ROSEBERRY: This is Jessica Roseberry. It is February 2, 2018. I am here in the School of Education in Marrs McLean building, Baylor University campus, with Dr. Larry Browning. And this is our first interview together. We’re going to talk about the history of the School of Education. So thank you very much, sir, for agreeing to be interviewed today.

BROWNING: Thank you. I think this is going to be interesting. I very clearly remember my second twenty years here (Roseberry laughs) but not my first twenty, so I’m not sure how this is going to go.

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ROSEBERRY: Well, we’ll talk about maybe a little bit of both. If it’s all right with you, if I might ask you what year you were born, if that’s okay.

BROWNING: Nineteen forty-five. I was born one day before the Germans surrendered. I was born May 7, the war in Europe was over with on May 8.
ROSEBERRY: Wow, what a time for celebration.

BROWNING: So I am not—what is—baby boomer? I missed it by one day.

ROSEBERRY: (laughs) You were almost a baby boomer.

BROWNING: I missed it by one day.

ROSEBERRY: Well, where was this? Where were you born?

BROWNING: I was born in a town in Empire, Alabama. My father was an underground coal miner, and there was—it’s interesting, I said Empire, didn’t I? My son saw that written on a map when he was about twenty years ago—when he was about twenty years old, and he said, “That’s how you spell it. I thought you were from ‘Empar.’”

ROSEBERRY: (laughs) Empar.

BROWNING: Because Empar is the way we’d always say it. My father was a coal miner, he was a boss in—underground boss in local coal mines, and in the coal company camps, the bosses lived on Dude Row. And so, I was born on Dude Row in Empire Alabama, which is in Walker County, north of Birmingham.

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ROSEBERRY: What does Dude Row mean? What is that?

BROWNING: That’s where all the bosses lived. Those houses were slightly—the houses were owned by the company. Some rent was collected out of your weekly or monthly check for the house, and the bosses all lived in slightly nicer homes.
ROSEBERRY: I see. Okay. So, did you grow up there in that coal town?

BROWNING: I don’t remember that town. We moved to a neighboring town, Sumiton, Alabama. We moved to Sumiton when I was about four years old. I guess, during World War II, people bought a lot of war bonds. It was a way of, I guess, investing and sort of supporting the war. One day when my dad came home from work, there was a truckload of furniture leaving his house and he followed it to the house my mother had bought when she cashed in the war bonds, because she wanted a house. So we moved from a rent house to a house that’s still in the family, my sister owns it. I always wondered what would have happened if Dad hadn‘t—if the truck had already left when he got home.

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ROSEBERRY: (laughs) She just made that executive decision.

BROWNING: Yeah, she did that, she made those kinds of decisions. But it was a coal-mining community, so I grew up in a small town. I lived about two blocks from the school, and of course it was the Jim Crow south. It was fully segregated community: work was segregated, schools were segregated, the entire community.

ROSEBERRY: Were you aware of that?

BROWNING: I look back now and wonder how I could have missed it. Why didn’t I even notice it? I didn’t notice it until the first year in college. But my first year in college was 1963, and to get to the university—the school, the state school I was going to attend, we had to drive through Birmingham. So we drove through Birmingham in the summer of 1963, which was the demonstrations that Martin Luther King led. Reverend [Fred]
Shuttlesworth led demonstrations, and that sort of got your attention, and so you’d think about, Well now, why is this going on? At that point, I always wondered—I didn’t even notice the racism until I was eighteen years old, then I did. So that’s one of the—I don’t know, there’s probably a name for that sort of moment, but that’s what I think as being one of the strongest things that happened to me.

ROSEBERRY: What did you think in that moment?

BROWNING: It just seemed horribly wrong, but I didn’t know anything to do about it, so I thought about it a lot. I even went—the college I attended was segregated. There were no black students. One of the dishwashers—I washed dishes in the—I worked in the cafeteria to pay for my degree, and one of the dishwashers was black. Maybe one in each washroom. We had two washrooms and they did the dirty work, and that was the only—the only blacks on campus. When I taught school—am I moving too fast?

[00:05:55]

ROSEBERRY: You’re fine.

BROWNING: I taught secondary—I started off teaching secondary education. I finished that little state school, Jacksonville State, in four and a half years. I started teaching in 1968, and the first year I taught, I was the only white person on the high school campus. So I’ve always thought of that as being quite a transition. (laughs) I’d never went to school with a person who was not white, at all. There were black athletes that showed up my senior year at the college I attended, but I was not in class with any of them. But then my first teaching experience, I was the only white person in the building.
ROSEBERRY: What was that like?

BROWNING: That was different. I talked—I’m thinking about that, I think, because one of my co-workers, Rick Strot, was in here this morning, and he and I have a friend in common and she taught in the black schools in Waco. She was a graduate of Paul Quinn, and she was one of the black teachers in Waco that made the transition from the segregated school to an integrated school, and she still works with us some. She’s been telling Rick stories about the integration, and Rick and I were talking this morning something about that—and I told him this story. First day of school, it was my first day to teach, so I don’t know what I’m doing anyway.

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ROSEBERRY: Is this your first teaching job?

BROWNING: First teaching job, everything. I have done like a seven-week student teaching experience somewhere, and now I’m an eleventh-grade homeroom teacher who’s going to teach—because I’m the only white person on campus, I get to teach all of the senior classes in my field. I get the privilege—

ROSEBERRY: You were given—okay.

BROWNING:—it was a privileged position. So I got to teach the seniors, and so I’m in this eleventh-grade homeroom class. I don’t even know what I’m supposed to be doing. I think I was supposed to be registering the students or doing some paperwork, but I’d never done it before and no one told me, so I was just sitting at my desk looking at them and they were staring at me. Thirty or forty minutes into my attempt to communicate with
them, one of the young women stood up and came up to me and said, “Can I touch your hair?” and I said, “Sure.” She reached up and touched me on the top of the head. She turned around and looked to the class and says, “Dog’s hair, y’all. It feels just like a dog’s hair.” (laughs) They had never had any direct contact with an adult white in their lifetime. They lived in the suburb of Birmingham, Alabama, and I was the first white person who was in any way accessible to them. So I had a wonderful two years, just a fantastic two years. I always used to think—I wondered all the time, Look at all that stuff I missed out on from the time I was a year old to the time I was twenty-two years old living in a white-only world, what all I had missed. That was 19—first year I taught was 1968, and I was the integration of the high school system in that district. I was the only white teacher, I think, that year. It was a large school district. So, it’s 1968 and Brown v. Board decision was 1954, and the new order was ’55, so it was thirteen years later. Then when I came here—I came here only—it was only nine years later when I come here, when I came to Waco. Waco had only been integrated a few years when I got here. They integrated well after we did, and that’s such a short time ago.

ROSEBERRY: It was a long time after Brown, wasn’t it?

BROWNING: It was a long time, but it was such a short time ago, yeah. I took you off down a trail, sorry.

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ROSEBERRY: I appreciate it. Well, let me back up a little bit and ask you if education was important in your family.
BROWNING: My father was much older. I am his second family. His first wife passed away and he lost a child and then he remarried. When he remarried, he married someone nineteen years younger than he. (laughs) He was forty-something. My father was born in 1903, went to work in the coal mines in 1916, so he was thirteen years old when he worked—to work in the coal mines, he had finished the eighth grade in school. My mother finished high school in 1942. To both of them, education for the children was very important. My father was a very smart man. He read a lot, but he was not educated. My mother was very insistent that we would all do well in school, and within our home, education was very important. We had books, very literate culture. We read and talked about what we read. To some extent, my parents didn’t have a large library, but there was nothing out of bounds. If we had something we wanted to read, we read it. Of course, my father was a coal miner, so he was a member of the United Mine Workers—UMWA—United Mine Workers of America, John L. Lewis’s union. We had that weekly publication for them, so early on I knew that the rich people were the bad people and the poor people were the good people. (both laugh) It was interesting, it’s not a liberal environment—liberal political environment, because in terms of—they, my parents, supported segregation, and I had never heard him say anything against it, but they were progressive in the sense of worker against owner and rich people—

ROSEBERRY: Very pro-union—

BROWNING: Very pro-union. Sought that out in politicians that they supported, and didn’t trust a lot of the local wealthy folks. So, there was always that critical sense, although I don’t think they would use that term. But this sort of critical sense that—it’s okay to question things if you want to. I have two brothers and a sister. I’m the only one
that went to college. A brother in the navy, he dropped out of high school his senior year and became chief petty officer—master chief, I think—in the navy. A sister that went to Florida and became very successful entrepreneur growing greenery, the stuff you buy when you buy a handful of flowers. The ferns and things that are in there were probably raised by her and sold by her. I have a brother that entered—he was a construction worker—welder—in the coal mines. But he didn’t do underground coal, he worked in strip mines. He’s retired in West Virginia now. So, yeah.

