

Michael Choukas, Jr. '51
Director of Alumni Affairs Emeritus

An Interview Conducted by
Jane Carroll

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INTERVIEW: Michael Choukas, Jr.
INTERVIEWED BY: Jane Carroll
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CARROLL: [Today is] September 4, 1996, and I'm speaking with Michael Choukas, Jr., Class of '51 and the Director of Alumni Affairs Emeritus. I wanted to start and have you talk about your long association with Dartmouth. Did you grow up here in Hanover?

CHOUKAS: I grew up here in Hanover, yes. My father, who was the Class of '27, came back in the fall of '29 to teach and he was a professor here for 39 years. So at the age of a year and a half I moved to Hanover and lived here—well, we moved to Norwich in '41 but I went through the Hanover school system into high school and then went to Vermont Academy as a student and graduated from there. I then went to Clark School, which was in Hanover, as a post-graduate day student, and then to Dartmouth, and graduated in '51.

CARROLL: What was Dartmouth like back in the 40s?

CHOUKAS: And the '30s?

CARROLL: And the '30s, yes, that's right!

CHOUKAS: Well, Dartmouth was—this is a stereotypical quote—monolithic, although we didn't realize it in those days. It was a small college but it was very nationally prominent, and I guess I can talk more about what Hanover was like from—through the eyes of a young kid growing up here. It was a small town and you sort of knew most of the people who lived here, and the summers were very sleepy summers. There was nothing going on at the College at all, and not much in the way of tourists or anything. It was just a very comfortable—every kid had the run of the town.

I was a very gregarious young boy and I was very interested in athletics, and I followed all the Dartmouth sports teams. So I knew so many athletes and so many students, and in and out of dorms and

everything else, at age ten, 11, 12, 13, without any of the problems that, from today's perspective, one might think about. So I just have very happy memories of my childhood. Could not—can't think of a better place for a young kid to grow up than Hanover in the 1930s and early 1940s.

CARROLL: Was it isolated here without the freeways coming up?

CHOUKAS: Yes, it was—or the airport. There were—it was—I can give you this example: it was a four-hour drive to Boston; it was a seven and a half to eight-hour drive to New York; the train to Boston took four and a half hours, and there were several trains—probably six or seven trains a day from White River [Junction] to Boston. And the train to New York I think was about an eight and a half hour ride. And that was right up through 1945, at least, and beyond, so that's what . . . yes, it was isolated.

CARROLL: And then during World War II, did they actually train officers here?

CHOUKAS: Yes, they had the V-12 Program.

CARROLL: Oh, that's it.

CHOUKAS: Yes, and that was a lot of fun for us because by then we were teenagers and we were still moving around town a lot and it was very exciting having the sailors and Marines and everything in town. So it changed then, and that was when the summers no longer were sleepy little summers.

CARROLL: Did you have brothers and sisters?

CHOUKAS: No.

CARROLL: Ah, so [when] you say "we," it was a pack of, a gang.

CHOUKAS: That's right. Exactly. In the best sense of that word.

CARROLL: That's right. And then you decided to come here. Why did you decide to come to Dartmouth?

CHOUKAS: Well, I guess I just liked it so much, and I had been away at prep school for three years, and it was just where I wanted to go and I wanted to play sports at Dartmouth, so that's why I—I mean, it was—I never wanted to go anyplace else, to tell you the truth.

CARROLL: Did your dad try to dissuade you, or did he . . .

CHOUKAS: No no, no. And since, in those days, faculty children went free of tuition, he certainly did not try to dissuade. I think he was very positive about that decision.

CARROLL: Was it different being a student, from being a townie?

CHOUKAS: Yes. And because I put—we lived in Norwich, in fact in the house that Seaver Peters lives in now—my folks built it, it's right on the bluff overlooking the river. And I very definitely stayed in dormitories and then fraternities, and I saw about as much of my home, I think, as kids who lived in New Jersey or whatever. Occasionally I would run across my parents on the street, but since my father was a professor, obviously I saw him.

And that makes me think I should say a little more about childhood in Hanover, because you not only knew students, but you knew so many of the faculty. I mean, I knew as—from a child's point of view I just knew all the names that you would think about and associate with Dartmouth and the faculty in the '30s and '40s. I knew all those people, and I knew them because my parents socialized with them, and my father played bridge with them, and—you know, and I just—I knew them as personalities. And it was very interesting then to come as a student and see them from a different perspective than I had growing up.

CARROLL: Was it hard to make that transition, to sit in the classroom and be judged by these friends?

CHOUKAS: Well, no it wasn't. It was interesting. I mean, I think I knew about—because . . . Well, for another thing, one of my hobbies—obviously because my parents were very interested in contract bridge—I learned very early. And by the time I was 16, with a couple of other guys who were peers of mine, we played in the—there was a weekly duplicate bridge tournament in the Hanover Inn every Wednesday night, and it was mostly faculty and faculty wives, generally not playing with each other. But there would be, you know, eight or ten or twelve tables every Wednesday night, and we did very well. But the only reason I'm mentioning it is that we began to form opinions about these faculty professors that were quite unlike what you would form in the classroom. It was really fascinating.

CARROLL: Not connected to academics.

CHOUKAS: No, it was fascinating, it was really fascinating.

CARROLL: What did you major in?

CHOUKAS: Sociology, which was my father's field, and I like to say, in spite of the fact that my father was in the department. I mean, I was just very interested in sociology.

CARROLL: Did you take courses with him?

CHOUKAS: I had one course with him, yeah. He had a very, very popular course on propaganda. He was really a forerunner in this country, he's published a book on it. But I don't need to be modest on his behalf. He really codified--he was so far ahead of his time, and I can't tell you how many alumni in the last 20 years told me as I would travel around, that my father's course meant more to them than almost anything else, including my friend Berl Bernhard ['51], who says the same thing. Because all of the techniques that you see now, that are unfortunately so commonplace now, were not generally known. And his course, from a sociological and psychological point of view, got at that. And of course he had Goebbels in Nazi Germany as one—a very good practitioner, producing plenty of material for his classes!

But he was—because of this he was recruited by the OSS in 1942, and he went to Washington, and he headed up the whole propaganda campaign in Europe until the fall of the Nazis, and then he took over in the Pacific arena against the Japanese. He was in charge of that whole effort in this country.

CARROLL: Did your family move down to Washington?

CHOUKAS: Yes. My mother moved—she did in—she moved down in '43. He was there a year, and then—because he wasn't sure where they were going to send him and so forth. Yes, so I lived in Washington, although I was going to prep school, so it was only during vacations. I was in Washington the summers of '44 and '45.

CARROLL: That must have been an incredibly exciting time.

CHOUKAS: It was, it was. I was 16 and 17, and I'll never forget VJ Day in Washington, it was some experience. I was there to see Truman come out on the lawn and speak briefly to all of us who were on Pennsylvania Avenue, and it was quite an experience, yeah.

CARROLL: Did it block up traffic, was there—I mean did people just stand there waiting?

CHOUKAS: Yeah, there was—yes. We were all just right there on the street, and there were lots of funny things going on too, so . . . It was very interesting.

CARROLL: Well, that would have been—made you right in the center, in the eye of the storm for all this. No wonder sociology seemed so exciting.

CHOUKAS: Yeah, very much so. And I can tell you that when we get to talking about alumni views on coeducation, etcetera, and the shanties and everything, I can't tell you how valuable my sociological background was, I mean how valuable.

And I also--this is a--not a self-serving, but a subjective observation. I've been very disappointed in the directions of sociology in the last ten or 15 years. I think they got away from what was really the human aspects of it and they got too caught up in statistical stuff. And also people who were social activists who were getting into sociology for reasons other than being objective and scientific. But in the days that I took it and my father was teaching it, it was really a terrific subject.

CARROLL: But it really proved invaluable to you.

CHOUKAS: Invaluable. Also through my prep school teaching and headmaster days as well.

CARROLL: So when you got out of Dartmouth—now you had—you did a lot of athletic here, you were in hockey and . . .

CHOUKAS: Yes.

CARROLL: Well, was it hard to be here sort of right after—with all these soldiers coming back, to be at Dartmouth at that time?

CHOUKAS: No, no, it was terrific. I mean, I remember playing—my sophomore year our hockey team went to the NCAA tournament, went to the finals in the NCAA tournament. And I was playing—I mean, [William] Billy Riley ['46] was 28 years old [laughs] and I was 20 years old—19, 20, something like that. No, it was very good, it was a nice—I mean, it really didn't—it really wasn't a—there was no generational thing at all, and not even the experience that so many of them had in combat in the war, it was just a very good place.

CARROLL: There must have been a lot of joy, too, at putting World War II behind you.

CHOUKAS: Yeah, exactly.

CARROLL: But it must have been a different place, too, because a lot of them came back with families and wives.

CHOUKAS: Yes. And you probably know this, and I don't think this is of particular interest anyway, but Sachem Village—do you know where Sachem Village is? [West Lebanon, New Hampshire]

CARROLL: Sure.

CHOUKAS: Well, it was built for married students coming back after the war. And it wasn't where it is now. It was right next to Hanover High School, right—it was between the Catholic church and the middle school which is there, there's a soccer field and a lacrosse field—well, that was Sachem Village, that whole thing right there. And that got moved—I don't know, I was—I was out of town when they moved it. I came back—“where's Sachem Village?”

CARROLL: You played hockey and baseball and what else?

CHOUKAS: Yes. I played freshman football, and—in those days freshmen were not eligible for varsity. I played freshman football, hockey and baseball. And then I did not go out for football after that, and I played hockey and varsity baseball, and did not go out for baseball my junior year. And then I broke my arm in hockey in my senior year and so I couldn't play baseball my senior year—I was going to go out again.

CARROLL: When you were here, was this the time when Dartmouth became part of—an Ivy League was formed?

CHOUKAS: No, that was after I graduated.

CARROLL: OK. And who were the teams you played, most of the time?

CHOUKAS: Well, it was pretty much the same schedule. During the war, before I came here, it was quite different. I mean, we played Notre Dame, and . . . But my—let's see, my time here it was really the Ivy League, it just wasn't formalized. And then you could play a couple of outside games. It was pretty much the same way. But we did have one—my senior year we played the University of Michigan in football, out in Ann Arbor. That was quite an event. We did pretty well with them. And in hockey we were—you know, we were one of the top teams in the country, so we played not only all of the eastern teams, the Ivy League and Boston College and so forth, but we would play University of California, Michigan, Minnesota, all those teams.

CARROLL: Where did you go—did you fly out to play them, or did you meet somewhere in the middle?

CHOUKAS: Well, they might make a trip on the East Coast and we would play them as they came through, or—my freshman year, so I didn't make this trip—there was traditionally a Christmas trip and they'd go by train to California or the Midwest, and they'd stop and play those teams as they were going out. And then when we were in the NCAA tournament, in those days it was always held at the Broadmoor Hotel in Colorado Springs.

CARROLL: Oh, wow!

CHOUKAS: Yeah. Wow is right. And we did fly out to that, and that was a big deal in those days, it was pre-jet travel and so forth.

CARROLL: Exactly. And who did you play?

CHOUKAS: We played the University of Michigan in the semi-finals, and beat them, and then played Boston College in the finals and lost 4 to 3. We had split with Boston College during the regular season; we had beaten them 4 to 2 and they had beaten us 2 to 1.

CARROLL: It's very respectable!

CHOUKAS: Oh, yeah. Well, I like to say that I was playing hockey during the decline and fall of Dartmouth's prominence. Because all during the late '40s, or mid- to late '40s, Dartmouth was number one in the country in hockey. And some of the remnants of them, of those teams, particularly veterans coming back, were—who were—like, Billy Riley was a Class of '46 and his brother Joe—his brother Jack was '44, and they all went into the service and then came back, and they were terrific.

But by then there was a dramatic shift in the admissions policy in the late '40s, and that's what—there were two things that contributed to Dartmouth's decline as a national hockey power. One was the fact that we didn't have artificial ice. We played in Davis Rink, in a closed rink but on natural ice, so we were very dependent on the weather. We could never get on the ice until early December, whereas more and--that was built in '28--all through the '30s and '40s we were one of the few colleges that had its own rink, even though it wasn't artificial ice.

Most of the colleges would play—like all the Boston colleges played in the Boston Arena, and so we—that gave us a leg up in terms of kids wanting to come here. And then we had this nationally known coach, [Edward "Eddie"] Jeremiah, and people wanted to play for him. The two things that happened was, right after the war college after college began building their own artificial ice rinks, and two—and this is the

more important one—the admissions policy changed. I mean, it was dramatic.

College boards were not required when I came in as a freshman. And right after that they did, and the numbers crunch came to what it was, and it was a quantum leap. And so a lot of kids who still wanted to come here to play hockey couldn't get in. And they started showing up on our opponents' teams, and that was the beginning of—you know, we had a—we still had enough in the pipeline so that by my senior year we were still very respectable, but then after that it really started to go down.

CARROLL: This is neither here nor there, but have you been going to the women's hockey games here recently? I think they're good.

