Jack Stieber

August 1, 2001

Jeff Charnley,

interviewer

Charnley: Today is August 1, the year 2001. I am Jeff Charnley, interviewing Dr. Jack Stieber, for the MSU Oral History Project, for the sesquicentennial, to be commemorated four years from now, in the year 2005.

Dr. Stieber, you see we've got a tape recorder here today, for this session. Do you give us permission to record the interviewer?

Stieber: Yes.

Charnley: I'd like to start first with some questions about your personal and educational background. Where were you born and raised, and where did you go to school?

Stieber: I was born in Hungary, came to the United States with my mother in 1923. We lived in Newark, New Jersey, until I was probably twenty or twenty-one years old. After that I lived in various places, depending on whether I was working or going to school.

I went to Southside High School in Newark, New Jersey, graduated in 1932, and I lived in New York for while and went to the City College of New York. I could have graduated in 1936 and graduated from college in 1940. I went for a couple of terms while looking for a job--that was during the depression--in the New York School of Social Work, but midway through, when the war, 1941, started, I had previously taken civil service examinations and I was offered a job in Washington, D.C., for the War Manpower Commission, and worked there for about a year when I was drafted to the army in 1942. I was in the service from 1942 to 1945. After that, you

can ask questions or I can just go on.

Charnley: Where did you serve? Quite a few of the people I've interviewed have had World War II service. What unit did you serve, or what did you do during the war?

Stieber: I was in the air forces. After taking various basic training and going to supply school, I applied for officer candidateship, and I was selected to be a statistical control officer. I was in Miami Beach when I applied for that, and they sent me and, I guess, any others who applied and were in that class, to the Harvard Business School. I think that was probably about a six-week course.

Left there as a second lieutenant, stationed in Topeka, Kansas, from sometime in 1942 or '43. I was previously a private or, I guess I eventually was a sergeant, and served in Alabama. Then when I applied for OCS [Officer Candidate School], I was in Miami Beach, and then from there to the Harvard Business School, and probably completed that program in 1943 and was stationed in Topeka, Kansas, where I stayed until about 1944, when I was sent overseas, in the Pacific, to an island called Bapiak. It's in New Guinea. It was part of the air force. It was a maintenance headquarters. From there, I guess sometime in 1945, was sent to the Philippine Islands in Luzon, and was discharged in about November of 1945.

Charnley: So you part of the island-hopping campaign, or you were behind the lines?

Stieber: We were behind. It was a maintenance program. I wasn't in a flight duty or anything like that. I was a stat control officer.

Charnley: What were your main duties in that?

Stieber: I guess it was counting airplanes. In Topeka, I had an office with, I don't know, about half a dozen nonofficer personnel, and it was B-24s, where they were processed in Topeka, Kansas, and sent overseas. We had to keep records of the status of the airplanes, how many came in, how many went out, personnel, and all of that sort of thing.

Charnley: Did they have any type of computers that you used as part of that work, or no, not at that time?

Stieber: No. Nobody had ever heard of a computer at that time. No, it was just a matter of reporting by hand.

Charnley: What rank did you get out of the service with?

Stieber: Eventually I was discharged as a captain. I think I was a first lieutenant for most of the period, but when you're discharged, if you've had enough service, an honorable discharge, you very often got promoted to the next rank. So I was discharged as a captain.

Charnley: Did you then use the GI Bill as part of your graduate work?

Stieber: Not immediately. Since I had worked for the United States Government, I had the reemployment rights. The agency for which I had previously worked had already been terminated, and after the war I worked for another agency of government. It was called the Office of the Housing Expediter. It was an office in the labor Office of the Housing Expediter. The total Office of the Housing Expediter was designed to build low-cost housing for veterans, under $10,000, but it didn't do very well, because there was too much other competition from business and other organizations to get the various supplies, and eventually that office was

terminated.

When that happened, it was 19--let's see, I came back in '45--about the middle of 1947, when the office was terminated and I started thinking about what I was going to do. At that time, several different university programs, graduate programs in the field of industrial relations were starting up.

I heard about the University of Minnesota. I applied--it was already late in the year--for a graduate assistantship, and was given an assistantship there. So I went to the University of Minnesota as a graduate assistant. I'm not sure, but I think my salary as a grad assistant was $300 a year. It sounds awful low at this time, but that's my recollection.

I went there with the idea of going for a Ph.D. In December of 1948, I received my master's degree in economics and I was associated as a graduate assistant with the Industrial Relations Institute. At that time I received a phone call from a person that I had formerly worked with in the Office of the Housing Expediter, Otis Brubaker [phonetic], a friend of mine and co-worker. He was the research director for the United Steelworkers of America, in Pittsburgh. He called me and said, "How would you like to work for the union?"

I guess at the time I maybe had had enough education to feel that I didn't necessarily want to go on for a Ph.D. at that point. So I went down to Pittsburgh, and after meeting with the president of the union, who was Philip Murray, who was both the president of the steelworkers and the president of the CIO, the Congress of Industrial Relations, and I then went to work for the research department from December of 1948 to 1950.

In 1950, the Korean War started, and anytime there's a war, the government tries to involve unions, and especially major unions, in an agreement, a no-strike agreement, that they will not strike during the period of the war, in order to not impede the war effort. This had been in World War II, that would have been 1950, President [Harry S.] Truman. Yes, 1950. He contacted Philip Murray, who was then president of the CIO, in his capacity as president of the Congress of Industrial Organizations, which includes many different unions. He asked for him to

send some people to Washington, to work in the government and to assist in the various agencies in the war effort. I was asked, or sent, whichever way you want to put it--

Charnley: Drafted again.

