LW: Welcome to Macon Memories, this is Lynda Wright at Randolph-Macon College. Today I am here today with Mr. John Clements and Mr. Thomas H. Birdsong to talk about their time as students at the college and as their service on the Board of Trustees.

TB: Well, I’m pleased to be here this morning and, Lynda, I hope we can contribute something to these memories you are referring to. But I became interested in the college while I was in the service. I served in the navy from 1944 to 1946 and then at that time they were discharging people from the service quickly. I got the word in the August that I would be discharged by end of August and I said where am I going to school? And I thought of my father and other members of our family who had been here. I called my dad and I said “I will be getting out of service in a few weeks. Can you maybe help me get into Randolph Macon?” So I came to Randolph Macon in September of 1946 and I loved it and I still do. So it has been a great experience for me.

JC: This is John Clements and my introduction to Randolph-Macon was a little bit different from Tom’s. He’s had a real association back many generations. I had never been to Randolph-Macon College. I was a student at Dinwiddie High School and Abner Butterworth who –the three Butterworth brothers had attended Randolph-Macon College and I knew them. Mr. Butterworth called me over the intercom one day and said he had Lambuth Clarke, who was assistant to the president at the time and wanted me to meet Mr. Clarke. So I came down to the office and met Mr. Clarke and so after Lambuth left, Abner informed me “Randolph Macon is where I want you to go to school.” And so, - my parents were not college graduates, and so when I went home and delivered the message that Abner Butterworth thought I should attend Randolph-Macon College, that was a done deal. My first experience on the campus was when they brought, got me up to third floor of Thomas Branch, put me in closet. Said Henry Odom was going to be my roommate, but he wasn’t available at that time and there was only one key passed out at the business office. So when Henry got back from Richmond with some of his cohorts from Suffolk, as the first time we met and we are life time friends now, but I was sitting out there in the hall and we had a small room there and of course he had chosen the top bunk and I ended up on the bottom bunk, which when you get into bunk beds at college you find out every one wants to laze around, lay around on the bottom bunk. But anyway we went off to someplace out here, they loaded us on a bus night that night after my mother had gotten in and cleaned the room, brought steamer trunk that she had gone out and purchased for me. That was the only time, I think, that steamer trunk was ever used, but we went out and were
singing ‘Good Night Ladies’ and I’m telling you right now I was so homesick and so much ready to go home that if I’d known which direction Carson was I certainly would have gotten on the road and walked home, I’ll tell you the truth. But of course Randolph-Macon is a far cry; the memories and the appreciation of all the good things that came from it still is very much a part of my life.

TB: Well, it is a very much a part of my life too John, having graduated in ‘49 a few years before ahead of you. I feel like our friendship through the years has been one that we’ve kept up to date and in touch. I, of course, had most of my working career in Texas, and but even then I would come back occasionally, but did not come back on a regular basis. I remember very distinctly I had a call from Ladell Payne saying he would like to come down and visit with me in Texas and this was in 1980, I imagine it was. So he called and I said that would be great and I’d love to see you, I didn’t know what he was coming for. I figured he was coming to try to raise some money, that was a part of the deal too, I think. But any rate, we lived in a little town called Stephenville Texas. So Connie, my wife said, “Well why don’t we invite him over for breakfast tomorrow morning?” I said, “That would be nice.” So we did and she still tells this story today, say we invited him for breakfast at let’s say 8 o’clock. She looked out the front door and here comes this good looking man and she said, “My goodness, you should be a part of whatever he is asking for.” So he was a very handsome guy and still is, and so any rate he extended the invitation to me to become a Board of Trustees member. And that I think, John, is when we really began to renew our relationship, because as of this date I have been in Texas for some 44 years, but I’m still now spending time between Virginia and Texas. But that was how I got on the board and the Board of Trustees meetings went on my calendar when it was announced the dates and I always tried to be here on regular basis. I think the only time I missed in my tenure on the board was when I was sick one time and that was when Ladell and Bill and John met with, what was the lady’s name? McGrath? [i.e. June McGraw McBroom]

JC: Right, right.

TB: Gave money for library.

