Oral History Interview of Margaret Collins Weitz

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Interview By: Patrick Riordan and Tessa White

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Interview Summary
Margaret Collins Weitz, professor emerita and former chair of Suffolk University’s Humanities and Modern Languages Department, discusses her non-traditional path into academia, her research, and her career at Suffolk. She begins with a description of her experiences growing up as child during the Great Depression and her Fulbright experiences in France which inspired her seminal research into women in the French Resistance. Dr. Weitz describes her campus involvement which ranged from reshaping her department and its educational offerings, supporting students from all backgrounds, to convening international conferences at Suffolk. She discusses the university’s dramatic growth, demographic changes, and the creation of international campuses in Madrid, Spain and Dakar, Senegal. The interview concludes with a discussion of Weitz’s post-retirement career, including several notable recognitions she received from the French government for her scholarship related to France and French women.

Subject Headings
Education and globalization
Suffolk University – History
Weitz, Margaret Collins
World War, 1939-1945--Women
TRANSCRIPT BEGINS

PAT REEVE: Today is Wednesday, October 31st, 2018. And this is an interview with Professor Emerita Margaret Collins Weitz.

PATRICK RIORDAN: So thank you so much for coming today, Margaret. I'm Patrick, and this is Tessa.

MARGARET COLLINS WEITZ: Hello.

RIORDAN: And we’re students at Suffolk University. As you probably remember, this interview will be archived at the Moakley Archives, and will be available to the public. So we do ask that you sign this consent form, if you don’t mind.

WEITZ: Mm-hmm.

[Pause]

REEVE: Do you need something to write on, Margaret?

WEITZ: Well, I can write on this thing here. Put my name in, right?

RIORDAN: Yeah.

WEITZ: Shall I fill in the date and location? Or you can put that in, right?

RIORDAN: Yeah, we can put that in.

WEITZ: Okay.

RIORDAN: Thank you very much.
**WEITZ:** Somebody’s nice pen here.

**RIORDAN:** Thank you. Okay. So I guess let’s just get started then. So, just to start off, we do know that—just to start off with some things we know about you. We know you accomplished a lot during your time here as chair of the humanities and modern languages department. And we also know a bit about your extensive research into French women’s lives during the Resistance. And we’re hoping to ask you a couple questions about your career and your research. So I guess, just to start off, why did you decide to become an academic?

[00:03:49]

**WEITZ:** Because I guess I always enjoyed reading [from] very young. And I had some very fine teachers. And I thought I would like to share and continue that experience that I have had if possible.

**RIORDAN:** Was there any big moment that you were just like, “This is what I want to do?”

**WEITZ:** Well, I don’t know how much you know about my background. But it’s very complicated.

**RIORDAN:** Yeah.

[00:04:21]

**WEITZ:** I mean it’s not the typical academic background. And so I wasn’t ever—well, not until very late, was I in a position to make that kind of decision. I don’t know if you want me to tell you. Because, as I tell my French friends, my background is atypical, yet typical of Americans; that is, we changed a lot. I am from a Depression-era family, from Toledo, Ohio, the oldest of four. We were all born in different cities because my father kept losing his job during the Depression. And when I was 14, he had a breakdown. And this was—you know when I was born, so that clues you in. There was no salary, no savings, and no insurance. So I had to take all kinds of part-time jobs.
I was then in a convent school where I had won a scholarship from the Ursuline nuns, who have a history of teaching. And that’s their dedication. And so I took mostly babysitting [jobs], but also making craft supplies, and doing various things, and helping my mother. The youngest was one, so my mother could not go to work. And doing dressmaking and so on.

At sixteen, when I was eligible, I spent the summer working in a branch of Macy’s. And then, when I graduated from high school, I worked there full-time. There was never a question of my going to college, even though I had a very good academic background. And come to think of it, in the Midwest, and in that era, not too many [women went to college]—there was never—I don’t know if anybody in our class even ever went to college. So anyhow, I went—I wanted to continue my education.

And there, I was fortunate, in the sense that I was an indirect beneficiary of the GI Bill. The year that I started working, I could also go to night school full-time, four nights a week. How I managed? You do things when you're younger, as you both know. And there were more classes at night school, actually, at the University of Toledo than day, to accommodate all the veterans who were now eligible.

But I never had an advisor, never—there are limitations, I think, to online learning for certain disciplines. This is something I won't get into unless you want me to. But anyhow, I have some thoughts on it. And, in any event, I worked six, sometimes seven days a week, depending on the holidays and sales and whatever. And went to school four nights a week, from six thirty to ten. In other words, full-time schedule.

And after—and in my work, I didn’t like clerking and so on. But I did well. And when I was 19, they asked me to join the Junior Executive Training Program, where I was with a group who all had bachelor’s in marketing. And it was a six month training program, management.
This I mentioned when I had my interview here at Suffolk because I had some training in management which came in handy in running a department, or at least I thought it might. Any event, so here I am, taking, after a year or two, classes for which I had no background. I just wanted credits. But I was very fortunate, and this goes back to what I said in the beginning, there were some very dedicated teachers, particularly in history. And in any event, when the younger siblings could help out after a few years, I had decided by then, that I did not want to go on and be a merchandise manager. And the head of it all predicted a great future for me. But it wasn’t the future that I wanted.

And so I wrote two letters, one to Ohio State, asking if they could accept me as a student, and so I could get some kind of a degree. And I needed financial aid. And another to Radcliffe. Radcliffe never answered. But the dean at Ohio State offered me a half-time civil service job in his office and a scholarship. And in one year, they put together this very strange collection of courses that I had, you know, musical theory, with a woman who was a pupil of Nadia Boulanger, who founded the Longy School of Music. Anyhow, and they gave me the first ever bachelor’s in humanities at Ohio State.

And this becomes relevant much later on. So anyhow, by then, I had to take a language. There were no languages at night school. And I took French. And somehow it clicked. And I decided it would be—that’s when I made the decision you asked about initially, and decided I would like to become a French teacher. But I anticipated doing some remedial work, to put it mildly, because I did not have—I was—a couple of—while we were on quarters, not semesters. But anyhow, a couple quarters ahead of the very first class in French.

And somebody—one of their teaching assistants didn’t come back from Europe, where he had been on scholarship. And so I was suddenly four quarters ahead of what I had on teaching that class. But language is the kind of thing where there are limits and so on. It’s not like a field where you really have to have a vast amount of knowledge.
So anyhow, I started graduate school, and taking seminars. And one of the buyers that I had back in Toledo, Ohio—I'm now living in Columbus, at Ohio State—used to drive me back and forth. Her son, he was finishing up his doctorate at Ohio State. And one day in our traveling, he said, “I just applied for a Fulbright.” And I said, “Oh. What's that?” And he told me. And I thought, “Well, that sounds interesting.” And, as you probably guessed by now, I got the Fulbright and he did not. [Laughter] Well, I think he had been in the military, and had been in France. So that might have been a factor. In any event, maybe they thought, “If this person, given her background, wants to become a French teacher, we have to help her. But she has a ways to go.”

