AN INTERVIEW WITH JAMES BUDDE

Interviewer: Jewell Willhite

Oral History Project

Endacott Society

University of Kansas
JAMES BUDDE

B.F.E., Business, Wayne State College, 1962

M.S., Education and Counseling, University of Nebraska, 1968

Ed.D., Administration, University of Kansas, 1976

Service at the University of Kansas

First employed at KU, 1970

Assistant director of Systems Technology, Bureau of Child Research, 1970-73

Associate Director of Systems Technology, Bureau of Child Research, 1973-75

Director of Systems Technology, Bureau of Child Research, 1975 –

Director of the University of Kansas Research and Training Center on Independent Living.

Senior Scientist at the Schiefelbusch Lifespan Institute

Director emeritus, 2002

Retired in 2008
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Q: I am speaking with James Budde, who retired in 2008 as senior scientist at the Schiefelbusch Lifespan Institute at the University of Kansas. We are in Lawrence, Kansas, on April 30, 2009. Where were you born and in what year?

A: I was born in Wisner, Nebraska, on January 26, 1937. It is about 90 miles northwest of Omaha.

Q: What were your parents’ names?

A: Actually, my father’s father’s name was John and his wife, my grandmother, was Minnie. They were both immigrants from Germany. The Budde family’s occupations were basically carpenters, teachers, and ministers. During high school my father quit during his sophomore year and went to Chicago where he went to school for Coin Electric, where he learned the electric trade. But there were no jobs available during the Depression, so he took a job as a shoe repairman, and he later bought his own store and worked in that field for a number of years. He was also active in the Lutheran Church. He taught Sunday school for 40 years.

My mother’s family came from Sweden. They settled in Model, Iowa. Her father, Gus, worked for many years on the Chicago, Northwestern Railway System and was killed in a railway accident. Her mother Elsie struggled to raise four children. My mother quit school in the eighth grade to provide for the family. Later my grandmother remarried and she married a fellow by the name of Faith, strange name for a guy. But I was very impressed with him because he could roll a cigarette in one hand while he sat on his horse.
Q: Did you mention your parents’ names?
A: My parents’ names were Frederick R. and Marjory I. Budde.
Q: Did you have brothers and sisters?
A: I have one brother, Gary. He lives in Norfork, Nebraska. He is a real wizard at electronics and has owned an electronics store and also serviced these huge towers that repeat TV across the country.
Q: Did you grow up in the town where you were born?
A: I did grow up in that town. What I remember most about my parents is how hard they worked. For example, my father would work from eight in the morning until six o’clock at night repairing shoes, particularly during World War II. Then on Saturday night—that was a big night—he would work from six until midnight, sometimes two o’clock in the morning. Then he would get up and he would go teach Sunday school. That was very interesting because everybody worked then and there wasn’t a lot of money or actually many kinds of merchandise because it went to the war. So there were a lot of social activities. There was a movie theater and people would walk in big circles all around town and chat with one another. It was kind of an exciting place. Everybody was very kind to one another.

And my mother was the same way. She worked very hard. She cooked the meals on a coal-fired stove. We didn’t have any hot water, so she heated the water in a cistern and poured that in the bath tub to take a bath. I remember her scrubbing floors on her knees. We couldn’t afford new linoleum. Actually, there was old linoleum and she painted that. She would take little pieces of sponge and stipple the floor to make it look better. She made soap out of cracklings. She used a wash board and an old washer and
hung her clothes on the clothes line. And her clothes were always white, very white. I will never forget that.

I have to say that our family was very poor, but that was not unusual for those times in that community. I don’t think we were ever in need for any kind of necessities. We were very rich in the Christian faith and we had a lot of hope for what was going to happen after World War II. The war was going to end on our side. I actually remember the end of World War II.

Q: Really? What do you remember about it?
A: Well, there were church bells ringing all around town. We had known that it was coming, and we were going to celebrate by taking hollyhocks and putting them in our ears. I remember my mother saying, “You are going to break your eardrums. Take those dumb things out of there.” But people were, you know, the liquor that there might have been around, maybe homemade wine and things, they were celebrating. Everybody was out in the streets. It was a very joyful time. And then, of course, along came the Cold War. That was another story.

Q: Where did you go to elementary school?
A: I’d like to say just a little bit more about the family, if I could.

Q: Sure.
A: Our house was built in about 1880 and it was about half a block from the Chicago Northwestern Railway. We could see the trains from our kitchen window and could hear the whistles. Actually, the ground would just shake when the trains would go by. Those old trains used to put me to sleep at night and wake me up in the morning. That was the beginning of one of my interests in life, which was the study of railways and model
railroading. The other thing I remember about the town was particularly when I probably started associating with people who were a little bit more affluent, I was ashamed of that background at first. But as time went on I found what a rich environment because, although there was hard work the boredom almost produced Yankee ingenuity where we would go to the city dump and take alarm clocks and pull them apart and make them work. The sports that were in that town were such a big part of that town. The bands and the sports were a big part, as they are in most towns. That taught us the teamwork.

And kindly neighbors always looked after us. We didn’t have to worry about children, like children do today going out on the street. And they disciplined us and the parents didn’t care. If you were out of line, in the community, they would let you know. But there was always this community spirit where particularly elders of the community would come to you and encourage you and tell you that you were doing a good job. There was a fair share of gossip there, but even that served to keep people in line, probably the only part I didn’t like about it. But maybe it was a good part.

The other thing was I really developed a strong sense of patriotism when I would see the flag-draped coffins come out of the railroad cars and the whole town would turn out for it. And of course we had, as most towns did in those days, an honor roll for all the men who were serving in the service. They had a little placard. If they had been killed in combat, or had been killed during that time, then there was a gold star next to them. I don’t know whatever happened to that, but it was gone. So there was this sense that the world was going on but great patriotism. Of course, that stuck with me as well.

The community members, my parents, I think that’s probably my basis for the work that I do, helping other people, came from. The last thing that I would like to say
about that was that my father taught Sunday school for 40 years. And you can imagine if he was working in that shoe repair store until two o’clock in the morning and had to get up and start teaching at eight o’clock in the morning. That was difficult. But we didn’t have a car so we didn’t go anywhere. If we had to go someplace, we would go on the train. I often thought about that. I thought that during those 40 years he probably didn’t miss more than eight or nine days because we didn’t go on vacations either.

Q: I know that you have worked with disabled and people in your adult life. Did you know people like that as you were growing up?

A: No. The only one that I can remember was a girl by the name of Virginia Creiger. She had cerebral palsy. I remember she had a seizure one time when I was in junior high. I didn’t know quite what to think about it. The lady who was there, a wonderful principal by the name of Mary Gross, knew exactly what to do and she restrained her and put something in her mouth so she wouldn’t swallow her tongue. Then she was all right. I do remember how embarrassed her brother was over the whole thing. Of course the kids didn’t know quite what to make of it.

The other situation that I remember was that my grandmother worked for a lady who had a son who had mental retardation, an intellectual deficit, as they call it today. They came to visit. His name was Doug. I wanted to take him to school, because here was this great big guy, you know. We wanted to have him up there to share. Well, I had no idea that he had Down’s syndrome, being about a second grader or so. And the children just teased him unmercifully. He started crying and went back home. And of course I was mad at them and tried to hit them. I went and told the principal about it, the
Mary Gross I was telling you about. She stepped in and took care of it, but by then it was too late. So those were really my only experiences.

Q: Where did you go to elementary school?
A: I went to Wisner Elementary School. I can’t remember very much about it. I was not a very good student. I loved to draw. I would get clobbered over the head with a ruler now and then for drawing when I was supposed to be working.

Q: Then you went to junior high and high school in this same town.
A: Yes. Junior high was in the same building as the elementary school.

