campus now, there's just a handful of them. Uh bigger specimens that are in strategic places, and they treat those –

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: -every year. But it was too expensive to treat every ash tree on campus.

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: And by the way I don't like ash trees anyway.

[laughter]

Killian: So –

Miner: Me too. [laughs]

Killian: I wasn't sad to see them go.

Miner: I am thinking now isn't it locust trees that are behind the library? Those are on the south side, and then next to –

Killian: Yes.

Miner: - the locust are the –

Killian: There are some–

Miner: -red - dawn redwoods.

Killian: Yeah.

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: And there are some crabs back there, flowering crabs.

Miner: Yeah, those –

Killian: Umm –

Miner: -are pretty stunning.

Killian: Yeah. Those were nice. The locust have their own issues; every plant has got its own issues –

Miner: Huh.

Killian: -now. I mean uh the- uh it's not – it's not a great time to be a plantsman-

Miner: Oh.

Killian: Because there's an awful lot of problems. Lot of pines; we got to where we couldn't plant any pines safely.

Miner: Yeah.

Killian: Uh yeah and the-the locust are big issue, and most of the maples are now susceptible to that verticillium wilt which is a soil borne thing, and –

Miner: Hmm.

Killian: -not much you can do about it. So yeah, that's – it-it's – it's tricky. I think that climate changes really affecting things and [sighs] –

Miner: Alright.

Killian: -you know. So.

Miner: Anything else we should be thinking about?

Killian: Well, it seems like we talked about stuff that probably didn't even need to be talked about, so –

Miner: I think it's great because um I recall inviting you to provide an oral history when you retired, but I don't think you ever took me up on it. So, I wanted to –

Killian: Oh!

Miner: -press you a little bit more on that.

Killian: Oh really? I didn't –

Miner: I am glad.

Killian: I don't recall.

Miner: Well, it was probably, you know, not big on your priority list –

Killian: Well-

Miner: I am thinking about leaving, but –

Killian: Maybe.

Miner: I was grateful for the umm documentation you provided me about the quad and umm I mean I think, you know, because certainly that is obviously a center piece –

Killian: Yeah it is.

Miner: -on our campus.

Killian: Yeah, it's –

Miner: Thank you so much!

Killian: Well, hey, welcome!