And so I, for the first time, went to New York. Because of our background, we had never traveled or had—or had vacations. And went on the Liberté. And was assigned to Poitiers, which is a medieval town. It’s near—well it’s between Bordeaux and Tours, if you know Western France. Our government, then, in its wisdom, kept all the young men in Paris. And we were eight young women in Poitiers, which the French, even then—and we’re in the mid-fifties now—described as mi-couvent, mi-musée, which means it’s a town that was half a museum and half a convent. I mean it was just very—So I didn’t really meet many French people and that part of it was not too successful. It was a wonderful Romanesque town, and I did a lot of traveling, and met some friends. And we’d spend a lot of time traveling.

And I think, in a way, it was wise, rather than just try and take these courses, which the French, for example, in these courses that we were assigned, would spend a whole year on a couple of poems, you know, really analyze them in depth and so on. And I wasn’t certainly up to that level. And most of us weren’t. So most of the Fulbrights I know knew, at least those who were not staying in Paris, traveled. And that was a revelation for me, because it was the first time in—in a decade that I wasn’t working and going to school.

At the end of the school year, I got a letter from the Fulbright Commission asking me if I wanted to stay another year in France and do temps et version, it’s translation both ways. And I thought
that I could manage. And that meant I had my—modest as it was, I had my monthly income and so on, during the summer, and could do all kinds of travel. I had been in youth hostels from Marrakesh to Malmö, up in Sweden. Anyhow, we were then—I was one of a number of very fortunate young people. We had time. And we took advantage of it. We didn’t have much fun. We went steerage to Crete, and so on.

Anyhow, I got a letter when I returned back to my base in the middle of the summer, that announced that the head of the department of English at this university, which was Aix-Marseille, the second largest university after—after Paris. And at that time, it included students all the way to the Italian border, all of Corsica, and all of what was then Algérie Française. The French were still in charge of—Algeria was one of their colonies. And so it was a very mixed student group, and also very large.

But he decided that I was his replacement. And he sent me a thing. I was going to teach American civilization, although there was some question as to whether that was a legitimate subject, but never mind. You know, again, this was all—they never had an American teaching it before, you see. So, and then a few pages of everybody—every writer you have ever heard of. And they thought the summit of American literature was James Fennimore Cooper. Well, you know, this came as a surprise. But it wasn’t—it wasn’t when I learned that the head of the department who I was going to replace had done his doctoral dissertation on—guess who? [Laughter]

[00:15:00]
Anyhow, it was a fantastic year. It really—those two years really were crucial in my life, changing so many things. And that year—well, I was younger than any of my French students, which already created some problems. And I had just started a master’s in a subject—and here I am, supposedly teaching Michael Wigglesworth’s colonial epic, *The Day of Doom*, that only graduate students here in English would even attack.

And first and foremost, I learned I don’t speak English. I speak American. And these students, who spoke with the accent of the area, which is not the greatest French, it’s like a southern
accent. You know, it distinguishes you. They were afraid I was going to corrupt their accent. They spoke with the accent of Oxford. The BBC English, which is spoken by four percent of the British public. But that’s what they were graded on. So I had that to deal with.

[00:16:00]
But of course I was a novelty. And there was standing room only for the first couple of classes. But I got there, I got to know some of the French. So anyhow, as you can see, I've had a very, very atypical academic career. When I came back, I finished my master’s and started a doctorate at Ohio State. And that’s when I was introduced to my husband. And he was a professor of philosophy there. He had come from Vassar, his first teaching job. And we married, and wanted a family. And we could not afford babysitting and my tuition.

So I taught, as it turned out, for a decade at Ohio State half-time, which was two classes a quarter, when my husband was free to babysit. So it worked out in that sense very, very nicely. Except I didn’t teach, again, yet as in—As in France, I was not teaching something I had been prepared for. I was in the comparative literature department. But there, it was really great books. It was all done in English, all the reading. But that was very enriching.

[00:17:18]
And maybe I should stop here. I'm probably rambling on. Okay. Well, as I say, you asked for my background. So here I am, just had started a PhD. But then I started, had all these years of teaching at Ohio State. And then, my husband, he was in a situation, he was a full professor. And you have one last chance to get your final teaching job. And he had been offered jobs at NYU and Columbia, a number of places. He was better known, actually, in England, but very well known.

And we chose Brandeis, which offered him a position, because we just thought this area, New England, for the children. We had, by then three—I forgot to mention that. That was fairly important. I had three children in five years, which kept me rather busy on that score. But again, if you're married to an academic, or at least somebody like a philosopher, who doesn’t need research facilities, but can be out mowing the lawn while he’s working on a problem—And we
had neighbors who, you know, would come up to him and say, “Did you find something?” They thought he was—Thought he was unemployed. [Laughter]

[00:18:33]
I went over to the, what was then the Bunting Institute. No, it was the Radcliffe Institute then. It’s changed names several times. Because I had a friend whose husband had come to Harvard. And she had mentioned it in correspondence, to see what I could do. I assumed, half-time teaching. And this was something similar to what I had been doing, in the greater Boston area. And the woman looked at my résumé, and she said, “You’ve had two Fulbrights? And you started, you know, on the PhD? What the area needs is you to finish your PhD.” Well quite honestly, it was the last thing I had thought of. I was not that young. And I had been away, not only from the classroom, but from the subject for ten years, because I had—In Columbus, it was very little in the way of French, maybe a French movie now and then. But I had done virtually nothing.

[00:19:31]
But I had a very fine education at—a thorough MA. For example, my MA at Ohio State was more demanding than the one I did at Harvard eventually. And so that stood me very well. Anyhow, she said, “Look,” the counselor I spoke to at Radcliffe. She said—We were in early January. I had just gotten the kids settled in school, and the house pretty much set up. And she said, “Enrollment closes the fifteenth. Apply, and then decide.” Well, I didn’t even have a résumé. I had to throw one together and so on, which I did. And amazingly, I was accepted.

And so there I am. They didn’t give me much, a couple hundred dollars for babysitting, and that was it. But I only had to do one year of classwork and pay tuition, because again, I had a very good MA, a lengthy MA. Let’s see, two and a half days of written exams—this is for an MA, an oral with five people, one for each century, and a Master’s thesis, which was as long as my Harvard dissertation which came later.