Stieber: I went from the union to Washington. I suppose if I had said I didn't want to go, they would have gotten somebody else. Various unions sent different people down.

At first I was detailed to work in the National Security Resources Board, which didn't last very long. At that time then they had established a Wage Stabilization Board, which was a tripartite board of eighteen members, six from labor.

Well, there were two labor organizations at that time. There was the American Federation of Labor. The AFL, the American Federation of Labor, was the older organization, and they had split with the CIO, the Congress of Industrial Organizations, in the 1930s, formed two separate organizations because of policy differences.

Therefore, the Wage Stabilization Board consisted of six representatives from the CIO, six representatives from the AFL, and six public representatives. I was the executive assistant for the members of the Congress of Industrial Organizations, the CIO. In that capacity, the real members of the board were presidents of unions, elected presidents of unions. In that capacity, they could not spend full time in that organization and representing labor, so that the staff really was a full-time staff. I had a few secretaries and at least one, as I can recall, assistant, an economist.

Therefore, I would represent them in meetings of the Wage Stabilization Board, unless there was something going on which required a vote, and then they would schedule a vote and the members would come in from various parts. Some of them weren't in Washington, D.C.; they were all over the country.

So I was there from 1950. In that capacity, I was a government employee, even though I

was representing the CIO and you might say I was really taking my orders from the CIO. And the same thing was true of the AFL representative and the industry representatives.

One of the members of the Wage Stabilization Board, a public member, was John Dunlop, from Harvard University. The six public members were all university faculty members, but were on leave to serve in this capacity at the request of the president. The chairman of the board at the time I was there was Nathan Fiensinger. He was professor of law at the University of Wisconsin. Others were different universities. Clark Kerr, for example, later, president of the University of California, was a public member.

At any rate, during that period I got to know the public members well, because they dealt with me as the representative of the CIO members. Professor Dunlop, one day he got to talking and he asked me what my background was and things like that, and I told him. When I was with the steelworkers union, they had a rather unusual wage agreement with the United States Steel Corporation and other steel companies, which, as a result of an order during the war of the Wage Stabilization Board, they had agreed to meet and try to work out what they called a wage inequity program. The unions always complained that wages were set differently in different plants in the same company throughout the United States.

After the war, they set up a program called Cooperative Wage Study, CWS, which was designed to have labor and management representatives in the steel industry meet and develop a program which would set classifications in jobs in the steel industry for the whole country. Dunlop, who was a professor of economics at Harvard University, knew about this program and he was interested in it.

Anybody who knows John Dunlop knows that he's what we would call an operator. And he said to me, "I've got a deal for you. Why don't you go back and get a Ph.D.?"

I said, "I can't do that." By that time I was married, had one child, and another one on the way. I said, "I can't." I had already taken some benefit out of the GI Bill program.

But he said, "If you agree to write your Ph.D. thesis on the steelworker and steel company

wage inequity program, I can arrange the financing."

He got me two scholarships, one, a Worthheim [phonetic] fellowship, and other one a Littower [phonetic] fellowship, each of which paid a certain amount of money for my tuition and various other expenses.

Charnley: Was this at Harvard?

Stieber: At Harvard. And I also had the GI Bill. I then left the board in 1952 and went to Harvard University to work on my Ph.D. I was there from 1952 to 1956, and did my thesis on the steel industry wage inequity program, which was later published by the Harvard University Press.

In the last two years of that program, I really was finished with the fieldwork. I would travel all over the country, interviewing steel and union people, and getting their records and so on and so forth. In the last two years of that program, while I was writing my dissertation, I worked at the Harvard Business School as a graduate assistant, and did some teaching in the Harvard Business School program. And I got my degree, it was awarded. I had really finished in 1955. My degree was awarded in 1956.

Charnley: In the course of that fieldwork that you did, your interviews, did you record any at the time?

Stieber: No, I took notes. I don't know that they even had any transcribing.

Charnley: They might have had wire recorders.

Stieber: I never had had any experience with it. In fact, in all of the research that I'd ever done,

which often involved meeting with people, I never had a recorder, I guess either because it wasn't that common to use it, but more likely than not, the people that I was talking to probably would not have been as willing to speak freely if he knew that there was a transcript being taken.

Charnley: Understandable. The machine does affect the results, that's for sure. How was it that you came to Michigan State?

Stieber: When I got my degree in 1956, by that time I was older than most students who go through school directly without having breaks for work, like I did. That was 1952, so I would have been thirty-three years old. Let's see, 1919--is that right? By the time I got through, I was thirty-seven. That would have been 1956.

I went to a meeting of the American Economic Association--my degree was in labor economics at Harvard--with the idea of interviewing for jobs, and Michigan State University was at that time just starting a new program, a graduate program, called the Labor and Industrial Relations Center. Charles Killingsworth, who was chairman of the Department of Economics, and he was a labor economist, had gotten his Ph.D. at the University of Wisconsin, he was there interviewing people to staff this new center.

I was interviewed by him and then eventually came down to Lansing for an interview and met with the Department of Economics people, because at that time it was still in the very formative stages. There were no really positions, tenure positions, in the Labor and Industrial Relations Center. So my appointment was in the Department of Economics, and I had sort of a joint appointment with the Labor and Industrial Relations Center, but my tenure-stream appointment was in economics.

