

NANCY KURTZ FALCK

In her own words, Nancy Falck "fell in love" with William and Mary when she visited it as a high school student. Her college years were during the post-World War II era, a period she describes with great glee. In 1970 she was appointed to the Board of Visitors by Governor Holton and in 1974 was reappointed by Governor Godwin. She is best known perhaps for her advocacy of renovation of the dormitories, and she has served as chairman of the board's committee on buildings and grounds.

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Interviewee Nancy Kurtz FalckDate of interview May 12, 1976Place Williamsburg Lodge, WilliamsburgInterviewer Emily WilliamsSession number 1Length of tape 92 mins.

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Nancy Kurtz Falck

May 12, 1976

Williamsburg Lodge
Williamsburg, Va.

Williams: You came from 1946 to 1950. Well, I've read a lot about the veteran enrollment of those years, but what happened to the girls -- no one talks about.

Falck: It was marvelous. It was marvelous, just marvelous for those of us that were able to get in. They cut the class down of women to very small proportions so that as many as possible of the returning vets could enroll. But if you were one of those select few that got in -- oh, the stag line was six deep! You had a date in the morning and in the afternoon. Of course, the freshman year you couldn't date after seven o'clock at night except on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays. But it was just heavenly, something happening all the time. There were so many men that you'd think you would know a guy's name ^[when] someone would call you up and say, "would you like to go to the movies?" you would say yes because you thought you knew who was calling, and it would turn out to be somebody else. There were so many you just couldn't keep them all straight! I felt very, very sorry for the young men that had enrolled coming straight from high school because the vets -- well, a good many of them sort of knew what they wanted to do.

They were a bit older;
 ^ they were glad to be back in school and quite a bit more sophisticated than the young man coming out of high school. I really felt sorry for those poor freshman boys that came directly from high school because they really were sort of smothered by it. ^{The} ^ girls had a marvelous time; ~~The~~ boys I'm not so sure did, ~~But~~ we all had a lot of fun. My freshman class, (at least the ones who lived on campus) all got rather close and still pretty much keep in touch. We had a class reunion last fall with a very good turn^out. ~~And~~ the girls in particular have kept very close touch with each other. Someone told me once that about thirty-five out of the initial freshman class of women had graduated, ~~And~~ if that's true, probably just with checking with just a few of us we could tell you what their names are now and where they live and how many children they have and so on. It was a very close relationship.

Williams: A very close group.

Falck: I had a lot of fun. Most of us lived in Jefferson, and Jefferson was in bad shape even then. It had large gaping holes in the floor, In fact, my mother when she saw it was going to snatch me right out of it. But as a result and since we were told ^{that} ^ the following year it was going to be somewhat remodeled, we felt somewhat free to have water fights. And oh, there was a dead fish that traveled from bed to bed for a considerable length of time -- little

things like that. It was just a great deal of fun.

nobody really minded being locked up at seven o'clock at night; we had each other to talk with.

Williams: It didn't occur to you that maybe this was very strict? In the sense of the times maybe it wasn't.

Falck: In the sense of the times it probably was not, although even at home I had much freer hours. We just had such a good time we didn't feel really deprived. In some cases, with this plethora of young men to date, it was sort of a blessing because if you did go out with someone and it turned out you weren't too compatible, you had a very valid excuse to come in. So it made you feel a little more willing to say, "Well sure, I'll go to the movies with you" or whatever because you knew you weren't stuck for any great length of time. You felt a little freer to meet more of them as a result. But there weren't too many social activities per se. my first brush with student activism was in my early years here. The fraternity houses had been lost as a result of the war with the young men going off into service, and so there was really no place for social gatherings, other than Blow Gym for a few dances a year, you know. And I can remember parading on campus carrying placards, that's when they finally decided to build the fraternity lodges, and of course, those immediately became the center of social activity.

Williams: I'm sure.

- Falck: And it was fun because you didn't just go to one lodge and stay put. You visited.
- Williams: Lodge-hopping.
- Falck: You lodge-hopped.
- Williams: Right.
- Falck: So everybody saw everybody else, you know, in the course of a Saturday night. And of course, that was one nice thing about the sororities, too. You didn't join one and then just stay put. Your friends were always in the other sororities, and ^[for] even the girls or young men who didn't join fraternities or sororities there was a great deal of freedom of motion there, you didn't restrict your friendships.
- Williams: Not closed communities.
- Falck: No closed communities at all. You can see it in our alumni relationships. Many of my good friends either were not in a sorority or were not in the same sorority I was in. ^{but} my husband did not go to William and Mary, ^{and} he always felt very welcome down here because when they were still operating the fraternity lodges as such, they ^[told him] always [^] "well, come in and have a good time." They never made him feel excluded, either. There was always such a nice friendly atmosphere here. That's one reason so many of us love the place so much. It just represented so many good friendships.
- Williams: Weren't the fraternities a little reluctant at first to go

into the lodges? Didn't they want houses back?

Falck: Oh, they wanted houses back. But when that became apparent that they weren't going to get their houses back, they very quickly settled for the lodges. And as I say it did give us then some place to go and something to do on the weekend. There was a lot of "let's sit on the floor and sing" kind of thing. Not being known for a glorious voice, I sang my way through William and Mary. I can remember trying out for "Pappy" Fehr. I knew I couldn't make the choir, but I did try out for the chorus, and he finally accepted me because he said my voice wasn't good, but it was quiet.

Williams: Sounds like something he would say, yes.

Falck: And we had a very active intramural program between the sororities. We played basketball and softball and things like that -- outdoor stuff, even in those days when you couldn't walk across campus in a pair of gym shorts, you know. You had to put a raincoat on over them.

Williams: What about athletics? You know, just after you left was the football scandal. Were the students aware ~~that the~~ ~~football~~ -- or did they think of the football program as being the big-time thing that it was alleged to be shortly after you left?

Falck: Well, at least some of us were aware that at least some of the athletes were put in sort of special classes. The reason I became aware of it. I was

the laboratory assistant to Miss Grace Blank in the biology department, and she taught a course in animal physiology, which was an advanced biology course. . . for some unknown reason it was a required course for the phys. ed. majors, which was the football team.

Williams: Right, right.

