

ROOSEVELT UNIVERSITY

Interview Release Form

In consideration of my desire to be of assistance to future historians of Roosevelt University, I, Otto Wirth, hereby authorize and approve that the interview with me recorded on December 18, 1970 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.

9/23/71
(Date)


(Signature of Interviewee)

1377 E. 55th Place
(Address)

Chicago, Illinois 60637
(City, State, Zip)

HY 3-4662
(Telephone)

Interview with Dr. Otto Wirth
December 18, 1970

(Tape 1, side 1)

Daniel H. Perlman: As you know I am studying the history of faculty participation on the governing board at Roosevelt. I have a number of general questions as well as some specific questions. As you recall it over the years, what, historically, was the policy of faculty representation on the Board intended to achieve? What was the objective? What was hoped for?

Otto Wirth: I think there were several objectives. I think one objective was, which I look [upon] as a reaction of what had gone before; the dictatorial unilateral decision made by the Board of the Y, sifting down, "you are hired hands; you do what we tell you; we know much better." I really don't know whether or not the YMCA College, Central YMCA College I should say, had a constitution or not. I really don't know. But if they had, it certainly was something which has no resemblance whatsoever to a real constitution. Out of this grew the desire, and you know Creanza stressed this over and over again: the preamble of the constitution. The first part is traditional: "to form an association of free men and women dedicated to the enlightenment of the human spirit" and "the improvement and preservation of the best in American education." Best, we were convinced, whatever is, not all is good. But then I think the later part, "to insure the harmonious functioning of all parts of this association through the practice of democracy by the student body, the faculty and the Board of Trustees." I think this is the crux, "the harmonious functioning of all parts," and there was only one part represented at the Board and that was the Board, through faculty or student representation. Now they did not go as far as student representation, but they certainly went as far as faculty representation. And, at the time, I was not present when this was done, but at that time there was even the idea of having a majority of faculty on the Board.

DHP: The initial idea was to have a majority.

OW: That's right.

DHP: Whose idea was that as you understand it?

OW: As I understood it, it was Sparling's idea.

DHP: And what happened to the idea when he proposed it?

OW: Because some people, among them I would imagine (again this is more guess work than anything else) that Leys was quite aware of the fact that you need a Board not only to govern, but also a Board to solicit the community.

DHP: To raise money,

OW: To raise money. And the faculty could not raise the money.

DHP: You think it was Leys maybe more than anybody else that.. . ?

OW: Leys and perhaps even Huelster. And also I would not be surprised if Henry Johnson might have had a hand in this. And Taft and Creanza.

DHP: In reducing the proportion from half or.. .

OW: 51 per cent.

DHP: 51 per cent, to the 25 per cent that it was originally.

OW: They wanted to have an absolute co-determining voice in the Board, no question about it, I mean the faculty..

DHP: The faculty wanted to be represented on the Board.

OW: They wanted to co-determine their own destiny and the destiny of the University.

DHP: It was not to be a token representation, but substantive?

OW: No, no. Substantive, absolutely substantive. There was no idea in the first few years of tokenism in anything. It just didn't exist at Roosevelt. Everything that was done, and was thought was looked upon as real. Very tangible.

DHP: Well, as you see it then, this was to provide democratic representation of the faculty on the governing board. The governing board, with the co-determination of the faculty, was to charter the destiny of the University.

OW: Absolutely.

DHP: How did it work out?

OW: I think it worked out well. If it would not have happened, and with the composition of the Board as we had it--first of all our Board would have had a different composition if this would not have happened.

DHP: Do you mean by that more lay members?

OW: Yes, more lay members and different lay members. Different lay members would have been attracted to the Board.

DHP: Let me just follow that one up for a minute. You think that there were some lay people who were disenchanted or turned away from participation on the Board because there were faculty people? Was that the implication?

OW: No. What I suggest is that first of all there was not more space for them. They could find a taker for every spot they had. If this would not have been the case, then, in my opinion, it would have taken perhaps initially additional people and different people. Embree, the first Board chairman, was a man of this world. And he knew exactly what it was all about. So was Marshall Field: Idealistic, primarily attracted by the non-discriminatory implications, the racial overtones. And I'm afraid, you see, if there wouldn't have been faculty participation, and very often the faculty did represent (and this could easily be established by reading the Board minutes) a majority of those present at the Board meetings. During my years on the Board it was very, very rare, it was an exception that the faculty was absent from the Board meetings. It was absolutely a sine qua non.

DHP: So the faculty attendance was better and more religious.

