THE ORAL HISTORY COLLECTIONS, F.I.T.

ORAL HISTORY OF F.I.T.

MARVIN FELDMAN
PRESIDENT OF F.I.T.

Dates of Interviews
November 13, 1984
November 21, 1984

Interviewed by
Mildred Finger
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**MARVIN FELDMAN**

**ORAL HISTORY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page Range</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 - 5</td>
<td>Brief summary of background and education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 - 10</td>
<td>Early work experiences for the Ford Foundation and United States government agencies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 - 17</td>
<td>Exploring possibilities for college presidency in the private sector and also in the public sector;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 - 22</td>
<td>Description of administration, faculty, physical plant when Marvin Feldman joined F.I.T. as President in the late 60’s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 - 30</td>
<td>Evolution of F.I.T. from a two year community college to an institution offering the baccalaureate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 - 35</td>
<td>How the New York State government works with educational organizations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 - 39</td>
<td>Interfacing with various industry groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 - 48</td>
<td>Description of hierarchy of the administration of F.I.T. and of management style.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48 - 53</td>
<td>How departments start from the earliest stage and evolve into viable courses and majors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54 - 60</td>
<td>Description of Marketing program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61 - 65</td>
<td>Explanation of exporting fashion merchandise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 - 69</td>
<td>Introduction of two Master’s programs and exposition of the third Master’s program in the works.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69 - 72</td>
<td>Industry’s needs for trained workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72 - 76</td>
<td>F.I.T. as it relates to workers and to ILGWU.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76 - 85</td>
<td>Planning for the years ahead.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q: For the Oral History Collections of the Fashion Institute of Technology, and for the Oral History of the college itself, this will be an interview with President Marvin Feldman. The date is November 13, 1984; the interviewer is Mildred Finger.

President Feldman, before you tell us how you got to be President Feldman, suppose you start back at some very early point in your life, and let's hear what your interests were when you were growing up; where you grew up, and so on... Okay?

A: All right. I was born in Rochester, New York in 1927. My family moved to Los Angeles, California in the '30s. I don't quite remember when in the '30s. I grew up in Los Angeles, in East Los Angeles, in a community then known as Boyle Heights. I went to school in Boyle Heights and graduated from Roosevelt High School in, I think, '43 or '44, and I joined the Navy. I was a Machinist Mate 2nd Class on the U.S.S. Steamer Bay. We fought in the Pacific. I left the Navy in '46 I think, and then I applied for admission to the United States Military Academy at West Point. I was admitted as a "plebe" in 1947 or '48. I was a cadet at the military academy until 1951.

Q: What drew you to a military school?
A: Oh, my rage, I guess, about the Holocaust. I didn't discover until years later my father had joined the British Fusileers with Jabotinsky and he had been in the British army; I never knew about it until years later. I never really dreamt of being a civilian. I just never thought I would be a civilian as long as I can remember. Becoming a civilian was sort of being reborn again. That occurred in 1952, and I went back to California.

Q: And that was after graduation from...

A: I was on special assignment with the government. I was with the 82nd Airborne, and I was in something called Special Services. But then I later became a civilian and ... It was sort of strange, because ... I guess I was in my early '30s, but just having been born again. It was very strange. It had never entered my mind, to have to think about schooling or a career or to find something to do. Of course, the family wanted me to go into the family business, the furniture business. I didn't think I would be interested in that. Perhaps in hindsight, I should have. I'm the only one left.

Q: You never were interested in merchandising, in other words...?
A: Oh, I was. As a child, I sold... I was a good salesman. As a matter of fact, I was very good at it. I even once, in a huff, went to work for Sears & Roebuck. I sold farming equipment while I was still in high school. I was also interested in ... Brought up in Los Angeles, one becomes interested in cars and hot rods and that sort of thing. And... In any event, I had a lot of GI Bill time, so I took a degree - I went to San Francisco State University. I was going to be a teacher, for all those good reasons; three months vacation every year...

Q: Was that in Hayakawa's time?

A: Hayakawa was one of my teachers. He was a Professor, as a matter of fact, of languages, and communications. He wasn't the President then. I forget who the President was. I got very much interested... Because of my checkered background, and never realizing that the courses at the military academy were relevant to higher education, I was sort of a strange student. I had more math than math teachers were required to have, and I had more science than the science teachers were required to have, so I was out interning in the public schools of San Francisco as a student teacher, and as an
intern, and became very much interested in the capable, average learner. The kids we're now talking about in these new excellence reports, the ones in general tracks, neither good academic or good vocational schools. And a position came up at a very precious institution in San Francisco called "Coggswell Polytechnical College," which was a college that was founded in 1887. It was tuition free, as a matter of fact, a tax exempt corporation. Very low keyed. It had engineering technology majors in it. And I went there as a teacher of mathematics, surveying and science, and developed programs with the secondary schools on alternate learning modes: different ways of kids achieving academics in non-verbal ways. These were kids who would be counseled out of academic work in about the 10th grade and told not to worry about it -- take Speech instead of English; take Social Science instead of History -- hold your math and that way you can go into your local community college. Don't worry about it.

Q: I'm sorry. I don't understand that...?

A: Well, there are three big major tracks in the public schools. There's a fine academic track. These are the kids that go on to the Ivy League schools, win Nobel prizes and
look better than anybody in the world. There is also a very good vocational system in America. These are the kids who take... They are the future farmers of America or they're in distributive education clubs. There's good vocational education in some places in our country. But there's very little for the students who are good neither academically nor vocationally. We used to have one out of four students who used to be in the general track. It's now one out of two, and this is the heart of the problem. The heart of the problem is not the kids achieving good vocational education or good academic education; it's the kids who are in the general schemes. And those kids interested me back then, because I thought there were other ways of dealing with them, that we recognized that their learning styles may not be verbal.

In any event... From the base of Cogswell, which was practically a public school, because it was tuition free and we had more endowment than we could use, and a good reputation in the technologies, I went into a good number of public schools designing something called the Richman plan -- pre-tech -- the literature is full of all this stuff. This went on toward the early '60s, with local support from foundations -- the Roosevelt
Foundation, a lot of San Francisco foundations -- the Ford Foundation became very much interested in these activities and gave me a couple of big grants. We went into... We would do all sorts of experimental work with other ways of dealing with learning, where the outcomes had to be the same. In any event, they decided it was cheaper to hire me, so they hired me. I went to... I left San Francisco and I came to New York, and I worked for the Ford Foundation.

Q: Before you go on, I assume by then you were married. You said, "we came to New York."

A: Yes, I met my wife in San Francisco, my children were born there. Both my sons. And the dates, give a year either way, are either '62, '63, 64, and I worked for the Ford Foundation until '68... '68, I think, when Nixon was first elected. One of my grantees out in California was Bob Finch, who was one time Lieutenant Governor of California, but we were doing industry education and using Bob and Lou Butler and a group of people in California who were our grantees... Bob called me and told me he was going to go to Washington as Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare under Richard Nixon, which surprised me no end, because he probably could have been the Vice President.
In any event, Bob asked me to go down to Washington with him to create some policy papers independent of the bureaucrats, and I took a leave from the Ford Foundation and went down and did a number of position papers for Bob and I wrote a couple of bills - the Comprehensive Community College Act of '68, and a bunch of others.

All during that period I was doing a tremendous amount of writing. As a matter of fact, if you've got my vita, it lists them all. I had begun to write quite a bit about education.

While in Washington on leave, I was doing a presentation to the Cabinet on, I think, community colleges (I'm not quite sure), and I met Donald Rumsfeld. Donald had been a congressman from the Chicago area who had resigned his seat and moved down to take over the office of Economic Opportunity. Don asked me to come in with him as Assistant Director of Program Development, and he had two other deputies -- Frank Carlucci, who recently resigned from the Defense Department, and a fellow by the name of Wes Hornavich ... I couldn't even spell his name.

Q: You can't?
A: It begins with an "H." In any event, we were running O.E.O., and what intrigued me with Don's appointment was the discretionary dollars. I didn't realize the political...

Giving away money is very difficult, at best, but at least at the Ford Foundation it wasn't quite so political as with the government. But I had been... Oh, a number of Presidents, from Johnson on, appointed me to a good many advisory committees (the wall is full of these appointments), and I had been pretty familiar with the Federal program because through the years at the Ford Foundation we would be evaluated on a grant in terms of "did this go into legislation? Did people change the delivery of dollars differently as a result of your program?" This was before the Reform Act where they didn't want us to influence public policy anymore. So I was quite familiar with the Federal Government.

I was at the Office of Economic Opportunity when it became quite difficult, a lot of political problems. It was much more politicized than under other administrations. President Nixon felt he wanted more control in his discretionary dollars from the Federal agencies. I was responsible for all this discretionary money and it's very difficult to keep on top
of it. And I knew it was just a matter of time before I'd stumble, because it's very difficult to keep control. We're talking about money, which during an average few months is $400-500 million, and you really have to watch it. I thought I'd better move on. I called MacBundy and I was going to return to the Ford Foundation, as I was quite happy there. While I was with Ford, I had made good friends. I worked the international as well as the national--I worked in Nigeria and Colombia and India, all over the world.

Q: Well, the Ford Foundation really provided you with an opportunity to meet a lot of very important people.

A: I was grateful to the Ford Foundation for the opportunity of trying ideas and having the resources... But I found it extremely difficult cajoling others...it was a lot easier... I learned later in life, it's a lot easier getting grants and running projects yourself than it is to find people who are ready to implement the ideas. And I found the foundation work extremely frustrating because I could never find the talent. You'd have the ideas and the trustees would appropriate the money, but it was so difficult finding grantees that didn't have a hidden agenda, and that's what's difficult.
Q: And essentially you were acting as a kind of consultant, in a consulting role as opposed to an implementing role...?

