

INTERVIEW I

DATE: November 8, 1968
INTERVIEWEE: DR. LOGAN WILSON
INTERVIEWER: DAVID G. McCOMB
PLACE: Dr. Wilson's office, Washington, D.C.

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M: Dr. Wilson, first of all, let's say something about your background. I have some data on it. I can read through this and if I come to something that ought to be corrected, please correct it.

According to my information, you were born in Huntsville, Texas, in 1907. You were educated at the University of Texas and at Harvard. You got your Master's degree from the University of Texas in 1927, a Master's degree--Master of Arts--from Harvard in 1938, and a Ph.D. from Harvard in 1939. Did you ever get a B.A. degree?

W: I took my B.A. degree at Sam Houston over in Huntsville before I went to the University of Texas.

M: Also you have numerous honorary doctorates of law degrees. Also according to my information, you worked as an assistant professor at East Texas State in 1928 to 1930, and again in 1932 to 1936. You were research associate at the Massachusetts Community Project, 1936 to 1937, tutor in sociology at Harvard 1937 to 1939, associate professor of sociology at the University of Maryland in 1939 to 1941, professor and head of the sociology department at Tulane in the early 1940s--1941 to 1943, professor and head of the department of sociology

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at the University of Kentucky in 1943 to 1944, a dean at Tulane in 1944-51. What was that, as dean?

W: Newcomb College.

M: Newcomb College, vice president of the University of North Carolina, 1951 to 1953, president of the University of Texas, 1953 to 1960, chancellor at the University of Texas, 1960 to 1961, and then president of the American Council on Education, 1961 to the present.

W: That is correct.

M: You have also been on numerous boards through your career, such as the Fund for the Republic, agencies of the Ford Foundation, Carnegie Foundation, various national education boards, and author of several books.

W: That's all correct.

M: Now I'd like to get into this section about your relationship with Lyndon Johnson. Can you tell me when you first met him?

W: I don't recall distinctly when I first met him. It was some occasion in Austin when I was president of the University there. He was a member of Congress. Of course, he was out on the campus for special occasions a number of times. He and Mrs. Johnson were in our home on at least one occasion for a dinner. We have been out to their place at Johnson City. We weren't intimately acquainted, but sufficiently so to be on a first-name basis when he became president.

M: Did Lyndon Johnson have anything to do with integration of the campus at the University of Texas?

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W: No, the University integrated without a court order. This is one that I had discussed fairly fully with our Board of Regents and I told them that I thought that we ought to do the gracious thing and the sensible thing and not wait for a suit that was coming eventually anyway. We didn't have any particular argument over this. The decision was made simply to integrate the University, and we were one of the first southern institutions to do that without really being forced or pushed. I am very happy to say that integration there went off without any unpleasant episodes. I recall very distinctly the Autherine Lucy episode in Alabama. Several years after that I was talking to the late Oliver Carmichael who was president of Alabama and he was complimenting Texas on escaping some of the difficulties that they didn't escape at the University of Alabama. I told him that we had good cooperation from the press. I had urged the press not to make a big hullabaloo over the admission of the first Negroes as undergraduates. Of course, they had been in the professional schools--the law school, there was a case on that one, you will recall years before. But this was the first admission of undergraduates. They didn't send out a battery of photographers. There weren't any television cameras around. And the students reacted very sensibly. I attribute some of our good fortune to the sensible cooperation of the various persons involved.

M: Did you deliberately keep the publicity down on that? Do you think that publicity is a factor in the troubles we have today?

W: I think it has been. Dr. Carmichael said that he had tried unsuccessfully to get the same kind of cooperation over in Alabama, and with

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no luck. He attributed some of his difficulties to the excessive press coverage--following these people around and making a big fuss over minor incidents and so on. Of course, I recognize this poses a dilemma for the press if they regard a lot of this as legitimate news and something that people are entitled to know. But I think future historians may look back on some of the activism and see that the activists have been stimulated by the television and press coverage they get. I again could cite a few incidents here--students all set to do something and appear at a particular place discover nobody was there to cover it, and they call it off and notify the press again. If they got a good turnout of cameramen the next day, they would move ahead with whatever they'd planned.

M: When you integrated the University of Texas, what mechanical steps did you take? Did you simply not have this on the forms, for race, or what?

W: I frankly don't recall whether there was anything on the registration forms that indicated [race]. I know that later we kept no record of who the Negro students were. Again, there was no state law in Texas on this. In some states this is a matter of law. You can't get this by law in Connecticut, New York, and some other states. Because I would be asked occasionally, "How many Negro students do you have out there this year or this semester?" I'd say, "Honestly, we don't know. We guess we've got three hundred, but we don't keep a specific record of this. We try to give them the same treatment, same accessibility that other students have."

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Now I remember in another southern state university, which I shall not name, when they first took in Negro students, they did pursue a policy of segregation. They put Negroes to sit in the back or over on one side and the whites on the other side or in the front. But we never had any segregation except that we did not integrate the women's dormitories initially. We had separate, physically separate, housing for Negro women students. This was partly in response to the gradualism aspect, that we were cognizant of the dating problem and the common parlors and possible presence of parents of East Texas students and this kind of thing. We felt that this was one we had better put down the road a piece rather than move into immediately. But insofar as the educational facilities were concerned, there was absolutely no segregation of Negroes.

M: How about the male Negro students?