OW: Yes, more religious. The other ones, they were there, they came and they didn't come. In the early days they all came, because it was new and something very exciting, and people who would never have thought of sitting on the board of a university or a college naturally were very, very excited about it. I could give some examples from my own experience. Pollak--whenever he saw me between Board meetings, he asked how is my university doing? There was the proprietary interest of the Board members there. Lerner looked upon this as my university, and in fact, later on when he became chairman, after Ickes, I'm afraid that he looked upon his chairmanship really as the chairmanship of a board of trustees or board of directors of an industrial enterprise. He was the chief executive officer. And the president of the University is an executive vice president. But it's he who makes, the final decision and must be consulted. In fact, at least this is what Jim often told me, repeatedly, that Lerner wanted to have an office within the University for himself.

DHP: I can imagine that this would create some tension between the president and the chairman of the Board, and as we know, Lerner ultimately resigned over the Auditorium situation. But, was there any tension or any interchange along this line between Lerner and the faculty trustees?

OW: No. The faculty trustees we had at that time were rather quiet people. Joe Creanza faded out from the Board rather early, relatively early. The one who was there for a longer time was Henry Johnson (I'm thinking of the old people), and G. D. Gore. I think this is also very interesting to note, G.D. Gore (which might be something indicative; it might mean nothing, but to me it means quite a bit): You always could see when there was a Board meeting coming [because of] how G.D. Gore was dressed. He had a new suit on, his best suit.

DHP: It was special and he wanted to get dressed for it.

OW : Absolutely. It was a groping for something. Seevers, Charles Seevers, attached much more importance and responsibility to the Board, than the Board actually had and more responsibility than the Board ever could execute.

DHP: Even though he served on it, and actually saw how it functioned, he still held it in very high regard?

OW: That's right, in very high esteem. If there was not enough to go around, you see that's the function of the Board.. . . And the Board really was another expression of the predominant feeling at the University, or at the College at the time. It was a complete proprietary feeling of everyone. It didn't make any difference who he was, from the chairman of the board down to the night woman who cleaned the washrooms.

DHP: Everybody felt it was their university?

OW: It was their university. And they had something to say about it, They contributed what they could, their contribution. I think this is also something to do.. . There was from the early time on quite a controversy when, particularly in the later stages, during the academic depression, some attempts were made by the Development Office to exert pressure upon the faculty to contribute. There were certain people, absolutely refusing to contribute money. In fact, some of them looked upon this as a kickback.

DHP: Some of the faculty trustees who were asked to contribute as trustees, that is in their role as trustees, refused, felt very strongly about that.

OW: Yes.

DHP: Did that have any repercussions outside of the individuals involved? Was there any.

OW: I think it had some repercussion on the rest of the Board. They looked upon faculty representation, at least some of them did. . . but who can really assess the mind of a person. I think it had something to do with Lerner's attitude.

DHP: Specifically?

OW: Specifically that they are [more] often ornaments than of actual value on the Board.

DHP: This was the attitude, you think of at least one of the chairmen?

OW: I guess so.

DHP: Do you think this was only Lerner, or was it shared by others?

OW: Yes, I think it was shared, and might be still shared by others.

DHP: As you described it, it's an attitude of, partly of neutrality, you know, that is, "what function do these faculty people perform on the Board?" Would you say it's neutral or is there some hostility toward faculty representation on the Board?

OW: I think that at some times there was.

DHP: Can you think of a specific instance or situation?

OW: Not of a specific situation, but sometimes the tenor of a discussion. A faculty member very rarely was asked for his opinion. If the chairman, say Lerner, singled somebody out and said what do you think about this, so far as I remember, he never called on a faculty member.

DHP: The opinion of the faculty member wasn't given as much consequence?

OW: No. The faculty member as such, even those who did not contribute, they felt that they did contribute by being there, by serving, by teaching, whatever it is, to add to the greater glory of the university.

DHP: What role did the faculty members actually play on the Board? You are suggesting that some didn't contribute funds, others did. Certainly fund raising and the contribution of funds is one of the roles of the Board. What other functions or roles did the faculty trustees play on the Board? What did they do?

