ROOSEVELT UNIVERSITY

Interview Release Form

In consideration of my desire to be of assistance to future historians of Roosevelt University, I, Wayne A. R. Leys, hereby authorize and approve that the interview with me recorded on January 8, 1971 by Daniel Perlman be included in the Roosevelt University Archives and be made available, by the Roosevelt University Librarian, to users of the Archives. I hereby also grant permission to the users of the Archives for the publication of this interview or portions thereof.

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INTERVIEW WITH WAYNE A.R. LEYS CARBONDALE, ILL., JAN. 8, 1971

Mr. Perlman: Well, there were some difficult years for the University there for a while--transitional years. But, there seemed to be a lot of difficult years for that institution.

Mr. Leys: Well, I remember when Millard Everett left I wrote to him about one of our crises. He said, "Oh, Roosevelt's a neurotic institution." DHP: Why was that? Was it a question of the personalities involved? WARL: And the place. You see, it was at a crossroads of all kinds of influences; but it was also a combination of personalities. The first two years we recruited a lot of idealists, some of whom were not too stable. That was certainly a factor.

DHP: Did it have anything to do with the governing structure that permitted so much involvement of everybody in everything?

WARL: Well, of course the Bylaws were written with the idea of making it a strong president institution. The faculty constitution was written with the idea of checks and balances. You look at those two documents, the motivation of those two documents is not the same. That is, when Mitchell Dawson and I drafted the Bylaws we consulted with Sparling and several other people, especially Floyd Reeves. And we were contemplating an institution that would not have, really, adversary proceedings within it. We were

contemplating an institution with a kind of company union, or if you don't like it, call it a fascist thing, corporative. And that was pretty much Sparling's idea--to get all types represented in the basic structure of the. University, and then everything could be ironed out to reach a concensus. . The faculty constitution was drafted by Johnson of the English Department, Gore of the Mathematics Department, and I believe, Creanza of the Language Department. They had had some years of frustration in the old Y College, and, particularly, frustrations under the Liberal Arts dean, who was finally fired when Henry Johnson went in and told Sparling that Cramer didn't have the confidence of the faculty any more. So they wrote the faculty constitution with these 3-year votes of confidence. And then the constitution was supplemented several years later by the creation of the Budget Committee. The motivation from that side was the idea of collective bargaining, checks and balances. It was a much less loveydovey idea. I remember during the first year, at one point this attitude on the part of one of the faculty members of the board came to the surface in a Board meeting with John DeBoer. It was a rather sharp exchange. I think it was on faculty salaries. I remember Morris Bialis, of the Ladies Garment Workers, said he refused to sit on the employers' side of the table if there was going to be collective bargaining. And that sort of quieted things down for awhile. But, after the G.I. boom played out and Sparling wasn't having any luck raising big money and the faculty felt that they had been "sweated" at these low salaries and heavy teaching loads, then particularly

through the Budget Committee you got more and more the pattern of collective bargaining. My last experience on the Budget Committee was in 1954. I understand that after that it got to the point where it was taking two long meetings a week for something like three months to make a budget before it was presented to the Board. Well, that is an indication of how far this institution was from its original idea that the Board [which] represented all elements, not only in the institution, but in the community, would reach a consensus and no one would get away with anything adversely affecting any important interest. This was Sparling's vision, his noble vision. DHP: Did you share it at the time? Did you feel it would work? WARL: Well, as I say, Mitchell Dawson and I drafted the Bylaws, and I was willing to give it a try, although a book that I had brought out in 1941 pretty well indicated that I didn't believe in the feasibility of corporative organizations, that is an all-inclusive consensus organization. I just don't think that in our kind of world they have a chance to exist, or if they do exist to survive.

DHP: What book was that?

WARL: Ethics and Social Policy.

DHP: What was the timing of the writing of these two separate documents, the Constitution and the Bylaws? Were they written about the same time, or did one precede the other?