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ROSEBERRY: So how did you then go to college? How was that?

BROWNING: It was something I was always going to do. I didn’t know enough about what I was going to do with a college degree to have a plan. I just knew I was going to go to college. Actually, I hadn’t thought about this in a long time. Is that’s what this is supposed to do, make me think about things I haven’t thought about in a long time?

ROSEBERRY: (speaking at same time) That’s right. That’s right, bring it back.

BROWNING: I remember—I knew—I always thought I wanted to go to college. I liked the people that taught—my teachers, they’d all gone to college, that’s what made them different. I liked the Baptist minister that I had one year who had a college degree. All those others who didn’t have one, never seemed to me to be as important as the one who did. Watching an old black and white TV show, and I really think it might be something like the story of Knute Rockne or something like that, and there was a character who taught in a university. He would walk home of an afternoon and sit down in a den and
there was a fireplace, and he would sit at that den and his wife would sit and talk to him. He had books he would read, he’d smoke his pipe. That just looked like the perfect life. So I remember as a child thinking, Boy wouldn’t that be wonderful to do that. But that was never a goal, I was going to go to college. The first person that talked to me about going to college and how he went to college was the—he was the local mailman. His wife was a first-grade teacher. But he sort of thought I’d make a good pharmacist, because he knew pharmacists made pretty good money, and he connected me up with a local pharmacist to talk about what you would do. That didn’t go anywhere.

I was the grocery carry-out boy to Piggly Wiggly, the local Piggly Wiggly. I know early in May of my senior year, I had been accepted to the University of Alabama. I had to figure out a way I could pay for it. My parents would have been able to help me some, but they couldn’t pay tuition. My friends knew I wanted to go to college. I had been accepted at the Baptist university in Birmingham. It was called Howard then, it’s Samford now. But again, that was going to cost money. One day—one Saturday—in the parking lot at the grocery store, a friend who was a few years older—and we played high school football together. He had been the older kid when I started high school football. He came by and said, “Larry, I know you want”—something along the line—“I know you want to go to college, I wonder if you might want to do this.” And he had a job as a college student, he had worked in the cafeteria at this small state school. He had just graduated, and he was going to stay and work for their version of Aramak [Aramark]. I don’t know what it’s called then, but they had some business that worked at that cafeteria. He was going to work there, and he was putting together—he had been told he
could hire some students and so he asked me if I wanted to go. I said, “Sure,” or something along that line, and he said, “Well, I’ve made arrangements.” He’d already arranged for a person who was a student there who lived in the town and he was going to—they were home for the weekend, and this student was going to be driving back on Monday. So, Ernie Sides [Earnest], who had made the arrangements for me, set me up with Eddie Dodd, who was an upperclassmen at that university. I was going to ride back with him and they were going to take care of me. He said, “Bring your test scores with you”—ACT. So, I took my ACT scores with me, change of clothes or something. That Monday morning they introduced me to the people in the cafeteria. The cafeteria lady said, “Sure, we’ve got a job for you.” They walked me over to the admissions office, I showed them my ACT scores, and they admitted me.

ROSEBERRY: (laughs) That was easy.

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BROWNING: It had been Jacksonville State Teacher’s College, and it was just becoming Jacksonville State College. They were dropping teacher out of it. This is 1963. I guess those Baby Boomers were actually getting to school, and a lot more people were going to college, and they were growing. It was a school of only about three thousand. It would be comparable in quality—it would be a second or third tier state school. Well, I don’t want to say a school’s name, but you probably know second or third tier state schools. That would be one of those. The only stipulation was I had to start in summer, so this is late in May, and in about five days—about three days after I graduated from high school, all of a sudden I was a freshman at Jacksonville State College. Eddie Dodd, the person who had
given me the ride up there, was pre-pharmacy. Someone else had already said pharmacy
to me, so they all decided because I had good high school scores and I had strong scores
in math and science, that I’d be a chemistry major—I’d become a pharmacist.

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ROSEBERRY: (laughs) Okay, you were pointed in the right direction.

BROWNING: I was pointed in that direction, and then they decided after my first
semester there—they decided maybe math. So they were making these decisions for me.
But I worked in the cafeteria, and the arrangement then was—that was before all the
federal controls over student workers existed, so we could work as many hours as they
told us to. I washed dishes all three meals, twenty meals a week, no Sunday dinner for
two weeks in a row. Then the third week you got the weekend off, then again. The pay
was calculated so that by the end of the semester you would have paid your room, board,
tuition, might have a few dollars left. The bookstore would issue us credit for the
textbooks with no interest, and whatever was left out of the money we had earned at the
end of the semester would pay for the textbooks. So all we had to do was come up with
spending money. Now, I think we were probably making forty, fifty cents an hour. We
were probably working—well, three meals a day and it took more than an hour—so we
was probably working five hours a day, somewhere between thirty, thirty-five hours a
week. Plus you had to clean on Saturday, which took all day. You had to do a deep clean
of the cafeteria on Saturday. So we were probably working somewhere above thirty hours
week, but we were full time students, and we made just enough. (Roseberry laughs) It
actually—I did that until my senior year, and in the senior year—no junior year—well,
junior, senior year—the federal controls over student workers, which produced what we now call student workers—with some federal money, that plan came in place. And it reduced the number of hours I could work, couldn’t make enough money. Had to borrow money to finish, so I ended up finishing school owing $900. (Roseberry laughs) I had a student loan, after four-and-a-half-years, of $900, and somewhere along in there, I had shifted from pharmacy through math. I ended up with a lot of hours in math, enough that I was offered junior high school teaching jobs in math. But I shifted into what I liked which turned out to be history/social studies, so I ended up with a history major, political science minor, maybe an economics minor. I’m not sure I had that many hours—because I stayed. I didn’t want to graduate, because they were drafting boys that graduated and sending them to Vietnam.

ROSEBERRY: Okay. Keep on—

BROWNING: So I tried to stay as long as I could, but—so I ended up certified in secondary history and political science. In Alabama, political science teachers taught economics, so government and economics were taught as one class.

ROSEBERRY: So you were certified to teach.

BROWNING: Certified to teach. I went through—I ended up with a bachelor of science in secondary education. That was not what I thought I was going to do when I started, but it was comfortable and nice. Seemed like the thing to do, I enjoyed it. Graduated in January, which meant I couldn’t get a job in the spring. The only offer I had in the spring
was someone wanted me to be an assistant basketball coach and teach math in the junior high school. I had never played a full game of basketball in my life, and was not certified to teach junior high math, and I didn’t take that. I had throughout my years—I had supplemented my income as a dishwasher, working carpentry, home construction. So I worked to spring and then started looking for a job in Alabama. Jefferson County was considered—Jefferson County, Alabama just happened to be considered one of the best school districts in the state. Birmingham was in it, but not part of the district in the county. I liked them because they paid more than the other counties did, they supplemented the salary. Interviewed there, and the assistant superintendent—some sort of question there was why—he asked me the question as if he thought the answer would be no. He said something along the line of, “Would you teach colored kids?” And I just said, “Yeah, why not?” So, they virtually hired me on the spot because they were needing white teachers to integrate. What they did was sent me to—I interviewed with the principal at the school, Levi Satisfield—Satis—yeah, Satisfield, Mr. Satisfield. I got the job, and I found out later on that they had moved one of their most respected, best teachers, and put me in her spot, so they set me up.

ROSEBERRY: (laughs) Really gave you a plum position.

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BROWNING: That’s what they did, they moved the best black teachers to the white schools when they were forced to integrate, and they moved new teachers—if they could find them—were the weakest white teachers to the traditional black campuses. So, it wasn’t done in a sort of sense of fairness, but I was glad to have the job.
ROSEBERRY: So that was your first teaching experience.