A: Yes. And in the same sense in a very careful way, because people will follow money anywhere, and the idea is not to develop a marriage with a grantee, but keep him somewhat at a distance. So I found it very frustrating. A lot of people loved it. I mean... Giving away money is harder than getting it.

In any event, when I went back to Ford, or was in the process of going back to Ford, I had a funny look on my face I guess, because Mac asked me, "What's the matter? I'll give you the whole West African program. What do you want?" And I said, "I'm just tired of throwing money at problems." And he said, "Well, what do you want to do?" And I said, "I don't know. I think I'd like to be a college president." The reason I said this was that it was at the height of all the riots...and it was Cambodia...and he laughed, and he said, "My G-d, I know of 200 open right now." And I began getting invitations for interviews. I was up interviewing at Case Western, the
University of California, Santa Cruz, the University of New Mexico... And I was pretty well settling on a mid-western university when I got a call from Ernie Boyers who was Chancellor of the State University of New York. Ernie called me in Washington and said, "I understand you’re looking for a presidency," and, in fact, my response was, "Thanks a lot Ernie, but I’ve already got one, I think..." There was a kind of silly.... My wife didn’t particularly like the president’s house because there were common rooms on the first two floors in the faculty club.

Q: Which college was this?

A: This was in Ohio. My children were smaller then and she didn’t really want to raise them there. So they told us to go out and find a house. We were just at that funny stage, when Ernie asked me if I had ever heard of Harper College in Binghamton, and I said, "Vaguely, why?” And he said, "Well, we’re taking it over. It’s going to be the State University of New York at Binghamton, and as part of our take over I can name the first president, and I really think you belong in the public sector; I think you belong in the independent sector, and why
don't you and Dorothy go up and take a look at Binghamton and consider it." And I said, "not really." And he said, "Well, I think you ought to, and by the way, I need a favor. Did you ever hear of F.I.T.?" And I said, "No, what's an F.I.T.?" "You're supposed to be the footnote in the history of vocational and technical education, and you never heard of it?" He was surprised. Anyway, he said, "It's one of our units and they are about to recommend somebody for the presidency." I don't think I should tell you who it was, but, "We're going to have a problem in that our board won't approve it; the State University of New York won't approve the local board's appointment. And we don't have a candidate and I don't have anybody to say... I don't have anybody to say 'Get somebody like,' and I feel very vulnerable. Will you do me a favor and go down... I know you're not going to want it, I know your scope is much larger, but if you would go down there and interview for me, Binghamton's yours and you really belong there." So I said, "I'll go down."

So I came on campus, and Shirley Goodman was acting President. And she'll remember this, because I put my foot... I was terribly rude.
Q: This was 1970?
A: It was '70...
Q: But you became president in ....?
A: In '71, so it was just before... And I remember I hadn't made an... I may have made an appointment... No, I hadn't made an appointment because the secretary asked me, and I said, "No, I'd like to see her," and they were a little flustered. So I walked into the room and put my feet up on her desk and suggested that it might be a good idea if they interviewed me, and she said, "Well, thank you very much but we've already selected a president," and I said, "Well, it's not 'public' yet, and..." I mean, I was terrible. It was... When I think back on it, it really was hysterical.

So they did. They opened up the interviews, and I wasn't in the beginning at all serious about it. I was just going through the motions for Ernie. And you remember, all we had at that time was this building that we're in, the "C" building, and there were some skeletons around. And I remember coming...
The interviews were also very, very touching. I had been through a process at other colleges and met students and faculty and unions and trustees and educational foundations and alumni -- all the various groups interviewing me, and each would have a...

Q: I hope at a separate time?

A: A separate time. But it was hard to believe they were talking about the same institution, or, as they viewed the problems, because they were so different. It was almost sort of cute. I came back for a second interview, and I came back early, because of the shuttle from Washington, and I was sitting out on the front stoop and a young man came up to me who had been part of the student... He was President of the Student Association, and he had had to interview me the week before, and he was from Australia, and President of the Student Association. So he recognized me and he sat down and we started chatting on the steps of the "C" building, and I said, "Tell me about this place. You're from Australia. How did you find it?" And he began telling me about F.I.T. The more I thought about it the more I thought, "Good Lord, the 60s have sort of passed this place, and the potential here is absolutely marvelous."
Q: Yes... Excuse me. The 60s, from anything I've been able to gather, did really pass this place entirely.

A: Yes. They were looking inward, for whatever reasons, but they were not really... And there was sort of a... The self esteem of the institution wasn't anywhere near what it should be, or should have been. The issues... All of a sudden, all those interviews clicked in my head; I began to understand what they were probing for. They did not have a very good opinion of themselves, and had no ideas...

Q: You're talking now about administration, trustees...?

A: The entire institution did not understand that they were better than Harvard; they were light years ahead of education... That education wasn't even in the league of the bases of this institution. It had such forward looking criteria. This was an institution created by people who were denied their own opportunity for schooling. They were graduates of the coat and suit business on Seventh Avenue. They had a burning zeal and an appreciation of what education could be and should be...
Q: You're talking about the Morris Hafts and the ....

A: And as you read the incorporation papers, it was sheer genius. And then the early people who developed this institution, through design or accident, were right on target -- the mix of general and vocational; the purposes of education, education of the working people -- things like that that today we take for granted. And when you think back then, when they were formulating the policies of this college, I thought they were quite profound. And the self image was very bad because the image, I think, of the industry itself was... It was somehow noble to them to do hard goods and degrading to go into soft goods. And luckily I didn't come from that background. I could look at it much more objectively than the people who were in it.

And I became immensely intrigued with it and wondered if I had alienated everybody here because of my sort of smart-ass way of dealing with interviews. But I went back to 8th Avenue and 28th Street and there was a delicatessen on the corner with a pay phone in it, and I called Ernie, and said, "Ernie, I'm back for my second (or third) interview. And, I
don’t know... I’ve been so silly about it. But I’ll tell you, the place is more serious than we may think it is, and I think I really am going to put my heart in it, and when I get to the next board meeting...” I had one meeting with Andy Goodman and Dave Zelinka and John Brooks, who was Chairman of the Sunfast Corporation and of the selection committee of our board, and I was being kind of cutesie with them all; I wasn’t really... I didn’t research the place... If you’re serious about a job, you do a little background and I didn’t even know who Dave Zelinka was. I had never visited Bergdorf Goodman or... I hadn’t done any of that and I really didn’t know what... So I called Ernie and said, “I’d like to be serious about it,” and he said, “Of course you should be serious. You don’t belong at Case Western and you don’t belong at Binghamton. The place is made for you. It’s kind of a good marriage. You ought to go to F.I.T.” So I called him and then I got back on track with the interviews.

Another strange thing happened. George McBundy wasn’t aware that I was doing this, but one of our board members knew Mac, they’d gone to school together, and had called Mac for a reference, and Mac said something kind of silly. He said, “Marvin’s scope is far beyond a modeling school,” which is one
of the images of the fashion industry. Either you were in the rag business (I hate that term; I could choke somebody for using it), or modeling school -- those characterizations -- and at my third interview they were quite hostile. And I couldn't understand it, and I said, "I have obviously offended you."

[And they said] "Why are you wasting our time? We know for a fact that . . ." And I said, "Well, the facts are wrong." And that's how I came to F.I.T.

One of the statements ... In my early meetings with Ernie Boyers, in my early conversation, as I was going through the ... I had to be interviewed again by the board here - the SUNY board - now, at the SUNY board meeting I suggested that before they agreed to my appointment, they should understand that I was going to drive them a little crazy. That in the first place I didn't intend to have F.I.T. ... I intended F.I.T. to be a model community college by the year 2,000, which did not preclude, in my thinking, anything necessary to meet the management needs of the industries (and I use that as a plural)...that I intended to go into Baccalaureate and graduate education as well as the compensatory remedial one year programs. I thought that I was going to upset the system because
were not going to fit in with the cartel of higher education as it then looked, between the colleges and the universities. Be careful said I because I will drive you crazy, and we're not going to let loose until the model is built. And we talked about the model, one of the buildings of higher education -- sort of an urban version of the land grant college -- which was a great piece of social legislation. I said that it wouldn't be easy because we'd offend the arts and science colleges and the state university centers. The way the university is organized, everybody has a certain part of education, and I was going to cross ...

Q: You're talking about the State University of ....
A: The State University of New York. All of education, as a matter of fact. Educators behave as if it's a cartel; they sort of divide it up and hand out what's agreeable to them. So if they agreed to my appointment, I urged that Ernie be prepared. Ernie's response (and I'll always adore Ernie), was "I know. We've known each other for a long time and I know you're that way. I promise you that I won't fight you, but I won't support you. I know exactly what you're saying..."
That's why I had to write legislation to get all this done. Because the university ... His position, "I'm not going to fight you but I'm not going to support you ..."
Q: Why?

A: Because there's too much political pressure on him. If they allowed the Fashion Institute to go into Baccalaureate degree programs, every other college in the state would want to do that. If you let the Fashion Institute go into graduate education, where do you draw the line? Other institutions were going to feel they had just as good a case to make as we did. So, anyway, that's how I got here. And when I arrived, it was not the happiest of times. In my opinion, my first task was to change the climate, and the climate in this place was very uptight. People would walk around the hallways with a contract in their pocket. It would be "paragraph five, subset C," there would be mumblings and meetings in the hallways...

Q: Was this faculty...?

