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Harold Tedford,

Interviewer: Tanya Zanish-Belcher

Q: This is an interview with Professor Harold Tedford and Harold, would you like to talk about your family background and where you grew up?

A: (00:00:15) Well, I will tell you I was born in Clarksville, Arkansas River Valley, as my mother frequently told me, in the depths of the depression and we moved from Clarksville when I was about two and we moved to Bentonville, Arkansas where Wal-Mart was eventually founded and is still - the headquarters are still there and some of the family, I think, still lives there, but anyway the town was a lovely town, I remember it with great fondness growing up there, and it had - I remember strange things that a southern boy might have seen and one of the things was that the woman behind the street that we lived in that - the last house that my mother bought and my other daddy bought was on Central Avenue, which is one of the main thoroughfares now and that one - the street behind us there was a house where a woman lived with her father, her father was a confederate veteran. Now, I don't remember whether he was union or whether he was southern, but he was - he sat on the front porch, rocked and he would and he would rock and he'd say "We'll hang John Brown's body on the old apple tree" and you can imagine what little kids, what we thought. We would creep up into the shrubs and we would listen. We just knew he was going to hop off that porch and come get us and so we had to be careful. That was one thing I remember. I remember also knowing, for a couple of summers, children of a famous aviatrix, who died in High Point - ended her days in High Point named Louise van Thaden, but she dropped the first - the second world war she dropped "van" so her husband - she and her husband dropped "van." Then they had two children and her mother lived just down the street from us and they would come and we would play with the two children and I remember Misses van Thaden or Louise van Thaden - err, Louise Thaden taking us swimming one day out at Bella Vista, which is north of Bentonville, and a resort it had a swimming pool and we went out to swim and she sat at a table, world sophisticate that she was. She had broken records, flying records, she had a beer and I looked at her and - my dad was a Baptist preacher and so I looked at her drinking that beer and I just knew that God was going to come on down and stomp on us before we got home. We made it home safely and that's - that's not long after prohibition, it was in the - probably the late thirties, early forties, we moved from Bentonville in forty two, the year after the start of the war, in March and moved to Marion, Arkansas which is across the river from Memphis, just north of West Memphis. It was a county seat town, my dad was called to be pastor of the first Baptist church there. There was a Baptist and a Methodist church there. Again, another southern town, and I remember many things. I picked cotton, that's how I made a little pocket change and I remember that - if I could find the time to do that, I just loved it, I loved to go out and pick cotton, but I did - we went to Memphis a lot and that was my first city experience and the first city I knew and it was a lovely city at the time, at least to me it seemed to be that way. Probably people that live there that thought it was

hell on earth, but I - but for me and my brother and I would go over and mother would give us a dollar every (00:04:15) Thursday when we went over and we would have money to spend anyway we wanted to and so we would go, there was a hamburger joint we went to and we - my brother was a fledgling magician and he loved the magic shop and the gift shop - I mean the trick shop and we would always go there and he would buy magic tricks. He loved that sort of thing and anyway, I saw - while we lived there, I saw my first real professional production of a play and that was The Fleeter Mouse, which was an English traveling company and it - I remember seeing as I sat in the balcony, close to the front edge of the circle, and I remember looking down on the stage and I remember - it's very vivid, the maid was almost in the scene that I remember - I didn't remember the music, which must have been lovely, but I do remember this bit of business, that the maid was dusting, she was dusting on all of the props because it was a road show and you didn't carry around big old props during the war because there wasn't any gas to do that. I expect they came by train and the piano that was part of the prop was painted, it was one-dimensional, painted, a little flat piece and the maid was dusting and the - she came down and was dusting the keys, up and down the keys, and she reached over and pushed one of the keys down, which moved and down in the orchestra "Bing!" The sound came, it was during the musical sequences she was dusting to and therefore I - I remember saying to myself "I want to do that."

