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Interviewee: Prof Harold Brown

Interviewer: Kristina Bilello

Interview Date: November 20, 2019

KB: This is Kristina Bilello, Reference Librarian on the 20th of November 2019 with Professor Harold Brown and his wife Ann Brown. Thank you for coming. You started working here at Pace in the year 1969. Can you describe your early years working as a new professor at Pace University?

HB: It was...an *interesting* beginning. I was still in graduate school when I applied for a job here and I actually had sent in a letter applying to any available positions for philosophy here at Pace. And I had received a letter telling me that there was nothing available. And I was in the office of our doctor getting a physical because I had started teaching at a branch of the New York University, New York City. I was teaching in New York City Community college.

KB: Right.

HB: And they wanted a physical exam. I got a call from Ann at my doctor's office saying someone had called from Pace wanting to know if I could go there for an interview because they had an opening. It seemed as if the full-time person teaching philosophy was actually going to be out for the semester and they needed someone to cover his classes. So, I went to Pace University... in those days it was Pace College and the entire building was in 41 Park Row. The entire college was in 41 Park Row. This building [1 Pace Plaza] was still under construction and hadn't been completed, and I walked onto the floor where my department to be was located and as I was walking down the hallway I saw that the names of the faculty are over their doors. And one name popped up. It turned out that my tenth-grade history teacher was on the faculty.

KB: Your tenth-grade history teacher?

HB: My tenth-grade history teacher, who I annoyed no end! I was a really obnoxious kid.

KB: Well, I think when you're really smart, you probably have an opinion!

HB: I was a history buff, I really liked history. So, I was interviewed by the assistant chair, who was in American history. He didn't know anything about philosophy but I was able to answer all kinds of questions from him about American history so he figured if I could talk to him about history, I could talk to our students about philosophy. So, he hired me to teach these courses. And then I walked into the class, for the first day, and a very large segment of the class was at least six feet two inches or taller. It turned out that the entire basketball team was taking this philosophy class because the professor was *notoriously* nice to athletes. So, when I came in and announced myself they all got up and left. And waited, and dropped the course and waited for the next semester to take that class with him.

KB: Were you aware of that situation when you made that announcement and then a bunch of students walk out?

HB: No, I figured it out later, that they were the basketball team. I mean, the size was a giveaway. And then I heard things about that other professor as the semester progressed. That he was extremely partial to student athletes, or anyone who was interested in sports.

KB: Hmm. That must have been a really funny moment though, but perhaps not at the time.

HB: In retrospect.

KB: Yes, in retrospect.

HB: In retrospect, it became funnier. And, I had taught at a few other schools and I had taught other subjects. I taught literature at Temple University. But this was my first semester *really* getting into teaching philosophy. And I was really excited to be able to do that, because that was my field, that was my thing. And it was good. I got into it.

KB: Well clearly, you had a long career.

HB: Yes.

KB: One thing I wanted to touch on. 1969 is a time period known for student protest and at the time you were also an adjunct at the New School, which I imagine was more radical. Were Pace students comparatively conservative? Can you talk about your impressions?

HB: I wasn't teaching at the New School, I was a student, I was a graduate student at the New School.

KB: Right.

HB: I had completed all my courses and I was working on my doctorate. Writing my dissertation at the New School. The students at the New School were much more radical than the students here. Well, for one thing, they were comparatively older. Because there wasn't very much of an undergraduate program at the New School at all.

KB: New School students were older, you're saying...

HB: Yes. And the graduate students in particular tended to be much more radical than the students here, although we did have a radical contingent and you must have heard that, sometime during that first year, I think it was in April or May, there was a demonstration all the way downtown...

KB: The Hard Hat Riots?

HB: ...that a number of our students were involved in. I was in school that day, and those days my office was in 150 Nassau Street. It actually overlooked the front of Campus West, so I had a bird's eye view, so to speak, of the students returning, at top speed, from that rally followed by

the construction workers. What I didn't see, although people told me about it later, was that right across the street in front of New York City Hall, there was a whole detachment of police, standing there watching all of this. Watching the construction workers running after the students and breaking the very expensive window glass in front of the just recently completed building.

KB: Oh, my goodness.

HB: And they just stood across the street in front of City Hall, as if keeping the peace was not part of their job description.