Falck: Well, I've never known of a larger misfit than the football players in Miss Grace Blanks' biology class. She detested them, absolutely detested them, and they were really at sea because this was a course that was designed for biology majors. And she flunked them left and right. Nobody seemed to want to budge. She didn't want to change her course to teach at their level, and they didn't want to have to take it and the phys. ed. department for some reason kept insisting that they had to have it. it was a real standoff.

I did, as a lab assistant, . . . have to work with the classes some, and I did begin to feel very sorry for the poor football players. It really wasn't their fault, you know. But it was apparent that while many of them were scholars as well as athletes, there were some on campus then that really couldn't hack the kind of academic program that many of the other students were going through. But we enjoyed the football games, and we enjoyed the rivalry between the various schools. I don't remember sensing any kind of student unrest about it.

Williams: Or anything sinister.

Falck: No.

Williams: Which probably comes out as that 1951 feeling that people had about it.

Falck: Yes, well there they were --

Williams: When they were uncovering the abuses.

Falck: Yes, right. But other than that there weren't too many classes we shared with the football players, so we weren't really aware of how they were going through school. I was a biology major, and particularly in the chemistry and math classes and biology classes I was taking you didn't find football players. I can't remember a single one of them except in that animal physiology class. No, at that time I was in love with a tennis player.

Williams: Well, the tennis team was a big thing then. They were what-- nationally ranked or something like that?

Falck: Oh, yes they were. They won the collegiate title -- national collegiate title, and all the young men that played on the team were nationally ranked, and several went on to Davis Cup play and so on. Sharvy Umbeck was the coach of the team and then he later went on out to -- oh, dear -- I know the name of the school, too, in Illinois, and really made it into another William and Mary -- Knox College. He was really fond of William and Mary. But he had a very close relationship with his boys. Now that was the one athletic endeavor I got to know the best because I was dating the tennis player.

[Umbeck]
 He liked to have his boys do well academically, and they were not put in a special class. They had to go into the same kind of classes the rest of us did. Although many of them were on some sort of grant-in-aid -- well, they didn't have quite the grant-in-aid for the tennis players that they did for the football players. What they would do is give them a job at the laundry or something like that. And they did have to put in a certain amount of work for the tuition relief that they got and so on. But they were expected to compete academically. # I knew a few of the basketball players. Chet Giermak is one in particular. Of course, he was a very good athlete-scholar, and, he became president of O.D.K. and so on. [there was] again, no difference in what he was taking academically from the majority of the student body. It was just a few of the football players. That's what happens when you start recruiting just on the basis of "what can you do on the playing field" But I would imagine even with the William and Mary scandal, it probably wasn't all that much a scandalous thing. William and Mary tends to attract people -- even the people in athletics seem to be a bit more scholarly than in most schools. So it might not have been up to William and Mary standards, but it was probably above a great many others.

Williams: Probably you're right.

Falck: After getting to know a lot of young people going to various other schools, I think our level -- even then when they had the

so-called "big team" was probably somewhat above the level of many of the college and university athletes. Other than that, I knew a couple of young men on the track team, and again they were expected to make their grades. The athletes that were in my field -- if they did anything athletic, it was either, usually track or tennis. But it was a small school then. You know, you got to know just about everybody in your college generation.

-- the class immediately before you and the class immediately behind you anyway.

Williams: As you said a few minutes ago, ^[it was] really a different William and Mary from the one there is today, in the sense of knowing everybody.

Falck: Right, right. Although I think it's still -- I would consider it one of the friendlier schools. That's from talking to the students themselves. They do seem to know a good many of each other. Not just the student leaders knowing the student leaders, but the average student on campus does seem to have a fairly wide ~~acquaintance~~ ^{acquaintance}. So that must mean some are out there smiling and saying hello.

Williams: It's something I'm ^{glad you} talk about, because often people do bring that up -- the friendly atmosphere, which I think is significant.

Falck: I think it's very significant because it sets the environment for you. It's one of the most unusual characteristics of

William and Mary. I know a great many schools where you can walk across the campus ... and nobody will meet your eyes. At William and Mary you walk across the campus and someone is going to say hello or smile. It is different that way, and I think this is one of its very unique characteristics. It makes it even more pleasant to learn, to attend class. I'd like to see a study done sometime: now that nobody takes roll, you know, is William and Mary because of this friendliness perhaps attracting more students to actually attend class than some of the other schools are? You know how you can make a guess before you do a study, I would be willing to guess you would probably even have better class attendance as a result. People aren't feeling quite so strange. People do tend to attend something where they don't feel they're surrounded by strangers.

Williams: That's very true. It would be interesting.

Falck: But I haven't been invited into one of the classrooms in a considerable number of years, ^{so} I don't really know.

Williams: So that we don't skip over a twenty-year period of your life, after you graduated in 1950 until you came onto the board in 1970 -- just briefly, what was it that you were doing?

Falck: What did I do? Well, let's see. I became a research bacteriologist, which I continued to do until I married and had intended to continue to do it even then except that my husband and I were not then able to live in

the same city. /Description of Mrs. Falck's teaching biology and chemistry in Princess Anne County, Virginia, her work as a secretary, as a volunteer in the field of mental health, and as a bookkeeper in her husband's business.7

Williams: The year that you came on the board, there was a real turnover, on the board.

Falck: Yes.

Williams: Why was it that Governor Holton appointed you, do you think?

Falck: I can remember the day the appointments were made public a young lady from the Flat Hat called me up and asked me what my qualifications for the board were, and I said I didn't have any. I think Governor Holton was making a very real effort to try to put some women on some of the state boards. I had gotten to know him--not terribly well--but certainly I had gotten to know him a little bit when he first ran for governor. Then when he became governor, due to my interest in mental health and the knowledge that I had gained from so many years of volunteer work, I immediately started working with him on his thoughts for mental health

for the state. So I think at least he knew I was a woman who was aware of the community, or even the statewide community, ^{and} some of its needs and so on. Plus one of my very good friends [^] he made ~~her the Commonwealth --~~ ~~oh, dear --~~ Secretary of the Commonwealth -- Cynthia Newman.

I think he was asking Cynthia also to name women that she knew were active women in their communities that might make good board members. I have a feeling that perhaps that's how my name came up.

Williams: Of course, you were an alumnus, too.