CHOUKAS: I have, yes. They're very good. Yes, I love to watch them play. They're very disciplined and George Crow does a tremendous--and Judy Parrish--does a tremendous job of coaching them. I--they play the style of game that we played.

CARROLL: That's interesting.

CHOUKAS: The way they set up their plays, and the way they're disciplined and everything. I don't like the college game as much today, and I'm not talking like an old you-know-what alumnus, believe me I'm not. Because these kids that are playing today are so much more talented than we were. But I don't like the game. There's too much hitting and grabbing and holding and everything. But I still prefer to watch men's hockey to women's hockey because, for me—I guess I have to put all my credentials on the table.

I can't stand soccer because it is so damned slow. You know, I sit there and I watch a soccer game and I say, well, he's going to pass the ball eventually to this guy running down over here, and I watch, and then sure enough, sooner or later he does. But—and women's hockey is better than that, but it doesn't move fast.

CARROLL: The power.

CHOUKAS: Yeah, that's right. But I'll tell you, I scrimmage against the women's hockey team every fall, and I am impressed. I mean, when I'm out there on the ice, because I'm just a--you know, I'm over the hill and everything--but I have to work hard against those women, and I can't stay with them skating anymore. And I don't even think I'm playing against women when I'm out there, don't even think of it. It's just a group I'm playing hockey against.

CARROLL: It's getting better, I think.

CHOUKAS: Yeah, it is, oh, it's terrific.

CARROLL: That kind of got us off the track but I thought it was fascinating. What prompted you then to enter the Marine Corps after Dartmouth?

CHOUKAS: Well, I went in--first of all, in terms of one's input and intake in growing up, very positive feelings about the military, if you think about the fact that my generation really came into their teens in the early '40s and World War II, so you had these feelings. And then--and it was very honorable. And then we had to go in the service, I'd quickly add that.

CARROLL: You did?

CHOUKAS: Oh, yes. You were either going to get drafted, or something. It was still required. And the Marine Corps--there were several programs here. The Navy had its NROTC program, and the Marine Corps had a program, the Platoon Leaders Class, which was called the PLC program. And in the NROTC you got a scholarship that went with it, and you had to drill every Monday. And then you had to go every summer for eight weeks. And you got--and you also got paid a modest amount. In the Marine Corps you didn't have to take any military--oh, and you had to take a Naval Science course each semester in NROTC.

In the Marine Corps, during your college time, there was absolutely nothing. You didn't have to drill, you didn't have to take any military science courses. They didn't pay you anything, and you had to go two of your three summers for six weeks each to Quantico, Virginia for training, for which you did get paid. That's all you did. And then when you graduated you were commissioned a Second Lieutenant, and then you had to serve for two years. So a whole bunch of us did that, and you know, the Marine Corps--even in those days we were wise enough to know how much better the Marine Corps was than any other . . .

CARROLL: [laughing] Spoken like an old Marine! Well, you must have known Quantico to some extent, having been down around Washington, so it wasn't unfamiliar territory.

CHOUKAS: No, except I didn't know--really didn't know--I only knew Quantico was down there someplace, but I didn't really know.

CARROLL: Did you like the Marine Corps?

CHOUKAS: Very much, yeah. I got married the fall of '51, which was the fall after I graduated, at Quantico. My wife had been a student nurse here at

Mary Hitchcock and that's where I met her, so we'd been going for about a year and a half.

CARROLL: Did you meet her because you got sick?

CHOUKAS: No, no I didn't.

CARROLL: I've heard two stories like that, so I was curious.

CHOUKAS: No. So when she graduated just before I did, she knew I was going to go to Quantico, so she got a job at Children's Hospital in Washington. And we got married in November, and we went to Camp Lejeune after Quantico, and we just—we just loved it. We really loved it. In fact, it's hard for us to realize this, but we really thought seriously about whether to stay in the Marine Corps or whether to get out. And the Korean War was just ending, and it was--it was very exciting times. But by the time I'd been out for three or four months I couldn't believe that I ever wanted to stay in.

CARROLL: What prompted you to make the decision to get out?

CHOUKAS: Well, I mean my two years was up, and then—I mean, it's either, you're going to be a regular and that's going to be—and I think I'm remembering this correctly, because we did talk about it. I think it was the fact that you had to--you were going to get transferred every two or three years for the rest of your professional life, and we just wanted to sink roots someplace and raise a family, and I think that was probably as major a determinant as any.

CARROLL: So then you started looking around.

CHOUKAS: I did. I came back and I started having some interviews. The college placement office was nothing like what exists now, it was one guy, [Donald W.] Don Cameron ['35]. And he set me up with an interview with Procter & Gamble, and someplace else, and then I just--I was just very unhappy. We were living with my parents in Hanover until I got a job, and I think my father was looking for me harder than I was looking for myself.

CARROLL: Well, you had a child then, right?

CHOUKAS: Yes, that's correct. Your research is excellent. Our child was born in Camp Lejeune in North Carolina. So one day Don Cameron and my father ran into each other in the post office, and Don said, "I don't imagine Mike would be interested in anything like this, but they've just had a death on the faculty at the Millbrook School in Millbrook, New

York, and they're looking for somebody to run a dorm and coach hockey and so forth." So my father came home and told me about it, and I said, "Well, jeez, sure, I'll go down and talk to them."

So I called up the headmaster and I went down, and--I'll never forget this--the experience that I had in that interview process and touring the campus and everything was like night and day with my interviews with Procter & Gamble and other places. I mean, this is like Psych 1, but it was so obvious that I had found a niche that I was comfortable with and so forth.

So they hired me, and I spent the--I went down there in January and I was there until graduation, and then the then--headmaster of Vermont Academy, [Laurence] Larry Leavitt--I don't know if that name has ever crossed your--he's Class of '25 at Dartmouth, and he was my headmaster when I was a student. He heard that I was--had gone into teaching, and he called me up and said there was going to be an opening the next year at Vermont Academy, and would I be interested in coming on the faculty. And so that's how we went to Vermont Academy in the fall of 1954.

CARROLL: Now, what jobs did you hold there? I know you eventually became headmaster.

CHOUKAS: Well, I was--I taught mathematics and I coached football, hockey and baseball--varsity football as a backfield coach and varsity hockey, and third group in baseball, but eventually I became the varsity baseball coach as well. I was on the faculty eleven years. Leavitt left--let's see--after I'd been there five years, I think, and then the new headmaster after a couple of years asked me if I'd like to be Assistant Headmaster, and I said yes, and I did that.

And then he resigned and there was a search for a new headmaster. I was not a candidate. I didn't want to be, but I was the acting headmaster. Frankly, as I saw the candidates coming through, after a while I got in touch with the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, and I said, you know, I think maybe I would like to be a candidate. And then I was appointed Headmaster. So I was the headmaster for 12 years, so we were there 23 years professionally.

CARROLL: You really raised your family there.

CHOUKAS: Raised my family there, exactly right.

CARROLL: What town is that in?

CHOUKAS: Saxtons River, Vermont.

CARROLL: Saxtons River, OK.

CHOUKAS: It's about 50 miles--45 miles south of here. It's five miles west of Bellows Falls.

CARROLL: OK. What a pretty area, wow.

CHOUKAS: Yes, it is. Yeah, it is, it's really nice, very rural, not so rural anymore, but very rural then, and my kids just loved Saxtons River. Their real roots are there.

CARROLL: Now was Ludlow so developed in the skiing at that time?

CHOUKAS: No. Okemo was there, and interestingly enough [Donald] Don Cutter ['45], the father of the Don Cutter ['73] who runs the Dartmouth Skiway now, Don Cutter who was also a Vermont Academy alumnus and a Dartmouth alumnus, was running Okemo in those days. And Okemo was a--you know they had one or two chairlifts and lots of poma lifts, and it was not what it is now. But it was there, yeah.

CARROLL: So did your kids grow up with the skiing and the . . .

CHOUKAS: No, it was--it's really kind of sad, but in those days Hanover had some good programs, but most of the Vermont towns, they didn't have that, I mean, all they did was play basketball. Really, I'm not kidding you. There was no hockey anyplace except at Vermont Academy, the prep schools. None of the high schools except Hanover High put it in. There were four high school teams in New Hampshire, and I think maybe zero high school teams in Vermont. Isn't that incredible?

CARROLL: It's hard to imagine!

CHOUKAS: It is, but you see there were no artificial rinks, and it was—everybody played basketball. And I used to go around and say, you know, look at all these kids that are 5'7", 5'9", what the hell are they doing . . .

CARROLL: [laughing] But there's that whole Canadian influence in Vermont and New Hampshire, all those . . .

CHOUKAS: Well you know, there were quite a—there were more teams before World War II, but the transportation was such during World War II that they were all cut out, and they never picked them up again. Now there—as you know, there are—I don't know how many high school teams in both the states. Hockey's a big sport.

CARROLL: Yeah, it is. Now, when you were there at Vermont Academy, did you think you wanted to spend the rest of your career there?

CHOUKAS: Uh-uh.

CARROLL: Never?

CHOUKAS: No, but I never—I'm sort of a now person. I never really thought much ahead. When I became headmaster, I made it very clear with the chairman of the board, not with the rest of the trustees, that I was interested in something like about a ten-year appointment. And— I said, I think that's probably about the right amount of time. And that's something we ought to talk about a little later, because it's true of college presidencies as well as headmasters. That was an amazing transition from the venerable old headmaster who headed the school for the rest of his professional life, to the young headmaster who would run the school for ten or so years.

[End of Tape 1, Side A — Beginning of Tape 1, Side B]

CHOUKAS: . . . I mean, if you go back and look at most college presidents, it was assumed, I think, when they took over that that was kind of "it."

CARROLL: Like Supreme Court justices, you die in this institution.

CHOUKAS: That's right. And for lots of reasons, most of them sociological, that just was not the case anymore. And it was amazing the changing. Well anyway, so I said ten years. We both agreed to review it every year, and we both agreed that we would not tell anybody else, because as I said to him, I don't want--at the end of my sixth year I don't want the faculty to start counting down with me, you know. But I was very clear that I was going to be about 48, 47 or--46 or 47 at the end of ten years, and then I would--I wanted out, because I'd seen too many cases of people who stayed in schools longer, and I didn't want the trustees--you know, by the time I got into my mid-50s I wasn't going to be too excited about looking for a change in career, and I didn't want them saying, "Well, what are we going to do about old Mike? You know—he was OK 20 years ago, but my God, he's got eight more years?"

So that was kind of—what actually happened was, at the end—and we also agreed that we would make the decision a year to a year and a half before, and then I would—and announce it. And at the end of my eighth year the country was in double-digit inflation and the Vietnam War was in full fling, and it was very hard to find students, and our enrollment was dropping as it was in other places, and we were

starting a capital campaign and it was clearly not the time to change headmasters. So I agreed to stay on until those things turned around. That's why I ended up going 12 years instead of ten. But when I resigned I had not a clue as to what I was going to do, not a clue.

CARROLL: No job lined up?

CHOUKAS: No job. When I announced a year and a half in advance to everybody well, a year and a half—in the spring, that the next year would be my last year, you know I thought I was going to have to hire a battery of secretaries to handle all the job offers that were going to come and that the phone was going to be ringing off the hook. [laughter] Uh huh. I did not get—I left Vermont Academy on June 30 of 1977, and I was offered a job at Dartmouth in late July. So I was a couple of months without any job, or even knowing what I was going to do . . .

CARROLL: And three kids in college.

CHOUKAS: No. That was another thing about our timing. My son, who is our youngest, graduated in '77. So we—I mean, we were free to—whatever happened, happened, and we were so happy to get out of being the headmaster and headmaster's wife, and the freedom that that [brought] not—don't take me wrong, I wouldn't trade those years for anything, they were very rewarding years. But . . .

CARROLL: Are you a headmaster 24 hours a day, is this . . .?

CHOUKAS: Yes, it's like being a captain of a ship. I'm telling you, the phone rings in the middle of the night and it's not good news. And everybody, and particularly in a small school—I mean, I would make a distinction between the Exeters and Andovers and Deerfields and St. Paul's, where there's quite an administrative structure to go with the headmaster. But here, one of the reasons parents pick a small school is they want the intimate contact with the headmaster. So, you know, I'm supposed to know that so-and-so's kid lost the J.V. tennis match by double faulting, you know—I mean, it's just—

I have a—most of the positions are—the administrative positions are part administrative and part faculty, so the director of athletics also teaches Spanish, and the director of studies also teaches English, etc. And the assistant headmaster also does this, and the dean does this. So trying to get those people doing these things, and the parents—if they've got a problem—if everything's going OK that's no problem, but if the parents have got a problem they don't want to talk to the dean or the assistant—they want to talk to the headmaster. And it's very, very

involved. Wouldn't trade the experience for anything, but there was no way I would ever go back.

I will never ever forget the end of my first week working at Dartmouth, in September of '77, and on Friday afternoon leaving my office in Blunt, which was then Crosby Hall, and walking across the campus to walk home, and thinking, "My God, I don't have anything to do until Monday morning, this is incredible!"

CARROLL: It was true luxury!

CHOUKAS: Yeah, right.

CARROLL: Did your wife like being the headmaster's--I mean, in a sense it's a job you don't get paid for.

