Okay. Today is July 1, 2004. This is Rick Strot. I’m interviewing Dr. Pat Sharp in the School of Education, Department of Curriculum and Instruction. We’re in the Draper building in her office and this is for the Hillcrest PDS [Professional Development School] oral history project. And it’s currently about 3:25 in the afternoon. Okay, well, Dr. Sharp, if you would, tell me when did you first become involved with Hillcrest Professional Development School?

I guess I became involved in about 1991, before it was Hillcrest Professional Development School. I don’t know when—when exactly did Hillcrest—

It opened in the spring—in July of ’93—

Ninety-three, okay.

—because it was on that yearround schedule.

Okay. And the reason I would say that’s when I became connected to it was I was department chair of curriculum and instruction and the idea had been around to have something like a professional development school. And we had talked about different potential
models and so I was right there at the first part where we were beginning to discuss what might be possible.

Strot

And who was involved in those discussions?

Sharp

Well, as far as I can remember—and I’m not completely certain—but, Dr. Elden Barrett was one of the beginning persons. His idea—he first kind of broached the idea with the dean at the time.

Strot

And that was Bill Lamkin? Is that correct?

Sharp

That was Bill Lamkin. There was a lot of discussion about what potentially we might do with our program to add a professional development school concept. And a lot of different models were proposed. I know I went to Albuquerque [New Mexico] about that time, with several other faculty members to look at their schools there and see what they were doing in a program that wasn’t exactly the same, but similar.

Strot

And were those trips funded by the School of Education?

Sharp

They were funded by the School of Education.

Strot

Oh great. Okay.

Sharp

I know there were four of us that went when I did—that went together and I know that it must’ve been in about ’91 or ’92 when we did that. And we looked at their program, came back with some ideas and that wasn’t the way that we went, but the discussions were held about that time.
Well, when you think back to that time, even before there was a Hillcrest PDS—when just thinking about a PDS—what was your impression at that time of what a PDS is and should be doing, in the context of Baylor?

Right. Well, what we wanted to do—I remember that we were discussing a way to get our students to be in a more realistic setting than the university in getting ready to teach. And that we wanted them to be there more than just one semester—sometimes even one semester part-time—to get an idea of what teaching was like. People always kept commenting, One semester is not enough. They just get started and then it’s over. And they can get a feel for the classroom, but they really can’t get—can’t feel that they’re absorbed in the teaching experience. They’re either at the—usually they’re in the spring semester. They don’t have a feel for how that year started. They don’t have any concept about working with people, working to get a class off the ground. So, the whole idea was that we would put them out into the schools for a year and actually give them a whole year’s experience. So, that seemed to be the focus. The critical question at that point was, are we going to do it in a four-year program or are we going to do it in a five-year program? And that was the big issue.

And that was based on models you’d gone out to see?
And that was based on models that we went out to see.

Did you see both kinds, four-year and five-year?

We saw both kinds. Albuquerque was one and I can’t remember where the other one was. Maybe I just—I didn’t go to one of the other schools. But we did do a lot of reading about it and we finally decided that we weren’t going to be able to do the five-year model, but we could do the four-year model.

Okay. Then, as this PDS discussion evolved past ’91—1991—at what point do you remember Hillcrest becoming sort of a reality, that there was going to be this professional development school?

Oh. I can’t remember exactly. I do know that between about ’91 and maybe between ’91 and ’92, they began to have discussions with Waco about setting it up with Waco.

And when you say they, was there a committee that worked on this?

There was a committee at work on it and I was not a member of the committee at first. But there was a committee at work and I know that Dr. Barrett was part of it and I believe that Dr. Baker, Anita Baker, was a part of this discussion. And there was a lot of con—you know, moving back and forth about, okay, what level is it going be? Is it going to be elementary? Is it going to be secondary? A lot of discussion in those areas.

And then what was the process then that it ended up being an
elementary school?

**Sharp**

Actually, they started with both an elementary, kind of beginning focus and also a secondary beginning focus with La Vega, because Dr. Barrett has some connections with La Vega and so we started having kind of a part-time program at La Vega, but not a full blown professional development school.

**Strot**

Now, a couple of years later, when we had—there was a short period there when we had several PDS sites—

**Sharp**

Several going on, and that’s—

— and La Vega was part of that as well, wasn’t it?