So there I am, teaching four courses. Nobody had explained to my department [head] at Harvard that, for each child, a married woman now, or a woman with a child, could take one less course.
It’s probably just as well. Because if I had started out just taking one course instead of four, I would not be here today probably. I survived that year. And then I started preparing for the—the dissertation and so on.

And I think maybe I better stop here. I’ve just been telling. So we’re almost getting to the—

TESSA WHITE: Yeah. So just to go off of what you were saying before, what kind of things did you do as chair? And what are you most proud of?

WEITZ: Sorry?

WHITE: --being chair at Suffolk University?

WEITZ: What?

WHITE: So when you reached Suffolk University, and you became chair of your department, what sort of things did you do there? And what were you most proud of?

[00:21:51]
WEITZ: Well, number one, I was, you know, much, much older than your—And I came in as an associate professor. And Mike Ronayne, the dean, was a scientist. And he said to me, “You're in charge of humanities at Suffolk.” He had a bad experience with Latin—I could never get him to—at BC. I could never get him to let us have Latin, and some things like that. But he was—He, you know, just gave me carte blanche, essentially. And so I was a multi-disciplinary department with one person essentially for each discipline, which created problems, simply because the faculty had no common background, professionally. They had each been in their own schools, and belonged to their own professional associations.

So I started to try and make the department more integrated. And I wanted it to have more impact and, you know, with the students, to get more students. Because with one person, it’s kind of difficult to keep things going. And one of the things that I did, based on my experience, I
I haven't mentioned that yet, but this was before I came to Suffolk. I was head of, for a couple years, of the Alliance for Independent Scholars. This is 99 percent women in the Greater Boston area, who have doctorates but not regular jobs. And so I drew on that experience, and talked the dean into half-time assistant professorships. He had never heard of this. And I don't even know if it exists elsewhere or still exists. But that meant that you have somebody who's not just a lecturer. And you can't expect [part-time lecturers], especially here, where we taught four—four courses was the standard, and large classes.

[00:23:55]
So firstly, I talked him into a couple appointments where people would contribute more, and—and think about programs, and getting the students more involved, and make a larger commitment. And then, as we grew, then they became full-time. And then I also got the dean to reduce the class sizes. I had two classes of forty-five students each, without any assistance or anything. And if you want, as many of the students need, written work that then somebody looks at and corrects, it's—it's a real burden. So I got it down to thirty-eight. I don't know where it is at the moment. But—

REEVE: Nineteen for upper level.

[00:24:41]
WEITZ: Okay, we've come a long way. So anyhow, that was one of the things that I did. When I was burglarized—and we won't get into that—One day, in the afternoon when I was here, not thinking I had anything of value, they took my computer, which I had not taken the disk out of. And I was giving a paper at a professional meeting in New York a few days later. And that's—I had just had a PC for a year. And suddenly, I had to go back to the yellow legal pad, and I realized, in one year, how much the computer had changed the way I do things. But I had bought myself a PC because I had contract for a book, before I came to Suffolk. And I published, and that's all part of the later days.

And I knew I would not have time. And, as we got a computer a year, basically, that was the allotment. And so I gave it to them. And little by little to different members of the department, I
gave them the computer of the year, so to speak. And so that was something that I, you know—
And I tried, and I was very pleased to hear the new president talk about foreign scholarships and so on, because that was one area—Now here we were with four languages, and no money to send these kids over for a semester, or even a short trip to, you know, which I felt, from my own experience, was very important. But we never—I didn’t get very far with that. But apparently, it’s [moving forward now]— But I did help—We had then a very aggressive person in charge of enrollment. I don’t know if she’s still around—Marguerite Dennis?

REEVE: Marguerite retired a few years back. I can't quite—it may not even be that long ago.

[00:26:40]

WEITZ: Okay. Well this woman, who had been dean of the dental school, I think it was, at Georgetown, her husband was a pilot for one of the big airlines. And so she traveled a great deal. And suddenly, we were having—we were going to trade fairs in Hong Kong, and so on. And Suffolk is, little by little, expanding into a larger [market]. When I came, it was—we had a—the dean who did the recruiting went, essentially, to the thirteen Catholic schools and that was it. So we had a large component of Italian and Irish [students]. But, little by little, we became more cosmopolitan. And then that went along with the larger demographic growth anyhow.

[00:27:28]

And then, well I did any number of things, tried to—We had the first African-American professor in the department. And he was an artist. And I tried to get—I arranged shows for him and things like that, to get the students more involved. And I got to go to Madrid, at least, and check up on our program there. So that was—it was nice. It just seemed like I was always involved.

And then I got us involved in two international conferences, which we’d never had before, no connection like that. And this was because, among other things, I am—and I still am—I was vice-president of the Boston-Strasbourg. And we had exchanges with inner city kids, who some of them have hardly ever been to downtown Boston. And it was something, you know, because I believe very strongly in exposure to other cultures and other countries.
And because of that connection, they helped, in ’89, which was the 200th anniversary of the French Declaration of the Rights of Man, I’d happened to be in Strasbourg. And the president of the three universities there said to me, “Let’s have a joint conference in Boston. I’ll send over a few professors who speak English.” In one case, that was not the case. But anyhow, that’s another story. And so we had the first ever conference in ’89. I got Stanley Hoffmann, who I knew from Harvard, I haven’t gotten to that either, yet. But for a couple years I was associated with the Harvard Center for European Studies. And he came, and a number of people. And we had a roundtable on human rights at city hall. I wanted to bring the larger community in. And they recorded this. I don’t know if it’s still available or what. But anyhow, they did. I edited the notes, because, for example, Stanley Hoffmann’s comparison of the French view of human rights versus the American, I think is a classic. And people were—So anyhow.

And then, I organized one other major conference. And you have to understand, we had so little funding and support. I was going to the airport, meeting people, shopping for napkins and so on for a reception, all this kind of business, running around the neighborhood. Oh, that’s another thing that I did, is a little part. But we had a music department. And we had access to the, what was it, Old West Church?

REEVE: Yes.

WEITZ: The organ there. And we had—He was an organist in his church as well. Harry—is he still here? No?

REEVE: Kelton?

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1 The conference papers, *Celebrating Human Rights: Papers from the Bicentennial Symposium on Human*, were edited by Margaret Collins Weitz and published by Suffolk University in 1990.
WEITZ: Yeah.