W: Well, they went right into the men's dormitories initially. I don't recall whether there was any voluntary segregation. There may have been that if you had four Negro students in a dormitory, they may have roomed together. It rather interests me that at Northwestern, to mention one case, this is what the Afro-Americans want to get back to now. They don't want to be so fully integrated. They want their own sections of dormitories and this kind of things.

But, by and large, the integration was a more peaceful process at the University of Texas than it was in most other southern states, and it moved ahead faster there.

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M: Was there any opposition to this once it was under way?

W: We never met with any organized opposition. Of course, there was a lot of muttering and even some in the legislature among a few of the East Texas legislators. I don't know whether you are a native Texan or not. If you are, you know that East Texas is more like the Old South in its folkways and mores, and the Panhandle is very little different from, say, the plains of Kansas in the climate of opinion on the race question.

M: Was there any thought about integrating the athletic teams at this point?

W: I don't recall that it was ever really discussed. I remember I teased some of my friends over at A&M. I said, "I'll tell you how the University of Texas will integrate A&M. We may get a few Negro football stars and beat you very badly and to retaliate you may start admitting Negro athletes." I don't even know if either team as yet has any Negro stars. Of course I've been away from there about seven years.

M: Being a former University of Texas student, I have heard stories that Lyndon Johnson helped to integrate the Forty Acres Club. Do you know anything about that?

W: Well, this was after my time. I recall something about that but I would guess that the sensitivity of his national position and the importance of a reasonable, enlightened stand on the race question and the importance of being from a home state which had a similar attitude which was certainly a bit more progressive than the Deep South is pretty important politically. But none of us got into any

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of this while I was still there because he was still a member of Congress then.

M: Was there any thought while you were there, in your tenure, about the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library being placed on the campus?

W: No, this hadn't, as far as I know, ever come up for discussion.

M: What kind of direct connection have you had with Lyndon Johnson recently, after you left Texas and after he became vice president or president?

W: I haven't had any really direct connections. I've been in the White House a few times by special invitation for the signing of education bills and that sort of thing. But otherwise none in particular.

M: Do you have any impressions about the personality of Lyndon Johnson?

W: Well, naturally, you have some. You know you have impressions about the personality of anybody you know. He is an individual with a very strong personality, so naturally you do have impressions. I don't know him intimately enough to have a close first-hand knowledge of Johnson, the man, as an individual. Most of my opinions are based on seeing him in action publicly or being in a group where he is the principal figure and that kind of thing.

M: Is he impressive in this kind of situation?

W: Very much so. He handles himself very well, I think. I know it astonished me that even after he had been in office a few years, he still remembers you and greets you by your first name. He has a lot better memory for names than I have. With hundreds of people coming down a line, I'm likely not to be able to think of the names of some that I've known for years. I may think of their names later, but

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they don't come to me right off. But he's never at a loss on that.

M: I've heard that in a crowd he has to concentrate on one person at a time and almost envelopes that person. Is this true?

W: I've never noticed that particularly about him. Of course, I must say I haven't been around him a great deal since he's been in Washington. In the contexts I've seen him in, this wouldn't be easy to do. We've been in situations where he naturally would have to divide attention among a number of people who would be there.

M: Did you have any connection with the Kennedy Administration?

W: No, not in particular. Again, I was in the White House a few times for bill signings, once for a meal and so on, but I never knew any of the Kennedys intimately.

M: Do you have any impressions about Lyndon Johnson's contribution to higher education?

W: Very definitely. I think he's personally, as president, done more for higher education than any other incumbent of the office. I edited a book several years ago, and was contributor to the book which the Council published called Changing Patterns in Higher Education. I sent an inscribed copy over to him with a notation: "To Lyndon B. Johnson, the president who has done more than any other for the advancement of higher education in the United States." I meant it then and I think history will show that this is true. Kennedy, for example, made a lot of very fine pronouncements about higher education, but if you compare the actual accomplishments of the two men in terms of what measures they got through, there is no comparison.

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M: Why was Lyndon Johnson successful in this and Kennedy not? Do you have an opinion about that?

W: Well, it's a risky thing to attribute motives to people because you often don't know what their motives are. But I think that Lyndon Johnson has been really seriously interested in higher education. I remember talking with John Gardner, whom I have known a long time, just after he was named to the cabinet. I said, "John, just be frank with me. Why would you leave a foundation post where you would be pretty much master of your own time and could do the things that interested you most, and move into a cabinet job where a lot of time your time would cease to be your own?" Admittedly a cabinet post is a very important one and the main point he stressed was that he said, "Well, this man, Lyndon Johnson, has convinced me that he really means what he says--that he attaches great importance to education on all levels as an elevator of the whole society." I have felt the same way about him, and the record demonstrates this. It is unfortunate that in the last few months with all the disaffection about Vietnam, that some of the credit really due Johnson tends to be forgotten.

M: What especially about his contributions to higher education stand out in your mind?

W: Well, I don't think there's any one thing. But the fact that he really got in there and pushed for a whole host of measures, and he threw his whole influence behind us. A lot of these things had been talked about for years, but nobody really got behind them and meant business the way he did. And I think it was his knowledge of how you

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get things done in Congress and his determination to do something that got a lot of these things off dead-center.

M: Did you have any dealings with Congress or with the President on any of this legislation that was passed?