**Sharp**

La Vega was part of that. Um-hm. But there were these beginning discussions with these two places.

**Strot**

Now, as you recall it, were these discussions within the department of C&I [Curriculum and Instruction], or did they cross departmental levels?

**Sharp**

It—I don’t know that they crossed departmental levels, but they were really outside of C&I. It was really some individuals who wanted to do this, as far as I can remember. And the dean was very interested. And those few people were very helpful in getting this started, but it was part of a committee that was set up and I’m sure I had some sort of inclusion in that, but I don’t remember exactly what it was.

**Strot**

Now, at the time—if you wouldn’t mind thinking back to the context
in education and teacher education in particular at the time—was this, then, very current at that time? Was this something that a lot of people were talking about in other places?

A few people were talking about it, not a great number, but quite a few were talking. At conferences we’d go to, we’d hear about, Why don’t we do this? What other people were thinking about in relation to professional development schools.

And you mentioned you’d visited some sites.

And we visited some sites, so it was obvious that things were moving that way, which was interesting to me because about—oh, what—fifteen years before, a lot of people had just gotten rid of their lab schools. And the lab school, though not exactly the same, certainly had a lot of the characteristics that later the professional development schools became.

Now, you were a department chair at the time, so you were probably aware of the funding opportunities for this that were going on. Was there some grant incentives to do PDS work?

You know, I was not so much a part of that discussion of the grants, but I do know that we certainly got some grants to begin that work. But I can’t—I was not a part of getting the grants.

Okay. So, the committee worked on PDS. At what point did the committee go to the C&I faculty and say, This is the school we’re
going to present? How was that handled within the faculty at Baylor?

Sharp

Yeah. I think Dr. Barrett talked about it numerous times and we, as a
group, began discussions of, did we want to do this? What was it
going to be? How was it going to be set up? And at that point,
nobody stepped forward to say, I'll do this. We'll begin—

Strot

And was this at the point where Waco ISD [Independent School
District] had already agreed that they would provide a school?

Sharp

They were in discussions with them and Waco had already said that
they thought that would be good.

Strot

So this was in C&I meetings or—

Sharp

Uh-huh. And actually, the dean had asked who would be—take the
leadership role on this and Dr. [Tom] Proctor was one of the ones
who stepped forward to say that he would do that, he'd like to do that.

Strot

And Dr. Proctor was, at that time—

Sharp

He was chair of the department of educational psychology. But he was
very involved on a—had been very involved on a personal basis in
schools because he was very interested in work with special education
students. And so he really wanted to maybe have a laboratory for his
work. And so he began taking one of the leadership roles. Dr. Barrett
stepped back, I think at that point. He really wanted it—in my
remembrance—he really wanted it to be in a secondary school.

Strot

And that was his field, correct?
Because that was his field at the time. And so, because it was not going to be a full-time professional development school in a secondary school, he—I believe he stepped back.

So, I understand now, there was a committee formed that included Waco ISD people and Dr. Proctor and several others that then took over the guidance of setting up Hillcrest?

Exactly. Um-hm.

Okay. And then, as it got closer to opening, I was hired to be a Baylor faculty member to work here.

Right. And I was on—for example, we had people from the department who were assigned to various committees, subcommittees, to set this up. For example, I worked with the individual who was working with the libraries and I was on a subcommittee to help plan and design the Hillcrest school library. And we—because they were going to renovate that building that became Hillcrest Professional Development School. It was an older elementary school. But they decided to renovate that building and make it to be what we wanted it to be, which was very exciting ‘cause this had not happened to us before. We were able to take a look at it and the subcommittees were able to say, Okay, what do we want to do? What does our program look like? And that’s when we began to say, Oh, well, what about if we made it multi-age? What about if we put groups together? How

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about if we make it large enough so we can have students moving back and forth and set up groups and all those fun things. And the school itself was perfect because it had those large quarters. And you could actually have small groups out in the corridors, so it really leant itself to this program.

Strot

Tell me a little more about the library then, since you had some direct work on that. For example, let me just ask you this: did the work that your committee did—did you feel that it manifested itself in the building that actually opened as Hillcrest?