Q: It went to eighth grade, I suppose. That’s the way they did in those days.
A: Yes. Mary Gross was there. Mary Gross was a wonderful teacher and a wonderful person. She would read to us *Huckleberry Finn* on Friday, if we were good all week. And she kept score about what was going on. She was a wonderful person. She always had good things to say about me. She was always a person who would get me to try to do new things and then compliment me when I would make it. Now her sister was the opposite. She was the second grade teacher. If you couldn’t pronounce words she would take this ruler and crack you over the hands. I think that led to some reading problems that I had early in my life. High school was right across the way.

Q: Was that called Wismer High School?
A: Yes, Wismer Public High School. It is now Wismer-Pilger. They’ve merged. The things I remember most about that was, first, it was a pretty rigid structure because it was geared for the rural areas. They had classes to make hog feeders and weld and do all of those kinds of things. For the girls they had bookkeeping, shorthand, typing, etc. But there really weren’t any other kind of electives. The only two electives that I could think
of that were available were trigonometry and leather craft. So I kind of took the typing classes and I took the trigonometry and it was terrible. I’m not much on math, but I loved the leather craft that was a part of it. I love sports. I played football all four years. In my junior year I started boxing and boxed in the Golden Gloves.

Q: Was it a high school sport?
A: No. But they were recruited out of the high school. It was just done by a local guy in the community who wanted to do it. So I boxed in the Golden Gloves my junior year and I was the light heavyweight runner up. I ended up boxing a guy who had been in the Navy. It went to a split decision. Of course, that was big talk in the town for awhile about all that.

Because we didn’t have any money, work always had to be a part of it. I worked in the Phillips 66 station where I made the great wage of 50 cents an hour. Before that it had been 25 cents an hour to pull weeds and do odd jobs. So I worked at those jobs. My junior year I also found this great job to clean out pig barns that paid 75 cents an hour. Then there were some other jobs where I was able to drive the tractor and plow some fields, which were kind of nice. Hauling bales was a big one. That was a dirty job but that was a young man’s job to get in shape for football. So when I graduated…

Q: What year did you graduate?
A: 1955. I was not encouraged to go on to college.

Q: I suppose your parents felt they couldn’t afford it.
A: Absolutely not. They were just delighted and even had a party for me when I graduated from high school because the whole family in those days of the Depression….Girls weren’t expected to do it. Like with my mother, it was a necessity. She had to support
the family after my grandfather died. The same way with my father. He was going to become, go to a trade school. He went to a very fine trade school. I’m sure he skimped and saved to make that. And actually my father was working for someone in a shoe repair store and that’s how he met my mother, who was working right next door in a dime store.

Q: Did you go to college right out of high school?
A: No, not at all. I had an uncle who was in the Marines and he came back for a visit. He said, “I have a job for you at Paper Mate Pen in Los Angeles.” So I jumped in my little Plymouth and drove to Denver and stayed with an uncle there. Then I drove all the way through without sleeping. There were no interstate highways. I remember taking those curvy old roads going out there, going out through the desert, going in through Los Vegas with all those big lights and my mouth was just hanging open. So I worked in Los Angeles for about six months. But I really didn’t like it.

Q: Were you working in a factory?
A: Yes, in Culver City. Then my uncle moved to Canoga Park. So we lived out there and I had to drive back and forth and commute and just hated the traffic out there. The smog was so bad it would get in my eyes. I would start crying and couldn’t see where I was going. I didn’t really know a lot of people out there. I had one friend out there who was a neighbor kid. So I came back home and I was talking to my friends. We went out drinking beer one night. I asked them what they were doing. They said, “We volunteered for the draft.” So I said, “That sounds like a wonderful thing to do. I think I’ll volunteer for the draft as well.” So I found myself going to Fort Omaha for our physical exams. Then they put us on a troop train. Then we went through Kansas. The
Alcohol and Beverage guys got on the train and they went through everybody’s packs to see if they had any liquor, which they confiscated. I don’t know what they did with it after they got it. I was not one who had one. Then we went to Fort Chaffee, where we took our basic training. It was so huge, just absolutely huge. And you are really kind of confined to a small area.

All along the line I have been in different kinds of leadership. For example, in high school one of the other events that occurred was that they had county government day and you would go down to the county court house and you would take on the position of the person who was there. So I tried to get voted in to be judge, and my first political speech was for that. And they had this lady who thought she was the town constable. She was married to him. She sat up on top of the hill and as the kids would speed down the hill she would go after them and give them a ticket. So one of the parts of my speech was—her name was Lil—I would remove Lil from the hill. The kids liked that. So I was elected to that. Anyway, through my whole life I have always been looked to for leadership. That started at some early time, and I have no idea why. But those are some of the seeds that I remember.

When I went in the service I was kind of the person who was given the orders to take people around as we were going to camp. When we were in camp I was put into a position of the squad leader. Then we didn’t come back home after basic training like you normally do. We went to our advanced school, which mine was a kind of a mechanics school. At Christmas time we went back home. A friend’s father came down to pick us up. There were about six of us crammed in his Chevrolet and we drove back home and spent two weeks at home. Then it was time to go back and we had the choice
of going on a bus. Then somebody came up with this great idea of buying this old
Hudson. So we bought this old Hudson and drove it down there. It took eight quarts of
oil to get down there and it was two quarts low when we got there. So then we finished
school and we got our orders. My orders were to go to Korea, so they flew us to Fort
Lewis, Washington. Then we went on a troop ship, which was a very interesting
experience, because we had rough water going out. There were a lot of people who were
sick. The places that we stayed in were six berths high. If somebody got sick above, you
didn’t want to be down below. The other interesting thing about it was that these berths
were just basically an iron pipe that was curved around that was about six feet long.
Then you webbed a piece of canvas underneath that. There were no mattresses or
anything on it. But I’m six foot four and the canvas was about five foot eight. So you
can see I had no room, and with the berths so close to one another, you couldn’t turn over
either.

Q: Oh, my.
A: But I loved the water and I got out on the deck and went up on the bow of the ship. It
would go down and hit it and it would throw water over the top of it. Of course then I
was all filled full of salt. When we got to Korea I had absolutely no idea what it was
going to be like. We landed with landing craft. And of course the cease fire had been
signed a couple years before.

Q: So the war was over by the time you got there.
A: Yes. Well, there were always little skirmishes that were going on. So they loaded us into
some Army trucks and took us out about eight miles north of the 38th parallel. We
weren’t too far from the DMZ. I was in a tank battalion. You know one of these things
in the Army, you never know where you are going to end up. So I was in the tank battalion for most of the 16 months. But toward the end the divisions around there had football teams. Every general said, “I’m going to have my football team.” If you saw the movie “MASH” with the football team, it wasn’t too far from that. But I had played in high school and they had people that they were recruiting who had been drafted who were pros and played in college. So there was a lot of tough competition for me. I got whipped around pretty good. But that was all right. I learned some lessons and it was kind of a fun thing. Then we came back home. The thing that I most remember was that the ship docked in Washington. I looked out there and I thought, “There have been so many things that have happened to me the last 16 months, I don’t know whether I am ready to go back again or not.” But I did. I went back home and worked construction. A friend of mine who had graduated from, and who was going back for his junior year said, “Why don’t you go up to Wayne State College and go to school?” I said, “I have always wanted to do that.” I had saved enough money for a car, so I thought, “I’ll use that for one semester. I’ll use that money to get me through and I’ll play football and I can say I played football in college.” That was my whole goal for going.

Q: You had the G.I. Bill, didn’t you?

A: No. That was a very interesting thing because they did away with it about a year before I was in. So when I came back there was no parents’ money and I was struggling. I had a wonderful job in the summer. I worked for a place called Merit Beach in Omaha. Soon after I was there I was again in leadership and promoted to the head lifeguard. We would have 5,000 people there on a weekend and maybe 1,000 in the water. We lived at the beach. The gals who worked at the concession stand would give us hot dogs and other
food to eat so we could kind of limp by on that. The money was very good and I could save all that and then I would have my tuition and a bit of my spending money for the next year and then work in the filling station and the library. Then after I got through, they made it retroactive. So I got the G.I. Bill for my master’s and my doctorate.