A: Faculty and staff. Faculty... The administrators were just... I had an administrative meeting and I'd say something and I'd hear a mumble, and I'd say, "What did you say?" And they'd say, "What's the hidden agenda?" And I'd say, "What's a hidden agenda?" "Well, what do you really mean?" "Well, why isn't what I'm saying what I mean?" With all the management tasks... As a matter of fact I reversed the usual
way of managing, with planned, organized control... Climate setting to me was most important, because until I had a critical mass of people who wanted to share the dream, we weren't going to get anywhere.

Now, the outward task was the fiscal one. The college had a deficit with the retirement system. The building program was dead in the water, and there were terrible fiscal problems. I had to plead with the Board of Ed. on a Thursday to get the payroll for Tuesday... Memos, "I implore you... I have to pay the rent..." We had quite a fiscal problem.

So that was the outward... That's really what I was concerned about. I wasn't as concerned about how much it took up my time as I was about climate. So we did silly things back then. We sent the faculty off on T-groups. We had 72 hour mini-Ts in recruit centers. I would do anything to get them open. People cried. I remember the Chairperson from one of the departments... And the students... We started something called the Retreats for Student Leadership. I wanted to get into a more humanistic, "let's trust each other a little bit, and let's not be afraid to cry a little and laugh a little and show a little emotion. We're in a noble cause here." And that's what we spent the early years on.
Q: What was the student population like?

A: Oh, lord. We were small. In fact my operating budget last year was $40 million. In '73 the operating budget was under $9 million. So we were a very small institution. We had about a thousand students in the day and maybe 1,200. Now it's 8,000 during the day... It was a different world. And we had fewer majors... Which is why I think you should talk to Frank Shapiro, because Frank has instituted a lot of jewelry design and advertising and those are all parts of Frank's Fine Arts department.

But in any event, the task then was to get the building program going again. To develop a high morale institution with a dream and a vision and a sense of direction. And then to deliver the dream that the people who created the place really wanted, and without... And this is more difficult than it sounds... It's easy to go from a two year college to a four year college to a university... The history of education tells us very clearly, there's never been a two year institution that's become a first rate four year institution. And it is usually the first rate two year institutions that try... The Ohio College of Applied Science, Oregon Tech., Pratt Institute -- they never really got to the major... And we didn't want
that to happen with us, and we had to do it very carefully. We have... It's an upside down curriculum. It's two on two on two, and we go from the special to the general, not from the general to the special. And to get that ingrained in the faculty, and get the faculty and my Board of Trustees to understand that the heart and soul of this institution is still the student needs, as with industry's needs, the industry never has all the right answers anyway. We're going to have to invent a little bit too. So, it was a very complicated task.

Today, we're all glib about it. We have a two on two, and an upside down curriculum, and a two year institution is hard to look upon. Everybody talks the party line, but to get from X to Y was...

Q: I'm sorry... Would you go a little more into this business of two on two?

A: Well, the American educational system is fashioned in such a way that people have to make... First of all, they have to make a decision... If you choose vocational education, you foreclose any future education. We divide the curriculum up into the Fine Art and the Practical Arts and the Liberal Arts... whatever terms you want to put to it, and at whatever level we
talk about it. Once you've made that commitment, there are no crossovers. We believe at F.I.T. that you don't educate people at all unless they're educated in the Fine Arts and in the Liberal Arts and in the Practical Arts. You must have a coherent program; they must reinforce each other. That's the first problem.

The second problem is that community colleges, (and we're a community college), while nowhere in the history of the community college, created by the Truman Commission did they ever say it should be two years, that's the party line. It turned out, for political reasons, to keep the enrollments down in higher ed., the war, the veterans, the system of the community college is really a bastard institution and they were given a distinct mission. The mission was to do the first two years of university work, for people who couldn't afford to go on, to do occupational-technical and there were few takers in those days. We used to dream about some day having 30% of that and now it's over half), and we used to do compensatory-remedial. And that was the mission, and that was the party line. I wanted to show that a community college... First of all, this is a different kind of community college. The community is
an industry, it's not geographic. It's not called Chelsea College. The Fashion Institute is... the industry is our community. And that community has a different set of needs. If it has a need for a Master's program in management and it's not getting it, it's our responsibility to give it to them. If they need a "tailor" and they're not getting it, it's our responsibility to give it to them. So I would have to be constrained in the rubric under which we offer education to provide this industry whatever it needs to succeed and flourish. Whatever its human needs are.

On education's side, American education is fashioned in higher education, and for most students this is true. Give them a year of the Humanities and the Urban-Natural Sciences and the Social Sciences.... After all, they are 17 years old. They don't know, really, what direction to go in. They don't know what their skills are. Their self-esteem is very low, they feel quite useless, and they need a general education before they can make those decisions. And that's generally so. So when you and I went to school, in the public sector anyway, and not military sector, we had a year or year and a half, and then we majored in something -- Lit. or something -- we never worried about who we were and how we were going to survive economically. How do you
get rid of that feeling of uselessness? So we went to professional schools. We would argue that that's generally true but we would also argue that there are a good many students today, for whatever reasons -- television and so on who pretty well know... They don't know quite what to do. They may be artistic and they don't know quite what to do with it. Or they may know that they want something in business but they don't know quite what to do with it. They've already made up their minds and they have a different agenda. They want to know, "What am I good at? What can I do better than average? How do I get rid of these feelings of uselessness?" They want that up front. They don't want to wait. These kids are in a hurry.

They're hard to find, because on profile - SAT scores - you can't tell, but they've got a different style. And that's the style you see when you come on my campus now, at F.I.T. You see...

Q: They have different motivation...?

A: They have a different agenda. And I feel... I hate to use the word "misfit," because I don't mean it in that sense, but they've always felt they didn't quite fit in wherever they were. They were role playing a lot. They were never quite satisfied. Back in high school, they weren't interested in
doing what the other kids were doing. But they were shuffling along, because they were listening to the other... But they had a different agenda, and they never really opened up until they got here because this school really deals with these kinds of kids.

In any event, we wanted to fashion an institution that said, "Okay, try your... Find out what you do better than average in your first 15 weeks. A 17 year old coming to F.I.T. has to declare a major. That's not done anywhere. And if they say, "I can't declare a major," we say, "Fine. Go someplace until you're ready to."

Q: But this was in 1970. Is it still?

A: Sure. But, see, that's what intrigued me about the Fashion Institute. That they intuitively are on target to design, or whatever way they did it. That was a major attraction of the Fashion Institute for me, from an educational point of view. They had already broken into it, this whole business of "make your commitment."

We had a recruitment problem as a result of that. A constant recruitment problem, but we dealt with it. What kid is going to say, "I want to go into textile technology, working in apparel production." And generally we recognize that. But generally that's why the kids... That's why fashion... And by
fashion... I'm sure you and Shirley Goodman talked pretty well, about educating people that fashion doesn't mean apparel. But that was popular because kids wanted to go in those directions. But these other 19 majors were difficult to develop.

But, in any event... I'm getting off target. The mission was to, first of all, get the building program going. And the building program was part of a 10 year plan, and much of the planning did not quite meet the needs ten years later. There were still things in the plan (hot lead type, linotype machines and advertising and all that kind of stuff), we had a lot of problems with that. We were only allowed 15% change orders, and I think the first month I was here we had about 40% change orders. So they put a halt to it. We also had to piece together the financing of it, because there was very little data. One of the architect's key men died, DeYoung of DeYoung & Moscowitz. Moscowitz was the artist and DeYoung was the manager. And the city administration had changed three times. We had had two different mayors, and they didn't have any records... Meanwhile, we had the whole State funding and the Federal funding... So we had to piece all that together, which we did, and got to a mark. We went from $46 to $64 to $82 million in a few months.
Q: Did you have a marvelous financial officer?
A: What I did was I brought in a very hard nosed person from the private sector, who had never been in the public sector, but who had gone through this kind of growth in private industry, with aluminum companies. I didn’t want a public financier; I wanted a private sector financial officer, so I brought Fred Blatt in to handle...
Q: So he’s been here since...
A: He came in a few years later. I had an interim union problem, and I had to get that thing set aside.
Q: A professional union? A teachers’ union?
A: Yes. They were quite militant. It seemed my predecessor made some public statement... I’ve known Larry for years, and I don’t think he meant them...
Q: This is Lawrence Bethel?
Q: Oh. Lawrence Jarvie, excuse me.
A: I knew Larry when he was Vice Chancellor. But it caused a lot of... He lost his temper a few times. He shouldn’t have done that but he did, so they were all armed and ready to go to war. I had to deal with that particular problem.
So, it slowly evolved into what we are today, and that’s........ We took an enormous amount of abuse in public hearings for the baccalaureate programs...

Q: Let’s slow down a little bit. When were you allowed to control the baccalaureate?
A: '75 I think.

Q: So, you came here in '71, and the first couple of years, I assume, were spent getting the financial house in order and getting your understanding of the whole situation, the whole culture...?
A: Well, we had to, first of all, reorganize... We had to nail down the... I didn’t understand what the marks were for the building program. We had to set down which directions we were going to go into and we had to do an awful lot of planning and come up with some reasonable... I had to meet with a lot of chairpersons and faculty and get their feelings, because I had to get a feel for the rigor and the minds that we had to rely on -- which were very impressive, I must tell you. It’s really understated here.

Department after department would send up their wish list. And we did a lot of silly things - in the Liberal Arts
Division - I took their sign down. We were all in the "C" building then, but I took down the sign that said "Division of Liberal Arts" and I put up "Division of General Studies." It was up there for about a month at least, until somebody noticed it and then was up here in a rage. Then I said, "Let's talk about what Liberal Arts and General Studies are, because you can liberate an artist in their craft ..." silly little games ... just getting people thinking about ethics and things they should be doing. I spent an enormous amount of time in those days (recently I miss it), with each of the departments. It was fun and it was true when I'd say, "Look, I'm an absolutely ignorant, I don't know... I think a textile converter is a machine. So why don't you educate me about textiles? Why don't you educate me about communications?" And they were all eager to do that, so it gave a marvelous chance for somebody who didn't know a thing...