Eventually, after the interview, I was hired to come to work. I know came in June 1956. Because of my ignorance about how the university works, I thought when you were asked to go report on June the 1st, you had to do it. I didn't even go to my graduation at Harvard. In fact, of

the three degrees that I have, the only one that I ever attended a graduation exercise was at University of Minnesota, which I considered the least important of the three. But the other times I was either working or not feeling that it was important to attend. So I was appointed as an associate professor and director of research in the Labor and Industrial Relations Center.

Charnley: Professor Killingsworth just died not too along, didn't he?

Stieber: He died a couple of years ago, yes.

Charnley: So you had a close relationship with him for a long time?

Stieber: He was the director of the center, and there were three associate directors. I was the associate director for research, another person was associate director for the labor education program, and the third person was associate director for the management education program, called the personnel management program service.

We did not have authorization to give courses. Really, the institute was primarily set up to provide labor education extension programs for unions and for management personnel in the field of industrial relations. And also the research program did not have any full-time faculty, except for me, but there were joint appointments, which I would work out with various departments--we were on a quarter system at that time--for either a full-time or a half-time appointment, generally a half-time appointment, from various departments--economics, psychology, sociology, various other areas of the university.

We had quite a bit of money at that time, so that departments were glad to have their personnel, who were then, instead of teaching full time, they would get a half-time research appointment with the Labor and Industrial Relations Center, and were free to work on research. We paid half their salary and the department paid half their salary, but their appointments were in

the department. That's the way the program was set up.

Charnley: The school at that time, what was their relationship with labor leaders, prominent ones like Walter Reuther and the others?

Stieber: We were in contact with labor leaders in Michigan, since this was a Michigan program, and we had labor advisory committees and management advisory committees, so that a labor advisory committee would be composed of union leaders in the State of Michigan. Presidents of unions would not generally serve on a labor advisory committee, but they would send one of their representatives.

Generally, if a union was a big union, like the UAW, their representative would be the director of labor education. Not all unions had such people. They might send international representatives or staff people. Similarly, the management advisory committee was generally made up of directors of industrial relations of various companies--Ford, General Motors, Chrysler, Kellogg Corn Flakes, as I recall. All of those organizations.

1959, Charles Killingsworth, who had his degree at Wisconsin, was offered a job position at the University of Wisconsin, and they were offering him a position as a university professor, which was very rare. Probably they didn't have any at that time, which would allow him complete freedom. He was inclined to take it, but President [John A.] Hannah, who was then president, called him in. Killingsworth had been at MSU by that time from about 1947 on, so he was a senior-type employee. And Hannah said, "You don't have to go to Wisconsin. You can have a university professorship here."

So he decided he would do that, which meant that, really, he would give up his administrative duties in the labor and industrial relations center, and also he was no longer chair of the Department of Economics, but he would be housed in the center, and do whatever he wanted to do, more or less, both in the center and research and otherwise.

I remember I had been given a three-month overseas appointment to teach labor and management people in Scotland, especially with regard to labor relations. I got a telephone at six o'clock in the morning, or something like that, from, I guess he used to be called the vice president for academic affairs. His name was Paul Miller. And said, "Killingsworth has resigned as director of the center and the various people who are associated with the center had held a meeting and they recommended that you be made director of the center."

At the time, I wasn't necessarily so eager to do that. I had been primarily interested in doing research, mostly in the field of automation, which, at that time, was very important, especially in Michigan, because the automobile companies were instituting automated equipment and there was a great concern whether this would result in unemployment and things of that kind. But after thinking about it for day or two, I let him know that I would accept the position and came back after I was finished with that assignment in Scotland. I was then director of the center from 1959 onward.

Charnley: At what point did it change from a center to a school?

Stieber: Well, that's an interesting story. We continued in that vein and we did not have our own students because we weren't authorized to give courses, so that students interested in the field of industrial relations would take their course work in the various departments.

[Begin Tape 1, Side B]

Charnley: When the tape ended, you were talking about the transition from a center to a school.

Stieber: The labor education program was much more successful than the management program. The management program had started out with an associate director from the business school

who didn't really want to stay in that job, particularly. He wanted to go back to the business school full time. And Killingsworth, before he retired from that position, had hired a lawyer from outside the university, primarily with background and experience as a lawyer for management, to run the management program.

But that wasn't working out, and his more or less last words to me was that one of my major problems would be to have to get rid of this guy, who was given a tenured appointment in the business school, because he also could not hold any tenured appointments in the labor and industrial relations center, as it was then called. But it wasn't working out.

Primarily, I guess, briefly, his idea was that really the only people who could teach people in business and in management were people out of business and management, and not university academic people, who were more Ivory Tower kind of people. And of course, that was not consistent with the mandate of the school. We were using faculty members to do our extension program, teaching.

So when I came in in '59, he was then in that position, and we tried to get along and change things, but it wasn't working out very well, and the director of our labor program was a very active person and had a very large program going, and had a lot of new ideas. His name was Fred Hoeller. He had the idea that they ought to have a film made. We had an audiovisual department then, as we do now, probably much smaller, about labor unions. He talked to the person in that department--I can't remember his name--about having such a film, and got some money from the AFL-CIO. By then, they were joint organizations. To do a film on the cheap, more or less. We didn't really have any money to do any professional actors or anything like that.