Falck: Yes, but I'd be willing to bet everything I've got that I wasn't on the alumni list that went to the governor at that time because women were never included very heavily on any list of recommendations to the governor. Marian Duncan, of course, had made a national reputation for herself in her role as president of D.A.R., but ~~in~~ the state boards you just didn't find many women serving. It was a rare occasion, and Governor Holton did appoint more women than any previous governor did. And perhaps younger women, too -- and younger men, for that matter. I know the average age of our board came down considerably with Holton's appointments. I'm not used to thinking of myself as junior, but I was considerably junior to previous members of the board. In fact, I think I've gone back to being the baby of the board again, which at my age is rather startling. It was nicer when we had Elsie Powell and Roger Hull.

Williams: Right, right. I've not met Mrs. Powell, but I've met Mr. Hull.

Falck: Uh huh. Oh, they were both outstanding board members. They really were full of vim and vigor and vitality and really interested in serving. There aren't any real qualifications I would think that you have for a job like that; I think the main qualification is: do you care enough to want to learn?

Williams: I was going to ask you that.

Falck: Because that's really what you must do. I imagine that the only people who have qualifications are people that are already in the academic community, and I don't believe that is why the state of Virginia has all these citizens boards. You know it's a rather unusual state. I think it's one of the only states in the country that has a citizen's board connected with almost everything it does. At least the way I look at it, historically it was to get a lay opinion in there some way, you know. So if you had a board consisting of nothing but college professors -- that isn't what the board was designed for. It was to give it a sort of cross-current ^{of} information that might ^{be} going on somewhere out there in the world that you might be unaware of in the college community. You might possibly have heard or know of some better way to do something that you could tell them about, you know, if you were here all the time.

Williams: I think it may have been since you've been on the board --
 no, maybe it was just before you came on the board that
 out-of-state members were added, which was something
 totally new. It had always been Virginians on the board.
 Do you see this as a good development?

Falck: Oh, yes. Yes, indeed. I think anything that counteracts
 the community becoming too parochial is good. Now you
 don't want to become too nonparochial either, because your
 problems are peculiarly your own. But in the case of
 William and Mary in particular we like to call ourselves
 a national and international university. And if indeed you
 are going to be so, your governing board must have some sort
 of wide experience also in what happens in the rest of the
 world. I have never known anyone to miss a meeting because
 they live too far away. We have extremely good board
 attendance, both from the people who live close to the college
 and those that live far away. They come.

Williams: I've noticed that.

Falck: -- and they care. Even our non-alum members are very, very
 faithful in their attendance.

Williams: It must be a exceedingly time-consuming thing to be on a
 board.

Falck: of course, it's very easy for me because
 I don't have business hours at home. I can arrange my
 schedule around it. My only trouble is -- who's going to
 feed the kids.

Williams: Yes, yes.

Falck: And even that problem is beginning to be solved. But ^[for] the men who are serving on the board--and the women also--who have careers, it is a great commitment on their part. But they do it, and they do it very gladly and very graciously, too. I've never heard anyone object to the time required, ^{they} do show up. In fact, now that I'm in my second term I've seen quite a large number of board members all tolled. I can really only think of one board member whom I would fault for -- well, two -- I'll change that to two board members whom I feel probably did not take their commitment as seriously as all the rest of them. And for a fairly large board and that much of a turnover, I think that's pretty good.

Williams: That is good.

Falck: But it certainly is ^{it}. "I'll accept the honor, and I'll never show up." They all come. I kid the president -- "Don't you wish we'd all stay home."

Williams: He probably says, "Yes."

Falck: But I would imagine, having been a little in administration myself, sometimes just having to explain things to us must help to crystallize his thinking sometimes. So maybe we're a mixed blessing anyway.

Williams: Before I suggest any one issue, let me ask you a question I ask of all board members: in the six years you've been on the board so far, if you had to cite the most important

thing that has come before the board since 1970, what would you say that was?

Falck: The choice of ^{the} president . In fact, since I've been on the board, we've chosen three presidents.

Williams: That's true.

Falck: Plus an acting president, which is quite surprising to me -- old, fat housewife Nancy sitting there choosing college presidents! But that to me is probably the most important thing we do because your chief administrative officer is the one who really sets the tone for the institution for the time he is president. He's the guy who is on the job all the time. He is the one that to the public eye is the head of the institution, and it is his character and his personality that you see. That's something that our board is well aware of. I can't say it's been true of every board I've ever served on, but our board at least tries to continually remind itself of that fine line between what the board's supposed to do and what the administration is supposed to do. And there's a real difference there. It is the president who really sets the tone. There have been other things, you know, that have come up, both good and bad, but I really think that that has been the major thing.

Williams: Without drawing any personal comparisons, Dr. Graves and

Dr. Paschall are different types of men. Would you say there was some significance to the type of man that was selected in 1971?

Falck: Well, now I can only speak for myself. I was really interested in finding a candidate who felt very comfortable with all the facets of the college community, most particularly the students -- someone who was willing to listen to them; not necessarily yes them, but certainly make them feel that what they had to say was being heard -- and [who had] really the same sort of attitude toward the faculty, too -- this feeling that, "I won't necessarily agree with you, but I sure will listen to what you have to say and take it into consideration." that was the kind of candidate I was looking for, and I think we were very fortunate in finding Tom Graves -- very fortunate that he wanted to come to William and Mary. and he's done a fine job. As a board member I have the same kind of relationship with him. I'm not so sure he's always going to agree with me, but at least I always have the feeling he is listening to what I have to say, also. He's very good at that; he gives you his attention and is an intelligent man; certainly he's very personable. And all around a jim-dandy college president. It was really a tremendous honor! You know, when I'm ninety-two and I look back over my life I'll remember the honor of being allowed to be one of the people that selected a president of the College of William and Mary. It ^{was} really quite

something. ^[it was] And [^]a tremendous honor to select the president of Christopher Newport and the president of Richard Bland.

[≡] those two schools have come along very well, and I think they have to be considered part of the William and Mary family because they have been brought along by William and Mary as the parent. There's been a tremendous change in Christopher Newport in the years that I have been on the board. It's wonderful and it's rendering such a valid service to the community in which it exists. I think it's something William and Mary can be proud of.

Williams: Have you found the board's attitude toward the branches a willing stewardship?