W: Not directly with the President, if you mean sitting down talking this over, man to man. Of course, we'd have contacts with his staff. His main education man was Doug Cater, a good friend of mine, numerous conversations with Doug Cater. We have a commission on federal relations, several full-time staff people who spend a lot of time up on Capitol Hill when the legislation is cooking and follow it daily. We're unlike the NEA--we're not chartered to lobby--but we are the main liaison agency between the institutions of higher education and the federal government. So we've been in the middle of a lot of this stuff.

M: Before I go on to educational policies, do you have any impressions of Lady Bird or the other members of the Johnson family?

W: Yes, I always admired Lady Bird. What I'm about to say is one of those things that shouldn't be made a matter of public record for at least ten or twenty years. But even before she became the wife of the president, I used to make invidious comparisons between Jackie Kennedy as the first lady and some of the others, mainly Lady Bird and Mrs. Dean Rusk, who were doing a lot of Jackie Kennedy's work for her. Unless it was some glamor crowd from Hollywood or some place, Jackie couldn't even be bothered to come downstairs or whatnot. I used to observe Mrs. Johnson and Mrs. Rusk, who had all kinds of receptions for foreign dignitaries and so on. I'm sure there were a

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lots of times they would rather have been at home resting or doing something else, but they were quite conscientious about all this. Jackie Kennedy was the one who got the favorable press though, as if she was the most cultivated person, and there were a few invidious comparisons made even after Mrs. Johnson went into the White House.

I recall right after Johnson became president, some free-lance writer who had been a newspaper man here and New York came in to talk to me. He thought I, being a Texan, would know Johnson intimately. I told him I didn't. But we got into some of this. I said this concerning the amount of mythology about a lot of this, that the Kennedys somehow have a halo with the press, popular press. of being from a long and aristocratic lineage and that Johnson is just up from a grubby nothing. I said, "You've got to remember that Kennedy forebears didn't immigrate too long ago from Ireland and they came from nothing. If you go back to grandfathers, I seem to recall that--wasn't Johnson's grandfather a judge or something? I don't believe any of the Kennedys of that remote ancestry had any similar position of importance." And that Jacqueline Kennedy is supposed to be so well-educated and cultivated and all this. I said, "Well, Lady Bird is actually the best educated first lady we've ever had. As far as I know, she is the only one that's ever had two degrees from any place. Most of them never had a degree from any place." And [I said] that she's a very intelligent, conscientious first lady, and I don't think she's had all the credit that was coming to her. I think in general she's been a very respected first lady. It has irritated me [that] there's been a kind of--I'm not

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resentful of the Kennedys. I don't mean to denigrate them, but somehow they have built up this image, this halo of "publicity saint" effect that they could do no wrong. And even Jackie's recent marriage, these rationalizations that have been appearing in magazines. They are the darndest things I've ever read, some of them. I hope history will recognize Mrs. Johnson for all of her fine qualities as first lady. I'm not sure but what she isn't the best first lady this country has ever had in terms of dedication to the job.

M: You're impressed with her interests in politics--

W: And all sorts of good causes. The way she has given generously of her time. She'll go all around the country and be at some rural school ceremony in West Virginia--something of this kind. A lot of this was in the middle of his term of office. He wasn't running for anything then. But she was just, I think, quite conscientious about it.

And something else I hope future historians will pay a bit more attention to--Lyndon Johnson always worked like hell at his job. He put in long hours. And she worked at her job. He's always had a very craftsman-like--that's not quite the word--approach to the job. I remember years ago reading Time magazine, which was never particularly friendly toward him, credited him with having the best staff of anybody in Congress. You don't get this accidentally. You have to search these people out and even then you have to help train them and groom them. He's had a very able staff all up through Congress. They put in long hours. I remember flying up on the plane one time just

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before I moved up here, with one of LBJ's young staff members. I was contemplating where to live and I said, "I've heard that one shouldn't live over in Virginia--that the bridge is a traffic bottleneck." I said, "Where do you live?" He said, "I live over in Virginia." I said, "Does this bother you?" He said, "No," but said, "if you work for Lyndon Johnson, you get there so early in the morning you beat the traffic and you come back so late at night that traffic is all cleared out." The fact that this man could keep these young fellows working that way is quite a tribute to him.

M: You once stated that money in education should be looked upon as an investment, not something as a stopgap measure or something that just had to be, but as an investment in the future. Is this correct?

W: I'm still of that view, but I don't think we should regard public funds spent for education as being like money spent for things you consume. A lot of things we do with public funds are for humanitarian reasons. You can't let people starve. You can't let people die because they can't afford medical attention in hospitals. Or old people--you've got to treat humanely and decently. Some of this you do for humanitarian reasons and you're not under any illusions, though, about this increasing your productivity as a nation or any particular payoff in dollars for this. But I think you could demonstrate that money put in wisely--I don't mean just any money just thrown into education; there's money wasted in education the way it is in every other kind of investment. But properly spent, this is a capital investment that pays future dividends and increases the productivity of the individual.

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It makes him a more useful member of society, and there are social gains all across the board that improve the quality of life. This is a dividend, too, and I think this is pretty generally recognized now that there are some arguments I made fifteen years ago when I went to Texas, that some of this stuff you had to try to sell people who didn't want to be sold. But most of them are pretty well sold on this now. I don't think you have to argue this much more.

M: Has this idea been accepted by the federal government? Its educational policies?