Q: When you went to Wayne State, what did you major in?
A: I had a major in business and a minor in art. I didn’t know what to do for a minor, and I took an art appreciation course. I thought, “This might be an interesting way to go.” And actually my first job I ended up teaching art. My degree is a BFE, a bachelor’s degree in fine arts.

Q: When did you graduate from college?
A: In 1962.

Q: Then what did you do?
A: Well, then I got a job teaching school at a tech high school in Omaha. I was the swimming coach. I thought, “Well, I’ll try teaching.” I didn’t know that it was any great interest of mine. It was a ghetto school, a very interesting place. It was during the times of the riots. The riots happened around that time. It was at that time that I met my wife Jane. Actually, I had met her as a roving manager of one of the swimming pools. She was a lifeguard and I was the guy who would come around when the other guys would take days off. We were married in 1964. I can’t remember exactly when I started graduate school at the University of Omaha. I think the degree from there was 1967, if I remember right. But it was an interesting place to teach in at the time and I really liked the counseling, helping young men that were entrusted to me. The problem with it was that you were forced into doing the discipline and not really doing any kind of good
counseling. Then when my wife wanted to have children, or we wanted to have children, the money was not great enough and I was kind of getting a little burned out on the job. So a friend of mine had told me about a job at Northern Natural Gas called Northern Assistance Company. He had brought back four engineers from NASA who had used the systems approach in the space program. I absolutely loved this job. For some reason I had a great conceptual grasp of how to use the systems approach to solve problems in human services. I just absolutely loved it and loved the company.

Q: What does that mean, using a systems approach?

A: Well, you are like a system analyst. For example, when there was a riot we would go into a community and we would take a look at the community and say, “What are all the problems that we see here?” And we would develop an approach for each one of those problems that had a series of systematic steps that we would use to solve them. For example, one of the programs we operated in Lincoln was the Job Corps. We would bring the people who had been in the riots, young men who had some potential, out of their neighborhoods and we would take them back to an old Air Force base and we would let them go into the barracks, much like I did when I did when I went to Fort Chaffee. In there they would start getting the beginning of social skills and basic work skills. Then there was a big assembly line out there that had good jobs, like sheet metal. And there was programmed instruction. It was all systematically done with a systems approach. They would go into the program and if they knew it they would just progress on to the new one. If not, they would have to stay there until they got it right. At the beginning of it, it was basic knowledge, things that they needed in school, arithmetic, etc. But at the end of it they were actually fabricating sheet metal as good as any place. Now along with
that they had a social skills development and the reinforcement system where in the beginning you were just getting the necessities. As you went further through the program, you would start getting paid. You would also get better living accommodations. You got off the ward, you would get into an officers’ quarters where there would be two of you. Then there would be one of you toward the end. And you would start getting more leave to the community. But the idea was to break the mold of where you were. A systematic part of it was that we had a high level of placement. We were paid for placement and we were paid for people being on the jobs. So we were out there supporting them afterwards. That was the idea, this was the systems approach that they used in putting a man on the moon, figuring out what all the steps were and putting people through it.

Q: They don’t still have that, do they?
A: Oh, yes. But we’ve gone back away from it. I’ve used it the whole time that I’ve been here.

Q: But I mean the Job Corps.
A: Oh, no. I think there may be some around someplace, but those were the thing to do. And when the funding went out, you know, that was it. What happened at the place where I was working was that these four fellows were really serious about making changes in human services and education. They got into a fight with the chief executive officer, who was using the money that was given by Northern Natural Gas for political purposes. He was running for Congress. He got beat out in the primaries. By then the four guys had just lost interest in it. So they left. I was looking for a job and had a wife with a new child. It was a difficult time. So a friend of mine said, “You know, they have
a grant at Glenwood State Hospital.” So I said, “I’m going down there and talk to them.”

The superintendent said, “Oh, I’d just love to have you use this approach to take adolescents on the back wards and try to develop some kind of habilitation program.”

Well, that was the same approach that was used in the Job Corps. It was just a different population. The process of creating something that was close to that program’s instruction for them was different. It just had to start at a more basic level. So he took me out to the institution. And he said, “Let me show you what these young men are like.” Well, I went back to a place that was basically an old hospital that was built at the turn of the century that had nurses’ stations in the middle. On the ends it had wards. And there were probably 30 to 40 adolescents who were on those wards with maybe three or four people who were doing the supervision. They were lying on the floor and moaning and crying and playing with little pieces of silverware.

Q: These were mentally deficient people.

A: Moderate mental retardation is what they called it at the time. But the effect for a lot of them with Down’s Syndrome was that we look like we have mental retardation and we do, but we don’t have as severe a level as we would have had if we had been in homes. Lying out on that stinky old ward. I mean I can smell it today. And I can hear those moans of those fellows who were out there to this day. I said, “I’m not sure I am up to this.” I mean I said it to myself. I didn’t say it to the superintendent. But I thought, “It’s a job and there is really a great need here. I’m just going to have to buck up and do it.” So the superintendent let me get some people from the institution who I could pick that were really pretty good. So I got them together and we started out with our big flow charts and we figured out how we were going to start with basic reinforcement with M &
Ms in the mouths for basic skills like sorting and stacking. That went all the way to work skills and then working in the laundry or working in the shops that were up there. Social skills were a component that went along with it. You know, they didn’t know how to interact with people. There was a job skills that went along with it that had to do with how to do the job. But it was also the work habits of getting there on time, asking questions if you didn’t understand. So that program in about a year and a half became very successful. The superintendent was one who wanted to (unclear) his institution. So we had legislators coming in and a lot of people who were looking at it. I was asked to write a paper to present at the American Association of Mental Deficiency, as it was called at the time, in San Francisco. When I was out there I went to a workshop because there was a behavioral component to it. Remember I was saying that we started with M & Ms and worked up.

Q: A sort of Skinner approach.

A: Exactly. And we worked up to the point where you would receive tokens and you could go to our commissary and you could buy things. And so they started understanding this whole approach of it and they didn’t need M & Ms in the mouth every time they did something. You know, they could sustain it over longer periods of time. So there were fellows by the names of Jim Lett and Luke Watson who were putting on the workshop on operant conditioning and behavioral analysis. So I went to the workshop. I thought, “You know, it would be good if I could bring one of those out to the program.” So I asked Jim Lett and Luke Watson if they would come out. They went through the program and didn’t say anything. We went back to my office and they didn’t say anything. And I said, “My Lord, my program can’t be that bad.” And Jim Lett, was at
Parsons, but was part of the Bureau of Child Research at the time. He said, “Jim, you
don’t need us for consultants. We need you.” So they asked me to come down and be a
consultant and then I met Dr. Schiefelbusch.

Q: So this was from KU.
A: Yes.
Q: So you came here then. In what year?
A: 1970. Dr. Schiefflbusch came up with a fellow by the name of Bob (unclear) and went
through the program. It wasn’t long after that they offered a job. And I wanted to work
on a doctorate.
Q: So you had your master’s by this time. Did you get your master’s in the summers while
you were teaching?
A: Yes. It was the last years that I was teaching. That’s right. I actually finished it up when
I was at Northern Systems Company.
Q: What was your major for your master’s?
A: It was actually educational counseling and psychology. The psychology part of it was,
you know, the behavioral analysis was the stuff I just absolutely loved. At that time they
were using behavioral analysis and doing behavioral counseling. That was kind of a new
approach, and I did like that. Unfortunately, I never had an opportunity to use much of it.
Q: So then you came up here to work with Dr. Schiefflbusch.
A: And they had a grant. They had gotten me busy organizing it. It didn’t get funded. Then
there were questions about whether there was going to be money for me. A fellow by the
name of Bill Ferguson came over from the office and they were just starting the
destititutionalization movement. And they were setting up DD councils around the
country and they were starting up programs like Cottonwood, Inc., which is here, where it is a community component of it. So I wrote a grant with Bill and we became longtime friends. He used to fight with Bill Ferguson because he didn’t like Bill Ferguson’s indirect cost rates. We used to laugh and call it a Fergusinger conflict, a combination of Bill and Bill. So I wrote the first grant. What was so important about this was that the young men who were in Glenwood State Hospital where I worked, they needed to come to the community, but there was no way to get to the community until this deinstitutionalization started. So some of these same young men now were coming out to places like Cottonwood and they went to sheltered workshops and lived in group homes and they had more access to the community. But it wasn’t quite complete. What finally made it complete was something that happened in 1970 that I’ll get back to and talk to you more about later. But I worked on my doctorate then and my advisor was Og Linsley.