The thesis of the film was that there ought to be more education at the high school level on what labor unions do, and especially what state councils--for example, the AFL-CIO, in addition to being a large union of various other unions in the state of Michigan and nationally, also had a state federation and other representatives throughout the state, and local areas. The plan of the movie was that a school teacher, a high school teacher, would be teaching a course in

social studies, and in the course of that course, she would talk about labor unions.

One of the students would then ask, "What does a state labor body do?" and she realized she didn't know. That wasn't really something that she was very well-versed in. So she decided to do some research on it, and in doing the research, she made appointments with labor people and management people. That was her idea.

She interviewed the president of the state AFL-CIO, Gus Scholl [phonetic], a very legendary figure, and asked him, "What does a state labor federation do?" and so on and so forth. She interviewed him in his office. For a management representative, and I had very little--while I was the director of the program, our associate directors would run the programs, and as long as I felt they were doing a good job, I would really know in detail why and how they did everything.

But at any rate, for some reason, I guess because of lack of money or cooperation, Fred said that the person who had been in charge of our audiovisual center--I can't remember his name--he would play the role of a management representative. So this teacher then had a meeting with him, and they decided that they would meet over lunch in Kellogg Center, which was then in existence. She met with him and they had lunch, and I think, as I remember the conversation, the teacher would say to this person, management representative, "I'm interested in finding out what--the management people, do they also have statewide organization, and what then do they do?"

And he said, "Well, I'd be glad to talk to you about that, but I'd much rather talk about you." The film was made. It was about, I don't know, it ran maybe twenty minutes or a half hour. And this woman--actually, I believe--I'm not 100 percent sure--I believe this was his wife. In other words, this is the kind of repartee that one might make, and she was a rather attractive woman and they were probably in their forties or thereabouts.

The film would then be made available to unions and anybody else who wanted it, to show in high schools throughout the state. We would sell them, to try to make some of our expenses back. Our management representative knew about the film, and at some point, I think

Fred showed the film before it was sort of finished, to members of our staff to get ideas, anything that you might want to change or whatever it was.

But as I recall, I remember seeing it and it didn't strike a bell with me that there was anything unusual about it. It was just a pretty amateur kind of effort. The person in charge of our management program saw the film, and as I recall at the time, he didn't say anything negative about the film. But pretty soon, we started getting rumblings about the film, and at that time, our state legislature was quite different than today, and the relationships between labor and management were much more strained and antagonistic than they are today. Now we have fifty years of experience of dealing with one another, so that the management representative, Chuck Rogers, talked to his management advisory committee and said, "You know, this film is anti-management.

When they meet with Gus Scholl, you see them sitting in his office and Gus is there with his sleeves rolled up, in his shirtsleeves, and talking business. And here when they meet with the management, so-called management representative, they're in a cocktail lounge." Well, of course, that wasn't true because you couldn't even serve liquor in [unclear], but there must have been a glass in front of whatever it was to make it appear as if they were in a restaurant.

Well, these rumblings, it didn't take long before--he had connections in the state legislature, and the legislature was strongly Republican. Even now, while we have a Republican governor and so on, it was nothing like that. It was controlled by both the House and the state Senate by the Republican party and by very conservative Republicans. There was enough to-do about this that a committee was established, a joint committee, I believe it was, a three-member committee, set up to investigate the labor and industrial relations center to find out if they were pro-labor and anti-management. I don't know whether your work is confined to the oral interview, but you could learn a lot if you went back to the archives at MSU. You could probably get a copy of the film, but more importantly, newspaper clippings in the *State News*.

Charnley: What year was this, do you remember that?

Stieber: This was 1961. But as I said, you can really see those stories.

Charnley: In the clippings.

Stieber: I had not had any previous dealings with journalists or newspapers and was occasionally interviewed by journalists, and one of them, particularly, from the *Jackson Citizen Patriot*, was a very well-known labor reporter. He interviewed me a couple of times and I would talk freely about that, obviously, this was not an anti-management film, it was just designed primarily to educate high school students. This business about the cocktail, it was a lot of just eye-play between two people, who really were not professional actors or anything like that.

But the stories always came out differently, and now that I've had more experience, I know, when you talk to a newspaper, it doesn't come out in the newspaper with a headline the way you think it ought to. I wouldn't say we got a very good press because the *Citizen Patriot*, I think, was also known as a very conservative newspaper and maybe it still is. I think it's part of the Ridder chain.

But at any rate, this state committee, three-member committee composed of two Republicans and one Democrat, held hearings in the state capitol in 1961. Every day there would be news stories on testimony before the hearings and so on, and President Hannah was told that they want him there. He said, "You don't have to subpoena me. I'll be there when you need me and do whatever, testify or anything." He had issued his statement supporting the center and saying that he believed they were doing the job that they had been set up to do and so on and so forth.

The committee also had a staff attorney, who they had hired from outside, and he generally conducted the hearing for the management. The university was represented by their

lawyer, who I think even at that time was not--the university now has a staff of lawyers. I think he was a part-time lawyer. We'd not had much experience with that sort of thing. The kind of questions, as I remember--and again, there's a transcript of those hearings, which took a few days, several days.

The kind of questions I remember when I was being interviewed, testifying, you might say, or testimony under oath--"Well, you say that you're not anti-management and that you're pro-labor and your research department turns out different things."

And I remember one of the questions says, "Well, here's this member, Sullivan, Professor Sullivan, from your history department."