W: There is no question about it. The federal government is--all you have to do is look at the increased dollar appropriations for education, particularly higher education. The evidence is there.

M: The federal investment is in buildings, research, and in this category, that you would classify as investment, not just something that had to meet a current need?

W: I think virtually all of it could be treated in the investment category, even the federal loan policies and the federal fellowships and so on. The expectation is that these individuals are becoming more useful members of the society.

M: Is there any danger of excessive federal funds going into American universities and colleges?

W: Maybe you could say it's very remote, but there are few if any persons who would argue that the entire support of higher education ought to be taken over by the federal government. Now about a fourth of all the dollars going into higher education, all kinds of monies from all

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sources, about a fourth of them come from the federal government. And I have put this question to educational leaders: what do you think the percentage ought to be? They want more money but they don't want to dry up existing sources. I mean if you increase the federal contributions and if the state contributions decrease by the same amount, you're no better off than you were. I think one of our problems is to devise a varied system of support that is good for any college or university, to have diversified bases of support--not to be completely dependent on any one source. I would not like to see the federal government carrying a major part of the total cost of higher education. I think there ought to be a balance--private support, federal support, state support, and I think again that even though tuition ought to be kept reasonably low, I think you can make an argument for some tuition in all institutions, just at least a token amount to let the students know that this costs money, that it isn't free.

M: What about the current plight of private schools? Seemingly, most private schools in the nation are feeling pinched for money. Are federal funds a major source of their income?

W: No, they are not a major source. They, in general--federal funds for higher education--go to both the private and public sectors on the same basis. The research monies . . . Now it is true you get some strange anomalies. MIT, for example, is called a private institution. Yet, up until recently, more than eighty per cent of its total budget came from the federal government. Similar figures for

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Cal Tech, which is a private institution--but a lot of these are for big research projects, you see.

M: You think to say then that eighty per cent comes from the federal government is really a distortion.

W: If this were true across the board I think it would be undesirable. My own feeling is, it's hard to draw the line anywhere. You say, "Well, not more than fifty per cent." Well, what do you mean--forty-nine per cent, forty-eight, you mean forty-seven and a half per cent or what? But in general, my feeling is that not more than fifty per cent of the support of any institution ought to come from, say one--let's get away from percentages. It is desirable to have mixed support, public funds going into private institutions, and also I would argue for private funds going into public institutions. A fair amount of private money has come to the University of Texas, for example, and this is good. And this is a leavening influence.

M: Are there such things as privately supported universities anymore?

W: That get no public funds of any sort? In the strict sense of the word, no, if you consider the tax subsidy that all private institutions have always enjoyed. They have always had some public support. They don't pay taxes on the grounds they occupy for educational purposes. Well, this is, in a sense, a public support of them, because if they weren't given this privilege, they would have to pay taxes.

M: Is there any danger of federal over-investment in the sciences, rather than in the humanities or the arts?

W: Well, I wouldn't say they have over-invested up to now in the sciences.

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I would say that they have under-invested in the arts and humanities. I don't think we're anywhere near the point of diminishing returns with regard to what the government should put into science, although there is a cutback. The National Science Foundation has had a drastic cutback in its budget. I think there ought to be a more balanced support. If federal funds are heavily available for, say, the hard sciences and the medical sciences, some of this may be matching money which means that buildings get put up over here because you can get the matching money. Maybe you need a library even more, though, or you need a building for your fine arts or humanities even more, but you can't get matching money for it. So you can see what this does to your building program. Or again research money. The most critical problems now, in my judgment, are in the area of the social sciences, not the physical sciences. Look at the race problems, the problems of the cities--these are all in the social science area. And yet compare how much money the government isn't spending on social sciences with what it is spending for physical sciences. Now, I wouldn't argue that the way to solve that one is to take away half of the money now being spent in the physical sciences and put it over in social sciences. The way to do it is to increase the money for the social sciences.

M: How do you sell the idea of federal investment in social sciences?

W: Well, this idea is being sold. Pressure is being put on the National Science Foundation by members of Congress to spend more money on the social sciences. You can get this right out of the Congressional Record. Some members of Congress have been urging this, and they are

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responding to it. And the Humanities Foundation, of course, is in existence now. They don't have too much money yet to operate on, but this is an indicator of something just in the last few years.

M: Will the emphasis be broad enough to include such areas as English, as well as sociology?

W: In the Humanities Foundation and in the Arts Foundation, money is available now for English, but not on the same scale that's available in physics, or engineering, or some of the other fields.

M: Is it possible that the emphasis on research grants by the federal government would degrade the quality of teaching? Say you take a good teacher and you take him out of the teaching field into a research field and he attracts good graduate students in the research field.

W: Well, this, of course, as you know, has been a subject of much argument in recent years. There are those that argue that the great amount of attention to research and the availability of considerably increased sums of money in the last decade or so for research has had as its corollary the neglect of teaching. I don't think that follows. This isn't a necessary relation. It may actually happen in cases.

There was an interesting article not long ago. Some man up at Tufts queried the students there about who the best teachers on the faculty were. Then he looked at the research record of these men--who was getting the most grant money, who was publishing most, and so on--and he found a very high correlation between productivity in research and acclaim in teaching. So this would seem to be counter to the notion that the two functions aren't compatible, that the more

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research you do, the more you have to neglect your teaching function.