KB: Did you hear why they didn't act?

HB: Nothing was said about it at the time. I have no idea.

KB: Okay.

HB: My guess is that they probably sympathized with the construction workers.

KB: Wow.

HB: That would have been my guess.

KB: Yes, I think there are pictures and things about that. Yes, it was pretty bad riot.

HB: And the dedication for this building was set for May, I think. And the speaker at graduation had been announced to be Bob Hope.

KB: Oh! ...Right.

HB: And that dedication had to be postponed because the front of the building was all...

KB: Smashed up! ...Oh, my goodness...

HB: Smashed in. Those huge beautiful windows were all smashed by the construction workers. And it took months to get the replacement windows and have them put in.

KB: Did that...

HB: By that time, he [Bob Hope] was not available. And I don't remember all these years later who they got to do the dedication. I assume the University had somebody to dedicate the opening of Pace College in that building. It was *years* later when the school became a university. We were still a college.

KB: Right. That was something, the Hard Hat Riot in May and the dedication ceremony supposed to be in May, also, but obviously put off. On a different note...

HB: I entirely watched all of that happening from the safety of my office window. I thought I was very clever in not coming down and intervening. Clever me. I was not going to risk my head.

KB: Yes, it was quite a different era. If that had happened in 2019 people would have had their phones out, taking pictures, calling, it would have been all over social media.

HB: Yes, it would have been all over social media, absolutely.

KB: Did you have a phone at your desk?

HB: Sure.

KB: Did you call somebody?

HB: No.

KB: You didn't.

HB: No. The idea of...I wouldn't have known who to call.

KB: That's true, because you were observing the police, and would you call the police when they're there, seeing it...

HB: ...thinking that the police were going to intervene. Of course not. The police are there. They're already on the scene.

KB: So, basically, you're an observer, because what could you do? Yes, very different. Well let me ask you about your experience as a professor of philosophy and religious studies. And the question is, did you face challenges in teaching courses that some would say are cerebral, esoteric, in a university/college where most Pace students had business majors, science majors? Is it harder to reach a student, a business student or an accounting student, as a philosophy professor? Did you have many of those students in your classes?

HB: Yes, oh yes. The classes were very diverse. It was extremely interesting to work at reaching our students. One of things I would do is bring in case studies. One of the case studies I brought in had to do with the question of the legitimacy of charging people for blood.

KB: Oh?

HB: It's about a catastrophe that happens in Central America. A lot of people are injured. Meanwhile there's a company headquartered in the States, somewhere near Washington DC, that would go wherever they could to buy blood plasma, inexpensively. According to the case study, they were getting it at the time, for the equivalent of 48 cents worth of beads from a tribe in West Africa who, it turned out, were universal donors. And then they would take this plasma, and of course, it had to be properly refrigerated and treated and they would ultimately sell it and after

this tragedy which I think was probably an earthquake or something of that sort...with all the injured people, and so forth...They were selling the blood for a \$100 a pint! And this led to an enormous controversy in this country, over the legitimacy of selling blood for so much more than what the company had purchased the natural product for.

KB: Right.

HB: It led to a Congressional investigation, and the CEO of the company was called before a Congressional committee and asked to justify the cost to the consumer, because people couldn't afford it. And he said, "Well, we have our expenses. The plasma has to be refrigerated, it has to be properly and scientifically taken care of, to make sure it's not contaminated and that it's pure and so forth and so on. It has to be... Everything has to be done correctly. And that costs a lot of money. Plus, there's research that has to be done, in terms of the future of this kind of enterprise and all of that costs a lot of money. I would introduce this case study and have a discussion, and then, we'd have a debate. And, typically, the debate would involve the liberal arts students on one side and the business students on the other side. And I'm sure you can imagine that the liberal arts students would all be in favor of the company seeing to it that those that needed the blood would be able to afford it, whereas the business students were absolutely certain that the CEO of the blood plasma company was perfectly correct in charging what he thought they should charge for the product. The debate lined up, by school.

KB: Interesting...

HB: Absolutely by school. Sometimes, what I would do would be to turn it around and have the students take the opposite side to the side that they were naturally inclined to take. What's the argument, the best argument for the other side?

KB: That's smart.

HB: The one *against* your position? And that, of course, is the way to teach, or one of the ways to teach what we call critical thinking.