Q: What department were you in?

A: Education. Higher Education and Policy was the name of it. Og was kind of a crazy guy who had been to Harvard and he was a behavioralist. He used to never know what he was going to do. But I really liked the guy. And he said, “The requirements of this kind of general approach that we are going to take here is one where I am going to let you take courses from other departments. But you have to take the requirements of the department and you have to take my courses.” Well, I wanted to take his courses anyway. But the issue here is one where I wanted to continue on with a systems approach, but I needed to learn other things. For example, cost was a big part of it. So I was able to take cost accounting and with those set up cost (unclear) when I set up the system. I could put
these little cost centers around there and figure out what it would cost and figure out how
to budget things. Then I got my doctorate here in 1976.

Q: What was your dissertation on?
A: Well, that’s interesting too because my dissertation was on a systems approach, how it
would apply. It was more of a historical research kind of thing and looking to see what
had been done in this area any place in human services. Then later on I published it and
it was a book called *Measuring Performance in Human Services*.

Q: How many children do you have and what are their names?
A: We have two children, Chip and Ann is the daughter. They both went to school here and
graduated from Lawrence High School. Both attended KU. Chip played football here for
four years. He was starting center for four years. There was only one person who started
more games than he did and that was a person who played in a bowl game at the time.
But he has something like 1,067 continuous snaps as center before they put somebody in,
you know. That was kind of an unusual record. They usually don’t count things like
that. Chip married a lady by the name of Sue Anna Miranda. Her dad was a coach here
with Ted Owens. They had some fantastic basketball teams, a national championship and
final fours. She is a great lady. She is a senior vice president of Bank America in
Wichita. Chip left here and got a master’s degree from Northwestern in what they call
integrated marketing. After working for several large companies he started his own
marketing company and operates different than most do today because he knows a lot of
people in the field and he is kind of the deal maker. Then he gets someone who is going
to an (unclear) in that site and somebody who is going to do training and somebody who
is going to do a logo and he puts these packages together. And most of these people are
working out of their own little businesses in their homes or little shops. You don’t have these mega companies like he was with. His last one he had worked his way up and they laid off 300 people. He was like in the third wave that was laid off. He said, “I can do this myself and I can do it cheaper and I can do it as good if not better.” I was really shaky on that, but he is really doing a fantastic job. He’s the president of the K Club here. Sue Anna is very active in the K Club. They have two children, Luke and John, great kids. They are up here a lot because Chip does football games on Saturday. He does colors for them. But they are always up here visiting her parents or my parents.

Now Ann got a degree here in speech pathology but left to drive me crazy to become a nanny in California. When she was out there, she took a thing, kind of like Coin Electric for my dad, to learn how to be a chef. She was going to be a world-class chef. So she moved back after being a nanny for a year with some people who had unbelievable money. I mean they lived in a house that had an Olympic sized swimming pool with a cover over the top of it. That was their personal swimming pool. But they were good to her. She came back and she wanted to work on the Plaza. She became in a very short time the pastry chef for Fedora’s. Then she went to work for the American Hotel. You know, it wasn’t for her. So she called me up and said, “Dad.” I wasn’t going to help her out moneywise because I was not happy with her choices. So she called and said, “Dad, if I went back to school, would you pay?” I said, “Sure, anything.” So she started working on her master’s in education at the University of Missouri in Kansas City. She then met a young man by the name of John Bros, who was in her class here in Lawrence. He had just graduated from Law School. John went and got a job as an assistant county attorney in Truman State, and moved out there. So we got her an
apartment. She thought she could get through school faster at Truman State. Truman State is a wonderful school. She had a choice of doing teaching or being a student teacher. She said, “I’ll just be the teacher.” So somebody came up and recruited her for a school called Banneker in Swope Park. She had much the same kind of experiences that I did in the ghetto school that I taught in. But she hung in there and really became a good teacher. Then they moved from Kansas City to Lawrence and we were about five minutes away. John had done well and became a partner for a large law firm in Kansas City, but he wanted to try something different. So he became a corporate attorney for Payless. That’s when they moved here. Then Lowes just recently hired him to be the head of the litigation department for them. That meant a move to Charlotte. In the meantime they had a granddaughter by the name of Sophie, who, you know, we are just really great buddies. So it was hard to see them move. Now she has had several interviews for schools. One of them is over at Davidson, which I am very impressed with the college.

Q: When did you get your Ph.D.?
A: In 1976. Actually it is an Ed.D.

Q: Were you also working for Cottonwood at that time?
A: No.

Q: Was that later?
A: No, I never worked for them really. I was given a title of director of systems technology. I had a little office over in Haworth that was so small that if I wanted to have somebody come in and visit, we’d have to open up the door to let somebody stick their legs out. That’s when I worked on the first grant that was here. Then they were just completing
the top story and that was called the UAP (University Affiliated Program). Funding came for that from Health and Human Services. The idea was that underneath the Kennedy Administration they wanted to use the brainpower of the university to solve these problems in the areas of mental retardation. So the UAPs were developed to teach courses and come up with innovative programs and to provide training and technical assistance in the area of mental retardation, what they called it at the time. So Schieffelbusch said, “Well, you know we’ve got a fellow going up there to become a director who’s got a doctorate and you don’t have yours yet, but I think you would make a fine associate director.” So I moved up there and became very active in bringing grants in for the purpose of deinstitutionalization. There is a later affiliation with Cottonwood. As a matter of fact, last Monday night I received a lifetime service award from them. I’ve been on the board for 22 years, on the executive committee for 19 years and president for a couple of years. But they we were going around this region of Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska starting to organize the developmental disabilities councils and also to help organize these community service agencies. I was telling you before, we were bringing people back from institutions. (unclear, I was turning the tape over)in this association. There are UAPs in about every country. A friend by the name of Martin Fiefield said, “Jim, you know, we need you in a leadership position here.” Something that I really liked that organization did, they are always looking for talent because they knew that was the essence of what would build the organization and keep it going. So I was on several committees and then they wanted me to be vice president and finally president. As president we had a lobbyist and I was then introduced to the full
process of lobbying, which I thought was very hard work but it was also a very exciting thing. Of course that was something that I used after that for many years.

Q: Were you lobbying in Topeka at the State Legislature?

A: No, federal. Basically, they would take people like myself who had experience to come in to testify. Then we would set the agendas for what we thought the financing should be for every year that we would go to Congress with for these UAPs that were all around the country.

Q: You had something to do with establishing Independence Inc., didn’t you?

A: Yes. Just to wrap up a little bit what happened with the AAUAP and the UAP that was here. Just because of me and systems work, we were always looking for cutting edge kinds of things. So the people from the granting agencies saw this. We became very good at bringing grants and building an organization and bringing more and more people in. There was always a conflict, however. The university saw the space as university space, and there were always people who were trying to get courses to be taught in there or something like that. I was needing the space for expansion and bringing in new people. There was never a very good resolution to that, probably the only frustrating part. But the other parts were good because what we would do is I would look for people who I could bring in here from around the country, very promising people. Then I would teach them the systems approach that we would use. We would come in with some kind of a problem, like how do you start to evaluate these agencies out there? So we would take the systems approach. Okay, what kinds of things do we want to do? What are the outcomes that we want to see? Then we would work backwards. Then we put this whole
system together and then we would put it in terms that the bureaucrats and the grant reviewers would understand and sent the grants in. And we just became very successful.