[00:30:32]

WEITZ: Okay, well he had a full-time job as head of this church in—I think it was Wellesley. Anyhow, he played the organ. And we invited the whole neighborhood, you know. It was an open concert for trying to get the community in, too. But to go back to the second major conference, you will not be surprised, it was about women in the French Resistance. [Laughter] Which I was then writing a book on. Well, I had already written a lengthy introduction to this one well known woman [Lucie Aubrac] who was—To the English version of her—The translation of her memoir [Outwitting the Gestapo]. And I had been asked to write a very lengthy introduction to that. I'm talking about thirty pages or something. It’s been reprinted a number of times.

But it was a Book of the Month Club selection here in this country. And I thought it would be nice to invite her. And our attaché cultural in the French Cultural Services is the child of two former resistance [members]. Anyhow, she got very excited. And she knew Lucie Aubrec, this woman. And made—contributed and so on. And so we had this big conference, four days. We had a show at the French Library. I don’t know if any of you are familiar with that, over there? —Yeah.

[00:31:58]

And I went to France, and I worked in the Ministry of Veterans and Foreign—I'm translating it—and Victims of War. And in their archives I picked out a number of illustrations for a show at the French Library. And they not only mounted them and— did a wonderful job, and made things, and shipped them—they shipped them over here. And said, “No cost. Your country helped us during the war.” So that was rather nice. Anyhow, we had that [conference].

And we had—I talked to Stanley Hoffmann. He claimed he didn’t have any money, you know, to afford Lucie. But anyhow, she talked there. She didn’t speak English. So that was a little bit [of a problem]. But I had a number of people here. That’s when I brought Michèle Plott in. I wanted to give her some exposure. She didn’t have tenure. And so I got her involved in that. And we
published the papers. And it turned out there were a number of people working on different [French resisters] in the area. Susan Suleimon, my friend over at Harvard, and so on.

[00:33:09]
That was a big production. That was four days. But we had the different—There had already been a film based on her, on this one woman. And they showed that at the Harvard Film Archives. And we had all the meetings here at Suffolk, and a reception. [Small section removed].

But to go back to the students, you know, that was the main thrust. As I think I've already indicated some of the things that I've tried to do. And I say tried, but—Oh, I brought, among other things, I helped Harry get the Sunday concerts we had for many, many years. I don’t know, were you ever at any of them?

REEVE: No, they predate me.

[00:34:09]
WEITZ: Yeah. This is Emmanuel Music, which is very well known. Boston is great for early music, has all kinds of things going on. And this group is at the church down by Copley Square. For many years, they did every non-orchestral piece of certain composers, like Brahms, with all of these very talented people. And I think these concerts were free. I can't remember. This was in our theatre on Sunday afternoons, for many, many years. And that gave us a good standing, too, in the larger community. Suffolk was—Well, they had never—Many of them didn’t know where Suffolk was. And it gave them a chance to see that.

And then we brought a new music group. They did some concerts. And I also brought the Boston Baroque, which is the oldest early music group in the country, for rehearsal. Because so many of our students had never been to a—what they thought was going to be a boring classical music concert. And maybe they still thought that. But at least they got to see the group informally on the stage practicing. And these guys and gals—mostly guys, but they were wearing, you know, jeans and sneakers, and just like the rest of them, not in tux and all the rest. And those were kind
of a fun thing, because you could plan beforehand, and have the students play excerpts of music for them, and give them some idea about what was going to integrate it.

[00:35:48]
So I think one of the things – I hadn't really reflected on this – but trying to give Suffolk more of a presence, you know, and be better known, is one of the things. And I think there, the dean was very supportive. And he was very pleased. Because I had gotten a number of grants when I was here. And that gave me, exposure.

RIORDAN: So you mentioned a few things that were changing around the time you entered Suffolk, such as ethnic diversity and class size. There's also—Well, Suffolk was transitioning from a commuter school to a residential one. What kind of changes affected your role at Suffolk?

[00:36:41]
WEITZ: You mean in the physical components? Where we were situated? I can remember, for example, chair meetings where the dean and others [said] absolutely, “Suffolk will never have dormitories.” I mean that’s where I go back. And that was the feeling. And also, I had heard that we had a very conservative board of trustees who would only pay cash, and would not take out mortgages. And in fact—And we sold quite a bit—a number of properties on the Hill, here, which was gentrifying.

The whole idea of a campus was one of the things. I still feel that Suffolk misses a bit on not doing more of offering classes for all the workers in the offices, in the area around here. When I see what Harvard has done, and just jumped way up, we’re even better located. We have many more people working right around here. To stay another hour and a half for a really good class, this is something that I tried to get started. Maybe we’re doing a better job on that, I don’t know. But apart from the fact that the dormitories were just a no-go, we couldn’t even discuss it.

[00:38:02]
In my own experience, as I say, I was burglarized. And I bought a house where I could entertain, because we had no faculty club, or at least we didn’t. I think now it’s only the law school, is that correct?

REEVE: Most of the events are now held here, because it has space, yes.

WEITZ: So, you know, so I could—because I wanted [our faculty] who were all, as I say, from different backgrounds and so on, to even bring their spouses, partners, friends, whatever. Kids too, some of them already had children. So I think the location is perfect, except that it doesn’t have space. I mean, and that’s always been our major issue. And in what ways that I could, I tried to help us on that score. Now, do we still have this little theatre over here?

WHITE: The Modern Theatre.

WEITZ: Does that have ongoing programs? Because I never get any—any sort of messages or anything.

REEVE: Let’s talk afterwards, because what I can do is make sure that we figure out who needs to be in touch with you.

[00:39:21]

WEITZ: Yes. I just learned that my—I hired a number of people, including Fred Marchant. And he got the medal that I was one of the first to get. And I knew nothing about it! They should have a list of—At least let those of us who have this, you know, come to the next—

REEVE: The Heritage Award?

WEITZ: Yeah, yeah, yeah, the Heritage.

REEVE: I'm surprised that HR isn't doing that.
[00:39:46]

WEITZ: In fact, I didn’t know anything about it. I just, as I said, it was Julia who told me about it when I saw her with some materials. Well, I think Suffolk could also—and we’re jumping ahead here, but do more. And you are now with this. But using the resources of faculty who, you know, who are retired, but are still able to perhaps help in various ways. But this is a—Well not me, necessarily, but I think it’s—it’s something that will help. I'm not sure I answered your question.

RIORDAN: I think you mostly did, yeah. It was just how did these changes kind of affect what you did here.

[00:40:34]

WEITZ: Well, I think it was—I won't say I was leading the change, but I was a part of it. And we were a larger, you know, I'm thinking particularly of my dear friend’s friend, Ken. And we were trying to get Suffolk more recognition, more professional, quite honestly, I think. And then there was [David] Robbins. I think he brought a Phi Beta Kappa chapter here, didn’t he?