Q: And the learning process was part of the whole thing?

A: Why can't we do this? So the curricula was a lot of fun and we went through those kinds of years.

In the meantime, we had to make a lot of friends. F.I.T. is a strange institution, the way it's governed. Who do
we work for? We're a SUNY institution, but we're really not. We're sponsored by the Board of Education of the City of New York, but we're really not. We have a Board of Trustees (the Governor appoints four and the Board of Education appoints five), and we work for those people but ... the Educational Foundation, which is the official advisory committee for federal money; what is their role?

Q: Federal money or...?

A: Grants. We have to negotiate our own budget through the Office of Management and Budget. I have to skip up to Albany... By the way, every time we have a resolution the Board has to approve it; it has to go to the City, it has to go to the Board of Ed., it has to go to SUNY, and you have to appear and make your own agendas, and we have to negotiate those things. It quickly became evident to me that I'd better make some friends. And there's a funny mentality in Albany, that anywhere south of New Paltz doesn't exist. The New York delegation is sometimes very helpful, and sometimes they're not. And I find the Chairman of Higher Education is from Suffolk, and Warren Anderson is from somewhere else. So I quickly learned that I really couldn't rely on ... I love the State University - it has marvelous people whom I adore - but they have a different
agenda. They have university centers in their medical schools and have to build their school at Stonybrook, and that was their agenda. We had to wait in those days for supplemental and budget deficiency. I had to do my own lobbying. So we had to spend a lot of time making friends with the people who turn these taps on and off. We had to get the City of New York and State of New York to be on speaking terms with the speaker, whoever the speaker might be, and with budget committees. We had to deal with the Governor's office ... So we spent a lot of time in those years, because I knew we were going to need legislative support on the building we wanted to get to. In those early years, while I was around budget ... money ... We'd go out of our way to make friends with Bill Passanante the speaker pro tem - Stanley Fink the speaker now, but whoever was the speaker before him, and Jerry Kremmer of Ways and Means Committee so that when we were ready at least we'd be on talking terms.

Q: There's an incredible consortium, isn't there?

A: Yes, right. It's really a management nightmare in that one has to have a lot of courage to move prior to resolutions being approved. If I have to wait ... You have to wait ... the calendar or the clock ticks on. Sometimes it's six months. For example, problems meeting payroll - sometimes I
don't get my first quarter payment until Christmas and it comes in quarterly payments and one has to take a little bit of risk, willingness to risk a little bit and do things before they are...

For example, we had a... All the majors in the Art & Design building were not even registered, and we had kids in a new program. If I had to wait for the State to finally approve a program in hand knits, hand knits would come and go. Or jewelry design. The bureaucrats work on a different calendar than we do. Kids come to the Fashion Institute in August and they graduate in June. There are certain marks, and if you don't make the move then, you have another year to wait. So we just went out and did great things. I got a lot of gray hair but made friends along the way. When the time came to move F.I.T. to the status it now enjoys, I was able to find any number of legislators willing to introduce legislation.

By the way... We had to make friends with the State Education Department because everything in New York State is under the Regents of the State of New York... That's a whole other division of bureaucrats and systems, and the processes were quite ugly. We would first have to request permission from our own competition in the independent sector,
and we had Regents for hearings, and if they say nasty things about us, then we have to appeal it and go to the Regents. See, legislative authority means they shouldn't have told you to do it, but you're not going to offer a program until it's registered with the Regents in this state.

Q: In fact, there has to be a certificate of need...?

A: And it's tough. But we had a lot of fun, because we were on the right track.

Q: I'm curious though. How did you learn all of this? All these complications, all these people you dealt with?

A: I guess because of my federal experience. At the other end, I had to learn it when I was a fed; when I was responsible for millions and millions of dollars of federal money. The delivery systems to the states had to go through these processes that you deal with whether the Regents of the State University of New York, or the Community College Service. A couple of years in federal government gave me a pretty good picture of the local boards. There were some states, for example, where they're elected not appointed, but the process is... Working in Indianapolis, it is with the Mayor and equity housing projects... You begin to understand what the role of the city council is and what's a supervisor, so... It's
the first time anybody ever asked me that. I just always knew
it. I guess it really was through that experience...

Also, people were very helpful to me here. I honestly
couldn't spell fashion. I could spell fashion, but I really
didn't understand the role of the Joint Board and the Outerwear
Board and Children's Wear Board and all the guys I hang around
with now. What's the role of the ILGWU? But they were very,
very helpful to me. They tried so hard to catch me up to what I
should have known just walking into this job. And we had 19
colleges here, because... In Interior Design, there's an
American Association of Interior Designers and they have their
politics. And in Advertising they have theirs, and their boards
and their accrediting... By the way, in addition to the normal
accrediting, Middle States and all that stuff that you have at
colleges, F.I.T. also has the professional accreditation in each
of their groups. For example, when we wanted to go into
packaging, I discovered there's something called the American
Packaging Council, and that's where you'd run into great guys
whom we would bring on the campus. So each... There is an
Association of Apparel Manufacturers, and they have their entire
organizations... There's Textile Distributors and Textile
Technology, and all their kinds of things... And when I'm in any one medium at any one time I have to be as up to date, as knowledgeable...

End Tape 1 Side 1
A: Let's say the kids are participating in an advertising contest. They just assume that I know the advertising industry in New York, so I had to spend an awful lot of time to get to at least a speaking knowledge, an appearance of knowledge in all these other areas. And people assume I know the difference between conservation, preservation and restoration, and I better damn well know that because with restoration people I'd better speak restoration. So it's a very difficult institution to manage in that it's not monolithic; it's not just one program of the liberal arts or community college or college of arts and sciences.

Q: No, the disciplines are many...?

A: Many. And it's also part of the fun of the Fashion Institute. The battles on the baccalaureate program and the master's took up an enormous amount of time, the bachelor's much more than the master's because... I had discovered along the way that I hadn't spent as much time with CICU (the Council of Independent Colleges & Universities in New York State) as I had on the public side, going through the viciousness of the baccalaureate.

Between the bachelor's and the master's I spent a good deal of time in the independent sector, making friends with the
presidents in the independent sectors, until we got a by-law going that was going to put them out of business. I don’t really want to talk about those kinds of things. This has been really difficult the Master’s, but the Regents will be moving on it next month, and I’m almost positive that it will be passed. The complaint was much milder than... In the meantime we had to build bridges to the industries. F.I.T. will never forget its roots in Seventh Avenue, and never forget that it was the 7th Avenue geniuses that created the Fashion Institute. In a sense you grow from that when you become a national or international institution, and we grew from... We’re almost in equal partnership now, in leadership with the industries. The conferences we hold, and high technology... The seminars we run, the technical assistance that we now provide. We’re just an equal partner in the industry now. Today... F.I.T. and the industry that it serves are one and the same. Sam Feinberg writes in his column that it is difficult to find the line of demarcation, and that’s true because there isn’t any. Their problems are our problems. If Liz Clairborne wants to go into the Bronx, we’re going to help build a factory in the Bronx. And if old Charlie has an off shore problem in Taiwan in patternmaking, we’ll go to Taiwan and... You know, we try to
balance the people who support us and the success of our industries. And I think we and our alumni have proven over the past 40 years that the college is on the right track. One of our frustrations at F.I.T. is that the show biz part of fashion designing is easy to publicize, Norma Kamali, Calvin Klein, and the rest. The no namers, the people in the para-production work are key to the designer and there's no one as good in the country as our people. My own son is a graduate of our Advertising and Design program. Those kids, these are no namers, and they're slowly moving... It's fairly new, but in another decade we'll be as famous as we are in the fashion design area. In the meantime, we went through some interesting government changes in the Fashion Institute, which makes it extremely difficult today. When I arrived, the best job at the Fashion Institute was to be a Dean. Today that's about the worst job. We've reversed the responsibilities quite a bit at the Fashion Institute ... at the price of my poor deans. I feel sorry. I would hate to have to report to me. But we've reversed the management decisions so that we have centralized them as far as we can. We've pushed them down as far as we can, bringing the responsibility where it really belongs. There's no way, not with all the materials in the world, all the resources that make
an institution, to create the classroom climate unless people feel good about themselves. The faculty must feel good about themselves and want to share their knowledge, and the students must feel good about themselves and have self-esteem so that they can learn. We used to appoint Chairpersons, now we elect them. This has caused some management problems on "recall" but we never really had a problem with it. Most of the problems now are... It is difficult to manage an environment that requires consensus management. But nonetheless, we're light years ahead in humanistic studies. We're light years ahead in... We were doing consensus management before people were talking about the Y&Z period that Peter Drucker was writing about. And it does work, but it works at a terrible price. The people who report to me in turn manage divisions with chairpersons or directors who in turn manage people; and the requirement is constant consensus. It is a very difficult management task but when accomplished, you have a superb institution.

Q: What it means then is that you, as President, have reporting directly to you the Deans who then have reporting to them the chairpersons?
A: Not only the chairpersons. See, that's where it breaks down. We in administration serve the faculty, and we serve... I can, without any discussion with anybody, decide I'm going to go into the giftwear industry - I'm going to do that. I look at my discretionary budget and I say, "Why don't you come work for me? I want to set up a department. I can hire you on the spot. You in turn will bring your own faculty in, and the college will provide to you recruiting materials, and we'll brief our admissions officers and get you a class, and you will start your career. At the end of the fourth year, whether you remain as Chairperson of that department will depend on whether that department now elects you as Chairperson. What we did is separate out two issues that have plagued other colleges. Where we're going and how we're getting there is my Board's responsibility, which is my responsibility. Because if I want advice, I'll ask for it.