Q: (00:06:13) So, that was actually my next question, which is what inspired you to follow theater throughout your academic careers? -

A: Well, because it wasn't reality. No, I went to a lot of movies growing up in Bentonville because the movie people that owned the movies let the preacher's children and the preacher's family in free because they didn't want to be attacked, so I went to movies sometime - because we lived just down the street from the movie theater. I would go to the movies sometimes two or three times a week and I always went on Saturday afternoon to see the - there would be a horse opera, a cowboy movie and then there would be another one, maybe Tarzan or something and I managed to see an awful lot of movies - black and white mostly, occasionally - I saw Gone With The Wind there, my mother got us out of school, so we could go and see that and it was an - still an amazing movie although, no one ever moralized about it at that point. Then I remember seeing the Wizard of Oz, and they were both the same year you know, they were fascinating movies, and I remember them vividly and then Snow White, Walt Disney's Snow White, which I remember, especially the queen looking in the mirror and I remember the woods that she went through all reaching out toward her to grab her and she was trying to get away - she was afraid in the woods and I remember that very vividly. A few other things, I remember also in Bentonville my mother was in a show and she had - she sang and she was in something they did and they did it in the movie theater. The movie theater, evidently, had at one time been able to do stage shows. It wasn't very big, but she was going to sing and my babysitter, Esther Dickson, who's still alive, she's ninety two and my mother turned me over to her when we moved to Bentonville and I was taken care well - taken care by Esther and she took me backstage to see the backstage and I remember that I was not paying where I was walking and I stepped then my mother's garnish sig in love call or something like that and there was going to be a moon that would rise and this moon was painted and was on the floor and I stepped on the

moon. Oh my. You can imagine the horror, stepping on the moon. Another thing I remember about backstage was high school plays and I went to see a few I remember one of them was something called Thunderbird or something and the prop was a bird that would hit people on the head with it or something I don't remember what it was and I remember they let me hold it and it was a deadly weapon of some sort. It had some dead curse - or curse on it and I thought I had touched something really important and so I - my mother had gone to theater when she was a girl and she was working in Little Rock and she had gone to the theater some, so she was for a preacher's wife for the time she was a little bit ahead of most, I expect, who didn't like the theater, but she did and she would occasionally go to the movies, but my - Memphis was the first place that I really saw the - I saw a circus, I saw a Clyde Beatty Circus there, but I decided I didn't want to be in a circus or a clown, although I did see one of the famous clowns was in that Clyde Beatty Circus and later my ties to Memphis - good friends moved to Memphis and I would go visit them and the - summer time, Memphis had something called the Memphis Open Air Theater, it was called the MOAT, Memphis Open Air Theater and they did Broadway shows and they did - what - now we never see anymore, the operettas, desert song and you know, there were many others, but I went to see several of those I remember going later to visit these friends and they had me - tickets at Christmas when I went over to visit them, they had tickets to Death of a Salesman, which was on the road. I had just seen it in Little Rock, so I was seeking out theater and it was interesting because Death of a Salesman, the set design that was even for a road show was designed by Jo Mielziner and Jo Mielziner was the designer of our theater at Wake Forest - both two theaters at Wake Forest, one's no longer there, but the main stage is - was designed by Mielziner. I saw another show that he designed, I saw a road show - Little Rock was a good roadshow town because they - it was a railroad between St. Louis and Texas, so for shows it was a logical place to stop and we would drive up when I was in college and see shows and I saw Guys and Dolls, which was also designed by Mielziner. When we would go into Mielziner's studio in the Dakota in New York, to work with him on designing our theater, we passed through the second door inside his apartment and all around it were his drawings of Guys and Dolls. I still think about that, I think "Oh my." you know, because it's an iconic show, it's such an iconic show.

Q: (00:11:59) Now, you ended up doing your BA, your MA and a PhD all in theater and did it turn out as you thought it would?

A: I'm happy with the way it turned out. I'm not sure I went into it with any expectations, I mean because - you know, things happened and you just go with what happens. No, I would say I was very happy with the way it turned out - that my life turned out, I went to Ouachita College, which was a Baptist college in Arkansas, which was my wife and I both when I met - it's where I met my wife, Josie, and she came from Hope, where my mother had grown up in Hope, where Bill Clinton was born, and she - but, Josie lived in Hope and had come - her daddy wouldn't pay for her to go anyplace to college except Ouachita, it was the Baptist school up the way about seventy miles from Hope, north, and my dad went from Corning, Arkansas where we moved after Marion, my dad went down to Ouachita to be dean of men for two years and so my freshman year he was dean of men. My senior year of high school was at Arkadelphia High School, which is where the new - Sherr Teitel (?) -

(Video 1 ends at 00:13:27)