REEVE: There's a Phi Alpha Beta in History. He may have, I don’t know. He was here when I got here. But I didn’t have much interaction with him.

[00:41:15]

WEITZ: Anyhow, you know, we just thought that here’s this wonderful resource, this jewel of a place. And it’s just not as well known as it should be. And while Marguerite Dennis was going around and making all these connections, and that brought us, I think a fair—most of our international students. I went twice to Dakar, to teach when we had that program there. And that was certainly an extraordinary experience. But I don’t know, that didn’t—That ended a few years ago, right?

REEVE: Yes. I don’t know if, Tessa or Patrick are aware that we had a campus in Senegal.

RIORDAN: Oh really?
REEVE: Professor Bellinger was very involved with that and continues to go back. But yeah.

[00:42:06]

WEITZ: The dean wanted me to take that program over, because I'm Franco fluent. And everybody there is. And that’s the language of the country, the major. And, by the way, they speak a beautiful French, much better than Paris or France, even, because it’s not been corrupted by advertising and all the rest. And I—What happened to these poor students after two years in this tropical climate, and then they come here for two years? [Laughter] It was a business degree. But I went there and did the humanities requirement. But anyhow, that was certainly, that was post—Actually, I think that was post-retirement.

WHITE: Yeah.

WEITZ: I went there. And that was, for me, personally, that was an extraordinary experience. People said, you know—This was after 9/11 and so on. And here you're going to a country that’s 93 percent Muslim. And I can tell you, they have alcohol 24/7 which we don’t even have here in Massachusetts. [Laughter] And the women wear the most revealing clothing. I mean it was just totally—Your preconceptions are—No, Islam is practiced in Sub-Saharan Africa is very different from the Arab countries, very different. Are you familiar with some of it?

REEVE: I have actually, only from afar. I would like to go very much.

[Side Remarks]

REEVE: I know you folks want to get to learning more about her research with the French Resistance and stuff. It’s about five after four. So you have plenty of time.

WHITE: Yeah. So going off of that, well first, we wanted to ask how research fit in with your teaching. Because we know you're kind of doing both at the same time. So how did that work for you?
WEITZ: It’s as Simone de Beauvoir says, the personal becomes political. The fact that I had to drop out of my doctoral program when I married because I wanted a family, and we could not afford childcare and tuition. When I started doing graduate work, even already at—Well, when I came to Harvard and was doing graduate work, finishing up my PhD at a much later age, I realized how very different my career would have been if I were French, because—And this became my soapbox. The French have non-compulsory childcare. It starts at six months. And that’s the crèche, the crib that goes to two and a half years. There's a slight charge. It’s need-based, but not prohibitive at all.

And then, from two and a half on, they have what they call an École Maternelle. That’s the maternal school, pre-kindergarten. And this is free, non-compulsory. And the teachers are—It’s part of the national education system. The teachers are trained for—Like elementary school teachers but appropriate for their age group that they're going to be teaching. And they're paid by the French government.

By age four, ninety-some percent of French children are in these schools whether the mother works or not. In other words, it’s just accepted as part of the grand educational scheme. And it just so happened, on a sabbatical with my late husband, and I had three kids in this little French town, a fishing village. There was a foundation for American professors. Again, I found out about it from somebody and applied. And there we are. And I was asked to join the PTA, because I was—well, I was a Harvard doctoral student, you know, never mind in her mid-forties, but whatever. And I had three children in the elementary school, the only one in the town. There were 3,000 people in the winter. But in summer, it’s a big resort place.

That was the first time I really felt part of France, or French people. I got to know them because we shared our children. And that’s when they—one day, they said to me, “Well, Madame, you know, you're at Harvard.” And it’s the one name that they know, you know. Never mind. “And
tell us about the École Maternelle in the States.” And I said, “Well, we don’t have them.” You know, consternation. “What do American women do?” And a very good question.

[00:47:17] And so I started. And when I came back, a Harvard professor – I don’t think you would know his name – but anyhow, had heard about my being the PTA. And he said, “Why don’t you write that up.” So although I did my doctoral dissertation at Harvard and the literature of the French Renaissance -- not a growth industry -- from Rabelais to Montaigne. Anyhow, here I am, writing about my experiences in the French PTA.

And the journal that published this article asked me to write a little bit more about French women. And I wrote an article about the new French Feminist Movement, which was then happening. And I was meeting some of the women involved and finding it very interesting. And then I was asked to expand those two articles in a book, into a book. And that’s when I—They wanted an introductory essay of eight centuries of French women, you know, starting with Marie de France in the Middle Ages. So I did my homework.

[00:48:22] And suddenly, when I got to the 20th century, I met—I found a few articles by journalists about women in the French Resistance. And I knew nothing about this, but I knew some women who had been in the Resistance, and who were very active in social issues, such as family planning and so on. And I wondered if there was a link. And because I've had this crazy academic background, I didn’t worry about not being a historian. [Laughter] And decided that I would write the book. So in that sense, the work that I've done professionally, anyhow, is the direct result of my finding out how different my career would have been if I had been French.

REEVE: I wasn’t going to interrupt, but I just want to follow up by saying that I'm completely intrigued by the reality that it was your family life that led you down some of these scholarly paths. So it’s really interesting integration of family, teaching families, the way they run in together, and your life was very interesting.
RIORDAN: Was there anything particularly enlightening about your research, I guess? Anything you discovered that really surprised you?

[00:49:50]

WEITZ: I guess it was the fact that, number one, because these kind of wars don’t leave any sort of—clandestine wars don’t leave archives. So you have to work from oral history. I'm very sorry, in a way that I wasn’t into this technology when I did these interviews. But I don’t think it was developed that much. But in any event, I knew—The first thing I had to do was to interview as many women as I could before, because they were aging. And there, the fact that I'm foreign helped me because there had been journalists who had picked up things, and that had been sensationalized, and not totally accurate. There wasn’t that much to begin with.

Everything written about World War II in France up to that point was about the military, the men, and particularly those who came in at the very end of the war. And that was just it. They came in at the very end of the war. And these women, who had done these extraordinary things that I was starting to hear about, very few of them did it for political reasons. And the simple reason for that is, do you know when French women got the vote? 1944. And they voted for the first [time]. This was the Algerian Assembly, when the French government was then in Algeria. And they voted for the first time in 1945.

[00:51:21]

So apart from the Communist party, which had always a strong component of women. French women were not politically active. And that was the big surprise. But they had turned to social issues, and tried to help those who had been imprisoned and so on after the war, and things of that sort. And so that was certainly one of the discoveries.