KB: Right, to see it from the other person's point of view.

HB: Perspective...and develop your own arguments for...and *see* what the arguments are for both sides of the position.

KB: Right! To have a balance, that's clever.

HB: And you definitely learn how to do that kind of thing. The ability of the students to argue either side of a position, cogently, over the course of a semester would improve.

KB: I'm curious, was your course part of the core curriculum or was it something that students...

HB: It was part of the core. It was an ethics course, which they could take as part of the core.

KB: Okay, so they were required to take it.

HB: Well they were required...Ah, with virtually all of our courses the students had choices. They had to take some kind of a course like that one. It didn't have to be a philosophy course, depending on which revision it was. At this point, now, years after, if I thought about it for a few minutes, I could probably work it out. Having been here for fifty years, I was here during a number of instances of core revisions, and the way it worked changed depending on which particular revision it was. But in virtually every case, in something like mathematics, if you were going to major in business you had have finite mathematics, you had to have Math 104, but philosophy never worked the same way. You needed to have one of three, four, five different courses, any one of which would satisfy a particular requirement. And the students chose, typically on the basis of which of the professors teaching the course got the best rating from Rate My Professor, or which was at a time that was most convenient, given my other classes.

KB: Yes, I think that any course that encourages us to think, as opposed to simply memorizing information definitely, helps one to develop as a person. And, related to that, you were active in creating the core curriculum, and then the Freshman Thinking Project. Can you talk about your goals in creating the Freshman Thinking Project.

HB: Well that happened because of a dinner to which Edward Mortola, who was the president for most of the early years when I was on the faculty here at Pace, was invited. There he met someone who was connected with the Exxon Educational Foundation. We had just recently changed to a new core and, somehow, Ed Mortola and this gentleman got into a discussion of the core, and like I guess it must have happened at various times. One afternoon, I'm sitting in my office, and I get a phone call from the secretary of the dean of Dyson College asking me to come up to the Dean's office for a chat. He tells me about this conversation that the president had had. It turned out to have taken place several months earlier, and the Dean said that he needed to have a proposal from me to spend \$50,000 dollars which the Exxon Educational Foundation was giving to Pace University to instill critical thinking into the new core curriculum. And he wanted that proposal two months ago. Well, the date on the letter that... What happened, of course, is that the President of the University wrote a note to the Provost, who wrote a note to... Actually, what happened was there was a letter from the President of the Educational Foundation and the President wrote a little note in the margin to the Provost, "Let's get this going by such and such a date." And then the Provost wrote a little note further down in the margin to the Dean of Dyson College saying, "Hey Joe. Let's make this happen by such and such a date." And then the Dean got on the phone and called me and said, "Harold, come on up, I want you to make a proposal to spend this money... two weeks ago." I forget what the relative dates were, but it was quite some time before I even heard about this, because all of that letter sending obviously took a lot of time.

KB: So, you had to scramble and get it done.

HB: So, I had to scramble. I was working against the clock and he wanted it right away because he wanted to get back to the Provost, so the Provost could get back to the President, so the President could get back to... So, I did it in several stages. One was a course that I worked out with Jerry Goldberg, who was the chair of the Speech and Drama department at the time. And the other piece of it was the development of the Freshman Thinking Project. I had a thesis that, in

order for critical thinking to really work, you need to have not just one semester, but you need a year. So, what I wanted to see was what would be the consequence of starting something happening in one semester and then following up on it in a second semester. And the results were awesome.

KB: Was it well received when you made your proposal?

HB: Very much so. Oh! It was received well by the Dean, who said, "Okay, now, make it happen." I said, "Well, what are you going to give me, to help me make it happen?" He said, "Nothing. You're on your own." (Laughs.) Which was typical. If you wanted to do good deeds, and make something happen, at least in Dyson College in those days, you were on your own. If your department had a student assistant who could help you, you were lucky. And so, I had a little help from a couple of students to help me run things, to do some collating and stuff like that.

KB: But it was mostly on your shoulders.

HB: It was mostly on my shoulders. And then, of course, the big thing was selecting an appropriate group of students as a control group and experimental group to see if this was going to work. And to do that I was completely on my own.

KB: Did you have a certain rubric or something that told you that a student entering the Freshman Thinking Project... some sign that they had changed by the end of it?