BROWNING: First teaching experience, other than student teaching, yeah, that was it. Two years there, and in the second year, massive court-ordered integration. So the core of that wonderful faculty I had worked with that first year, who were all better educated than I and they had gone to far more prestigious universities than I did. They were better educated than I. They were much better read, more literate than I, and they were experienced teachers. That core group got moved to white high schools, and I was given coworkers, who were not at all of that quality from white high schools, and a very poor white principal. The community—the white students that were supposed to come to our school never came. They went on strike, and I virtually did not teach for a year, but had a full job. I had a small class of general science—see, there’s that chemistry came back—just because we had a few students. Most of the black students in the community were bussed elsewhere. The white kids that were supposed to be bussed just didn’t come. They came during the spring at night and destroyed the inside of a building, parents or somebody did. My desk got chopped up with an axe, they broke walls in a concrete—the block walls—they beat walls with a sledgehammer. Never found out who it was, but we assumed it was local white community. The end of that year, I was trying to figure out what I was going to do, because I’d had a great first year and not a very good second year. It was a weird second year. So the third year, I go back to the same school. I realized during the opening faculty meeting, it was just going to be another year like I had had the year before. As I was leaving the opening faculty meeting, an area superintendent—the school district was large enough to had divided up into areas—the area superintendent was walking in the building as I was leaving. I don’t know where I
was going, I just know I was leaving. I had a conversation with her about how the school was really declining. I didn’t like that, whatever. She essentially escorted me to a neighboring school and I became the seventh-grade history teacher. An elementary school that they were going to add a seventh grade to it, and then that seventh grade was going to become the core of a new middle school that would be built in this mostly white, upper middle class, growing community. She just took me there and introduced me to the principal and I became the seventh-grade history teacher. She knew they needed it, and she just moved me over there and I taught at that school three years, and in the time went back to school, got a master’s degree in elementary education, recertified as an elementary teacher. When they moved that seventh grade away from the campus and built the new school after my first year there, I became the sixth-grade teacher. One of the sixth-grade teachers—there were 1100 kids on the campus, so it was—and then, I became a—a—after my third year there, I had finished my master’s.

I became the head teacher of the smallest school in the district. Little four-teacher campus (Roseberry laughs), hundred-something kids, hundred-five, six kids out in a very rural, country, isolated part of the county. So I was twenty-eight years old, and I was the lead teacher. They changed my title to second year to principal, so I was twenty-eight, twenty-nine-year-old principal of a school that only had a hundred students in it. I was principal for twenty-three months. Twenty-two months of that I was looking for another job, because—

ROSEBERRY: That wasn’t it.
BROWNING: That wasn’t it. Do you know the movie Deliverance?

ROSEBERRY: I’ve heard of it, yes.

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BROWNING: This is in Alabama, North Central Alabama. We’re in the foothills of the Appalachians, although people don’t call them that, they just call it the hills and hollers. So across the line in Georgia would have been where Deliverance was filmed. It was that sort of area: low income, very undereducated, whites, parents are not educated—many of the parents weren’t literate, a lot of mixed race children, a few black students. Never seen a Hispanic yet, in all my life I haven’t seen one yet. Children were very poor, they’d come to school barefoot at the start of the school year. No library in the school. Now it’s a large school district, and I had taught at a school that was as good as any elementary school in Texas, the elementary school where I taught. Wonderful school, large classes, forty kids in a classroom, but a lot of very innovative curriculum practices, we could do about anything we wanted to. Very well-equipped, and in the same county, I ended up doing school that doesn’t have a library. There are no audio-visual materials in the school at all, nothing. So I was the principal there for two years. We built a library on the stage. I remember we painted them primary colors. We built wooden shelves, and my fifth and sixth-grade students helped me—we built them at school—they helped me paint them, so we painted them bright yellow enamel. Part-time office manager became part-time librarian. We even auctioned off a pig to raise money to buy it. We sold all our chances on a pig and auctioned off a pig. Made friends with the school district librarian—the person who ran the instructional supplies media component for the—she would give me a lot of
the—every time I had to go to a county meeting of administrators meeting, I’d go by her library and she’d give me a box of books. When I left there, we’d had a pretty nice library. Did you ever see a TV show that talked about the coal field millionaires or something like that?

ROSEBERRY: No.

BROWNING: North Alabama a lot of strip-mining. Some of those people became overnight millionaires because of coal on their land, and I had one of those millionaire’s sons in my school, and he was always good for a thousand bucks here or there.

(Roseberry laughs) So if I had some—

ROSEBERRY: Know where to go.

BROWNING: If I had some project going on, if I could—I would sometimes go to the— somebody would say, “Well Larry, if you come up with a thousand dollars for these books, then we’ll give you an extra thousand dollars’ worth.” So, I’d call Mr. Hallmark(??), his son would bring me a thousand dollar check the next day, and we’d go get the books. But it was something I knew I didn’t want to do very long, and the way out of that was grad school, so I went to grad school.

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ROSEBERRY: So, is this your path to higher education?

BROWNING: Yeah, I went from—I decided that I would see what I could do other than being a campus principal. It seemed logical to me, I could be a central office
administrator. I had been a principal; if I could be a principal, then I could be a superintendent. I actually had been very privileged and didn’t realize it at the time. As the only white teacher on a black campus, you get treated very differently. You get treated with a tremendous amount of privilege. You get to do what you want to do, teach the classes you want to do. Well, if you’re probably the only male except for the custodian on an elementary campus, it’s the same way. So I had spent five years teaching and two years as a principal being treated as if I were a person of some sort of quality or difference, and it was just purely I happened to be—I think if I had been tall it would have been just the same thing, the tall guy gets better treatment than the short guy or something. Decided I wanted to go back to school, see what it was like. My master’s had been University of Alabama Birmingham. My doctorate—they didn’t have a doctoral program at the Birmingham campus. So, Tuscaloosa, main campus, University of—I went one summer—I went one evening—I took an evening class. I got admitted and took an evening class, a fall class, second year I was a principal, and I lived—my school was seventy-five miles from the campus. It was the class that started at six o’clock and was over with at nine. I did one semester of that and didn’t do any more of that, didn’t do very well in the course. Went the next summer, this would’ve been summer of 1975, had two wonderful classes first summer term. They were classes with the same person. You had summer classes—two classes would mean we start at eight and I’d be through about one. It was the same gentleman. In July, I started my second summer. The person I’d had the summer classes with got promoted to department chair, and it was unexpected. Someone left—I never understood the circumstances, but someone left the school unexpectedly, and so he moved into a department chair role. They had not had time to hire someone to
teach his undergrad classes, so he hired me to teach his undergrad classes. He did all of this because he thought he was the department chair and he could do anything he wanted to, so we negotiated a salary, a deal that I would teach part time and go to school. We had worked out what sort of the load would be, we talked a little bit about the details, and I drove home.

By then it was like sixty-five miles to my home, and on the way home, I practiced all the ways I was going to tell my wife that I was going to resign my principalship and go back to full-time—because I had not talked to her at all. But she was in the master’s program at the University of Alabama Birmingham, and she was a—she had just finished her second year of teaching first grade and we have a young child, we had a son. So I’m on my way home trying to figure out how I’m going to say all these things I’m doing to disrupt. I got to thinking, Well, a good friend in the central office, with the school—the personnel director at the time—I call him and tell him what I’m planning on doing before I tell my wife, and ask him if he could move her from her teaching position.

ROSEBERRY: You’re playing a risky game. (both laugh)

BROWNING: I really was. If I could move her to this—if he would move her to this campus, which would cut my commute—if I could live in that community—it would cut my commute from almost seventy miles a day to forty miles a day. And so he says, “Sure Larry, we can do that.” There was a sort of informal promise, that I would not be resigning, I would just be taking an unpaid leave and come back to the district. And so when I got home and told Diane what I had planned on doing, she said, “Okay, when?”
ROSEBERRY: Aw, that’s—

BROWNING: We’d always said—our plan had always been that we were not going to stay in that little town. That we were each trying—she was working—she was one degree behind me, but she was working also. Going to work and go to school at night, whatever. So in—now that’s 1975—so in 1975, we moved so that I could have a shorter commute, and I did a very rapid doctoral program. Every time there was a course available, I went. They had mini-mesters. I took every mini-mester, I took maximum load, and graduated in July 1977, so I did the doctoral program in two years, full-time, and came here.

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ROSEBERRY: There you go. Well, what was Baylor like when you came?

BROWNING: Oh, that’s what I’ve really been thinking about—it was so much smaller. It was so much smaller, but our classes were so much bigger. I think the student body must’ve been about 8,000, I don’t remember those numbers. But I came in fall of ‘77. The School of Education had just—had been moved one semester. I think they moved out of Pat Neff, maybe, January 1977 into the Burleson/Draper. So, the School of Education was most of the first floor of Burleson. The [College of] Arts and Sciences dean’s office was in there, and all of the second floor, and then their classroom space was first and second floor of Draper. They had maybe been there one semester, seven or eight months was all. All the area adjacent to Tidwell, from there towards the river, those were still businesses and shops. There was a post office on the corner where the faculty dining room is now. That was a post office with a Masonic Lodge above it. Nothing in there had been developed. I guess the library—the library in these buildings—they were the newer
buildings. They’d been here five or six years, something like that. The School of Ed faculty was small. When I was hired—when I showed up to work in August seventy-seven, it was just sort of, well, Go upstairs and choose an office. And so go up second floor and there’s just—half the offices are empty. Paul Rosewell, who was on the faculty then—Paul was showing me around. He’d been here several years and he and Henry Norris, who was also a faculty—the three of us wandered around into the empty offices and put together the suite of furniture I wanted. (Roseberry laughs) So we moved pieces around and matched up the colors we wanted, and I chose an office. I think, maybe, only half the offices were used at all for the first couple of years.