Another one was, very few of them had declared themselves after the war as veterans. Even though one woman kept apologizing, because she said, as if it was her fault, she said, “I was arrested three times.” Well each time, if you had been arrested once, then you know what happens, you know, to do it again. Anyhow, they all said, you know, “I didn’t do anything. I just did what I had to do.” And it was this total sort of gut reaction. And some of the women
compared the German presence on French soil to rape. It was rape of their country. And they saw it in very physical terms.

[00:52:35]
Those are some of the issues that I found. Number one, De Gaulle had no use for women. He was a traditional military figure and wouldn’t even let them in, until the very end. And then they could drive cars—you know, chauffeur visiting VIPs around London, and things like that. But these women were very inventive. And they could do things, you know, put on disguises. And they were much—Because women really didn't have much of a role, married women were very restricted in France during World War II. That’s something that is not well known. Married women couldn’t even open a bank account without their husband’s signature, couldn’t do all kinds of things, couldn’t get a job, certainly, couldn’t travel, couldn’t do—

[00:53:28]
And so, with almost two million Frenchmen prisoners of war, suddenly they had to start changing the laws. And so women had a chance to do a lot more and take on total new roles. And then there was sort of a Rosie the Riveter syndrome after the war. All these men came back, and after, it was very traumatic. Some of them had been in camps for six years, some of these, you know. And their kids, if they had kids before they left, their children didn’t recognize them. And it was very, very traumatic.

But, you know, women, number one, didn’t have a strong patriotic, nationalistic view of things. They just, they loved France, and what France represented. And their families. And they were willing to do these extraordinary things, I think. That’s what I think.

WHITE: Yeah. So going back to your time at Suffolk, we were talking about the differences, like how things were when you were there, and changes that you were implementing. So we were just wondering what advice you’d give to our current university leadership.

[00:54:48]
WEITZ: Well, I wish I knew the current leadership better. So I mean, I have—I just know what I read in the papers. And my neighbors are always asking me, “What’s happening down at Suffolk? You have so many presidents, and etc.” And I honestly, I never had any contact. The dean asked me to represent the faculty way back, when I—just shortly after I came on the trustees’ board. There was always a faculty [member]. But I had, with this new multidisciplinary department and heavy teaching responsibilities, I said no. [Section removed.]

Anyhow, so I have had very—I always worked closely with Mike [Ronayne]. I never, unlike people—one particular person in my department who always went right up to [Frank] Flannery, I was just an impediment in his life. I don’t feel that I know that much, that I can offer, other than indirectly, things that I’ve mentioned that might be relevant, like taking more advantage of the pop—you know, the working population around here. That’s certainly one thing that—But I think some of the things that I—from what I'm learning now, that I was concerned about, like the scholarships, thanks to President Kelly and so on, for travel abroad and so on, some of these things are being implemented. And unless you have some specific idea in mind about—

WHITE: No, we’re kind of just talking generally.

RIORDAN: Yeah. Well, I guess what was one of your most memorable experiences working here at Suffolk?

[00:56:47]
WEITZ: Memorable at what? Events?

RIORDAN: Really, anything. Just like anything you did that was really particularly important? If there was a class you taught, or some big scholarly event that was happening around here?

[00:57:04]
WEITZ: Well, certainly some of the people I hired. For example, Fred [Marchant]—Mike came to me with his résumé. Some of these departments, they have people in place to be moved up, and bringing in someone new, who perhaps has certain better qualifications and upsets the whole
thing. So the English department, at that point, didn’t want him. And so I took—He had been—Yeah, I think he had been here before teaching. And then he’d been teaching history and lit over at Harvard. But I took one look at his résumé and said, “Yes. Yes. I’ll have him. I’d love to have him.” And then I sort of groomed him to be my replacement.

REEVE: He’s being interviewed for this as well.

WEITZ: Sorry?

REEVE: He’s being interviewed this fall as well.

[00:57:56]

WEITZ: Okay, great. And the same situation with Leslie [Croxford] over in—Who’s now, well, he was in charge of our Madrid Bureau. And he is just extraordinary. And that was the History Department that didn’t want him. He had done a PhD at Cambridge, England, at Trinity College in history. I mean—and he’s written a book which became a bestseller. And he had—

REEVE: Short-sighted?

WEITZ: Well, you know, but I was happy to have him. Eventually they took him in history, and integrated him. And then, because he was multilingual—He’s a fascinating guy. And I'm sorry that apparently Suffolk didn’t take him back when he wanted to come back from Egypt. I don’t know if you're familiar with the writings of André Aciman, a novelist. Well, he teaches at Bard College. Leslie is from this family. [Sentence removed.] But his mother is Sephardic Jewish. That’s this group that were expelled in—what is it, 1542 or so on—No, wait a minute. I got my dates—was the same year as Columbus, I think.

REEVE: 1492.

[00:59:19]
WEITZ: 1492. I'm off 100 years. Well, never mind. Scrub that on the tape. Well listen, given my age—Anyhow, he comes from this family on his mother’s side. And his father was a British military figure. That’s where he gets the name. And they were living in Alexandria. He’s fluent in several languages, including Arabic. And in ’54, they were expelled by Nasser from Egypt. And so he has this, as I say, extraordinary background.

And so I was able to bring in a couple things. And then I talked, as I said earlier, about bringing in halftime situations which then became fulltime. And I was always trying to get smaller classes—and also some idea of scholarship. Because when I came in, it was sort of an embarrassment, because nobody in the department had published anything. When you teach four courses, you know, a semester, large classes, it does not—And besides, I had this hiatus in my career, something I didn’t go into.

[01:00:46]
But anyhow, I started publishing. And that was my—my husband was seriously ill and eventually died. So I—And there were no jobs. I say I belong to the last generation—lost generation of scholars. And so I started publishing, and here I had already several books when I came here. And it was kind of hard trying to, well, keep up on my—My work had nothing—I never got to teach anything that I wrote about. That’s just like I've taught all these things that I never studied.

So remember, going back to your— kind of hard to say a particular “Eureka” moment. But just in general, I thought I was so fortunate to be here, because in my experience—so many of our students, then anyhow, were working. And I had done virtually all my B.A. at night school. And I just knew how important it was to have professors who were there to help you. And I just thought that, you know, I was very lucky to have the opportunity to use some of my own experience in what we do here, and do so well, I think.

REEVE: Patrick, may I piggyback on your question?

RIORDAN: Go ahead.
REEVE: Suffolk obviously changed a good deal during your time working at it. Could you comment on the shift in what you saw in the student body, the shift in how faculty thought about the school? If relevant, maybe just talk first about the shift in the student body? Because presumably, by the time you retired, it had changed considerably.