Sharp

Actually, (laughs) the library was pretty much as we envisioned it. But it began to take a very different turn after the building was set up and the principal was hired and those kinds of things were begun, because the emphasis began to be not on a traditional library, but actually on a technology program. And the librarian was not a, I would say, such an integral part of the plan. And so the money that was going to be used for a full-time library technologist combination really went to a technology focus.

Strot

So they ended up with an aide?

Sharp

So they ended up with a library aide, rather than a library technologist combination. So it was a very different focus and, I personally thought, unfortunate because I thought—though I certainly was delighted to have a good, strong technologist—I really thought they
needed both and that was one of the cuts that was made.

Now, say a little bit about the context at that time of thinking in terms of school libraries. Technology back then—this is ten years ago now, 1994. The internet was just beginning. So, what changed their mind to try something that was so unproven, say, or what was the genesis of making it more technology oriented?

Actually it wasn’t—technology was important at that point, but it wasn’t technology in relation to the computer, so much as it was technology in relation to all different kinds of technologies that you could use for teaching. And the problem was that, because this was such a new field and it was so very expensive that there didn’t seem to be a lot of focus on, okay, are we going to do a book library or are we going to do a wide variety of materials library? And so, I think that they kind of lost the vision of this kind of multifaceted library approach, that very strong technology-based library. It was not new. In fact, it had been around for ten or twelve years at that point. But there was a big change coming in the area of library science and the people who grabbed on to the library and technology focus, did very well. But the ones who stayed as book libraries—book librarians with book libraries—did not do so well. And you can see that just in general. And so, I think that the idea of having an up-to-date technology program became one of the major focuses for the school.
And because of that, it was less important to have that small library with a lot of great books. And so they lost the focus, perhaps, that we had hoped to have for the school.

When it came to the physical library, did you have any influence on the books that were purchased for the library since they were setting this up new? Was there any input from the university level on those things?

There was a little input. They hired a librarian and the librarian began working and I did a little bit of—I guess I’d call it consulting—but after that, I think the change came pretty soon. And so the collection was pretty small. And they spent most of the funds on technology, some of which was in the library, but a lot of which, of course, went into the classrooms.

I believe when they first opened, they had taken the library space and they had half of it was a computer lab and half was a library.

Half of it was a computer lab and half of it was a traditional library, and that’s the key. It became a very tiny traditional library.

And, see, I hadn’t realized that till you told me that. When I arrived, it was already—

Done that way.

—done that way.

Um-hm. And, you know, I think it was great that they had the
technology focus. I really liked that. But I also think that they lost something.

Now, as Hillcrest opened then, as it came nearer to the time that it opened, from the Baylor side, what’s—tell me a little bit about how the staffing was handled and how the first group of interns were selected.

Okay. The staffing was handled really—it was such an interesting collaboration. I know I was on a number of the committees, maybe most of the committees for the first year or so, to select faculty. And I was in on a lot of interviews with teachers. And what we did at first was to let teachers apply to be at that school and that was really a fun thing because you got teachers who walked in there and wanted to be in that school and they wanted to have a new focus for education and they thought it was really a good idea to have Baylor students involved. That was a very exciting time. And we had people from the school district and people from Baylor serving on the same teams and it got funny at times because some of the teachers would come in and they didn’t know quite how to deal with an interview in which you had six or seven people doing the interviewing and part of them were faculty from Baylor and part of them were WISD [Waco Independent School District] employees. And they weren’t sure how to handle it. And usually what we did was we would have a certain number of questions going to be asked and we would choose which question we were going
to ask this time. And we would have a certain person, maybe, who would always ask certain questions and we got to where it was really a fun thing to get to go to these interviews and hear the kinds of things that people would say about their view of teaching in a school like that. And as we began to hire more and more people over the next year or so, the teachers in the school then began to be the people who were doing the interviewing and Baylor faculty tended to be less involved, except for the ones that were actually at Hillcrest.

**Strot**

Who—in that hiring process, did they hire the principal first and then teachers, or were some teachers hired before the principal was hired? Do you happen to recall?

**Sharp**

I do not remember that sequence. Unfortunately, I know Mac (Dr. Ron McEntire?) was hired early in the process, but I’m not sure which came first. I think he was hired and then we began the procedure, but I can’t remember for sure.