Overwhelmingly male faculty, which was unusual to me because I had just finished five years in elementary schools, so I was accustomed to female faculty, but it was overwhelmingly male. Texas and midwestern—it seemed to me everyone had a degree from Texas. It seemed like every person—I know they all didn’t, but it seemed like everyone had an undergraduate degree from Baylor and a PhD or a doctorate from Texas, and they spent mostly their entire career here. That was the sense I had. I know that’s not true, I know now it’s not. Paul Roswell, who was the secondary English guy, was from Nebraska. Fred Curtis, whose name was on that book I just showed you, right there—Fred was from Nebraska. There’s a guy in Ed Psych department who was from Kansas.

ROSEBERRY: So, you were just talking about the department. What were the departments like?
BROWNING: There was a—the dean was L. V. McNamee, and I know he must have had names that—I don’t think his given names were L. V.—

ROSEBERRY: (speaking at same time) L. V.—

BROWNING: —but I’d never (Roseberry laughs) heard anything other than L. V. McNamee. His son, I think, now works in the athletic department here, or grandson maybe. But there’s someone here with that name. The associate dean was Bill Lamkin who was also chair of the Ed Psych department, and the Ed Psych department had an undergraduate special ed certification and then they had graduate programs. They trained counsellors—mostly high school counselors—and diagnosticians. There was a program in school administration that Henry Norris was the chair of that program, and they had bilingual. We always thought it was strange, they was the chair of school administration and bilingual. (both laugh) Or maybe bilingual was—it wasn’t in their title, but it was housed in that department. I think it had to do with a faculty member who was housed there. So they trained school administrators. The PE [physical education] department, and it was called the PE department then. It went from PE to HPE [health and physical education] and HHPR [health, human performance and recreation] and all that, but it was the PE department was part of the School of Ed [Education]. Then I was in curriculum and instruction, and curriculum and instruction was organized into elementary and secondary, and we had chairs, like there was a chair of elementary ed and a chair of secondary ed. But there weren’t—mostly their job was to schedule classes, I guess, and do some paperwork. There was no—we all knew we worked for the dean. So we had people with titles in between, but there was no sense that that person did anything other than coordinate some required things, like be sure the schedule is covered. They probably
did things like review students who were appealing courses and whatever, but they didn’t
do personnel ratings on us, annual reviews, they had no input into our tenure, anything.

So, we had those three departments. The largest was, of course, curriculum instruction.
Elementary was by far the largest program in terms of number of students. My first few
years here—my first class I taught—I had two sections of a class, each section had more
than forty—had about forty-five to forty-eight in it, and I was given a light load that first
year to get—I was supposed to be helping develop a reading program, so I had a light
load. So I taught two sections of a class, had forty-something people in it, while writing
the course descriptions, putting the syllabi and things together for an undergraduate
program. We called them specializations, an undergraduate specialization in elementary
reading. There were elementary—well, I was going to say there were elementary—yeah,
could be elementary something else. You could get a specialization in elementary art,
elementary music, elementary history, or elementary reading, and so I was writing those,
but the numbers were just large numbers. Faculty members weren’t nearly as specialized
as they are now, so you might be elementary literacy and also teach elementary social
studies. I taught elementary science methods, so we just kind of taught everything.

ROSEBERRY: Did the School of Education have a literacy focus at that time or was
there—were you alone in that, or—?

BROWNING: Yeah we had—I know the people involved, but I don’t know what the
impetus was. Jim Wiley was here then and Dr. Wiley had been here about five years
ahead of me and he was elementary literacy. The way the state certified teachers was
elementary teachers had to have a field of specialty. The only fields that actually fit School of Ed would be special ed, you could be elementary with special ed, elementary with literacy. All of the others were in arts and sciences, so you could be elementary—well, you could be elementary PE, which was—but you could be elementary math, which was an eighteen hour program in the math department, elementary chemistry to elementary biology. I think the School of Ed wanted—generating more hours, they wanted to grow the ones that would fit within their department. So by putting in a program of elementary reading specialization, then that would have been Jim pushing it, Jim Wiley. Then that increased the number of credit hours being generated by the school. It gave a different major, and the year after me a third person was hired in the field; she only stayed here two years. So, I think, driven by the desire to have more credit hours, we had a very large elementary literacy program at the time. I would say I wrote the eighteen hours of coursework. I’m sure the people with me would say, We wrote it, and probably it was a we, not an I. They might say I, I mean, they might use a personal pronoun for themselves, but we put in place a six-hour course—a six course sequence that became the largest program in the School of Ed, those people getting elementary reading specialist.

That’s when I started thinking about—that’s when I really started questioning what we were doing, because I would have forty sophomores, or forty-five sophomores, all girls, most of them from East Texas. We seemed to always have a lot of students from the Tyler/Longview area. But you’d have forty students or more, and in one course or in a series of courses you were going to teach them how to teach a child to read by lecturing to them about how you teach a child to read. We did all sorts of things trying to break that
up. We taught each other, we got in groups and practiced lessons with each other. We even had a couple of rooms where you could film somebody teaching. The special ed [education] department—special ed program had a classroom with one-way mirror—one-way window so you observe people practicing teaching each other, but we still were working with each other, and most of us were uncomfortable with the quality of student we were producing because we had spent maybe three semesters lecturing at them about how to do it, but we’d never actually done it with a child. They hadn’t done it with a child and we hadn’t done it with a child. So I’m trying to get some sequences here in right. We had then—the student teaching program was during one semester of your senior year, the first half of the semester. So, seven-and-a-half weeks would be a combination of a—it would be a methods course in teaching science, a course in teaching social studies, and a course on teaching the language arts, had to be nine hours with it. Then the second half of that semester, seven-and-a-half weeks, you would be student teaching. So it was a seven-and-a-half weeks student teaching program. The year before that you would have taken semester-long reading methods classes, math methods. For some reason they were considered more important so they got a whole semester. Then you would go student teach for seven-and-a-half weeks, and that’s nothing. I think the secondary program at the time was probably not a School of Ed degree. The secondary program was probably—I think it was you got a degree in math and then one semester you came to the School of Ed and did that semester some secondary methods courses and then student taught for seven-and-a-half weeks.

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ROSEBERRY: So how long was that system in place?
BROWNING: Somewhere in the mideighties, the early 1980s, the first thing we did was to go to a full semester of student teaching. So that meant we took those methods classes that had been seven-and-a-half weeks long and turned them into full semester courses. So, first thing would have been that transition and I’m thinking that’s ’82 or ’83, it’s that quick.

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Tom Proctor led the special ed program and so he led a program that was elementary with special ed specialization, and I’m not the leader, but I’m active in the reading specialization. Tom and I were good friends. He and I worked an arrangement with the Waco schools so that we could take our students—we took our juniors. He took some of his special ed students, and I took one of my reading classes. We combined them into a six hour class. Oh, no we didn’t combine them, the students only got three hours. But he and I taught together and we went to an elementary school, which is near the VA hospital, and an hour from now I’ll remember the name of the elementary school.

[Browning note: It was Kendrick Elementary.] (both laugh) But we had a classroom there, a couple of teachers that had agreed in the schools. It was interesting, we wanted to go to a low-income, low-performing school, especially one that served minority students. The school district wouldn’t let us, because if you take those Baylor girls there, we would never be able to hire them for a job because they wouldn’t work for us if they saw how bad those schools were. So, they sent us to a school that they thought would not run our students off, (both laugh) and so Tom and I were there maybe a year. Our students would—we would either match our students up one-to-one and they would teach and we would observe and critique them. For the reading people, I preferred putting them in a
small group—giving them a small group and so they would teach a reading group, and
they would practice teaching a reading group for a semester with me observing and
critiquing them. And I think I probably had a graduate assistant that helped me, and we
did that at that school for a year or so, and—

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ROSEBERRY: And there was no lead teacher in that classroom?

BROWNING: There was a classroom. The public school teacher [Browning note: Robbie
Moore] was in the classroom and she would help us. As a matter of fact, one of them
came back here with me eventually and became my graduate assistant and taught with me
for a few years, so we were recruiting good teachers back into our program. So we did
that for, maybe, only a year, and Tom still didn’t—Tom wanted more control. Special ed
people want me and you, and we want three people. We want Tom over there watching
me teach you and you’re going to be the little child.

ROSEBERRY: Very individualistic.

BROWNING: It’s individualistic, only very behavioristic. The group just drove him
crazy because special ed kids don’t do well in a group. So our partnership in that sense
didn’t work. He had to bring his back on campus and he started a learning lab. Over in
Draper, there is a space, it’s probably all been torn out and it’s offices now, but that was a
special ed learning lab and kids came to school—identified special ed learners came on
campus late-afternoon, and our students taught them one-to-one.