A: (Continued at 00:00:00 of video 2) she is the, well, secretary of the national arts council, what is it? A government position, anyway, whatever that is, anyway she went to the College at Ouachita and she graduated from the same high school I graduated from, so that was good and I'm proud of that, the high school has turned out interesting, in good people that have done things. I - that was nineteen fifty - fifty that I entered college, as an undergraduate and graduated in four years, now that college was sort of a family school. My mother and daddy had both gone there and I had an aunt - a great aunt who was on the board and the - she gave money for the new library that they built after the administration building burned down the library in it. They had to build a new library and it's named the Riley-Hickingbotham Library, but she was named Riley, Emma Riley, and so I went to school, I didn't - and my brother had gone there, my aunts and uncles had gone there, in fact the theater there is named - a cousin gave them money and they named the theater Verser Theater and that's - he's a farmer, he had lots of land and farmed lots of land, but he was on the board of trustees of the school so - as my aunt Emma was, she was on the board of trustees. So, it was kind of a family school and you didn't think about going anywhere else, you thought the people across the ravine at the state school Henderson "Sinful people, over there" and then you think of the University of Arkansas and you think "Oh no, what a horrible-" but I ended up getting my commission in the army as a First Lieutenant and - I'm sorry, Second Lieutenant and I eventually got promotion to - in reserves to First Lieutenant for no good reason whatsoever as I had done nothing, since I had left the army, but I was in - I went - well, when I was at Ouachita I studied what was then known as speech, but theater was part of speech, they didn't call it - they didn't call it (00:02:30) theater or drama. In some places they were, but at that point, speech was standard for a department that included theater. I think it started here in English, speech started at Wake Forest in English and then became speech. Now, it's communication and then theater split off - they split those subjects in two, and now it's theater and dance, so it kind of like, oh these things happen. Multiply - when in college, I saw - I went my freshmen year - well, at college, I went to - I went to every play that they did at school, but I wasn't involved and then the next year I took a class or two and three or four and eventually I was the Technical Director and Designer. I designed the sets and I designed - and I was sort of who they depended on to get things done. I was in place - I was an actor, I'm not good, I can't remember my children's name, much less the lines in a play, but I am a - I just like being around the theater. I like the people who're around and you got things done and you did things. Audience came and they clapped and they laughed and they cried and they did all of those good things and (00:04:00) you'd say "Yeah, that's fun. I'd like to do more of that." I would like to.

Q: Your first job at Wake Forest was as Technical Director of the theater department?

A: Yes and Designer, Technical Director.

Q: Can you describe what it was like - your initial impressions of Wake Forest when you arrived?

A: OK, it was - Frank Shirley hired me to be the Designer, (00:04:45) Technical Director. It was a lot of things. I did costumes, I was a costume designer, I did sets, I did stuff I had no business doing, but I was supposed to know how to do it. It's not - it wasn't hard in the facility, but it was - my initial impression was - well, these are really nice kids and I was surprised that I found - I had taught at a state school in Texas, what is now Texas State University at San Marcos. It was Texas State - South Texas State College when I taught there and it was the Director of the theater who was an atheist would not allow any profanity anywhere near his theater. No, sir. Not a bit. I came up here and I thought "Oh my goodness," because the man who I worked with had a whole new vocabulary and there was - his criticisms sometimes took the form of things like - and I would I tried to be - I'd get along as well as I could, I mean, it didn't bother me I - language is language, words are words. You know, it's not like I go hide my head in a pillow or anything, but I found that Wake was a good bit more liberal than I had thought it would be on such matters, but of course they still couldn't dance, but this was sixty five, nineteen sixty five when I came and - my impression was - Frank Shirley went to his - my wife and I drove into town in August, our first trip over here and we - and Frank - we went out to Frank and Amy's house, which is on faculty drive, and we said - he said "I've got to take you over and show you your office" and my office was on the sixth floor at the - think of the lobby on the sixth floor with the steps that go down, it was on the sixth floor at the east end and the office was the end - it now is a doorway, it's a passageway, but my office was there it had a - I had shared my office with six people, I think, down in Texas in a big old drafty building where Lyndon Johnson had been janitor when he was a student there and so people were stealing - when Andy (?) became President, people were stealing door knobs, but - so we had to be careful, we had to watch people, but I had a nice office and the speech department was in that corner, the east corner - the southeast corner of the library and Frank Shirley had Marie Bagby as his secretary and he was - at that time he was on the school board I think and there was one classroom there and between that classroom and what is - what was Tribble - brand new, Tribble Hall was brand new was an office for Julian Burroughs who founded Anna's - did a splendid job founding WFDD for the camp - got it then PR station - he's did a lot of remarkable things and anyway, my office was there, but the theater was on the seventh and eighth level of the stacks and there were two theaters there was a little presidium theater and there was an arena theater and actually Mr. (00:08:30) Walton - Bill Walton, who was the director of the theater at the time, was more interested at that point directing in the arenas theater, which was an oval, seated - I don't know how many it seated to tell you the truth, I would guess twen - a hundred and ten, maybe and you had to get - getting up there was something else. I'll tell you about that in a minute, but he liked to direct in that. There was this little proscenium, which occasionally things were done in the proscenium, which was on the east side of the building and the arena was on the west side of the building between the arenas and the hallway - the stairwell hallway was the scene shop and there's also the girl's dressing room, above it was Mr. Walton's office. The men's dressing room was in the middle of the green room in there and it's a complicated to describe it all, but the arena was something Mr. Walton had given a good bit of time to and he had - when they were remodeling Reynolds Auditorium, he - that was about that time - the first big remodeling and they sold out all of the seats that were in Reynolds Auditorium and he bought enough to do - for the arena and - which was nice to have - it was also cheap, didn't have to spend a lot of