CHOUKAS: That's correct. Yeah. I think that's changing now. I mean, with the changing role of women professionally, I know--I'm not guessing--either they're getting paid for these things or they're not doing them. One or the other. Like, there's a very funny story--I mean—that's part of the transition. If you think of the years that I was a headmaster—we're supposed to be talking about Dartmouth.

CARROLL: That's OK, this is about you too.

CHOUKAS: The years that I was a headmaster—'65 to '77—and you think about what was going on in this country at that time, with the Vietnam War, with kids, with relations between parents and kids, with the counterculture—I mean, you know what I'm talking about.

CARROLL: Yeah, I lived through that.

CHOUKAS: I know you did. And so, we also had the transition with our faculty. The younger faculty that were hiring were coming out of colleges--yes--and those that are married--we were an all boys school then, although I did have a couple of women teachers, mostly male--their wives, you know--there's a very funny story. I don't know if you know who [Stanley "Stan"] Colla ['66] is, who is the Vice President for Development and Alumni Relations?

CARROLL: Sure.

CHOUKAS: Well, I hired him at Vermont Academy, and it was his first job when he graduated from Dartmouth. And he came with his wife Judi, who had just graduated from Princeton in the first all-coed class from Princeton, and Nita, my wife Nita, was lining up faculty wives to pour at receptions

after games and at faculty coffee and everything, and Judi said to my wife, "I don't do tea." And this is kind of a--and the reason that this is kind of a funny story is that Stan Colla ended up being my final--my last boss here at Dartmouth.

And so I made the comment at my retirement party that, when the person that you hired--when you end up working for the person that you hired, you get the message that it's time to move on. But my wife and Judi have a great relationship, and that little story--I mean, my wife was able to kind of turn it around at one point, in a very amusing fashion.

CARROLL: I like that. Well then, so you came here and you were first, as I understand it, . . .

CHOUKAS: Director of Leadership Gifts, yes.

CARROLL: What is that?

CHOUKAS: That was the Campaign for Dartmouth, the previous major capital campaign. And I was hired to—it was a five-year appointment, and there was no guarantee of anything after the campaign ended, it was a five-year campaign. So a number of us were hired that way. And the breakdown was Major Gifts, and [Lucretia "Lu"] Martin, who had been working in the President's office, was appointed at the same time I was as director of major gifts; and those were defined as--her prospect pool was those people who had the capability of giving over a five-year period a hundred thousand dollars or more. So she focused on them. Leadership gifts were defined as those who had the capability of giving five thousand up to a hundred thousand over a five-year period. And there was a differential in the way that this was done.

The major gifts, as you would imagine, there were long-term cultivations, and she had a couple of officers working for her, and they would go any place in the country to see people and ask for gifts and that sort of thing. And the people had been identified as capable of making those kinds of gifts. Whereas Leadership Gifts, which were the bulk--I mean, we had the most prospects. So we set up regional offices. My job was, in effect, to establish a national sales force, and I hired six regional directors; and unlike this campaign, where those regional directors all were located in Blunt and went out to their regions, we had an office in Boston and New York and Atlanta and Chicago and in San Francisco. So I hired people to run those offices. Those were the officers working for me. And then they in turn had all the cities in their region, and they would establish volunteer

committees in each city to do the solicitations of all of our prospects. So that's what the job was.

CARROLL: To be hired did you have to be a Dartmouth alum?

CHOUKAS: No, but it sure helped. And let me see: all of the people that I hired as regional directors—I had six, as I told you—had Dartmouth connections. One was the wife of an alumnus, and one had worked in the admissions office here, although she was a Smith graduate—had worked for [Alfred “Al”] Quirk, and [Edward “Eddie”] Chamberlain, I guess. She was the first woman ever hired by the admissions office, in fact.

CARROLL: Who's that?

CHOUKAS: Her name then was Ginger [Virginia L.] Soule. She has since married a Dartmouth alumnus and she's Ginger Norton. She would be a very interesting person for you to talk with. They live in Portland, Oregon.

CARROLL: Oh, what a pretty place.

CHOUKAS: But anyway, that was the job that I came here to do, and I had no experience in fundraising at all. In fact, it's funny—when I—in fact Berl Bernhard, who was a classmate of mine, was on the trustees then, and his son—one of his sons was going to Vermont Academy. And so he knew that I was leaving, and I think he and [Franklin “Frank”] Smallwood, also a classmate, kind of put my name in up here. And when I came to interview for the job, I really was not very—I did not think I was going to be very interested. I mean, I didn't like fundraising as a headmaster, and it didn't strike me as a kind of productive thing to be doing.

But when I began to learn that, one, I would be traveling all over the country, and two, I would be organizing people who would be doing all this stuff, and I began to get the dimensions of the job, I began to think, jeez—well, you know, after 23 years in Saxtons River, population 722, the thought of, you know, zipping around the country—I'm sort of a geography freak anyway. I mean, I'm one of these guys that used to travel—be in the plane with my head glued to the window, saying, Oh, there's the Snake River, and there's the . . . So anyway, it became a very attractive thing and I pursued it very actively.

And obviously—Oh, the other downer, as Nita and I talked about whether or not we really wanted to do this, was, although I had loved Hanover as a kid and growing up in it, as I've already said, and I thought maybe when I retired I might want to come back here, but the

idea of coming back when I was still in my professional years really didn't appeal all that much. I mean, we had been living in a fishbowl for 23 years, and what really appealed to us was midtown Manhattan. [laughter]

CARROLL: And anonymity.

CHOUKAS: Yes, exactly. But I spent enough time here—my folks had moved away by then so I didn't come up much anymore—I spent enough time here during the interview process to begin to see that Hanover was quite a different town, and it was very cosmopolitan, and I could walk up and down Main Street and I didn't have to stop and explain to everyone why my arm was in a sling, or whatever. And so this turned out to be just a great move for us. The 20—17 years I guess I spent at Dartmouth, were very very happy, very happy years.

CARROLL: When you set up these offices, then, did they in turn go out—how did they do their solicitations? To individual people, or did they go to alumni meetings?

CHOUKAS: No, to individuals. They would organize the committees, and then these volunteers would each have five prospects, and they would go and set up—they would go from city to city; and I would usually go with them to the original meetings to recruit the area chairman and to have sort of a training meeting of the committee, once my regional directors helped the chairmen recruit these people. But we found out after a couple years that the volunteers weren't really—I mean, they weren't being paid, and we were getting what we were paying for. With many exceptions, obviously. But we began to evolve and change our tactics.

Pretty soon we began using the volunteers to set up appointments so that the regional director could go with them and make the solicitation. And they were—the volunteers were much happier with that. And then I began doing them too, and we began—we really did most of the solicitations the last two or three years of the campaign, using the volunteers as much as we could, helping us get appointments and that sort of thing.

But I think—I mean, most of the volunteers volunteer because they want to help Dartmouth, but their take on fundraising was about what mine was before I got the job, and therein is a problem. And there was so much controversy going on at Dartmouth during the Campaign for Dartmouth in those days, that people being solicited really wanted somebody in touch with the College to talk to about this, either to vent or to ask honest questions about, what the hell is going on up there?

So we were—in fact, one of the things that I really inculcated in my regional directors was, I really don't care as much whether you get a contribution or not, I just want that alumnus to feel better about the College when you leave than they felt when you got there. So we did a lot of stuff of—I mean, I would bring them back here four or five times a year for a week at a time, and so they were really in touch. And we talked a lot about college issues and the perspective and all of this.

CARROLL: Who would target the alumni to contact and ask for gifts?

CHOUKAS: You mean, how did we know who—how did we identify . . .

CARROLL: Potential givers.

CHOUKAS: Well, that's an ongoing process, not just at Dartmouth but at every institution. You have—you just have all this information, and we would start—I mean, it's just historical, it's gathered—files on everybody are kept in terms of what they've given to the Alumni Fund, which is the annual giving fund, and what their job is—I mean, if somebody, you know, is a senior vice president with Merrill Lynch, I mean, that tells you something, right?

And then what we would do is, we had something called screening meetings, which preceded the establishment of any area committees, when we would ask one person who was sort of the Mr. Dartmouth of a particular community if he would get five or six alumni together who knew the community, and meet with us, and we would go there and sit down, we had all these lists of all the alumni, and we'd go over them, and they would just give guesses as to what they thought the person might be able to give over a five-year period. And so then we'd come back and pump all that information into the computer and get our list.

CARROLL: When you were going out making contact with these people, what were the questions that they had, what were their reservations about the university? This would be what, about '77, '78, '79?

CHOUKAS: Well, in those days—and there is a constant in that all these questions are always there—but the nature of the questions changed a little bit. Well, the concerns were, one group was very upset with John Kemeny as president.

CARROLL: Why?

CHOUKAS: Well, there's a surface "why" and there's an under the surface "why." The under the surface why was, they blamed him for the loss of the

Indian symbol and for the advent of coeducation, in which order I don't know. I don't know which is the more important concern.

And it was so clearly generational. You know, the younger alumni, who we saw less of because fewer of them made the cut in terms of who we wanted to solicit, were mostly very positive. But the older alumni, you know, who didn't—for reasons we can talk about later . . . There were many, many exceptions in the older alumni, and that's important to know, I mean there were a lot of people who felt very good, not only about their college but about what John Kemeny was doing and all of this stuff, and were supportive of coeducation, and who were—once you talked to them about the problems that led to the Indian symbol going away, were comfortable with it, accepting of it. But those were the major questions in terms of why they didn't like Kemeny.

CARROLL: What's under the surface, as to why they didn't?

CHOUKAS: Well, I suspect, his Jewishness. I suspect, that he wasn't an alumnus, that he wasn't an athlete, that he wasn't in the Dartmouth mold, and all of that. Those were—and you know, you see so many irrational manifestations in a lot of the alumni. It was so disappointing. It is so disappointing to see people who, you know, went to this fine liberal arts college, and who are out there, and seem incapable of getting a new set of information and changing their thinking at all. And when you spot somebody like that, then you know you're shoveling it against the tide, so you take a little different tack. But anyway, those were the major concerns, I would say, in the late '70s.

CARROLL: And could you convince people? In other words, was venting enough, or did you have real reasoning . . .

CHOUKAS: Well, this is very individual. Yeah. I mean, I would meet with my regional directors (I'm sure they hated these sessions), drawing on my vast sociological background and getting them to understand why coeducation, and how much it had to do with the changing role, professionally, of women; how much it had to do with the fact that since our graduates were going to go out into the professional world, where women and men were working comparable positions, it was important for them to live and study and play with women—the male aspect, to play with women during . . . and all that sort of stuff, anyway. And you could size up the person that you were talking to, who might be expressing some of these concerns, and most of them were rational, and you could say this thing and they would accept it. And the same with the Indian symbol.

The one thing I kept hammering at, and this is one of my pet peeves about most of the administrators who are making public comments now—it was then and it is now and it probably will ever be—but we had a cardinal rule in my office: you never said “and the College today is better than it ever was.”

CARROLL: [laughing] It gets the hackles up.

CHOUKAS: Oh! you know, I'd say, everything is relative. When these guys went to this college it was a first-rate college. It was terrific, they've got great memories of it, and it was prominent, and it's different today, you know. And maybe some of you younger regional directors working for me think it's better, but let me tell you, parts of it are better; parts of it, in my opinion, are not as good, but parts of American society I don't like the way it was when I was growing up, but most importantly, the College has to be contemporary. If it isn't contemporary, no high school kids' gonna want to come here. Anyway, so we gave them all that stuff, but don't ever say “the College today is better than it ever was,” or don't ever say, “you couldn't get in today.”

CARROLL: True though it may be!

CHOUKAS: True though it may be, yes.

CARROLL: Ruth Adams said to me, she thought that the key argument that convinced a lot of older alums is when their granddaughters got into Dartmouth. Did you come across cases like that?

CHOUKAS: Oh, yeah, but I'm not sure how much it convinced them as opposed to how much it confused them! [laughter] Because it gave them conflicting emotions that they had to deal with.

But you see, what I think really—I mean, clearly the climate is not the same now, there's general acceptance. Not only acceptance of coeducation in a resigned sense of that word, but acceptance in that, yes, we had to do that. So now I don't think it's an issue, I mean I really don't. It was not an issue the last few years I was working, except with some of those old . . . who are irrational about their thinking anyway. You know, and you just take one look at them.

Another thing I used to say to the regional directors, when you're in a meeting speaking to a group of alumni, and somebody gets up and starts to rant about this and give half-question, half-speech, when you respond to that person don't think that you're going to convince him. There's no way. But remember, there are a lot of people sitting in the audience who are going to be very interested in your response, and

who have identified that person in the same way that you have, and maybe know him a hell of a lot better than you do, and you give a rational, objective response, and just remember you're really talking to all of them, you're not talking to this guy. That's something that worked very well for us.

But anyway, back to this other thing of the concerns on coeducation. The same thing is true of the Indian symbol. I think that right now it's probably flip-flopped a little bit, and there are probably more people still, if not upset about the loss of the Indian symbol, wishing that we would get it back somehow. And as for coeducation, I don't even think that that's an issue anymore. I mean, it's so abundantly obvious where we are in this country.