OW: One, and I think it's an important role, they prevented, and I cannot give you any evidence that ever an attempt was made, but they prevented a regression into the traditional channeling of governance or of attitudes which in the course of fund raising campaigns sometimes it was raised. One of the great issues we always had was the issue of the image of the University, or even of the college: What do we stand for? What are we? How do we measure up? I think that the faculty representation prevented even this from ever getting to the floor. But I am sure that it would have been. That's what I meant when I started out at the very beginning. That without faculty participation we might not be what we are, as far as governance, as far as freedom is concerned. They were the conservative forces there, conserving what had been gained, This was perhaps one of the motives I had in mind when I said what I said at the summer meeting of the Board [when] Jerry asked me: "What you have inherited from your" fathers, earn it anew in order to possess it." This was my idea of the function of the faculty representatives on the Board.

DHP: So one of the roles of the faculty trustee was to, in a sense, preserve and consolidate the revolution that had been won?

OW: Yes. Exactly.

DHP: Can you think of other things the faculty trustees did, either as a group or individually? Were there any other consequences of their sitting on the Board?

OW: Yes, I think it was even before we had a budget committee that the budget was scrutinized by the members of the faculty, just as well. And I think the creation of a budget committee was simply an after thought.

DHP: We are talking about the budget committee. That is certainly another unique structure. How did that get started?

OW: This started during the academic depression, I've forgotten the exact date, maybe '50, '51.

DHP: At the time of the drafting for the Korean War.

OW: Yes. Funds were very, very scarce and it was the idea of some of the members of the faculty, particularly Brennes; the funds we have, are they

used best for the purposes for which we are here, that is to educate students? Or are they being used for other extraneous things like administration? And at that time, or before this time, the administrative set up in some areas was relatively plush, relatively plush. For example, we had in the dean of faculties' office a man like Willard Abram who was assistant to Leys. We had quite an elaborate presidential office, not elaborate, but in comparison to what we had, with John Schwertman the president's assistant. And [some members of the faculty thought that] there were areas where money was being spent that did not need to be spent. They wanted to be sure they knew where the money was going. The faculty committee was created as a Board committee, elected by the Senate. The budget committee is still a Board committee, not a faculty committee, elected by the faculty, but it is looked upon as legally a Board committee.

DHP: In what sense is it legally a Board committee? Did the Board establish, did the Board go on record as establishing...?

OW: Yes, I think the Board did. The Board accepted this idea.

DHP: The Board does not elect this committee?

OW: No, but the Board looks upon this committee as its own committee.

DHP: Was there any opposition to this in the Board?

OW: I'm not aware of this. I don't know: But it went over with the faculty with great enthusiasm, overwhelming.

DHP: I don't want to read into this more than existed, but I sense an implication along the following lines and I'd like you to tell me if I'm correct or not: At the time that the faculty trusteeship and the original constitution was established, I get the feeling that there was a great feeling of solidarity between the faculty and the administration, that the faculty was, in a sense, to be allied with the president and whatever other administrators there were that would support the academic point of view against the layman.

OW: That is absolutely correct. The best illustration came out of an extraneous thing, but I think it's indicative. On Jim Sparling's desk there was a set of pens with an inscription on them which the faculty had presented to him on his 50th birthday. I mean you could really find out when his 50th birthday was--that's 23 years back and would take us to '47. In '47, '48, '49 there was absolute community. There was no friction. Friction was brought in later on by dividing faculty from administration, by implication. The idea was of checks and balances. The phrase "total power corrupts", what is that?

DHP: Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely?

OW: That was used often, and over and over again. And I would say the friction between the faculty and the president got generated quite late, relatively late.

DHP: The thing that brought it to mind was your suggestion of the origin of the budget committee, and the feeling that maybe the budget committee got started because the faculty weren't happy with how the administration were running things .

OW: This happened, you see, probably in '53, '54. At that time, in the early days, '45, '46, '47, '48, really money didn't play any role. It was a euphoria. At that time you could hear such phrases: "isn't it wonderful to do the things you want to do and even get paid for it." And you could hear that, not only from a fool like me but more people said this at that time. And this was genuine. It was absolutely genuine. And then it also penetrated into the Board. And there was no idea whatsoever of quid pro quo: I do this and you have to do this; I stay an hour more and therefore I need a load relief. That did not happen whatsoever. There was really a complete identification of the individual with the University.

DHP: And between the faculty and administration?

OW: Oh yes, absolutely.

DHP: And yet by the time it was felt necessary to institute a budget committee some of this must have no longer been present.

OW: Exactly. Some distrust had been sown. I don't know how, but it was quite evident. And then the budget committee took, in my opinion (maybe I'm absolutely biased and wrong), one form and that was collective bargaining.

(Side 2)

DHP: You are attributing to the budget committee a development of the sense of each side wanting to get as much as it could?