ROSEBERRY: So, this—was it a school or was it a class?
BROWNING: It was a learning—we called it a learning lab. The students came from all around town. They would apply and vie, they wanted to be in there, because if you had a child with learning disability then you could get one-to-one attention three to four times a day—I mean, three to four times a week for a year in a specialized clinic. So he did that and I kept trying to figure out how you would do it out in the schools. So tried to—I eventually ended up in La Vega. See, I’d have forty students in a class. So these are forty students I could either lecture on how you teach, or I could take forty students to a campus, put five or six of them in every classroom, everybody gets a group of three to four kids and then try to supervise them. Now I didn’t supervise them very well. I didn’t give them much feedback because there’s—but I felt like because they were working with kids and they had a classroom teacher in there with them that they were becoming better trained, so for several years we just kept manipulating—play ing with that model until we got fairly comfortable with graduate assistants and others, that we moved our special ed program, and the reading program sort of led the way. We were the ones out in the field. By 1988, ’89, along in there, that was a model, that was what we were doing. If you were in elementary reading, you were doing these things out in the field. If you were in special ed, you were doing these other things. If you were doing elementary mathematics, you were not doing anything other than your one semester of student teaching, so—and that elementary literacy program became one of the largest. It was where—if the people who wanted to teach, this is where they could get with kids. So they might have wanted to be a math teacher, but the math program didn’t have the extensive field experiences in it. We eventually got enough faculty members that our class sizes got
a little smaller, too, that helped. Or maybe people stopped majoring in education. (Both laugh)

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ROSEBERRY: How would you describe the relationship between the public schools and Baylor during this time, and what were—

BROWNING: Yeah, the—I think, our relationship was to a campus, and I—for me, I knew the central office reading literacy coordinator people, had good relationships with them. I would know a principal reasonably well, so I’d pick a school. I’d say, “I’d like to move my program to your school, this is what I want to do.” And they would talk to their teachers and they’d find people. So on that campus, we have very good close working relationship. They respected us and we were trying to help them with their kids, and we were sort of collaborating on stuff, but it could be possible that there were schools in Waco that never saw a Baylor student or a Baylor faculty member. So it’s not that we were—we were not antagonistic towards each other, we just weren’t involved. So we had good strong working relationships with some campuses. I ended up in La Vega at La Vega Elementary School, which—I think that’s what they call it. They have a primary school and then something else. But third and fourth grade in La Vega, and there was an elementary principal there that followed me around, watching what I was doing. He ended up with a doctorate from A&M and was our special ed—not special ed—our student teaching coordinator, long-term faculty member, secondary ed. He moved—he followed—I think his experience watching me with those students—he thought, Well, that would be something I might like doing. So Baylor hired him as a lecturer. He got his
doctorate and came and joined us. So we had relationships like that, mostly we robbed their talent.

ROSEBERRY: (laughs) You moved into the schools—

BROWNING: Moved into the school and if there was somebody really talented in the school then we’d bring them back. So I guess they were probably—

ROSEBERRY: Now the truth is out.

BROWNING: Yeah, so there might be some campuses that weren’t nearly as supportive.

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One of the things we’ve always—we’ve always wanted to do it. No, as a faculty, we talk about how much we’d really like to be part of a school improving somewhere. That we could really make a contribution to improving the lives of the kids on particular campuses or something. I think we are sort of disappointed because we’ve never been able to do that. We do it in isolated situations, but we’re never big enough—see, I get my chemistry and physics here confused. It takes a certain amount of momentum to cause something to move, and that generally means—for example, I think the best way to teach a young child who’s having trouble learning to read is to put them in a small group learning situation and do careful tutoring. You’ve got a hundred kids on your campus that need tutoring. How many tutors do you need? And trained tutors—if the tutors aren’t trained it doesn’t work. So we never have enough people to provide the service we think we could provide. We’re never big enough to do it, and that’s been sort of distressing to us, I think, those of us that think about it.
ROSEBERRY: Well, this a good time to talk about the Professional Development School? To transition into talking about that?

BROWNING: Yeah, in the—what we were doing out in the schools, it was gradually sort of growing—well, several of us were saying, Yeah, we really need to try to think about how we could do more field involvement. We had a program in which some students were getting a whole lot of experience. Other students were not getting much experience at all.

ROSEBERRY: Because of the different fields that they were—

BROWNING: Different fields were in, yeah. Yeah, and the different ways we were certifying. There were also—there were some things, unusual things, that were happening. The state bought into some ideas—what was his name? They’re very—I would call them almost reactionary ideas. The idea that the problem that we have in schools is that teachers haven’t had enough courses in arts and sciences. That we would be better off if we reduced the amount of training they have on how to teach and increase the amount of training they have in their subject field. So that became—by law—about 1988 or 1990, there were some changes made that said in state schools you can only have x number of hours in the School of Education. The rest of your degree must be from some other place. There were even specific things. The original law, I think, said that courses in human growth and development would not be permitted, period. Methods classes for elementary teachers couldn’t occur. We had to do some rewriting of our undergraduate programs because we had to meet some certification guidelines. So even
though you didn’t have—the legislature couldn’t tell Baylor what their degree plan was going to be, the legislature could say, “If you have these courses, they don’t count.” So, to be certified, you’d have to have certain number of hours at the time. And it was impacting some of our undergraduate programs in some way.

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Somehow in the process of rewriting our degree plans and also this push internally by some of us to get more field experience in, Hillcrest Professional Development School was developed. Now, we had a dean and a school superintendent who were talking to each other, and they wanted to do some things together, and Waco needed to add classroom space. They were going to reopen this old school—Hillcrest. They were going to remodel it and reopen it, and somehow because people were actually talking to each other, we became part of the group. We—the School of Ed—became part of the group to help Waco come up with a way to turn—to develop that school. Waco—oftentimes, Waco’s doing things to attempt to slow down the white flight out of the school district, a school where you’re more likely to keep higher income families. So this was seen as sort of a magnet school that might keep families from moving. It also could be a place that we could experiment with some ways of training teachers and with teaching kids, become sort of a model school. Always, our intention was if we could figure it out, we’d want to scale it up. We’d want to go from one campus to something else. So, Hillcrest PDS, early 1990s, a year of planning and then opening it, and we wanted to do a year-long internship, but the way our degree plan—the way our school was set up was a one-semester internship. So Tom Proctor and I took the classes that we had been teaching, that were junior-level or could be senior-level field experience classes, and sort of piled

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some of them together and turned them into a one-semester practicum, which became the first semester of the year. Then the second semester would be the student teaching, so we would just call that full year the internship. I taught classes at Hillcrest on campus. I gave grades in classes.

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ROSEBERRY: You say that in quotes.

BROWNING: In quotes. I gave grades in classes that I might not have taught. What we worked out was—well, in this first semester you will get credit for these courses. So you’re in the school, you’re in the classroom working with a teacher, you meet occasionally with me or with somebody else and we focus on that content, but you don’t actually do the same class that the kids are doing on campus. You don’t follow the same syllabus, you don’t do the pre-imposed—you don’t do the final exam necessarily. What you do is—while working with kids, learn how to do these things. So your first semester might be focused on working in the classroom where you are really getting some experience teaching math, teaching science, and when it’s all over with, you get credit for methods of teaching math, methods of teaching science, although you haven’t been in a class, necessarily. So instead of having an internship that was worth nine hours, we had three three-hour classes combined into a block and then we planned the block as a unitary experience. You do this and you get nine hours credit, and it happens to show up on your transcript as three separate classes and ultimately that turned into—but it took ten years to go from Hillcrest—one campus—to scale it up to ten campuses.

ROSEBERRY: That sounds significant.
BROWNING: Yeah, ten years.

ROSEBERRY: And ten campuses is a lot.

BROWNING: And ten campuses is a lot, and ten campuses is very expensive. It’s not a cost-effective way to train teachers. If you were looking at what it would cost to have a faculty member somewhere teach x number of hours—

ROSEBERRY: Sit them in a classroom.

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BROWNING: —it’d be a lot cheaper to put them in a classroom somewhere and lecture to them. We’d go back to 1977 and put forty of them in a section and lecture to them.

ROSEBERRY: So where did that money come from?

BROWNING: When—gosh, so many deans and presidents have changed—we had a dean—our dean at that time was Yinger, his name was [Robert] Yinger. Sloan, President [Robert B.] Sloan [Jr.] was here, and we were looking at a completely different financial model for the university. That financial model, we felt like, was going to really impact the size of the School of Ed. I mean, our students now are struggling with almost $50,000 a year cost for school. If they go to North Dallas, they’ll make 55,000 the first year they teach, if they stay in Waco, they’ll make 45,000, so they’ll earn less than their last year costs them. So we were afraid of what that was going to do, but there was some sort of commitment campus-wide that we were going to have a School of Education. We were going to train teachers, and the model for redesigning our school—the model was that we
would have a unique program that would be seen by others as a high value, successful program, a unique program. This is how you ought to train teachers. I remember the financial model is based on 150 students graduating a year, but if you have 150 students graduating a year than this program’s viable. We’ve never had that, we have 100 to 110.