Falck: Oh, yes, yes indeed. And a great deal of interest -- and we get worried. the majority of our meetings are here in Williamsburg, but we do try to have at least a meeting a year at the other branches. [≡] just because we're not physically meeting there does not mean that they do not have our interest. It has made a larger problem of communication with other facets of their college communities, though. It is a little harder for their students to come here and feel that we're any part of them, and it's harder for their faculty to come here and feel that we really have any interest, but from the board's viewpoint we do have the interest. I'm not so sure they know we do. [≡] that's the main difference. And I think this is one of the reasons why Christopher Newport will do very well with its own board because then nobody is

going to wonder, "Do they care?" Although I hear that here sometimes at William and Mary...

Williams: I suppose. That's human nature.

Falck: But I can remember back as a student on campus on the very, very, very rare occasion when I even remembered we had a Board of Visitors -- they had no identity to me whatsoever. I didn't know any of them. In fact I asked one of my best friends, who was very active on campus also, "Did you ever have anything to do with the Board of Visitors?" And she said she did once. She came -- ~~was~~ ^{was} it that we were asking for at that time? - oh, something to do with student life.

they asked her to come in and speak for a few minutes on the subject, and she said that was it. That was her only brush with the Board of Visitors.

Williams: Have you seen that change?

Falck: Yes. And this particular friend I asked because her grandfather had been rector of the board years ago, and I thought well, if anyone would have known ^[she would] know at least how they function and everything. She said no, that hadn't anything to do with it at all. She still didn't know who they were or anything -- it was that great, gray body sitting over there.

Williams: Truly visitors.

Falck: Yes. We just didn't see them at all. Well, the students tell me that they don't feel that they know us too well. They ^[the present board] certainly know us a lot better than we did our Board of Visitors

when I was a student. But what that points up is ^{not} that we're all such marvelous people that they are all panting to meet us. I think it points up the fact that they are so much more -- well, shall we say sophisticated?-- that they're interested in the governing process. I think that says a lot for the students. I think they're smarter than we were.

Williams: I imagine especially at the time you went on the board there were plenty of people who thought the students were trying to do too much in the governing process, because when you came on the board would have been in the days of Kent State and Cambodia and marches and peace demonstrations and things of this nature.

Falck: Well, of course, I live in the Washington metropolitan area, and we were having riots and you name it. What was going on at our local schools made anything down here just look pale and tame by comparison. The so-called student activism that was going on here was just nothing compared to what was going on there. So I wasn't the least bit shocked by it. I was sort of thinking, "My, aren't they nice and quiet here?" And they thought they were really being daring.

Williams: Right, right.

Falck: The only thing I can remember is being somewhat resentful of the fact that we were spending ninety-nine per cent of our time worrying about what time the girls came in at night, which I didn't think had all that much to do with the mission of the

College of William and Mary. And very quickly after I came on the board we got out of that business of telling the girls what time to come in at night ^{went about} and really what the board was supposed to be doing. ^{there was no reason for us} to be worrying about that kind of thing. It wasn't too real in today's world. I had been on too many of the college campuses and acquainted with too many of the colleges and universities ^{as} to what the rules and regulations ^{were,} and we were really quite a bit behind the times. ^{then when the} state recognized eighteen year-olds as legal citizens in about every respect there was no legal way either that we could do it. I began to resent the parents who, when the young people were at home, wouldn't tell them to come in at that time, but they wanted us to. And that's ridiculous. We're not going to be naysayers when they couldn't do it themselves. I don't think it made that much difference to the students. ^{they're not staying out} all night just because they can. Sooner or later everybody gets tired.

Williams: When I was looking back over the minutes I found you had been on -- I guess it was the last committee that worried about visitation rules. I wondered what kind of considerations you had, because some people on the board seemed dead-set against the open visitation.

Falck: Yes, yes they were.

Williams: It even comes out in the minutes, which not always ^{is so apparent.}

Falck: But almost as a bloc the new members then pretty much had the attitude, "What in the world are you worried about?" In fact, I remember we had asked Dean Lambert to come in and speak to the subject, and then we were airing our own viewpoints. I aired mine, and Dean Lambert was a bit shocked; he leaned over, "Well Nancy Kurtz, what are you saying?" And then he said, "Oh, I mean Nancy Falck." But as a parent and having that kind of association with young people of the time, I just couldn't imagine why they were getting so upset. to me the board is supposed to be concerned with do we have a good functioning academic program here? And then if we do, what can we do to make it even better? And when it comes to student life, ^{are} the students properly housed? do we have a decent health program? -- are they being served as attractive and appetizing a meal as we can afford for the amount of dollars we can spend? things like that. I've never thought that a governing board was in any position to dictate the morals or mores of society, and I think when it tries to, it finds itself in deep trouble. We quickly got the Board of Visitors out of that kind of trouble in a fairly short time. As I say, we've got enough things to worry about without having to worry about that. I guess I have a great deal of respect for young people today. I think that if they're approached properly, then they respond properly. Gee, I sound like Dean Lambert -- Miss Wynne-Roberts, Miss Wynne-Roberts.

Williams: Yes, I've met Miss ^{Wynne-}Roberts.
^

Falck: I can remember when I was on campus they tried an experiment at the Wigwam, which was at one end of Trinkle Hall. They decided they would have an experiment and they would serve beer there, which was absolutely unheard of in those days. And Miss Wynne-Roberts went through all the women's dormitories giving little talks. The gist of it was, "Well, beer is another beverage. And when you drink milk you don't sit down and drink gallons and gallons of milk, and so when you drink beer you should not sit down and drink gallons and gallons of beer." What she was trying to do is to make us realize that we had to do it -- decide for ourselves how much of this we were going to drink. ~~Oh, you can even get into the areas of, you know, sometimes they talk about the young men destroying their dorm rooms and so on. Well, if they're put into a dorm room that looks already destroyed they will continue that, but I have noticed at Old Dominion now that it's been remodeled they're treating it very carefully. These same young men are accused of being dorm wreckers, you know. So it's just how it's presented to you, students are people; They will react accordingly. To me, if you say, "Well okay, you're going to make your own social regulations, and you're going to tell yourself when you have to come in at night," They're very quickly going to do it. And if they don't, chances are they aren't mature enough to be a proper college student anyway. That's not the college's fault. That's something that should have been done at home before~~

they came. I never came down here and expected the college was going to tell me how to be. We did have rules and regulations.

Williams: They sure did.

Falck: ~~That didn't mean that~~
things weren't going on.
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Williams: No, never has.