JC: That is exactly right.

TB: You had the weekend and I had to call and cancel; I was sick.

JC: We met in Roanoke to celebrate the fact she was coming on our board and also was going to be gracious on many things but especially the extension to the library at that time.

TB: She was a very attractive lady and you said she was helped Randolph-Macon in many, many ways, but a very attractive lady, and we miss her like we miss a lot of us along the way.
You want to talk about how you got on the board, too?

Well. I got a call from Judge Hodges, William Hodges and Bill, I thought Bill was trying to play a joke on me as he normally did on many occasions. Just two or three weeks before that he’d gotten on the telephone; he sounded like the president of the United States informing me that he was on Air Force One and he really wanted to set up an appointment with me in Richmond and I was gullible enough to fall for that. So two weeks later, when he called up, he wanted to know if I was interested in coming on the Board of Trustees of Randolph-Macon College. I said “Well ok, surely they got the record up there that would give you the indication that I would be the last one that anybody would be asking to come on the board.” He tried to assure me that was not the case. Bill called and asked and I met with some of the trustees in Richmond, I reckon that was for them to come look at and glance over little bit before they confirmed things, but it has been a real pleasure for me to have the opportunity to serve on the board.

John, I just wanted to say this about your service as the board chairman. I often said that John Clements was comfortable talking with anybody; it didn’t make much difference who they were or their status in life, but he was a great charmer and still is, but he could talk to most anyone --or everyone-- and that I appreciated very much in you and so many of your friends do.

Thank you Tom, thank you Tom. Well I’m just a country boy, born and raised in Carson. I was fully 21 years old before I went out of Virginia, so I have to say I had that fine thread of connection back to the little village of downtown of which I am still a resident of.

And train still runs through it.

Train still, have 78 trains through Carson and a lot of the same trains that come through Ashland here. CSX main line still goes through it.

And you got used to it, doesn’t wake you up in the morning.

No, it is when it doesn’t run is when I wake up, when everything gets quiet.

Well, I am glad that when you were a student you didn’t realize you could have hopped on one of those trains and jumped off right at home. Now both of you on the board during, Mr. Clements specially, during difficult financial times for the college, can you talk about Ms. McBroom coming on for the library, can you talk about some of the fund-raising efforts you had for the college, capital campaigns and I know that was a difficult time and we’ve gotten through that.

Well, it was and I would like to give tribute to some people that had great deal to do with that. Jimmy Butler was the chairman of the board when I was first came on and the college had
really gone through and we had a several million dollar deficit on the operating side of the budget and it was something that needed to be done and dealt with. They had a committee and Jimmy Butler was chairman of that committee along with Hunter Jones and some others that met for a year or two to find out what the things that they needed to do. We inherited some good ground work that was done when I first came on board and so we were able established that the college needed to pay off that debt they put a special effort to make sure that debt was paid off in two or three years. But they also put in place that they were going to operate on a balanced budget that I think that even today that the string of balance budgets had been started back 15 or 20 years ago. Still in place and that is probably the best ground work that anybody can do, and Tom will agree that special effort by the board was that we had to live within our means and I salute the board for the continuation of that.

TB: John, you are exactly right, and why don’t you tell the story about Jimmy Butler and Ed Estes and how they got the dining, the money for the dining hall.

JC: Well, we had Don Holsinger saying there was going to be a chairman and Jimmy Butler and Ed Estes they were on one side of administration building and we were meeting over on the other side of the administration building trying to deciding on what we were going to do. And it looked like two horse traders that I ever seen in my life and between those two and the rest of the board; we were just nodding back and forth among ourselves. When Ed Estes would give a challenge to Jimmy Butler and Jimmy would in turn give a challenge back to Ed Estes. So we got that wonderful, wonderful dining hall to show for it, Tom, and you were very much a part of a go-between the two adversaries.

TB: They were friendly adversaries; in fact they grew up, where were they from?

JC: Chase City, Chase City.

TB: They did lots of good things for this school and of course, Jimmy Butler, did he go to Randolph-Macon or just his son?