ROSEBERRY: Okay. (both laugh) Are you talking about the Vision 2012 as the financial—

BROWNING: It was about that time. It was built into that discussion of Vision 2012 and whatever and the changing of the tuition model. The School of Ed wrote a proposal to reconfigure ourselves, to reimagine ourselves—

ROSEBERRY: Including these ten—?

BROWNING: And that’s where they came from. Those of us that had been involved at Hillcrest and had been pushing for field experience all along, by that time there were enough of us in either leadership roles or in positions where nobody could shut us up, (both laugh) that we became, sort of, the dominant voices in rewriting it. Now, I don’t mean that I did that. I was part of the group that did it, and Tom Proctor, who I’ve mentioned was my buddy. Eldon Barrett, who was the guy we brought here from La Vega, was part of that. Rick Strot, who’s a lecturer in our program now—Rick was the initial faculty hire to help support Hillcrest, so he had never been anywhere but our guy at Hillcrest. Susan Johnsen, who’s in Ed Psych—Dr. Johnson is very active and very supportive of the notion that you train—she trains the gifted and talented youngsters, so
she wants the GT teachers teaching GT kids, and so she had always had those sorts of things. We were all in the mix of talking about, What would this new program be? And we were told if we could design it—just design it so that it was of the highest quality and then we’ll try to figure out how we’ll staff it. So our first freshmen entered that program September 2001. They were in my class on 9/11. When we went into that class—when we came out of that class, everybody was out in the hallway talking about what had just happened, and so we missed it. Those freshman—and I think our first graduates were 2004, maybe 2003, 2004 in our new program. But one of the things that we were given as we built the program and designed the courses in what we thought it would be—

ROSEBERRY: You’re talking about early on in Hillcrest, or is this—?

BROWNING: Well, I’m sorry, I shifted there didn’t I? Yeah, Hillcrest we managed to staff by adding one person, Rick Strot. Everything else was those of us who taught certain kinds of classes taught our classes a different way. So we go out there and do them, so I think that Hillcrest was actually done at least from our point of view, sort of on the cheap—

ROSEBERRY: Oh really? Okay.

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BROWNING: Sort of, yeah. We didn’t add a lot of faculty for it, but when we started scaling up, then it’s obvious you’re going to need different faculty. If you have a Professional Development School—we knew from Hillcrest—you need someone there who is Baylor, you need someone there who is Waco, and the two of them talk to each
other and they sort of coordinate things on campus. You need a partnership like that, and you need our faculty who are teaching classes out there, and if you’re teaching a class out on campus, it can’t be forty, it’s got to be fifteen or fewer. Our faculty members really say they’re overloaded if it’s fifteen.

ROSEBERRY: Students, you’re talking about students?

BROWNING: Our faculty, if you have fifteen students, our faculty would say. If I’m working with a group that’s at a campus and I’ve got fifteen of them in my class, it’s virtually impossible to give the support. Because we’ve now become convinced that that support has to be there, where thirty years ago we were trying to figure out how to do it. We didn’t have the support, and we couldn’t convince people that we actually had to have somebody.

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For every five or six people you need one person supervising, so we ended up with, in 2001 and 2, trying to staff a program where we would do that. The Provost Office gave C and I (Curriculum and Instruction) five lecturers positions for three years, and so then at the end of three years, we’d reconsider. It may have been five for three years or three for five years. (Roseberry laughs) I know at the end of the time period we kept them. We ended up—this department grew by five faculty members in one year in order to support the field base program, and that was the university. Prior to that, our funding model had been tuition generated—credit hours generated. So you had to have fifty people in your classroom to cover your own cost. Now, however the magic works dividing up the bear bucks, however it is, it’s not divided up by credit hours generated. It’s how much money
do you need to operate this program which we want to have. If you want more money, demonstrate the program is more important to us. That’s the way I interpret it; that may be my understanding of the model. Our program—we went from certifying about 400 teachers a year to certifying about 100 to 110 a year, with increased costs. We went—

ROSEBERRY: (both laugh) That sounds a little backwards, but—

BROWNING: Yeah, it does. It does sound backwards. We reduced the number of graduates.

ROSEBERRY: Overall?

BROWNING: Overall in School of Ed, we reduced the number of graduates. We didn’t intentionally do that, we think the financial model—we think the tuition model reduced it, or we think that was one of the factors that reduced it. The other factor is the constant stuff in the newspaper about how bad the schools are and how dangerous it is to be a teacher, how hard it is. We have all that, sort of, negative press, but we went from 400 to 100/110. We increased the number of class hours that we teach. We increased the number of hours our students are out in the field, which increases supervision. Our students are never in the field without supervision. It became a—I think it’s a wonderful program, but it’s very different from what we were doing forty years ago and it’s much more expensive to operate.
ROSEBERRY: Will every student go into a classroom that way?

BROWNING: You mean will all of our people get jobs?

ROSEBERRY: No, I’m sorry. Will they all be part of that, kind of, classroom program?

BROWNING: Every student—every person that we have in the School of Ed now—because their first directed experience during their freshman year. They do an experience in their sophomore year. Both of those are one-on-one tutoring kinds of things, but then in their junior year, all of our students are in a classroom half-day all year. So, at our five elementary-school campuses, we have groups of—from—we have about fifty juniors in our elementary program, and they’re on five campuses. The smallest group is Hillcrest with six students in it. The largest group is twelve or fourteen. So they’re out Monday through Friday, eight to eleven, they’re all in a classroom, part of that time. Part of the time they’re in seminars, and then their senior year they’re out for a full-year internship. By the time they graduate, they’ve done two to three times as much field experience, all supervised, as the graduates of another Texas school would have been.

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ROSEBERRY: So are you satisfied with the program?

BROWNING: I’m satisfied with the nature of the program. I’m still not satisfied with the quality of the experiences they’re getting while they’re in the field, and the necessary quality of supervision they’re getting, because some of us are better at it than others. I’m not a good observer/supervisor, I’m a good planner and thinking about it. But it’s a lot better than anything we’ve ever done, and every year it gets a little better. I had a
superintendent—first couple of years I was here we had a—we would have a career day. Superintendents would come—our personnel directors would come interview our students. Most of our students—many of the superintendents would bring contracts with them, and they would sign them. In the seventies and eighties it was not unusual for the Houston suburbs to bring contracts with them and sign people up in February when they were doing the interviews. These were people who had just started their student teaching is all. The superintendent from one of the Houston suburbs, the one that has creek in the name of it—Clear Creek. The assistant sup. from Clear Creek said, “Oh, we would hire all of the Baylor students we can get. We can count on them, we can always know that they’ll show up dressed appropriately, it won’t cause any trouble all year.” They were not hiring them because of the quality of the teachers, they were hiring them because they knew how to dress and they would be polite and they would do what they were told to do. Recently—about three years ago—a school principal from the North Dallas area told me that in their district they had been told that if a Baylor student applied—to interview them, that they move ahead of everybody else and they get an interview. The reason is, they’ve hired some of our recent graduates, and the notion is if you’ve hired one of our graduates then you will hire another one just because they’re better teachers than they can get from any other place. And they will say it to you, “Your teachers are better prepared,” where it used to be, “Your teachers would dress nice and keep quiet.”

ROSEBERRY: They’re polite.

BROWNING: But polite. So I think that changed. That’s the change that’s been over about forty years, but I don’t know when the change actually shifted. But I think that’s a better model now than what we had.
ROSEBERRY: Do you have any stories from either the Hillcrest years or after the—in the new model that you’d like to share?

BROWNING: I’ll have to think about that for a few minutes. One of the things that happened when we started going out into Professional Development Schools—so, early on I was much more active out in the schools. In 2001/2002, I was coordinating the freshman class, so that put me out in the schools a lot, and I also I was a failed UL [University Liaison]. I tried to help start a PDS [Personal Development School] and the PDS didn’t work out. So that didn’t work, but I have always—

ROSEBERRY: A failed UL, I’m sorry—?

BROWNING: I was a failed UL. Our Baylor person that’s on the sight coordinating it is a UL—a University Liaison. So on our first go-around of PDS’s I was a University Liaison, I won’t say what campus, and the campus that I tried to develop as a PDS is not one and it’s primarily because I failed at it. I could not—strange, I couldn’t build a relationship or do it, so I am a failed UL and I now hire UL’s.

ROSEBERRY: (laughs) You know what not to do.

