

HOSPITAL
ADMINISTRATION
ORAL HISTORY
COLLECTION

Carl N. Platou

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CARL N. PLATOU

In First Person: An Oral History

Interviewed by Donald W. Dunn
1993

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Carl N. Platou

CHRONOLOGY

- 1923 Born November 10, Bay Ridge, New York
- 1943-1946 United States Army
 Paratrooper, Demolitions Specialty
- 1949 University of Minnesota, Minneapolis
 BA, Social Psychology
- 1949-1952 Northwestern Hospital, Minneapolis, Minnesota
 Administrative Assistant, 1949-1950
 Administrative Resident, 1950-1951
 Assistant Administrator, 1951-1952
- 1951 University of Minnesota, MHA
- 1952- Riverside Medical Center (formerly Fairview and
 Fairview Riverside), Minneapolis
 President, 1952-1988
 President Emeritus, 1988-
- 1972 Harvard University, Graduate School of Business
 Administration, Executive Education Programs
- 1989 Director, Center for Health and Medical Affairs,
 Graduate School of Business, University of
 St. Thomas, Minneapolis

MEMBERSHIPS AND AFFILIATIONS

- American Cancer Society, Minnesota Division
Professional Education Committee, Member, 1957
- American College of Healthcare Executives
Member, 1965-
Curriculum Planning Committee, Member, 1970
Publications and Public Information Committee, Member, 1970,
1972, 1974
- American Hospital Association
House of Delegates, Minnesota Delegate, 1957-1959
House of Delegates, Alternate, 1961-1964
Committee on Hospital Governing Boards, Member, 1963-1966
Committee on Long Term Care Facilities, Member, 1963-1966
Council on Management and Planning, Member, 1973-1976
Board of Trustees, Member, 1975-1978
- American Physical Therapy Association, Minnesota Chapter
Board, Member, 1958
- American Protestant Hospital Association
House of Delegates, Alternate, 1961-1964
House of Delegates, Member, 1965-1968
Board of Trustees, Member, 1973-1976
- American Red Cross, Minneapolis and Hennepin County
Advisory Board, Member, ex officio, 1959-1966
- Augsburg College
Board, Member, 1972-1978
- College of St. Thomas Management Center
Advisory Council, Member, 1971-1974
- Community Chest
District Director, 1954
Hospital Group, Associate Director, 1960
- Community Welfare Council
Executive Committee, Member, 1956-1959
Priorities Committee, Member, 1956-1959
Health and Medical Division, Vice Chairman, 1957-1958
Health and Medical Division, Co-chairman, 1958-1959
Senior Citizen's Committee, Member, 1958-1959
- Concordia College
Preceptor and Faculty Member, 1968-

MEMBERSHIPS AND AFFILIATIONS (continued)

Farmers and Mechanics Savings Banks
Board, Member, 1969-

Fourth Northwestern National Bank
Board, Member, 1961-1969

Greater Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce
Board, Member, 1971-

Guthrie Theater
Member

Health Manpower Management, Inc.
Executive Committee, Member, 1955-1956
Vice Chairman, 1957-1958
Board of Trustees, Member, 1957-1960, 1970-

Hennepin County General Hospital
Advisory Board, Member, 1967-1973
Mental Health Board, Member

Hennepin County Tuberculosis Association
Advisory Board, Member, 1954

I.D.S. Bank and Trust
Board of Directors, 1986-present

I.D.S. Life Series Insurance Co.
Board of Directors, 1986-present

Interlochen Country Club
Member

Lafayette Country Club
Member

Lutheran Brotherhood Insurance Co., National Branch
Vice President, 1955-1958

Lutheran Charities Council, Minnesota Division
Health Services, Chairman, 1956

Lutheran Hospital Association
Board of Trustees, Member, 1955-1961
President, 1957-1958

Mental Health Association
Advisory Board, Member, 1957

MEMBERSHIPS AND AFFILIATIONS (continued)

Metropolitan Council
Metropolitan Health Board, Health Advisory Committee,
Member, 1972-1974

Minneapolis Athletic Club
Board, Member, 1965-1968

Minneapolis Board of Public Welfare
Committee on Community Health, Member, 1959-1961

Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce
Urban Renewal Committee, Member, 1960-1962
Citizen's Committee for Community Development, Member, 1968-
Minneapolis Club, Member

Minneapolis Hospital Council
Secretary, 1951-1952
Treasurer, 1954-1956
President, 1956-1957

Minneapolis Hospital Service Association
Board, Member, 1971-1973
Secretary, 1973-

National Health Council
Participant, 1970

Norwegian American Chamber of Commerce
Upper Midwest Chapter, President, 1968-1969
National Chapter, Vice President, 1969

President's U.S. Conference on Occupational Safety
Participant, 1964

Rotary
Board, Member, 1971-1972

Salvation Army
Board, Member, 1969-

Science, Inc.
Board of Directors, 1989-present

Sons of Norway
Member

Torske Klubben
Member

MEMBERSHIPS AND AFFILIATIONS (continued)

United Hospital Fund

Business Division, Vice Chairman, 1956-1957

University of Minnesota Alumni Association

Alumni Association, Program in Hospital Administration,
President Elect, 1955-1956

Alumni Association, Program in Hospital Administration,
President, 1956-1957

Nursing Research Advisory Committee, Member, 1956

Preceptor and Faculty Member, 1956-

Nursing Foundation, Board of Directors, Member, 1961-1966

University Health Science Committee, Member, 1969

Board of Directors, Member, 1969-1973

Executive Committee, Member, 1969-1973

War Memorial Blood Bank

Board of Directors, Member, 1953-1962

Executive Committee, Member, 1957-1962

Vice President, 1957-1958

President, 1959-1962

AWARDS AND HONORS

Concordia College

Honorary Doctorate, 1969

Fairview Hospital and Health Services

Served as a case study in the Harvard Graduate School of Business, 1975

Served as a case study in the Graduate School of Business Organization and Management, Yale University, 1975

Funding of Platou Scholarship, University of Minnesota, 1988

Minneapolis Junior Chamber of Commerce

Outstanding Man of the Year, 1957

Minnesota

"1 of 100 Minneapolis Newsmakers of Tomorrow," 1953

Commodore, Minneapolis Aquatennial, 1966

Norway

Knighted Sir Carl Platou by King Olav V, 1976

Who's Who in America, 1967

Who's Who in Minneapolis, 1959

PUBLISHED WORKS

Platou, C. N. Fire orders. Modern Hospital. 75(6):49-50, Dec. 1950.

Platou, C. N. How to make friends with people before they're patients. Modern Hospital. 95(3):112-113, Sept. 1960.

Platou, C. N., and Palmquist, L. E. Students get preview 'on location'. Modern Hospital. 96(6):144-145, June 1961.

Platou, C. N., and Wegmiller, D. C. Fairview Hospital in Minneapolis prepares to start its first branch in the suburbs. Modern Hospital. 99(5):94, Nov. 1962.

Platou, C. N., and Wegmiller, D. C. Minneapolis satellite will serve three suburbs. Hospitals. 37(15):43, Aug. 1, 1963.

Platou, C. N., Wegmiller, D. C., and others. Hospital rehabilitation center grew with community need. Hospitals. 39(20):83-83, Oct. 16, 1965.

Platou, C. N., and Pederson, W. D. Can more part-time nurses be recruited? Hospitals. 41(10):77-78, 82, May 16, 1967.

Platou, C. N., and Rice, J. A. Multihospital holding companies. Harvard Business Review. 50:14+, May-June 1972.

Platou, C. N., Wegmiller, D. C., and others. Consector theory of hospital development: an examination of the multi-unit system of the Fairview Hospitals. Hospital Administration. 18(2):61-75, Spring 1973.

Wegmiller, D. C., and Platou, C. N. Looking backward, planning forward. Hospitals. 49(5):57-59, Mar. 1, 1975.

Platou, C. N. HCMR interview: Carl Platou. Health Care Management Review. 3(4):87-92, Fall 1978.

Platou, C. N. Trends in health care delivery. Health Matrix. 1(2):13-17, Summer 1983.

Greene, J. Platou will be missed. Modern Healthcare. 18(52):52, Dec. 23, 1988.

DUNN:

The machinery is on, Carl, so let's start out and let me ask you about your early years, particularly where were you born? When and where?

PLATOU:

Well, my mother and dad came from Norway, and I was born in Bay Ridge, which is a section of Brooklyn, New York, which is a settlement of Norwegians. We used to say that the Norwegians who were wealthy and had \$10 would get on a Greyhound bus and come out to Minnesota and North Dakota. The poor ones would stay there and work on the ocean, which is what my dad did. I grew up in Brooklyn and then went to Haverford High School in Philadelphia and came out to Minnesota in 1942 to go to the University of Minnesota where I had an uncle living here. I had four uncles who were doctors, and so I'd always wanted to be a physician. That first quarter I was here at Minnesota in undergraduate work—I was in pre-med—I realized World War II had started, so I went in the service that following January of '43. So that first quarter I had organic chemistry, math, physics, biology, and zoology. I had three Ds, one F, and an incomplete. And whenever I talk to a medical group of physicians or whatever, I always start out with that story and say, "Then, when I got my grades at the end of the fall semester, at dinner my uncles looked at it and said, 'Carl, have you ever considered being a hospital administrator?'" I then went in the service—the U.S. Army. I was in the Paratroops for three years, overseas two, wounded and decorated, Purple Heart and Bronze Star, three battle

stars. I was a demolition specialist. Parachuted out of airplanes, all very exciting and risky. Combat was an extraordinary set of experiences.

DUNN:

Where?

PLATOU:

Down in the Pacific. Leyte, New Guinea, the Philippines, Okinawa, and then we were ready for the invasion of Japan. We did things like in the movie The Bridge On the River Kwai. You'd jump way behind the lines and blow up a target—usually it was a bridge. So it was very harrowing. Then I came out and went back to the university, got a degree in social psychology and humanities, and then went into the program of hospital administration, working at Northwestern with a fellow named Russell Nye who was the director and a wonderful, wonderful man.

DUNN:

Was he an influence on you?

PLATOU:

Well, he was indeed. He was a very heartwarming, very much of a loyalist, a grand gentleman. He'd been in school at Chicago with Ray Brown, and they were classmates together at the University of Chicago. Ray, of course, was the intellectual leader of the whole field in those days. I got to know him through Russ Nye, and then I applied for the program in hospital administration with Mr. Hamilton at Minnesota, and was accepted as a special audit student because of my three Ds, an F, and an incomplete. As a matter of

fact, I finally—I did graduate, but I think it was by the skin of my teeth.

DUNN:

Who else besides Russ Nye, in your formative years, was an influence?

PLATOU:

Well, Russ certainly was number one. Another fellow named Donald Carner. Don was then the assistant administrator with Russ, and Don was very influential in my life. I find him to have been an extremely important person; he's a great thinker, and he created Memorial Medical Center out in California. When he went there, it was a little place called Seaside Hospital. It was a wood frame building. He built the giant. And of course, the most important one, I think, was Mr. Hamilton, who I really admired tremendously. He caused us all to stop and think—learn how to think. And the other one was Ray Brown. Ray became a very dear friend. He was a visionary and a man of great competence. He was really remarkable. An avid writer. Then there was one—by his writings—one other man by the name of Joe Norby, who had been the director of Fairview years before and was one of the leading people with Dr. MacEachern, the old, old people who got hospital administration started as a profession. Joe Norby was a dear friend.

DUNN:

What qualities of—let us go back to Carner. What year did you get acquainted with him, and when did he go out to Seaside?

PLATO:

I got acquainted with Don when I was working at Northwestern. I was a student at the University of Minnesota getting my bachelor's in humanities and social psychology, and I was working at Northwestern in the evenings. That's where I met Don. And then I went into the program in hospital administration in '49, and then I was administrative intern at Northwestern, and then I was really in touch with him. So that was 1950. He went on to Fort Wayne, Indiana, about 1951 to Parkview Memorial Hospital and then he went to Seaside. I would guess that was about '55 and '56.

DUNN:

I see. Okay.

PLATO:

Don was an avid writer and contributed to the literature a great deal, and he had a wonderful organizational mind—very broad-gauge thinker. I remember he always had time for discussion and to help. He was a very good counselor.