CARROLL: Was their concern with coeducation the loss of tradition, or was it something more specific like the ability to field a football team, and that kind of detail?

CHOUKAS: I think that, although some people might have said it was what was going to happen to our sports, I think that was a smokescreen for what they really felt emotionally. And I think it really comes down to their experience in college, and the all-maleness of Dartmouth was an important part of that experience. And so they think that that's being lost, that's been lost. And I agree with them. But it's lost! It's lost in this country, so hang onto your happy memories of going down to White River late at night and having a beer with some guys, and everything. Fine, I mean that was great, it worked for us then.

And I think another point I used to make about it was that when my generation and generations before me were growing up, most of the private institutions were single-sex. The universities were coed, but other than Middlebury, I'm hard-pressed to think of other colleges that were private. And that's a reflection of the fact that it was just an assumption, I mean, when I grew up I wouldn't think of going to a coed institution. And yet I have no trouble knowing that if I'd grown up 20 years later or 30 years later, I wouldn't think of going to a single-sex institution.

And that's what I meant earlier when I talked about the input of one's generation, I was talking about the military, your feelings about the military at that time. But you know, there were all these absolute truths that teenagers have, just because they just kind of ingest it, right from the first grade on up, they're absolute truths. And so, when you get into your later years and you start to find out that these absolute truths

aren't so absolute, you know, some people can handle that and some people can't.

CARROLL: The other thing Ruth Adams says is that she had as much opposition, if not more, from Dartmouth wives, the wives of the older alumni. Did you find that as well?

CHOUKAS: Yeah, although I wouldn't call it opposition because I didn't have as much contact. In her position she would have seen a little more of that. But I know what she's talking about, and I agree with that phenomenon. And again, it isn't all wives, to be sure, but I think—I mean, I guess I could generalize it by saying, probably around the reunion tents the wives are saying, "well, I grew up and I've had a happy life, and I went to a single-sex college, and I didn't need coeducation, and I knew my husband when he was a student at Dartmouth and it was terrific, and . . ." yeah. But I think that probably there's a little bit of envy or sour grapes or something down in there.

CARROLL: Did it help you at all in communicating the new atmosphere on campus the fact that you had a son who was the class of '77?

[End of Tape 1, Side B — Beginning of Tape 2, Side A]

CHOUKAS: . . . and you know, when my son was here coeducation was still—there were a lot of problems in the student body at that time. I mean, he was '77. Seventy-six was the first class with coeds who had entered as freshmen, and there were a lot of nasty things going on between the male students and the female students. Again, that's a generalization. And there was a group of males, probably the same group that today hover around The Dartmouth Review or whatever, and fortunately it has been an ever-shrinking group, but there were a lot more of them feeling that way in the early '70s.

What helped me, I think, was, with the age group we were dealing with for the most part in the Campaign for Dartmouth, a lot of them knew who I was, a lot of them knew I had played sports at Dartmouth, a lot of them knew me when I was a little kid--a lot would come up to me and say, "I remember you when you were 11 years old and running around the campus." A lot of them knew my father, so between my father and me, I had a certain amount of credibility which, as long as I didn't blow it, was very helpful, because I think alumni like to have a link back to the College, a personal link back to the College, and that's one of the problems with turnover. If they look up here and they say, "My God, I don't know a single person up there any more," then there's a little something lost. And so, if they have me as someone that's credible,

they'll listen to me. They may not agree with me, but at least they'll hear another point of view from somebody whose point of view they respect, whether I earned it or not, I mean, that's besides the point. So that, I think, was more what was helpful.

CARROLL: You try to persuade. Well now, how did—who actually hired you here when you came to this . . .

CHOUKAS: Ad [Addison] Winship, who was the Vice President at that time.

CARROLL: And then you became the Director of Capital Giving.

CHOUKAS: Yes.

CARROLL: Is that when the Campaign for Dartmouth ended, in '82?

CHOUKAS: Yes, the Campaign ended, and Dartmouth, prior to the Campaign for Dartmouth, had never had any systematic way of soliciting capital gifts. It seems hard to believe, but they had the Alumni Fund, and it was highly organized, you know, about six officers working in there in that annual fund. But all of the capital gifts were sort of—I won't say "seat of the pants," but they were kind of individual sorts of things, starting with Ort [Orton] Hicks and George Colton, and there never was any office that was specifically charged with an ongoing process for soliciting for capital gifts. So when the campaign ended, Lu [Lucretia] Martin and I were asked to establish a Capital Gifts office. So we were co-directors, and we were co-directors of Capital Giving for—I don't know, three years, maybe. And then Dave [David] McLaughlin asked me if I would take over Alumni Relations, and then I moved out and Lu became the sole director of Capital Gifts, and I became Director of Alumni Affairs.

CARROLL: So you took the knowledge that you had gained in the Leadership Fund and brought that to the Capital Gifts . . .

CHOUKAS: That's right, and that she had gained in the Major Gifts, yeah.

CARROLL: OK, well that was a smart thing to do.

CHOUKAS: Yeah, it was.

CARROLL: Did you keep, then, the regional offices in place?

CHOUKAS: No, no. We thought we should, and I argued the point to Dave McLaughlin, but to no avail. And in retrospect he was probably right. I mean, they're an expensive undertaking. I just thought we had a

Dartmouth presence in—I didn't think we should keep them all, but I thought in New York and San Francisco and Chicago it probably—that they could serve the College in more than just development areas; they could serve them in alumni relations, they could serve the visiting faculty, and you know, admissions, and just a lot of things that could be done. But I think that you have to weigh that against the cost of it, and he was probably right.

CARROLL: So then you had to do a lot more traveling at this point, or did you have people in places?

CHOUKAS: Well, the Campaign ended—we didn't have the—what happened then was that there were sort of many capital campaigns that our office would support, like the Athletic Department had embarked on a \$16 million campaign which resulted in the building of the boathouse, the building of the Berry Sports Center, snowmaking at the Skiway, and there were academic programs and other little campaigns going on, and that's been the process. That's sort of now our between-major-capital-campaigns modus.

This campaign's [Will to Excel] about to end, and I have no doubt—I don't know what they are, what they will be, but I have no doubt that you'll see many campaigns. The people who want to give to—well, there are a lot of needs. There are some in Athletics, and there are still needs at the Skiway, and there are academic needs and so forth.

CARROLL: When you left that office, did Lu Martin then assume your role as well?

CHOUKAS: Yes.

CARROLL: OK.

CHOUKAS: I suspect that—I have no way of knowing this, but I suspect that if the Vice President and President hadn't wanted to keep both Lu and me, that that would have been a one-person operation.

CARROLL: From the beginning?

CHOUKAS: Yeah, I think so.

CARROLL: Did you establish relationships with alumni throughout the years, through the Leadership fundraising, that went on?

CHOUKAS: Yeah, I sure did. And I had—I mean, and I'd really—I'd mention my father as a professor and so that there were so many who may not have known me, but had him as a professor. And then there were the

alumni in the '20's who are—pardon me for saying it—no longer really a factor, but back in the late '70s and early '80s, were, and they knew my father as a fellow student, so there was a lot of continuity. And then, beginning in the mid- to late '80s, then I began to pick up on lots of my son's—people would come to me who had known my son in college, so . . .

CARROLL: That's nice!

CHOUKAS: Yeah, it really is nice.

CARROLL: Do you remember the first major gift that you got, the first time something just fell in your lap?

CHOUKAS: I don't, no, I don't.

CARROLL: I ask that—my father-in-law did this for a small college, and he has stories about the first million-dollar gift when he was going for \$10,000, and the fellow said, well, I can do a bit more.

CHOUKAS: That's terrific, yeah. Unfortunately, if I'd had one of those I would remember it.

CARROLL: That's right! What was the job then, that when you went over to the Director of Alumni Programs? How was that defined?

CHOUKAS: Not particularly well, as a matter of fact, because Mike—oh, is Mike [Michael] McGean ['49] somebody that you're going to be talking with?

CARROLL: Yes.

CHOUKAS: Yeah, he should be. He was the Secretary of the College, and that title of Secretary—really, his job was what my job was as Director of Alumni Affairs. And he had succeeded Sid [Sidney] Hayward, who was Secretary of the College. And when I—let me see—when I moved in—when Dave McLaughlin asked me to take over Alumni Affairs and Alumni Relations, that was at the same time that we did not have a Vice President, we were between Vice Presidents for Development and Alumni Affairs. And so Lu Martin and I were then co-Acting Vice Presidents, she for Development and me for Alumni Relations. And Mike McGean then reported to me in that position. And then there was some awkwardness with that, and eventually Mike McGean took—was moved out of there into another position, and then I moved in and took over for him, and that's when I—I was essentially the same as the Secretary of the College, but I did not want that title, for obvious reasons, so that title no longer exists. It's a sensitive area.

CARROLL: What sorts of things fell under the umbrella, then, of Alumni Programs or Alumni Affairs?

CHOUKAS: Well, there was the ongoing thing of his—of the office that existed that Mike inherited and then developed and grew to a larger role. There were, let me see—all of the Dartmouth Clubs around the country, of which there were—around the world maybe 135. And that was one area, and Dave Orr was sort of in charge of those.

Then there was reunions, and somebody having to work with the classes that are going to be reuniting, and that was a major thing. Then there was class officers, and there are—every class has a President, a Newsletter Editor, a Head Agent for the Alumni Fund, an Alumni Council representative, and a Secretary who writes the notes in the Alumni Magazine. Those are the class officers that each class has. And each of those positions has an association. There's the Class Presidents Association, which is made up of all the class presidents. There's the Class Newsletter Editors Association. And so somebody in our office staffed that, in fact one person would have the responsibility for the class presidents, and another one the responsibility for—oh, I forgot the treasurers, the Class Treasurers, and another one for the newsletter editors, and so forth. So our office was working with all the class officers.

Then the Alumni Council is a major factor, and our office worked with the Alumni Council. And that has implications of identifying and nominating alumni Trustees, which is really very important, a very important function. And—I'm blocking on one very important thing, I should come up with it in a second. Your question was?

CARROLL: What all comes underneath this term . . .

CHOUKAS: Oh, yes. That was sort—oh, yeah, Alumni Continuing Education, I knew I was forgetting a very important arm, which under Mike McGean and then under me until he left, [Steven] Steve Calvert was in charge of. And now [Martha] Mardy High runs. But that is sending professors and administrators to speak to the Dartmouth Clubs around the country; that is all of the overseas alumni trips where one or two professors go and alumni sign up and pay mucho bucks and go down the Danube or whatever—down the Danube as far as Yugoslavia.

CARROLL: Not today!

CHOUKAS: Yeah. And so Alumni Continuing Education.

CARROLL: Is Alumni College part of that?

CHOUKAS: Yes, and Alumni College in the summertime, yes. So that was another responsibility. And that was kind of what Mike McGean was focusing on, those things. When I came in, with all of the controversy going on with the—on the campus and in the alumni body, and with the advent of the Ernest Martin Hopkins Institute and what was going on, I took—I got into some other dimensions.

You won't be surprised to hear now, after listening to me all this time, that they had to do with the propaganda techniques that I saw being used against us by the Hopkins Institute through The Dartmouth Review and in other areas, and it was an incredible thing. I could share with you a number of memos that I wrote, trying to alert people to what was really going on, and it was really interesting. I mean, it was my father's course to a "T," what was happening and how they were manipulating, and the techniques that they were using. Very sophisticated.

CARROLL: Are you talking about The Dartmouth Review at this time?

CHOUKAS: Well, only as an arm of the Hopkins Institute, which was not strictly—although it seemed to be all Dartmouth, it had people like William Kristol, whom you see on TV all the time, who then was with The Wall Street Journal, and his father's with The Wall Street Journal, and [William] Simon, the former Secretary of the Treasury . . .

CARROLL: William Simon.

CHOUKAS: William Simon. He was very involved in this. And the way they reached out to William Buckley—I mean, it was incredible what was going on. Anyway, I got very involved in that because that was affecting alumni relations so much, so that's—there's another dimension to the office, which I suspect is not probably part of my successor's—in fact I've talked with my wife and a few other people that I talk with about this from time to time, just wondering whether—how much of what I did in that job was a function of the times, and how much of it was a function of my own particular background and interests. I really don't know.

CARROLL: Did you work with [Alexander] Alex Huppé in the—what's his office called?

CHOUKAS: Yes. Well, it used to be the College News Service, but they've changed their name and I don't know—I don't need to know those things any more, Jane.

CARROLL: That's right. When you were talking about The Dartmouth Review and the problems that were—or the controversies that were there at the College—this is '83—are you talking specifically about the shanties and South African divestiture?

CHOUKAS: No, that was the thing that gave them a quantum leap; that really let them get more than their foot in the door, and then they expanded from that, and they were after the Trustees and they were after the President, and it was just—it was incredible. You know, on the one hand I would sit back and admire the techniques that they were using, and on the other hand it was so scary.

CARROLL: I'm curious—well, I guess I'm sitting here deciding, should I go back and start, then, talking about McLaughlin's presidency from the beginning? But I'm curious, why do you think the people of the Dartmouth Review so turned against McLaughlin who, on the surface, seems to be a more conservative and more one of them?