But I think unquestionably there has been a certain inattention to the importance of teaching and this is one source of dissatisfaction particularly among undergraduates in a lot of places. I don't think that anybody has said that this caused graduate teaching to be denigrated because a lot of this has been tied in with the training of graduate students. They become involved in research, too, and this is fine training for them as contributors to knowledge. But you can see how it might cause, and it undoubtedly has at some universities, a neglect of undergraduates, particularly lower level undergraduate teaching.

M: Is it possible that with a man gone off to research that the department might have to use inferior teaching assistants because the best ones were taken off to do research?

W: Well, that may be true, too, in that you can say that if you send your best people abroad, or if they are in Washington, or somewhere else, they are not on the campus to teach undergraduates. You get substitutes for them and very often the substitutes aren't as good in the classroom as they are, so the poor undergraduate pays for this. Though Washington may get a distinguished political scientist or whatnot for a year, if he is a fine teacher and you need to pinch-hit for him while he is away, you get some green teacher who is not very experienced or good. The students are the ones who really suffer from that exchange.

M: Have you in your career figured out a way to measure what is a good teacher in any objective way?

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W: I don't think you can measure this in the sense that measurement means you have to have agreed-upon units. You are talking about a yardstick--you have inches, and so on. We have no agreed-upon units to measure teaching, but that doesn't mean that you can't appraise it. In fact it is being appraised or evaluated a lot of places now. I think the students are asking for more participation and I think they ought to have more participation in some areas and not in others. I think it is foolish for students to think they can advise about the investment policy of the universities or that they ought to have a voice in which faculty members are retained and which ones fired--a direct voice in that. This calls for very sophisticated judgment. But at the same time if they are not in a position to evaluate teaching, who is?

Now, there are some things, admittedly, they can't judge too well. But they can tell you who the bores are and who the interesting teachers are. They can judge this as well as anybody. They may be deceived about who knows his subject best and so on because sometimes they are taken in by popularizers who interest them but don't really give them much substance, the anecdotalists who entertain them. Students love these types. But they also love eccentricities and sometimes professors cultivate eccentricities because they know students like this. Sometimes they do flock to the easy markers and this word gets around pretty fast on campus. And they avoid those that work them too hard. So the students certainly can't be the final judges. If you just made a popularity contest out of it, your faculty would go to pieces in short order.

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But there are a lot of things that students can judge. And there are places that have fairly systematic questionnaires they use. Since this goes on, I think really it ought to be done as objectively and effectively as possible, instead of leaving it to scuttlebutt. These student guides that students themselves do, you know--well, these aren't too reliable. They may have just one student who is a gifted writer but not a very objective observer. He wants to write up something that will be interesting to read and provoke a lot of comment. Well, he may grossly misjudge somebody or may just take it on hearsay. So if you are going to do that, and it is done anyway, why not do it with the best advice that you can get from your psychology department and so on and so forth. And again you can raise the question about what uses do you make of these evaluations. Well, the minimum use you could make would be for the teacher himself to see these unsigned evaluations.

But the objection to stopping there is that if you are going to recognize and reward superior teaching, you as an administrator or department chairman or budget council as you have at Texas, or a dean or provost or president, this information would be useful to you to separate the sheep from the goats, to single out these superior teachers and give them special recognition--salary, rank, and so on. But there's a lot of resistance to this because of the traditions of the sanctity of the classroom. But why this should be, I don't know. The professor's research, my God, it really gets scrutinized and gone over and torn to pieces by his colleagues and it's published in journals where

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everybody can look at it. Why this reluctance to have their classroom utterances subjected to the same criticism, I just don't know. I do know, too, but I mean it's not rational.

M: This brings up, also, the question of tenure. Does tenure really make sense?

W: Yes and no. Tenure made more sense years ago, I think, than it does now. In a seller's market such as we have now, a good man doesn't need tenure for job protection. If he's mistreated in one place, he doesn't have any trouble moving to another one. And unquestionably, the security of tenure is a considerable aid to academic freedom. But we shouldn't ignore the fact that we have paid sometimes a pretty high price for tenure. It's also a shield of incompetence in the academic profession, a shield of laziness, a shield of all sorts of things. And I suspect that overall it has a depressing effect on the average salary. The better men are carrying these other guys--carrying them in the sense they aren't being as well paid as they ought to be because these other guys are better paid than they deserve to be. If you've got a bunch of drones around who are really not carrying their weight, other people will have to take on added burdens to uphold and improve the reputation of the place. So you can argue tenure both ways.

M: So, do you have any ideas about how this can be reformed?

W: Well, I think tenure ought to be maintained. But I think that the faculty ought to be less charitable in its judgments of its colleagues. I used to watch this at Texas--the up-or-out rule. I don't know

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whether you still have that or not. But there were a number of cases where the departmental judgment was a good deal more charitable than mine. In a few instances their judgment prevailed with considerable reluctance on my part. I followed the fellows where I thought a mistake had been made and later performance confirmed my judgment that they had been too charitable about these fellows. They said, "What you don't realize--well, yes, he's been here four years and it's true he hasn't finished this yet, but he's had a lot of sickness in his family or his state of morale is bad, and we think that if he got tenure and an appreciable salary increase, you'd notice greatly improved performance next year and the year after." I never saw this happen. So then again it's too difficult to get rid of some people.