money on temporary seats and that point even - at that point we're talking about the fine arts center, whatever that was going to be. There had been one originally designed for the campus by the campus architect and I looked at it now and I'm so thankful they never built it. It was really antediluvian, it was way back in another age the way it was designed and would have been a lot of trouble, but that was the - that's what I found were these two theaters, on the seventh and eighth level of the stacks, the eighth level had not been poured yet, had not been set, so we had about what - eighteen, nineteen feet between the floor and the ceiling and it was in there that we did our plays and in the arena we had curtains around - it was an oval really, but we had curtains around them. Had one actor, who used to hang the curtains and take them down by - he was a gymnast and he would hang them with one hand and he would untie, let it drop and he would hang with another hand here and untie, he walk all the way around just hanging on. You'd thought - my heart stopped, but that was a nice little theater, he did some really nice work, although I heard of some productions in there that I would not have been happy with, but I did my first production in there and I decided not to do the arena, I turned it into a thrust and I took one side of the seating and I built out into the stage and out into what was the acting area in the oval arena, I built a thrust stage and it was in that thrust stage that we did Glass Menagerie, that - it was the first show I directed here, Glass Menagerie and had wonderful performers, I was so proud of the performers and the - well, Walton in that year did three shows and I did one - or no, he did four shows and I did one, and he did Jay and Barry, Alice Sit-by-the-Fire, and he did Camelot. He started off with Camelot and I remember, that I had the job of doing - this is all good Wake Forest stories, I had the job of designing the costumes for the chorus of Camel - well, for the whole show, I mean it was - and I put the woman that lived across the hall from us in the faculty department, Ms. Brown, to sewing some of it, my wife sewed some of the more important costumes and then I had the chorus to deal with, so what I did was I went out to - found a pattern that I could use with a little bit of toying around with it, and that pattern would, if it was cut just right and I attached something to it that - where you could see where it needed to be cut and I would give each person, each woman in the chorus, I handed them three kinds of fabric, satins and taffetas and things, that I thought would work and I said "this is your costume," and then underneath it was the pattern and they said "I don't sew!" and of course, Wake Forest girls didn't know how to sew, well of course Wake Forest girls didn't know how to sew. They never took home ec, you don't do that for college prep at Wake, you don't take home ec, a lot - well, most people don't, but anyway they - so, I said "you're going on stage naked if you don't have - if you don't find someone who'll make this for you," well, they went back to the dorm and they found friends that helped them, they all - they were all done. Anyway, I'm rather irascible about some things and it worked out fine, but the thing that astonished me was he said he didn't want more than twenty rehearsals and I thought "Twenty rehearsals Camelot? You know, that's a big show." because you didn't have all the scenery to shift everything, all you had were lights and the little bit of stuff - I built a thing in the middle of the stage that could be used in all kinds of configurations and it worked out - it worked out fine and I was - twenty rehearsals, he said "they lose their freshness after twenty," I thought "they hadn't gotten any freshness at twenty rehearsals and you go ahead and give them more than that." Anyway, that was me and that was him. We had our differences and eventually - let's see if I got any other tales out of that period, the lighting booth for that arena was on the eighth level bridge that went between those offices that are on the backside of the eighth level