Now the other part of this was one where a fellow by the name of Lloyd Buzzie, who was a state legislature came to me and he said, “Jim, I would like you to help us. There is a young lady who is about ready to be kicked out of a nursing home.” I said, “She has a physical disability, I assume.” He said, “Yes, she’s a quadriplegic. She was injured in a car accident. She is a beautiful lady, 21 years old.” I said, “You know, that is not my field. And I am busy coaching Little League football right now.” Of course that was with my son in the early stages. I said, “I can’t do it. Lloyd said, “Well, I tell you what. When football is over, will you come and help us?” So I said, “Sure. I will come and give you a hand.” I went down and met with the people. There are some pretty good people in there. Roger Williams is one of them. He was here on campus for a number of years in the Paleontology Institute. He and I became great friends. At the beginning we kind of rubbed noses. Gary Condra, who started Cottonwood was there and a number of other people from there. There was somebody from the university who wanted social work, I believe. So the idea was how do we take this lady out of a nursing home? I thought, “Group homes. That’s what we are setting up around the state.” So we fiddled around with that. We were trying to figure out where the funding might come from, etc. One of the young men working for me said, “They’ve started up a novel program in Berkeley and they’ve got two other demonstration sites around the United States. They are called Independent Living Centers. I said, “I’m going to jump on a plane and go out there and talk to those people and get a tour through.”
So I found something completely different than what I thought I was going to see. It wasn’t a facility like Cottonwood. It was a storefront. I went in to meet with the director. The director introduced himself and showed me around. Now what was so interesting with this was their philosophy and the way they had organized. It was organized around something that had three strong legs in it, kind of like an old milk stool that you would use. One part of it was a very strong change in the way that you evaluate people with disabilities. The process had been that you would go to the individual and you would evaluate them on how well they could get dressed and put their clothes on, etc. They are saying, “No, that’s wrong. You provide the kind of support that they needed and then evaluate whether they can do it or not.” For example, if they want to go to class and they can’t get to class because there is no ramp to get into a building, you can’t say they are illiterate or dumb because they can’t get there. So this was a major change. It fit right into my philosophy. I liked it a lot. Then a second part was what I termed in one of my papers later on the nondependence-creating services. For example, if you put a person in a group home, they are going to be in there forever. There’s really no way to get them in the community. What they were saying is, “We’ll help you get a house. You’ll have to take care of the house. We’ll find a place for you to live. We’ll advocate to make it assessable or we’ll advocate to people who don’t want to rent to you. But we will teach you how to advocate and teach you skills to be independent.” But the greatest thing that was part of that was that you are going to make your own decisions. Well, people with physical disabilities at the time had two options. They could live with their families. In some of the research later on I was just appalled that they hated their families. But their families tried to teach them like children when they were older. Or
they could live in a nursing home. These were not very good options. That’s what they were saying. “We want to make our own decisions.” Well, several things had happened. One of them was people with physical disabilities were living longer because of science. There was a time when they said if you have a person with a severe disability just let that person die. And there also was a time before that if you had mental retardation they would say, “Put them in an institution and forget about them.” Some of those adolescents I was working with were like that. So I thought, “That is a wonderful philosophy. This is what we need in Lawrence, Kansas.” So I asked the director what I might do to help out and move this forward. He said, “Nothing. We are going to do it. You can be my attendant. Come up and push my wheelchair around or do whatever.” I didn’t take offense at that. I still find it amusing. He was saying, “We want the people here to take control of their lives.” That’s what independence is all about. If you think about yourself and how you live in this country and our forefathers, it was about being able to have your independence and decide your goals and decide your way in life and vote and become part of the community.

Q: Were you able to do anything for this quadriplegic?

A: Well, sure. We came back and decided we were going to build an independent living center here. That’s how Independence Inc. was formed. I ran across a fellow by the name of Howard Moses who was working for the state in their rehabilitation department, a wonderful man. Absolutely an outstanding fellow. He had moderate cerebral palsy. I said, “Howard, is there anything we can do? I want (unclear) theses programs.” He said, “I know about them. I’d like to get one going in Kansas.” I said, “We have a candidate for you over in Lawrence. I can use the systems approach and what I learned in
California. I can put together a model to make this work.” He said, “That would be wonderful.” I said, “Do you have any money?” Howard said, “Yes, I’ve got some innovation and expansion money I think we can use for that. It’s only available for a year.” I said, “Well, we’ll take it.” So we worked with Howard and we put the first independent living center together. First we met up at the university in our offices, looked at the model and figured out how we were going to do it and interviewed people. Then we got a place down behind Douglas County Bank that is no longer there. By then Roger Williams, who had a severe disability, was in a wheelchair. A lot of people remember him because he had this big old four wheel drive van that he drove around. He found out that he had muscular dystrophy when he was in the Air Force. It just got progressively worse during time. But he had a fantastic spirit. When we lost him that was a difficult time for me. But anyway we put the model together. Then I was working with Howard on funding. He said, “You know, the federal people think that these models around the country have worked. We think we are going to get federal funding for it.” So I said, “We are going to be first in line to get that federal funding.” So we got the federal funding for Independence Incorporated and we incorporated it and got it off the ground. I was on their board for maybe about 18 years. I think I was president of the organization for a couple of terms.

What happened to me professionally was this independent living thing was so exciting to me. So I wrote a grant the year after we got federal funding for Independence Inc. to establish a research and training center on independent living. There was terrible competition. Nebraska and Missouri wanted it and there were none in this federal region and the feds said, “We want one that’s out there.” So they gave some extra points to us.
Well, when I designed that grant, I brought the people in with the disabilities, like you normally do, and made them a part of it because this was going to be a center for them and we wanted them participating on our boards. More than that, we wanted to listen to them. And more than that we wanted to hire them because what we find is being an able-bodied person, I can’t understand what these problems are. If we have people with disabilities working with us, they know and keep us straight. That was part of the early thinking and that has always been a part of our model. Glen White, who has taken my place after my retiring, came down as a graduate student and worked his way up to training director and then associate director. He’s now the director of it.

And we have always had a fair number of people with disabilities working for us. The problem in the early years was we could not find them because they had not had the opportunities to get degrees. But what happened was that there were fellows and gals who had been in college and people who had been in the service who had a severe disability and they understood independence. Then we also had people who were living longer because of the medical advancements and the changes of thinking in the medical community. As a result of that, there was a pool of people out there who needed someplace to go. And independent living centers were the obvious choice, or solution to it, I should say.

Q: Do these people live in their own apartments and then your center is simply the place where they access services?

A: Yes. There are four core services at the independent living center. This is part of the research we did before. We studied around the country. There were so many different things that people were doing in different ways. We wanted to find out what the things
were that were best that could be worked. It’s interesting if you ask a person without a disability what it took to be independent….I’ll ask you. What does it take for you to be independent?

Q: Well, I’d have to think about that.

A: Would you say money? If I had money, I could do anything, right? Okay, the person with a disability wouldn’t say that because they couldn’t buy some of the things that they needed. They needed accessible transportation to get where needed to go when they needed to get there. And it wasn’t available. Then needed a house that was accessible and probably a subsidy to help them. They might have been able to get the money but then they would have problems with landlords who would say, “We don’t want people with disabilities living here.”

Q: And probably some of them need help from able people, such as with cleaning or various other services.

A: That is a part of it. They needed supports and they were not all the same. So they needed what we call attendants. That was another one of the key services. That was a difficult thing with professional people because an occupational therapist, physical therapist or nurse might come out and say, “This is what you need.” And that wasn’t it. We taught in some of our programs for people with disabilities how to hire people, how to manage people, and how to terminate them if they needed to and how to deal with neglect and abuse. And that does happen.

An interesting little side story. We had a national conference on independent living every year and there was a fellow who came out from Ohio and he had cerebral palsy and he had no speech. So he hired this new attendant to drive him out. They got
out and he had some colleagues and friends who were along with him. They came up asking us, “Where is he? We can’t find him.” I said, “Have you been up to the room?” They said, “Yes. We’ve knocked on the door and we’ve called. He’s not there and he has no speech.” I said, “Let’s get the house detective and go on up.” So there he was in bed. The fellow who he hired for an attendant had just gotten out of prison and took the guy’s money to buy some drugs and took his van and took off up north. The cleaning people came in and he tried to tell them something was wrong, and they didn’t know what was going on and it scared them and they left. So he was in his bed for about three day and dehydrated and in difficulty.