What you do and how you teach belongs to you - I'm not going to intervene with that. You get out of my way and I want to get on with this college, and I'll get out of your way, and except for curriculum review and placement office review... We have accountability built into the system, we have processes built in, but politically I don't bring all my buddies in and
appoint them chairpersons. I'm not going to give sabbaticals just on the basis of longevity. All this we'll discuss. So this is a difficult management task for the division, where in fact... Suppose I want to relieve you as chairperson. Management may decide or the faculty may decide, but when the faculty decides, it takes 2/3 of their vote, and they're only appointed for two years so they always have a shot at it. But if management decides they want to remove a chairperson...

First of all, the Dean of Academic Affairs has to meet with the department and say, "We're going to ask for a recall," and unless you can answer the following questions, here's what's happening. The department then votes. That means they're not satisfied so they vote. It might mean they get 50% of the vote then the Dean cannot remove the chairperson. Or, the Dean can come back to me and say, "Listen. I had a vote and I can't move." I then have a third step. I could appoint three people and the union could appoint three people - independent of the department - see, now, all this government stuff. They then advise me whether I can remove him or not, when they meet once a year, and they say, "No, your deans are wrong," or your manager is wrong, but they understand what the criteria would be for removal. So either you have enough faith... Here's the issue, have
enough faith in the general level and commitment of the faculty that they really give a damn, and have maybe as much wisdom as management, and you rely on a combination for that kind of a decision, or we don't. And it's difficult to be a dean when the dean doesn't have the fifth area of management, which is reward and punish. My managers cannot reward and they cannot punish. And if you can't reward and you can't punish, most people in management can't exist. So it requires an awful lot of persuasion to manage in this kind of an environment, and not everybody is successful.

Q: When you say "this kind of environment," do you mean the academic environment or the particular F.I.T. environment?

A: Well, what I just said is generally true. But it's a little bit more severe here because we're not dealing with two divisions, we're dealing with 19 colleges, and each...

Q: Each of these divisions is considered a separate college?

A: No. When I was managing Cogswell Polytechnical College, it was marvelous. I had Machine Design, Structural Design, Eletronics Design... It was all engineering, an all...
engineering faculty, one style and it was easier to manage. Here I’ve got artists in illustration and the hard nosed people who coo the virtues of business and marketing, and you’re dealing with different mental sets and different approaches to problems, and it’s an extremely difficult management task.

Q: Can you... Is it possible for you to just draw me a verbal picture of what the structure really is, because I’m not sure.

A: The actual employers of the Fashion Institute are these “nine souls” we work for. They are set by law; it can’t be ten or eleven, it’s nine. We work for them. I am the Chief Executive Officer. They can remove me, and I work for that group.

Reporting to me... Because, first of all, an Executive Assistant to the President really runs F.I.T., and that’s Vikki Barbero, and anything that gets past her is really a problem, and I would say that 80% of the problems she solves long before... She’s an ombudsman and G-d knows what else, she runs my life as well. But, I have a Dean of Academic Affairs, I have a Dean of Students, I have the Treasurer of the College, I have a Vice President of Development, and that’s the top management team.
Q: Fund raising?
A: Well, not me, because the foundation does fund raising, and college advancement. We also have the Secretary of the College, who is responsible for publications as well. That's my management team.

Each division has a dean. There's a Dean of Liberal Arts; there's a Dean of Art & Design; there's a Dean of Business & Technology, and...

Q: Each of the 19 divisions...?
A: Yes. And they report to my Dean of Academic Affairs. Now, each of these deans has department chairpersons. The Art & Design division has illustration and advertising and interior design and photography; they report to the Dean of the Art & Design division. The Business & Technology Division have apparel production, technology, merchandising, they report to that dean. The Liberal Arts school has social sciences, the humanities, economics, sociology - all that stuff - reports to...

And when I say they report to the dean, the dean really reports to them. The dean's responsibility is managing the division resources. People come on campus August 25th and they expect 12,000 bodies and they expect resources to be ready, they expect desks to be ready.
Q: And they expect courses to be revised, if necessary?

A: Yes. Now, we have within the structure of the college committees, standing committees, that do academic standards, curriculum reviews, placement reviews. These aren't cutsie-poo, they're working committees. For example, in curriculum alone, last year alone, we did at least 120 serious revisions of the total instructional program of this institution. Now, they can come down or they can come up. We also, up until the fiscal crisis, had a future's committee. We would sit around on Fridays and dream up new majors. But I've kind of cooled it. We don't have enough room anymore.

We now have a new division, a graduate division, because next year we will have three Master's degree programs, and Robert Gutman's another dean. And in the meantime, you have Richard Martin who is Executive Director of the Resource Center, and he floats...as needed, because sometimes he's part of a "cabinet" when he deals with his libraries over there, and sometimes he's part of another group when it has to do with gallery exhibits - it's kind of a crazy job.

Q: It's a staff function, isn't it?
A: It's a staff function. Yet every one of them has line responsibility because they have people who report to them. They have to make sure they're at work and they have to make sure their vacation schedules are scheduled and that their sick days are really sick days. They have a budget and budget responsibilities but very little authority. Responsibility without authority, and that's the frustration with this kind of management. Now usually, deans pay their dues and Vice Presidents pay their dues on their way to the Presidency, and the frustration level that builds up at the Fashion Institute is that we're just a big family. It's very frustrating because all of us in my business rate ourselves on what happened to our subordinates and how well did they do after they leave us. And this is the first place I've ever been where they stay on and on. I love it. Don't misunderstand me ... And it makes their jobs very, very difficult because...

Q: Yes, I'm sure it does. Could you take one department and go through it, from the start of it to where it is when it finally becomes a place where people study?

A: All right. In the Fine Arts Department some years ago there was a jewelry design class. It became evident that jewelry as a field ... Well, let me go back. Kids were selling
jewelry on the street corners in the early '70s and the police were arresting them and busting them. My niece ... visiting us from California; she was walking around the Village and there was a policeman beating up a kid and blood was coming out of the kid's ear, and they were hauling him into the wagon. They were little vendors selling jewelry on the street.

I came back to F.I.T. and I called my seminar director, and suggested that we ought to run a seminar on how to market handcrafted items because there were other ways to do this; and we started a program. Then it occurred to me that there's another side to this and that's jewelry that's not handcrafted. There's a pretty big jewelry industry. How big is it?

So we began looking at it and I asked Frank Shapiro who the best guy in this department was and it was a fellow by the name of Sam Beizer. So I said, "Sam, how about creating a department?" And he said, "Well, I always wanted to but I didn't know the college did." And I said, "Well, Sam, I'll release you from your teaching duties and keep you on salary (of course he was a Chairperson) and why don't you get a curriculum together and get an advisory committee to get people." So he got an advisory committee together and he started working on a curriculum and getting backup help. Then we decided we'd put it
through the internal mechanism of the college in terms of cost and space and all that stuff. Then we filed for a HEGIS number which is to get permission...

Q: What number?
A: HEGIS, it's Higher Education, something, something... And I had to go up to the State University of New York and make a case for a new major.

Q: You had to have a new major approved?
A: Oh, sure. By both SUNY and the Board of Ed. First my board approved it, then the Board of Education has to approve it, and then I have to go to the State University and see that department, and then we find space and we start a program in jewelry design.

Q: Now, how long did it take from start to finish?
A: Most of our majors, like menswear and cosmetics, take from beginning to end, two years.

Q: Two years for the planning process to...
A: Take advertising communications for television...

Q: Is that a sub-division of your communications department?
A: Well, maybe. We have courses in it now, but I believe they're writing copy for radio and copy for television
and story books for television and one minute concepts but they're a little different from the others. We're the best in the world in print, there's no doubt about it. Now the question is, do we want this as an upper division, option for a BFA, or is it a two year associate parallel with the other two, or do we want it as part of ACAD... So it's been percolating now for not quite a year, and I should be getting a report on it by January and make a decision on it. Sometimes we make mistakes. We've made a lot of mistakes. The first mistake I made, I remember, was back in '76 or '75 or '74... I would have bet menswear was going to go quite the way women's wear was, with leisure suits and seasonal...but we made the wrong bet. It went quite classic, so our investments were in the wrong direction, with the textbooks we commissioned and the curriculum we ordered way off base. We had to pull it right back into tailoring and that sort of stuff. Sometimes we make other mistakes. We're now wrestling with restoration. Antiquing is big business. Restoring antiques and antiquities other than art is something that is badly needed. There's a lot of jobs out there in these areas. But it's a very complicated curriculum, so we're in the middle of the giftware... Giftware is another one. It's a $3
billion industry sorely in need of people. The decorative arts... We want to go into a new management major; management as it relates to product knowledge. The MBA doesn't have that kind of product knowledge. So we have percolating right now at least half a dozen new directions we want to go into. We don't have space and resources for all of it. But it...er ends. It just can't end. People have theories that are...wrong about institutional change. You're supposed to become mature. And you get to the entrepreneur stage where you look through the management literature; then you go through a mature state and a research stage, well that's all nonsense. The institution has to constantly be in change. You don't level off and tighten it up for a while. It's like life itself; if you don't grow, you die. If your cells aren't replaced every single week, your body stops functioning and you begin to die. Similarly, if this institution ever stops changing, it'll die. It'll go down faster than it went up. We have to constantly....