DUNN:

Great. You guys were close to the same age.

PLATO:

Well, he's a bit older than I am—70 this November. It's hard to believe. Yes, Don's probably about four years older. And he'd studied under Ray Brown. Ray was then at Chicago, and Don started under him, and it was through Don that I got to develop relations with Ray.

DUNN:

Tell me about Joe Norby a little bit more, because of your connection with him and the Fairview connection itself.

PLATOU:

Joe had been a superintendent of schools in a little town in Minnesota, and he got a phone call at a place called Fairview Hospital that was looking for a then superintendent. That was in 1923. He went there until the mid '40s when he went to Columbia Hospital in Milwaukee. When he went to Columbia, he'd already been president of the AHA, president of the American College—very, very organization-minded on behalf of hospital administration to create it into a recognized endeavor instead of just what it had been, very fragmented. It wasn't much of a responsible position in the old days. Joe, with Dr. MacEachern and Dr. Bachmeyer, I think amongst the three of them—Robin Buerki were amongst the four that were key. So he went to Fairview in 1923. That was a long, long time ago. He was there through, as I say, the early '40s.

DUNN:

And what was the size of Fairview in those days—'23 to '43?

PLATOU:

Very small, 80 beds. As a matter of fact, when I went to Fairview in '52, it was about 140 beds, of which half were empty.

DUNN:

140?

PLATOU:

Yes. And with 39 physicians on the medical staff.

DUNN:

And not a high census? Talk about that first decade—or the decade of the '50s while you were there.

PLATOU:

Well in the '50s, the economy of the U.S. was growing. After the war, things were taking off and growing extensively. Suburbs were beginning to be created. The outer ring was being created for the first time from the inner cities. Hospitals in the twin cities were 29 in number.

DUNN:

And today they are?

PLATOU:

They're four systems.

DUNN:

Four systems from 29 hospitals in the '50s.

PLATOU:

Yes. And the only system that has the parent name still from the old days is Fairview. When I was at Northwestern, I was invited for an interview. Nobody wanted the job. I remember a fellow named Cliff Hildreth from Albert Lea—was the administrator at Albert Lea—he came up and looked at it. He didn't want it. It was unfilled for about nine months, and I was invited to meet the board at a dinner. It was a Norwegian organization basically, and on the board were all Norwegians were 21 men—just men—and two Danes. One was a fellow named Clyde Jorgensen who was a president of a bank, and also chairman of the board of Blue Cross-Blue Shield

of Minnesota, and somebody by the name of Sorn Ege Kuist who owned a major bakery. They were both Danish, and I knew that they were going to be the toughest questioners on the board, because they were very prominent and they knew a lot about the health field and the rest of the board members really didn't know too much. So when the dinner meeting started—it was held here at the Minneapolis Club—Clyde started asking one question after another about budgets and fiduciary responsibility. Northwestern had a wonderful record, and I had been there a year and so I knew how to answer. After about 15 minutes of questioning, Clyde sat back—I'll never forget—and turned over to Sorn, and said, "Sorn, at long last, I think I've found one decent Norwegian." [Laughter] And from there, it was all downhill.

DUNN:

And that was right here in the Minneapolis Club?

PLATOU:

Yes, same old place.

DUNN:

In 1952.

PLATOU:

That was '52. And then I went that September, and of the 29 hospitals, the smallest was Eitel, which is now a chemical youth treatment program for Northwestern. The next smallest was Fairview, which had 39 physicians, and when I was there that first September, we had a Fairview Hospital Association dinner out at a little cottage at Lake Minnetonka, which one of the board members

had given the hospital, the school of nursing. I remember the entire association consisted of people sitting in one living room. Now when our association meets, it's usually a hall that takes about 800 to 900 people. And the 39 doctors have grown to a group of about 3,000 or something like that.

DUNN:

Fascinating.

PLATOU:

It's been a lot of change, and it's been just marvelous. It's just been really wonderful. I would say that the thing about Fairview that was and is so prevalent in my mind is a sense of commitment to good medicine, respect for the physician, high respect for the medical profession, long-tenured relationships, a lot of trust, and relatively strong financial performance, organizational development, and the freedom granted by the board to its management to exercise initiative and new ideas. Be creative. The creativeness was the most important, so we really flourished. When I went there in '52, there were 39 doctors and there were 140 operating beds and in 7 years, by 1959, we had 545 beds at Riverside and had struck the contract with the Dayton family to build the first satellite hospital in the United States.

DUNN:

I want to come back to that building—the first satellite hospital in the United States of America. But before we do, do you recall who your first administrative resident was?

PLATOUE:

Yes.

DUNN:

I came and joined you in 1954, and my recollection was 200 beds.

PLATOUE:

That's right.

DUNN:

Had you increased the size in that two-year period?

PLATOUE:

Yes. We had, indeed. It was a new OB department, and then we had started a rehabilitation center, which was the first rehab, actually, in a general acute hospital in Minnesota. And then we had the first department of psychiatry in a general acute hospital. Patients who were in mental institutions—quote, unquote—were off in the countryside somewhere and out of the mainstream and were considered second-class citizens. The thing that we did was to integrate it into a general acute hospital, and it was part of that evolutionary change in the thinking of society as to what mental illness is. But we happened to be the first one in this region to do that, which was very exciting because all the psychiatrists got integrated.

DUNN:

So that was first. A first psychiatric unit in an acute care hospital in the area.

PLATOU:

Yes. In the whole region--well, I think for many states, to be honest about it. Yes, it was very exciting. Then we also did this new program in physical rehabilitation, which was also a first. It used to be that didn't have much stature at all. And then both of those, of course, enlivened the staff intellectually and so additional things started to occur.

DUNN:

Your rehab pioneer work, was that with physiatrists?

PLATOU:

No, we did not have physiatrists. It was all orthopedics. As a matter of fact, out of that came the Scoliosis Center. One of our doctors, Dr. John Moe, who was a professor of orthopedic surgery at the medical school, University of Minnesota, came in to see me one day and said, "Carl, I've decided to leave practice. My fascination is with scoliosis, curvature of the spine, especially in young people. I'm going to devote my career to that." Which he did and became world renowned with the Scoliosis Center at Fairview. It is now among the greatest scoliosis centers in the world.

DUNN:

Continues?

PLATOU:

Continues today and there are now 12 to 14 full-time surgeons with residents, and they come from all over the world. It is just fascinating. That has been a real contribution to medicine. The

first text on scoliosis was written by Dr. Moe and Dr. Robert Winter. And then there was a new edition—second writing of the textbook, but it's the standard for all medical schools on scoliosis. Back in those days, there were three doctors involved in scoliosis—Dr. Harrington who developed the Harrington Rod, Dr. Wally Blount of Milwaukee—University of Wisconsin—and John Moe. And Moe devoted his entire life to that. He's passed away now, but what he did continues on at Fairview.

DUNN:

That's one of the milestones that you had . . .

PLATOU:

Yes, that's a distinct milestone. And out of that has come all the sports medicine centers, of which we have 19 in the Twin Cities.

DUNN:

Where are they located?

PLATOU:

All over the Twin Cities.

DUNN:

In freestanding settings?

PLATOU:

Freestanding settings, yes. And then the orthopedic group that's with us are now the sports medicine consultants and physicians for all of the professional teams here plus the University of Minnesota.

DUNN:

Is that right?

PLATOU:

Yes. So there's a tremendous amount—and now they've set up the sports medicine institute to do education and research in sports medicine, which is all an offshoot of what John Moe started. It's just fascinating how it evolves. It's a major program. Very extensive, very complex. And Dr. Bob Winter and Dr. John Lonstein, the two senior men now, have been in it for about 20 years. They both lecture widely throughout the world.

DUNN:

Carl, let me check to make sure we're doing okay. The sports medicine that evolved out of that orthopedic group is clearly one of the milestones. What happened to psychiatry, which you pioneered?

PLATOU:

Psychiatry started at Fairview Riverside in 1957-58. It flourished. It was a 40-bed unit. It flourished, and then started a whole series of outpatient programs. And then we got together with St. Mary's, and they put in a unit, which was alongside us. We had 120 beds between the two of us. One took adolescent, and one took adult. And then we took an emphasis on the drug-dependency programs for adolescents, and they did for seniors—for adults—and the St. Mary's chemical-dependency program got to have a national ranking, and patients came from all over the United States. Very, very well-organized program. And, of course, St.

Mary's and Fairview today are one corporate entity called Riverside Medical Center. Fairview bought out St. Mary's, so it is one functional department now.

DUNN:

It's one functional department, and the merger occurred in what year?

PLATOU:

This merger, the last merger, took place about two years ago.

DUNN:

And what's the board composition of Riverside?

PLATOU:

Board composition of Riverside is an elected board through the Fairview Hospital Association to manage that hospital as the Fairview Hospital Association also selects and appoints a board for Fairview Southdale, Fairview Ridges, and also for Fairview Princeton.

DUNN:

And are there any remaining influences of the St. Mary's order?

PLATOU:

Oh, definitely. Not of the order, not of the church itself, but of the board members who were on the St. Mary's board, we have invited a number of them to stay on for continuity and understanding and an expression of the church. If there's any one thing that I might say that the American health system was fundamentally an outgrowth of Judeo-Christian ethic, and Fairview

being a reflection of that was conceived to take care of Lutherans. St. Barnabas in this community was of the Episcopal Church, and Abbott was of the Presbyterian Church, Mt. Sinai was of the Jewish Faith, St. Mary's was of the Catholic faith. But all of their identities are washing away, which is unfortunate, I think. And we're getting conglomerates in corporate structure. We're losing the commitment of the Judeo-Christian ethic creating hospitals. And that's a difficult social change.

DUNN:

Of some concern.

PLATOU:

Yes, I think so. I think so for the long term. Conversely maybe it's not all that important. But it certainly loses a lot of the sense of commitment.

DUNN:

As an individual that found his way into hospital administration, did you feel in your interest in medicine and then hospital administration, some of that commitment?

PLATOU:

I did. I never—never as a highly conscious thing—but it certainly grew on me over time, and it was very gratifying to be in the hospital, because its service role is so important, and you're really contributing to people's lives and welfare. And so it was a very lovely thing to have, not to hide behind, but it was just a nice—I think that today, that commitment is still there. Like young people go into medicine committed to be a physician. You

respect all this economic change that you're going through. But it's a joy to see the medical school class at Minnesota this year had a higher number of students applying than they have for the past 10-15 years. It's the way it should be. So perhaps it's just being older, you feel that you've lost some of that more visible expression of commitment. That's probably what it is. I think people in the hospital in the medical field are as committed now as ever. Maybe in some respects even more.

DUNN:

Good. Let's go back again now. We talked about the '50s, and a growth from 140 to 200 and then to 540, I recall you said, by the end of the decade of the '50s.

PLATO:

Right.

DUNN:

And that more than doubled. The growth was in the areas of psychiatry and rehab. Anything else?

PLATO:

Some more medicine and surgery because of all of the orthopedic work. And then a fascinating thing happened. The Dayton brothers--there are five of them--set out a strategic plan and developed the concept that has now made the Dayton Hudson Co. the fourth largest retail merchandising corporation in the United States. Dayton-Hudson now--as it's now called--is a giant. But in those days, they had one store--downtown Minneapolis, part of a commitment, which still is. And they then acquired 500 acres of

land out in a place called Edina, which is a suburb. It's a growing suburb. And they developed the nation's first totally integrated all-weather enclosed mall. It's called Southdale Shopping Center. Now it's old hat. In those days, that was very innovative, and it was built in a farm field. I remember France Avenue was, in those days, a gravel road. Now, of course, it's a six-lane freeway.

The Dayton Brothers had an architect by the name of Victor Gruen who was a very outstanding architect from California—very visionary—and he developed the Southdale Shopping Center, and then all the attendant elements—parks, libraries, schools, and theaters, automobile showrooms—and residential. And in that whole concept—well, I shouldn't say it was 500—I think it was 800 acres. Maybe it was larger, but 800 for sure. They had a 30-acre site for a medical zone. The first thing they did was build an office building, which accommodated some 60 physicians. And then I, of course, read that and saw that, and it was at that time that I had been addressing with our board how the suburban areas become served medically by hospitals.