OW: I wouldn't say each side. The budget committee had, and it later worked, also different ideas in mind. Our fund raising fell off. Enthusiasm within the community died out. Workers began to become indifferent to this, and the budget committee by presenting the case of the needs stronger, probably, had an effect even on the Board, or at least was thought to have an effect. But it didn't, you see.

DHP: The budget committee was thought to dampen the Board's enthusiasm for raising funds?

GW: No, no. To raise it.

DHP: To encourage the Board to raise funds.

OW: That's right.

DHP: Do you think it did that?

OW: I don't think so. Unfortunately, most members of the Board couldn't care less what the budget was. It was a formality. They never took personal responsibility for meeting it. That always had been left to the faculty and to the administration particularly. Then it was also a means of "encouraging" the president, Sparling, to raise his own goals. And Rolf certainly can verify this, that certain members like Bernie Greenberg.. [interruption]

DHP: We are talking about the feeling of the Board regarding meeting the budget.

OW: It was primarily, you see, the idea of also encouraging the president to raise his goals. I think Bernie Greenberg at the time, when the proposed budget didn't meet, whether or not there should be another \$10,000/\$20,000/\$50,000 in the salary budget or not. He said, "Oh, Jim, you can raise easily more than this." And Jim said, "Maybe I can." And that was it. That was another function of the Budget Committee.

DHP: So the budget committee worked to get the goals for fund raising as high as possible?

OW: Yes.

DHP: You mentioned now in addition to--we were talking about the budget committee and we started talking about that because you said, prior to the time of the budget committee, the faculty trustees reviewed the budget, and even subsequently they were aware of the total budget. And that was one role they performed in addition to conserving the revolution. Can you think of anything else that the faculty trustees were there other things that the faculty trustees did?

OW: I think perhaps more informally than formally, they were a living monument of what the Board had created and to some people it was an inspiration, or at least an admonition: I have to work so that those poor bastards can continue. I don't know whether I make myself clear?

DHP: Their presence on the Board was a kind of continual confrontation, between the lay trustees and the fact that there were faculty members who were dependent on their salaries and so on.

OW: That's right. Not only this but also it was for most of the trustees the only contact, the only real contact, with the University.

DHP: How did that work? Was that a successful way of establishing this kind of contact? Did they get to know the University through the faculty trustees?

OW: In some instances, yes. In some instances they got a very biased picture of the University. But by knowing some people (seven people, or whatever there were on the Board), they knew what kind of faculty there were; what they did; their aspirations. And I think this was all to the good. And undoubtedly there was more than this involved too. In cases of real confrontation like the Auditorium, I think the presence of the faculty members conserved the unity of the University and of the Board, otherwise it might have fallen apart.

DHP: The presence of the faculty trustees conserved the unity of the University? In what way?

OW: Because even if they were very much opposed to the restoration, like Golay and probably Weisskopf and probably Rolf, with the exception of Golay, who was a newcomer, they would not have walked out of the Board. And therefore the defection of four members, Stapleton, Pollock, Hirsch (and Golay), really didn't effect the workings of the University too much.

DHP: Because some of the faculty opponents remained on the Board.

OW: Yes.

DHP: Was Golay's resignation connected to that?

OW: No, I think this was only an outward symptom of something which was much more basic. I'm sure it was not the decision of the Board. I'm certain of this. He knew that I was for the restoration and our relation was most cordial. There was not the slightest impact. It had nothing to do with this. But he took this opportunity, of course. I really think that conserving, justifying the revolution and its gains, that was the main object [of the faculty trustees] and perhaps to some extent also to introducing to the Board something of "academia." That is also important. And for the faculty as such to be self governing, not only in name, but de facto. It was important.

DHP: Was this substantive self government? Do you think this was a real element of self government?

OW: Yes. For many people it was. Undoubtedly. Furthermore, it was a rallying point for the whole faculty. Undoubtedly, it was a mark of great distinction of which everybody effected was very proud to be elected, I mean to have the confidence of your colleagues to be sent into the Board, as their representative.

DHP: It was considered a real honor to be elected a faculty trustee?

OW: Yes.

DHP: Was there competition for these selections?

OW: Oh yes, and how. There were all kinds of machinations which we don't know any more.

DHP: We don't have these kinds of machinations any more?

OW: I don't think so.

DHP: Why not? Is it less esteemed now than it was.

OW: Less esteemed, or looked upon as less important.

DHP: Why? What has changed?

OW: The early enthusiasm is not there any more. There is no question about it. There is no question about it. It has become an institution. It has been institutionalized. If that should be changed I'm quite sure the faculty would fight like hell.