I've watched this in Civil Service here in Washington, too. There was a time when Civil Service was much more needed than it is now. I know a case of an alcoholic postman who used to serve this neighborhood. There were a lot of complaints around here. We complained to the post office. We didn't know he was an alcoholic. They told us that. The problem was that he just didn't deliver the mail half the time. But they said, "It's so difficult to fire anybody in Civil Service, we'd rather just put up with this behavior than try to get rid of him."

There is some of this in academic circles. The lazy fellow who once he gets his tenure, I don't mean he quits meeting his classes, but, you know, he just sloughs off. There ought to be some way a man's colleagues could prod him to get on the ball or get out, again

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some way to correct mistakes in judgment, against faculty derelictions. I never heard of anybody anywhere being relieved of a job, a tenured post, on grounds of incompetence. Have you ever heard of one? I never have.

M: I know some that should have been.

W: It just stands to reason there are bound to be such people in every institution who just aren't measuring up to their jobs. But this is pretty hard to prove on a fellow if he's meeting his classes and so on. Of course, if he just goes off somewhere on a binge and doesn't meet his classes for two weeks, you can do something. But if he's meeting his classes and going through the motions, it's pretty hard to prove this. And for some of the irresponsible actions of faculty people that reflect discredit on the institution, pretty hard to haul these people into line.

I heard an interesting discussion not long ago among some university presidents talking about student activists. If they run afoul of the law, you just let the law take its course. But what do you do about your faculty members that get involved in the same thing? Do you keep them on or do you fire them? Do you have a double set of standards? Do you dismiss students for violence on the campus and if a professor is involved, a tenured professor, do you dismiss him, too? Seems to me if you are going to be fair, there ought to be a single standard for students and teachers in terms of lawlessness. And this is something that is worrying a number of universities.

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Of course, if he is a young fellow on trial, and I understand you have a case like this at Texas now, you just don't reappoint him when his term of office is up. And this is the beauty of the up-or-out system anyway. You have a chance to look at a fellow and see how he does. And you are under no obligation to extend his appointment if for any reason he falls short of what you had expected of him. And I don't think you are under obligation to explain to him either. Any more than you are under obligation if you are a young fellow dating a girl and you decide you just don't want to date her again. She's a bore. I think it would be unfair to her and a breach of etiquette to call up and tell her she's a bore. You're not going to call for another date.

M: But you would think that the line of identity between a professor as an officer of the university and professor as a private citizen is not too sharp? What he does as a private citizen is taking part in a riot and carrying signs in front of the White House and so on, regardless of the fact that. . .

W: I'm talking about the campus. But this may go to off the campus, too. There's a division of opinion about this in the university community. Of course, you know this anti-riot thing Congress put on the appropriations that a student who is involved and breaks the law--doesn't matter whether it is on or off the campus if he's convicted--his federal loan or fellowship or whatever is dropped. Well, would you make the same argument for professors? If you're going to be equally fair I think you'd have to. But nothing was said about professors in any of this.

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M: Is it possible to draw a line between the private life of a professor and the . . .

W: I don't think you can draw a hard and fast line. I think there are certain rules you could make and guidelines that might be helpful. Say, if you want to write a letter to the editor, your name is Joe Doaks, Assistant Professor of the University of Texas. That you are writing this letter not as an official of the university but as a private citizen. Just sign it Joe Doaks. Don't write it on department letterhead. Use your personal stationery. If there is no breach of law or anything in the communication then I think this is a private matter. But if you write it on university letterhead, identify yourself as a professor of a particular university, you can't argue that you are speaking as a private citizen.

M: To change the topic a little bit, is there a need for some sort of a national system for scholarships, say sponsored by the federal government?

W: Well, to some extent we have this. Now, see, we have the fellowships and so on. We've got all kinds of aids to students, work study, loans, and so on. This is one I can argue both ways. I'm fearful that if the federal government moves wholesale into this, it might dry up some private scholarship money. This is one of the easiest things--there aren't any really easy things--to raise money for in education. One of the least difficult things to raise money for is scholarships. So if private citizens get the notion that the federal government is taking care of everybody, this money will dry up. So I think it ought

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to be pretty highly selective. Now, of course, the private institutions argue that you can get around the church-state difficulty and some others if you just give the money to the students instead of the institution. Then let him go where he wants to go, which is what New York State does in part.

M: Has the National Defense Education Act been a success?

W: I think it has. It has made a great difference in the availability of educational opportunity and the quality of opportunity. I don't hear any educators argue anymore against federal aid to higher education. There are debates about forms and how much and so on, to whom, but not against it in principle.

M: Is there any problem in higher education with the concentration of facilities or resources through the country, such as placement of graduate libraries and so forth? In other words, what I am driving at, should there be some sort of national organization of education or of universities to direct resources to specific areas? Would this be more efficient?

W: Well, to some extent the Council as an influence group--we're the most comprehensive association of colleges and universities--every year gets out a position paper which goes to Congress recommending some things above others, and suggesting some priorities. But I doubt that the whole education community of twenty-three hundred institutions would be willing for any non-governmental agency to take this on. I doubt members of Congress, in turn, that appropriate the money, would be willing to turn the money over to some intermediary to decide which

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institution--I'm not sure legally they could even do that if they wanted to--decide which ones are going to get it and how much, because these are public funds.

M: Do the state systems, such as California, that have some sort of state coordinating board. . .