So that was the importance of our research. Again, a systems approach. What do you train, how do you train, how do you know that it is going to be effective? So that was the third part of the things they needed, the housing, the transportation, the attendant to help them and then counseling programs, which were peer counseling where they had other people who had learned how to do these things to go ahead and make it work. So today Independence Inc. has a small transportation system that it uses and it has an attendant training program that it operates. It does a lot of work in the community to make sure it is accessible and Bob McKessick, who has been there for years, is absolutely wonderful at that. And it is a (unclear) service system. As I was leaving we built the new building where it is located now, a very good facility.

Q: Where is it now?
A: It’s on Haskell.
Q: It isn’t still in that shopping center, is it?
A: No. It is right across the street from there. It is a beautiful new building. It is all state of the art. It’s where the fire station was across the street, over in that area. If you get a chance, drive by and take a look at it. It is a wonderful facility.

Q: About how many people does it serve?

A: I really don’t know any more. But it is not like Cottonwood, where you have a constant number of people that are there. It is more like a clinic would be. I don’t want to use that because I don’t want you to think there is a medical connotation. But people are coming there for some kinds of services and they are getting them. Of course there is a case management component that goes along with it. Part of that is when people come in, you know, you come in to get services but you are going to make your own decisions. You are going to have to stand on your own two feet and go on out there.

Actually, there is another big component to it, which is working with communities to make them accessible and to change the way people feel about people with disabilities, the stigma that goes along. Actually, a lot of our work was…one of the studies that we did and a lot of work…a fellow named Mike Jones who worked for us was a leader in that. What we did was we took a group of people with disabilities and we would review the newspaper articles and radio broadcasts and TV broadcasts. The idea was to learn how the reporters and people were describing people with disabilities. So it would usually be like, “The crazy man shot the woman and the dumb guy couldn’t ride his bicycle and ran into a curb.” They were all very negative kinds of things. We said, “We are going to have to develop a new language. Let’s look in the guide books that the press uses.” So we looked in the guide books and what we found in the guide books was “handicap,” but it pertained to golf. There was nothing that pertained to disability. So
what we did was we developed a guide book, a style book that talked about disabilities, the different kinds of disabilities, the correct terminology about disabilities, etc. Then we developed a research project and we used these guidelines to go to the reporters and you’d talk about the person with mental retardation who was involved in an accident on a bicycle. There was so much turnover that we would just kind of get the training done and then it wouldn’t last. So we tried to figure out what was the most effective thing that we could do. We would go to a reporter, let’s say, and give them these guidelines and a little bit of training. The people with disabilities would track them and see what kind of language they were using. Then we would do the intervention and then we would see what happened afterwards as a result of what we did. And we tried things like working with advertisers and different approaches. But the big thing we found out was that our technical assistants would go in and just talk to them and give them the brochures because there was a high turnover and that was the way to go. So then we developed manuals that went along with that and now that stuff is being used all over the world. I think the guidelines is probably in its 12th edition now and it is, I believe, in two different languages. I think the last one that was done was in Korean.

I think that this is another thing that you have to understand about the kind of research in a systems approach. We’ve had many professors who have come and worked with us and used the money and done a part of the research. The research, there was high demands for us on the field. The fellow I was talking about said I could be his attendant. He wanted to see something coming out. He had no appreciation or ideas for what it took to conduct the research. You know, you should be able to do this now. It is a very simple thing to do. Besides, all you need is consumer satisfaction. If the consumers tell
us it is all right, that is all the research you need. Well, we went back and did the studies on that. It is highly biased. People who have not been asked for services before are going to say it’s really a pretty good kind of a thing, you know. There is a lot of research in the mental health field that talks about that. So that was a part of it.

The first one was really a strange one. We had a consumer advisory board made up of people with disabilities to deal with. What are the needs here? What they said is what we need is to keep people out of our parking places. So we had a group go out there and check to see who was using the parking places and for how long they were in there, etc. Then we tried a couple of interventions. We went down and we got the fine increased. But then they wouldn’t prosecute unless there was a sign that was up because the marking that was on the street wasn’t enough. We found out that when we put the signs up at eye level with a fine on it of $250 that we didn’t eliminate it, but we reduced the time that people were there and the number of times of people who did it. It was kind of like they would look up and down the street—this was reported to us by our consumers—see if anybody was around, run in and get their cleaning, get out and then they would take off. So this is the kind of research projects that we did.

I’ll get back to the way that we did them because we had a systems approach. We would start with a need of the consumers and come back and then we would design the projects. We would involve the people with disabilities in the projects advising all along the way, which is what we do today. We would then say, “What kind of a product can we produce that will solve this problem, that will resolve the problem?” So we would develop a manual or a reporters’ guide like we talked about. Then we would take that into the community and we would test it to see how well it would work. Then those
things, as soon as we knew that they were working—they weren’t professional publications, because that wasn’t going to get the job done. They became products that we distributed through our distribution centers and we had mailing lists, etc. And we were getting these things out in the community. Every time there was a workshop on independence we were out there doing a workshop and showing people how to do this, how to evaluate their centers. That was an accreditation kind of thing that I worked in for a long time. We were out there. It was a systematic approach, find the problems, develop the interventions, test the intervention when it is perfected, get it out to the market right away.

Now you contrast that with some of the professors who’d worked with us before. For tenure they needed their research so they would try to find the funding some place and they would talk with people in the departments and they would figure that this would be kind of an exotic thing that we would need to research. Not all, but I mean that is kind of the standard university model. Then they would publish their research. It would go up on the shelves. People would read it and it might move things along. But it wouldn’t move things along nearly as fast as the process we had. Now after we got it working and we still had all of our data, that’s when we would do our professional publications and that part of it. But because we were so consumer oriented and wanted to be a part of this movement and really wanted to help this movement, we really had to be very efficient in that systems approach. Not only was it used to develop our system that we put in place, it is still there today.

Q: So you didn’t actually teach courses at the university.
A: The only thing that I have ever taught at the university has been like a guest lecture. But I have done many workshops on management and independent living. My consulting is absolutely unbelievable, consulting and technical assistance is what I’m saying. That came paid mostly by the federal government. But it was not unusual in the days when we were very busy that out of a month, I would be out three weeks, different times working with different centers.

Q: Was this around the country?

A: All around the United States. Doug Glen has really pushed that around the world. The farthest part of the country I got to was Puerto Rico. We did a good bit of work down there when they were establishing their independent living centers. At that time independent living was being established around the country. And by the way, there are in excess of 200 of those centers right now. Their work was so great, figuring out how to operate them and training people and retraining people that doing that in this country was more than we could handle really.

Q: You mentioned one book. Have you written other books?

A: Actually, I’ve written more chapters in books than anything. They also got interested in aging and mental retardation. There are some areas in there, other chapters on independent living. But the majority of my publications are technical publications and intervention publications that are based on the research that are used to help people out there. And of course there are a number of professional articles that came out of those kinds of things. It was interesting because in the Lifespan Institute we have rank just like you do in a teaching department. It starts out like an assistant researcher or something like that. Then the top level is senior scientist. So I had to have my publications and all
the things that people did from the departments. But there was question then about the kind of publications I did in the field. It just so happens that the researchers in the Lifespan Institute understand this because the idea of that is to make immediate changes out there to do what was needed. Then these publications become more accepted. There were a number of other scholarly areas that I worked in as well. Some of those things in the early days when we were on the cutting edge were just position papers on how to do certain kinds of things where we were a think tank, where if you want to make independent living work and the community is fighting it, how do you integrate it into the community? Or if you are from Hispanic background and you want to take control of your life and make decisions, but you go against the family when you start making decisions. How do you deal with those kinds of problems?

Q: You didn’t actually work with students then.