DHP: How did these early fights take place? Did people campaign on a particular issue? Did they say if you elect me I will do such and such?

OW: Not openly. They knew what they stood for. There were camps, the right and the left and the middle.

DHP: Was there caucusing, politicing?

OW: Oh, and how. And you were visited by people who told you the story of what to support. You'd better. I mean, not as a threat: you'd better do; but if you want the survival of the University you would elect him. Very openly.

DHP: People would come to visit you, for example, and urge their candidacy, or your support for their candidacy.

OW: That's right. And very often they didn't come directly, but somebody else came for them.

DHP: I'm trying to get the sense of whether or not this was support of particular people because they wanted to get this recognition and evaluation of their popularity, or whether there were certain issues that individuals were backing and their candidacy represented these issues?

OW: Undoubtedly there were issues too. The School of Education in the early days was an issue. Academic standards was an issue. Tuition was an issue. And the matter of salaries was an issue.

DHP: And these were issues about which particular faculty trustees or candidates for trusteeship had formed opinions on and wanted others to support them?

OW: Yes. And the position of the President--not the position of the President, but rather curbing or encouraging the position of the President.

DHP: What about the faculty trustees vis a vis the President? People have written in the literature that this is inimicable to the authority and role and so forth of the president. What did this do with the relationship between the President and the faculty?

OW: It could do very little at Roosevelt at the time. Because there was a camaraderie which was never equalled at no place. It was not only a John, John situation, but it was simply a genuine growing up together in a struggle.

DHP: A kind of equal basis, equal partnership, between the President and the faculty?

OW: Absolutely. And this position was not the position that could harm or benefit individuals. This was simply one of the many instances of the check and balance system. Because promotions, really all he had to do was put his name on there. It really was decided in the councils.

DHP: The college councils.

OW: Tenure [was] the same situation. Appointment was in the department and in the college. I never had the feeling that I “worked for Jim Sparling.” If somebody had told me this, or if I would have heard, “he works for me,” I would have given him a kick in the ass. I did not work for him. I worked for the University, of which he was one fuctionary as I was another functionary.

DHP: So that this structure with the faculty trustees did not create any particular difficulty with President?

OW: I don't think so.

DHP: Back to the question of the role of the faculty trustees, do you think that the faculty trustees and others shared the same notion of what the faculty trustees were to do on the Board, what their role was? Do you think that all the faculty trustees had the same idea of what their job on the Board was, what their role was?

OW: Oh, there were differences, of course, different concepts. The best illustration would be the concept of a man like Runo and all the rest of us, each one conceived of it from his own vantage point.

DHP: Was there ever an attempt to get together on the part of the faculty trustees? Did they caucus or decide together?

OW: Never in my memory. It was not necessary.

DHP: What about their responsibility, or their sense of responsibility to the body that elected them, the Senate? Did the Senate ever instruct the faculty trustees on certain matters, and say you should act in this way?

OW: No. If the Senate had any instructions to give, the Senate gave the instructions to the Board of Trustees through the President. Never through the faculty representatives.

DHP: So they never said, we want you to vote this way or that way on a particular issue?

OW: No.

DHP: You mentioned a little while ago the situation of the College of Education, the issue that came up early, in the 50s or before. In that situation, or in other situations, were there instances where the faculty representation on the Board was decisive or determining of how an issue was handled or disposed of?

OW: I think there were. But I cannot really put my finger on it. But by the sheer weight of their presence, they determined the outcome of issues.

DHP: Can you think of particular instances where the outcome was determined by the faculty representatives that might have been different if they had not been on the Board?

OW: Really I can't think of anything specific. But I think it could be ascertained, you see, in many instances you wouldn't have had a quorum with the Board without the faculty representatives there. So in many instances it was not that they determined it in opposition to the lay members. That's not my point. But they were the Board, for all practical purposes. I don't know if I make myself clear?

DHP: Yes.

OW: There were often meetings where there were more faculty members present than lay members.

DHP: So they controlled or were decisive in certain issues simply because they attended religiously and the lay trustees didn't. But in addition to that, were there instances of where the votes on certain issues lined up between the faculty and the lay trustees?

OW: The only division I ever observed was the Auditorium.

DHP: How did that work? What is the story there?

OW: Well, maybe there too, if the faculty members would have voted a different way, it would not have come to pass.

DHP: What wouldn't have come to pass?

OW: The Auditorium restoration. The resolution of the charter [for the Auditorium Theatre Council].