And I would say, "Yes, John Sullivan, I believe--" I'm not sure. That wasn't his first name. I don't even remember.

Charnley: Richard Sullivan?

Stieber: No, no. Long before him. He had come from the upper peninsula, in the iron ore mines. In our research program, which I was the associate director of before I became the director of the school, we would then pay these people and they would submit research proposals and we would say whether it's worth doing. He wanted to write a monograph on strikes in the upper peninsula ore mines, and he did. He wrote about strikes in the ore mines and one of the questions was, "Well, I see that you have your center publish this thing about a strike. Why would you want to be publishing things about strikes that fomented labor-management discord?"

And I would say, "Well, this is a professor of history and that's what history is about." Well, they didn't seem to understand that.

Another question was, "You also have published this monograph research by another professor, on a man named Terrence Powderly [phonetic]. Why would you do anything about a man like that?"

And I said, "Well, at that time, he was president of the AFL-CIO, in the nineteenth century, and this professor thought that would be writing about."

One of the congressmen, who was then called the congressman from Dow Chemical because that's the district he represented, he said, "Yes, but I understand he's been dead for so many years. Why would you write something about somebody who's been dead?" All of that went on and on.

Our management representative, who, by that time, was--I think by that time they may have already worked out a deal so that he would no longer be the management associate director. He had a tenure system appointment in the business school, but that was really only supposed to be a pro forma appointment because he was not really qualified to be a professor in the business school, as a lawyer. But we persuaded them, "You don't have to worry about it because we're paying his salary."

Then they were told, "Well, he's a tenured professor in the business school. You've got to take him back." Well, they did, but he didn't last there because he wasn't too happy there, either. But he testified about his views on why the management program was starved for money and the labor program got money, and that was true, actually, because unions sending rank-and-file members to labor education programs would not have the money to pay for them, so we subsidized those programs. Management, on the other hand, would be running management program and they would be charging pretty good rates for people to attend those programs.

So the management program made money, and it was used, to some extent, to subsidize the labor program. This guy said, "Why should management pay to train union people who are opposed to management?"

And of course, our theory was, well, we want to train them so that labor and management would not be strongly antagonistic, but would learn to live with each other and that they'd have some common interest.

At any rate, the upshot of it all was that they issued a report, which was that the labor and

industrial relations center should be abolished, and no funds that are appropriated to the university for the center could be used to subsidize the center. There was a minority report by the Democrat on the committee, but the majority report was the one that passed.

Now, one of the things about the labor and industrial relations center, which was unusual in terms of other university programs--not all of them, but many of them--is our budget did not come directly from the legislature. That was not true in some other programs, in New Jersey and a number of other programs, where the legislature would appropriate money for the specific purpose of establishing an industrial relations program. So that the legislature really could not abolish the program because they didn't give us any money. They gave the money to the university.

President Hannah and the board of trustees--at that time I think they called it the Board of Agriculture or whatever it was--they decided that they had the authority to decide which programs would be continued and which would not, in the university, and that they felt that there was no reason to terminate or to do away with the industrial relations center, and that they didn't have to abide by any resolution passed by the state legislature, since the money didn't come from the state legislature. It came from the university. So we were protected in that regard and President Hannah said we're going ahead.

The demonstration of the way in which the committee conducted their affairs was illustrated by the fact that Hannah said, "You let me know when you want me to testify and I'll come down there." And the chairman of the committee said, "No, we want you here. We'll let you know when we want you, and we want you down here. We can't until you decide when you're ready." And Hannah would have to come down and cool his heels for two or three days, listening to other people before they had him testify.

Eventually they did and he issued a statement, which was very supportive of the center and so on and so forth. At that time, that was about 1961-62, Hannah did decide that the center, by being a--I used to report to the president of the university, and there was an advisory

committee of, I think, three deans, or maybe more, of different colleges--the college of business, the college of social science, and so on--who would sort of have oversight.

But my responsibility as a director would be to report to the president of the university. Hannah decided that because we did not have an intervening dean to sort of take any kind of criticism and be supportive of a program that the dean of other colleges were--they would support their various departments in any kind of programs and things like that, that basically the structure should be changed. I really didn't agree with that because, you know, you always had the feeling, well, you're more important if you're reporting to the president.

I said I thought we would prefer to be in the same situation but he said, "Well, I think you'll find that this would be a better arrangement." And in 1962, the university was going through a reorganization. It used to be that there was a college of business and public service, and that included social science and public service and economics and sociology and so on, in that department, in that college of business and public service.

We were broken up, the university structure was changed, so that there would be a college of social science, a college of business, and a college of natural science. They also set up James Madison College and Justin Morrill College and all of that.

So that the board decided that they the proper place for the school of labor and industrial relations would be in the college of social science, which made sense. And that also, we would be authorized to give our own courses and become more of an academic-type program, giving courses with academic credit. Well, let me put it this way. They recommended that we consider that kind of reorganization.

Our faculty, the part-time faculty, met and agreed that they would want to be an academic program. Not on the undergraduate level, but have only graduate programs and graduate courses, and give a master's degree in labor and industrial relations. So that in two or three years, all of that was worked out, and in 1965, the name of the program was changed to school of labor and industrial relations. We did not have our own faculty. All of our faculty had always been joint

appointments, but we were then authorized to appoint people on a full-time basis in the school, and also to offer tenure positions in the school. We gave our first courses in 1965 and I believe there were about fifteen students registered for the program, but the courses were still mostly taught in the departments because we didn't have the faculty to staff them.