Falck: Never has, never will. And it was ^{up to} you as an individual [^] to decide what you really were going to do and what you weren't going to do. I mean there were girls who went out the windows in those days and rode in cars when they weren't supposed to and so on.

Williams: That's right; ~~that was a rule.~~

Falck: And then there were others that didn't. Sometimes I think just because there was a rule saying you couldn't, it became a challenge to see if you could. I think on the whole, their behavior is fine considering their age. Who ever said eighteen year-olds are fully mature? They're not. That's one thing they do while they're in college; they begin to mature. I know a lot of forty-six year-olds that aren't very mature either.

Williams: You mentioned a little bit ago something that I know has been one of your concerns as chairman of the buildings and grounds committee, and that's ~~dorm~~ renovation. I wondered --
the ^{as} dorms [^] you said earlier, were in bad shape a long time ago. Why now?

Falck: Why now? Well, it was one of those things that should never have been put off. And the longer it was put off the larger

the problem became. So it was just a question of when do you acknowledge that you have a problem? To me one of the responsibilities of the board is not only the academic program, but all the physical surroundings thereof. We are personally charged with the condition of the buildings and the grounds and the books in the library and the typewriters in the offices and everything. It was part of our stewardship to look at these buildings and everything else and ^{ask,} "are we doing the right thing?" And we had not been doing the right thing. A ~~sinking~~ fund had never been set up to do this kind of renovation/restoration that's needed in any kind of building, whether it be old or new. So we went on the system ^{that} now we do have the ~~sinking~~ fund established, so that as the dormitories get older there will be a fund built up to do this kind of thing. But in order to get over the hump we had to go into this ~~bonded~~ indebtedness, you know, and it's never nice and possibly never completely wise, but it wouldn't have gotten more wise if we had waited longer. The job we're doing with them isn't even all that should be done. It's the best we can do at the time, and at least it begins to correct that error. Now ~~in the way the~~ administratively the way the funds are set up and everything, hopefully this will never happen again. There will always be a fund that is being accumulated for each of those buildings to repair and renovate when it's needed. But that's part of our stewardship. I'd

like to think we were doing it just to make it marvelous for the students, but it was really more than that. We were not paying proper attention to what was under our protection, and we had to get about doing it.

Williams: Was it at all difficult to convince the board that this indebtedness should be incurred?

Falck: No, not when we finally got around to putting it on paper and projecting it out. No, the board was extremely agreeable. I must admit I sometimes thought they did it just to shut me up. I started ding-donging about it, and then I was told that Barrett Hall was going to be renovated. Well, they brought it back to its 1930-some grandeur. It didn't exactly bring it into modern-day campus living.

After that we asked that it be put down on paper and really costed out and so on. Mr. Carter, vice-president for business affairs, has been just tremendous. I think he is one of the most valuable assets the college has, not only in this building renovation but in all the financial matters of the college. We have a much better reporting system for all the financial matters now. We really know where we are. He will tell us at each meeting where we now stand in comparison to this year's budget and so on for all kinds of operating costs.

If we did not have Mr. Carter and hadn't gotten him when we did I don't know what would have happened to us. For instance, a year ago our heating bills went up 283 per cent in one year just due to increase in cost of

Does this
make sense?
It's hard to
understand on
tape.

fuel. If he hadn't had a good reporting system built in by then we'd have been in the hole, and by Virginia law we're not allowed to run in the hole.

Williams: Right.

Falck: He's just been invaluable, just invaluable. ^{after}
 Mr. Carter came to William and Mary we were able to get all this on paper and project out at least what at the time we thought it was going to cost. ^{Prices} have changed some. We've had to cut the program a bit as a result, but at least it got us started, and we are now in a better position of taking care of what we should have been taking care of. You can't sit back and expect someone else to do it for you. ^{Too} many years ago the state got out of the dormitory business, and we really had no place else to turn then ~~but~~ to look to our own resources here to do it. I feel very badly that we had to make so many students pay for these renovations. It would have been much easier if this renovation program had been put on a regular basis all along, and then all of a sudden it wouldn't have hit the students-- because it's the students that are paying for that. That comes out of their room rent; it's one thing the board is always very sensitive about. We don't like to add any additional cost to go to college. We know what it's like for them. Many of us worked our way through college, and we're very, very sensitive to that. I feel guilty about it, but I would feel even guiltier if we did nothing

about it. It had to be done, and that was the only way we could do it was to float those bonds. We've got a decision like that coming up as to whether to build even another dormitory, and again we'll have to go ~~the~~ bond ^{route} unless someone out there decides to give us a whole hunk of money, which I don't think will happen. And the students who will be using it will be the ones who will be paying for it. Anytime we have to increase the fees, whether it be for athletics or anything else, we sort of fret about it and worry about it. Even the tuition -- because the state has never supported William and Mary commensurate with William and Mary's academic record. It's really been a crime. It really has. We're in the lower group of state colleges and universities in terms of amount of state support, and I don't know how that ever got started. I should think it should be a darling of the legislature instead of the other way around. Maybe they always felt one way or another we'd manage to do it for ourselves.

Williams: Maybe so.

Falck: We're not about to let things slide, but it's just so far before we do it for ourselves. Those are the ^{kind of} financial worries that really bother you because you don't want to layer it on the students, and yet as far as steady income goes, if the state legislature doesn't give it to us you've got to get it from the students. But that's getting far away from the buildings and grounds project. When I

first came on the board I was put on the buildings and grounds committee, and we didn't have a meeting for two years. Then I became chairman, and we've had meetings ever since. In fact I was told twice we were going to have ^a meeting and I came down to Williamsburg just for them, and the meetings weren't held. And that's when I used to button hole poor Mr. English --

Williams: Yes.

Falck: And I'd say, "Okay, let's go look at bathrooms." I'd make him take me in all the dormitories, and I'd look at basements and the bathrooms and stuff and then

at the next board meeting I would say, "We've got to do something." But I've been in a lot of bathrooms and a lot of basements since I've been on the board -- and closets and a few attics.

Williams: Has Dr. Graves been more supportive of this renovation than had been true previously? I assume that, but maybe I'm not assuming correctly.