Now, really changing, the appearance of changing, the appearance of planning and never being satisfied and always reviewing and never letting it get mature. Never let people think you've stopped. There's something called the Valley of Despair in management. The institution perks along and you
introduce a change and it goes into a Valley of Despair, and in theory it comes out higher than it was and then goes on again. So the idea is always to climb out of that valley; otherwise, people get complacent. So we're always in change. People say, "Come on boss, let's settle down. We've got to tighten up that BFA and marketing, and it'll take us a couple of years to smooth it out. And my G-d, another change." and "You can't do that Charlie and I'll tell you why. And I know you'll fix it," but they want that relief. I think a Chief Executive Officer's major task is never to let that happen.

This is also true in the corporate world. That's why everybody is buying and making acquisitions. I mean, when was the last time we were doing R&D? You have to continue growing ... under the guise of smoothing it out... So you always have to push, always be a little bit unhappy and never praise too much and assume that you're not quite there yet. It's an interesting thing.

End Tape 1 Side 2
Q: For the Fashion Institute of Technology's Oral History Collection, this will be a second interview with President Marvin Feldman for the project of the Oral History of F.I.T. The date is November 20th, 1984; the interviewer is Mildred Finger.

President Feldman, I noticed that in your Baccalaureate program, you have six majors which can end up with a B.A. or a B.S.; can you tell us what those are, and mention also, perhaps, why you don't have one in retailing?

A: We have Bachelor of Science degree programs in Apparel Production, Textile Production, Marketing... We have B.F.A. programs in Packaging and Advertising Design, Interior Design, etc., and then we go on to the three Master's degree programs next fall in museum and gallery work. The reason we went to marketing instead of retailing, or why we're not into retailing, is that we had a lot of meetings on the future of merchandising and of retailing. For better or worse we think we were right. We think that the major emphasis and need in the decade ahead is going to be in marketing. Retailing, as we know it today, is undergoing so many changes, there's so many ways of distributing goods - mail order catalogues - we have no idea what's going to happen with television and communications, off
price centers. There are so many different ways of retailing that retailing as a traditional program in traffic management, personnel management; the storekeeper functions of retailing really require a lot more study before we're going to move into it again. And I know this doesn't please... This wasn't 100% fair to our advisory committee. There were many, many groups in our living room in the wee hours of the morning, talking about bringing back the retailing programs. There used to be programs in retailing. There were retailing schools. They made some mistakes in moving toward the MBA. They wanted to go into a different kind of management. In the graduate center, one of the programs we were thinking about going into (it was beyond thinking; we had outlined it) was a Master of Management Arts, which is a marketer with product knowledge. But in our opinion, marketing is the key, not retailing, currently. And that's why we're not giving anything in retailing. Although I would suppose ... I would find it a little difficult except for the small business.

Let me qualify this. For the entrepreneur programs, the self-employed, for the small business people, we do have a center, a Small Business Center, and we're providing those management skills that normally would be called retailing, but
it's not as a retailer in the corporate world. There I don’t think there is a need for retailers. There are people who have to be visual merchants. Everything is changing in retailing, to display and lighting and advertising, marketing; these are the ways we want to go. Not as an all around retailer running the store. We just don't think the future calls for that.

Q: Does your two year program...?
A: Neither does our two year program. Our two year program is a program of fashion, buying and merchandising and we do understand the need in merchandising - what goods to buy, when to buy them, how to display them, how to move them, or how to price them. Retailing means something quite different. Retailing is salary and wage administration, traffic management and warehousing, contracting - it’s a totally different discipline in the way we approach it. And at F.I.T., as we do everything else, we go from the specific to the general. I'm positive that when we have our Master of Management Arts we will bring management in retailing as we would marketing, with the sorts of chief executive officers that the industry so badly needs.

Q: How much liberal arts are the retailing students exposed to?
A: In all of our Bachelor degree programs, 50% of the program is in the liberal arts. And in our two year Associate degree programs, one third of the curriculum is in the liberal arts.

Q: But if you have no Bachelor's program in merchandising...?

A: Yes we do. We don't have one in retailing. We have one in merchandising and marketing.

Q: Okay. You're making that distinction. President Feldman, what are some of the things you think are important for the future for F.I.T., starting from the industry problems and stemming from your own thinking about what the future will be, as you discussed it with Sam Feinberg in a column that appeared on October 12th, where you talked about reviewing the GATT and so forth and how this will impact on your curriculum?

A: We look at the fashion industry as fashion industries. Most people think of the fashion industries strictly in terms of apparel. What the computer revolution has done, in our opinion, is blurred the lines between fibre people, textile people, apparel people and retailers and advertising. It's all blurred. The industries are now in transition. I'm amazed at how many of my colleagues think we're
in the middle of a dying industry, which is absurd. It is in a transition that is going to force this institution to take the leadership in blurring the distinctions of the way the industries are organized now and how they operate now. The first step is the transmission of technology to the industries. For example, next week we will hold one of the most sophisticated advanced technology seminars - a three day seminar for about a thousand apparel manufacturers - with the most sophisticated demonstrations on the availability of technology.

So the first change that we foresee is a blurring of what used to be very distinct, disparate parts of this industry. Second, is that we are in a little bit of trouble now. We used to say that the best designers were in America, but now we're facing very competitive designs from abroad. As technology is transferred and we're all equalized in terms of cost, we're returning to them for design, which is a critical factor in the survival of the industry, so we really have to step up design and spend as much time now in design and the concepts of design as we have over the past decade in technology. We've been just so immersed in technology, with "CAMSCOS," and "CAFCANS" and color graphics and robotics...

Much of this has been at the price of design, and let's get back
to design and make sure it has a commensurate amount of
attention in this institution.

Secondly, we have to take a look at what's happened in
marketing. We have the largest market in the world, but we've
lost a third of it to other countries. We have to reclaim it.
We have to reclaim it by better marketing techniques, which is
why I said earlier that the key, the keys, the technology
blurring the distinct functions, and the design and market...
The market being able to perceive consumer preferences quickly
will get them delivered a lot quicker. This leads us to a lot of
federal laws, even anti-trust regulations, that are somewhat
obsolete in this era of technology. To say that a company
cannot manufacture fibres and textiles and apparel and retail it
(there's an anti-trust law facing them) when we face competitive
pressures from abroad where that's precisely what they're doing,
is a little bit archaic. The agreements, the tariff agreements,
the #807, the off-shore, have to be totally re-examined and not
through a piecemeal approach but the fibre, the textiles, the
apparel... This all has to be re-examined in the light of what
the technology has been doing to us.
If you add to this the communications revolution that we’re in (and we haven’t even talked about that yet), and how quickly we can communicate with parts of the world and with each other, in two-way communication links, the picture becomes a little bit clearer about the direction which an institution takes and the direction of our industry. If you remember that the apparel textile industries are, first of all, a $50 billion a year industry in this country, but overwhelmingly made up of small businesses and small companies, you begin to see the picture very, very clearly. There are only about 300 companies in America the size of Bluebell, Levi Strauss; you can really tick them off and name them very quickly. The rest in the industry are fairly small. They need the learning institutions, such as F.I.T., to be their spokesperson, to advance the information that they need and to do the management training. So our plans are very clear. We have a good five year plan in place, we have an eight year plan in place and we have a ten year plan in place. And with some modifications, it’s crystal clear. It’s marketing, high technology, communications.

Q: How much of this planning involves (or does it) preparation of the students for working abroad? Are they
working for companies, doing some of their work in the Orient, for example? I know you're doing it in Europe; I mean the Orient.

A: This country... Our ability to deal with foreign language instruction is scandalous.

Q: I don’t mean foreign language instruction necessarily.

A: We have two programs now in import-export, which is in the curriculum. We hired a marvelous person who’s spent a number of years in it. We've got any number of faculty persons now in the Orient; they're in Japan three or four times a year, in Thailand and Taiwan. The answer is yes, in international marketing.

First of all, Americans have never really been interested in exporting. We've been expanding, always moving West; we've always had our own markets, and we have never really thought about exporting as being a fundamental concern until very recently. We know very little about exporting; we know very little about tariff agreements, common market textile problems, even metric systems and packaging and deliveries. We're dealing with very hostile countries when we deal with exporting, and it has to be done.
We know very little about it. We’ve had, in the fourteen years I’ve been here, at least half a dozen seminars from the Commerce Department and the State Department, just on the notion of exporting. But there’s not been much interest yet.

Q: What about students of design learning about working in the Orient, or working for American manufacturers but making trips to the Orient and working with their production people?

A: A lot of our graduates, as you know, people working for Biederman Industries for example, have to go to Hong Kong and make sure the quality assurance is up to snuff. To answer your question, in our curriculum now, we have about half a dozen programs of international experiences. Kids do in fact go to Japan and Hong Kong and Europe, but these are short term; for the month of January and during the summer. We haven’t really ever been able to organize a program where they went for a semester, for example, if that’s what you have in mind. On the other hand, knowing the number of alumni that I know who actually do this now - so far we’ve had the same quality of production; it’s the cultural aspects you’re talking about - that’s pretty hard to fit into a curriculum. We do have semesters abroad in Europe,
but we don't have semesters abroad in the Orient, mainly because of the language problem, which goes back to languages. We don't do a very good job in teaching languages. We for instance now have Spanish in our curriculum, but we don't have Japanese. We don't have Chinese. We should. The question is how do you get it in. We teach in Chinese in Chinatown. We teach patternmaking in Chinatown, in Chinese. But we don't do it for any of the students in the institutions. It's serious but it's not just at F.I.T., it's all over the country. We're very bad at that. I think it's a question of whether we're going to use it or not.

Q: Well, it has become so apparent that almost all of the designers, except perhaps a handful of the most expensive designers, who design expensive merchandise, almost all of them spend a great deal of time in the Orient as part of their jobs.

A: For production?

Q: Uh huh. Yes.

A: What's going to happen when the technology is such that you're not really searching for the cheap labor anymore?