and that was there, it had been poured and it was there, but so that lighting booth was up above there and if you needed a musician, I think there may have been a musician or two up there, I'm not sure, but they - at least in one or two shows, I think they did and the sound came from up there too, I mean, they had - that's where the backstage was for the shows that they did in the - he did - he was very successful, he had built a pretty good following in the university community and in town. He had been - he was a bit of a - he was from Nebraska I believe and he had been a bit of entrepreneur and when he came here he saw out at Tanglewood - Tanglewood just opened about the time he came here and - right when the university came here and the college came here and he started a barn, what called a Tanglewood Barn Theater and it ran for many years and it was a staple in the summer stock. I knew people from LSU where I went to college at LSU and I graduated - got my PhD there and I remember some of them came up and worked for him in the summertime and they were - one was a faculty member and there was some students that came up and worked so he had a well-supported - I think the people in town supported him and gave him backing for it, he was able to talk - he could talk people - he was a good talker, he could talk people into that sort of stuff, he got the whole play - I mean, the whole summer stock going and it lasted until I came when they closed Tanglewood because the will had said that the property was given for the use of the white citizens of Forsyth County and - but there was also more money that was given for the Kate Biting Reynolds foundation for health was given for all the citizens of Forsyth County, they were trying to balance it all. Anyway, they closed it. They said "You can't do that," and so they broke the will, they opened it up and somebody came back and did plays for a couple of summers and it never was successful again. Bill was good at promoting it, so he kept things going and so when it opened - I mean, when the summer stock was no longer out there, well then Wake Forest was - and the school of the arts had just opened, when Wake Forest and school of the arts and the little theater were the three theaters in town and now there are many, so there were a lot of theaters. Start looking around you have more to go to than you can go to, I found that out.

Q: I wanted to ask, when you were Director of the university's theater, what did you like best and what did you like least about doing that job?

A: (00:05:15) Well, there are not really much that I liked least. I mean, let's start with best. What did I like best? Well, I liked working with people. I liked what little bit of promotion I did, I liked it. I never minded talking to people about coming and working and if - I just enjoyed people, I enjoyed those Wake Forest students, they were always supportive, they were always willing - well, not always, some of them, the theater was not something that they did because when I came here in nineteen sixty five, the men came to class in Harris Tweed coats and a buttoned down shirt and a tie, that's how they came to class and I thought "Oh, this is different from Texas, where they came in cowboy boots and jeans." and - but, that's the costume down there and this was the costume for the school over here, but that went away in two years, that was - that didn't take long after things begin to break apart and I - well, what did I like the most. I think dealing with the students and the - and watch them develop, watch them turn into really fine performers and also see that they succeeded after they left, I mean, I'm still in touch with them on Facebook, you want to go down my Facebook page, I've got a bunch - I just heard from one Stansel Campbell who was just a wonderful, wonderful student and he was an actor, as well as