HB: Yes, I used a couple of things. One had to do with purely observational things. They were writing better by the end of it. In speaking with people who were teaching the basic English courses that they were taking, the writing courses that they were taking, I was able to ascertain that their writing had improved, enormously, over the course of the year.

KB: They were writing more logically?

HB: Yes, more comprehensively. They were constructing more logical arguments for the positions they were taking. I also made use of some psychological tests, the Myers-Briggs personality inventory for example, to see if there were noticeable changes in how they were working cognitively. There was. Plus, I was looking at their grades and their grades were better.

KB: So...success!

HB: Yes. And I showed the results to various individuals. Unfortunately, at the point at which I was prepared to make a presentation, we were going through considerable changes here at the University. We changed Presidents, Provosts and Deans, all within one semester.

KB: Was that in the 90's?

HB: Yes. Late 80's, early 90's.

KB: So, it didn't continue even though it sounded like...

HB: Yes! Because the person who would have had to give me the go-ahead to continue and to fund at least some of the cost of doing this was the new Dean, who wasn't convinced. Because, he didn't want to spend the money. We're talking about such a small amount of money, but that's who he was.

KB: It's a shame.

HB: Yes, it absolutely is. (laughs) The funny thing is that a few months later, I had a proposal for a presentation accepted by an organization that came out of the University of South Carolina called the Freshman Year Experience, for a presentation in Charleston, South Carolina. And it was going to be...they have an enormous Arts festival during Memorial Day weekend and they wanted me to make my presentation. And it turned out it was going to be the Friday before the weekend began, at eight o'clock in the morning. Which seemed to me to be a God-awful time to have a presentation on critical thinking.

KB: Right. Who's going to be there? Who's going to attend?

HB: Right, who's going to be there? When I got there, people were standing in the back of the room.

KB: Wow.

HB: They had read the notes I provided on my program. These were the people who were actually doing things like this in the various schools all up and down the East Coast. Not administrators, but faculty. Who were really interested in this stuff. And I walked into the room, and I see a room of people. Ann (his wife) couldn't come with me, which made me feel very guilty, because I was off on this adventure. (Laughs).

So, I later went around and found some really nice jewelry for her, got this really nice necklace, or was it a pin, I forget? Or both? [Turns to his wife Ann.]

AB: The pin you got in Charleston, South Carolina I think it was a necklace... (inaudible)

HB: So, I said to them, "What are you all *doing* here?" And that's what basically they said, "We read your stuff, we want to know about it. Because this is great! Tell us, what your... Give, give! What are you doing?" So, I'm going to spend a couple of hours explaining the program, and from what I understand a number of schools then instituted what I had been doing here.

KB: That's a wonderful validation of the program.

HB: Yes!

KB: So, it sounds like a great project, and who knows maybe...we can only hope that in the future it will return.

HB: Well. I didn't give up. I tried it again in different ways. And later on, I became the Director of the Honors College here and I did something similar.

KB: That actually leads me to my next question. As a Director of the Honors Program, what was your proudest achievement, would you say?

HB: Oh. Study Abroad.

KB: The Study Abroad program. I know you have a lot of memories and anecdotes related to it

HB: And travel to various parts of the world, mostly to Europe, and the Middle East.

KB: Why do you think that having a study abroad program was good for students. Why? From what you saw?

HB: One of the students, a typical student, was the daughter of a fireman, a New York City fireman. (sounds of a fire-engine.)

KB: And of course, we hear the sounds of fire engines in the background, perfect timing!

HB: That year we were scheduled to go to France. I remember her father telling me how nervous they were because no one in the family had travelled outside the five boroughs, and none of them had ever been on an airplane. And here their baby was going off to France. But because she was going with us, with Pace University, the tour, they were letting her go. And she became an art history major.

KB: Based on that experience.

HB: Based on that experience. She went back to France for a year for study abroad, I forget what school it was. Then she became an art history major, wound up working for different museums and has had a wonderful career in this area. But, and this was one example, there were others for whom this was a defining moment in their education.

KB: It opens up possibilities, opens up mind-expanding...