DHP: If they had opposed it?

OW: Yes, I'm quite sure.

DHP: If they had opposed it, it might have killed it?

OW: I think so. It might have. Some did oppose it, but the majority were in favor of it. They were swayed by the enthusiasm, particularly of Klutznick, who really gave a speech.

DHP: And Klutznick persuaded people who had been neutral before to go along with it?

OW: I think so. They had the idea that if he's for, it can't be so bad. If I remember correctly, it was a secret vote.

DHP: Well, now we're talking about certain instances that were really critical in the life of the University. Times 'when there were tremendously strong feelings, so strong that some of the lay trustees felt it necessary to resign. For that, or related (or unrelated) reasons, some of the staff people, Golay and Burnett, also felt it necessary to resign. I'm curious to know what role the faculty trustees played in this very intense kind of situation, in terms of how it built up, in terms of its actual resolution and what happened following? What did the faculty trustees do?

OW: That's very difficult to answer. But I think its the same situation that still takes place in the lunch room where issues are debated that come up later on. One other area which I think is important, I'm sure that the faculty (I was not a member of the Board at the time), but I'm sure that the faculty had an influence in the McCarthy situation.

DHP: The Joe McCarthy situation?

OW: I'm quite sure the presence of faculty members on the Board strengthened the perseverance of the Board for the principals. I'm quite sure that was one of the important issues. The lay members, or certain lay members they had all been indoctrinated ideologically, or else they would not have been on the Board--but the presence of the faculty members on the Board, again gave them the enthusiasm with which to fight this onslaught, I mean the McCarthy situation or the Broyles Commission. And the faculty members really were a transmission bearer of the enthusiasm of the faculty for the University, and still is to some extent. It is not really important, you see, what they did or what would have happened if they had not been there. But what was important is that they were there and could do what they did in order to enlarge and preserve the academic freedom or self-government of the University.

DHP: So this was certainly another instance where they made a decisive difference.

OW: I'm sure.

DHP: If the faculty trustees had not been there, the lay trustees may have?

OW: Not caved in, but they might not have put up the fight or wouldn't have had the resolution to resist as well as they did.

DHP: Could you give me a little background on the Broyles situation? Or the McCarthy situation?

OW: The Broyles situation was before the McCarthy situation. Remember, the niece of Walgreen's at the University of Chicago, told her uncle that she was fed the Communist line in her instruction in social science. And thereupon Mr. Walgreen made quite a fuss about this. And thereupon Mr. Broyles introduced a resolution and investigated the University of Chicago and at the same time also Roosevelt University for the presence or absence of communism on the faculty. At that time Joe Hackman was actually named or accused of being a Communist. Hutchins and Sparling were invited or summoned to testify. And from the really close relationship that Hutchins had with Roosevelt University he felt that it was. . .

DHP: A kind of ally?

OW: Yes. Or something that had to be protected and helped. I do not know whether the Board minutes reflect anything of this sort what-so-ever, but undoubtedly it was discussed in the Board.

DHP: Well, they contain Sparlings report at the Broyle's hearings. I'm curious to know whether you had anything in mind specifically when you said that the Board might have behaved differently. Had the Board been asked to do something that it then voted not to do? Is there some specific way in which the Board resisted?

OW: No. No. I said that because of the constellation of the individuals who were members of the Board of Roosevelt University. They were liberal". They were on this side of the center.

DHP: It was a question more of giving Sparling moral support in his going down there.

OW: Exactly. And tell him now you go ahead and do this, this is right." And you applaud. This is the point. I think this was more enthusiastic because of the presence of the Board members. Because, there again, there was a living symbol. It was not for an amorphous mass that you did it.

DHP: And the faculty trustees were a central factor in that?

OW: Of course.

DHP: What about other crises? There have been a number of particularly crucial periods in the history of the University; that undoubtedly was one and the Auditorium, as we mentioned, was probably one. Was there some role that they played at that time?

OW: No, I don't really think that there was a specific role. There was a specific role they played, but it was much more by the weight of their sheer presence that things were decided.. .

(Tape 2, Side 1)

DHP: So that it wasn't so much the faculty trustees voting on one side of an issue or lined up against the lay trustees?

OW: No, I'm sure there never was a division--lay vs. faculty.

DHP: [It was] the atmosphere created by the faculty trustees?

OW: Yes, that was the important aspect., And there one could say, with the Haggadah of Pesach: "This would have been enough." I'm quite sure.

DHP: But with the Haggadah of Pesach there was always more. What was the "more" here?