a designer and a technician and he is now teaching at the University of Cairo in Egypt and he's been there for years and years and years and years and he is - was just advertising a - something on Facebook of the choir that he sings in that is at a church in - a Christian church in Cairo, that they're going to have a Christmas concert and he just had the poster on there, but then there was another picture of him. He puts pictures on every now and then and I always enjoy. That's a long way off to have a student and you think "goodness," everyone loves him and he's a wonderful guy and he was one of the finest actors I've ever worked with and Mrs. Fullerton, who soon after I came here I realized I needed to do something with the students on their voices and I had a chance to - Caroline Fullerton who had her degree, masters MFA from TCU, was counted as her specialty, she had written her doc - her master's thesis on musicality in theater speech and voices. She - I hired her to come in on a show called Noah, which wasn't a very good play, I think it's a really- a pretty bad play, but we had fun doing it because it has all the animals on the ark and you know, you don't have to do a whole lot to be a monkey, but the guy did a monkey just loved it he stayed around for the whole time, I mean for four years he stayed - it's a way to recruit because you had these roles to offer people and anyway she worked with - and Stansel Campbell, this young man I was tell you about, was played Noah and Sandy Fullerton was just not happy with his performance and his voice and the way she was ending one of the scenes was just not right and she wanted to work - she took him home with her that night and she kept him up all night until he got it right and I have to go and pick him up, bring him back out to school and that night it was just letter perfect. He did he - of course, she was persistent, she would not give up, you didn't get by and if in rehearsal if you were not doing what she told you to, she would shout it out to you and this actress would get so mad, but she was absolutely right and it taught them, they'd better stick with it if - they'd get shouted at if they didn't and she was terrific and she stayed with us until the early nineties. Oh my, many of her students had gone on to do very well for themselves in acting, though she trained voices, if they - people listened to her, it worked and what she taught them worked, but that's our - seeing the development of people, I liked seeing people develop. I used to go up - people laugh at me about a lot of things. Of course, I'm eccentric, I don't do things (00:10:00) the way other people do and so I go up, I've got a big cast in a play - I like to occasionally do a great big cast, because you got a lot of kids in, I said "That's what we're here for," you get everybody to know a little bit about - I mean, everybody you can to know a little bit about the theater and I got (00:10:15) - well, let me see. I got a play, we'll say something like Skin of Our Teeth and I needed some people in the second act of Skin of Our Teeth, so I'm (00:10:30) not having enough people showing for auditions, so I go up the plass and I said to him "I watched people walk by," and I say "Have you ever been in a play? What are you talking about? Blah blah blah." and I picked up a lot of people that way. That's how I got some of the (00:10:45) actors and some of them stayed with us and stick with us a long time and for three or four years, so that's the kind of person I am I don't really know much about strangers and I like to talk to people (00:11:00)

Q: (00:11:01) Well, that actually brings me to another question, what role do you think a theater plays on a campus like Wake Forest?

A: Well, I saw it - when I was director of the theater, my idea was that it was - that if a kid came to the theater for four years while they were at Wake Forest, if they went to every play, they'd have a pretty good background in world drama because we did a little bit of this and a little bit of that. We did Shakespeare every few years and we did eighteenth century plays like the rivals and we would do modern plays and do the latest hottest thing that we could like we did Look Back in Anger, I remember an awfully good production of that, and - I didn't direct that it was a young man who had come into direct for two years to teach and direct for us and he directed also the Caucasian Chalk Circle, Bertolt Brecht, which you needed a lot of people in Brecht, in fact Ben Brantley who's the chief critic on the New York Times was in the Caucasian Chalk Circle. He was also in my production that I did of Dill and Thomas's. What do I mean? See, I'm losing - I lose it. I'll think of it.

Q: (00:12:41) Do you want to talk a little bit about the role of London (00:12:45) and traveling abroad?

A: Alright, I'll tell you about that. I loved that, more than nothing and this - you know, my daughter's will tell you that I got them over there as quick as I could, but I - in nineteen sixty nine, I was reading the New York times as is my want or was my want and I was - I looked in the travel section and here British Airways was offering a - offering a round trip two weeks round trip to London and it counted your hotel and breakfast, it counted six -

(Video 3 ends at 00:13:26)

A: (continues at 00:00:00 of video 4) theater tickets, it counted your transportation from the airport, Gatwick then, Gatwick into - no, was it Gatwick? Were we at Gatwick? Wherever it was we landed and - Heathrow, we landed Heathrow and they would take you into the hotel and then they picked you up, took you back out there, and you'd take the kids and the pound was really good, was not too expensive, but they wanted for this - if you can imagine (00:00:30), for two weeks and breakfast and tickets and transportation, they wanted three hundred and eighteen dollars and so, I decided I (00:00:45) would try, so I got me a travel agent, started working with them and we ended up having I guess twenty people that went and of course it paid my way, that was nice, I guess it ended up costing me money (00:01:00), as trips will no matter if you get your way pegged, you know, you're still going to spend money, but that's when I first got to see the theater in London, extensively, and two years later (00:01:15), I did it again and - at Easter, and then after that I told Josie and the girls, I said "I'm not doing this until you all get over there and you see London for yourself, so that summer I took them (00:01:30) and they went over, I think Rosalind - she was born - she was about four, great fun when we were with her in Westminster Abbey and I carried her around and I pointed out all these - I said "O (00:01:45) Rare Ben Jonson," on one of the stones that you'd hardly notice when you go through Westminster Abbey and all these things and we were reading the tombs, where it says "look, this is Lord Sownhal (?), so and so, so and so, he won a battle (00:02:00) and he's buried here," so we got outside and I said "can I carry you around anymore Rosalind? I'm going to put you down and you're going to have to walk a little bit." Oh, she let out a yelp and started crying and I said "Just stay there and cry, we're walking on," well I turned around and she was