HB: Huge possibilities. Simply the idea of *different kinds of foods*. Ah, the first trip I did was to Italy and Greece, and a number of these kids were faced with having to eat something other than mac and cheese and hotdogs and peanut butter for the first times in their lives. Some of them just got right into it, and some of them took a few days. They would see their friends, and nothing would happen to them, so they figured, "Oh well I'll try it too." And you know, they became, it became part of that experience, to live in another country and absorb that new culture, that different culture, and it was a wonderful experience. A huge, broadening experience. This became a kind of a signature part of Pace University, the idea of studying abroad.

KB: Yes, it certainly sounds like a wonderful experience for everyone,

HB: For everyone.

KB: For the students, for you, just as you say, to discover different ways of living and...

HB: And I wound up going to, I don't know, four or five student weddings as a result, a partial result anyway.

KB: So, you formed friendships there as well.

HB: Yes, yes, absolutely.

KB: Wonderful. Another question I wanted to ask you is, you alluded to working in an office here in New York City and that the campus and the neighborhood have changed over the years. How have the buildings changed over the years? Can you describe when you started versus now, when you left. How the neighborhood has changed, how the buildings have changed.

HB: Pace was a commuter school, when I started. The dormitory in One Pace Plaza opened up in the fall of 1970, when Civic Center finally opened. But as I was later told, the residents in the dormitory were from other schools. We didn't have any resident students at that time. It was just a year or so later when **our** students began living in the Tower. It took a few years for Pace to get students coming to Pace living in the Tower. And it was a few years before we actually filled up the Tower, with our students.

KB: So, the average Pace students were, maybe they lived with their families in Queens, Brooklyn, the Bronx, is that...

HB: New Jersey...

KB: New Jersey, ok. And those students weren't living in the dorms because maybe the neighborhood wasn't perceived as safe at that time? Is that right or..?

HB: ...Or they just had too many things going on in their neighborhood. My guess is that for most of that time, the vast majority of our students were working, and they were working in their old neighborhoods. So, they would come in for a couple of classes, and then run home to go to work, in some store or other in the neighborhood or whatever it would be. It took several years before, for example, there were students living here who also got jobs working at the South Street Seaport.

KB: I see. Thinking about now it now, in 2019, this neighborhood is nice to work in because on your lunch hour you find restaurants, you find interesting stores to browse around, and I don't think that was quite the case...

HB: No, and there were very few restaurants that stayed open after 5 o'clock.

KB: Oh right.

HB: I mean, there wasn't anything to do.

AB: After 5 o'clock there was nobody around.

HB: There was no one here! The students would go to...Many students would come in for class, go to class and then go home.

KB: And this was true of say, the 70's, 80's?

HB: This would have been true of the 70's into the 80's I would think. And then beginning in the 90's this is beginning to change.

KB: Meaning...

HB: Slowly!

KB: Slowly there were more stores, restaurants opening a little later...

HB: Yes.

KB: Yes, because the city expanded. And then of course we have the seminal event of 9/11.

HB: 9/11 yes, and things just go, wide-open. At that point, there's a tremendous upsurge in the number of students living on campus. At that point, for the first time, the university is in the business of creating new dormitory space outside of the Tower. So, in at least one or two cases, they refurbished existing buildings. Or, in the case of 33 Beekman. We went by there this afternoon, when we came back from wherever we were going, to the Beekman bar. The son of a friend of ours lives there. And you know, it's the tallest dormitory in the city, I think. That's the claim. It's 30-some stories and skinny, but tall. Because the footprint is small. It was built on a parking lot.

KB: Yes, well real estate has, the real estate value has gone through the roof.

HB: Through the roof. Yes. When I ...I'm sorry? (Ann starts talking)

AB: I was going to say I remember when they were selling co-ops in the area and there was nothing happening here, I was thinking we should get moving soon before they go up in price, but we didn't and we should have.

KB: Right, because that was after...how soon after 2001...?

AB: This was before 2001.

KB: Oh, this was before 2001. OK.

HB: There was a period when the Trustees really thought the future of the university was in Westchester, and New York was, maybe, on its way out. They weren't sure about New York.

KB: What time period was that? Was that in the 80's?

HB: The 80's yes. This was in the 80's. But what they wanted to do was to complete this building. You know there are six stories in the front, in Civic West, and it was built with three. The plan was to complete the additional three stories. They didn't have the money. They wanted to get the money together to complete the building. They had sold...there are actually four buildings on the block between Beekman and whatever the street is that runs by the University, that one short....