Well, they won't drive to the existing hospitals and/or the new investors with capital and build hospitals, which was happening in the explosive areas of Texas, Florida, California. Not so much here, but they were about to come in. So I sat down and tried to figure out how can we expand into a new community, on what organizational framework? And I thought out an idea of the hospital holding company, which was based on the Bank Holding Act

of 1893, U.S. Congress, which said that banks are community organizations, they are—we had 3 or 4–10 people together, and they take out a certain amount of capital and they get a state license and have a bank. And then that bank would have a piece of assets, which were only committed to do so much for customers. Some customers that needed greater assets and greater borrowing capacity would have to go to a large city to a major bank, because the community bank . . . So the idea was to have these community banks hooked together and have flow of capital and resources so you had a bank holding company, such as First Bank System in the Twin Cities, have banks in the entire nine Federal Reserve Districts, and local banks out in the small towns of North Dakota could have access to capital and so forth.

So I took that, with the concept of each local bank has its own board of directors, has its president, and is involved in the economic development of that small town, and yet everything is centrally done for them and with them. So we extended it into the hospital field, and I wrote the first article, which was in the Harvard Business Review, the first definitive article on a hospital holding company, and it was called "The Hospital Holding Company." That was in the Harvard Business Review. Then out of that came a fantastic set of experiences. The Harvard Graduate School of Business made us a case study, and it's still there, as did the Graduate School of Organization and Management at Yale.

I met a gentleman by the name of Robert Crabb at a dinner party. And Bob turned out to be the president of Dayton

Properties. That's the company that held all the Dayton assets. He said, "What do you do?" And I said, "Well, I'm the administrator of Fairview Hospital." "Really?" "And what do you do?" He said, "I'm Robert Crabb." So we got to talking, and he said something about they had been thinking about a hospital out in their developments. And I said, "I'm aware of that, and I would like to have lunch with you tomorrow and show you something." So I showed him the draft of this hospital holding company concept, which took his fancy. He then arranged a dinner with our then board chairman, Carl Grandrud, who is a very interesting fellow, and Bruce Dayton. Bruce is still here. We still talk about our first dinner. As a matter of fact, we had lunch together last week. We laughed about it. It was right here in this building in one of the private dining rooms on November 10 of '57.

DUNN:

In '57 this was occurring. Okay.

PLATOU:

And I remember November 10, 'cause that's my birthday. We were sitting, and Carl Grandrud said, "Well, Carl," meaning me, "tell Mr. Dayton and Mr. Crabb your idea." So I did. Went through it all, and Mr. Dayton said, "That's very, very interesting, 'cause we'd like to have a hospital on our property. We have a 15-acre zone there, identified by Victor Gruen." Carl said, "Well, we would very much—you know, we never have raised money for—we've never received a penny from anybody." Carl said, "We would appreciate if you'd give us the land." And Dayton said, "I

couldn't do that. I'd give you the land, and we'd just contribute it to a hospital campaign, and I don't think we could do that." And Carl rubbed his tummy and said, "Well, if you can't give us the land, how about giving me another scotch and soda?" [Laughter] And Mr. Dayton was not a man of great humor. And I thought, "Oh, gracious, we've lost it all." He was a very dour gentleman—lovely man—and he said, "Well, why don't we do this? Why don't we ask Mr. Crabb and Mr. Platou to come back to us in three weeks with a letter of understanding?" So we did. And the understanding was that they would give us shares in the corporation called Fourth Edition Corporation, which had as its sole asset, the property—the Southdale property. And they would divest themselves of the number of shares that would give us 14.97 acres. And for that we would agree to build, without a fund campaign, a new hospital called Fairview Southdale, which was 225 beds. And that was the first satellite hospital in the United States.

And then I took that letter and met with Mr. Humphrey, who was our senator, and told him the idea, and he became enthralled with the idea. So he got us a National Institutes of Health grant of \$2 million that just knocked us over. And to build the first satellite hospital in the U.S. Then that and the studies we did became the basis for many, many other developments. They're just legion. And in that way, we really, I think, did contribute to restructuring of the health system. Rather than just having investor-owned hospitals doing suburban growth developments, the

formative structure, the organization structure, really did make a positive contribution, and for that we're very thankful.

DUNN:

Fascinating.

PLATOU:

But the funniest thing of all is we had this agreement with the Daytons, and, of course, they were a power structure in Minneapolis, and we were a bunch of Norwegian Lutherans . . .

DUNN:

Outsider working people? The Minneapolis Club crowd were the old guard?

PLATOU:

Yes. And we were not. We were the immigrants. And one day I got a phone call from Mr. Donald Dayton, who was the president, and invited me to come down to his office. He said, "Tell me, what do you want to call the new hospital?" This was before we started building the hospital. We had looked at all sorts of names like Fairdale of Southdale and Fairview, like Fairdale, and Southview, and all . . . And he said, "Well, let me tell you something. You must maintain the parent name or people will not recognize your heritage. Now the name Southdale is patented. Why don't you use the name Fairview Southdale?" I said, "Could we?" He said, "Absolutely." So that's how we named the hospital.

Then when we built the hospital, we had this beautiful bas-relief above the information desk when you come in the front—beautiful lobby—done by a local artist. What we did is we

featured the 12 men and women of medicine who've made the greatest contributions to medicine, and in the center is Christ, the teacher and healer, and all these physicians who've made great contributions identified by their name and then a bas-relief depicting them. Bruce Dayton said, "Now, Carl, of all things, when you have the new Fairview Southdale Hospital, we do not want the name Dayton anywhere because we don't want to have this community beholden to us, so no plaque. Please be certain of that." And they're very modest Presbyterians—lovely people. And I said all right.

And when I was working with the artist on the bas-relief, we put the Dayton name in right adjacent to Christ, the teacher and healer. But we put it in in a different way so you couldn't see it. We spelled it in backwards. Backwards, amongst the flowers. And so then when we had the dedication, Dr. Russell Nelson was here from Hopkins and Dr. Mayo was here from Rochester, and when Bruce and I walked in the front door, I said, "Now, Bruce," I called him Mr. Dayton is those days, "Bruce, I just want you to know, forever, the name Dayton will be up here and remembered." He said, "No, I told you not to do that." "Don't worry, you won't be able to find it. It's spelled backwards." He still laughs about it.

DUNN:

And it's still there?

PLATOU:

Still there.

DUNN:

Who are the 12 physicians?

PLATOU:

Oh, from Hippocrates right on through Madam Curie and all the great physicians. Yes. And we dedicated the hospital to medicine in the Judeo-Christian era, and dedicated to the men and women of medicine.

DUNN:

So that really was the beginning of satellite hospitals and multihospital systems.

PLATOU:

Yes, it was the first. I shouldn't say that. The Kaiser system had started in World War II, and the United Mine Workers had four hospitals in West Virginia. But there was no nonprofit hospital-community hospital-that had done anything. We were the first.

DUNN:

Yes. Oh, as the holding company concept, did that then get implemented at that point? Did you create a parent corporation?

PLATOU:

That's correct. We created a parent corporation, and my title went from the administrator of Fairview to executive vice president of the Fairview Community Hospitals. We incorporated the Fairview Community Hospitals, which then had two hospitals, Fairview and Fairview Southdale. The first administrator of Fairview Southdale Hospital, who did a magnificent job, was Chuck Lindstrom. Chuck

was with us for a year and a half before the hospital opened, and he had all the responsibilities for staffing, department heads, medical staff relationships. He did a marvelous job, and he was with us for about four years when he then went to St. Luke's Hospital in Kansas City, where he still is. He did an outstanding job. He was wonderful.

DUNN:

One of your authorships--articles--talked about consector theory of hospital development. What do you mean by that?

PLATOU:

Well, as we got into this, Don, at the time, it was intellectually exciting, it was very creative, having this new hospital system, and we had visitors from all over the country coming back. As a matter of fact, I have a book at home called visitors. It's a red, thick book, and it has, actually, I think, true to say, thousands of names in there. And everybody was intrigued with how are we going to meet medical care in the outer suburbs. Then we got into the subject of the adjacent rural area. So we sat down and thought it through and wrote an article, which is called the consector theory, which says that a catchment area, that is a geographical area, should become the assumption of a health medical facility for total health care. And, of course, the other hospitals were infuriated, and doctors thought it was an octopus sort of thing. It got nowhere. It was published. It was published in Trustee Magazine years and years ago, NACHA Bulletin, magazines, so forth. But it was a forerunner of what we're all

calling today the ISN. It's the same thing. It's really sort of funny. And I have a copy here for you. It's just sort of hilarious.

DUNN:

Minnesota, the state, has coined the term ISN. What's that stand for?

PLATOU:

It means the Integrated Service Networks, which is a consector theory.

DUNN:

Covering a geographic area and "all of its populations."

PLATOU:

Well, not really, exactly, but close to it. Close to it. There will be overlapping ISNs here in the metropolitan area, for instance, but the fundamental idea of total health responsibility for a given population. So we were 25 years ahead of time. But it stimulated a lot of discussion, a lot of thought. Very exciting. I wish we'd patented the names. It would have been lovely to have royalties on multi-unit systems.

DUNN:

Yes. I should say. When did you invent that term?

PLATOU:

It was 1970. That was after the hospital holding company about 10 years. And then in the midst of all that I got a phone call from Ray Amberg, who was the director of the University of Minnesota Hospitals—we hadn't opened Southdale yet—and he said,

"Carl, would you be interested in another position?" He said, "Well, there's somebody who would like to talk about another position." I said, "No, I wouldn't be interested." He said, "Well, you'd better. This is Dr. Russell Nelson, who is the president of Hopkins. He has met you and seen you, and he wants you to come down and take his position at Hopkins as director. He's going to call you in two days, so you'd better think about it." Two days later the phone rang, and it was Russ, Dr. Nelson, who I'd met in a very casual way at some conference. He said, "I'd like you to come back to Baltimore and spend two days with me and take my position at Hopkins. I'm director, and I'm going to be president and then a board position." I was astounded, so I read every book I could get ahold of about Johns Hopkins, the founder, and I also found out who I was going to be interviewing with when I got down there. So then my wife and I did fly down to Baltimore and met Dr. and Mrs. Nelson, Ruth, a lovely lady. Spent two days there. Had a wonderful invitation, and it was great for one's morale and a fascinating experience.

DUNN:

Obviously, you didn't accept that opportunity.

PLATOU:

I didn't accept, because I came back home and I struggled with it, and I visited with a dear friend of mine who was the president of Luther Seminary, Dr. Alvin Rogness, and I really was struggling to go or to stay, and he said, "Do you know what, Carl? Are you asking what I think, Carl?" I said, "I guess I am." He said,

"Well, let me put it this way. If you go to Hopkins, you'll have all the grandeur of that position, that organization, one of the great medical centers in the nation, of the world, and you will scale the heights. However, I would suggest that Fairview is just starting. I wonder if you wouldn't like to lay your own tracks." I thought about it, and I thought, "I think that's right." So I called Russ and said, "I don't think I should do that." He said, "Why?" I said, "Perhaps it's a sense of independence. I want to be more creative here. I have the opportunity, the board's lovely to me, and the medical staff. I have a great opportunity here." And he accepted that, and we became very good friends. As a matter of fact, he came out for the big dedication here. We had a thousand people for the dedication dinner at Fairview Southdale. He was the principal speaker.

DUNN:

What year was that dedication?

PLATO:

That was in '63.

DUNN:

What else happened in the decade of the '60s?

PLATO:

Well, right after that, we had started. Fairview is on the Mississippi River—on the west bank of the Mississippi. On the other bank is the University of Minnesota. The University of Minnesota Medical School is there and the hospital, and there was a president of the University of Minnesota by the name of Dr.

Meredith Wilson, one of the most magnificent men I'd ever met. He called one day and said, "May I visit with you?" And I said, "Of course." I went to his office over on campus. He said, "I'd like to show you this."