But as time went on, we hired more and more of our own faculty until, I can't remember at what point, we would be giving a hundred percent of all of our courses, and that's been true for many years. By the time I retired in 1989, as director, I think we were running between 100 and 125 students, and we were probably the largest graduate program in the country. We also had a Ph.D. program, which is a Ph.D. in social science, which would require students to take three fields in industrial relations, including courses in various departments--sociology, psychology, economics, and so on and so forth. But that's sort of the background of the program.

Charnley: It's interesting. Don Stevens was on the board at that time, wasn't he?

Stieber: Don Stevens was a member of the board for some time. Don Stevens was formerly education director for the UAW or the state AFL-CIO. I don't even remember. So he would be a member of a labor advisory committee, but he was not a member of the board of trustees until some time later when he was elected to that position, and he served at least two terms on the board. I don't remember exactly. Are you interviewing him?

Charnley: We did already.

Stieber: Did he make any mention at all of this?

Charnley: He didn't talk about the school so much. I think the focus of the interview with him was more on the transition between Hannah and [Clifton R.] Wharton [Jr.] and Walter Adams

and that, and some of the administrative things.

Stieber: Well, Don was on the board and formerly had been on our labor advisory committee.

Charnley: Some of the questions that I was interested in, in terms of the school of labor and industrial relations, who are MSU's main competitors in the country for that? MSU is a leader.

Stieber: The largest school, the one that was the first school established that gave degree programs in the field of industrial relations, was the Cornell school. It started in 1947 and it was set up primarily due to the support of Senator Ives from New York State. They had and have, continue to have, a large undergraduate program as well as a graduate program. Their undergraduate program is much larger. The graduate program is very sizeable, master's degree, Ph.D. programs. I, at various times, was asked to evaluate different programs, and after I retired I was chairman of a committee to evaluate the Cornell program.

I remember our committee of six members, a former member of labor unions, member of management programs, and a few people from other industrial relations programs. We actually recommended that they abolish the undergraduate program because basically it was not primarily a field in which undergraduates really were well prepared to work in that field, but their program is so large and their faculty is so large that we knew that didn't make any--they couldn't accept that because then they wouldn't be able to support their faculty in just their graduate program. But that still is the largest program.

We are very much like the Illinois program in Champaign, Illinois, where they also--they, again, are only a graduate program. There are very few undergraduate programs to rival Cornell. University of Minnesota is, again, a well-known program, and one of the earlier programs. There are a number of others. Not all of them give degrees, even though they are very good programs. University of Wisconsin, for example, while they've always been in the forefront of

labor management education and labor economics, never had their own degree. I think it's primarily a matter of university politics. For example, the Department of Economics, which I--

[Begin Tape 2, Side A]

Charnley: This is tape two of the Jack Stieber interview.

When the last tape ended, we were talking about different schools that were prominent in labor and industrial relations. You were mentioning Wisconsin.

Stieber: Yes, well, as I say, not all of them were authorized to give degrees. They had courses.

Charnley: You were saying, the university politics in Wisconsin--

Stieber: Oh, yes. Well, actually, for example, the Department of Economics at Michigan State University, was very much opposed to the setting up of a degree program in the field of industrial relations because they felt they were giving courses, and still do, in labor economics and other related areas, and we had our students take their courses at the beginning.

Later on, as we grew larger, our students complained that the courses that they were taking in other departments were geared primarily to their own graduate students, and therefore, they were not really as relevant to the field of labor and industrial relations, which is what they were interested in and the kind of jobs they were interested in getting. So that little by little, we sort of developed our own courses in all of the fields.

But when I said that some universities have never authorized separate degree programs because they would conflict with courses here. And of course, our business school was very much opposed to it. At Michigan State University--I don't know how it works now--it's suppose to work that you're not supposed to have any duplicate courses. The courses being given in one

department, or in one college, should not be duplicated in another college. The business school felt that they were giving courses which would provide better education for management people than a school of labor and industrial relations, and so most of the jobs our graduates get, 90 percent of them are in management companies or in government.

There are not many jobs in unions, and there are even fewer now than there used to be, when unions were much stronger. So that the business school was also opposed, but it was President Hannah who was really pressured, I think, to some degree by the UAW and AFL-CIO in Michigan, agreed to start that kind of a program. And that's why not all schools give degree programs in this, but we do. And now we have a very large program. I know I talked to the people there and we have about 130 master's degree students and maybe about a dozen Ph.D. programs in social science.

Charnley: You mentioned the graduates and what they did. Were there any that went on to prominence, to any great degree, that come to mind?

Stieber: Oh, yes. Well, for example, the state AFL-CIO president is a graduate of our program. Took our master's degree program in early 1980s. There are quite a few others. A lot of them working in various corporations. I can't remember the names of the them.

Charnley: Any that went into government service?

Stieber: In terms of cabinet member positions, I can't think of any but there could have been some.

Charnley: The different schools--obviously, the relationships that you had, in terms of working with provosts and different presidents, besides Hannah. So it sounds like generally Hannah was

supportive of the school of labor and industrial relations?

Stieber: Oh, yes, very. I think if Hannah had not been strongly in favor, the legislature would have prevailed in their view that they should not set aside any funds for the school.

Charnley: Did he see the mission of the school as linked to the outreach concept that he had, or land grant--

Stieber: Yes, that's right. Because Michigan is a land-grant university, that we were required not only to turn out academic graduates but also to provide education in practical fields in industrial relations and people working for unions or companies and government and so on. That's very much what his view was.