W: Yes, you have those in about forty or more states. Now you have one in Texas.

W: Does this make sense to you?

W: Well, I think there's no alternative to this. Some central agency has to make some decision about priorities. Hitherto the legislatures have done this. But education, higher education, has become so expensive and complicated and has been growing at such a rapid rate that the average legislator does not have the time or knowledge to decide some of these intelligently. So he needs some intermediary and presumably impartial body to make recommendations, and that's a purpose of these coordinating bodies. Then again another of their purposes is to eliminate wasteful duplication. I remember when I went down to Texas as president, there was a legislative freeze on all new degree programs. The legislature had simply got fed up with every state college and university throughout Texas wanting to mushroom, graduate programs, professional schools, and all this. So they just put a lid on that. And they said, "We're not going to solve this thing until we get some intermediary that can look at this and recommend to us about what the real needs are and what a sensible division of labor ought to be among colleges and universities." This is one

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reason that virtually all the states have now come to such.

We have a study under way now. There's a young political scientist from California who was with us for over a year directing this study of the statewide systems--how they function, how they are constituted. And we'll try to evaluate them.

M: The next step will be some sort of coordination at the top of all of these state systems with perhaps a director of resources through the country.

W: Well, this is one of the functions, of course. There have been numerous task forces that President Johnson has appointed, for example, to make recommendations, draw up some long range plans. I'm not sure how much they would be heeded by Congress. I mean, you can have them on paper and everybody might agree and though it is hard to get everybody to agree that this is the plan we ought to have, circumstances will change. Of course, Congress is loathe to give up some of these measures of authority that it now has to make these decisions.

M: Do you think there is any need of reorganization of colleges? For example, the trouble that Columbia has had. Is that an organizational problem or is that a social problem or what?

W: Well, it is all of those things. The Council has been involved in some of these studies. We have been looking at student unrest. We're now getting into quite an ambitious research project that is going to have international dimensions actually; going to have people studying this in France, German, and other countries. There is going to be a meeting over in Paris next month of some of the researchers.

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Then we are beginning to take a look at this whole business of the reorganization of universities. The University of Pennsylvania has set up a task force to look at all of this. Trustees, administrators, faculty and students will all participate. The City University of New York is looking at this and I suspect there are dozens of others. And we are going to get out a questionnaire pretty soon to find out what is going on around the country and maybe do some case studies and see how we can be of assistance.

I have suggested to one of our staff people that there ought to be a really empirical study--a hard-nosed one on at least one campus--of how decisions are actually made now. There is a lot of rhetoric on this subject. To the best of my knowledge nobody has really done a comprehensive study of this on one campus. Now you can't go just by what some of the books say on this. How does the curriculum get changed? Who decides what? Suppose you want to put in an inter-disciplinary program. How do you do this in an organization that is as highly departmentalized as the University is with all these separate baronies or whatever you want to call them among the departments sometimes warring with one another? A lot of this needs to be looked at. The students want more voice in decision-making. Well, they ought to be shown what the contexts of a lot of different decisions are. And there needs to be an analysis of what kinds of decisions they can participate in intelligently and usefully and in what kinds of decisions their presence is at best useless and at worst an impediment.

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To use my example that I mentioned a minute ago, the investment committee. Assuming that the main purpose of university investments is to maximize the income so that you have more resources to keep down student tuition and to keep up faculty salaries, you want people on that committee who have objective knowledge about investments and shrewd judgment. You don't want a bunch of sophomores on there who would be guided by sentiment and say, "Well, let's not invest in General Motors. The American people spend too much money for automobiles now." Or "Let's not invest in any oil stock because practically all the oil companies are supplying oil to the military. Get rid of all those stocks. Get rid of all your food stocks because most of General Foods and these others are supplying food to the military." I don't know what would be left to put your money in if you proceeded on this principle.

Or again some of them want a say in the employment or retention of faculty people. I don't think they should have a direct voice. An indirect one, yes, through their evaluation of the classroom teaching they get. But this requires the best judgment you can muster from an experienced faculty. You have a young fellow who is twenty-eight years old, he's been with you three years, he's under the up-or-out rule. The decision to give him tenure is in effect a decision of whether the university is going to commit several hundred thousand dollars maybe for that man for the next--well, if he's twenty-eight, he stays at Texas until retirement, until he's seventy years old. You want the best minds you have on your faculty and the most experienced to help

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make these decisions. You don't want a bunch of students that are going to be gone the next year or the year after anyway. They don't have to live with these mistakes of judgment, but the people who are staying with the University have to live with these decisions.

But unquestionably there are other areas where students ought to be heard. Dormitories. In the past, when I was down in Texas, I don't know that we ever talked to any students about design of dormitories. But why shouldn't they be talked to? They are the ones that are going to live in the dormitories. Why shouldn't they be listened to seriously and heeded? Or again their own rules and regulations. I'm not sure you can give them complete latitude there. Say, if the boys and girls want to sleep together in the dormitories, I'm not sure, as a public institution accountable to the parents and taxpayers and so on, you can be a party to this even if appreciable numbers of students want it that way. You have got something else to think about. Maybe personally if you are a cynical administrator, you couldn't care less. But if you have to raise money from that institution and you know that this is going to alienate you from everybody except these students that you indulge in some youthful ideas that they would probably regret having some years later anyway, it would be a mistake. So I don't think they can have complete latitude even in their own rules and regulations, but they certainly can be given a lot of latitude. And I think in loco parentis is gone--forget that one--just about everywhere.