JC: No, no. I think one of his sons came here and the other went to Lehigh University. Jimmy had a fine thread of connection back to... he was a Methodist and so when you look around and you think about the connection to the Methodist Church back to this college goes way back. But it also goes back and establishes the fact that the e connections and the good things that have come to this college have come a long way through that fine thread of connection back to the Methodist Church. Also, remember back when they came with the, I forgot what it was called it-- the Covenant or something --that the conference cooked up among themselves that they wanted to become much closer and much more controlling over what took place. But that was something the college and those of us who were Methodist were trying to understand, but the
Covenant did not succeed at the conference on the succeeding year. So we operate now with a real close affiliation but not a binding one by any form for the college or from the conference.

TB: And I think that the way we operate today is a better way.

JC: I think so, no question about it.

TB: It was beginning to get rather uncomfortable, I thought, it could have been better.

JC: There is no question about that at that time. I do not know what the procedure is today, but you and I both went through that process that nominated and we were accepted by the conference or at least voted on at the conference. I don’t know the legality of all that, but anyway it is something that is in place, I do not know if it is in place today or not, but it is a close affiliation and a close connection to the two.

TB: Yeah, which I think is good.

JC: One of the things that I remember talking about Randolph-Macon and one of the things that I began to think about, I began to make contributions to Randolph-Macon through the annual fund and I think it was only three or four years in there that I have not contributed. Not in large sums at any time, but at least here again I’ve had that appreciation for college and want to do those things through the annual fund. And I think, Tom, you used to be a head of that drive on the trustee board on many occasions that I am immensely appreciative.

TB: Well, I think I was involved on several occasions. I think that is a very important fund for the school and it has begun to grow, which I think is great, but I guess I remember back one of capital campaigns that we had, Larry Blanchard headed it up and was that a 50 million or 100 million campaign?

JC: I think that was a 50 million when we were working on that.

TB: And we thought at the time, my Lord, can we raise 50 million dollars? But we did.

JC: Right, we did.

TB: And that time I grew to like Larry very much and his wife. They had a place down there on Northern Neck close to us, and we enjoyed many good times with them. So it got to be a great relationship that went beyond Randolph-Macon. Larry is one that is not with us anymore.

JC: No. I see his wife from time to time at Cedarfield.

TB: I understand she is having problems.

JC: She is, very much.
TB: But, we are getting ready to embark on another campaign, officially, I think. It is already started in a big way and I rode around this morning and saw what is taking place over here on the athletic field, and my goodness that is going to be a big, big complex. I feel like we are going to be successful, even though the economic times are certainty not good.

JC: Certainly not with us at the present time. Let’s hope for all of our sakes that that makes a turn.

TB: That’s right, that’s right, for many, many reasons.

LW: Thank you that is very helpful. Mr. Clements, you were on the presidential search committee that brought Ladell Payne to the college, I think.

JC: Oh, I was.

LW: Would you like to talk about how that all evolved?

JC: I would, I would.

LW: Thanks.

JC: I was invited to serve, I think it was Ed Stiles the one who called me, asked me if I would serve for the search committee for the president, and we were going through that process and there was a committee, and I remember making in my own mind that Jim Turner would make us a good chairman of that committee. He was a Methodist minister and was such a strong person and I felt like he would be a fair person on the board of trustees as we sought out the president. So we looked at a hundred or so people and divided it down into groups and each person in that committee and I think there was about 10 or 12 maybe as many as 15 of these people. The process before we even got to looking at the candidates and everything, we met up at John Marshall Hotel for three days, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. So Friday night about 9:00, everyone was worn clean out (20:00) at the end of the interview and a lot of people were talking about the situation, what we were going to do. And decided the individual we were looking for and in comes in the last person that we interviewed, Ladell Payne, at nine at night.