A: Here’s another interesting thing about how we handled students. We always have plenty of money available for students. They can come and work at our center helping on the research projects. We will give them an opportunity to start taking on more and more responsibility at the center. These are basic graduate students that are there. We have had some professors there. And Glen also has an appointment with the Human Development Department. He was able to help us find kind of the cream of the crop. Well, if you stay with us, we will write a place where you can have your own research project. And your research project, as long as it is in line with our mission and is your dissertation topic, you could do it and we will pay for it and you can write your publications here. So there is a whole continuum here where you can come in and work, take on more and more responsibility, learn to be a better researcher, learn how to write
grants for your own research and do all your dissertation work there without having to work at some other job. And of course I’m sure we included those kinds of things because they were excited about the kinds of work that we did.

Q: I suppose these were graduate students in education.

A: Well, psychology, human development.

Q: Do you remember outstanding former students who have gone on to greater things?

A: Mike Jones was one of them who was there. He’s a director of a center in Tennessee. He’s part of a medical center. He’s done very well. He works with a lot of accessibility things. Tom Sequins is a big favorite of mine. He’s the director of a center in Missoula, Montana. Howard Moses, who I told you about, came back to work with me after leaving the state and the center when we first started. He went on to Washington and had a distinguished career as a civil servant. He came back here. Unfortunately, he died a very untimely death, but he was just a wonderful guy. There are others as well. All of them came in as students thinking one way and left as students thinking another way. All of them. I can’t think of the whole time I was there from 1980 to the time that I retired. There was maybe one student who just didn’t quite get it and was not anxious to do too much study.

The staff is another big component of this thing. I have very much a team approach. I don’t care who you are. The janitor is as important to us as the Ph.D. researchers down in the room. We all have jobs to do. When we write grants we all pull together to design them and pull together until they go out the door. It’s not any kind of an authoritative process unless something really serious happens, when I may have to step in. I’m just kind of the facilitator who helps everybody to be successful. I’m not
opposed to paying somebody more money than I get if they can come in and they can contribute to the program. The gal who has worked for me for 25 years has a very interesting story. She was on welfare after her husband left her with nothing. She had two young children. Boy, she just worked her way up. Now she’s our chief executive officer, very great. She’s a farm gal and she hated being on welfare. She works like farmers do. Everybody pitches in and does things. She has no college degree but she’s a leader. She’s very well thought of.

Q: Have you had honors?

A: Yes. I was given a lifetime achievement award by the National Association of Rehabilitation and Research Training Centers. Just last week I received a lifetime achievement award from Cottonwood. They asked me to come over about 22 years ago and join the board and help out there. It’s a fantastic organization. They’ve got one of the best in the country if not in the world. It’s fantastic. I was nominated to serve on a distinguished panel for mental retardation back in the seventies. One of the other honors I’ve had here, there’s not much to do made out of it. But if I remember right, I was the top grant getter in terms of volume of money that I brought in over a ten-year period. They concluded that study in 1988. I didn’t know anything about it. I think it was Ed Mein who came to me and said, “Hey, you’re doing all right.” But you see that what I do in working for the Bureau of Child Research is so much different than being a professor.

Q: Oh, yes.

A: Because you don’t have to worry about where your salary is coming from. If we don’t keep the money coming in the front door, we are headed out the back door. So we have to run it like a business. We have to have very good people, we have to be competitive.
The grant business is highly competitive. We have to do good work. A lot of times the bureaucrats don’t have very good ideas about what they want. We have to shape that in such a way that they still look good but that we come up with something that is really innovative and does a great job. And it takes a lot of public relations. You have to be spending your time in Washington and in knowing the people. You have to be involved in professional organizations to help make improvements and make sure there is money around. You may not get it, but you have to work with the legislators to insure that we are able to have a pot of money that we can go after. That is particularly important these days.

Q: What professional organizations do you belong to?

A: Okay, one that is probably the longest is the National Association of Rehabilitation and Training Centers. I also belong to the National Rehabilitation Association. And I was president of both of those organizations. Then I was telling you about the UAP, the one with the Area Mental Retardation. For about 10 years I was a big part of that and I was president of that organization as well, in addition to serving on a lot of committees. So the very nature of the funding in the national ballgame that we are in takes us more to Washington than it does to the university or to the state. That’s where we have to be to provide leadership and set the policies that make it possible for us to work back here. Now from time to time I have been on dissertation committees and when Francis Horowitz was here I was on a research committee that she was on. I’ve been on space committees and I’ve been on a number of other things that have been here over the years. I believe in doing my share, particularly with the Lifespan Institute because they are a
very supportive organization and their management is much like the management that I use.

Q: You mentioned that you were interested in railroads and models.

A: Well, that goes back to the days that I was telling you about earlier.

Q: Do you still do models?

A: It started when I had a paper route. My parents helped me get a model railroad. Then my dad was really interested in this wild train that I had. I would come home and he would have a bunch of guys and he would give me a quarter so I could go off. It was probably more like 12 cents that it cost to go to the movie at that time. So with a quarter I could have some popcorn or something else. So they could play with them. So I had this interest all along. When I was a young man I would go to Grand Island, Nebraska, with my uncle. He would take me out to watch the Union Pacific city trains that would come through, the City of Los Angeles, the City of San Francisco. I’d see these big yellow things with the big flashing lights going up above. They would flash by and I would see all these people in there. The next thing they were gone and there was this big red light that was flashing on the end of it. I was so thrilled with that. So when I came out of the service, I flew to Denver and spent a day with my uncle. Then I got on the City of Denver and took it back to Freemont, which is near my hometown. I finally got a chance to ride on one of them. So there has always been this interest in watching the trains, etc.

Probably when we moved out here I got interested in model railroading. Now in my basement I have a layout that people come from all over the world to see. It has an interesting design feature to it. I always like the Santa Fe and the Union Pacific, but I
couldn’t figure out how to put them all together. So somebody told me that during the flood of 1951 the tracks went out from the Santa Fe side and they went over on The Union Pacific side. I thought, “Well, I could build a railroad around that theme.” So there is a railroad in my basement now that is 15 x 22 x 6 and the main line of the railroad is 286 feet long, I believe. It goes from Topeka through Lawrence to Kansas City and there is plenty of flood activity there and trains are all state of the art. They run off computers and they have sounds that are like the real railroads and lighting like the real railroads. So I get a lot of interest in that from around the country. Now the writing I am doing, I’ve got several articles on the line that I’m going to do for the hobby.

Q: Do you ride real trains?

A: Oh, all the time. For example, my wife gave me a present some time ago which was to jump on the train here. I think I had taken Amtrak several times to work in Chicago. But they pulled in the train, they pulled up with the coach section. About eight students were getting on. So they got on and he looked at me and said, “Oh, no, Dr. Budde.” My credit card had Dr. Budde on it, so that’s why he said that. I don’t say that. I don’t push that around. I didn’t know what was going on. He waved the train to go and it took off. I thought, “What is going on here?” And he pulled the train until the sleeper stopped in front of us. So we got on the train and had a good night’s sleep. We woke up out by La Junta, where they were stopping and had breakfast. When you are on a sleeper, breakfast comes with it. The food is very good and you meet a lot of interesting people when you are in the diner. There’s no road rage out there. You don’t have to take off your shoes to get on a train like you do in an airport. And it is very relaxing and you can go up and down the train. You can go to the observation car where you can see all over. They have
a diner, but they also have a snack shop where you can buy different things. When you are in the dome car you can see all over the place and meet a lot of people. I really like that. We went to Winslow, Arizona. Who ever heard of going to Winslow, Arizona? Well, they have a hotel there that was built by Mary Coulter, who was the chief architect for the Santa Fe Railroad. She smoked three packages of cigarettes a day and she drove the guys nuts. They had to bring her back in to give the guys a break. Well, she built the La Posada Hotel. Go online and look at it. It’s was designed…the Santa Fe would come in. You would get out, you would stay in the La Posada. Next day you would get on the old train cars, the old Packards and Cadilacs, and you would go out to the Petrified Forest and the Painted Desert and come back to the Fred Harvey House for a meal. The next day you’d get on, not the same numbered train that you were on, and you would go off to your destination. Well, some guys from San Francisco restored it. And it is an elegant place with nice sized rooms and they have a five star restaurant that is in it. And you can sit around and read. You can rent a jeep and go out and see the stuff. So we spent a week there, just great. And the depot is right in this part of the lodge. You get out of the depot and walk 50 steps into the entrance to the hotel. Then you get on the train and go back. And we’ve been all over the country. We ride the rail services in Europe, which are different, but they are very good. They are good here too. The railroads that we have on the Eastern corridor, the fast trains that they have out there, are wonderful.