Q: Well, that will be a good day, won't it? That will be a day that the American market will be happy to see come.

A: It's almost here. We are discovering though... I

63
discovered something just this year that while we're still
talking about catching up in technology, the Japanese, through
something called the C.C.C. - Creativity Communications
something or other - are back into design. The most exciting
designs that I have seen in 14 years at the Fashion Institute
were here last month from Japan. This came out of Kyoto. The
Japanese have already recognized once again that it's going to
be design that's going to make the difference, and not just
running around searching for cheap labor. That's going to
change. Do you know about the Draper Labs project?
Q: What project?
A: Draper Labs?
Q: No, I don't think so.
A: The apparel industry, along with the Amalgamated
Union...Arrow Shirt and a few other companies...commissioned the
Draper Labs to determine once and for all whether a robot would
be able to actually cut and sew. And they deliberately went to
Draper Labs and deliberately kept every one of us in the
education ... in fashion education, out of this completely. And
they went to the same people who gave us the aerospace and the
defense contracts and gave them an assignment. I actually saw a
robot, six months ago, make a sleeve; and I can tell you now,
it's possible.
Q: They're programmed to do a particular thing?
A: Yep. You say, "Make a sleeve," and if they can make a sleeve, they can make a collar, and they can attach it to a bodice. And I watched it... It's a tailored garment, but the fact is it was technically possible for a robot to handle softgoods. That was the question; the answer was yes. So, with the work they're doing in the "CAMSCOS" and "CATCAN" system, it's just a matter of time.

Q: Could you talk a little bit more about the Master's programs, of which you are offering, I think two this fall? And what will you add to these and what is your time frame?
A: Well, in the first place, we set out more than a dozen years ago to create a University of the Fashion Industries based on the land grant college set up in the Act which created the first colleges in the world concerned with the education of working people. So we've been on a deliberate plan to create an urban version of the land grant college, but based on the community college model. The community, of course, is not geographic but an industry. And our first move was to protect the integrity of our 2 year Associate degree program and we wrote that into the legislation; our next move was to create our ten Baccalaureate programs, and get some experience in upper division education.
We applied to the State legislature and to the State University and to the State Education department. It has taken us about five years for the authority to go into graduate education, which would then give us the entire model.... First of all, they've given us the authority to go into graduate education, so at the Fashion Institute we now offer a Master of Arts degree. The political question, and the educational question is mostly political, is what Master degree programs will we provide? And the concerns are that we would be in direct competition with the independent sector, and in fact would be harmful to the independent sector, even though we'd be a public institution offering these programs.

But there's two that are now approved by the State University and will be under review at the State Education department next month. Both are in museum studies. One is in restoration and the other is in museum-gallery management. The needs are quite great in those areas. We wanted to add a third at the same time, which is gallery art administration (art is big business in New York City), and the ability to manage a gallery, open a gallery, display an exhibit, price of the... The "cooler" virtues of the business side of art isn't offered
anywhere. We wanted to move into that, but we began with the
two museum programs because we could identify the placements and
the needs were great. These were jobs that had heretofore been
handled by volunteers, who just won't volunteer anymore. And
they want professional status.

The third area we're moving into is going to be the
Master of Management Arts. That is based on a recognition that
the typical MBA candidate, who now manages most of American
businesses, probably serve most business well. They take
certain ... the science of management, but then they major in
finance or marketing or personnel, or that sort of thing. We've
come to feel that a good number of the fashion industries
require a product knowledge. They require the same
understanding that the original entrepreneur in the industry
brought to creating the company in the first place. And
bringing in a bright, young Wharton School manager without
product knowledge doesn't fit the needs of all of the industry.
So we want to carve out just one part of it - not too large
numbers - but we just know there is a need for management that
has as much knowledge of product as the original entrepreneur.
So, rather than calling it an MBA, we filed for an MMA, which is
a Master of Arts, but that is a political problem.
The other area that finally we're going to go into is a program that we call the Master Artisan. We've come to recognize that the strength of our nation has always been the technical schools of our people. Despite the songs we used to sing as children, we've never really been blessed with that many natural resources; we've really had our technical skills that was our proudest product, our biggest export. We've lost that edge. We've lost the edge of technology to countries with even fewer resources than we have, and we have to reclaim it, and reclaiming the skills and productivity of the American people is very high on the agenda. We think it should be high on the agenda of American policy, but it isn't, so we thought... What we did is we looked at the old London guild certification programs of many, many years ago. The London guild provided a mark of artisanship, and if you had that mark stamped on an item, you knew it was the best. We thought we could demonstrate a return to master artisanship by going into certain areas of print making and jewelry design, and have a master artisan's program pretty much based on that London guild model. Hopefully the other colleges and universities would follow suit and go into other fields, because we feel that's terribly important. So the master artisan, the master management arts, the gallery art administration, museum studies and restoration
and preservation, conservation... Our country is getting older. And all these are exciting fields with many, many, job opportunities.

Q: What about the job opportunities in sales? Are you addressing yourself at all to that?

A: Well, we're calling it marketing. I think, in my tenure as President of the Fashion Institute in the next decade the key is going to be marketing. And that's where we're putting most of our emphasis in the business side of the institution, our upper division programs and marketing. After all, whether it's advertising or packaging or merchandising, you're really talking about marketing. Creating new products, finding consumers, moving goods. That's really the strength of this institution.

Q: That's on the graduate level?

A: That's in the undergraduate program. That's in the baccalaureate program. All of our baccalaureate programs - not all of them - those in the fashion buying and merchandising programs are moving to marketing. The other two areas -- the textile engineering and the apparel production -- are still two major needs. One of the great ironies of this institution... If you added up all the people studying apparel production in
America, we’re larger than all of them combined and yet we’re terribly short of enough graduates to service the industry. It’s one of the problems the industries are facing. We can barely get production people through this institution before they’re gobbled up and ... We can’t get them into Pennsylvania, we can’t get them into New Jersey, North Carolina.

I don’t know what the problem is anymore. I used to know. Most of the students come to us because their families are in the business or they know somebody else who’s in the business, or they see it as a freshman in this institution and transfer to B.S. degree programs in apparel production. But somehow it’s noble to go into hard goods—industrial engineering—and somehow it’s degrading to go into apparel production. I don’t know what the problem is. I don’t know of a single graduate of this institution in apparel production who doesn’t start out at at least $17,18,000 a year, and make $30-40-50,000 in the first four or five years. I don’t understand it.

Q: Perhaps one of the needs of the institution is related to that. Perhaps one of the needs is for a far more extensive description of industry and industry opportunities?
A: We've tried that. We've offered free scholarships. We've had posters. We've had brochures. I even had films made. We've even invited to this institution... We sent our people off to every high school in the greater New York area. We've had counseling sessions. There just isn't... I thought I had the answers years ago, but the longer I stay here... We're not worried about it any longer because we're getting, in terms of the amount of space that we have more than we can handle. They're coming from Canada...

Q: I'm sorry. I didn't mean to suggest that your student population needs to be reached out for. I'm suggesting that when it's here, the student population perhaps needs exposure to the notion that you can earn a great deal of money in production. It may not have the glamour of design, but...

A: That's true. We do now have crossover majors. This is our second year. Students may go from fashion buying and merchandising to apparel production, or from fashion design to apparel production, or from textiles, etc. So there's crossover majors and they are somewhat successful. We've been picking up 60-70 kids a year to do that kind of crossover, but it's far less than what the industries need.
Q: Well, it seems to parallel, then, the crossover in the industry itself, where retailers go into manufacturing. Not usually the reverse, but retailers have been known to go into manufacturing where their skills are apparently very useful too.

A: So they can have their 300% markup instead of 100% markup. That is called hostile input.

Q: I think I am coming to the end of my questions. I would like to know how much of a role is the union taking in the council these days, and on the board, for example, do you have a lot of manufacturers?

A: Well, Chick Chaiken is a member of my board. He's the President of the ILGWU. And I had dinner last week with Jay Mazer and Shelley Appleton.

I find the union a little negative nowadays. I'm sure.. I'm speaking of the ILGWU -- that's the one I'm closest with -- These are very decent people, and of course they pioneered so many social acts in this country...but they're... I don't think the unions will ever be back to their 300-400,000 membership in the glory days of the ILG. I think it's going to be a meaner and meaner organization, a lot different. They have been extremely cooperative in the technology. I was worried.
For example, when I ordered the original "CAMSCO," I thought they would really give me a bad time, because none of the union shops had computer grading and that capability. They quickly understood that we had to be concerned about kids working in 2050 and give them great support, and they’re not as negative as I thought they’d be, although they’re... They’re somewhat depressed. I see a...

Maybe it’s because I’m the President of the Fashion Institute and I have to be, but I don’t think that’s really true, I’m not that naive, but they’re much more negative about the future of this industry, generally, than we are. I just see it as being a much more diversified industry. And when I look at the people who are coming into it and want to go into it, it’s a different ball game. When I deal with the younger managers and when I deal with... Of course, we’re great friends with David Schwartz and Freddy Pomerantz and Abe Schrader, and all those. They’re also looking with their children, with their sons, and Mort and Johnny and Richard...." They’re a little more optimistic. And that’s the side I would rather be on.

To answer your question... The ILG is going through its changes. I don’t think it’s been doing a hell of a lot of
organizing. I don't know... It's an international union, but I don't know what they're doing in California. I don't know what is happening in Chinatown, although I know they're working. I think it's a good future for the union. As a matter of fact, if I were a young man looking for a career, I wouldn't hesitate at all going to the ILG. It's going to have a whole different look to it. It's going to be much different. Remember that the industry that the ILG represents has been somewhat transient - people coming and going. There are a lot of terrible federal laws that cause enormous constraints in terms of trust taxes... The people who are itinerant workers are really casual workers; they're not workers who are making a career out of it. And this causes a lot of difficulty. If I own a business and want to sell it and there are certain trust funds that I have to control, I don't want to buy a business where I have an obligation down the line - which may or may not ever occur.