Everyone was worn out and of course he came in and took over the meeting and started interviewing us. Dr. Turner had to tell Dr. Payne, “We are here to interview you!” And we had different questions and why I was asked, we are having a little problem about serving alcohol in the president’s home and so that was a question that somebody had to come up with we needed to ask the president, “Will you feel comfortable to serve alcohol in the president’s home?” That doesn’t sound like much of a question but anyway that was my question that was my contribution. Probably the teetotaler of the bunch would ask the question about the president about … So now I can remember asking the Ladell Payne, “Well, when we have
functions will you feel comfortable serving alcoholic beverages?” And I can remember Dr. Payne, and he kind of straightened up and that little grin that he has about him and he says, “Well, you know, you know I don’t drink red wine but I will have a spot or two of white wine. And, you know, on a hot day I might enjoy just a modest sip or two of a cold beer.” So when I got home that night I told Lilly and I said “Well, I don’t know whether anyone else thought they picked out a person today, but I saw my president in Dr. Ladell Payne.” And he was just infectious and really took over and that went on for six months and we went on to personal business. But any way Dr. Ladell Payne gave us an emphasis in his leadership that this college really, really needed at that time.

JB: He came out at a very needed time for the school.

JC: He did.

TB: A very needed time, I think he made an excellent President.

JC: Well, I got some couple of stories that go along with Ladell though. We were seated at the big board table, and he was having a conversation-- I won’t mention the individual he was having a conversation with -- but Ladell would defend the position of the college and the things he had to approach, and we had a gentleman who always had to have a word or two to say at our board meetings, that was just a known fact. And so he and Ladell got to debating and I could see Ladell rising up a little bit and talking back and forth back and forth back and- till finally when I decided that we had about as much of that that we should need, I reached over and caught him by the coat tail, I sort of pulled on it, and he sat down. And so he wrote me a little note that said “Halleluiah, I am glad you tugged my coattail.” I don’t have evidence of that but anyway Ladell appreciated that.

And then we called on a lady here that we were working on for a gift for the college and we decided we would asked for a million dollars. And so as we went in and discussed it for the appointed time, and go through the little ritual things that you plan about what you were to say and I know we will get to it later but very generous to us, and so we decided I would be the person to ask for the funds that day, and I mention the million dollars and this lady said “Heavens no, heavens! Heavens, no, no, no. Heavens no!” So here back last spring when Dr. Payne was here, he still had it on his mind because he had that when he mentioned it over at the president’s home, “Heavens no, no, no, no, heavens no!“ But anyway she was good, she was very good.

TB: John, that kind of brings to mind that the fact that you and myself and Bill Hodges and lots of the good friends were members of the Phi Kappa Sigma fraternity and some of the things that took place I think are best that we don’t discuss.
JC: Oh I think so today.

TB: But in the initiation when I went into the fraternity, which was always we pledged probably the first year usually you are at school. So I joined the fraternity or to join the fraternity and one of the things, the crazy things they wanted to do one of them was for me to have dinner with Dr. Moreland and his family at their home with his four or five daughters, how many was it, four or five?

LW: Four.

JC: Four.

TB: Four daughters at an appointed time, and I get all dressed up with a coat and a tie, slicked down you know and time for us to have dinner and I was not making any conversation at all and I felt very, very awkward you know for not making the least bit of conversation. Well, after we had a very delightful dinner and didn’t have any wine or anything at the table, but had a very wonderful desert as I remember it, and as I and finished they talked amongst themselves asking me questions which I didn’t answer, so when I finally got up and pushed my chair back to the table and I said “Well, this is the damnedest dinner I ever had” and I walked out.

LW: Now you were you allowed to say anything?

TB: No, I wasn’t allowed to say anything. Well they had set it all up well, so it wasn’t a surprise for them and they looked shocked and I felt very embarrassed. That was one of the things we did and some of the other things I won’t mention. Well Dr. Moreland, I think, came in as a glue that we needed at that time and he was here since I came here in 1949 and had been here several years, but without a person like Dr. Moreland I am not sure if Randolph-Macon would be here, John.

JC: He did a lot.

TB: He did a lot. He could do more with a dollar than most anybody I know of.

JC: He really built the infrastructure that we have today that we’ve added on to that, but Dr. Moreland through his time, we came through World War II with very little having been done to the infrastructure going into the ‘30s and so he took it upon himself, like you said Tom, with very few dollars, but with a tenacity of getting things done, and a lot of it was done with the work force that he employed some maintenance people here at the college.