looking down at the sidewalk and she was looked up at us and she said “this says - “ and of course there were tombs all over outside, I mean, where we were in the cloisters and so she was standing on a tomb and she says “this says little girl should be picked up,” so, I went back, I picked her up, I’m a sucker for that kind of thing. Anyway, one of our favorite family stories, but I - so I took a group in sixty nine, was my first time, and then I took a group - and this - I didn’t - not for any course credit for this, this was just for Easter break, this was what you did for your spring break if you wanted to go. Well, kids took their parents and interesting thing about it was that all - nearly all of the people that went with me had to get passports, they didn’t any of them had passports. Now, if you take these kids today and you say “you want to go to London?” “oh, I’ve been there,” and you just don’t get the - you don’t get the sort of, this is a whole new adventure, but it’s a different adventure every time you go and I would always leave the kids pretty much themselves and I’d say “watch it, this is not a, you know, perfect world and you have to watch yourself and handle yourself,” and we’d do things together and I said - anytime I took students I always said “you can follow me all day long, I do not mind, I don’t go anywhere you can’t go, but if you don’t want to follow me, go figure your own stuff out.” I’ve had one student, Mark Thomas, who’s a lawyer down in Raleigh now, he went in and he would get up at like seven thirty in the morning and he had his list and he went - he saw everything in London. Some of the kids will say “Oh, this is a good way to catch up on my sleep,” and, you know, but that was their money and they were spending, but I would - they’d have to go to the plays and they had to write reviews of the plays and so, I had - I did have assignments eventually that they had to be done and after seventy one, then they instituted the winter term and the winter term we took for a month, we took students to London for a month, and as one of my students said - one of my favorite students said “oh, yes I went on that trip, thirty plays in thirty days,” and that’s what they were supposed to do and some of them did that because you can see in London they’re just - in New York there are two matinee days in Sunday afternoon, but nothing after - probably not at night on Sunday, but they had matinee days in London - sometimes you’d have a matinee day on Tuesday or Thursday or Friday and so you could see a matinee in the evening and one of my favorites was seeing three at once, three in one day, I managed to work it out, but can’t see too much, time’s wasting.

Q:(00:05:27) So, if you had to look back over your long career at Wake Forest, what do you think your most important contribution is to Wake Forest?

A: Well, the thing I’m proudest of is the fact that the theater has been sustained and that the university administration has seen fit to keep it going and has not killed it off and they are - the fact that I have - that I helped establish a permanent theater, I mean there was a theater when I came, so I wasn’t the only one, but I helped put it on, I thought, pretty sound footing, and I - but, the thing that I’m probably proudest of is the theater and the fine arts center, I’m very proud of that. The biographer of Jo Mielziner says that his theater in Scales Fine Arts Center is - she said “is considered the finest small theater of its sort in the country,” and it is a wonderful nearly perfect little theater and it was a lot of us working together, and Charlie Allen in the biology department was head of the building committee and he was - I’m sorry you’re not getting a good interview with Charlie, my goodness, he’d have tales to tell, but he watched over things and I found out you could get Charlie to do - make all kinds of decisions if you made him think it’s his