Falck: Well, let me put it this way: with Dr. Graves and the new members of the administration, such as Mr. Carter, we entered a whole new world of computer use and so on. We were better able to get a grasp on what we had and what we owed and so on, which (made then) the renovation program easier to understand, to make a decision about and so on. Though I won't say the previous administration was opposed to it, it just was easier under the new administration, using new and

different management techniques. I think that was really the major difference. We could then begin to see how we could do it. of course, the board was very sympathetic to the problem, and as soon as it could figure out how to do it, it did. And that was the main thing. again it really got to the point where something just had to be done, and I don't care who was the administration at that point, it probably still would have been done because it had to happen.

Williams: It ^{had} reached that time.

Falck: Yes.

Williams: You singled out the most important issue - you have seen in front the board. Could you also single out what you think is the most controversial thing that's come before the board? It may be the same issue, ~~for that matter~~.

Falck: Well, the thing I heard the most about from other people was the athletic policy. We had letters and phone calls -- everything -- for a considerable period of time, which completely amazed me because I thought it was probably the least important decision we've ever made. I'm sorry -- no, the least important was the social hours, you know, the hours for the women.

Williams: Right.

Falck: There was an awful lot of misinformation floating around out there --

Williams: A heck of a lot of it here, let me tell you.

Falck: Among students and everyone else, people

were trying very hard to hang on to their misinformation; they were really working at it. In my viewpoint what the board was doing was the somewhat similar thing that they did with the old dormitories. They took a good hard look at something and said, "can we afford it?" And if we can afford it, how can we afford it and how should it be done? and that's what we did. We took a good hard look at the athletic program, largely in view of the finances, and tried to fix it so that people would be somewhat contented with it. Athletics were going to have to be paid for by something other than the college itself. And there was just no question about it: we didn't have the money to put into it. So if the college were going to continue to have a football team and a basketball team, which were the two sports that required the largest amounts of money, this athletic foundation was going to have to get busy and raise the money to do it. That somehow got interpreted that we were going big-time. Now I don't know how that relates because we're not big-time; I don't envision that we ever can be. The board made a very firm policy decision that the student/athletes would not be tracked; they would be kept in the mainstream of the student body. you can't go bigtime if you're going to do that because you're limited then in your recruiting. But all of a sudden the students thought we were going to go big-time. The alums thought we were going to wipe out the athletic program completely.

The faculty was quite split on it. Well, everybody was split on it. I mean I heard ~~pro~~ and ~~con~~ from all segments, but it was purely a financial decision. Okay, if we're going to have a football team and a basketball team -- fine. You fellas go out there and ~~raise~~ the money for it. We can't provide it here at the college. In addition to that, as part of the college picture, there should be athletic opportunities for the majority of the students -- intramurals and so on. And so we did beef that up because whether you like athletics or not, it's nice to be able to go out and toss the ball or run around the track or kick a soccer ball or swim the pool and so on; it should be a part of a complete university. -- I mean this should be offered. So we did that, too. And so far (and this is a considerable number of months after the policy decision was made) people are still hanging on to their misinformation, and I guess they always will. But what we were trying to do -- well, we didn't want students paying for other student s' way through college, either.

Williams: I remember that was a point that was made very strongly by some of the students.

Falck: That's right, and they are not. we are in this interim period -- I mean you can't just suddenly tell the Athletic

Foundation, "You've got to come in with 250,000 bucks tomorrow." You know, it takes a little while for them to work up their fund^oraising and get it up to a level where it can maintain the football team and the basketball team. But they are certainly working at it, and they are doing very well at it. I think once we get through this interim period, no student fees will go into the football and basketball program. That doesn't mean that the student fee is going to disappear because ^{if you're} ^ going to have this full college picture and intramural sports, that's really where that fee will probably have to go. I'm not a jock, but I'm not an anti^ojock either. I think a great many students would benefit from a little fresh air now and then. I'm sort of sorry that it is no longer mandatory for students to take physical education for a couple of years. I think it helps work out a few of their itches, ~~you~~ know, but that's the mother in me speaking, maybe not the board members. I don't think it's realistic to think William and Mary is ever going to go big-time sports anything, ~~and~~ certainly notⁱⁿ ^ football. They could do it I guess if they wanted to in basketball, ~~because~~ they've got the facilities for it, but the stadium's falling down, and we haven't addressed ourselves to that one yet, either. Maybe the athletic foundation can raise enough money to take care of the stadium. ~~But~~ that was the most controversial, I think. I just personally couldn't understand why there was all this

flap going on, with people accusing us of doing completely opposite things at the same time. ^{people probably got} more unpleasant ^{about} that one thing than they have about any other single issue since I've been on the board. -- I mean more personally abrasive ^{about it} than even the visitation rules, with anxious parents they didn't get quite as nasty in their questions and so on as they have about this athletic policy. You never know.

I just can't quite understand it. I thought we did what we had to. And why say you're not going to have a football team or a basket ball team if there is a group connected with the college that wants to raise the money to do it? But I did learn one thing, though, with all the research and stuff that we had to do as a result; there's no such thing as a revenue-producing sport. I mean it may bring some in, but it takes the rest out, too. So when they say revenue sport, that only means they can sell tickets to it; it doesn't mean it's self-supporting. We checked with every college and university in the country, and there is no way you can have that kind of athletic program unless it's subsidized by somebody or something. And all we were doing was moving that subsidy away from the college and away from the students into the lap of the athletic foundation, and then people who enjoy it the most have the responsibility for paying for it. I thought that was an

appropriate decision. I like the football teams; I'm not anti sports at all. My children have always been very heavily engaged in swimming on a very strict physical regimen, mostly by their own choice. So I'm not anti sports. I tend a little bit more into the participatory sports where more people can participate or at least have a variety of things where you can do the sport of your choice. I mean if tennis is your thing and golf is mine, you know, we have something there for both of us. I enjoy a Saturday afternoon at a football game, ^{but} and I somehow or other got labeled as the anti athlete on the board. A couple of people marched up to me at parties and they accused me of that, as I say very viciously, you know -- "You're the one that's doing it!" "Who me? lil' ol' me?" I just thought that's the way it had to go. And the board was in complete agreement. We didn't have any trouble in the board with that.

Williams: The trouble probably came from all the other people.

Falck: ^{It was} This misinformation that people are still hanging on to.

Williams: Yes.