He had a big plan in his office of the creating of the University of Minnesota west bank. It was to be all undergraduate classes. It was going to be a major investment up in the hundreds of millions of dollars, and then there would be a integrated walkway between the main campus, the east campus, they call it, and west bank. And he said, "In all this, we're going to be stretching all the resources of ourselves and the state legislature for many years, and at the same time, Carl, here are a series of requests from the medical school, University Hospital, which we are not going to really be able to fulfill. My question to you is, is there any way that we could integrate programs between Fairview and St. Mary's Hospital with the University Hospital, because you have a large capacity over there." St. Mary's is as large as Fairview. We had 545 beds, and St. Mary's was 600. "Is there any way we could do this?"

So we agreed to set up a community leadership group. John Pillsbury, of the Pillsbury firm, was the chairman, and leaders of the Twin City community were on it, and then we retained Dr. Robert Glaser, who was the dean of Stanford Medical Center, to come back and be the consultant to the group. What we did was develop a concept called *communiversity*—community and university. West Bank Medical Education Community. And we would have developed clinical

programs—obstetrics, pediatrics, orthopedics—at the Fairview St. Mary's site and others at the main campus. And also build a walkway bridge, not for automobile traffic, but a walkway bridge for the students—residents and interns—back and forth, between St. Mary's and Fairview and University of Minnesota. It was very well received. The clinical chiefs didn't like it too much, but the dean, Robert Howard, was for it, and, most importantly, the president of the University was for it and he was going to force this through. Although they preferred their independence, the clinical chiefs, they couldn't contest the power of the president and the board of regents.

DUNN:

And who was the university president?

PLATOU:

Meredith Wilson. Outstanding. He's a Mormon, a man of great, great, great competence. We laid out the plan, and as a matter of fact, I have a copy for you right there. And it was published. We had a big banquet, and it was announced to the medical community, and the Archbishop of the Catholic church was there, the president of our church, the president of the board of regents, Dr. Meredith Wilson himself, on and on. Dr. Glaser spoke on behalf of the consulting group, and Mr. Pillsbury on behalf of the community group. It was a done deal. Unfortunately, Dr. Wilson was invited to Stanford to be the president of the Center for Advanced Learning at Stanford. He left, and then Dr. Malcolm Moos came in as president. Dr. Moos's agendas were different, and he didn't want

to contest the clinical chiefs and all the political struggle that that created. And the program eroded and evaporated into midair.

DUNN:

Fascinating.

PLATOU:

Three months ago, the Fairview board of trustees and the University board of regents signed an agreement to have the obstetrical division of the University of Minnesota moved onto the premises of the Riverside Medical Center. So the concept is now under way. But it was laid out in an extraordinary way 25 years ago, and so we all chuckle about it. Sometimes it just takes a little longer.

DUNN:

Yes. With OB on the west. Will there be any change in admission policy?

PLATOU:

Well, there's some change. It's akin to the way some nonprofit hospitals, community hospitals work with medical schools. The University of Wisconsin is one example. The Milwaukee Froedtert Memorial Lutheran Hospital, which is a community-based hospital where teaching takes place. So there are many patterns throughout the country—many patterns. And it's going to be positive for the community at large, for the state and for the public, for the education of our residents in obstetrics. The University of Minnesota now has a dearth of admissions—a very

serious problem—and so it's going to enhance everybody's best interests.

DUNN:

The University of Minnesota Hospitals will no longer do obstetrics, at all.

PLATOU:

Correct. It will be in an off-site location.

DUNN:

You mentioned the dearth of patients at the university. Talk with me a little bit about the Twin Cities managed care model for the nation, and its impact on inner-city hospitals, not-for-profit, and University Hospital.

PLATOU:

Well, let's start with the most current. If you drive down 494 freeway to go to the airport, on the right hand side you will see the Control Data International Headquarters building, which is about 16 stories—a big, bronze, glass building. And that building has been Control Data since it was formed here 25 years ago. It's not Control Data now. It's Health Partners. That is their headquarters building. Now here, just think, 25 years ago in the creation, well, it was 35 years ago. Creation of Control Data. That was the new industry—computer industry. Today it is Health Partners in that same building—sort of symbolic some way or another. Health Partners is a combination of Group Health and St. Louis Park Medical Center. They represent about 800 physicians. They now contract direct to the 17 largest corporations in the Twin

Cities. They bypass everything and everybody. They direct contract.

DUNN:

So Health Partners provides all care for employees and families of 17 corporations?

PLATOU:

About 750,000 people. And then they have working relationships with hospitals for that service. Health Partners three weeks ago acquired all the assets and facilities of Ramsey County hospitals in St. Paul.

DUNN:

So that's Health Partners's first movement into hospital ownership.

PLATOU:

Right.

DUNN:

Health Partners has been using Fairview Riverside?

PLATOU:

Fairview Riverside, all the time. And that goes back to again 30 years ago. I called Maurice McCay, then the president of Group Health, and we had dinner. And all the doctors in Group Health were on courtesy staff privileges at hospitals in the Twin Cities. I suggested that they come to Fairview en masse, come on active staff, applying as individual practitioners—not as a group but as individual practitioners—and that we would render them the same discounts that we did Blue Cross. They took that. Our physicians

on fee-for-service at Fairview wanted to ask me to leave because this was a group of socialists coming in—something called an HMO—which was close to being pinko. The number of doctors involved with Group Health were seven—four full-time, three part-time. But it was the philosophy of having a closed panel group come into a fee-for-service staff that was very controversial.

DUNN:

It was difficult.

PLATOU:

It was very difficult, but it worked out very well, and now, of course, Group Health is dominant as is St. Louis Park Medical Center. So the Group Health was an organization of seven physicians, as I said, three part-time, four full-time. They continued to grow, and we've had a wonderful relationship with Group Health ever since. Today they have merged with St. Louis Park Medical Center, and together they have about 800 physicians, Health Partners, of which the president is George Halvorsen, formerly president of Group Health. The chief operating officer and president is Kirby Ericson, who was with us for 20 years at Fairview. So we have a very close relationship. It's fascinating to see how that, then the HMO, of course, in this community is ingrained in the practice of medicine. And the hospitals are now all lining up, going out of business, whatever, with the organizations that have the physician component. Fairview is now establishing at Fairview Southdale about 400 physicians for fee-for-service for Fairview's Physician's Association, so they as a

group negotiate. If you can't negotiate with the big buyers of practice, you don't have patients coming your way.

DUNN:

Help me make sure I understand that. Group Health is the dominant closed-panel HMO.

PLATO:

The people at St. Louis Park would say that they are equally large. And they are. They're both about the same size. And they have now consolidated into Health Partners.

DUNN:

Both Group Health and St. Louis Park Clinic are a part of Health Partners.

PLATO:

Are now Health Partners.

DUNN:

Okay. The Fairview Physician's Association . . .

PLATO:

. . . will be a separate group of 400 doctors . . .

DUNN:

. . . that contracts with them, perhaps?

PLATO:

Well, we would hope that we could get integrated. It's just being created now. It's still determined to be seen what's going to happen as to that relationship.

DUNN:

Okay. Fairview Physician's Association is the medical staff of Fairview Southdale? Or Fairview Riverside? Or both?

PLATOU:

No, just the Fairview Southdale.

DUNN:

What's Fairview Riverside's medical staff relationship?

PLATOU:

They are all good friends with Group Health, but they don't have the same need. There is very little general practice at Fairview Riverside of fee-for-service. Almost all of the work there now is orthopedics, which is not really involved in the HMO structure like a Group Health would be. They have a lot of referral from outside, from all over the region—all the scoliosis, all referred work. It's not capitated the same way that the HMOs are.

DUNN:

I see. It draws from a much larger service area for primarily orthopedic work.

PLATOU:

Correct.

DUNN:

And how many acute care beds are in operation at Riverside?

PLATOU:

There are about 900 beds, of which chemical dependency is a large amount—some 300 beds. That's about 600, so it's very

sizable. It's the largest obstetrical service in the state—4,000 deliveries—by which it's almost all Group Health patients.

And then the second largest OB practice in the Twin Cities is Fairview Southdale and the third largest is Fairview Ridges but the obstetrical practice that we have in our system is far and away the dominant. There's nobody like it. Just huge.

DUNN:

Okay. The Fairview Physician's Association at Southdale is likely to contract with other HMOs?

PLATOU:

Hard to tell. They are just incorporating a board now, and they're in their formative organizational stages and they'll have some very, very tender and skillful and delicate issues to reach as to with whom are we related and in what form. That I can't answer yet. That's for them to address.

DUNN:

Are they characterized by predominantly primary care, or specialists?

PLATOU:

Primary care and internists and pediatricians, some specialty. Some specialty, but there's a new movement now in town so the specialists are getting together in blocks.

DUNN:

Describe this relationship to me. Minneapolis, Twin Cities community with its managed care, does a lot of gatekeeper approach using primary care physicians?

PLATOU:

Quite a bit, yes.

DUNN:

As the specialists get organized, how do they create leverage and bargaining power?

PLATOU:

By instead of having 10 or 15 specialist groups, getting it down to six, or three, or two.

DUNN:

Will they negotiate with the HMO or with the primary care physicians?

PLATOU:

Well, it will probably be with the HMO. And they might try to go around the HMO, go directly to the buyers of the service. But that's going to be hard for them to do.

DUNN:

This is all quite new to everybody.

PLATOU:

A lot of it's not washed out yet, and it's going to be fascinating to see. There's great apprehension on the part of the specialists as to what this means to them, and their freedom of action has been removed.

DUNN:

The change is from bargaining power of specialists to bargaining power in the hands of primary care physicians? Or is all the power residing in the payer, with the buyer?

PLATO:

Mostly the buyer. If you take the 17 major corporations here who represent 750,000 employees. They really have the power base. And the creation of Health Partners, which is Group Health and St. Louis Park Medical Center, resulted because the corporations requested proposals. George Halvorsen, who is a very, very wise gentleman, said, "This is the time for us to really face up to it. If we want to really endure and be dominant." And the two of us have got to get together, which they did do. And that created a power block like nobody had ever imagined, and then about four months later, they announced they acquired Ramsey Hospital. And of course, St. Louis Park Medical Center has traditionally practiced—its largest percent of its practice—at Methodist. So Methodist is really brought into this almost automatically.

DUNN:

I see. Okay.

PLATO:

So right today there is an awful lot of conversation taking place in this community about what's going to be the shakeout.

DUNN:

The merger of Health One and Health Central into Healthspan?

PLATO:

Health Central was a group of three hospitals: Golden Valley—Glenwood Hills they were called—Unity and Mercy and then some little outlying hospitals in the rural area. They, Health Central, joined with Health One. Health One was Metropolitan

Medical Center in downtown Minneapolis, and United Hospital, a very prominent hospital in St. Paul. Health One and Health Central got together. Then Health One, which was having some stresses, joined Abbott-Northwestern, which became Healthspan, and the prevailing CEO is Gordon Sprenger. A wonderful man and an outstanding person. And they then combined their boards 50-50, some relationship, but it's the culture of Healthspan that's prevailing. So that's where it went.

There will be additional shakeout in hospitals. I don't think there's much question about it. And then in St. Paul is Healtheast, which is a group of nonprofit hospitals, who, five of them, got together and they're also in the competition.

DUNN:

Healtheast is five not-for-profit hospitals?

PLATO:

Yes.

DUNN:

And with what buyer group are they associated?

PLATO:

They have some relationships with Group Health; they have some significant relations with Group Health, which is, of course, very threatening to them now with Ramsey being with Group Health, Health Partners. They also deal with Blue Cross and a very limited amount with Medica. As a matter of fact, they had a contractual relationship breakdown with Medica, so Medica is not involved with Healtheast any more.

DUNN:

The four systems remaining in all of the Twin Cities are?

PLATOU:

Healthspan, Healtheast, the Fairview system, and you might say Hennepin County Medical Center, which is very prominent—not talked about as much as the nonprofits, but it's very prominent. And then there is the University Hospital, which is a freestanding, and North Memorial, which is a freestanding, which is a very successful hospital. That's where it is.

DUNN:

To have four or five systems is progress relative to 29 hospitals of 40 years ago?