OW: The "more" here was also vis a vis the outside, outside of the University. Here you have an institution not only professing self-government but exercising it. It had a tremendous impact on the outside. It undoubtedly attracted a great number of people to the University.

DHP: Faculty people were attracted here? You meant by that faculty?

OW: Absolutely. Even today, when you speak about, in the recruitment process, of faculty participation, you see eyes getting bigger, "is that possible?" And this is so understandable in the light of what is happening outside. The Board of Trustees is something very far as a god, you don't know and you fear. Here its revealed as all too human, doing nothing.

DHP: But despite the familiarity with the Board that was gained by having faculty members on it, there were some faculty trustees who continued to hold, you suggested Gore, [in high esteem].

OW: Yes, but it was primarily the gratitude they felt for somebody who had nothing to do with the University, or who was not involved, whose job, whose livelihood depended on something quite different, that he took the time off to devote, and by his sheer presence to give to the University. And I myself, I feel to go after each Board meeting to each Board member and thank him for coming, as though they do me, and they do, a personal favor by being there. This is the feeling that was also instilled, and, I think, in most people. And I really cannot conceive of our colleagues who would not feel that way.

DHP: You were talking a minute ago about the Board--and I forget exactly how you phrased it--that Boards were held in awesome esteem by the people outside who had no contact with the Board?

OW: Yes, they only were told, "by direction of the Board, and there was no future recourse. Here, the Board was "we." We are part of the Board and therefore, if necessary, there is a recourse. I do not recall any incident where it ever happened, but they can go there. There is an avenue open for us.

DHP: Do you think the Board at Roosevelt exercises the same kind of powers or played the same kinds of decision making, policy making, roles that Boards at other institutions played?

OW: No. Because the Board itself, except for the original founding of the University, did, relatively, very little. I mean Board members as such, relatively very little to enable themselves to exercise any authority. And basically, the University is a self-made individual, if I can use personification. It is this way. And the Board I think, by and large, has recognized this. And therefore, really, in most instances, in all instances that I know of, ratified what was being proposed by the administration.

DHP: So that, in a sense, the real decisions were made elsewhere and brought to the Board for ratification? Made by the administration and brought to the Board?

OW: Yes, even including the Auditorium Theatre issue.

DHP: The Auditorium Theatre issue was made by the administration?

OW: Made by part of the administration, by the President,

DHP: Made by the President?

OW: Right.

DHP: I want to pursue that one, a little more specifically, but I also want to ask you whether or not you think that the presence of faculty members on the Board made it less likely for the Board to exercise these kinds of decision-making roles that you think are played more strongly elsewhere?

OW: Whether the presence of faculty members prevented the Board from. .?

DHP: Yes.

OW: No, I don't think so.

DHP: Was there any feeling that, well, because there are faculty members on the Board we'd better not take real decisions or thorny problems to the Board, but we'd better iron them out in another forum?

OW: I don't think so. This would have made no difference. It's the thing in itself that makes the difference. The institution, as it developed, and as it lives; even today, the Board really represents. . . Perhaps, that can be put differently: the Board under the first president was a Board appointed by the President, and not vice versa. This changed with Pitchell, and part of the fiasco of Pitchell is probably, not only his own inadequacies, but also coming in this epoch because there was not enough backing of the Board for him. The Board caved-in when we came. I mean, with the revolt of the deans, the Board caved-in. There is no question about it. Yes, true, Lyle made a tremendous mistake in putting the man in. But this was simply another demonstration. And then, of course, after this, with Rolf, you have one old-timer who grew up with the other and who is conservative and who is conserving the energies and the substance of the University and the Board tries to help him, really, to do the job. But the Board does not exert any pressure on him, going this way or that way, academically or physically, the only thing is that he is striving for fiscal integrity. Naturally, the Board encourages this. But the Board does not make policies or initiate policies. The policies are initiated in the administration and presented to the Board,

presented to the Executive Committee, presented perhaps to the chairman, beforehand. But I'm not aware of any instance where a project was killed because of the opposition of the Board. A project might not have been carried out to fruition because of the other things, not because of the veto of the Board.

DHP: So, what you are really saying is that the Board was relatively powerless? That the decisions were made by the administration?

OW: The Board could have had the power but the Board never assumed, really made use of the power it has. I'm quite sure of that.

DHP: Can you think of any reasons for that?