Falck: I sensed it in the students again this spring when we had to increase the tuition and general fees. again I think they are still holding on to some misinformation. Some of our new board members came in with the idea completely other way, you know; we aren't doing enough hopefully after they've been on the board for a while

they'll understand, see the whole picture anyway. I don't think you can come on the board and be partial to one thing. You can't pick out a building and this is my thing or a degree program and this is my bag or whatever. To me, you've got to take the whole thing and try to see the whole picture as best you can and to me, athletics was part of that picture, just as the dormitory renovation is, ^[and] the master of business administration degree, which is something we've done since I've been on the board. You know, all of these decisions, they're simply part of the whole. While sometimes you champion one cause at a time -- to me, that doesn't mean that should have your only loyalty, either. I'm in danger of being labeled, too. "Mrs. Dormitory Renovation."

Williams: That's why I particularly wanted to get you to talk about the dormitory renovation.

Falck: Yes. You know it's been sort of good -- it's been sort of interesting to -- take an old building, such as Old Dominion, and try to bring it into modern living patterns, and what the architect was able to do with it, the difference in the environment in that building once the work was done -- it's been very interesting -- how he took an old attic and turned it into a game room, you know. Some of it's just the proper use of paint, you know, cheerful colors and so on -- the carpeting in the halls, which we were finally allowed to use by the state. I didn't

believe it when I found out the state wouldn't let us use carpeting. You know how we got the carpeting? We couldn't get the asphalt tile. We couldn't get a supply of it to put on the floors, and we had to tell the state that before they would then give us permission to use the carpeting. That's a no-no in the state of Virginia for institutions. So we don't get to say what happens with our buildings. We can say what we'd like. Even within the framework of the money that the legislature allows us, we still have to go back to Richmond for approval, and they don't always approve things. In some cases they may be fifty years behind the times. Now one thing they're not fifty years behind the times ^{on} and that's the fire code. We've got a jim-dandy fire code, which costs a lot in our dormitory renovations to meet. ^{that} was enacted between the time we did Old Dominion and we did Monroe. And when we got to Monroe we had to move the railings and the stairwells six inches to meet the new fire code. Well, a six-inch difference in those wide stairways is absolutely unnoticeable, but it cost a whale of a lot of money, and it was necessary because once you touch those buildings you remove them from the grandfather clause, you see. They're really up to date, and Virginia now has a very good, very up to date fire code, and that's expensive.

Williams: I'm certain of that.

Falck: Of course, we're paying particular attention to getting the buildings converted for use by people who might be

in wheelchairs, and when
 at least half of your campus is ancient as ours it's dif-
 ficult to do. It's easy to do ^{for} a new building; it's very
 difficult to take an old building, but for this
 coming year we will have housing for handicapped students.
 We're trying to look ahead to
 that kind of thing, be even a little bit more sensitive
 to a greater variety of students.

Williams: Let me ask you, then you've known first hand ~~on and off~~
^{on and off}
 the College of William and Mary for about thirty years
 now -- as student, ^{an} alumnus, as a parent, and as a board
 member. Could you assess the kinds of changes the college
 has gone through? You commented I think before we started
 recording that it's not the same kind of college you knew
 as a student, but there is a certain quality there that
 maybe is a carryover.

Falck: Well, I think there are many qualities. I think the aca-
 demic program really stands up. They might be teaching
 harder now and learning more, but even in my day we were
 taught harder and learned more, you know, and that's only
 improved. I think that ^{despite how} I'm sounding, you come
 out of William and Mary about as literate as the product
 of any college and university. You have an interest in
 continuing to learn. I think that's something William
 and Mary really tries to teach its students: your educa-
 tion doesn't stop here, folks. You're expected then to con-

tinue to learn. So I think that is still present, ~~the~~ the closeness of the faculty with the students -- I think you still have a great deal of that, even though the student body is now doubled in size. The differences are, of course, there are many more courses that you can now take. The campus has doubled in size. You don't have good old Trinkle Hall to eat in. ~~The~~ The dining room used to be a focal point for the social life, and I don't think that is true anymore.

Williams: Possibly not.

Falck: While it's still a friendly campus, it's probably harder to get acquainted than it was in my day. I think there are more cultural opportunities, and by that I mean in the broadest sense. We didn't have the kind of rock concerts and so on. I mean it wouldn't have been rock in our day, but you know, there were things like that then, and we didn't have them. We didn't have really a form^u_x in which they could be presented, as they do now. We did come from all parts of the country, and so we were not parochial when we came, but we were probably more parochial as we went through. We didn't leave campus much, and I don't think that's true anymore. Very few of us left on a weekend, and I'd say there is a good deal more of that now, which means that the campus life is no longer the end all and be all of what the student is doing at that point. Your mobility comes in with cars. Well, I can't remember anyone who ever admitted owning a car while they were here. There were some that did, you know but they

never said much about it. For that reason we were thrown together more; we had to make our own fun more, and I don't think they do that as much. I don't think they make their own fun. They seem to dine out a great deal more than I did. They're perhaps more affluent that way. Even if they're working they have more money to spend on that kind of thing. It was a rare occasion when we ate somewhere other than the cafeteria, and now from what I understand on dates they do eat out or go elsewhere, and we didn't. We just went and sat down on some floor and talked and talked a lot --

Williams: --and sang

Falck: --and sang! Oh, did we sing! And we danced; everybody danced. I mean you didn't sit there and watch somebody do it; you did it, too. You may not have been very good at it, but you did it. I imagine there's a certain amount of that still here.

Williams: It's possible.

Falck: So I don't think it's all that different. I think this reflects to a certain degree the changes in everybody's lives. -- Not just life at William and Mary, but life in general, and I think the students are probably a little bit more aware of national events than we were. But television has a great deal to do with that.

Williams: A lot to do with it, yes.

Falck: I mean, there were no television sets here when I was here. that's instant communication. We didn't have it. But as I say the variety of courses that are obtainable and the

non-credit courses -- these were not here. But you learned an awful lot when you got to know ^a professor and he talked with you after-hours or you worked as his assistant or something like that. You got a whole second education. You know, you got what you were paying for --plus. And I guess that's what William and Mary still does: They give you what you're paying for plus. And ^{young} people -- they're awfully clever. It's interesting now. Probably they're coming out even better ready to cope with the world than we were. Even the vets pull William and Mary up around them like their security blanket, you know, ^{some} of them have really seen some horrors.

Williams: Yes.