CHOUKAS: Well, when—it's true of a segment of the alumni body, too, the segment that we've been talking about a good deal. Yeah, I mean, they were euphoric when Dave McLaughlin was appointed president. But the shanty business was a key thing, I believe, in eroding his credibility or respectability or whatever with this segment of the alumni body that we're talking about. And he was—I mean, he understood The Review for what it was, and he understood what was going on, so he was very steadfast.

Oh, the other thing that got him into a little bit of trouble with this group was the stance that he took on fraternities, which was very hard-nosed, to get them to shape up. And that was another interesting phenomenon. I mean, fraternities were a disaster. Physically they were. I mean, I wouldn't set foot in one. I'm serious. I mean . . .

CARROLL: And you had been a president of a fraternity.

CHOUKAS: Yeah. But I wouldn't set foot in one today, and they are infinitely improved today over what they were starting in the late '60s and all through the '70s. It just got awful--attitudinal plus physical. And he was more concerned—well, no, I shouldn't say that. But he got very concerned about the physical, because you're talking about health and so forth. But this is so true of all these things that cut across alumni relations and alumni's feelings about their college.

The fraternities were not like that when I was in college, and when Dave McLaughlin was in college, and when all these other guys that we're talking about were in college. For one thing, our society wasn't

like that. We weren't into drugs and all of this, and we'd have a keg of beer probably on Wednesday night because that was the traditional fraternity meeting night, and some of the more hard-core drinking fraternities would have a keg on Friday night, and everyone would have a couple of kegs on Saturday night, and that was it.

But you know, when you say to an alumnus, "Do you know that they have beer on tap 24 hours a day? And these kids are going down, they come back from class and they go down and get—I mean, not all of them to be sure, but some—they can go down and get a glass of beer, they can go get beer anytime they want?" I mean, never mind pot smoking and whatever other kind of drug use.

And the other key thing was, in our day every fraternity had a janitor, and that janitor was in there daily, and he kept things picked up and cleaned up, and I'd just say, What do you think the Phi Gam house would be like if you went, say, ten days without your janitor in there? And they'd all say, "Oh, jeez," you know. I'd say, "Well, make that ten years and imagine what it would look like." I said, "Those are the problems." But you see, they—to them the fraternities were what they were in their time, and of course then the current fraternities are writing to their alumni and saying, God! The President and the Dean are trying to do this, and they're taking away our rights, and they're going to make us do this and that, and they stir it all up.

And then The Dartmouth Review enters, and they just sort of had a thing that, anything they could do that was anti-administration, that would get the alumni upset about the administration or the Board of Trustees, they would do. So the fraternity issue just fell right into their lap, and they—that was another thing that went against McLaughlin, you see, because McLaughlin was leading the campaign to try to straighten this out.

CARROLL: It must have been hard for him to see, because here he was doing what he thought was good, and there was another avenue of information being fed to the alums. How did he try to combat that?

CHOUKAS: He didn't. That was my major concern. Not with Dave McLaughlin, but with my immediate superiors and with everyone else. In fact, the only people that I think ever really understood what I was trying to do or what my concerns were, were [Warren] Skip Hance and Lu Martin. Most of the—I mean, I think a lot of other people thought I was seeing a bogeyman in every closet, and you know—and I understand that. But it was so clear what was going on, and Dinesh D'Souza was a major factor in all of that.

You could not—I mean, they had such a head start, The Review and the Hopkins Institute had such a head start on the College because they understood the fine aspects of propaganda techniques, and they had practically an unlimited bankroll, and that was very important. So they could do all these things, and they could get—I mean, I can't tell you how many—I'd have to go back and look at my memo to get the names, but you would recognize most of the names of the right-wing syndicated columnists who were picking up all this stuff.

CARROLL: Were they sending copies of The Review out to these people?

CHOUKAS: No, no, no, no. They were much more in the camp. I mean, somebody would call them up, or Buckley, or somebody, I mean, We need this, or The Wall Street Journal would do it. And if you can imagine you're an alumnus in Boise, Idaho, and it's one thing for you to get the Alumni Magazine or even The Dartmouth Review, which they sent free, incidentally, to every alumnus over the class of such-and-such, and you'd read this and you'd say, "Jeez, I don't know about this." But if you pick up your hometown newspaper, like the Boise Whatever, and there's a syndicated column, and this guy is writing negatively about Dartmouth and what's going on up there, then you begin to say, "Oh my God, there must be something to that." That's what the problem—that's what these guys were doing.

And I said they had such a head start, because the sort of the collective feeling of the administration was that you just do the right thing, and eventually the truth will out. And, you know, that was fine in the '30s. And so you have this thing of this poor—I mean, of this liberal arts college, which for one thing, as you would know, unlike a corporation, in a lot of ways it doesn't matter what the hell the President thinks; he can control his administrators but he can't control his faculty, and so you've got these faculty running around shooting themselves and the College in the foot every other week, with some comment. It's like, if you've got a point of view you want to show, you could stand—you could go around with your tape recorder and interview enough people, and sooner or later someone's going to say what you need to have them say. So The Review is the eyes and ears, and they're getting these faculty making these idiotic statements that are just perfect. So, the whole thing was just brilliant, it was just brilliant.

And the College was so vulnerable—that's the word I was looking for—so vulnerable, because the whole aspect of the liberal arts college is, you know, you don't try to use propaganda techniques, and you don't try to do these things, and you just let the things bubble up and sooner

or later people will find out the truth. But what was missing was, obviously, that the only source of information most of these alumni are getting is The Dartmouth Review or the Alumni Magazine which doesn't deal with these issues, and which has got a six-week lead time anyway, so—and The Review's coming out every week. And nobody is sitting back there saying, "God, I wonder why I get this thing free?" You know? I mean, I can't tell you how many alumni would say, you know, they'd sort of be embarrassed to say to me that they get The Review and they'd say, "You know, I get The Review, I don't know why, I don't subscribe to it." They're all asked to subscribe, and some do, and so that's gravy for The Review, but they don't need those subscriptions. They don't need advertising, they don't need anything because they're being bankrolled.

So they had—that was one of the things that I am proud to say was my initiative. It took me about three years to finally get this through, with a large assist from Cary Clark ['62], the College counselor. But the Dartmouth Life—do you see that, do you know what I'm talking about?—that goes free to every alumnus. It costs us a hell of a lot of money, but I just said, "We don't have a voice out there." Now unfortunately, Dartmouth Life, I have to say, from the beginning has not been what I had wanted it to be.

CARROLL: Not as sophisticated?

CHOUKAS: Not as issue-oriented. I wanted it—I mean, my concept was that we need—first of all, we need to establish credibility, so we need to tell things like they are. And when there are any kinds of issues that alumni are aware of, we've got to have people stating both sides of the questions, or "The Dean says this and this professor says this, and this student says this." That is what I was looking for. And all of the other kinds of stories that are in there that show really what the stuff of the institution is, because the problem is that 90% of what goes on here is not newsworthy. And the only time the national news picks up anything, it's usually negative.

And so I said, we need, just have to keep having these little stories about this student who's doing this or that, you know, and all this, so that the alumni—I mean, I guess what I used to say was, "The goal is to have the alumni have the same perspective about Dartmouth that those of us who live and work here have, so that," I would say, "so when all of these things (that we don't like either) happen here, they don't derail them. Because that's all they hear." But we know that 90% of the student body is doing what you'd want them to be doing. We've got some extreme groups here who are railing about this, and

have this cause or whatever, but we've got it in perspective, and we've got to get that perspective to the alumni. That's what I was trying to do.

CARROLL: Did it help, when the Dartmouth Life started going out?

CHOUKAS: Yes, it did, but I don't think it's—there isn't enough of that. And one of the things—this is kind of hoisted by your own petard, I guess, but one of the things is, I think this is so, that there seem to be more stories and pictures about minorities and about women than—if I were calling the shots it wouldn't be like that. I would try to get a real balance. And I'm not even sure that the editor, for whom I have tremendous respect, I think she's just great—I don't think she's sensitive to these things and aware of them, and a lot of the students writing for her, just through natural selection, seem to come up with these stories, so that's what goes in there, and there isn't anybody who is—see, that's—we lost control. If we had control in Blunt in our office, we'd say, uh-uh, and you need this, and . . .

CARROLL: Maybe you have this story, but you have the picture also.

[End of Tape 2, Side A — Beginning of Tape 2, Side B]

CHOUKAS: That was another one of the problems that The Review—its whole modus operandi was to purport to be an on-campus student newspaper. And what I just had to keep hammering away at people to get them to realize was, they don't even believe that themselves. They know they are writing to a generation of alumni. That's their target audience. They don't give a damn whether they're accepted or not accepted on the campus, and they take some perverse pleasure in being gadflies and, you know, all this stuff. But what they're really doing is trying to inculcate the alumni in certain beliefs.

In fact, I went through—I had my secretary—this was about four years ago—go through the entire year of Reviews and in different color-coding we had about six themes. And we'd notice how, regardless of what the article was—it could be writing about the new Tuck School construction going on—somewhere in there would come a little line about Jim Freedman said something, and it would be something that—a point they're trying to make with our alumni, and it's fascinating. And we had this whole section of these things, and there were about six themes that would be ongoing. And it was very obvious that that's what—so no student editor is doing that. How could I have left [Jeffrey] Jeff Hart's name out of all of this?

CARROLL: Aha! OK, maybe we should bring Mr. Hart in!

CHOUKAS: He was, in fact, he was the key to the syndicated right-wing columnists. I mean, he and Buckley are buddies, and he wrote for The National Review (Hart), and he in fact—he did more than write for The National Review, he's on their editorial board, I think. I may not be right about that, but he had some position, because he'd go down to New York—I'd always run into him in the Yale Club. Anyway, and he would advise these kids. So there's a key person in the whole Dartmouth Review thing.

CARROLL: Why was he so negative about Dartmouth? Here's a man who is an alum, who is teaching in the English Department, has a stake in the university. So why this negativity?

CHOUKAS: And had a son who graduated and was a key writer for the Review. Ben Hart.

CARROLL: Ah!

CHOUKAS: Why?

CARROLL: Do you know?

CHOUKAS: I don't know. I think he was very bitter about some things. I think he was just an ultra-conservative and felt put-upon.

[Text deleted at narrator's request.]

It's very funny, interesting, when you talk to alumni. During the first half, or more than that, of Jeff's career here, he was a very, very well respected English teacher. My son took a class with him and really liked it. But towards the end it was not that way at all. Anyway, I think he was probably badgered enough by faculty and administrators, he perceived a liberal bent at the College was going on and he didn't like that. And this gave him a forum. I mean, he was very much a part of the founding of The Dartmouth Review, and this gave him a forum to print his own column, which he did, but also to have a lot of effectiveness. He didn't like Kemeny, he didn't like McLaughlin . . .

CARROLL: It was founded under Kemeny, and . . .

CHOUKAS: I don't think so, was it?

CARROLL: Yeah, it was, the first years were the last two years of Kemeny's administration. But it takes off under McLaughlin.

CHOUKAS: That's interesting. If you had asked me (and I accept what you say), but I would have said that it came out of—this is my recollection, which is probably going to prove to be false, erroneous, whatever—I understood that when the presidency, the search was going on, that...

CARROLL: For McLaughlin?

CHOUKAS: For McLaughlin. . . . that—what's his name?—oh, shoot. He was really the first editor, and he's published books, I'm just blocking on his name.

CARROLL: I can look it up but I don't know offhand.

CHOUKAS: Yeah. Anyway, he was on The Dartmouth staff, and The Dartmouth had a—editorial staff—and they had a big debate about whether to run a certain editorial, and I think it was an anti-Kemeny, pro-McLaughlin; I'm pretty sure it was 1981. And he somehow was the night editor or something, and he ran the editorial, against the decision of The Dartmouth editorial board, and he was kicked off The Dartmouth. Oh, I . . . [Gregory "Greg"] Fossedal ['81] was his name. I forget his first name. He's now—he's published a couple of books, and he's part of the whole ultra-conservative think tank Washington scene, with Kristol and Laura Ingraham ['85] and Ben Hart ['81] and all those guys, you know, with the Heritage Foundation and so forth.

But anyway: Greg Fossedal, finally got his name, Greg Fossedal. And he was really the founder of The Review, and it grew out of that incident. And so if Kemeny was still President, it certainly wasn't any two years, it was like two months or something.

CARROLL: Are you sure he's the founder, and not just stepped in and made it what it is today?

CHOUKAS: Oh no, I know The Review did not exist until that incident. But whether—I would have said it was under McLaughlin, but I may be wrong.

CARROLL: When I look at The Review, it seems to me so often it sets the agenda for what the debate is going to be about. Has there been any attempt—it seems to me that you were making an attempt to change that, and to give an alternate source. Do you think anything else has become the alternate source for that?