BROWNING: I sort of know what—I know that what I did didn’t seem to work, for whatever reason. But out in the schools once, one of the teachers that I had no recollection of knowing, was telling my graduate assistant who was there how wonderful
I was—that I was the best teacher that she had ever had. She was so proud she came to Baylor and got her training so that she could have studied with me. She graduated two years before I came here, so I have no earthly idea who she thought I was (both laugh). I have no idea who she thought I was or what recollection she had, but I had never taught her a day in my life as it turns out. No, not really, I’ll have to think about stories, I’ll have to think about which can be told and which can’t (laughs).

ROSEBERRY: Of course. Well, let me shift just a little bit if that’s all right.

BROWNING: Okay, please.

[01:31:29]

ROSEBERRY: So, I want to go back in time to maybe around the 1980s. I know that there was quite a bit of school reform, kind of, in the air, and I’m wondering if anything on the national scene affects the way that Baylor teaches, or affects the School of Education as you begin your teaching.

BROWNING: In general—generally, we think of there’s—there’s two orientations to teaching. They change names over time but one of them is behavioristic, and behaviorism—I’ll give the negative view (laughs). And all my friends at ed psych [Educational Psychology]—well, people who were once my friends, maybe—behaviorism is essentially oriented around the way that you break a task down to its smallest components and you design a way to train each task and you link them together. And you reward the child at each step and as they gradually build up these pieces of
things, then all of a sudden they’ll know how to do it. [B. F.] Skinner trained pigeons to dance—

ROSEBERRY: (laughs) I didn’t know that.

BROWNING: Yeah, Skinner trained pigeons dance, because every time a pigeon moved as if it were a dance move, he gave it something to eat. Over time that pigeon would do that dance move over and over, and then you add another one. If the pigeon moved his head a certain way you fed him. If he moved his head, you fed him. If he moved his head and his body you fed him, and ultimately you had a pigeon dancing. You could say I taught that pigeon to dance. That’s the worst view of behaviorism. In the public schools, behaviorism is, in order to read there are these x number of things you must know, and this is the first thing you must know and this is the second thing and this is the third thing. So if I can get you to respond appropriately to this question: what is the sound of that letter? Make it. Then what is the sound of this letter? What is it like if you put those two letters together? And you move through those stages. That’s a form—that’s an extreme form of behaviorism.

[01:33:54]

The alternative is a cognitive view. The extreme form of a cognitive view—since I’ve given a bad form of behaviorism—the extreme form of a cognitive view is you don’t really think consciously about teaching a child anything. You build an environment where you can explore and find it. If you want a child to become a good reader, have lots of books out, read yourself a lot, read aloud to the child, allow the child to read along with you when you can, give him books to play with. When he’s opening, talk to him
about reading, and over time, he’ll learn to orient the book correctly, he won’t have it upside down. He’ll begin to connect some of those things you’ve been saying to what he sees in print, and he’ll become a reader. He will naturally become a reader. Now, it’s sort of obvious, neither one of those is exactly the way you teach. There’s an approach to teaching reading and language that’s called whole language that’s more cognitive. You don’t use basal readers because basal readers don’t represent real language. “See Spot. See Spot. See Spot run,” is not the way kids talk. So you use a book that’s written as language would be written. You don’t restrict the vocabulary in books, you let the vocabulary be whatever is needed in order to write a good book. So you immerse children in reading and responding to books and print. Let the child write, encourage the child to write even if he can’t spell—invented spelling, that’s fine. Draw a picture and write about it. That’s whole language. We had a split within our school between behaviorists and whole language, but predominantly, our teacher education program—our undergraduate teacher education program, Literacy and Language, was a whole language school. The reforms in education that hit about 2000, the notion that every child can learn to read, federal money can only be used for certain kinds of materials—there were federal reports that were produced to say how you should teach reading—it was much more behavioristic than we. In a sense, the side that we were most identified with lost in that eighties to 2000. We were much more whole language oriented, we carry a lot of those characteristics.

Now one of the characteristics of whole language instruction in elementary grade is small groups—lessons built around small groups, and all the lessons were built around a child

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reading and interacting with a piece of print, with a book. So if you were to go in any of our PDS campuses, what you would see is the teachers teaching elementary kids in small groups. They would be reading, writing, and talking about a common text until they get comfortable with it, and then they’d go to another text. Now, some of what you would see—I would notice, you might not, is behavioristic. There’s more attention to particular words, so the teacher’s not just reading the book in order for you to experience the book, but she had decided you’re reading this book because we need to work with certain kinds of word endings, we need to work with certain kinds of sounds, and this book has it. So that’s a blend of that more structured, systematic behaviorism and the more child-friendly cognitive thing. So that’s one thing that jumps out is that some schools, some training programs became overwhelmingly behavioristic. Some became much more cognitive, and what most people are now doing is much more balanced, kind of, blending the two together. So, we were part of those reforms. I’m trying to think what other reform movements might have come out of that. Then we had no choice over the accountability, the notion that kids will demonstrate they’ve learned something by all passing a common test. We have resisted the movement that says you should spend a significant amount of time prepping the kids for the test. We still resist that, but—

[01:38:51]

ROSEBERRY: So, teaching to the test you resist.

BROWNING: Yeah, we can’t completely avoid it because schools do it. The spring semester for most of our interns and for our TAs—the spring semester is dominated by—in certain grades—by test prep because that’s when all the tests are given, and so the
curriculum that you might want to teach becomes—has to take, sort of, a backseat to what’s on the test. That varies by where the school is. The high achieving upper-income campuses spend much less time, but they do still spend some time on test prep, whereas if you’re teaching at a underperforming school, there’s still the dominant belief is the way to get the kids to pass the test is to teach it directly to the test. Probably, if I taught in those schools, I would probably go along with that because it would seem to me like it’d be a form of child abuse to give the child a test on something he hasn’t been taught how to do. So you’d want to be very sure that you were actually teaching to them somehow, I don’t know to what extent. The accountability movement is something that has impacted the way we teach, I think, to some extent. I mean, we do it. We have—for the last several years we’ve had a one hundred percent passing rate on the state certification exams. Well, if you spend enough time in our classrooms, you would see there are times that we’re teaching to that test. We’re being sure that certain things that we know are on that test are covered, although I don’t know that we exactly teach to how to answer the specific questions. But if we know that the test has certain amount of stuff in children’s literature on it, then we’re going to be certain that we get that children’s literature covered. We would call it course alignment. We’re align our classes to them, to the test. And those public schools do that, too. There was a movement—there has always been a movement towards individualized instruction. One version of—

[01:41:30]

ROSEBERRY: A national movement.
BROWNING: Yeah, it’s been an argument that’s been going on at least since the 1960s. What we do now is we teach children in age cohorts. So we think in terms of—there’s fourth-grade math and there’s fifth-grade math. If you look at a math curriculum, though, you can put things in sequence and you can learn some of that fourth-grade stuff in third grade, and many kids do. Or you could be ready to learn it in first grade, and some are ready to learn it in eighth grade. There’re always people who are trying to come up with a system that lets you teach children what they need to learn as they are ready to learn it, to individualize it. That’s very difficult if you’re in a classroom with nineteen kids to have them each in an individualized program, learning what it is they need to learn and when they’re ready, and most of those programs become packets. This is a file folder full of stuff that if you do those things, you will learn this thing, and this one goes before this one. So we’ll give kids a test and we’ll put them in the packet they belong in, and then we’ll let them move at their own progress. Much less small group instruction, mostly just the kids working on their own and interacting with teachers. We have never been strong advocates of that, some schools are. So when we talk about individualizing, we talk about to the extent you can within the curriculum that you’re working with match this instruction up to your prior experiences and your interest and try to be sure this is the right reading level, and those kinds of things. So we work in terms of making the curriculum appropriate to you, but we don’t have anyone within our program that’s advocating a wholly individualized—that would take the teacher out of it. Computer-driven instruction is actually individualized instruction. The computer delivers to you on time what you’re ready to learn without any adult interaction. Now, someday they’ll be
that good, but right now, we’re not advocates of that. What we are—well, let’s save that for another time.

ROSEBERRY: Well, as you think back on the School of Education, other significant changes that you want to talk about?

BROWNING: Within our faculty, especially within our department—

ROSEBERRY: Which is Curriculum and Instruction.

BROWNING: Curriculum and Instruction. Within Curriculum and Instruction, we’ve become in the last fifteen to twenty years—maybe it was longer than that—we’ve become much more specialized. When I came in ’77, there was no elementary social studies educator in the faculty, social studies methods was just taught by anybody. We didn’t have an elementary science educator. We had a science educator whose background was secondary, and he taught elementary teachers how to teach science, but it was something he’d never done before. What we now have—we have an elementary science instructor, a middle-grade science specialist, secondary science specialist. We have it in all the content areas. So that’s a significant change in staffing, which impacts the courses you offer, and, maybe, how well you do them. So we’ve had—there’s been a movement over the last twenty years or so to more specialized faculty. So we have more people employed teaching fewer students.
ROSEBERRY: Again (both laugh).