TB: Yup, but he came at time where we really needed somebody like Dr. Moreland, and of course nobody had any money, but he did amazing things.
JC: Well, and that comes back to what some of the things Dr. Payne put in place, he sought to, we had to enlarge administration and they had to enlarge what the job and really what the administration did, that it had to enlarge the board, it put in place a committed system and not allow things to come before the board because the executive committee met early in the morning let’s say around 8 o’clock prior to the trustees meeting and only took up items that needed to be administered and voted on by the board. So the first time I came on the board, board meetings went on for six or seven hours or eight hours, but this was a way we could get started at nine or ten o’clock in the morning and get back by twelve or one. But one of the things that we put in place that was very, very important to the college was the fact that we put a faculty representative that was Dr. George Oliver, which meant a great deal and I heard Dr. Oliver refer back to that. And hand in glove about the things that needed to be done here at Randolph-Macon. He put a purpose before the board and also put a purpose before the Alumni Association and the individuals that make up the family of Randolph-Macon, it put the emphasis on working together and pulling together and Dr. Oliver was very, very much a part of that.

TB: And he is still active with the school.

JC: Very much so, very much so.

TB: Used to always look forward to visit with George, he is, I think, a very attractive guy and we had known him since we were at Randolph-Macon and

LW: He is a classmate of yours?

TB: I think he did but I think he actually, a year or so older than I am. I think he may have went to...

JC: Went to Duke I think.

TB: Duke.

LW: And came right back to Randolph-Macon.

TB: Went to Duke, and came right back to Randolph-Macon.

JC: He taught me government, he was a professor.

TB: And a darn good one too, I was just reading, I’m wondering was he out in the service, for maybe as long as I was in the service. I think, he was a little older, he may have been in it for three or four. I will have to ask him that, that is a good question.
JC: He played an active role; he was a good moderator for the rest of the board and the things that were important to the administration, but also the things that were important to the faculty. We had gone through a real tough time with the faculty and the administration, we were not privy to a lot of that, but the undertow stood in place and the importance of Dr. Oliver serving as the first stepping stone and first representative on the trustee board. And we were able to bring him along with the Board of Associates and the alumni board, had seats on the student associates, Parents Advisory Committee. So we were able to enhance the network of people that were working for the college and having the representatives to those associations be active members and be elected members to the trustee board. With that in place then we could also put in place the very strong network of the committee structure, and expecting the committees to really work very close and not have a lot of off-the-cuff situations when the board met and brought a situation there that proved very helpful.

TB: But you know I feel today as I have for many years that one of the great pluses for Randolph-Macon for a student that is going to come here is the fact that the student-faculty ratio that we have in classrooms, which is very small I don’t what, did I hear like twelve students per faculty?

JC: Very small number.

TB: Very low small number, which I think is so important. Having that relationship with your teacher and the fact that you know perfectly well that with that number of students that you are going to be called on every time and if you think I haven’t prepared very well tonight for this class this is the very time you will be called upon, and you will not be able to answer the question very well.

JC: Yeah, to bring that point on, I have a granddaughter at Virginia Tech and she is in a three thousand, in a freshman math, three thousand. I hope, I reckon I would feel much better if I thought three thousand was a mistake, but my daughter assured me that was the number of students, and I think it is all done over some type of Internet...

TB: ...class student. Now if you want to go to the class you go, if you don’t. I guess you just don’t go, no one is checking on you. But I think at Randolph-Macon through the years if you don’t attend class on a regular basis someone was going to come check on you. Are you sick? why aren’t you here?

JC: We just had a no cut situation, people talk about cuts, but there was no such thing as a cut.

LW: Do you want to talk about any particular faculty that you remember? Classes?

TB: well I guess one of the favorites that comes to mind was Dr. Mabry.
JC: I will have to echo that, too. He was one of my favorites here too, Tom.

TB: But he always made time for you if it involved his class or even if it didn’t involve his class, if for some reason you wanted to talk to somebody. I felt very close to, I thought he was an excellent teacher and I enjoyed him very much and stayed in touch with him for some time after I had gotten out of school and of course he has been gone for many years.