CHOUKAS: I don't think so, and I don't know that it's possible in a liberal arts institution, just because of the federated nature of a liberal arts college. I mean, how do you do it, where does it come from, and where do the

funds come from? See, that's a key thing. I mean, that's why we couldn't get Dartmouth Life for so long, because—and if it had been left to strictly an administration decision, although that's the way it came down—I've got to believe the Board of Trustees, who were starting to get hammered, were beginning to see the need for something like this.

CARROLL: Do you think a lot of the alumni thought that The Dartmouth Review was a sanctioned student newspaper?

CHOUKAS: Not sanctioned, no. No, I think The Review makes it pretty clear. But they do think it's an on-campus, solely concerned with things on campus and writing to other students about things. And you know, so few students read it, and they read it for the joke content or they get a kick out of what's being said, but in terms of supporting the thoughts And anybody who lives on campus and pays attention to what's going on can see so many falsehoods in what's written, that they can't give it credence. And of course the alumni have nothing to judge it by. I mean, they read this thing and what is there to say to them that this isn't so?

CARROLL: I can see, that was a When you got Dartmouth Life, did you get that funded through the college, or did somebody give a grant, a gift?

CHOUKAS: No. We did get a gift, but we didn't need—I mean, we would have gone on anyway, and it doesn't underwrite it all. No, there's quite a budget item in the College for it. That's why I don't know how long it's going to last.

CARROLL: I think what we'll probably do, if that's all right, is stop today, and then—thank you.

CHOUKAS: Well

End of Interview

INTERVIEW: Michael Choukas, Jr.
INTERVIEWED BY: Jane Carroll
PLACE: Baker Library
Hanover, New Hampshire
DATE: September 11, 1996

CARROLL: It is September 11th, 1996, and this is my second interview with Michael Choukas. We are going to be starting by talking about McLaughlin's election. Now, you were already working in which office when he was . . . ?

CHOUKAS: I was still—the Campaign for Dartmouth was still going on. I was in Development, I was Director of Leadership Gifts at that time.

CARROLL: Were you aware that Kemeny was thinking of retiring?

CHOUKAS: Oh yes, yeah. Well, I mean I was aware that he was looking at about a ten-year tenure, and the ten years was coming up, and so yes, I was sort of aware of it.

CARROLL: Had you worked with David McLaughlin when he was the Chair of the Board of Trustees, in fundraising?

CHOUKAS: Only peripherally. That was more—he was more involved with Major Gifts, which was Lu Martin's bailiwick, and the leadership gifts, I wouldn't have—I wouldn't be using, working with the big guns like the President or the Chair of the Board of Trustees very much. So we knew each other, because he was a freshman when I was a senior in college, and so we knew each other, sort of that way.

CARROLL: I see, OK. Were you surprised by his election?

CHOUKAS: I was, yes. I was surprised. I was surprised philosophically, and I was surprised that the Board would hire as President someone who had been Chairman of the Board. It seemed to me a little inside-ish. And I was surprised, but not necessarily disappointed, but surprised that a businessman was being elected President. But I knew enough about Dave McLaughlin so that I—I mean, he had been a Phi Beta Kappa,

and he worked with the Trustees and therefore knew academia and knew what was going on.

CARROLL: And certainly knew the alumni then too from all of that. How active had he been in fundraising? I know not with you, but with Lu Martin, had he . . . ?

CHOUKAS: My guess is, fairly, but I don't know, you'll have to ask Lu that question.

CARROLL: When he came here—he has said, he's written, that the change from business to academia was tough. Did you notice that, or did this . . . ?

CHOUKAS: Yes, I did. I think that was ultimately his, I guess downfall is not the right word, but ultimately led to his resignation, in my opinion. This is very subjective opinion, but I really felt that, whereas he understood academia, and whereas I thought he was very good, that (this is pure speculation, but this isn't the first time I've thought of it)—I thought that whereas he had a lot of well-placed self-confidence in the administration of the College, of the administrators of the College, that he was insecure in his dealings with the faculty. And I think that that ultimately, that the faculty collectively began to sense that, and they began to have some rifts.

And then I think when the ROTC issue came up and he acted more like a corporate CEO than a President gathering consensus, I think that really began to open things, and I think that he lost the confidence of the faculty, and that was all too bad because I thought he did some great things for the faculty in terms of salaries, in terms of—he made some good appointments, I thought, and—but that's just—that's probably not even worth recording, because that's just one person.

CARROLL: No, that's exactly what oral history is—your ideas, your impressions. But now that you've brought it up, maybe this is a good time to talk about the ROTC. It had been banished from campus. Do you know when?

CHOUKAS: Well, I don't think it would be a wild guess to say sometime in the late '60s. [laughter]

CARROLL: Yeah, I think certainly after the takeover of Parkhurst in '68, that would have been the ultimate result. And why was there a move afoot to bring it back?

CHOUKAS: Well, I think that there was always unhappiness in a large segment of the alumni body. So many of the alumni had come through the NROTC program. And I think when Dave McLaughlin became

President he, too, was that way. You know, this was one of these generational things. I think we talked about this last time, that people of my generation had a completely different take on the military, pre-Vietnam, because of World War II and the Korean War. And so many just failed to understand the new thinking on all of this, and the concerns. So I just think that was always out there like a time bomb, sort of slumbering and ready at the right time to come back, and there were members of the Board of Trustees who had these kinds of feelings.

And then ROTC was helpful to the College. It brought in money, and it enabled students to get scholarships, financial aid that the College didn't have to put out, and that was also a benefit. I think it's been interesting how few people, how few students participated in ROTC when it did come back.

CARROLL: It's true, it's a very small presence on campus right now.

CHOUKAS: Yeah. But I think that is—I think the main reason for that really is the type of program that came back. Because Dave McLaughlin and those who were on the Trustees were forced to compromise on the program. What the Navy wanted for NROTC and what the Army wanted for ROTC—and the Air Force I think was involved at one point—we could not go along with because of their requirements for some military science courses that were required, which was the case before, and also I think for credit. They had the military science courses count for academic credit. It was a big hangup on this. There may have been one other issue also. And so ultimately we couldn't go with the Navy and their program, or the Air Force and their program. And we ended up with this sort of bastard program with Norwich University. I mean, for the first couple of years I think our kids were going up to Norwich for this.

CARROLL: That's right.

CHOUKAS: So I think that that probably was part of the reason that this didn't take a little better.

CARROLL: But of course, when it was McLaughlin—and I was reading there was at first this sort of hybrid program where they would go to Norwich for some of the courses and then come here. And then he seems to have made the push to change and bring the program back to campus.

CHOUKAS: Yes, exactly.

CARROLL: But what's fascinating to me is that the faculty voted overwhelmingly against this. I don't want to exaggerate, but it was like 150 against and 24 for.

CHOUKAS: Yes.

CARROLL: And he ignored that. Why do you think he did?

CHOUKAS: Well, he didn't ignore it, he overrode it. [laughter]

CARROLL: Good point! Why do you think he felt that strongly, he was willing to risk credibility with the faculty?

CHOUKAS: Well, because I think he believed in the ROTC program. I mean, there is some thought, and I think there's a lot of validity to it, that our military complex in this country is better served if we have graduates of liberal arts colleges going in as officers, as opposed to everybody coming up through the military academies. And that's a pretty important point, and I think he believes that, and he was a product of ROTC himself, and I think he believed in it, and he really believed it was in the best interests of the institution. And he felt that the faculty and the student body, to the extent that they may have been involved in the discussions, were simply not understanding of the point. I think he understood where they were coming from, and he just felt that this was the best thing for the institution and dammit, he was going to do it.

CARROLL: And he did it.

CHOUKAS: And he did, yeah.

CARROLL: When he first got into office—obviously there's always this comparison that's made between the previous administration and the next administration. When you look at that, how would you compare Kemeny versus McLaughlin, and how they went about business?

CHOUKAS: Well, they were quite different, and I really feel very strongly that institutions go through phases. And I really think that Dickey, Kemeny, McLaughlin and Freedman were all right for their times. And I think to try to compare them without greater historical perspective is really risky business. I mean, I thought what Kemeny did in terms of building the faculty and of building academia and of building Dartmouth's reputation nationally in academia was all very, very good, and he was a very good administrator and he had a relationship between the administration and the faculty that was very good.

But I think that there were also some things that were probably more a product of what was happening in society than what was happening on our campus, that were going on, that I guess you could sort of describe as drifting to the left, or of liberal thoughts coming over. I mentioned in our earlier talk the problems with the fraternities. And just to sort of—well, in those days the term “P.C.” [politically correct] hadn’t been invented, but the P.C. stuff that was really taking over and affecting all of this.

The same thing I thought was going on nationally, and whereas I don’t mind saying at all, I have no brief at all for Ronald Reagan’s presidency; I do think that the fact of his presidency halted all of this and brought us back a little more toward center. He tried to bring us way to the right, but at least he got us back toward center. And I think McLaughlin had the same effect on the campus, in that same way. Which of course was another thing that the faculty probably didn’t like about what was going on—some of the faculty didn’t like what was going on. But the way he stepped in with the fraternities and did that stuff, and he really had to play hard ball in a lot of that, and he was much more, much better equipped experientially than John Kemeny to do those kinds of things. So how do I compare them? I just think they both did a lot of very good things for the College, and I think also that he did a good job with the budget in terms of bringing that back into line.

CARROLL: Well, he had an amazing—McLaughlin had an amazing run in terms of fundraising and building.

CHOUKAS: That’s right, thank you. I knew there was another thing in there. Yes, the things that were built I thought were terrific, yeah.

CARROLL: Why was the Berry gym so important?

CHOUKAS: Well, as a component, obviously a major component, of the athletic program—Alumni Gym was an anachronism, and that’s about the nicest thing you can say about it. I mean, it was inadequate, and for Dartmouth to be competitive in the Ivy League and elsewhere it had to have facilities that were keeping pace with what was going on, and we simply didn’t have. I mean, we had a basketball court that was just awful. And the whole—the squash courts were not even—didn’t even comply with collegiate regulations.

So that was an important component. Also, as it turned out, it was something that brought John Berry back into the fold. Something I want to say for the record because I don’t think he got proper credit for

this, that [Addison] Ad Winship, who was Vice President for Development and Alumni Affairs at the time—well, he had retired then, but it was his cultivation of John Berry that really made all that happen, in my opinion.

CARROLL: Had John Berry strayed from the College?

CHOUKAS: Well, he was—it wasn't so much that he strayed as that he wasn't very involved. He had, I think, given—or his father had given some money to the Campaign for Dartmouth, but he—nobody had really made the effort to get him involved, and Ad did that, and then those that followed were able to bring home a really nice gift, and of course now we have the Baker Library additions and so forth.

CARROLL: Yeah, once he started giving he seems to have not been able to stop.

CHOUKAS: [laughter] That's right.

CARROLL: Now the other thing that McLaughlin built, and renovated quite extensively, was the dorms. Was it understood among people outside the student body just how bad the dorms were, or was this something McLaughlin brought to the fore?

CHOUKAS: That he did, yes. Very definitely. That's what I meant, I mean I was talking about the fraternities, but you're absolutely right, the dormitories also.

CARROLL: Were the dorms turned to in part in response to the attempt to bring a kind of counterbalance to the fraternities?

CHOUKAS: Well, with the whole concept of clusters and all that? Yes—you know, I can't remember whether that was a function of McLaughlin's administration or Freedman's administration. You would know better than I.

CARROLL: When you were going around raising funds, was it easier to raise funds for a building, or to say that we have to renovate dorms as opposed to something more amorphous like upkeep?

CHOUKAS: Mm-hmm. Or the current phrase, "steam pipes." Yeah. Yes, no question about it. But also you can—it's easy to raise funds to support particular programs, if you've got a person who's keenly interested in particular programs. But yes, it's a cliché but it's true, buildings are much easier to raise money for. Yes.

CARROLL: So was your job easier under McLaughlin as a result of the building?

CHOUKAS: No, I don't think so. I don't think so. Because we had things in the Campaign for Dartmouth that were this way. It was—I think I mentioned that the athletic—the DCAC [Dartmouth College Athletic Council], as it was called then, had a—for them, a major campaign. I think it was a \$16 million capital campaign, that followed immediately on the heels of the Campaign for Dartmouth. And the reason was that during the Campaign for Dartmouth, so that all of our alumni wouldn't put all of their money into DCAC things.

That's a generalization, of course. The DCAC—most of the DCAC things were taken out of the Campaign for Dartmouth. They had been in it at the beginning, and after about a year and a half or so one saw how things were going, and they were removed from it, and the DCAC was promised that as soon as the Campaign for Dartmouth ended they could have their own major campaign. So that's how all of that came about. All the needs were there, but you know, and you sort of saw it happen with the Will to Excel and not with the DCAC so much as other programs, but look at the components that have been lagging, and they all have to do with academia. I don't know what message there is there, but . . .

CARROLL: It's a hard sell.

CHOUKAS: Yes.

CARROLL: Are there areas of the country that are known to be easier to target or easier to get money from than other sections?

CHOUKAS: Yes. And just as—another way you could have phrased that question is, "Are there sections of the country where it's much harder to raise money?" Yeah. But that has to do with critical mass, I think, and how much, therefore, interaction there is among alumni, alumni with other alumni. New York City is very good, Chicago is very good, San Francisco's very good. Cleveland used to be, until the mid-'70s, and there were a lot of older alumni in Cleveland and they got down on John Kemeny and that really hurt our efforts there. That used to be good. Florida . . .