[01:02:45]
WEITZ: Well, I guess the main shift was, when we lost the—They had different names, and they changed some of them. The recruiter we had, who only went to the parochial schools, basically, gave us a very limited number—I mean kind of student body. Very, very fine. And I had secretaries and so on. And now one of them is a professor himself, who came from that background. But it was—it was parochial, in the truest sense of the word, literally.

So, when Marguerite Dennis came in, and started expanding, then suddenly we started having foreign students, which we—you could count in one hand prior to that, the number. We had virtually none. So that was certainly a major, major change.

[01:03:41]
I think partly accountable also, demography. I don’t know how much of Boston proper but I think Suffolk became better known beyond the Boston area as a school where you could get a very fine education, with no huge financial investment. And we started having dormitories. I don’t know what impact that’s had. I haven’t—That’s after my time, essentially. But that must have had quite an impact, no?

RIORDAN: Yeah.

WEITZ: I was not involved in any of that, so to speak.

REEVE: You were obviously very forward-looking in your thinking about what Suffolk could be. And it sounds like you took some very specific steps to move it toward that vision. To the best of your recollection, how did faculty visions for the school change over time?
WEITZ: Well, it depends a great deal on the faculty. Some—

REEVE: You know, your closest colleagues perhaps.

WEITZ: Some were very recalcitrant. They had always done some things in a certain way. And others were open. So you get the same sort of mix with the faculty that you do with human beings. That would be my general sense. We had some problems with affirmative action and all that. But you know, just a range of responses. Some people were very—But I think, in the long run, people, when they saw how things were going, accepted and brought in, so to speak, those who had not.

But I remember, for example, when we were—Oh, I didn’t even mention this. This is another thing. When we were going to hire a replacement for one of our French professors, the reason I never got to teach French when I came here, or anything to do with France, we had two full professors [teaching French]. And half the years, we didn’t even have a major in French. So they were teaching these humanities surveys, which was what I did.

But then, things looked up a little. And we were going to replace this professor who had retired from French. And we had two outstanding candidates in mind. I was head of the search committee. And I went to Mike, and I talked him into hiring both of them, because one of them—Well, they're still here.

REEVE: Barbara [Abrams] and Marjorie [Attignol Salvodon]?

WEITZ: Exactly the pair. Here’s Barbara, who has a classical French background, a very fine and great teacher. And here’s Marjorie, who was at Mount Holyoke, who did her B.A. in government, I think it was, or something. And then switched over and went—I think it was Yale.
You know, she had a French [PhD]—just tops in French. And I explained to Mike that Marjorie, in particular, could teach in other departments. So I got Mike to hire two people that time, not—Now we’re going up from half-time to full-time, too. Anyhow. So that was one of the things that I most recently was involved in.

REEVE: This was Professor Abrams and Salvodon. I don’t know if you met either of them.

WHITE: Yeah, I don’t think so.

REEVE: I’ll stop and turn it back to you.

WHITE: So going back to what you were saying earlier about how important it is to experience and get to know people from different cultures and different backgrounds, around the time that you were there, there was an increase in ethnic diversity in Boston and in Suffolk. How did you feel about that?

WEITZ: How would I what?

WHITE: How did you feel about that?

WEITZ: Oh, I approved. [Laughter] How could I not? No, no, no, it was for the best.

WHITE: Yeah. Did it cause any changes in the school?

[01:08:07]

WEITZ: Well, I think they’ve—that’s more subsequent to my—Maybe I helped with that. I’d like to think so. But I'm told we do a number of languages [now]. In fact, I don’t even know what my department’s new name is, because I haven't had much contact with them.

REEVE: World Cultures and Modern Languages.
WEITZ: World Cultures. Now that’s—There we go. [Laughter] I don’t know who came up with that, but whatever. No, Suffolk has really changed. And I understand there's somebody who funds classes or programs in is it Arab countries or something? Or do we do Arabic? I vaguely remember Fred telling me about somebody who’s fairly new, a man who’s—Oh, I better ask him about all this.

REEVE: There’s nobody on a full-time language faculty who teaches [Arabic].

[01:09:04]
WEITZ: No, this is a man who runs a program.

REEVE: Okay. I'm not familiar with it.

WEITZ: Okay, as I understand it. I’ll ask Fred. Anyhow, there's just a lot more going on here, very, very much so. And that’s all exciting. And what about the theatre? That was always—

REEVE: The Walsh Theatre?

WEITZ: Well no, the theatre program.

REEVE: The theatre program, what I know about it, I know through my colleagues. But it’s—You two may know more about it than I do, actually. But it seems to be thriving. Certainly, the loss of Walsh Theatre was a blow. And the Modern Theatre is easily half its size. So it’s quite a loss in seating capacity. And it’s the difference in the kind of productions. I don’t know if either of you has any contacts in the theatre.

WHITE: Yeah. Well I actually took a theatre class last year. And so what was cool about that was, we would read different plays, and then we would go and see them. So that was really cool, because I had never done anything like that. So it definitely was interesting. I don’t know if you—
RIORDAN: No, not at Suffolk.

[01:10:18]
WEITZ: Yeah, because that kept expanding when I was here, the theatre program.

REEVE: That’s good.

WEITZ: And I mentioned having Harry do concerts over here at the church. Among other things, besides the department, I was in charge of the language lab. And we built that up. I got a lot of funding. And it wasn’t always easy to get material. And I also built up the Slide Library. And in fact, I got the dean to finance somebody for the language lab, because with all this new technology, we needed somebody who could take care of it and make it available.

[01:10:56]
And I was in charge of four grand pianos in different places throughout. And we tried to get an elevator made in the Walsh Theatre so it could go up. Anyhow, all kinds of memorable moments trying to find out where the pianos are. [Laughter]

RIORDAN: So how do you think Suffolk today compares to Suffolk of old?

[01:11:29]
WEITZ: Well, I honestly have not had that much contact. I'm sorry. I became involved after I retired. And I don’t know if you’ve heard of the Harvard Institute for Learning and Retirement?

RIORDAN: Yep.

WEITZ: Yeah. And that was—Except I gave it up after a while, because it was too much like what I retired from. [Laughter] Here I am, you know, running—Well, unfortunately, when you’ve been there, running some of these classes that I was supposed to be taking. But that took a fair amount of time. And I also can go over and sit in classes at Harvard, which is fun sometimes. And my book has been optioned for a TV series, but don’t hold your breath. I’ve
been working on that. No, no, it’s very common to have something optioned. Very few make it to the screen. But I'm doing my best.