BROWNING: Again, we’ve become a more costly program. When I came—and this is Baylor also, not just School of Ed—I was hired tenure-track faculty with a 4-4 teaching load, no expectation, no reassign time for research. Minimal expectations for what was considered scholarly involvement, and it was assumed—and I was tenured based on service to the profession. I did professional development, workshops, wrote programs for school districts, and that was considered my scholarly contribution. So now, we’re right in the midst of our annual reviews, and one of the things I catch myself doing is looking at what the list—the materials the person give me counting how many publications they had this year, and their annual review is impacted by if they only had one publication and half their time is devoted to scholarship, does that publication represent appropriate use of half their time or not? So that’s a university thing, but has really impacted School of Ed. In C&I, we’re becoming—and we’re getting a little concerned about it—we’re becoming an undergraduate faculty and a graduate faculty. We began to sort of be separating out that we are developing a faculty whose job is to be out in the schools, running this wonderful, exemplary field-based program we have. And another faculty whose primary task is to teach graduate course and generate scholarship, and that’s—we’re uncomfortable with that. We’re trying to sort out what we’re going to do with that because once upon a time we were all significant players in the undergraduate program, and we were incidentally involved in the graduate program, and now we’re splitting into the two. We’re even using different titles. Most of our undergraduate people are lecturers and clinical assistant professors—clinical professors. Most of our graduate folks are tenure-track. Our undergraduate, majority of them, are not tenure-track. So that’s a
shift—it’s a change in the working environment, I guess, that we notice and we wonder about.

[01:49:07]

We don’t have any more scarf ladies. (Roseberry laughs) I got caught in this once. Having to think about that; I was thinking about changes in our student body. When I first came here, we had a lot of community-college transfers. We had a lot of people who would go to MCC [McLennan Community College]—and by a lot I don’t mean a majority, but we had a lot of people go to MCC, and they would come here for the last two years. They might have gone to MCC over several years’ time, so they might be twenty-six, twenty-seven years old by the time they get here as juniors. I noticed one year that it was sort of common, this fashion distinction, that many of the women who were transferred in and were not the typical junior age wore scarves. I started calling them—to other people, other faculty members—I started talking about my scarf ladies. We had some of our best students in the undergraduate teaching program and the elementary program were people who were—they were twenty-five, twenty-six years old, they probably have a five-year-old child at home. They’d run a family and they’ve managed to go to school part-time and everything, and so they were not phased at all by our requirements: get your work done, get out at schools, and that kind of stuff—but they wore scarves. Someone of my colleagues mentioned to some of the students that I referred to them as scarf ladies, and so at delegation of them came to see me (both laugh). They were not appreciative of the distinction, so we had a long conversation about it, and I think several of them after that were proud to say that they were one of the scarf ladies.
But I hadn’t thought about that, but that’s another change that’s really occurred in the School of Ed. We have essentially no undergraduates who are not typical college age. We have a few veterans, not many, within the School of Ed, military veterans who have come back to school. I would hate to say the percentage, but I would say it’s 90 percent or more of our students come here when they are eighteen years old and they leave when they’re twenty-two or twenty-three. We don’t have that group of experienced adults who have lived as adults outside the college—away from the college community for six or seven years who are raising children and who probably have a—they’ve worked and they’re coming back on limited funds, and their goal is get this degree and get a job as quickly as they can and go on about their business. And we don’t have them.

ROSEBERRY: To what do you attribute that—?

BROWNING: Too expensive. If you go to MCC now and get that two-year degree, you’re still $100,000 away from having your four-year degree because you’ve got to come here for two years, and so that student body—thank God we still have MCC—they go to MCC and then they do the University Center at MCC where Tarleton and others provide courses there on campus. They do their junior and senior year—they stay in Waco and they graduate and they become teachers in this area, but they’re not our products anymore, and they used to be some of our—and they were committed to the local community, so they went back to the communities here. Most of our graduates don’t stay in Central Texas—they go elsewhere—so we have less and less impact in terms of preparing teachers for the Central Texas schools, I think, so I regret that.
But we have fewer students whose parents were a graduate of our program. I think that has to do with the finances, also, because if you graduated from here twenty years ago and you’re a public school teacher, you probably can’t afford to send your child here, unless there’s another source of income, so we have fewer legacy. I’ve had families where I had parents in graduate school and then had their children to come through the undergraduate program and maybe stay and be my graduate assistant. We don’t have that anymore. We’ve lost that, and I think that’s just purely changes in Baylor’s role—how they’ve redefined their role as to what students—to what families—do they serve. In 1977, because of the tuition, we were only slightly more expensive than a good state school. So for just a few thousand dollars a year more, you could come here instead of going to UT [University of Texas] or to [Texas] A&M [University], and now that cost differential is much greater. So I think many of our students are more likely to making a decision about, “Do I go to Texas? Do I go to TCU [Texas Christian University] or SMU [Southern Methodist University] or Baylor?” Not, “Do I go to UT or Baylor?” Then maybe I was wrong, but—the admissions people probably would tell me I’m wrong—but most of our students are not children of teachers. Their parents are not teachers, where forty years ago, many of them were from teaching families, and they’re not now.

ROSEBERRY: Well, overall, what do you see of the future of the School of Education?

BROWNING: School of Education? Well, probably—I think where we’re going is—I think we are building a faculty that has more commitment to a social justice orientation.
You teach in order to make the child’s life better. Most of our younger faculty in the department are involved in research that has to do with, “How do we overcome the inequities in our society? How do we use education to overcome the inequities?” So I think this faculty will gradually generate—I think the faculty will evolve into, sort of, a very action-oriented, active group of faculty who are doing research and getting out into the field. Maybe collaborating with social work, maybe collaborating with community health, you know, groups like that and say, Teachers should be here making life better in this part of town. I think we’re going to see more and more of that as opposed to we—and at the same time we’ll probably still be preparing the teachers who are teaching the AP classes in the suburbs of North Dallas. They may still be doing that, but I think we’re going to have a much more social justice orientation. We’re trying to make—we’re trying to build more options for becoming teachers. We need more math teachers in Texas. We have a lot of people who finish in math and science programs who don’t go to grad school like they think they’re going to. We’re trying to make it easier for them to become high school teachers—give them a better route. So we may start graduating more people by doing that. We are currently investigating some online options, so we may become an online degree provider (Roseberry laughs). I think—and we never know what technology’s going to do, but it may be that actually when the computer technology all gets developed, we may become the place that teaches you how to use that individualized program that we don’t think exists right now.

|01:58:35|

But I really think—that’s kind of my hope, that this becomes a school that’s producing—sending out into the field people who sort of devote their service and their work to using
education to help others. I think I would really like for that to, but who knows. But I think we’ll continue to exist for a while; I don’t see Baylor shutting down the School of Ed. I think it’s a commitment, even though it is an expensive program. We are currently working on our program to make it more flexible, to make it easier for people to move into our program. As we moved—one of the things that happened as we moved out into the field—we developed more courses prior to you going out into the field, which was not the intent. So we ended up—we have a program that’s very structured. It takes you three years to finish our program now, so juniors can’t transfer into it. If you do, you’re here for an extra year. So mechanically, we’re working on how you could do that. So we have a more flexible program—reduce some of the total hours. I’m not that much—that future-oriented, I’m more thinking about—

ROSEBERRY: (laughs) Storytelling.

BROWNING: Yeah, more storyteller.

|02:00:16|

ROSEBERRY: Is there anything I didn’t ask you about, that we should have covered?

BROWNING: No, that’s a pretty—I don’t know what all I’ve talked about, but I feel like I’ve talked about a lot.

ROSEBERRY: (laughs) Got some great stuff.

BROWNING: Thank you. I don’t think there’s any significant stuff left out. I think it’s funny that—I just saw the notes the other day of—we had a centennial planning
committee, and I saw the notes the other day of people you might interview. Two of them have passed away, so I’m hoping (laughs)—I also know that some people were talking about interviews that might already be in the files, so I’m hoping that those people on the list were actually people who already in the files—that my coworkers didn’t think they were still alive (both laugh).

ROSEBERRY: Right, and I hope it’s not that we interview people and then they—

BROWNING: And then they go—and then all of a sudden that’s all that’s left, is your interview.

ROSEBERRY: That’s right. Well, thank you very much, Sir.

BROWNING: Thank you.

ROSEBERRY: I appreciate it very much.

BROWNING: Thanks. I hope some of it made sense.

ROSEBERRY: It did. Great stuff. Thank you, Sir.

BROWNING: Thank you.

*end of interview*