**Strot**

And from the Baylor side, how did faculty become involved? You already mentioned Tom Proctor had stepped forward to kind of take the lead.

**Sharp**

Tom Proctor had stepped forward. But we also—

**Strot**

And then I was hired, so I was there—

**Sharp**

—and then you were hired—

**Strot**

—and then there were other—how were the other faculty that were
involved, because there were five or six that were out there.

There were five or six. Dr. [Larry] Browning did some things. A little later, Dr. [Betty] Conaway began to do some things at Hillcrest.

And Dr. Johnson(?)—

And Dr. Johnson began working there. So we had a wide range of people. One of the things that happened early was that as our faculty began to see the potential for working there with their classes—not just interning there, but classes say, in teaching mathematics—faculty began to take their students over to Hillcrest. And in fact, after a few years, they began to inundate Hillcrest (laughter) with Baylor students, who were not seniors but were sophomores maybe a few of them—and a lot of them when they were juniors—would be over there working. And so it became almost—it became really hard to get them scheduled to go over and work there and we began just to talk about, well, maybe we shouldn’t inundate them, because we don’t want to watch—our students to watch Baylor students teach. And so we began pulling back and going to other schools also.

And then, if you wouldn’t mind, describe a little bit about the selection of those first year interns, because you had a very personal connection with one of them, who was your daughter.

Yeah, in fact, one of them was my daughter and so I had some insights into what was going on. One day we asked for volunteers and the
students began to be interviewed—they were actually interviewed to find out about them and see if they would work effectively in a group like this. It was a very interesting time period. But people actually got to volunteer to do it. And I suggested that my daughter do it because it was so new and I knew she liked fun things like that. So she was selected to go there and I can’t remember exactly how many we had, but I do know that it was kind of hard making those final choices as to who would go there. And I wasn’t involved in that, thank goodness. So I didn’t get to say whether my daughter would go or not. And she found it very exciting. She also, like a lot of the other students, commented that it was very hard that first year because nothing was in place and everything was having to be designed and when you’re that groundbreaking group, it’s really very hard. But she loved the idea of having a full year and thought it was the best thing that happened to her because it was a full year. And so I was very positive about it from her standpoint as well as from working with it.

Strot Well, this is a good time for me to ask you to tell, from your viewpoint, the story of the pig—

Sharp Oh, I must tell the story of the pig.

Strot —that appeared during the first year of Hillcrest, because you were very involved with that.

Sharp Far too involved with the pig. (laughter)
And I’ve never had a chance to really ask you your side of the story.

Oh, well, Hilary is an individual who loves doing fun things in the classroom; she just loved the idea of getting to be directly involved and letting the children be directly involved in various activities. She always wanted newness. So, she was teaching Charlotte’s Web and she asked Bianca Ochoa (??), who was her mentor, if she thought it would be okay if she could find a pig. And Bianca said, “Well, okay.” So Hilary began calling around to various farms and different operations to see if someone had a baby pig that she could borrow for a while. And she did. She found—I think it was Johnson’s out here—and they said, Sure, come on out. We’ll let you borrow a pig. So she got out there and, you know, she’s kind of one of these people who gets all excited and involved in things and she was out there looking at the pigs and they were saying, Here are a whole bunch of them. Which one do you want? And she saw this cute little pig that she called “Hillcrest,” which began to be shortened then to “Hilly.” So she took the pig and when she got it, she said, “I’d like this one.” And she cleaned him up—they cleaned him up for her. So she had this little pig and she was really excited. But as she left, they said, Don’t bring him back—bring her back. Just keep her. And she said, “I don’t know what to do with her.” And they said, Well, that’s all right. Just keep her. So, she brought him home, to our house. And said, “I have this
pig.” She was living in our garage apartment at the time—

Strot

I’m going to turn the tape over. Let me stop just a second.

Side 1 ends; Side 2 begins.

Strot

This is Rick Strot, continuing the interview with Dr. Pat Sharp on July 1, 2004. Okay, so she brought the piglet home.

Sharp

She brought the piglet home to our house and she—

Strot

And she had the garage apartment I believe you said.

Sharp

And she was living in our garage apartment, directly behind our house.

And she took it into her apartment. And I said, “Hilary, you need to be really careful about the pig because it’s going to be really messy.”