KB: William Street? Or Nassau?

HB: No, going parallel to Beekman.

KB: Oh!

HB: Franklin, I think it's Franklin Street. So that one little block where 41 Park Row is, has four buildings on it. And the University had sold the two at the far end of that block, to pay for the construction of Civic Center, as much of it as they put up. So, the Trustees decided to sell 150 Nassau to pay for the additional two stories on top of Civic West. And they sold it for, what I heard later, was two million dollars. They decided soon after that they probably shouldn't have done it and tried to buy it back, and they offered four (\$4 million). And at that point it had already been sold for eight (\$8 million). I may not have these numbers exactly right, but the point is, the value of 150 Nassau, like so many other properties in this vicinity, just skyrocketed.

KB: Yes, it is interesting that people thought back in the 80's that the time for living in the City was quote, "over". And yet now it's a very different perspective. So yes, it's interesting.

HB: Yes! At one point we tried to buy the property across from the hospital. And we were in negotiation for that property, but the price was too steep, so we didn't. The consequence was that for several years, those of us teaching here had to deal with sledgehammers, well sledgehammers, the sound of pile drivers *going into the ground*, right next door, (he makes the sound "BAM"!) and the ground would literally shake at times of the day.

KB: That's a little scary.

HB: Well it was, wasn't so much scary as it was...

KB: Distractive?

HB: Yes distracting! It was hard to hold a class when at any given moment there would be this enormous bang right outside your door!

KB: Yes, I can imagine! I have to ask. Were you here on 9/11?

HB: Yes.

KB: You were.

HB: I was teaching my class.

KB: Do you have a memory you can share with us about it? (Quiet for a few seconds.)

HB: [Tears up.] I still get emotional about it. Because some of my students died. Or alumni.

KB: Oh, my goodness. Really?

HB: Yes, yes. I am an early bird. I have to know that I'm where I have to go, on time. So, I actually went under the World Trade Center at 7 o'clock that morning. Two hours before, on a Path train.

KB: That's incredible.

HB: So I was here. I was in my office in 41 Park Row. And in my office I had lunch with the woman who at the time, was the Chair, no I guess she was the Dean of the School of Nursing [Dean Harriet Feldman]. And her secretary came in and said, "Harold, a plane just flew into the World Trade Center." I said, I can't think of her name now, the name of the secretary, "Planes don't fly into World Trade Centers, that never happens."

KB: Right.

HB: And she said, "Come and I'll show you!" And I walked into her office, and from her office you could see the top of Seven, I think it was Number Seven World Trade Center, and you could see flames coming out of the top of the building. From there I couldn't tell the size of the plane that had flown in, but Maureen...

KB: So she *literally* saw the plane go in,

HB: She saw!

KB: This was not on TV; she *literally* saw this happening...

HB: ...the physical plane going into the...but from that distance you can't tell whether it's one of these enormous jet planes or a tiny little Piper Cub, you know. You can't tell, because it's so far. I said, "Maureen, the fire department will come, they'll put it out, and everything will be fine." And, I went and got my books, and went over to teach my class.

KB: Wow.

HB: In this building [1 Pace Plaza], where there are, of course, no windows in the classrooms! So I had no idea what had happened. I came out of my class at 10 o'clock and the world had come to an end. The Security guards were there, and they were getting the students to exit the building and walk, there's an entrance to the Brooklyn Bridge right there. And they were walking across the Brooklyn Bridge. And the faculty were sitting in the Schimmel Center, in the theater. Waiting for the whole thing to be over.

KB: So you heard the news about 8 o'clock. You actually had a class in the morning, and then?

HB: I actually had a class from 9 to 10 that Friday morning. That morning. [**The 9/11 attacks happened on Tuesday, not Friday.**]

KB: Was there anything, when you were teaching the class, any indication of this? No. Right again, because people wouldn't have phones, or they wouldn't...

HB: Well, I had a phone. But it was out of power, so I managed to find a payphone that was working, and I called Ann, who was at work in New Jersey and they were usually very belligerent about taking my phone calls.

AB: For the class I was teaching and they didn't patch calls through normally, but..

KB: That day they made an exception.

HB: But they ran and got her. Because they knew where I was. I was able to tell her that I was safe.