PLATOU:

Well, when we had 29 hospitals, you had 29 administrators, 29 purchasing agents, 29 controllers as we called them in those days, and there's no question that this—society's needs are for consolidations in growths and mergers. We've seen it in every element of life—our economic life. And so it's evolved here gradually over many, many years. But it's a dramatic change now taking place and what you can almost see is that we're going to probably end up—we might, we might not—in which you have a total entity of the insurance company, marketing, the underwriting, the pricing, the negotiation, the physicians, the hospitals, all in one corporation. And the ambulatory care centers all in one corporation. I don't think it's too far away. As a matter of

fact, it's here. It's not far away at all, it's here. It's already in existence.

DUNN:

It's close to being a reality in Health Partners?

PLATOU:

It is a reality in Health Partners.

DUNN:

All of those functions being performed by a single entity.

PLATOU:

Right. Powerful. Powerful.

DUNN:

What turning points in the delivery of health care of the Twin Cities would you cite if you were to tick them off? I think we've been talking about them for more than an hour now, but how would you label turning points in delivery of health care over almost a half century?

PLATOU:

Well, one goes back to Mayo, I think, fundamental. The Doctors Mayo, that wonderful book by Helen Clapesattle, identifies a little clinic practice of a doctor in Rochester, Minnesota, with railroad tracks coming in and really getting a volume of patients. He and his two sons created Mayo Clinic, and with Dr. Balfour and a few others, which is now thousands of doctors and residents and a medical school. The practice of medicine as fee-for-service, a doctor in practice with one or two associates, or three associates,

or if you have four or five that's a big group. That was one form of medicine.

Another form of medicine, which is now showing here, has been for years, is the clinic. St. Louis Park Medical Center is a wonderful example, Group Health. Then you integrate into the assemblage of the physicians the ability to sell those services through a so-called HMO (health maintenance organization). The creation of the HMOs here, I think, is fundamental. Parallel to that, lesser or greater influence, depends on who you talk to, is the structure of the multi-unit hospital system.

So you put the multi-unit hospital systems adjacent to the multi-unit clinics, and then they begin to blend together, and then you have the totality, and that's where we are right now. They happened in the same city at the same time pretty much, I think because of the—and there are many factors—one is Minneapolis-St. Paul is a little bit off to the side of a lot of economic development in the United States. It's an entity unto itself out here in the prairie. Uniquely, it's the third largest headquarters of national corporations in the United States. Therefore, we have a large assemblage of very visionary, highly oriented management people, who examine things objectively and are very committed to the community. We have a minimal amount of inner-city strife and disenchantment and disfranchised people. So our community doesn't spend much time on the issues of disfranchisement as a Trenton, or as a Camden, or a Detroit might happen to have. So there's a freedom to look at things in a positive, forward vision. Plus

another important factor, I think here, this city has benefitted tremendously by some long-established families that were very committed to the community—the Daytons, the Pillsburys—especially those two have had a powerful impact on the arts such as the Guthrie Theater and the Minnesota orchestra. All tied into the support of the university and private colleges in Minnesota and also to medicine.

You have the excellence of the Mayo Clinic constantly emerging international recognition, and many of the young residents who are at Mayo seeking where they're going to practice, many of them settle here in the Twin Cities. So you have a series of forces and events for many rational and irrational reasons, forming a very enlightened medical evolutionary community. And it isn't one thing. I think it's the interplay of many. That's why it's a blessing to be here. And there's a freedom to do things. Ideas are encouraged and freedom of action is permitted and medicine has not been recalcitrant and arbitrary. It's had a very enlightened leadership here, and so new ideas are tried, and those that prevail, prevail. In many communities that couldn't have happened, but it has here.

Tied in with all of that is that one of the largest, if not the largest medical industry—or the industry of medical device, medical manufacturing in the United States—is right here in the Twin Cities. Perhaps worldwide. The Medtronics. Twenty-eight percent of the total revenue of 3M is Life Sciences Division. There are 151 companies like Medtronics. There's a huge interplay

here of technology and research in the medical area, and, therefore, also new forms and new ideas, new concepts.

DUNN:

Interesting. How do you perceive national health policy over the whole period? Not just currently, but over the whole period, affecting the profession of health care administration.

PLATOU:

Oh, let's step back for a minute and take a look at that. I can remember being at the University of Minnesota. I did a term paper on national health insurance. This was in 1946, and there was a bill in Congress at that time, which lost by one vote. It was the Oscar Ewing Proposal for National Health Insurance. Oscar Ewing was under Harry Truman's administration, was the Secretary of Labor. He had sponsored a bill in Congress known as the Ewing Bill in 1946, which lost by one vote. It was in the '36-'38 term in which national health grew, Scandinavian countries, Germany, France, England, Italy, all of them. And all of us were around 4.5 percent of gross national product for health. And then it got up to 9, 9.5, including Canada, and now we're 14, and we say we're 5 percent higher than they. But I was at a meeting the other day with a senior officer of Cargill, which is the world's largest milling corporation, headquartered here in Minneapolis, who said it's not the 5 percent that bother us as an international global company. It's not the 9-14 or 9.5-14. That's not what bothers us. It's the fact that our costs are 50 percent higher in this country by gross national product, than any other Western European country.

You mustn't think that the difference between 9.5 and 14.5 is 5—it's 50 percent greater. And that's a burden that we're not going to tolerate any longer.

So where does this all lead? I think the driving force is that, the economics and what our society can afford. We've always been able to afford everything, but not now. The corporation—it used to be the unions yelled for national health. You don't hear much of that now. It's now the corporations who say we can't afford it. As a society we can't. You've got people who are saying that themselves. I can't afford it. Therefore, there is a fundamental crisis—well, I wouldn't say crisis—concern, but there's a force for change. The thing about Mr. Clinton's proposal and Mrs. Clinton's proposal is that they are willing to address it, and I think that's very laudatory. It's to their everlasting credit that they are. I don't think it's so much what's going to come out of this because of our process in Congress, the debate that's taking place, and will take place, there'll be give and take, and there'll be some balance struck.

But I do think that what we have done here, what has happened here, we have done parts and bits, and it's come together in such a way that as it now is portrayed to be, it probably isn't going to be much different in the future for us than what we already have because the alliances are going to be established. They're already here. Those 17 corporations, Cargill is the leader, 3M is the leader. That's an alliance, buying medical care. And they're turning to those who can offer it. And Health Partners says we'll

do it for you. We have hospitals, we have clinics, we have doctors, we have an insurance company, we have an HMO, we can underwrite it, we can capitate it. The whole thing.

So what change does it mean for us? Well, there are many things to see as to what there's going to be in terms of controls. That we don't know yet, but that's what's got to be worked out through the lobbies and Congress. Fundamentally, we're down the road here. We're already down the road. I can see where in other parts of the United States this is the trauma.

DUNN:

It's a big trauma.

PLATOU:

The trauma must be horrendous.

DUNN:

The national debate gives recognition that Minnesota is almost a model or is there.

PLATOU:

Is there. And, of course, I can see how the administrators in hospitals feel because they need--says to me I'm out of a job, or, my goodness, I'm at risk. And many organizations are at risk. We've gone through that. You just look at the last four years here in Minneapolis. Metropolitan Medical Center closed--600 beds. Mt. Sinai Hospital, 380 beds, closed. St. John's Lutheran closed. St. Mary's, 800 beds, Catholic institution closed. There's four of them right there. That's a lot of pathologists, anesthesiologists,

administrators, and others who are—the shakeout is already behind us.

DUNN:

The constriction has occurred.

PLATOU:

That's the way it is. Everybody's at risk.

DUNN:

Carl, your association with Fairview Hospital consumed all of your professional work—active work—following a brief stint at Northwestern Hospital in Minneapolis. So we're talking about from 1952 to 1993. Are you still active in some respect?

PLATOU:

When I retired, when I was 65—when I was 63, I sat down with our board chairman and said that I'd like to now ask you that we secure my successor, that he and I can work together for two years, and there's an easy transition. So we set up a search committee, and we invited Gus Donhowe to take my place, who is one of the most wonderful men this world has ever known. He was a senior officer at Pillsbury. We invited Gus, who had been on the Fairview board. He's a Fulbright scholar. He is a fine, fine gentleman. Great organizational skills. He came to Fairview, and we worked together for a year and a half, and then I retired.

My wife and I went to Sanibel, where we have a home. We were there three weeks. On January 27, which was a Friday, the phone rang. It was 10:00 in the morning. I answered, and it was Gus. He said, "Are you sitting down?" I said, "No." "Well," he said,

"it's pretty serious." I said, "What's that?" He said, "Well, I just had breakfast with Nels, Dr. Hasselmo, the president of the university who's been in office six weeks. You know the university had been in terrible difficulties, and Dr. Hasselmo was brought in, and he needs some credibility with the legislature and the governor and the public at large, and the corporate community. He has invited me to come into a new position as senior executive vice president for management and finance. That is to be the chief operating officer of the entire university—not the academic side, but the university at large. What do you think?" I said, "Well, Gus, if Nels needs instant credibility, why is he asking you?" And he laughed, and said, "Well, I'm glad somebody's going to keep it in perspective. Now what do you really think?" I said, "Well, I think you have to go where your heart goes. How could you decline public policy positions of such magnitude. Besides you have such an interest in education and I would understand that, and I'm sure our board would understand." He said, "Well, would you come back?" I said, "Well, if the board invites me to come back, of course." He said, "Well, you're just starting your retirement." I said, "Well, if they invite me to come back, of course I will." He said, "Okay, can I call you back later this afternoon?" I said, "Sure."

So he did, and he called back and said he'd talked with Governor Elmer Andersen, our former governor, and some very close friends of his and ours, and so he decided to do that. So then I came back, and then the board appointed a search committee with Clinton Schroeder and Vern Johnson as the two principals, and they

made a magnificent, just the best conclusion any organization could, and we got Rick Norling. Rick is one in a million. He's a brilliant fellow, very, very intelligent, very keen, very ambitious, very sensitive, and very respectful of all the traditions in Fairview. He has done, I think, the most exemplary job I've ever witnessed in a hospital. Rick is a giant of a fellow. Has a tremendous future. And so it's worked out extremely well.

When I retired, they asked me if I would spend half of my time when I'm here with the Fairview Foundation, which was a new venture. I said I would be honored. So I go to Fairview every morning—I'm there every morning—and work with Jon Olsen, who is the director of the Fairview Foundation. As a matter of fact, I had breakfast this morning with a potential board member for the foundation. So I just love it. I couldn't be happier. I am very blessed and very fortunate.

DUNN:

We'd be remiss if we didn't mention how did the university do with Gus.

PLATOU:

Gus? Gus did beautifully over there, and they did beautifully, and then tragically, he died of a ruptured aneurism. He was cross-country skiing, and he died.

DUNN:

How old a man is Norling?

PLATOU:

Rick is in his early 40s. He's a Minnesota graduate. He graduated from Amherst, and he was with Sam Tibbitts out in California. He's a star. Rick is a star. And he understands his present circumstance very well, and I think he's leading Fairview through it simply beautiful. He's very adroit, very skillful, has already earned high marks from everybody. He's an outstanding person. Fairview's very fortunate to have him.

DUNN:

Speaking of people, as we are doing here, you refer to Tibbitts. Is Sam Tibbitts a friend of yours?

PLATOU:

Yes. I've known Sam for a long, long time. A long time. He did an outstanding job out there. He's retired now as I, although he still has a—I'm still privileged with being on the Fairview board and the Fairview executive committee, but I make it a point to say very little, because the former CEO really should be in the background. These arguments that we see that occur with the former CEO and new CEO I think basically are the fault of the former CEO. It's hard to give up. You've got to discipline yourself to move away emotionally from control. And that's hard. So you have to discipline yourself, and I hope I have. I've found other interests. I'm a director of the Center for Health and Medical Affairs at St. Thomas Graduate School of Business, the second largest graduate school of business in the U.S., by the way. I've gotten involved in things other than Fairview, and my role is to be

Rick's cheerleader. That's the way I see it. So it's lovely. It's nice.

DUNN:

Good. Who are some of the other outstanding colleagues that you've had? What are your recollections of Ray Amberg?