CARROLL: All those retirees?

CHOUKAS: Yes, exactly. Somebody said, made the comment years ago that Florida's highways are—the traffic is just awful during the winter, and 90% of the cars are fundraisers driving around.

CARROLL: [laughing] I like the image! When something happens like Cleveland sours on John Kemeny, did he go there and try to persuade them? Did he go there to sort of show the flag?

CHOUKAS: Oh yes, oh yeah. And they would—I mean, we're talking older alumni now, but you know what happened to Cleveland, there weren't very many young people in Cleveland for quite a while. I mean, it's coming back and it's changing a little. So this was again that generation of alumni who loved the College as it was when they were there, and were not happy about the changes, you know, most of which were societal and not initiated by John Kemeny.

I mean, I really believe Kemeny did a great job, but anyone else who was President, you would have seen the same things happen. They might not have happened quite in the same way or quite at the same time, but Dartmouth was going to become coeducational, I mean for crying out loud! And to blame somebody is just irrational, or not to be in possession of the facts and information. And the same thing was just true of all of these things.

I really believe that, because an academic institution has to be contemporary, or it's not going to survive or attract any students. Yeah, that doesn't mean that it has to bend—go with the wind in every direction, but it means that inevitably—and I don't think it's always a conscious thing—but people there realize that these are the things they need to be doing and these are the changes they need to make, and it all just kind of evolves. So there's no sense in getting all excited about it, there it is. So anyway—but—so the older alumni in Cleveland just felt this way. But that was a polite generation, that was pre-activists and all of this. So instead of storming the doors and shouting and yelling and everything when Kemeny came to town, they had a Dartmouth Club meeting, and they all came, and they were very polite and they listened to him talk and they applauded and everything, and nothing changed. That's kind of the way it went in those days.

CARROLL: Did they change when McLaughlin came on?

CHOUKAS: Oh, they were very excited about McLaughlin, yes, very excited.

CARROLL: So was there any kind of spurt of giving once McLaughlin was named President?

CHOUKAS: In certain areas, yeah. And Cleveland would be one, yes.

NOISE FOR REMAINDER OF TAPE 3, SIDE A AND BEGINNING
MINUTE OF SIDE B

[End of Tape 3, Side A — Beginning of Tape 3, Side B]

CHOUKAS: . . . put it up between Parkhurst and McNutt or something like that, there on the lawn. That would be appropriate. And they put it up on the Green, and he [Edward Shanahan] publicly said, “That’s going to come down. You either take it down yourselves or we’re going to bulldoze it down in 24 hours,” or something like that. And then McLaughlin—and once again, as I—I don’t know this for first-hand fact, but that’s what sort of the going word was, that Dave McLaughlin overrode [Edward “Ed”] Shanahan, and let it stand. There’s nothing wrong with the President overriding the Dean, but it was public knowledge that he had overridden So that kind of undermined a little bit of Ed Shanahan’s authority. It was a very sticky thing. And then we went on from there. And then they started adding them. I mean, that was just one, and then, you know, the next week there was another, and so forth.

CARROLL: Pretty soon it was a village.

CHOUKAS: Yes, pretty soon it was a village. Well, it takes a village. [laughing]

CARROLL: That’s right. When people would call in, did you ever get any calls that said, “I’m not giving money to this institution”?

CHOUKAS: Oh, yeah, sure. I mean, what else can a person say when he’s mad and just upset and mad and emotionally involved—I mean, what is he going to say? I mean, he’s got nothing else to say except “That’s the last dime I’m going to give!” And some of them mean it and some of them get over it, but you just say, “Gee, I’m really sorry, I know how you feel,” and so forth. Yeah, you get a lot of that.

But more than that is, we would go around with our Alumni Club meetings, with sometimes it was the President and sometimes it was the Provost and sometimes it was the Dean, or a member of the faculty. They would get very heated questions. And there are little hotbeds of places, like long after the shanties—that issue was finally resolved, the unhappiness with the College that they generated persisted, and still persists a little bit.

But you could kind of—by the late ‘80s and early ‘90s, you know, I could have color-coded areas of the country, for example New Jersey,

northern New Jersey, and a segment of New York City, and what you begin to see is that these people ride the trains in to work together, or they associate with each other, and they—so it's the whole issue of "everybody is saying," and if there's nobody that's offering any counter-information these things become truths. And it's amazing what people can believe if it's hitting the right emotional chord. I mean, friends of mine in New Jersey, I get on the phone with them and it would just be unbelievable. A little part of Fairfield County was that way, and a little part of Long Island was that way.

You know, you go to another part of the country and everybody's happy with all of this. But you'd have an occasional columnist in the New York Post who would write something, or The Wall Street Journal, and these guys would read it. And then the kicker, I have always felt, is that these guys are working in law offices or Wall Street offices or whatever, with their good buddies from Princeton and Yale and Harvard, and those guys are just—I mean, any time there's an article you know it's going to show up on the guy's desk, because the other guys are going to say, "Heeey!" It used to be they'd argue over football, but now they've got this other stuff. So that would heat it up too, and that would make them even angrier when they talked to their colleagues. So that just ferments and keeps going.

CARROLL: How do you stop that? How does that momentum get stopped?

CHOUKAS: Well, as—unfortunately as the leaders of the institution think (I said this before, you know), the feeling in liberal arts that the truth will out and everything will be fine, and I happen to think that, you know, maybe in the long, long, long run, yeah, but in the race we're all running, forget it! Because it's not an even playing field; because the guys that are trying to stir up this are having a field day, and they control all the media. That was one reason I tried to get this Dartmouth Life thing in, so that we can start at least pumping information out to all of the things that are going at the College, that the students are doing, that the faculty are doing, and that this is really all peripheral stuff, you know, it doesn't really have to do with what the real core of the College is.

I used to say, "You know, if you could only spend a couple of weeks on campus and just see what was going on, you'd feel pretty good about it, and you'd realize that, given the fact that this is the '90s and not the '40s or the '50s, and that our society has changed a little bit, you'd find ninety percent of the College just going about doing the things that you'd like to think were going on in your Alma Mater. And all this other stuff is out on the extreme, but the media picks up the extreme, and we have The Dartmouth Review, who wants to make the extreme look like

the center to you, and so forth.” Some people understand that and other people don’t want to hear it.

CARROLL: When they get this phone call that says “I’m not giving another dime to this institution,” do you tag their file, or do you keep going back to them anyway and see if they calm down over time?

CHOUKAS: Yes, yes. Unless they say “Take my name off,” in which case we write them a little letter and say we’re sorry, and we just want to make sure this is really what you want, because the way our computers are set up, we can’t—if we stop sending you Alumni Fund stuff we have to stop sending you the Alumni Magazine and your class newsletter and everything else, and so let’s be sure that this is what you want.

CARROLL: A little Green blackmail!

CHOUKAS: Yeah.

CARROLL: How many do you think actually go to the very far extreme and say “Take me off.”

CHOUKAS: Very few, very few.

CARROLL: In other words they vent a bit.

CHOUKAS: Mm-hmm, yeah.

CARROLL: There were changes in the Alumni Council under McLaughlin, to broaden it. I don’t know if this is something that affected you, but they went from 60-some-odd positions to 90-some-odd positions. Were you aware of that?

CHOUKAS: Oh, yeah, my office staffs the Alumni—the Alumni Council is a function of the Alumni Affairs or Alumni Relations office. Yeah. Not only was I aware of it, but it had nothing to do with Dave McLaughlin. The—let me see—from 60 to 90 it seems to me happened right at the very beginning of his [presidency] but it had absolutely no—there was no causal relationship at all.

CARROLL: Why was that change put in place?

CHOUKAS: Well, every five years, maybe it was every ten years—every five or ten years there would be a study of the Alumni Council done by alumni (I mean, this is the alumni body’s governing body), done by a group of volunteer alumni, staffed through the Alumni Relations office. And they would look at various aspects of the Alumni Council and how it was

functioning. And this particular study was done in 1981 and was chaired by [Stanley] Stan Smoyer, who is a Class of '34 from Princeton, New Jersey. And—what's his name?—[John] Blake Hering of Portland Oregon was a Class of '53. And they had a sort of a year-long study, and they made a lot of recommendations. And one of them was that classes should have representation.

There was—the Alumni Council was made up of representatives from class officers, like from the Class Presidents Association and the Class Treasurers Association and so forth, and from club officers, from clubs around, there were regional representation, and there were some at-large members. But they felt that classes should also have a specific representative so that the Class of 1975 has an Alumni Councilor. They realized that since there are about 80 active classes, that was too much to add on, so they had everything was a three-year term, and so classes would elect their representative at their reunion, which is every five years, so a class would have a representative for three years and a blank for two years. But that's what added it. It had nothing to do with Parkhurst or the administration.

Frankly, I thought it was a bad move, in retrospect. Let me say I was not—I didn't have anything to do with it at the time, Mike McGean was running it then. And whether or not he supported that I have no idea, but the Alumni Council did it. And 60 is a much more manageable number than the hundred which the Council now is. It just seems to me there are too many people there. But I don't think it's a particularly important issue when you're talking about Dave McLaughlin's presidency.

CARROLL: No, but it did bring about a kind of different—well I guess the question is, too: What is the difference between an Alumni Council with 60 and one with 100?

CHOUKAS: The difference in what way? Why does it not function as well?

CARROLL: Yeah, exactly.

CHOUKAS: The main problem—there are two main problems, and they're related. The way the Council functions is through committees, and everybody is on, has two committees that he or she serves on. There's a Committee on Admissions and Enrollment; there's a Committee on Academic Affairs; there's a Committee on Athletics; there's a Committee on Classes, and Clubs, etc. Communications, Public Relations. The problem is that each of those committees, because all

the Councilors have to be on a committee, get so damned big that they don't function as well.

The problem also (and this is the more serious one, and it is related) is that the Council itself—there are only a very few positions of meaningful leadership in the Council. There's the President of the Council, and the President-Elect who is essentially the vice-president of the Council, and the Chairman of the Nominating Committee, and those are the really power positions. And you have a lot of people who are in positions of some power professionally, who come onto the Council with expectation—I mean, they really are anticipating working for the College and being able to contribute to the life of the College in ways—and so forth. And they come on the Council and there are two meetings a year, one in the fall and one in the spring, and it's a three-year term, and along about the middle of their second year they're saying, "What the hell am I doing? I've got better things to do with my time than to come up here and sit and listen to people and go to committee meetings where there are so many people, and . . ." That's what really happened.

The Council—I mean, I believe the Council should be around 50 people to be really and truly functional and do some things. Right now you have a couple of committees that really do some important things, and the rest of them are just—you know they are, I would guess, a pain in the neck to certain departments in the College. I don't think the Admissions Office is particularly happy to have the Council's committee telling them how to run their admissions, or whatever. But anyway, that's what the problem is.

CARROLL: And so the real prompting for this was simply to get more representation?

CHOUKAS: Get the classes to have representation, yeah.

CARROLL: Now, at the same time there was a change in the makeup of the Trustees, where there came to be Trustees who were put on the Board of Trustees from the Council. Were you here for that?

CHOUKAS: Gee, that—I don't think that's accurate, Jane. The Trustees, for as long as I have known, had—there are 16 Trustees. One is the Governor—yeah, ex officio, one is the President of the College. And then the remaining 14: seven are Charter Trustees and seven are Alumni Trustees. And the Charter Trustees—the only difference is how they came onto the Board. Once they're on the Board they don't even know themselves who is which or whatever. They're all the

same. But the Charter Trustees are selected by the Board itself, by all 16, who say “We’d like to have so-and-so,” and they go and approach that person and say, “Would you serve on the Board?” And that’s all it takes. The Alumni Trustees are nominated by the Alumni Council, and those seven come on in that way. But that has been the case for years. I mean, back to 1912 or so.

CARROLL: Did the procedure change? I was reading . . .

CHOUKAS: The procedure changed, yes.

CARROLL: The procedure must be what changed, then. Because I was reading some minutes . . .

CHOUKAS: It changed, but it was during Freedman’s administration it changed.

CARROLL: Oh, it was later. OK. One of the last things I wanted to talk about was the DOC, the Dartmouth Outing Club, and Athletics. Someone told me once, and I’m trying to remember who this was, that they thought that the Dartmouth Outing Club was the best alternative to the fraternities that there was. And I wondered, did you participate in it when you were here?

CHOUKAS: In what, in the Outing Club?

CARROLL: Yeah.

CHOUKAS: Very peripherally, yeah. I mean, I guess I would say no. When I was a kid in town, I did. I used to—yeah, we used to go out to the Outing Club cabins and spend a night when we were 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, even up to 16. But no, I did not. And I don’t know who made that comment, but I don’t think it holds. I mean, I don’t see the relationship. They are just two completely different things, really. I mean, it’s like saying being a member of the crew is—I forget how you phrased it—alternative to the fraternities. Or—no, I don’t understand even . . .