WARL: Well, the Bylaws were written first and the Constitution was drafted in the fall of 1945. The reason it was drafted then, it might not have been drafted until some time later, but in order to get accredited the next March, we had to have all these documents and we had to turn them in the fall. So one of the first orders of business for the faculty in the fall was to draw up a constitution.

DHP: Where did the idea of faculty representation on the Board come from? WARL: Sparling had had this bad experience with a Board consisting mainly of bankers and real estate men; and then the faculty through the years had had trouble, couldn't communicate with the Board of the old College; so he developed this dream of a Board in which every kind of interest would be represented. And it was rather interesting that somewhere along the way. (I don't know if this is recorded in the minutes or not)--it was when Embree was still chairman--the question came up whether people should vote according to the constituencies they represented. And I remember Embree was very emphatic, saying: "You are here as an individual. The Board is a cross section, but you are here as an individual and you use your individual judgment." Embree was very strong on that point. DHP: And he made it to faculty representatives who were on the Board? WARL: Not only faculty representatives but you see there were people from labor unions, Ken Hunter from the Steelworkers, Morris Bialis of

the Ladies Garment Workers, and there were people of various religious persuasions. We were always a little short on Catholics, but Judge Campbell was our big Catholic.

DHP: Did the Faculty involved in this question have qualms about whether they were representing the faculty in a collective way, or was this an issue which was discussed?

WARL: It never got well defined as far as the faculty was concerned.

DHP: There was something rather anamolous about this question of individuals representing various groups or various constituencies. The faculty seems to be represented in a rather unusual way compared to the other groups, certainly the labor representatives, if you want to call them that; and other kinds of individuals. The faculty group is the only one that elects its own representatives. Was that anamoly regarded as an anamoly? WARL: No, it wasn't regarded as an anamoly. In other words the documents were developed not from any pure theory, and in the excitement of the moment. That certainly was a difference, but it wasn't noted, as I remember.

DHP: Was there an interest in having other groups, the labor group for example, elect its own representative?

WARL: The only time that came up, when Ken Hunter resigned, (he had been in poor health for awhile, but I think he resigned before he died) when his

replacement was talked about, it seems to me Hunter cleared it with the Pittsburgh office of the Steel Workers. He cleared something important with them, and I believe it was who should take his place.

DHP: What was the issue that led Embree to make the point that people were on the Board as individuals? Was there some situation where there was a question about this?

WARL: I think there was a question about whether somebody needed to consult his kind of people. I don't remember now the details.

DHP: Do you think it was this one, the issue of Ken Hunter?

WARL: No, no. The issue of Ken Hunter was handled sub rosa. Of course, by 1950 there was quite a bit of discussion as to whether the Jews on the Board were representative.

DHP: In what way?

WARL: Well, they tended not to represent the Conservative and the Orthodox Jews. They tended to be Reform Jews, that is Maremont and Lerner, were even anti-Zionists (at least/Maremont was, I think Lerner. was too). Bialis was pro-Zionist. But in the faculty we had a number of Jews who were very strong pro-Zionists. They were for the formation of Israel. I remember were series of lectures for the first anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel. Ben Mayer's. I had cooperative relations with a number of people like Burt Tucker of the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society. I had him come over and give some lectures, and he helped

us with some of our immigration problems. I remember some discussions in the late '40s and early '50s that the Jews on the Board were not representative of the community, and this was given as one of the reasons why we were getting so little money out of some of them.

DHP: This was the concern on the part of some of the faculty?

WARL: Yes, a person like Lionel Ruby, for instance, who was very well acquainted, knew the town pretty well, he was convinced that the Jewish representation on the Board was not really representative. It could be strengthened a great deal by getting some other people on the Board.

DHP: The basic idea, though, of having faculty representatives on the Board was Sparling's?

WARL: Yes. You know he said he was for having half of the Board faculty.

DHP: What happened to make it otherwise?