PLATOU:

Ray Amberg was a man of consummate wisdom. He had a young fellow working for him by the name of Kenneth Holmquist, who was just a great fellow and did a wonderful job all his life with his career. Ken was quite young with Ray, and one day he was hauled in by Dr. Leo Rigler, who is a professor and head of the department of radiology—internationally recognized. He was furious with Ken for something Ken had failed to do properly. He'd made a mistake. And Rigler had called this meeting, and they were in Ray's office around this table, and Rigler wouldn't quit. And finally Ray—and, of course, Ken had been wrong, but it wasn't all that bad. Finally, Ray sat back; he was quite overweight and sort of rumped. He was always rumped with his attire and his hair all over, and he pushed his hand through his hair, and he said, "Say, Dr. Rigler, do you have a pencil I can borrow for a minute?" And Rigler said, "Sure, here, take the pencil." And he took the pencil, and he looked at it. He said, "Oh, I see it's got an eraser." "Of course, it's got an eraser." He said, "I see the eraser's been used." "Yes," he said. "Does that mean that you've made a mistake some time or other in your life, too, Dr. Rigler?" There was silence and a couple of seconds went by and, we, Rigler said,

"Okay, Ray, okay. Okay, Ken, I apologize. I carried on too much. Let's go on." So it was wisdom; he had wisdom.

Joe Norby had wisdom. He had insight in how to motivate people and call on their sense of commitment. Those are very important, and I learned a lot from both of them. Especially James Hamilton.

DUNN:

Tell me about James Hamilton and Carl Platou.

PLATOU:

James Hamilton was fundamentally a boxer. He would have loved to have been a professional boxer, and he would have been the world's heavyweight champion. He was a great believer in the great man theory: You can do it; it's up to you. And he instilled that, I think, in every one of us who went into his course. I think you feel that way. I feel that way. We all do. Hamilton was a very, very astute, keen-minded person. He also understood human nature very well. I remember the last week in the program in hospital administration. We had had an interview with him, and you were to tell him what you thought of the program, and I remember clearly sitting with him that day. He said, "What do you think?" I said, "I think it's being intellectually dishonest." He said, "What do you mean?" I said, "Well, you make a point about everybody in the class is highly qualified, and you talked about that the first week, all week. And the selection process, how great it is. I know I got in because of my uncle. So I just haven't trusted you." He was furious. And he said, "I've always thought that you'd be

lucky if you could be able to manage a 110-bed hospital in a rural area somewhere, and now I'm sure of it." So I left. We became fast friends. But I told him what I thought, and I thought he ought to know.

John King—dear John, you know, one of the best people in the health field—came to us as a resident, and Steve Orr, and many, many, many good ones. Hamilton always, always said the same thing. "I'm sending you my best students because you need help so much." Don Berglund, and Mark Enger, Pam Tibbitts—all of them. And they're all stars. They're all winners. And they all flourished. Everyone. I'm very proud of so many of our people flourished.

DUNN:

You really have had an all-star lineup, haven't you?

PLATOU:

We really have. Truly have. We really have. I don't think—I don't know of any hospital organization in the country that has spawned as many high achievers in the health administration field as Fairview, which goes back to James Hamilton, because he saw to it that we got excellent people. It's really true.

DUNN:

I think he figured that they'd get a good experience. Have you enjoyed being a mentor?

PLATOU:

Oh, yes. It's the nicest thing there is, is to have students that—that's one reason I'm at St. Thomas University now. I just love it. It's just fascinating. I had an opportunity to speak at

George Johnson's program in hospital administration last week on leadership for two hours. The two hours were up, and the students stayed. And they stayed for another hour. I enjoyed that. That was very nice. Yes, very nice. They all want to know. They're all committed. Wonderful young people.

DUNN:

Your proteges include, as you mentioned, John King. How's he doing in the West?

PLATOU:

Portland? He's doing beautifully. I talked to him last week, as a matter of fact. He's doing extremely well. John has all the qualities of great leadership, whatever the field would be.

Steve Orr is doing magnificently in the Lutheran Hospital system up in Fargo, North Dakota. Funny little thing, you might say, but it's something like 89 hospitals and nursing homes. Bottom line last year, which was very, very handsome. They love him; he loves them. They've even invited him to be the chairman of the board of directors. He's the first one I've heard of.

DUNN:

Where the chief executive would be the chairman of the board.

PLATOU:

Yes. I've never heard of it before. So he learned an awful lot of guile and how to mislead people when he was at Fairview, I'll tell you.

DUNN:

Another of your superstars is Wegmiller. What's Don doing?

PLATOU:

Don did beautifully. He created—he didn't create Health Central, that was done by Bob Van Hauer, but he enlarged it, he expanded it, he made it much more refined and sophisticated and very successful, and then it merged in with Healthspan. Don left there and is now involved nationally in a company relating themselves to executive compensation. The fellows around here all joke so now he is called a life insurance salesman. But he's going to do very, very well, and he'll make a real contribution to people. He was president of AHA and numerous other professional organizations.

I remember clearly Don coming in one day, and I called him and he said that the Chamber of Commerce of Minneapolis had been asked to sponsor some young executive to be an advance man for the president, Mr. Nixon. Part-time, not a full-time job. And Don had been very active in the Republican party and had done a lot of wonderful things for them. I said, "Would you have any interest in this? If so, we'll submit your name." Don was invited and had those unbelievable experiences with Mr. Nixon, Reagan, and Bush—all of them. He really saw an awful lot of life, and you couldn't do that unless you were a very, very, skillful person. And Don did it beautifully. They always called him back. He had a great record. Great record. And he tells some fascinating stories about the White House and what took place. Just extraordinary. Tremendous. And he grew in the process, too.

DUNN:

Although he wasn't your resident, one of your proteges was Dean Roe.

PLATOU:

Yes, Dean Roe. What a wonderful man. The first person I worked with--my first assistant. He and I had been together about three years, and Hamilton called one day. He said I'm coming over to see you. He came over, and I'll never forget it. It was about 4:00 in the afternoon. He said, "I'm doing a study in a hospital down in Milwaukee--Froedtert is the name of it--and Milwaukee Sanitarium. I need somebody to go down there and hold the place together for about three months until they get a full-time executive director. And, Roe, I'd like you to do it. Is that okay with you, Carl?" I said, "Certainly, if it is with you, Dean." He said, "Well, all right, I'll try it." He's still there. He went on LOA from Fairview. He's still there 30 years later.

DUNN:

Three months leave.

PLATOU:

Yes. And then he created Froedtert Memorial. As a matter of fact, Dean was up here a couple of weeks ago with his successor who took his place. We spent the day together. So a lot of dear friendships grow up over the years.

DUNN:

Tell me about your classmates, Nelson and McNerney.

PLATOU:

Well, Stan was a year ahead of me at the university in hospital administration. Stan Nelson and I worked together at Northwestern. I was—it was the summer before I went into the program, and he was the administrative intern. He had just gotten married. We had a little office together in the hall. We had desks back to back in the hallway, over by dietary kitchen, Northwestern. He had just gotten married to his wife, who is called Riff.

One afternoon, it was in the summer, she and her mother came to Northwestern to pick Stan up to drive over to St. Paul to his parents for dinner. Mrs. Riffenberg was from St. Louis, and she didn't think too highly of her son-in-law. He had a casualness about him and a humor that wasn't her customary cup of tea. She thought that Riff had made a terrible mistake. Be that as it may. Riff came into the hospital at 5:00 and said, "Have you seen Stan?" I said, "No, I haven't seen him for the last hour." She said "Well, mom and I are out in the car. I'll go downstairs, and see if he's in the storeroom," which is where Stan and I worked a lot. He wasn't there. It was locked. We paged him, and he wasn't there. So I told her that we couldn't find him. At the same time, Stan was sauntering over to the apartment where they lived, which is about a mile away, one lovely afternoon. Got to the apartment and knocked on the door and nobody there, so he let himself in with a key and went in and got a beer and newspaper and sitting reading the newspaper. At the same moment, Mrs. Riffenberg and her dear

daughter, who was then very embarrassed, were driving to St. Paul to Stan's house thinking maybe he took the streetcar and went over to the house. Must have. They got there, and he wasn't there. So Riff did the only thing she could. She picked up the phone and called the apartment. Stan was sitting there drinking his beer, and the phone rang, and he picked it up, and it suddenly dawned on him like an electric shock where he was supposed to be. He said, "I'm sorry. He's not here." And he hung up. That's Stan. He's still the same.

And the other time, which I thought so hilarious, he was in his office at Henry Ford, as the president of Henry Ford Medical Center, and his classmate, Walter McNerney, called him national leader, international leader. They were classmates, and Stan's secretary said, "Mr. Nelson?" He said, "Yes?" "Mr. Walter McNerney's on the line." Stan said, "Ask him which Walter McNerney." So he was, and he is always good on the uptake. Sauntered through life and doing very well. He had tremendous responsibilities, and he's working at the university now with George Johnson as an executive-in-residence of the program of hospital administration, which is great.

DUNN:

Others of your peers. Bill Wallace?

PLATOU:

Yes, Bill was a dear, dear friend. He did a wonderful job at Miller and tying St. Luke's together. Then he died, tragically, of cancer. He had a little bump in one finger, and they excised the

bump, and then they found it was cancer so they took the finger. And then it was another finger. Just awful. And then it was in his lung. He was Swedish, and I was Norwegian. We used to kid about it. One Saturday I was in the office about 10:00, and I thought, gee, I'm going to drive over to see Bill, who was then in his last days. He died the following Tuesday, by the way. And I went to Miller Hospital and walked down to the end of the hall, and there he was all by himself. His big chair with his legs stretched out in front of him and a white gown, his face all wrinkled. Just felt terrible, and he did, as I say, expire four or five days later. I walked in and said, "Bill, it's Carl." He said, "Oh, gee, it's good to see you. Thanks for coming over." And he talked about life, and he was very sad. And he'd also gone through a divorce not too long before. He was very lonesome.

DUNN:

One of the tragedies.

PLATOU:

Yes. Really very sad. After I'd been there about a half an hour, I said, "Say, Bill." He said, "Yes." "Bill?" "What?" "Do you know how to get a one-armed Swede out of an apple tree?" He said, "What?" And I said, "Do you know how to get a one-armed Swede out of an apple tree?" He said, "No." I said, "You wave to him." He said some expletive. But he said, "Give me a kiss. Right here." And he pointed to his cheek. I said, "Can I close my eyes?" And then he started to laugh. And he laughed and he

laughed and he laughed and he laughed. And then we hugged and had a lovely time. He died very early in life.

DUNN:

Yes. Do you see Jack Rivall?

PLATOU:

I haven't seen Jack the last year. He's a good friend and a great fellow. We tell the story that when I went to Northwestern, Mr. Nye took a liking to me because I think my uncle—he was a pediatrician and important on the staff—he took a liking to me. And Jack was also working at Northwestern and that summer before he went in the program. But he was with the grounds crew, and he had a mallet in his hand and was breaking up some rocks down in the basement floor. There was a leak in the pipes. I walked by with Mr. Nye, in my suit, and Jack and I had met just some weeks before. He said, "I felt like taking the mallet and hitting you on the top of your damn head." Jack's gone through a lot of things. He's done very well for himself. He's doing well, feels well.

DUNN:

Are you good friends of Jerry Bieter?

PLATOU:

Yes. I haven't seen Jerry since he moved out to Phoenix, but their daughter, you know, worked with us for quite a few years—Meg—and she came to us. She was the number-one student in the graduate school of hospital administration. They had a big banquet. At the AHA we had a Minnesota Alumni. That's when she got her award, and we had a special party for Meg and her friends

and her mom and dad at the hotel afterwards. I remember that was a very festive evening. That was a great achievement. Meg's a wonderful person.

DUNN:

Where is she now?

PLATOU:

She's out in California. She's out in San Diego and called a couple of months ago. We had a nice long talk. She's very happy and has a wonderful position. She and her husband are very happy. The kids are doing well, and she's a real achiever. A very outstanding person.

Dunn:

Any other good remembrance?

PLATOU:

I should tell you though about one time I did go to Johns Hopkins. I had called Dr. Nelson. I called him, and I said, "With whom would I be interviewing?" He said, "Why do you want to know?" I said, "I'd just like to know." So he said, "Well, it's Dr. Milton Eisenhower, of course. He's the president of Hopkins University. And there are two other—one other doctor and two other board members." And then he said, "This last board member he just mentioned," he said, "is a very important man. A long, long-lasting, long-enduring Baltimore family, and of the blue bloods, and he really is sort of the center of influence on our board of directors." I said, "Okay, thank you."