Falck: And they were just delighted to get back to this quiet atmosphere. Some of them never quite got it all back together again, but many of them did and went on. They lived very, very normal lives. It showed up ^{a little bit} in their drinking, but then of course, they approached that in a very sophisticated way, too. The idea was to drink a lot and not show it at all, which is impossible to do. But it just wasn't the thing to be drunk. The thing was to drink, but not to be drunk. Dean Lambert mentioned ^a difference that concerns me if it's so. It may be true because of the school getting bigger. He used an example that years ago in my day ^{if} I had been walking with two friends, and I tripped and fell down, they'd stop immediately and

help me up, but he thought nowadays that sometime somebody could trip and fall down and nobody would help them up. Now he didn't mean it more than allegorically.

Williams: Yes.

Falck: But that might be true. Perhaps people don't feel quite as much that they are each others' keeper as they did in my day. But again that might be just a reflection of society in general. We were very protective of each other. If you saw a friend that was over-imbibing or something, the ranks formed, and whoever it was got home and ^{was} taken care of and everything. The girls had to get past the housemother; the housemother stood at the bottom of the stairs, and the trick was you had to get up the stairs ^{to} ~~on~~ the second floor. She never came up there to see what went on up there, you know. Once you got them up the stairs you were ^{all} right. And everybody helped the poor soul who had been unwise through this process of getting past the housemother and up the stairs and then took care of them once they got there, you know. I wonder nowadays would that many do that?

For someone you didn't know too well you still looked out after each other. But it was such a small community. I mean you couldn't be unknown and invisible. You were there, and they knew who you were, and you knew they knew who you were, and you knew that if you did something outrageous everybody would know that you had. So it was peer group pressure. Probably more than you have

now. That's probably a difference. I don't think our faculty was quite as mobile, either. ² they had come; they stayed. They didn't have [^] great turnover of professors. The president we had then I was very, very fond of, and considering his reputation as a scholar, why I felt we had quite a nice relationship. He wasn't a great gray nothing; I knew Dr. Pomfret and felt he really, really cared. He had students in his house for dinner. I thought he was a very formal man, but that didn't mean he was frightening at all. He was sort of like Tom Graves, only a bit stiffer,

The other members of the administration I can't say I really I knew at all. I remember going to see several of them ^{when we were} having another protest about food in the cafeteria.

Williams: I remember reading about that.

Falck: Yes. And oh, we marched over and inspected the refrigerator and discovered they cooked meat the day before, you know. No wonder it tasted bad!

We fussed about that. I guess that's why all this student activism didn't bother me because I was doing it then.

Williams: Maybe so, maybe so.

Falck: But, you know, they still complain about the food.

Williams: That's something that hasn't changed anywhere, I'm sure.

Falck: You know, I just said board members shouldn't have just

one thing. When I was appointed to the board, I announced to my husband, "I'm going to take care ^{of that} cafeteria food, ~~and~~ that kind of terrible food we had to eat on campus -- by golly, I'll do something about it now." And I found out why we have that kind of food in the cafeteria, and there isn't a thing I can do about it because to get any other kind of food we'd have to jack the prices up so much the students would hurt ~~so~~ so at least it's edible and memorable -- in a very wrong way. But it is filling and nutritious and everybody survives ^{it,} and so I really struck out on that one. There's no way we can get better food, unless we want to pay twice as much. I think now with the students being allowed to cook in the dormitories, why, it's a whole different thing. We weren't supposed to do that. We weren't supposed to have hot plates and so on, but everybody had one stashed away somewhere.

I sometimes come down here and wonder really -- what is the real ^{face} of women's lib, because I see an awful lot of girl students cooking an awful lot of meals for a lot of boy students and very little of the other way around.

Williams: I'm sure it happens.

Falck: There is one difference in the women's lib thing I just realized, though. There were some professors when I came on campus that said they did not teach women in some courses.

They had to be convinced of "try me you'll like me"

and I don't think you would find that on campus now at

all.

Williams: Probably not now.

Falck: And that to me has changed for the better. But I had one in particular that I had to say, "Well try it for a month and then if it's really driving you crazy I'll drop the course." He said he'd never had a woman in his course before.

Some of those doors are now open; girls don't have to fight their way through them any more.

The women on the faculty and the women in the administration are no longer the old maid, spinster type either.

They're attractive, outgoing women doing their thing, you know. That is a change when you see women

if they want to qualify to be heads of department or whatever -- some of that battle is behind us now.

Williams: ^{is} Trying in as you said earlier ^{with} women on the board.

Falck: Yes. You still feel like a token to a certain extent because they're still sensitive to the fact that you're there. I don't think that the fight will be over until they don't notice you're a woman on the board anymore -- in large capital letters. Certainly more tolerant now -- well, some jokes still floating around though. But I do think that that has been a significant improvement. I realize that I ^{'ve} begun to sound like I don't think anything has improved, you know, but I don't think that at all. I think William and Mary has come along just fine. I'm just sorry I'm as old as I am and can't come back and be a student all over again.

Do you think there will ever be a female professor of physics?

It's very difficult having a daughter here.

I didn't want her to become known as Mama's spy or the target for anyone who didn't like Mama or anything like that, ~~and~~ I've always been very careful the information I get about -- for instance students, I get from other students. I don't pump her for whatever and as a result don't tell her more than the students -- than she would know, you know -- anyhow. Because being the daughter of a board member could be, you know, either way.

Williams: Could be sticky.

Falck: Could be sticky. I've asked her recently, though, now that she's completing her first four years here, did she feel that I had hurt her in any way by being a member of the board, and she said no, we played it just right and most people know her for quite a while before all of a sudden they match up the names which strikes me as sort of funny because there aren't too many Falcks running around. But you can get that reaction not only from the faculty but from the students. They'll know me for quite a while before they ask me, "Is Laurie Falck your daughter?" And I say, "yeh." she has a whole other view of the college, but she loves it just as much. And I think that's great. That always worried me. I asked her before when she was applying, "You're not coming here because of my memories of it, because it's bound to be a different ^{one} you know, it is a different place. And I was on the board by then. She said, "No, I

want to go there because that's where I want to go--the way it is now." She feels she's really benefitted by being here.

It was my first real home. My family had moved a great deal when I was growing up, and it was my thirteenth school. It was the first time I had ever lived any place for four years, and it was just marvelous. It didn't move--it stayed! It was steady and permanent. I still have that sort of sense of coming home when I come here.