JC: Right, a long time.

TB: I don’t know for how many years but he was certainly one of them. John, you remember Mary Blackwell’s place we ate across from the Phi Kap house?

JC: Certainly, certainly right across the street.

TB: You know we would always be running late to class. Classes then started at 7:30 or 8:00 o’clock, something like that and Mary was a real large lady who had a boarding house there. That is all gone: the home and she has too. My goodness, we would run out there putting a sweater on or a coat or something half dressed and saying “Mary gimme an egg, gimme an egg real quick!” She would but she would say “You boys will drive me crazy.” But she would always come out with theses big greasy eggs, everything was grease. But she got us through it.

LW: So you had to go to a boarding house for your meals?

TB: At the time you had that and I think we were...

JC: We were in the process I think of, the first year I was here was the first year when the cafeteria was opened, but the boarding houses were still hanging around because the main place they ate was the old hotel that had burned just a few years before that, down there on the rail road tracks which was a lot. The cafeteria was in place and that is one of the buildings that Dr. Moreland built with his work force here at the college. And the same door that you went in through the dining room, I walked by it the other day, and I think it is now the weight room the old dining hall, do you know what is it used for, do you know?

LW: Oh, is it connected with where the athletes have their own training room?

JC: Right, Right. Well that was a dining hall, another thing about the dining hall I would have to think of Mrs. Lowery who was the manager there and she was one of the students so to speak because she got along with the students so well. And when Bill Brothers went in one night when we were going through dining hall line he said “Mrs. Lowery, Mrs. Lowery I got a complaint.” She said, “Bill, Bill you got a complaint about everything every night you come in here. What is your complaint tonight?” “Well if I am going to have fly soup to eat, I want more than one fly in my soup.” Tom will remember Bill.
TB: Bill was, he is no longer with us either.

JC: He was part of the mafia from Suffolk came here.

TB: Al Cary.

JC: Al Cary.

TB: From Richmond, I never I never quite figured it out, but he had lots of mysterious things going on in his life.

JC: He did, he did.

TB: He was a pilot in the Air Force during World War II, and he so didn’t he fly a plain in here one time and land it somewhere?

JC: When I knew Al he was in between here and Saudi Arabia I don’t know if he worked for the oil company or

TB: and Al, no not Al, Newton, John.

JC: Yeah, Chuck Newton.

TB: Chuck Newton, what was the story, do you remember the story about Chuck going to Dr. Bowen’s Latin class with his tie and formal dress on and just ...

JC: that was at 8:00 on a Saturday morning. During cotillion we would have a little bit of cider or something Friday night and Chuck probably brought a little of that to his Latin class, but I think he was asked in a Latin class to conjugate a verb and so Chuck started with “7-up, Coca Cola, RC drink, Orange drink” and Dr. Bowen) said, “Mr. Newton, Mr. Newton. I don’t think we are in the right class today.”

TB: We had some characters, but you know in ’46 when I came, once again we go back to talk about Dr. Moreland you had all age group. You had boys who were coming back from the service....

JC: returning veterans...

TB: Come back as a senior when they were 23, 24 years old maybe 25 years old. A lot of them were married and then you had a group that came right out of high school, and then you had some all in between, but that was a wide range of ages that were coming in and coming in even as freshmen even and never gone to college, but went from high school to the service. And that was a difficult time which I admire Dr. Moreland for handling that.
JC: But you know, the returning veterans were the glue that brought this school together, Tom. They came with a purpose, they wanted to enjoy themselves, but at the same time there was a seriousness about them that meant a lot to that school and Dr. Moreland captured that seriousness and then instilled that into the rest of the student body; I think that is one of our pluses.

TB: Yeah, I think it was. I have always been amazed about how we blended it all but as you say, these people who came back having been out in the service for several years who may when they had been drafted weren’t making the best grades either.

JC: Well, if you step back a little bit to, to do those things, we had compulsory chapel and they had a little piece of paper that you had to sign and of course people who were just out of high school and just back from service every one blended together, pulled together did those things, and we had those little rat caps.