But I think the ILG and Amalgamated are going to end up with a different cadre of worker. They're going to be highly skilled technologists and they're going to be career people. They're not going to be the casual workers who come in in season and go out... It's going to have a different look to it. And I
think the entire trade union movement is going to... It's not
going to be just apparel industries, but all industries.
They're going to have to take a look at their purpose and their
mission. Many of the contracts now being negotiated require
retraining, as a quid pro quo of introduction of technology, so
there's an enormous retraining effort to be undertaken. We're
not going to get into that too much, but it will be quite a job
for a lot of community colleges and technical institutes. And
we're going to come out of it in the year 2074 with a whole
different format. I think that's as positive as you'll get
anywhere. They've been spending the last 20 years going around
looking for cheap labor.

I remember my first year at the Fashion Institute; we
went to Puerto Rico to help the lingerie industry create a
capability of production, and attain a tax abatement. Ten years
later they're asking us to go to Haiti. We have to stop this
nonsense. We can't keep going around the world. There's too
much revolution. People want a better shake, and it's coming to
an end. We're in an era of shared power. People are going to
want to have a certain quality of life and...

American industry is always looking at the end of the
year, bottom line, P&L statements, stockholder bonus... They're not taking a long enough view. We have to come around and start thinking a little bit the way the Japanese... At least they've got a ten year view...

Q: You said that you have a pretty fair idea of where you'll be five years down the road and eight years down the road and ten. Could you elaborate a little bit?

A: Sure. We spend... We do this every five years... Last year we went off on a five day retreat... First of all, we carefully monitor the demographics of education. We knew eight years ago that there would be a change in the number of 17-24 year olds, and we had it mapped out and we knew our markets pretty well. We knew our market share pretty well. We not only project the consumer...

One of the reasons we went into a weekend college... We had a weekend college for women in here... We don't say it's for women but it is for women. We saw in our early research that the growing market in higher education was (this was eight years ago) going to be women, and women returning to the work world. So we translate that into program. We have on the shelves right now majors that we could move on in 24 hours--giftware, toy design...
Q: If you have the room?

A: If we have the room. So we're constantly looking not only at what we teach, but what the needs will be. We were the first institution in America to cater to the entrepreneur and small businesses. We were the first institution in America to have a center for small businesses. We were the first people to publicize the MIT study that 80% of all new jobs are created by companies with few employees. We did this in '72-'73... People are starting to catch up with us.

We are also looking at branch campuses. We have contracts now with major universities all over the country, for a junior year in New York. So we have a lot of fall back positions and a lot of future planning that we could put into place. Every one of our majors at the college is under a five year plan and in each of the majors the changes are enormous. In display, in exhibit... In display... Well, that's changed to visual merchandising. We don't worry about window training and sales of the week. We're talking about lighting and about the total environment of moving goods. And all of our majors... Our majors in textiles have to be as accurate in computer design as they are in weaving. It's just all aspects of curriculum.
So we're never standing still at the Fashion Institute, and we do...our planning is serious. We don't go into planning to plan; we go into planning to think about organizational change; the constant changing of this organization.

Q: Have you got any plans for... You mentioned traveling shows, have you any plans for having traveling shows for some of those great exhibits you've had?

A: Each exhibit we do... For example, the Napoleonic Silks, and the one we're doing now on... We just got a marvelous grant from Arrow Shirts, we're going to be doing American sportswear. We build into all of those proposals an opportunity to move the shows. It depends on the sponsor. We're responsible... We're a public institution so the exhibits that we have here and the shows that we have here and the thousands of people who come here... Of course, some are students in our institute... We provide that opportunity to any of the people who support these programs that we'll take it anywhere... And we have. We had a lingerie show that went to Japan and then to France.

The answer is yes. It's fitted into the budget, and mainly what the grantor does is say, "We'll look at the show, and then we'll say..."
Q: But this is not a fundraising device for you?

A: Oh, no. No. None of these shows... For example, The Hundred Years of Playbill, we don't make money on that. The purpose is educational and...

Q: So if you were to travel a show like that, to five or six places in the country, you would not... I assume you would not do it except under a grant?

A: Of course. It would have to be cost paid. But we don't do that for fundraising. We do it because we're a State University. We don't even charge for entrance or ask for a donation, although that constantly is in review.

Q: And when you mention satellites... Of course there is a lot... Just as hospitals are having to rethink all of their plans, strategic planning, a lot of them are building satellites because... They need the certificate of need from their states and they can't get them, and in order to raise funds, they are in many cases beginning to do other things.

A: Well, what's in trouble are traditional institutions doing traditional things. The institutions that open after Labor Day and close right after Christmas and go from 9-3, 9-4, nine months a year. They're in trouble. The average age of the community college student in New York State is 30, so
we're dealing with a different population now. And the whole
trend is in a much different direction. We even have a bizarre
plan... It's not so bizarre when you think about it...
Midnight college. A lot of people would go to school from
midnight to 3 in the morning. If I did not have a custodial
problem, I would have started it a long time ago.

You think of marketing. It goes back to marketing.
Everything is really marketing. I discovered that the most
popular program is fashion buying and merchandising. In that
program alone we only have 30% market share. So there's a lot
of growth. We don't need to concern ourselves with the
demographic problems that other institutions face because of the
flexibility of the institution, because we can just do anything
we want to do. And the reason we're able to do that is because
we monitor our placement so carefully. I have to report to my
board ... at the October board meeting, the October 15th
meeting, the placement statistics not only of the graduating
class, but the year followup and the three year studies. So we
monitor very carefully what's happening to our graduates.

Q: How many years does that go back, do you know?
A: As long as I've been here, and even before that, I
think. Eleanor Fried, who was our original Placement
Director...
Q: I'll be talking to her...

A: Eleanor put into place some interesting programs. First of all, giving faculty rank to placement counselors, which then allowed me to put them on curriculum committees and standards committees and admissions committees, because they’re part of faculty and they’re able to report back to the faculty and they can do this in a much less formal way... The people quickly know we’re not into hand knits, and we’ve got to get into hand knits, or maybe we need another program in patternmaking for February. I keep getting that feedback. Eleanor’s the one who put that into place and I think we owe a lot to her because this institution has taken that very seriously. One of the first things I did when I arrived was increase the numbers of placement counselors.

Q: Do you have any plans now for new buildings?

A: Yes. A dormitory. It will be a multi-purpose building. The fourth floor will be classroom space in an 18 story building. It’s going to be on the lot near the Resource Center. I hope to get the financing for the place in the next 30 days, but it’s very loose, very, very loose because of "bond marketing" and all the rest of it. We were desperate. I have 120-200 kids a year who can’t even come back to their own
college, and living conditions in the dormitories are obscene. Four kids in a room; it’s really bad. There’s a lottery at the end of the first year to stay on in the dorms. The housing in New York City is just impossible. Even the kids who could afford anything can’t find anything because landlords don’t want to rent to students anyway. So... And that’s the hardest money to raise. There’s nothing more difficult to raise than capital dollars. People are willing to give scholarships.

And that’s the way it should be. It should be hard. But I’ve been working on this for three years.

Q: Well, I hope you get there very fast.

A: We will. I’m sure by next year we’ll have the ground broken or at least started. It will take a couple of years to get it up. We’re desperately short of classroom space. Once we have classroom space, we want to go into restoration. We want to go into antique restoration. Our country’s getting older. There are so many things to do.

Q: It’s exciting isn’t it?

A: Well, I wrote a paper some years ago called “Plenty of Work, Not Enough Jobs.” It seems that in a free society, there is so much work to be done, so many things that ought to
be done, but there are not enough jobs to go around. And it seems to be the major fear. That's why there are so few democracies left in the world. In a free society, there's always the nagging fear there are not enough jobs to go around. If you could stand back and look at the work there is to be done and translate that into jobs, it seems there would be plenty of jobs. There is a misconception that the role of an institution such as the Fashion Institute is to find out what industry needs and then train the people for their needs, rather than look at the people's needs and educate the people. I think there's a significant difference. When you train people to do work, to get a job, there is a profound difference in the educational path. So many of our students are self-employed.

At the alumni party the other night I was talking to half a dozen students who graduated from the college over the last eight years. Four of them, since the day they walked out of here, have been self-employed, working out of a freelance bureau on 42nd Street, advertising, and making enormous money. I told them I was getting worried about them because they are getting a little older and they're not into Blue Cross/Blue Shield and all those goodies that we worry about, and
they laughed. They have a different agenda, and they're controlling their lives a lot differently. I went around talking to those kids. They were all making at least $2,000 a week. They work when they want to, and lead a life style that made me as nervous as a Depression baby. But they have a different agenda and they weren't about to go through the corporate world. Ever. And that's a very interesting phenomenon. I think it's the first time since the Civil War that we've had that kind of attitude. I also ran into four or five textile design graduates living in Soho, selling samples. They hire some high school kids to do their coloring; the colorists are there. And that's the life style that they wanted. Then I met a young lady who just opened up a store in a mall in New Jersey, a specialty shop, earning less than she was earning with B. Altman, but controlling her own business. That seems to be an interesting phenomenon.

Q: I think there's a relationship between what you're saying now and what Andrew Goodman used to say, which was that at some point in the future there would be two kinds of stores, one of which would be a K-Mart kind of discount store - no services or amenities whatsoever. And on the other hand a Bergdorf Goodman.
Anyway, I think we can end right here. Thank you very much.