M: Are you glad to see that go?

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W: I don't think administrators or faculty really ever preferred this anyway. This is one that parents wished on institutions and pretty insistent on it in some places, that they want you to impose discipline on their sons and daughters they don't even enforce themselves at home.

M: One last question. If you were president of a university and you were faced with students occupying your administration office, sitting down and refusing to move, what would you do about it?

W: I'm not sure what I would do in that specific situation at that moment, but if we didn't have specific regulations on that point about interference, student interference physically, with the normal operations of the university, I would, as fast as I could, try to get such a rule on the books, so that it would be unmistakably clear to all students that the university isn't going to tolerate certain things. Yes, peaceful picketing, marching up and down outside, this is all right. But if you are blocking access to buildings, keeping out students and professors who want to meet their classes, I think this is carrying it too far and those students ought to be dealt with very summarily and firmly.

And the university ought to line out what it is that subjects a student to expulsion and again I don't think the president or dean ought to have this whole onus. He ought to have due process and that is something else the university is going to have to be more careful about in the future. Be sure that you hear the evidence--the student's side of this. Maybe a student is out here in this mob that got

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dragooned. He didn't want to be in it, but they collared him and he had no choice but to be there. You don't want to kick him out just because he was there. So you need to hear the evidence and give him a fair trial, but there are certain offenses for which students just ought to be kicked right out because they are interfering with the rights of other people and with the functioning of the university. And my personal opinion, of course I say this enjoying the luxury of detachment, is that some administrators have been entirely too gentle about some of this. I've got a clipping here--I don't know whether you saw this thing. It came across my desk today about the Black Panthers. Did you see this one, out at one of the California colleges?

M: No.

W: "Northridge, California." We have a wire tape in here, this came over AP. You'll probably see it in the paper tomorrow. "'Stand on your feet when I am talking to you,' a member of the Black Student Union told Dr. Glenn Arnett, athletic director at San Fernando State College. Arnett looked up in astonishment at the black faces that had just burst into his office. Before he could react, his chair was kicked from under him, he was marched to an office where other college employees were being held prisoner. The five hundred faculty members of Valley State Thursday heard Arnette and other teachers tell their versions of what happened when the school's Black Student Union seized control of two floors of the administration building last Monday, charging mistreatment of a black football player. Meanwhile, thirty-three Negro students of the college in the suburb of Los Angeles were being

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arraigned in the municipal court, twenty-one of them on felony charges including assault, kidnapping, and conspiracy."

Well, there are certain forms of behavior that neither the faculty nor the administration nor anybody else should put up with or be expected to. And if there are some students who just refuse to observe the rules of decency and so on, I think they ought to be kicked out with no nonsense about it. Let them go somewhere else. They don't belong on the campus. This may sound authoritarian and tough and so on, but I'm also concerned about the public backlash that's being generated all over the country. We thought at one point we were about to knock out this thing that Congress put in--this anti-riot measure. We just about had it. We didn't want this. We knew the academic community didn't want it; we almost had them persuaded in the committee until one of the more liberal congressmen, who was for getting it out, went home that weekend to New York State, and there are about four or five colleges and universities in his district. He came back to Washington and said, "Sorry. I'm going to have to reverse myself. I've talked to enough of my constituents and enough of them have talked to me that my name is mud if I don't vote for this anti-riot measure."

Well, the failure to deal firmly with these students is going to cost the universities a lot of money for one thing. And the failure of professors, this is the most disturbing aspect of all to me. They're standing indifferently by in a lot of places and watching their beleaguered administrators get kicked around and not opening their mouths about it. Well, who is going to pay through the nose in the end? The faculty

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is going to be the one. They are going to pay in the tapering off of faculty salaries.

You were asking about research a minute ago. My prediction is that you are going to get some boomerangs in Congress. They'll say, "Well, the charge is these professors are neglecting their teaching. Let's not give them so much research money. Then they'll have less to spend and they'll spend more time on teaching." And [I predict] that you are going to have interference. Legislators are going to lay down hard-and-fast rules that are going to be twice as tough as anything that a tough administration would ever impose. This is going to restrict students in ways they haven't been before.

You can cite examples. This has already happened. The trustees of the California State College got fed up last summer and they told the president, "We're not waiting to hear your recommendations. Beginning today, you are to expel students for these offenses." This is the regents. If the regents won't do it, maybe the legislature will. Private benefactors, I hear this all around, that "I'm not going to give you any money this year." I can cite chapter and verse on this one. I know one instance of a whole alumni class year group that said, "Till you get things under control on the campus, we're not going to raise another dime for this university." Now you can say that this is childish recrimination. Maybe it is. But these are some of the facts of life that we have got to contend with, not just with these wild activists on the campus. They are costing everybody and it's high time, I think, that faculties waked up to their

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responsibilities and joined in with the administrators. I don't expect them always to agree with the administrators, but not just to stand idly by and watch this happen.

M: Well, I have taken up considerably more than an hour of your time.

W: I'm glad to talk to you.

M: I wish to thank you for this interview.

W: We got way off from LBJ, I'm afraid, there at the last.

[End of Tape 1 of 1 and Interview I]

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By Dr. Logan Wilson

to the
Lyndon Baines Johnson Library

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