[01:12:29]
So I really, because it’s—I don’t know, for me to come downtown when I don’t have to, I don’t have that much contact these days, except with certain friends and all. But Leslie was supposed to come here from—He’s head of a college in Cairo now. And I was hoping to see him. But you know, it’s dicey, his situation over there.

WHITE: Is there anything else about your time at Suffolk or your research that you’d like to address, that we haven't covered so far?

WEITZ: Well, I think I have said quite a bit. But I'm trying to think. Most of my scholarship was done before I got here. Because quite honestly, to do what I wanted to do here, I just—I took an unpaid leave. Suffolk doesn’t—or we didn’t have regular sabbaticals. Even if you qualified, you didn’t [necessarily] get a sabbatical. So I took an unpaid leave one semester to finish the book that I had. Well, you know, these classes that I was teaching, which was new to me.

[01:13:56]
Oh, the one positive thing, I guess, I was building out the Slide Library. So the Dean helped finance a few trips for me to Greek Islands—so we have a fair number of slides that I've taken in the collection.

REEVE: But there is something that I know only the general background of, that I think would be wonderful to capture in the interview. My recollection, and I may be wrong, is that the year that—I can't remember what year this was. Actually, it was two years ago. The French government recognized you. Could you say a little bit about that?

[01:14:40]
WEITZ: Well, I have actually two medals. They're my nicest jewelry, quite honestly. [Laughter] But I don’t get many invitations that say “Decorations will be worn.” [Laughter] So actually, I
had them on my gown, along with the heritage medal. You know, that’s a big clunky thing. I don’t know. Anyhow, well, first of all I have what they call the *Palmes Académique*, Academic Palms, which was instituted by Napoleon, who did great things apart from his military campaigns, in building up French society, the middle class in particular. And he wanted [to improve] education. He brought in women, did all kinds of things. Because he wanted an educated middle class who could run the country well. And so he instituted this medal for academics.

[01:15:35]
And I have a lot of pictures which I perhaps should bring down and give to Julia [Howington]. The ceremony for that was in the Parkman House. And that was fun. You know, that was a memorable moment, certainly. I don’t know if you’ve been inside the Parkman House, all up and down, and so on. And I'm trying to think. I think I coordinated that with the publication of the papers from the Human Rights conference. So that brought in the Boston-Strasbourg [Sister City Association]. Yeah, we celebrated. I still have the invitation. I had done a number of things for France, including running these conferences and so on.

[01:16:26]
And in my publications, while I was still at Harvard, I did something called *Femmes et Métiers*, which is French Women and their Professions. And these are interviews. I mean I've done more interviewing before I even—of French women who work outside of their homes. And it was tapes that—not actresses. These are women. And we didn’t correct anything, kept all the mistakes. And you’d be amazed when I sent the people that I interviewed, the copies of transcripts, they all wanted to correct their mistakes. They don’t realize, when you speak, that even, you know, you make errors, hesitations. So we [Weitz and Judith Frommer] did all of that. And I did all the research about women in the various professions. And that’s the kind of thing that the French government likes. And I suppose that’s partly why I got it.

Now the other one is more unusual. It’s called the First Step to the Légion. I'm not going to get there, because all the veterans are getting it now. And they fill up the quota well beyond my
presence. And still, it’s one of the two medals that the French president gives. And it’s a beautiful medal.

**REEVE:** You should have worn it.

[01:17:44]

**WEITZ:** Yes, next time. And that, I'm trying to think, where that ceremony took place. I think that was—The French bought a house in Cambridge. They used to have—Were you at the place that they had on Commonwealth Ave.?

**REEVE:** I was not.

**WEITZ:** Okay. Okay. For many years, they rented on Commonwealth Ave. And anyhow. And they bought this—a place that has a third floor ballroom, with a—so that they could have receptions and so on. And it’s French territory. There's a French flag. If you're ever on—what is it? 192 Brattle Street. Whenever there's an event, Cambridge parking rules don’t apply, because it’s—[Laughter] this is their land, you know. It has a unique status. But that’s where, I think that event was held. And I have a lot of pictures of that, because—

**REEVE:** You should definitely share that with the archive.

[01:18:43]

**WEITZ:** Yeah. Actually, especially the one at the Parkman House, you would recognize, perhaps, some of the people. Because, you know, my whole department was there. And the dean and so on. I’m still surprised—and that was a surprise—when the Consulate came up to me, he’s going to give me the medal. And he grabs me and kisses me on both cheeks. [Laughter] I wasn’t expecting that! I wasn’t expecting that. But anyhow.

No, I've been very, very fortunate. And then Julia organized this lovely event. You were there, right?
REEVE: Yes I was, yeah.

[01:19:22]
WEITZ: Which I thought was so—and with people, you know, like—Anyhow.

REEVE: It was a huge event. It’s actually a large—in the first floor function room in the law school. There was a panel presentation.

WEITZ: Yeah, and to have people like Jim Carroll.

REEVE: That’s right. I’d forgotten Jim was a participant.

WEITZ: Yeah, yeah. He was the—is he still here? Because he was going to New York.

REEVE: He went to New York. Jim Carroll the writer, James Carroll, who you may know of, was a distinguished faculty member here for—I lost track of how many years. And he’s gone to New York.

[01:19:59]
WEITZ: Yeah, he was leaving the next year, I guess. But no, when I was at that Harvard Institute for Learning and Retirement, we spent a whole semester on this one book of his, Constantine’s Sword.

REEVE: Yes, the new one yes.

WEITZ: No, this is the old one.

REEVE: Oh it is the old one? Okay.

[01:20:14]
WEITZ: Constantine’s Sword, yeah. It’s about 20 years old.
REEVE: Oh my goodness. Okay.

WEITZ: Maybe this is a reprint.

REEVE: Yeah.

WEITZ: You know it?

RIORDAN: Yeah, I heard about it recently, I think.

[01:20:24]
WEITZ: Yeah, no. And he came. I don’t think he was here at Suffolk. But that, I think, was—you know, the kind of thing, having a few distinguished, committed people involved and so on like that, is very good for Suffolk and Suffolk students, to know the wider world of scholarship and so on. Yeah.

RIORDAN: Well, I guess if there's nothing else, thank you so much for your time.

WHITE: Yeah, thank you for your time.

WEITZ: Well, I'm pretty garrulous. But—[Laughter] you get to my age, and the past—oh well.

REEVE: It’s great to hear about your work and your career. And you're a great storyteller, by the way.

WEITZ: Well, I don’t know about that. My children would perhaps—

RIORDAN: Well I’d say you are. [Laughter]

END OF INTERVIEW