KB: How long did it take before things, I mean because I can imagine from September 11th, right here...

HB: It was about 10 days before we reopened. The first floor, ground floor, I don't remember now, I don't remember what's there now. In those days it was a cafeteria, and that was used for triage. And the whole School of Nursing was called in to provide expert nursing care.

KB: It's amazing to think that next year will be 20 years.

HB: Yes 20 years. But I still get... The other thing, the Trade Center had like a patio built all around it. Built around the building, and that of course was flat. And, you know... But the ground around it was like that. So on one side, there was actually a cast iron staircase from the street going up to that patio area, for people who wanted to go down to I forget if it was Fulton, or Vesey, whatever the street was that's over there. (Tears up.)

KB: Yes, it's difficult to talk about, isn't it?

HB: And afterwards, everything else was gone, but the stairs were still there. It was a stair to no place. They were just standing there! In mid-air. This cast iron,...they're now apparently in the

Museum of the World Trade Center. I've never been to the Museum, I couldn't go in there. I wouldn't be able to hold myself together and go in there.

KB: I can imagine, that's a pretty haunting image. Yes. Thank you for...

HB: Several weeks later, after...school reopened, the Pace Press came out with an issue, in which they reported the Alumni who had passed in the World Trade Center. And I remember reading that, and then walking into class that morning, crying.

KB: Oh dear....

HB: I saw all those people..., sorry. And it's twenty years later. This is going to haunt me for the rest of my life. Probably should have done therapy but I'm such a macho guy... Doing therapy was just not in my ballpark.

AB: Not too late!

KB: I think you're, I think we've all been touched, you know. Of course, how could you not be affected?

HB: I think it's one of the...People know where they were on 9/11, if they were alive at that time. And people know where they were, when John Kennedy was shot, if they were alive at that time.

KB: For sure.

HB: Those are things that you remember.

KB: Yes, no, it has affected us all.

HB: Yes, those are those trans positional moments that have affected everybody.

KB: Yes. I want to say thank you for sharing that memory with us.

HB: I can't say that I'm happy to do it, but I do it. I think maybe I have a sense of obligation. Like I think people who went through the Holocaust have an obligation to talk about those experiences. To let those of us who didn't have that experience share a little bit of that and that's I guess how I feel about this.

KB: Well that is in life, you have joyful moments, and then you have moments of sadness. That's the human condition I guess, as they say. You had a very touching story, about a memory of a colleague, a man you worked with, that you spoke about...

HB: Oh, Tom O'Sullivan, yes. Tom was...sensational. He was amazing. The story I probably told you was about how he would come in, after we changed jobs, and I became the Chair and I took over his office. Which was the corner office on the 7th floor of 41 Park Row. And he would

walk in with this *gleeful* smile on his face and say, “Harold I just said the most horrible thing to..” And then sit down and proceed to tell me about this terrible thing he had said to somebody. And it was always, it was, funny as hell, and the kind of thing that, you know, a little terrible, but mostly just enormously funny.

KB: And he was a philosophy professor here?

HB: He was a history and religious studies professor. But also philosophy. He taught everything. We all did.

KB: He had a good sense of humor.

HB: Wonderful sense of humor.

KB: And you described him as someone who lived life to the fullest...

HB: Oh absolutely! He would, ...he was an *avid* lover of music. He would go to a concert, so the last two nights, night of his life, he had gone to a concert. And then he would go to T.J. Byrnes, which was, is an Irish bar, not too far from here.

KB: Yes, I think it's still here.

HB: Oh yes! And he would go for dinner and a drink and then he came home. The next day he was supposed to be teaching a class with one of my colleagues. A team-taught class. And he never showed up, and she got worried. And we got in touch with one of his former students, to whom he had given a key to his apartment. And he went into the apartment and found him on the floor dead. So he [Tom O'Sullivan] had gone to the concert, he had come to T.J. Byrne's and had his evening meal and drinks, and gone back to Forest Hills, where he lived, put on his pajamas, and then he passed away.

KB: Well it sounds like he lived life right up to the end.

HB: He lived his life right up to the end, just the way he wanted to. His life plan did not include going to see doctors, and so he didn't. Or no more than he absolutely had to.

KB: He sounds like a real character.

HB: Oh absolutely, absolutely. Students loved him.