WARL: Well, I think Floyd Reeves and I talked him out of it, but there were a number of faculty people that said it was not practical. The Board was supposed to help raise money and we are not good money raisers.

DHP: Were those the reasons that you gave?

WARL: Yes. We needed dough. From February 1946 for the next year and a half, we turned in an operating profit of \$450,000, which was how we were able to take the Auditorium and get started on the remodeling of it. And then we couldn't keep that up, the faculty just wouldn't work that hard.

DHP: In other words, capital expenditures were worked out of an operating budget? WARL: Yes. If you look into the financial records, for a long while it shows something like \$450,000 in the capital account, borrowed by the operating fund. Then they finally just wiped it out. The first year people were willing to be "sweated". They were enthusiastic, hopeful. But before the end of that first year there was clear evidence that the faculty was beginning to say it is time now to raise salaries and reduce these loads. DHP: So Reeves was also opposed to having the Board controlled by the faculty? WARL: Yes. He was in favor of faculty representation, but not 50 per cent. DHP: What about the other early trustees. Did they have a view do you know? WARL: I don't recall any strong view expressed. When we were before the board of review of the North Central Association in March of 1946, John Dale Russell raised the question whether we were a proprietary institution. At that time I didn't appreciate what he had in mind but later I came to understand what he was thinking about. It was in the '50s, after the Budget Committee got over its first spell of politeness, the faculty

representatives on the Budget Committee were expressing what I called bureaucratic conservatism. That is, they were almost uniformly opposed to any innovation in program.

WARL: At that point I could see what Russell must have had in mind when he raised that question.

DHP: Was there negative comment by North Central in their report?

WARL: The first report, as I recall, described as best they could the system of control and was very cautious about passing any judgment.

They were really giving us a break in every point they could. I think the North Central staff had decided in the fall that they were going to try to help us get accredited. You know, we didn't have any records. You are supposed to have years of records on everything. We didn't have any records.

DHP: Was this favorable attitude because of Reeves' participation on the board?

WARL: That helped. I think it was in August of 1945, I had written a letter to the Secretary of North Central. I took it to Reeves. He may have made a few suggestions, and he said "This will do it." That gave me great courage then, because he was a powerful man in North Central circles. Is he still alive?

DHP: Yes he is. He's over 80 and in East Lansing.

WARL: I think Roosevelt was the first institution that in effect had his idea of three vice presidents. But it never worked. That is we were supposed to have a fund raiser, a head of the business functions, and an academic head. And Reeves' idea was that these three people would meet with the president several times a week. But, when this was proposed, Sparling had been meeting with everyone who had a secretary in the old college and called it a "cabinet". Some of these people objected strenuously, so the Administrative Council turned out to be all the deans, the librarian, as well as these three (at least potential) vice presidents. And that sort of spoiled Reeves' plan. As far as I know he never raised any vocal objection. DHP: The question of the origins of faculty representation on the Board--I was looking at the Bill of Particulars that was drafted at the time of the resignations, and one of the elements of the Bill of Particulars is the suggestion that the Y Board immediately add faculty representatives and then I noted that after the resignations, when the Y Board was apparently still trying to hold on to something under Gilliland for a short while, they made the concession of appointing to the Board three members of the faculty, three that had not resigned. So I have the feeling that this was something that had been in the air, in a sense.

WARL: I don't think so. Of course, the 1932-35 revolution, when the

Central College Development Corporation was incorporated, and all the faculty were making voluntary deductions. I was the treasurer of that, We were going to have a college run entirely by the faculty; but when that was discovered by the YMCA it was broken up. That was when Sparling was brought in. He was brought in to clean house but within a year he was fighting the YMCA officials and directors.

DHP: But the idea back in 1932-35 was to have the college run by the faculty entirely? In other words, they were going to take over from the Y Board? WARL: Yes. We were convinced that the YMCA was never going to give us any satisfactory amount of money.