Well, she kept it in her apartment at first. And then she took it to Hillcrest and everybody loved it and they just adored having a pig.

And they thought it was the neatest thing and they took it to every classroom in the school to visit every classroom and introduce the pig.

And it worked so well with their unit and she would take it home at night, for a while. And then finally, it just stayed at Hillcrest and kind of became a little mascot, it seemed, at Hillcrest. The only problem is that as she would visit years later, and as I would visit Hillcrest years later, the poor pig became huge, because all the children would feed it.

And by the time the pig had to be taken elsewhere, the pig was so big it was having to be carted around by the children in a wagon because it was too big to walk. (laughs) And so that’s my view of what
That was some potbellied pig, wasn’t it?

It was a cute, cute, potbellied pig.

Now, I kept that pig in my house.

Did you? Oh no.

We were renting at the time over Christmas that first year, that first semester when she had the pig. (Sharp laughs) And I thought I was living in a sitcom. I mean, it was so funny, in retrospect. (laughs)

Yes, but not at the time. I should tell you that when my daughter finished that year and got married immediately and moved out of the garage apartment, we literally had to hose the apartment down. It was such a mess.

Yeah, she had asked me if we would keep the pig and I had said yes and I kept wondering when the pig was coming up and finally, when she graduated, the pig came.

Yes, she dropped the pig and we were just—we were so thrilled to have the pig go somewhere else because it had lived in that apartment with her for a semester I guess it was.

Well, the pig finally did go out to pasture on a farm to live with other pigs.

Thank goodness.

So, thank goodness for that.
I just wonder what the pig looked like after a few weeks. I just—just am hoping the poor pig wasn’t—

I think it was leaner, but—

—wasn’t a casualty. (laughs)

It turned out—we had a vet look at it—turned out it was a potbellied cross.

Ah!

It wasn’t a true pot-bellied pig. So, it got bigger—

Oh! No wonder!

—than a potbellied pig, but still had the potbelly. But it was still too fat.

Far too fat. (laughs)

Far too fat.

But it became—the original plan was not for it to be named “Hilly” from “Hilary,” but from “Hillcrest,” which is what she named it.

Well, that pig became a legend.

It is. And Hilary too, because of the pig. (laughter)

Yes. Now, thank you for that digression. That was a good story.

You’ve already talked at the beginning about what the vision for PDS and what Hillcrest was. And we’ve talked about who collaborated and their roles and how people volunteered. What was your view of how much influence Baylor faculty had on what went on at the school in
terms of the curriculum and the instruction that was going on at the school?

I think Baylor faculty had a lot of control—not control, but a lot of input into the decision-making on what was going to be done. I think that we discussed it long and hard about what was going to be focus. I think that the faculty members who were there and working with it perhaps had more influence as it became a few years away from its development because, you know, the focus maybe became—let me think how I should say it. The focus became a decision-making that was collaborative, but that was influenced by the people who were there on that campus, not so much necessarily by the department itself, but by the influence of the people who were actually on campus.

Now, Dr. McIntire is one who brought that—

Yes.

—kind of collaborative decision-making model to Hillcrest. It was being encouraged by the state at the time as well. Now, at Baylor while all this was going on, there were some concerns about Hillcrest and—

Serious concerns.

—Dr. McIntire. There was a lot of support for him, I know, but there was also some concern. So, could you just kind of summarize what some of those concerns were in the early years from the Baylor point, or things that were seen as problematic?
As, as causing difficulty or some question. Let me give you an example. One of the problems early was in mathematics. The approach to teaching mathematics—I know I was involved in this and because of that, you know, it was just such a, almost a storm of problems for a while. The math scores on the early testing had not been very strong. And the approach that was being used was very, very structured. Really special education focused. Barron, Ryder’s materials were being used and the scores were really pretty abysmal. And so part of the discussion was, are we going to stay with this very special education focused math program or are we going to move to a different one? The department of C&I was beginning to look at National Council of Teachers of Mathematics recommendations and they were absolutely the opposite of what was being used because this was very scripted material.