TB: Yeah, that’s right, you still got yours?

JC: Yeah, I still do, I ran across it here about six months ago, pulled it out of the dresser there, and every now and then I try it on. I haven’t tried it on lately, but any way I got it.

TB: You don’t have quite as much hair, but you still got a good head of hair compared to mine.

LW: I’m glad you mentioned the veterans. That was a real moment in the college’s history.

JC: Very much so.

TB: Oh yeah, at this point I am really pleased with what I’m hearing about our president today Dr. Lindgren, Bob Lindgren.

JC: I am too, Tom.

TB: I think when you talk to people that are associated with the school one way or another I don’t find anybody from student body, staff, faculty that’s not pleased with him.

JC: No, he is a part of a, I call it a three legged stool really, you got president on one leg, and you got the student body and then you got the faculty and if you don’t than get one off a little bit, a wompy-jawed a little bit things just don’t pull together, but from every thing I see is that the president appreciates the students, the students appreciate the faculty and so. Well, it could be a little bit scary because it is something but I think he brings something to the table that ...

TB: We needed.

JC: We needed.
LW: There is an article in the paper today about the president being selected to the board of the independent colleges of Virginia and he is very active in the Methodist college association. And he has really put Randolph-Macon College out there on the map besides all the good work he has done internally, he has been a great ambassador for us externally.

TB: I think, I think that Bob Lindgren has already put Randolph-Macon on the map to a great degree since in the last few years since he has been here, we are getting lots of newspaper postings published about Randolph-Macon and things we are having here today that I think are wonderful, but it is something we needed because we are in competition with schools who’ve got lots of money and can do lots of things, bring in lots of talent along the way but maybe we have been shorted because simply we didn’t have the funds to do it with, but I think he got a vision for the school, which I think it is very important and I think is beginning to show itself in a significant way.

LW: Well, any final memories or anecdotes or stories that you would like to share about time as a student or time on the board? I have enjoyed listening to personal stories, anything else comes to mind?

JC: No I, Randolph-Macon is just.... Tom, I know that Tom and his family, is just it is wonderful for me to have the opportunity to sit here with Tom. I have known the Birdsong family for a long time, we have had modest business relationships, but I have had the opportunity to know a lot of the family and to be able to have an opportunity to sit in and reminisce a little bit is special for me, but it is infectious and all the people who allowed themselves to get infected with what Randolph-Macon is and what it does and participate in the wonderful things the college and administration and faculty bring to as far as what Randolph-Macon is, they have a much better life and a much better appreciation for what it is all about and you gather a whole lot more than you will ever put back in the kitty, so to speak.

TB: Well, John, those gracious comments you said about my family I appreciate but the same goes for you and your family.

JC: Well, thank you.

TB: What John Clements has done for the school, the fact that John was—is-- such a poplar, a nice guy he has brought so many good things to this school. And John knows an awful lot of people who have helped with Randolph Macon, but it is because of your influence and your contacts that it has been possible, but I would hope along the way that we don’t loose what we think is so great about the school, we don’t want to get too large and although I think that perhaps about now with Bob Lindgren and his leadership and others on the board to increase the enrollment here and maybe the economics of it say it is necessary. But with the new athletic program that we have what is being built, I think we can attract that student that we
could not attract here just a few years ago. And to make a decision I still am very much in favor of Liberal Arts education I think it gives one a stepping stone to involve himself or herself in life and what ever pursuits they may want to make and that sometimes that you can’t get that with too much specialty. But that fact that you graduate here with a degree and I think you been exposed to excellent leadership, good faculty, good school and I hope we can keep it that way.

JC: Well, I am not going to sign off until I acknowledge the fact that I do have a grandson that is at Randolph-Macon this year; he is a freshman. So this fine, as my Father always said, this fine thread of connection will at least go through this generation one more time.

TB: Well, I think that is fine, I hope he likes the school.

JC: Oh, he is really happy. I bought him a good care package from home from his mother today.

TB: Wonderful, that’s wonderful.

LW: Well, I think that is a nice place to end, just continuing the thread of generations going on. And thank you so much, both of you, for participating in Macon Memories.