OW: Because everything went all right anyhow. They could not have done better. See, the first instance, so much has been said over and over again: with a few \$10 millions, 30, \$40 millions there would be absolutely nothing wrong with Roosevelt University, right? How do you get this? Normally, you would get it through the Board of Trustees, either they themselves would get it or give it. And this didn't happen, until very recently when we got some substantial gifts from Lyle and Heller and so on, but before it didn't. And for many it was simply a sport and nothing very much else.

DHP: In other words, what you are saying is that if the Board had put up a greater share of the funds, by raising it or giving it, they might have felt like exercising greater control, and would have been able to for that reason?

OW: That's right.

DHP: Going back, you suggested that the Board's role in relation to the Pitchell situation, that the deans revolted and the Board caved in?

OW: I say this to you most objectively. I was part of the revolt, you know, but I could have well seen in other instances, and it was probably what Mr. Pitchell expected, that the Board chairman would say "The hell with you, you are fired." And from his point of view, we really laid our career on the line. And he could persuade the Board that this was bad. But the Board did not make any attempt to protect Pitchell, their creation, their creature.

DHP: They sided with the [deans] ?

OW: With the revolt.

DHP: Did the faculty trustees play a role in this?

OW: No, I don't think so. I really don't. I don't recall that they played a role.

DHP: Where did the opposition to Pitchell come from?

OW: From the deans. Only.

DHP: Some of the deans were, at the time, on the Board.

OW: This made a difference, sure.

DHP: In what way?

OW: Because the chairman knew each one of them. Otherwise, how did Lyle know Rolf? Because Rolf was the secretary of the selection committee for the president. How did he know me? Because of my presence on the Board for many years.

DHP: So this personal acquaintanceship gave you an entree?

OW: I could call Lyle without any hesitation. By being able to call him "Lyle" and he calling me "Otto" there was a familiarity which came through common tenure on the Board.

DHP: So that actually there were a combination of circumstances. Tenure on the Board gave you an acquaintanceship that enabled you to contact him, but it was your position as a dean which gave you the incentive to make that contact. That is, it was the deans rather than the other faculty trustees that exercised that right.

OW: Yes, but you see, the point was that only the deans could see what's going on. They did not want to involve the faculty at large. Which would have been not right because, if it doesn't come out right, why bother them. That was the point.

DHP: You talked about being able to call Spencer without any hesitation.

OW: Which was illegal.

DHP: How do you mean?

OW: Because communication with a board member must go through the president.

DHP: What kinds of instances were there where there was this communication? Was there much of it, little of it?

OW: I had several times, lunch with him. I had lunch with him privately, so had Rolf, with Sheldon.

DHP: This was all regarding the Pitchell situation?

OW: Yes.

DHP: Was there communication with the lay trustees on other situations? Have there been other instances when.. .

OW: Not that I know of. I didn't have any.

DHP: Were you aware that other faculty trustees [were going to the Board members]?

OW: I don't think so.

DHP: So this one issue.. .

OW: We simply violated the rules because we thought of a higher goal.

DHP: Again this was another instance of feeling proprietorship in the University.

OW: Yes, of course.

DHP: In other tense situations, like the Auditorium, was there this kind of communication on issues?

OW: Not that I know of. Of course, I was not in the opposing camp.

DHP: The camp that you were in was also the same camp that Sparling was in. Was there communication between you and Sparling on this?

OW: Only in the matter that both of us worked on the Auditorium Council, or the Committee to establish the Council. Only that way.

DHP: Did he ever ask for your support on the Board?

OW: No. He knew better.

DHP: Did you feel constrained, or the opposite, about giving this support because it was the president who was asking for it.

OW: No. I felt, upon examination of the issues, this again was for the best of the University. The issue was so clear to me, it still is, that Roosevelt University through those circumstances could become the 20th century vandal to destroy a great monument of art that existed. I mean it was there to preserve such monuments, even if it were not its property. That was one [thing] ; the other consideration I had was that this might be one instrumentality that would open the road to Roosevelt University for many people outside who had not come to the rescue of the University, who looked upon the University with great suspicion. And, I felt that if they could see us a little closer, they would know that we do not have horns, that we were not quite the devils they imagined us to be.

DHP: In other words, you felt this would be a vehicle for a variety of people to come forth for the University?

OW: Of course. And out of this, I do believe and did believe at the time, that the creation of an Auditorium Theatre Council, as a semi-autonomous body would help to heighten the cultural life of the city. It was as simple as that. And other people looked upon this from other points of view. It was bad because it was proposed by President Sparling.

DHP: Because he was the proponent of it?

OW: Yes, secondly it was bad because it would divert money which would otherwise go to the University.