Now, when you say this—so, there was a math course that students would take on campus then that was espousing things very different from what was going on—

Very different from what was being used at Hillcrest. And so there was a lot of discussion about that. If we’re teaching one thing and our students are going out there to observe this and to work within this, shouldn’t it at least be coordinated? Shouldn’t we be saying that we’re teaching something and recommending that we teach it and then go
out there to see what’s being done in it and shouldn’t it be congruent?

So, we spent a lot of time discussing that and there was a lot of opposition to making the big change. But it finally—Dr. McIntire came here and discussed it with me here at Baylor and we were—he was very much in favor of just leaving it the way it had been and I was very much in favor of changing it. And eventually, they did change it and used National Council of Teachers of Mathematics standards and tried to focus it much more the way that we were teaching it in our courses. But it was kind of difficult and I think that’s just one example of a lot of the discussions that had to take place. There was a whole lot of discussion about, all right, what’s the way we—if we’re going to have a professional development school, we have to be very clear about what we’re teaching and how that’s going to influence the school because we want to be sure that it’s—we’re doing what we say we believe in. And that was probably the hardest, hardest areas.

Choosing the faculty was one aspect, but when you start talking about curriculum decisions for a school, you have to really work carefully together or you really end up yelling at each other.

Strot

Were there any issues of diversity and equity that came up that might have been sparked because of other issues or that were just inherent in the relationship?

Sharp

I don’t think that was a problem because the focus, when we started
the school, was we want it to be as diverse as possible. We wanted it to look like Waco ISD. And so, not only did we kind of open up the application process so that students would apply and it would be a magnet school and that we weren’t going to have any ethnicity issues, diversity issues because people were going to apply. Now, the question—they didn’t get enough students to apply at first. And so Dr. Mac did something that shocked a lot of people and that is he called principals and said, “Send us your students. Do you have students that you’d like—recommend that their parents apply.” And so they did and we wondered later if maybe some of the other principals sent some of the worst students. (laughter) And I kind of wondered at first about it, but I think it was really a pretty good move on his part because it made sure that we had a very diverse group. We did the same thing with the teachers. We wanted teachers of all different diverse backgrounds from racial issues—every topic. And we got it and that was great. And I think that’s one of the reasons for the success.

Now, Dr. McIntire was a very unique individual and one of the things that Dr. Mac had had experience with—I believe it was in Houston—was with working at the university level. And he had studied under people at UCLA [University of California-Los Angeles] that were very well known in education circles. And yet he—some have said that at
Hillcrest, he was a person who was at times very critical of universities’ ways of doing things. So, was there anything you remember that caused sparks within the Baylor faculty because of that perceived viewpoint? I’m not saying that he was actually that way, but I have heard that said.

In fact, he did. He caused a lot of ruffled feathers. And I can remember even my daughter coming home one day and saying,

“You’re not going to believe what he said to us.” (laughs) And I said, “What are you talking about?” And she said, “Dr. Mac told the interns today that if he could, he’d blow up all of the schools of education.”

He was ten years ahead of his time there. Somebody in the school administration made that remark some months ago.

Exactly.

Wasn’t there? One of the dep—somebody I forget who.

Yes.

Anyway, I’m sorry. I digress. But—

That was his comment. He would get rid of them. And I said, “Oh, you must have misunderstood. And she said, “No, I didn’t misunderstand. We all heard it.” That was pretty shocking and pretty upsetting to a whole lot of faculty members that not only would he say it but he’d say it to our interns. And that was unfortunate. He could’ve handled things a little better, I think. But he was a very
forceful individual. And fortunately he was, and that made him able to lead that school to start with. And I wouldn’t have said that at the time, maybe.

Yes, I was just going to say, now, in the long run—because he ended up being there five years—

He did.

And in the long run, how would you say it turned out with Dr. McIntire? Were there still a lot of ruffled feathers towards the end? Did he—

Yes, there were still. There was still a lot of feeling that people had been insulted and that perhaps he was—he could’ve been a whole lot smoother about the way he did things. But, his personality was such that he was able to lead that group of teachers and help them to become that cohesive faculty. It was almost them against the world for a while. It was the impression that I got and because of that, he was able to do a lot because he was able to—he got them involved in getting grants. None of them—or I would guess none of them—had done that before. And yet, he was instrumental in getting a tremendous amount of money.