CARROLL: I think this is a former Outing Club president who sort of voiced this as, those who would go to the Outing Club are consumed and have their own sort of fraternal group, that they didn’t need then to have fraternities as their social circle, they had an alternative to do that. It doesn’t strike a chord?

CHOUKAS: It doesn’t. It strikes a self-serving chord to me! I mean, I understand what he is saying, or she is saying, and I would certainly agree that that’s—you know, that the leadership of the Outing Club is very fraternal in that sense, and they have a neat thing going, but I’ll bet you

could find any number of other little things around the College where the students feel that way. And they're not mutually exclusive anyway.

CARROLL: The Outing Club has a fairly big presence on campus. The Mountaineering Club I just was reading about. Was that around when you were a student?

CHOUKAS: Maybe. But certainly not in the same way that it is now. I mean, it's a pretty sophisticated organization now in terms of what they teach and what they do.

CARROLL: I'm just amazed at what they are able to do, and how many of them go off and scale major peaks.

CHOUKAS: Yes, I know it.

CARROLL: So what you're saying is, it really evolved over time.

CHOUKAS: Yeah. But I think mountain climbing has evolved over time. I mean, I think that's why—techniques and equipment and just the very idea of it as a sport I think is wider spread now than it was.

CARROLL: Well, the athletics has always been important on campus as far as I can tell. There has been . . .

CHOUKAS: But in a different way.

CARROLL: In what way?

CHOUKAS: Well, again, you know, I keep coming back to this. You remember my sociology background. It's reflecting society, but back up through the '50s, maybe into the early '60s, the whole College was focused on athletic events. And when there was a home football game the majority of the student body would go to the football game—the overwhelming majority of the student body would go to it. And the stands were almost always full. The same with hockey, the same with basketball, and everybody knew what was going on.

But starting with the late '60s the phenomenon changed, and for all kinds of reasons. I mean, really all kinds of reasons. One being, there are so many other interests. I mean, the whole idea of art and the theater, for example—that was a very, very small enclave up until the '60s. And you know, when the Hopkins Center was built a lot of people were saying, "God, what are you spending so much money on the arts at Dartmouth for?" Well, look what's happened. And it's as much a

function of what's going on in our society as it is that there's a Hopkins Center here.

I mean, that would have come anyway, I have no doubt. But students have so many different interests, whether it's just going out and riding their mountain bikes, or whatever. So many different interests, they could care less about—no, not care less. They're interested if somebody tells them the football team was playing, you know, "Well, how did they come out?" But as far as using their discretionary time to go watch something that they're not all that interested in, they're not going to do it.

And the only time you see large student crowds at athletic events is when the team is doing something that means something. The basketball team a couple of years ago was really good, and you couldn't get a ticket to go in the place. Well, that's not the case anymore. And so, what were we talking about, the place of athletics? And the difference. And so there's something—I mean, I used to almost hate to go to football games myself in the last ten years, because I could not go to a game without at least one alumnus saying to me, "Good God, where's the student body? Don't they care . . . ?" you know. I should have something written up that I could just whip out and hand to them.

CARROLL: A pamphlet.

CHOUKAS: Right, exactly. So again, alumni don't understand. I mean, they don't understand why Frisbee's a big deal, you know, but because they used to play touch football intrafraternity and intradorm touch football on the Green. And softball on the Green. And these were big things, and the whole student body would be out to see some of these games when they'd go down to the championship games. Now, I mean what is that now? Nothing. And is that something to lament? I mean, is that something to really be upset about with your college because—you have to say, "Look, students are doing their own thing, it's a different world."

CARROLL: Well, it seems to me there are probably more sports available now too than there were in the past.

CHOUKAS: That's right, a lot more. A lot more. And different interests. I mean, soccer was not a big sport; it's really becoming quite a big sport now.

CARROLL: All my students talk about lacrosse.

CHOUKAS: That's right.

CARROLL: Lacrosse is very hot right now. Were there some who blamed the advent of women for the decline of the popularity of the traditional sports?

CHOUKAS: Yes, particularly at the beginning. But I think now very few people. I mean, I think anybody who pays any attention understands that that's not the case. But there are also a few—I mean, what I was really talking about was pre-television; and also, Dartmouth's football was, you know, up there, maybe not the top ten in the country, but Ivy League football was pretty important. And the New York Times on Sunday, you know, ran all the Ivy League games and everything. Now you try to find out about the Ivy League in the Sunday Times and you've got to look down and some little thing like this. That says it all.

CARROLL: It doesn't help that their hometown team, Columbia, has never had much of a team anyway.

CHOUKAS: That's right.

CARROLL: I wonder, then, too, why has Ivy League football fallen off so much in the last couple of years?

CHOUKAS: Well, it's more than the last couple of years. It has to do with admissions; admissions and financial aid. Financial aid is a very important factor. I mean, we only—ours is based on need, and the state universities and all the top football private universities give athletic scholarships. That's a major difference.

CARROLL: Has there ever been any talk of giving athletic scholarships here?

CHOUKAS: Yes, but it doesn't get very far. And—nor should it. And that's an Ivy League decision, that's not a unilateral decision.

CARROLL: Have there ever been any alums who mention, during the course of a conversation for funds, approval of the job the women are doing in sports? I mean, we talked sort of about the women's hockey team; they're doing quite well.

CHOUKAS: Oh, yeah, a lot of—oh, sure, there's a lot of—I mean there are a lot of alumni who don't pay any attention to it, but there are a lot of alumni who are very supportive of the women's teams, and financially supportive. Local alumni, you know, en masse are very supportive of most women's teams. But lots of alumni around the country, yeah.

CARROLL: Well, that's good to hear. Well, the last thing I really wanted to talk about was—oh, one more thing was that in 1984 Seaver Peters left as the head of the—what was his title?

CHOUKAS: Well, he was Director of Athletics.

CARROLL: And I have had intimations this was not particularly voluntary on his part. Would you feel comfortable at all talking about this?

CHOUKAS: Well, I can tell you that that was my feeling, that it was not voluntary, but he's never told me that. He's a good friend of mine, and we talk a lot. I can tell you that—and you can draw your own conclusions, which I would guess would end up being the same conclusions I've drawn, and a lot of other people.

Seaver was very excited when Dave McLaughlin was named President. They're classmates. And Seaver was captain of the hockey team when he was an undergraduate, and he and McLaughlin knew each other well. But Dave McLaughlin was, very early on, showed his concern about Dartmouth athletics, and I think he put a lot of pressure on Seaver. And whether Seaver ended up finally just saying, "Well, it doesn't look—I can see the handwriting on the wall and it doesn't look as though he wants me to stay around," and resigned, or whether he was asked to resign, I have no way of knowing.

[Text deleted at narrator's request.]

CARROLL: Was McLaughlin's idea that there should be a bigger, better presence of the athletics for the . . . ?

CHOUKAS: No, I think he was more concerned that our teams had losing records, so many of our teams had losing records. And in fact I think he made some public statements early on that he was really going to improve the athletics and get us back on the winning track, and competitive track, and all of that. Which, if you want to go back and look at the records of the teams during his administration, I think you will see there was little change from the first year he came on until the last year.

CARROLL: That's right. As with anything there are cycles and blips.

CHOUKAS: Well, the dramatic changes, in my opinion, have been under Jim—you know, paradoxically, I guess you could say, under Jim Freedman's. I mean, I think our teams have done much, much better.

CARROLL: It's true. The last thing I want to talk about is McLaughlin's decision to resign. Were you surprised by that? It was only seven years into his time.

CHOUKAS: No. I wasn't surprised, because he was under increasing fire. No, I was not surprised at that.

CARROLL: Did the alumni contact you? I know he was much more popular with the alumni than, say, on campus.

CHOUKAS: Well, I'm not so sure how popular he was towards the end of his tenure. I mean, he took a real hit with the shanty thing. And I think more and more alumni were disappointed that the College didn't seem to have taken the more hard-line approach to all of this that they assumed somebody with Dave McLaughlin's background would bring to it. And what the alumni didn't know—I mean, among so many things that they don't know—what they didn't know was the major difference in the governance of a college or university and a corporation.

I mean, that's really—a president has to lead by consensus. He cannot lead by edict. He can issue the edicts—I mean, he can say "I don't care that you voted 157 to whatever about ROTC; we're going to have ROTC." But sooner or later, you know, you can't govern. Because the faculty—you know, they're tenured. And it's quite a different thing. And not only that, but the whole being of an academic institution is expressing ideas and discussing them openly and debating them and all of this, and . . . And I think the debate is often more important than the conclusions or the results that come out of the debate, and that's the—it's like a big federation. So if you can't develop consensus for what you want to do, you're not going to make it. So I wasn't surprised.

CARROLL: Do you think—I've not spoken to David McLaughlin yet. Do you think when he looks back on this, this is something—I mean, his presidency is for him, in its sum, a positive?

CHOUKAS: You know, I really don't know. I hope so, because you see, you heard me say

[End of Tape 3, Side B — Beginning of Tape 4, Side A]

CARROLL: So you were saying you think he . . .

CHOUKAS: Yes, I think he accomplished some real positive things for the institution and was very helpful to it. But when you ask me whether I think he looks on this as positive, my guess would be that he knows

the positive things that he did, and he feels good about those. But he also has a feeling that a lot of people don't understand or appreciate a lot of the things that he did, and therefore that's got to be a bit of a downer to him as he views his own administration, that he probably feels he hasn't had the credit for a lot of those things. That would be my guess, but I don't know. It would be interesting to see what he has to say on that subject, but I really believe he did some terrific things for this College.

CARROLL: Well certainly, in the initial part of his time here, he really stepped in and just took off like a shot. I mean, he gets in office and immediately 60 different things are happening.

CHOUKAS: Yeah. Well, that was both for better and for worse, really. He made some personnel moves that some of us were not very happy about. I think the apparent handling of the dismissal of [Rodney] Rod Morgan, who was a Vice President [for Administration], for example, whether or not that position should have been continued or not is less important than the way in which it was discontinued. And that bothered a lot of people.

I don't know why Ralph Manuel left. I suspect it was partly the same as Seaver Peters, but I'm not sure. It may just have been that there's a lot of burnout in a dean position, and that Ralph was burning out and some things precipitated it, what was going to happen anyway, that he was going to make a move anyway in a year or two, I don't know. But those were a couple of changes that were controversial . . . Because those were people who, you know, Manuel and Peters (not Rod Morgan so much, because he wasn't that well known to alumni)—but you start taking out of the institution the people that alumni connect with, and you start to lose a little bit of the soul of the institution. I think there was some of that fallout.

CARROLL: When—you were still in the Alumni Affairs office when [Jim] Freedman came on. The last thing that I want to ask is, was there a kind of upswing in giving, an upswing in temperament, I guess, when Freedman came on?

CHOUKAS: No. If anything, it would have gone the other way. I mean, he was not a very popular choice with a lot of the types of alumni that we seem to have been focusing on talking about.

CARROLL: The crotchety ones!

CHOUKAS: Yeah. So it's taken a long time—I mean, all of the anti-Kemeny sentiment, which was laid to rest during McLaughlin's tenure,

resurfaced in a hurry when Freedman became President. And the fact that he had no Dartmouth connection, you know, was a little more than some people could take.

I guess I need to pause here for a second, and say—I'm saying a lot of negative things about alumni opinion and thoughts, and that's only because we're talking about how some of those things affect the present campus, or college, or did at any given time. And there's so many alumni who are very understanding and very positive that one has to be careful about that. I don't want this to sound as though—I mean, you know, a lot of my friends are alumni!

But seriously, I've really come to feel, in the last few years I was in office, that the great majority of alumni (and I really mean the great majority, like 80% or more) don't pay any attention to all of these things that we're talking about, unless they become national news, as they did during the shanty crisis and on a couple of other occasions. They're going about their own business. They're proud of their college, they had a good experience here, they like it, but they could care less about what goes on on a daily basis. And we tend to focus too much, I think, on the few thousand alumni who really are tuned in on what's going on at the College, and who are affected by it. And I think there's no doubt about that. We tend to overrate the minute interest that alumni are bringing to it, because we're working with a group who are volunteers and who are close, and so that's who we're tuned in to. I've been giving a lot of thought to that, and I really think we should probably change the way we do a lot of things, to tell you the truth, on that.

CARROLL: The other thing is, did you tend to talk about these people, because the jobs you had, you were on the front line combating with them so much. How many people pick up the telephone and say, "Great job!"

CHOUKAS: Yeah, right.

CARROLL: So you're stuck with all the people who called to complain.

CHOUKAS: Yes, exactly. But I think that, if you think back to what I said about—I was singling out New Jersey because it deserved to be singled out—but that phenomenon of, one, these alumni who see each other professionally riding in and out on the trains, or at cocktail parties at their local country clubs and all this sort of thing, and who, at the same time, are colleagues with graduates of other Ivy League institutions who are constantly needling them over what was in the press about this: I think that had an awful lot to do, really, with why they were and

are so upset about lots of thing. I mean, I really think that's the connection.

CARROLL: Well, I thank you for all of your thoughts. And if you think of anything else, let me know.

CHOUKAS: I will, OK.

END OF INTERVIEW