idea. He liked that. So, I worked - I liked working with people and getting that together and we were - Don Wolfe, of course, came in when we were over in the old theater and he was - he eventually became chair of the theater - of the speech theater and then he became chair of the theater and he was a mighty fine chair and he was a director himself and worked in the theater, he was Cornell, he came down here with a Doctorate from Cornell and he was a (00:07:30) great colleague to work with and he worked with us, we went to New York several times. I remember going with Doctor Scales to New York to see Jo Mielziner, I wrote several theater designers that I knew had to design theaters and - but Jo wrote the nicest letter back and I had heard him speak before pretty much agreed with his whole point about a theater, he - one of the things he said is "you - a theater can be too flexible. It can do too many things and if it does too many things, then you spend all your time making it do things and you don't rehearse the play." With college students, they just have so much time to give. So, I had heard him speak at the University of Texas when I was teaching down in Texas, had driven over to Austin and heard him speak and wrote him and he wrote the nicest letter and so I wrote back and set up - he wrote - or had a letter from his secretary that gave us an appointment and Doctor Scales went up and wanted to meet him, I said - I told him "we really need a consultant on the theater," because I felt strongly that theaters - the architects, they don't know anything about theater, you ask them "how many plays have you seen?" "what are you talking about I don't go see -" and this is a building where there are seats and there's a stage and that's all they know and they don't know the finer points, anyway he - Jo had us into his studio and so we were in his studio, there were his drafting tables where he worked, he was working on shows when we were there and he had lots of pictures on his wall you'd say "good gracious" and there was one wonderful set that he designed called for winter set, which was a bridge, it's a great bridge, it's considered one of the best scene designs, certainly it has lasted as an image of scene design for a long time and it was on the wall and I said "is that the original winter set?" and he said "well I'll tell you a story," he said "that - the original of winter set, the first one I did," he said "is in a museum in upstate New York, he said "I had an exhibit there, that exhibited my work over in Amsterdam, and I had an exhibit and they wanted to see that and they wanted to have that," and that was one of the iconic set designs he had done he said "I went up and asked the - or, I wrote the gallery up there that had the copy, they said they wouldn't loan it, wouldn't loan it to anybody," so he said "oh, I just went back to the studio and did another one," I said that often - he said "that's the original one now," I love it. So, he was quite a nice gentleman, he had done the Dakota, of course, and just living in the Dakota he had lived there for years and decades that's where John Lennon lived and, you know, it's a - Lauren Bacall lived there, she died there and John Lennon was shot right outside the Dakota and Jo died right almost at the same spot when he got out of a taxi, but Jo worked - Jo Mielziner worked with Eddie Cook, who was a - he had owned a lighting company and he had sold it out and he was now - he was working as - they were good friends, they had known each other for years and years. He just was helping Jo design these things, so what Mielziner did was give us a set fee, twenty five thousand dollars, cheap now, twenty five thousand dollars and we would pay the out of house - or the expenses of his things like travel, any materials that he needed, phone calls and that sort of thing, as - Charlie Allen didn't like to do that, but we did that anyway and in order to get him and we found that he was quite prompt with his papers and with his plans and he was very, very good to work with. He got angry at, one point in the design of the theater, over the curtain because the curtain

- the velour curtain, you have to get - to get it to be kind of what he wanted had to be dyed, well it was - the samples that we were sent from - they used to man - they used to weave textiles in this area, remember? and so, the velour factory was down in the - down in South Carolina, and you know, velour is a velvet, but velvet is woven two layers, did you know that? It was two layers and they can cut it close to the bottom layer leaving a thick layer at the top and so we were - we wanted that front drape because it has to be heavy enough to mask off any light from backstage, has to be the double thick velvet velour and so we had that and they dyed some swatches and Charlie sent the swatches to Jo and Jo wrote back quickly, he was on his way to Europe, I think, and he wrote something back "it's fine," then when he saw it, he saw - he was furious -

(Video 4 ends at 00:13:26)

A: (continued on 00:00:00 of video 5) and he was really mad and I had to go to New York, I'd seen him at a conference and he didn't hardly want to talk and so I went to New York, I talked to him and I said "this is completely out of my hands, it was Charlie Allen was designer," but we had to go ahead, we had to get the curtain ordered and then the velour ordered and get it dyed and it was a big job and he calmed down and not soon after died and so he didn't ever see the theater finished, we were sorry that he didn't.

Q: Well, it's a beautiful building.

A: Well, the theater is very workable, still, I am very pleased every time I go in it, I think it's - it would be nice if had ear trumpets because I don't hear well. It's not their fault.

Q: Professor Tedford, I think we're going to have to stop there, but thank you very much—is there anything else you wanted to share?

A: I would like to share how I proposed to my wife. I was going to the - Germany, I mean, I was in the army and they were sending me to Germany, they were - and so we went to a meeting and they said "you'll be stationed, and these people will be stationed in Hawaii and these people will be in Korea and these people will be in Germany." This was just after the Korean War "and these people will be in Germany" and I said "oh that's great," well I had French as a language in college, so it might have been I went to Europe because I had the language and I was so thankful and we had - and I called Josie and I said - and I tell people, this is what I did, I called her and I said "Hello Josie," and she says "Hello," and I said "Will you marry me?" and she says "Why yes, who is this?"

A: I can make it a complicated story or not so complicated, but anyway that's - she's good humored about it.

(Video 5 ends at 00:02:33)