Charnley: The next two presidents after Hannah, Walter Adams was interim there. You obviously were in economics with Walter Adams and you knew him. Was he supportive of the school at the time he was interim president?

Stieber: By the time he was interim president, it was fait accompli, but as a faculty member, Walter was not supportive. He was a member of the department and I think felt that there was no need for another program. I think he and Killingsworth, while they were very close friends, maybe that had something to do with their not continuing to be that close over the years.

Charnley: The next two presidents were Wharton and [M. Cecil] Mackey, who were both economists or lawyers, and they had that background, labor--President Mackey.

Stieber: Once we became a regular academic program, any opposition that there might have

been towards the establishment of such a program was long since over, and there was no discussion or anything of that kind. We had a large program. We were obviously a very successful program. Labor and management no longer had the kind of strong antagonistic views towards each other that they did in the 1940s and the 1950s.

I don't even know now whether they still have advisory committees. My guess is, they don't even meet. We used to meet very regularly, and especially our labor advisory committee was very active. Sometimes too active. I think one of the things that one has to insist on is that this is a university program, and therefore while we want advice and support from the communities that we deal with, we have to make the decision on who to hire and how much they get paid and all the other things.

The labor people did not always understand this. They sometimes wanted to try to influence our appointments and we had some problems with them. But I think they realized, down deep, that basically these were decisions that had to be made by the university, and the university always supported that view. At some point they would maybe even try to influence to the point of even going to the president and trying to get somebody appointed, but I think all of the presidents supported the school being an academic department that had to work within the framework of the university.

Charnley: You mentioned that union pressure. This was the time, obviously, that the clerical and technical staff was unionized, and there were attempts by faculty, faculty unionization attempts. Phil Korth, faculty associates and some of the others. Were there any members of the school of labor and industrial relations that were either active or in those movements at all?

Stieber: I think the people in the labor education program, some of those people came out of unions, and they worked with unions all the time. Yes, they were supportive and I think they would have liked to see--Michigan State University has had three elections among faculty, as to

whether or not there was a majority in favor of unionization, and it was always overwhelmingly defeated. Sure, there were people, but they weren't any more predominant. This fellow you mentioned, Phil Korth, he wasn't in our school. He was in ATL. While they were supportive of the idea, they were not predominant in the movement.

Charnley: While you were director of the school, did the focus change over time, in terms of your approach, the curriculum? What are some of those?

Stieber: When we started the school, the fifteen students, and for years after that, they generally thought that they would work for unions. In the 1950s, unions represented 35 percent of the labor force. They were predominant in the news, and as you, for example, mentioned, did I know Walter Reuther, Philip Murray. These people were household words. John L. Lewis and so on. Now you have to explain to a student who they were. They came to the school with the idea that they would get a job with a union, and we had to explain to them, or they learned pretty quickly themselves, that unions did not generally hire people out of universities. They do that more now than they used to.

Many unions did not even have research departments, let alone people who would actually be in the field, in factories and in representing unions. So that they thought that they would like to work for unions. There were jobs in unions at that time, but not very many. Most of them always got jobs in management. Ford Motor Company, General Motors, Chrysler. Many hired our graduates, to a considerable extent. The people that we recruited, our main courses were in collective bargaining, labor arbitration, labor law, equal employment opportunity. All of the kinds of things that are generally associated with labor management relations.

As time went on, unions became less predominant, weaker. The jobs in the field were more and more in management, and graduates in programs were in human resources programs,

and the term "human resources" was not a term that anybody even heard of in the 1950s. The management people who were in the field were being called "director of labor relations."

Now, I dare say, you probably would hardly ever find a director of labor relations. You'd find a director of human resources, whose function would include labor relations, as well as training and other aspects of industrial relations. So that the whole focus of the school has changed, where our faculty now in the school, there's at least as many faculty teaching, in the academic program, in human resources and in organizational behavior and organizational development, as there are who are teaching in the field of collective bargaining, labor arbitration, labor law, and that thing. So the focus of the school has changed.

Secondly, we only had, as I believe, at the time we started, I think there was only one woman in the program. Now there are more women. Starting, I don't remember exactly at what point, but probably by the mid, late 1980s, there were at least as many, and now I think maybe two-thirds of the program are women.

Charnley: Now, we're talking students?

Stieber: Students who are taking master's degree programs and some Ph.D. programs, not in the outside extension program. So that it's primarily, it's not just labor relations. It's human resources and human relations and so on. Also, now we have programs where the programs are joint programs, where management and labor people--these are in extension programs, where our labor education and our management education programs run courses cooperatively, together with some of the same people in the courses, which you could never have done in the old days.

In fact, one of the very famous stories, in the 1940s, before we even had a program, the University of Michigan used to have some courses given for labor union representatives, labor education. There was a big hullabaloo because they found out that one of the General Motors people had registered for the course so he could come back and tell the General Motors

Corporation what they were teaching these people. Generally, it appeared what they thought they were teaching them, and maybe they were, was how to--we teach them how to be effective bargainers as well as other kinds of things.

Charnley: GM had a stoolie in the class. Were there very many women that taught in the school?

Stieber: Oh, now, I think, sure. Some of our best people are women. Some of them have gone through our own program. We have Professor Ellen Cossack [phonetic], who is probably our top person in human resources, has a Ph.D. from Yale University. We have another one from MIT. Our labor education program has women in it. All of them do. The person who runs what is now called the human resources program is a woman.