Then I went to Who's Who, and I read about all these men and especially about this one. It said in Who's Who that he graduated from Swarthmore College, which is in Philadelphia. So I called Swarthmore and asked for their alumni office and said, "Would you read to me the biography of Mr. So-and-So and he graduated from Swarthmore." "Well, all right. Just a minute." So they did, and it said in there that he had played baseball. He was captain of the baseball team. So I called the athletic department and asked the athletic director if he could tell me anything about him. He said, "Well, what do you want to know?" I said, "Anything and everything, including his batting average." He said "Oh, my gosh, I don't know whether I have that." "Well, it's quite important." So he said, "Okay, hold on." So he gave me the batting averages and said, "By the way, he was on the Mid Atlantic baseball team two years—his junior and senior year." Well, I'd gone to school at Haverford, which had competed against Swarthmore.

So when I went to the interview, Russ took me in and said, "This is Carl Platou, and I'll leave the two of you alone for a half an hour and then I'll come back." So we sat down and he had bow tie and his sleeves rolled up—he was an attorney, very dour. He said, "I see you went to Haverford in Philadelphia." I said, "Yes, sir. It's a wonderful school, and great faculty and great student body." I chuckled. He said, "May I ask what you're chuckling about?" I said, "Yes, we had a great school and everything, but I was on the wrestling and the cross-country team, but there was one school that always vanquished us in one sport

every year. We could never beat them." I said, "It was a school by the name of Swarthmore." "Swarthmore?" I said, "Yes, they always beat us in baseball." Very quiet. "Do you know that I attended Swarthmore, Mr. Platou?" I said, "Yes, sir." "Do you know that I had played baseball in Swarthmore, Mr. Platou?" I said, "Yes, sir, I knew." "What else do you know?" I said, "Would you like to know your batting averages?" And before he could say anything, I rattled them off. And then he didn't say a word, and I thought, "Oh, my goodness. I've injured myself. This is too much or something." He got up from behind his desk, didn't say a word, went over and opened the door, and said, "Dr. Nelson, please come in here." Russ came in, and he said, "Dr. Nelson, anybody who prepares himself the way this man has for this interview has my vote as your successor." That was fun.

DUNN:

That's interesting. Just to get the record on the tape ahead of that little incident was discussion about a person at Stanford. And what was that person's name?

PLATOU:

Dr. Robert Glaser.

DUNN:

Dr. Robert Glaser.

PLATOU:

He was vice president of medical affairs and dean of the medical school and then became—he retired a few years later, and

became the chairman of the Henry Kaiser Foundation. He was an outstanding person.

DUNN:

So as a Norwegian in the heartland, you had opportunity to go to the East Coast, or the West Coast, and you stayed right here in the cold country.

PLATOU:

I'm glad I did.

DUNN:

How did you get from New York to Haverford?

PLATOU:

I was born, as I said, in Brooklyn, and lived there, and then Dad's business took him to Philadelphia, and so we were there. We lived there really from grade school on through high school, then came here to the university for college.

DUNN:

And did your parents come to Minnesota?

PLATOU:

No, Mom had died. I was 18. She died. Very sad. When the war started, the Navy needed people to help in developing harbors and nautical concerns, and he went in as a consultant to the U.S. Navy. So then my brother and I, who is a year my elder, came out here and lived with my uncle who was a pediatrician, to whom I told Mr. Hamilton, "That's why I got into the program in hospital administration. Not because of me, and you should have been honest to say that."

DUNN:

Did he deny that?

PLATOU:

Well, in the long run, it was okay, but he was offended that I would stand up to him, I think. He didn't like that.

DUNN:

What change occurred in your work when Medicare started in America?

PLATOU:

I think some of the fundamental structure of medicine changed with Medicare. I can remember so many of our physicians—and this is typical nationally—that doctors knew certain patients didn't have funds, and they sent them a very little bill or no bill. And then when Medicare came in, which everybody was covered, I think psychologically a rift began to occur there, or a division began to occur, because you charged everybody and the insurance took over. And so some of the individualism of relationships changed. The hospital financing became easier, of course, because of Medicare. You had fewer circumstances of people unable to pay for care. It covered it all. And so it—I view it as having been a plus as far as the health field was concerned—hospital field was concerned. Of course, here we're very blessed because the economy of this region is usually highly stable. It's agricultural-based, with firms like General Mills, Pillsbury. 3M is not agriculture. The firms here have usually been very strong economically. This area is not like some towns and cities that have boom or bust, or an industry going

down, or like an aeronautical industry just going away. Like the time they had that thing, the sign in Seattle, "Last one out, shut off the lights," you know, when Boeing was losing everything. We've never had that.

DUNN:

What is your observation about the national organizations? American Hospital Association? American College of Healthcare Executives? Have they been effective in your lifetime?

PLATOU:

Oh, I think extremely effective. Highly effective. I can remember way back to Dr. Crosby at the AHA. We had a circumstance at Fairview—we had some surgeons doing—taking out normal tissue. I didn't know what to do about it, so I went down to Chicago to see Dr. Crosby to talk to him. He said, "Well, you know, it's pretty simple. We have this Tissue and Procedure Committee requirement and Joint Commission. Why don't I write you a scalding letter about the inadequacy of your tissue committee?" I said, "Would you, please?" And he did. It was a lulu. I brought it to the executive committee of the medical staff and the board of trustees, and they constituted an effective tissue committee. I remember distinctly two brothers who were surgeons on our staff who were taking out normal appendixes. It's horrible to say this, but it's true. They were about 70 percent normal tissue. So we did a very simple device. We said that every month we're going to post the findings of the tissue committee in the staff lounge, and all normal tissue will be listed by percentage for each doctor, by

name. That did it. It's hard to believe, but it actually did it. Turned it around. That was Dr. Crosby. He had the insight, and he wrote a letter. He said, "And of all things, you must post in the staff lounge for all colleagues to read." I'll never forget it. He figured it out. He knew right away what to do. It was great. Medicine had such liberties in those days. They don't today, thank heavens. None of us do.

DUNN:

Is the review process within institutions effective today?

PLATOU:

I've noticed all of our administrators and board members and medical staff groups have great attention. We're being examined by the Joint Commission, and that's the most important thing of the year to many of them. That is very, very significant. It's taken with great seriousness by everybody. I never was much involved. I was on the trustees--AHA trustees--for one three-year period. I never--I just loved being at home, doing things here. I never got involved in the national scene. Others did, but I just never had that inclination.

DUNN:

Would you have observations to make about the executive leadership? The line of Crosby, McMahon, McCarthy, and now Davidson?

PLATOU:

McMahon, Crosby both, with whom I had quite a bit to do, I thought were excellent. I didn't have much to do with Carol, so I

really mustn't say. I wouldn't—with Davidson I really have very, very, very little—none as a matter of fact. I really oughtn't comment. And I don't imply by that that they're not equal to their predecessors—not at all.

DUNN:

Okay. Tell me about the hospital organizations locally. Specifically, the Minnesota Hospital Association and the Metropolitan Health Care Council, is that it?

PLATOU:

Yes. Both are very highly respected and have complete participation and endorsement of the health field here. Steve Rogness has been here a long time, done a great job, and Alan Johnson is doing a wonderful job. I think both of them are very active, very alert. And, of course, the community of hospital leadership here is very high in competence and dedication. They all take an active part. They don't treat it casually at all. I think it's very well done.

DUNN:

You and I share being alums of the University of Minnesota program in hospital administration. Is that a significant influence in health affairs of Minnesota?

PLATOU:

Oh, yes. Yes, it's sort of a singular influence and recognition. You know it was voted by its peers—all the 33 course directors. Two years ago they selected the outstanding programs. Minnesota was number one in the nation. By the 33 directors.

DUNN:

I didn't realize that.

PLATOU:

Yep, it was. The program in hospital administration in Minnesota, by the directors of the 33 graduate schools, was number one. And that's due to George and his faculty, of course, but mostly George. George Johnson's done, I think, an absolutely outstanding job. Outstanding job. And George is called upon to help many of the hospital systems get CEOs. Instead of going through some of the headhunter groups, they're going to George. Rick Norling is here because of George. Vern Johnson, the chairman of our search committee asked George if he would work with them, and they did. They didn't get a headhunter; they got George.

DUNN:

That's interesting.

PLATOU:

George knows his students. He knows them, and he knows the circumstances, and he makes a good placement.

DUNN:

Wonderful. I had felt Hamilton provided the Minnesota program a strong dose of that Judeo-Christian value structure. Do you feel that continues in graduate programs of health care administration?

PLATOU:

I don't know. I can't say. But when I talked to the students here last week on leadership—well, it was Monday morning, this Monday—I talked about the formation of the health system in the

United States. How the Judeo-Christian concern, and I thought to myself at the time I wonder how much of this they've had, 'cause they sort of looked at me quizzically, like what's that got to do with it? So I elaborated on how it started. So I think maybe there hasn't been much. That's just a small narrative on my part.

DUNN:

I wanted to ask you, since you've started, tell me a little bit more about your exposition of leadership to the students.

PLATOU:

I've given a speech in the past entitled "The Maginot Line," and I've given it all over, and I give it always to the students. And what it is, is to take an analogy, Germany and France, which had been at war with each other for centuries—in World War I millions were killed in trench warfare, and then the French, right after that war, developed the Maginot Line, which was the concept of Pierre Maginot, who was the engineer and militarist and general, that we would build this huge fortification, like the Chinese wall to keep out the Mongols from China. And they put all of their wealth and riches and policy into the Maginot Line, and, of course, the Germans created what they called the blitzkreig and panzers, and paratroops, and fifth column and stuka dive-bombers, and mobile armaments. So they went around it and over it. And France capitulated in seven days.

My point to the students is that what is leadership? Well, there's a situation there you have to think through what can be done. You have to have the courage to do it, and if you have in

your own mind a Maginot Line like I don't want to leave the Twin Cities to go to another city for a position in hospital administration, you're perhaps hurting yourself. Your Maginot Line that you got up here—your own frame of reference might be very restrictive. You look at Mt. Sinai, and because we're Jewish, we could always have a fascinating and well-received hospital. St. Mary's because we're Catholic. We'll always have a Catholic hospital. Same thing. It hits us all. If you get so—if you fail to understand what's going on about you and around you—like here we're talking about Health Partners emerging. The hospitals might find that they're on the second or third position in the whole scheme of things, whereas for all these years we've been in the first position. Simply because Fairview has three or four hospitals here doesn't mean that you're going to be the prevailing force.

So that's what I talk about in terms of leadership. You've got to broaden yourself, and you have to read, and you have to get exposed to different ways of thinking. You've got to read biographies and autobiographies. Otherwise, you're just trapped in your own small frame of reference like the French were. And all of a sudden you find out something's happened outside your influence.

DUNN:

The creativity of being able to perceive what could happen in your illustration of the Maginot Line, is that something that can be learned?

PLATOU:

Yes, it can be learned. I think it's a matter of fundamentally recognizing that change is inherent in our society, in our lives. Change is an inherent part of it. Automatic. Most people tend to want to be away from it. Don't bother me with that change. To read what's taking place in other industries, other businesses, read biographies, and you begin to understand that change is part of it all. So you know it was really simple to see that Southdale was going to be a big success. But you know the Danes had asked Northwestern to build a suburban hospital, and they said no. They'd asked Abbott to build a suburban hospital, and they said no. Because the doctors come here.

DUNN:

So you would urge individuals who would be leaders to be readers, especially of biographies, and history?

PLATOU:

Definitely. Positively. History. Positively biographies. Because it gives you a perspective. It gives you an insight, and you realize that people make the difference, and individuals can make the difference. You read John Gardner. He has an article on leadership called the antileadership vaccine, which talks about broadening yourself and not being narrowed and narrowed and narrowed in a specialty and expertise because out of leadership—expertise doesn't create leadership. Have the broad range of experiences, understanding, perception, appreciation. As a matter of fact, John Gardner has a thesis in his article, which

I talked about with the students. That is, you get an advanced degree, or two advanced degrees, you become an expert. The more you become an expert, the more you see the world in terms of your own light. And why are doctors usually in trouble as a professional group, in terms of society? It's because they talk to doctors. They have a conscripted frame of reference. He goes on to say that you can even call people who get themselves advanced degrees, and one on top of the other, men and women of great "educated incapacity."