KB: Would you say there were a lot of such characters on the faculty? Or he was kind of a standout?

HB: To be generous? Yes, there are others, but they broke the mold after they produced Tom. They broke the mold. I'm a character too, as you can see, but not the same kind of character. I have a different... But he used the say, between the two of us, one of us was always awake and

working at any given time, 24 hours, 7 days a week. His time was the middle of the night, and mine was early in the morning. But one of us was always at work.

KB: That's great. Do you...I just have two more questions, if you don't mind?

HB: Sure, sure.

KB: A memory of a student that you can share with us? I think you had a memory of someone who's particularly bright I think you mentioned...

HB: Well the memories that were memories... My favorite, I guess, is the student who I hired to teach philosophy here at Pace. And then he went on and got a doctorate at the Graduate Center of the City University, and then went to get a post-doc at a university in Berlin. Observing him teach has to have been one of the great thrills of my life, because as I've said elsewhere to other people, it was like seeing myself grown younger and more beautiful. And about six inches taller.

KB: That's great! Are you still in touch with that student?

HB: *Every* once in a while we share a note, we're on Facebook, and you know. But I would love to see him more often of course. But I think he's, I'm not sure if he's still in Germany or he's back here. I don't, but I'll have to, now that you mention it and make me think of it, I will be in touch with him.

KB: That's great. Was he a student who was taking your course as just an elective, or was he...

HB: He was a major. We got our major in Philosophy and Religious studies approved in 2001. The first of our graduates was a young man named Taylor Petry who went to Harvard and then got a doctorate at the Harvard School of Divinity. He is now an Associate, a tenured Associate Professor at a school in Michigan. And this young man was the second, his degree is a combined degree in philosophy and computer science, which meant in order to get both degrees, he needed to graduate with something like 180 credits.

KB: Wow. That's a lot of studying!

HB: Yes. And he was good at all of it.

KB: That's good. Yes, I can imagine you must get satisfaction out of seeing your students succeed in such a wonderful way.

HB: Oh yes, absolutely, yes.

KB: You've taught for 50 years, and I guess someone would think well now you're simply going to just relax, but I hear that you are still teaching?

HB: I'm still talking! I started a club at the place where we live, it's called Ann's Choice, and it's a senior living community for independent living and beyond. And I started a club called the,

“Eating, Drinking and Talking about Philosophy Club”. And we meet a couple times, every other, every two months we meet three times. The meeting schedule is a little complicated. Sometimes we meet with dinner and wine, and sometimes we meet just for conversation. And there are about 70 people who come to these things.

KB: Did you expect that attendance?

HB: I had no idea. Whether anyone at all would come other than Ann [his wife], because she’s paid to come.

KB: Why do you think...?

HB: Because I’m gorgeous, and attractive! And humble!...And, people are interested in intellectual life. And I surprise them with stories and,...we talk about important things. Like friendship, and trust. And they get it. And it’s really fun, because when I first started, since I started teaching when I was twenty, I sometimes had students who were older than I was. But then, of course, I kept on getting older and my students kept on getting younger. And now again, for the first time I’m going into a discussion kind of a situation, where almost everyone is older than I am. And that’s so much fun. And I get paid in thanks. And smiles. And I love that.

KB: People talk about burnout from a job, but it sounds like you have loved your work even more...

HB: Well, I’m burned out, from the commute. I live in Bucks County. It took us two and a half hours to get here today. That part of it I don’t need.

KB: Right. You don’t need the commute, but now you can just...

HB: But the part involved with talking about the intellectual life, I mean, that’s who I am. If I couldn’t do that, I don’t know what I would do. Well I do. I’d talk to my dear wife. We converse.

AB: We do.

HB: We also dance in the kitchen!

AB: The kitchen is small now.

HB: So we have to dance into the living room.

KB: Well, sounds like a wonderful life!

HB: Well, you got to have fun. And that’s how I think of...they’re not classes, they’re discussion groups. And I want them to be fun. So we do it with wine, and food, and jokes and fun. Because people learn. I mean that’s how human beings are. If they’re bored, if they feel antagonized, they don’t do so well. We need to make a learning experience attractive. And so, that’s what I try to do.

KB: It's been wonderful to talk to you and thank you so much for coming and spending time with us.

HB: Happy to do it.