NCATE [National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education], he was involved with, got the school involved with the NCATE PDS project.
Exactly, and because of that Hillcrest became known nationally a great deal. And the work that was being done at Hillcrest set the standard for a lot of the programs that developed in the future and that’s, I think, wonderful. But around Waco, there were a lot of injured feelings. But I actually think that maybe he couldn’t have been as successful as he was had he not had that kind of attitude and so he was a very forceful individual. And I understand that some of the other principals were quite upset. I never talked to any of them a great deal, but several of them were very insulted that Hillcrest got all the glory, they thought. And their schools, which were doing great work, didn’t get a lot of that PR [public relations]. But Mac was the sort of person who would call up the TV stations and call up the newspaper and, so it was positive.

Very true. Very true. (Sharp laughs) Okay, let’s see. Let’s talk just a little bit about changes. In terms of the original vision for Hillcrest, what has remained the same over the last ten years? What has kind of been the constant in terms of the vision?

Well, I think the vision was that this school would be a school of excellence. It would be a center where children would really be taught using the best research into what was appropriate for learning. And that every teacher would choose to be there and choose to be involved in that program. And my understanding is—I don’t know a lot about
this—but my understanding is that not all of the teachers necessarily would buy into having interns now and want to do the kinds of things that were envisioned first for Hillcrest. I think it stayed a very strong school. The emphasis has been very positive with Baylor, but I think it’s maybe not quite as innovative now and—but there’s still very strong teachers there.

Strot

Part of that original vision you talked about was having a normal school. Would you say that Hillcrest has been a—now it is a magnet school of course, which sets it apart from a neighborhood school, but all in all, in terms of faculty and student body and so on, is it a pretty normal type of school, as was envisioned or—

Sharp

I think it’s a pretty normal type of school, I really do. I think it—parents have to choose to bring their students, children there. And that’s different. And the lottery, which was set up originally to choose—in fact, I have to say that my children were not chosen, (laughs) to be a part of that. So I knew it was pretty legitimate—the lottery was legitimate, because mine were not selected in the first group. So, yes, I think it’s been a pretty normal school.

Strot

What part of—you addressed this a little bit—what part of the vision for the school has either changed or sort of been unanticipated in its outcome?

Sharp

You know, I’m not sure. I have been less involved with Hillcrest in
the last few years. I know that it has—the students have performed very well and I don’t think that’s—that is a big change from the first year because the students weren’t performing very well. But then, they were working with just whoever applied. And because of that, I think it was a pretty normal Waco school.

Well, now, you’re highly involved with one of our new PDSs. We now have ten PDSs in our network and as you began work with that PDS, do you feel like there were some lessons from Hillcrest that made our work with other PDSs easier?

Absolutely. In fact, if we hadn’t had that long experience with Hillcrest, it would’ve been impossible for us to put together ten and to get them going and to get them working quickly because what we did was take that whole experience with Hillcrest—we didn’t replicate it, because it couldn’t be replicated. But we did take the lessons that we learned from in organization, in working with teachers and so forth and have used all of those things to do the new ones. The big differences between Hillcrest and the ones we have currently—the ones that have just started—we didn’t get to choose the teachers. The teachers didn’t choose to be there and to start this new school and because of that they didn’t get to start this new school, it’s a totally different kind of experience. The teachers choose to be a part of it, but not everybody in the school is a teacher who has PDS students and
that’s a totally different model. Because we have the experience with Hillcrest and the collaboration and all, it made it so much easier to begin.

Well, I’ve covered the topics I wanted to cover. Is there anything in addition that you can think of that you’d like to add or like to relate?

No. I guess the only thing is I’ve found Hillcrest—the Hillcrest experience such a good one, such a good beginning in a view of collaboration. I have never thought about putting together a university and a school and doing it kind of intently. You focus on setting up a school that really is a true collaboration and it’s possible. It’s not easy.

You know, Pat, I’ll just say, I’ve been amazed as I’ve been doing this project at how many people were involved in what the result became. Oh, tremendous number of people.

It’s just incredible.

And people have been positive about the experience. You know, it was hard. People are people and they have egos and they have attitudes and so forth. But, basically, everybody wanted what almost all teachers want and that is to do a really good job in educating our children. And because of that, I think it can work.

I don’t think we could close with a better statement, so thank you very much for your time.

Great. Okay.

*End of Interview*