At the time we started, we had no minorities in the program, and starting very early in the game we made a lot of effort to get more minority students. Now, I don't know exactly what it is. They could tell you over at the office there. Probably about 15 percent of our students are minorities, but I'm not sure. But I know a majority are women.

Charnley: Who are those that succeeded you as director of the school?

Stieber: I'm probably the longest-running administrator. I was reappointed by the faculty. My first appointment was from 1959 to 1965. I was reappointed from 1965 to probably about 1971. I was director for twenty-seven years. From 1959 to 1989, I was the director, by reappointment, by the dean, with the support of the faculty.

Charnley: Since your retirement, you mentioned your consulting that you did. Have you been involved with any other university programs since your retirement?

Stieber: Yes, I've always done labor arbitration and I still do labor arbitration.

Charnley: So you're teaching that course?

Stieber: I did teach labor arbitration in the school, as well as collective bargaining and several of the other courses. But labor arbitration has always been totally separate, except for teaching the course, but it would be, you might say it's the same way as any other person, whether it's an engineering faculty member or business school faculty member who does outside work. I've always done labor arbitration and I still do, after my retirement.

Charnley: In the teaching of that course, let's say, labor arbitration, was there any technique that you favored?

Stieber: No. I think I probably retired at exactly the right time, because I never used an overhead. I never knew what it was. Certainly, I would not have been the ideal person to be running a program which had an computer organization expertise. All of our people, just like all of the programs in the university, students are expected to already be knowledgeable in the use of computers. I would use, I think--Walter Adams used to call it the Socratic method--having students give what they think, or decisions, if they had been arbitrators in cases.

I would tape a lot of my cases and play back labor and management arguments and then ask them to discuss it. And there's also a lot of labor law connected with labor arbitration, and I would also take students with me in my arbitration assignments, with the acceptance of labor and management representatives. I would check with them and see if there would be any objection to two or three students sitting in. Except for once, when we had six students who traveled on their own, and we met at where the arbitration was being conducted, and when we got there the labor

and management people were in a conference, trying to work out various things before we sat down in the arbitration case.

And then when they came out and they said, "We're ready to start," I said, "I think the American Arbitration Association must have told you. I asked them whether it was okay to bring students and they said it was."

The management guy said, "They never asked me."

I had to tell the students that they wouldn't be able to sit in. I said, "Either they neglected to inform you, but I have been informed that both management and labor were agreeable, but we'll go ahead with the arbitration."

When we sat down, the arbitration management representative said, "Under the circumstances, since you obviously are unhappy about the fact that we are not letting your students sit in, I think maybe we don't want to have you do the arbitration in this case."

I said, "Well, okay, if that's the way it is. I get paid for one day anyway."

Charnley: That's interesting. In looking back at your career, did you anticipate, when you first came to Michigan State, that you'd be here pretty much your entire career?

Stieber: No, no, no. I've been offered jobs, but I never did anticipate it. But we were very happy in East Lansing and we felt that there was no place else that we would rather be, taking everything into consideration. Also, my wife worked. She worked almost--she'll be able to tell you these things herself. Within a year after we were here, even though she had never thought she would be doing any academic work, was asked to teach. She had a master's degree in political science. She was asked to teach in political science and did that for many years, but she can tell you that herself.

Charnley: In looking back on your career, is there anything that maybe stands out as most

important?

Stieber: Well, I think the most important thing--it's probably true of a lot of people that you interview, or people who have a career in almost any field, that they never maybe intended or thought they would be what they were. It never occurred to me, as somebody--you know, you hear a lot nowadays about somebody saying, well, they were the first person that ever graduated from college in their family. Well, certainly my parents never graduated. All of our family were born overseas.

I think the turning point in my career really came when John Dunlop made me this proposition, you might say, that if I would agree to take a Ph.D. at Harvard University, that he would see to it that the various funds would be available to get me through the program. By the time I was there, I would have undoubtedly--nobody knows what would have happened eventually, but I would have gone back to the steelworkers' union after the Korean War was over, and who knows what would have happened then. I would have continued in the research department. I suppose there may have been things that could have come along then, but I did not think that I would have had an academic career if it had not been for that eventuality.

Charnley: So indirectly, the war, World War II, and your war experience, put you in a position to have that contact.

Stieber: That's right.

Charnley: That seems to be an important theme that I've talked with many people, the influence of the war in changing this university, both in faculty and influencing faculty. It seems to be an interesting perspective, and obviously, all the returning veterans and everything also would have influenced the faculty. It seems to be interesting.

I want to thank you, on behalf of the project. I really appreciate your insight, and especially your comments about the founding and the development of the school of labor and industrial relations. I hadn't spoken with anyone that had any direct knowledge yet, so that was an excellent source. Thank you.

[End of interview]

# Index

Adams, Walter, 24, 29

Cossack, Ellen, 28

Hannah, John A., 10, 18, 19, 24
Hoeller, Fred, 12

Killingsworth, Charles, 8, 9, 10, 12, 24
Korth, Phil, 25, 26

Michigan State University
  and minorities, 28
  James Madison College, 19
  Justin Morrill College, 19
  Labor and Industrial Relations Center, 8
Miller, Paul, 11

Rogers, Chuck, 14

Scholl, Gus, 14
Stevens, Don, 20, 21