Q: Then you went into phased retirement in 2002, is that right?

A: Yes. And we had a search and Glen came out on top as director. Then I stayed on as associate director. I saw my role changing. The community that I came from you’ve heard me talk about the values. I always valued elders in the community, what great kind
of people they were. So since about that time I’ve seen my role as not being a leader out in front, although I get propelled into that every now and then, but being a mentor to help people understand how to do things. And of course when you get near people it’s, “Oh, I know how to do it and I’m going to do it.” And just by the presence of me having an office there, which I still have, people are coming around and letting me know what is going on. “How did you do this? How did you do that?” It wasn’t because I was a really bright person. I had just been there for a long time and knew the right people and how to address problems in a certain kind of way. And I got great enjoyment from that, more enjoyment than I did in teaching, to tell you the truth.

Q: Any other plans in retirement?

A: Oh my Lord, yes. We’re out visiting grandchildren, active in the redux depot bunch downtown, with restoring the Santa Fe Depot. I work down there to meet trains, etc. This summer we are going on vacation with our son. We are going to Colorado and ride the narrow gauge railroads that are out there. (I changed the tape here.)

Q: You were saying that you are active in St. Margaret’s Episcopal Church.

A: Yes. A wonderful rector who is there, Father Goddard. He is about three or four years younger than I am so we were raised with the same kinds of values and things, a wonderful guy. We have made tremendous progress out there. That’s very exciting to me. Then we have a cabin in North Bend, Nebraska, which is about 40 miles from my home town. And my wife is from Omaha, so it is not too far from there. So we spend a lot of time there in the summer. There are a lot of interesting people up there, not interesting, just nice friends. It is a good, quiet place to go and relax. We walk. I have a good friend from Korea who lives not far from there. So we get together and drink coffee
in the morning. With the grandkids and everything, we are probably too happy, to tell you the truth.

Q: What is your assessment of KU or the department you worked in, past, present, hopes for the future, that kind of thing?

A: You know, it is a wonderful place to work. It is still a wonderful place to work. And I had already told you that I was always in leadership, but I never, although there were opportunities, I never had any desire to go in through the university structure. I did have a great interest in starting new programs, like the Research and Training on Independent Living Center. We created that. I went to the regents and got that sanctioned as a full operating center. It’s been there for 25 years. So that became the core then to expand out and bring a lot of other people in it. That’s what I’ve enjoyed. That’s what the Schiebelbusch Lifespan Institute is all about. It’s finding really good, creative people who want to build things and do good research. And they facilitate that. They accept that. They like that. They don’t tell you what to do. They let you do your own thing. So for me, it was like running my own business within a university. There were times, I said, there were problems, like when what I do in running a business comes in direct contact with people who want to teach, when it comes to space and resources and other thing. What I have to remind people of is that every grant that I bring in, 45 percent of that goes back to the university to build infrastructure. And people ought to be willing to give a little bit when they are getting that kind of money coming back in, because it doesn’t take 45 percent to supply the space and the accounting, you know, and the other things that go along with it. But I am happy to give that up as long as we have the money to do our kinds of things. So it is that freedom, that entrepreneurial businesslike
environment, that the Lifespan Institute provides is great. Then of course the thing that changed that was building the Kansas Center for Research. And the idea was if it is an institute you would have more flexibility. That’s the one problem that I had. We’ve become too bureaucratic. I mean you have to have an extremely lot of flexibility. For example, I had a young man who came to work for me named Randy Kitch who came out of an institution, a very, very bright guy with cerebral palsy. He had no use of his arms. He did everything with his feet. His feet looked like a hand. He could take a pop can and throw it 10 yards and get it in a trash can every time. He smoked a cigarette. He had a cigarette holder. He’d put it in there and put it up to his mouth, take his toe and flip a cigarette lighter and we’d get going. An amazing guy, just really an amazing guy. Well, he had no education. So when you go to the bureaucratic system here and say, “I’m going to hire a guy who has no education, but he is a very smart guy and we need him for this special spot helping us organize consumer groups,” he was just absolutely a whiz at it. It was a nightmare. Because he couldn’t sit at a desk, I wanted to purchase a rug for the floor that he could sit on because that was it. “We don’t buy rugs for offices.” Because he had no speech at the time, we had speak and spells. So I wanted to buy speak and spells so he could use his foot and tap those things in so he could communicate with us because before that he had a little piece of leather with the alphabet tooled into it and that’s what he used. So we just used our consulting money or other things to get around those kinds of problems. Well, today one of the problems, for example, is we want to hire somebody that is a little unusual, they now more than ever are looking for credentials. Not only that, they want to put you into a category. And there may not be a category that fits what we are going to do. The thing that was a problem was
understanding that research is a business and they need their share of resources and they are just as important because they pay their way around here and they should have that. And the other thing is don’t be so bureaucratic where you’ve got these new grants that are in independent living and deinstitutionalization where they take special kinds of people with special kinds of talents. And it requires money to recruit them, maybe more than what a professor is making, but that’s what it takes to bring the money and be successful. I think that’s the challenge for us.

Q: Is there anything else you’d like to add that I forgot to ask?

A: Well, that’s probably enough. There are a lot more things. I sat down here and was taking a look at a lot of the things that I did and things that I’ve done, but I think that pretty much covers it. I guess I’d like to say that one of the things that I’m concerned about for the country is that people like myself who lived in those small towns during those tough times, that’s not the way any more. I think that became the backbone of a lot of leaders in this country who retired from positions like myself. For better or for worse, we don’t have them any more. But, as I told you before, I felt real humbled by the poor background that I came from. I found out later on that it was such a rich environment. In fact my son, when he was about 12 years old, wouldn’t mind me like I did, so I sent him up to Nebraska to my mother, who put him on detasseling and cocklebur. He’s got a good work ethic today. He’s got a tremendous work ethic today. I think that is where that probably came from. But the university has been a great place to work. It’s been a great research institution that’s growing. I’m very pleased with the chancellor and the push in that direction. It has more promise and the kind of promise that it should have.
I’m proud that both of my children went here. I think my grandchildren are going here as well. My wife has taken courses here.

That’s another thing I should say about my wife that I bring up. My wife, she’s really the backbone of this stuff. I mean she’s always a person who is encouraging. She’s very positive. When I was spending long hours out on the road, as I was telling you, doing the technical systems, etc., she was at home. She’s been active in politics. But when the children got into college, she went back to school. She teaches government. She taught at Lawrence High School for about 10 years. When people see me and say, “Who are you?” and I say, “I’m Jim Budde,” it’s usually one of two things. It’s like, “Are you Chip Budde’s dad, who played football at KU?” or “Are you Jane Budde’s husband?” You know, kids come across the street and give her a hug who were her old students, which is fantastic.

I have one other story. While we were here I was busy writing grants. My son wanted me to go to Philmont. We took two groups out and got on the train and went out. We spent two weeks back there, heavy, heavy, back packing around the country. But I developed such a bond for those guys that they are the kind of guys who see me and are liable to come across the street and give me a hug too. That was a great experience.

Q: So you were active in Boy Scouts when your son was in it.

A: Yes, there’s probably a lot of stuff, community things, that I was involved in over the time. I’m a big believer in schools in the community.

Q: Okay, I guess that’s about it then.

A: Boy, we were what? Almost an hour and a half.