DUNN:

Educated incapacity.

PLATOU:

Educated incapacity. You look at their medical school right now—the front page of the newspaper today, John Nagarian's office was broken in, the FBI is in. Now why is it that John Nagarian and those are that way? Well, it's because they're in a frame of reference that we are the king. I am the king, and people will come to me no matter what, and I do not need to fill out those forms, etc., etc., etc. And of course, the medical school, the university hospitals, dropping like a rock, because they are the frame. They are the Maginot Line of the university hospital—the clinical chiefs. That's a fact. They are.

DUNN:

They really haven't been able to respond . . .

PLATOU:

They haven't been able to think through. They are like the Norwegian who is so convinced that the Swedes cheat, that if his daughter gets married to a Swede, he won't talk to her again. You know, that kind of stuff. But it prevails in human nature. And it's on the front page of the paper today. The FBI was in his office.

DUNN:

What influence has the American Lutheran Church had on Carl Platou?

PLATOU:

The church has wonderful people and wonderful purpose, and they've never intruded into Fairview. Our board leadership has been very strong, of which some of the men are very keenly and deeply involved with the church. Some hospital groups, the church has a very keen involvement, and financial. Not so at Fairview. It's more of a moral suasion or a mission fulfillment, an expression of mutual concern and goodwill, but not an operational tie. No operational tie. It's really excellent. I think it's excellent. We never, for instance, we never wanted to raise money. Fairview has a Foundation. In the old days, because so many of our congregational needs in our college—church college needs—are much greater than the hospital. So I didn't think we should go out and intrude on this broad audience of Lutherans in this region. And I think the church appreciated that. I think they appreciated that. Something we never did.

DUNN:

I'm intrigued, Carl, at your obvious record of pioneering—being on the cutting edge—with hospital holding companies, consector theory, and movement toward rehabilitation in those respects we've discussed. Now tell me what do you believe, perceive, are your particular skills or attitudes or interests that make possible that creativity?

PLATO:

Well, I think it's—I don't know how to answer that exactly. I think one thing that's important is that you tend to associate yourself with people outside your own profession. Develop interests that are external to your profession. Professionalism can tend to be a bit myopic. We tend to think that we're different than the others, and I have found it fascinating to know a president of Dayton-Hudson and hear him talk about retailing competition and why they're developing different kinds of levels of stores, and why they're going to go regional, or why they're not going to. And it makes you stop and think. Like bank holding companies. I mean it's right there in front of you. You don't have to be very smart to extrapolate into the health field.

DUNN:

Corollaries between health care and banking . . .

PLATO:

Yes, there are. In terms of serving the community. One has one function, and one has another. It's local, it's—but you have to have consolidated, and centralization, you have to have all

sorts of things. But I think it's getting with people who are achievers, and then you begin to think that way yourself.

DUNN:

Associating with achievers.

PLATOU:

I think so. Not for artificial reasons, but just because they're good people and they're doing things. They're just doing things. And finding on the medical staff the men who really have that spark of change to do things. A John Moe coming and saying, "I'm leaving my orthopedic practice. I want to specialize in this. I don't know where to begin." I said, "Well, why don't we give you an office?" "Well, what do you charge?" I said, "Why should we charge you? It's empty." Things like that. Helping things to grow. That's the joy—helping things to grow. See people fulfill their goals, achieve. It's achievement that counts.

DUNN:

What are your hobbies?

PLATOU:

Well, I love to work in the yard. I have a boat at home. I just love that wooden boat. I love to read. I'm reading Barbarossa right now. Barbarossa is the Russian invasion by the Nazis. After World War II, they removed—after 25 years, all official records were sealed, and now they've been opened and so these magnificent books are coming out. This was written by the Secretary of State under Margaret Thatcher who was a historian—military historian. Alan Hill, and he's written this

unbelievable documentary and what they did. You talk about human nature in the raw, there it was. I just love to read, and I read quite a bit. And then we have many, many friends. Socially, we have a lot of friends, do a lot of things.

DUNN:

Do you spend time at the lake?

PLATO:

We live at the lake. We live at Lake Minnetonka, and then we have a home in Sanibel. We're there four months every winter.

DUNN:

And do you get out on the lake in your boat?

PLATO:

Oh, yes. Frequently.

DUNN:

And is that a continuation of your heritage?

PLATO:

I think so. I have the Norwegian flag up in the bow. Yes, I think so. I think so. My dad would have loved it. It's a beautiful boat. I had a great big 42-footer for 28 years. That was a big boat; that was a giant. We sold that. We have a nice boat now—32.

DUNN:

And does it sleep a couple?

PLATO:

Yes, but we never sleep on it seeing as we just use it as a day cruiser, really. And then I'm over at St. Thomas at this

graduate school program. I started this new Center of Health and Medical Affairs. I just love it. We're not producing people to be hospital administrators. It's for the health medical industry here. We have a lot of people who work come to us—United Health Care, Proof Health, and all the rest—who want to get on with their careers and enhance themselves, and so it's . . . And it's a Catholic school, and they took me in and didn't make me have to say a darn thing about I hereby pledge allegiance to the Norwegian flag only in the evenings or anything. It's just great.

DUNN:

And your family? You have a son in health care administration?

PLATOU:

Yes, my son is the chief operating officer at Newton-Wellesley Medical Center in Boston, in a very sophisticated environment. It's tied in with Tufts and Harvard. He's flourishing. He's doing beautifully. I'm very proud of him.

DUNN:

Good.

PLATOU:

He's married and has two wonderful kids. [Hi, Carl.] Hi, there. That man manages \$12 billion in assets.

DUNN:

Oh, really? What's . . .

PLATOUE:

Good man. I find in my own career that you learn from those who—you learn from other people. Seek them out.

DUNN:

You've received a lot of honors in your time. Which ones are you most proud of?

PLATOUE:

Well, I guess marrying Suzie is the best one. Suzie is a wonderful wife. I got a phone call once to go to the Norwegian embassy in Washington. My mom and dad were Norwegians, you know, and I'd done things for Norway over the years. And I got down there. I didn't know what it was for. This was 16 years ago—17 years ago, exactly. The ambassador got out from behind his desk—very formal, very, very formal, I mean extremely formal—and I'd never met him. He had silver gray hair. He looked like a Hollywood—if Hollywood had an ambassador from a foreign country, that would be him. And he said, "Mr. Platou, I am honored to inform you that it has pleased His Majesty to bestow a knighthood upon you." I burst into tears. I cried. I stood there and sobbed. I thought of my parents. So they had a black-tie dinner here. As a matter of fact, here—180 people came out, a formal thing. Very nice. Yes. And here, you know, we don't talk about it. Nevil Mariner, who was the conductor of the symphony here, is British. And he was knighted by the Queen about five years ago, so it's Sir Nevil. Nobody'd ever say Sir Carl. But in Norway and Scandinavia, they just—they don't have any pomp. They don't.

That's the same thing. They used to give you lands or treaty rights or baronial homes.

DUNN:

But they're more stoic about it.

PLATOU:

Yes. But now they don't. They just give you the award. I wish they still gave land and trading rights. So I wore that little thing in my buttonhole—that little rosette on every suit, because you have to do that. And I think that only four of us in the U.S. were knighted.

DUNN:

Boy, that is lovely. Terrific.

PLATOU:

So I've been very fortunate to be with so many wonderful people and a great community. That makes it possible.

DUNN:

What makes this the great community that it is?

PLATOU:

Well, I think we talked about it a bit before. It's complex, but it's relatively small. The power structure of this community—everybody tends to know everybody else. And if you're good and honest and aboveboard, you're included. If they feel you're an achiever, you're included. So you get access. And then somebody would have a favorite project, and then he calls on his friends, and then vice versa. And the Jewish community also is very much integrated into all this. We have a magnificent Jewish

community. The leadership of the Jewish community here is utterly superior. As a matter of fact, three months ago, Hy Edelman, who is senior partner in the most prestigious Jewish law firm here, died, and I was honored to be a pallbearer. I'll tell you, that was an honor. That was an honor, indeed. And his son is Peter Edelman, who is special counsel to the president. His wife is Marion Wright Edelman, who has written this book Our Measure of Success. Peter is also the associate dean of Georgetown Law School. So I've known the Edelman family for a long time. I've known Peter, and we spent, when he was here for his dad's funeral, we spent a day and a half together. The Jewish community here is a very, very highly responsible community in leadership. So it's a joy. My friend, Harvey Golub—Harvey is chairman of American Express. Harvey was here at IDS. He was on the Fairview board. He's Jewish. As a matter of fact, he and his wife came to spend three days with us last winter in Sanibel, right after he was elected president of American Express.

DUNN:

There is a great sense of community in Minneapolis that people cite for a city of its size. Is there a Scandinavian influence, a social sense of community?

PLATOU:

You're right. There is. It's German more than it's Scandinavian. There are actually more Germans than Scandinavians, but the Scandinavians talk so much you'd think there'd be more of them. But there is—I think Mondale and Humphrey both reflect it.

There's a sort of a social concern legislatively—it comes out of the Depression days from the farmers. All of that. It's all wrapped into it. Agriculture is big here, and the farmers are independent people and highly socially motivated. Want good schools and good churches and good roads—you know public affairs.

DUNN:

But in addition to the public sector, we have in Minneapolis the 5% Club.

PLATOU:

5% Club started here by Wayne Thompson and Donald Dayton. They are the two who did it. Five percent of your profit goes automatically, every year, to charitable purpose.

DUNN:

Has any other community done that?

PLATOU:

Yes, some others have, but some of them have been 5 percent—not many—and then some are 2½, which is still a lot of money. That was started by Donald and Wayne Thompson. Matter of fact, Fairview has a 5 percent to our Foundation. Five percent of our earnings automatically go to the Fairview Foundation. Gus started that.

DUNN:

Having lived in some other parts of this Midwest, I keep asking myself why is there public and private sense of community that the city of Columbus, for instance, doesn't share?

PLATO:

Yes. Well, I think part of it—I don't have the answer, obviously. It's obviously an amalgamation of many forces. One is the agricultural background, one is the discipline of the German-Scandinavian background—self-reliance—politically, the social consciousness that the Democratic party reflects. That's what this is, a Democratic state. And then some of the old families who have had some extraordinary leaders amongst them—the Pillsburys, the Daytons. Maybe that's all happenstance, but you put it all together and it builds on itself. And then on top of that, being a headquarters city, you have all these bright people who are looking to do something with their time, and they get involved in a positive way.

DUNN:

Yes.

PLATO:

And they're varied. It's the third largest insurance center in the U.S.

DUNN:

After?

PLATO:

Hartford and New York.

DUNN:

Des Moines likes to lay claim to something in there.

PLATOUE:

Oh, they are. They are high. And also in publications. Des Moines.

DUNN:

As you reflect on this career, what are you the most proud of? If a monument was to be built, and it would cite what things were you a part of that you're most proud of.

PLATOUE:

[Long pause] Oh, I guess being honest.

DUNN:

I would have thought you might say something about initiation of the concept of multihospital systems.

PLATOUE:

Oh, those things come and go.

DUNN:

Yes.

PLATOUE:

They're important at a certain time, but that's . . . As I say, I'm 70 in November, and I have come to see more and more as time goes by. It's because they know you're dependable, you're honest, and no flimflam. You're successful, you're an achiever, creative, you want to name anything you want, but basically, if he says so, then you can depend on it. That's the important thing.

DUNN:

That's interesting.

PLATO:

I'm on the board of a very, very, very, very fascinating new start-up medical technology business. I was the first investor. And it could be gigantic. But the reason I was invited, I'm sure, is they felt, well, Carl will tell you what he thinks.

DUNN:

Of those in the health field you've known over half a century, who would you cite as sharing dedication to integrity?

PLATO:

Well, there are many wonderful people, of course. But of course, the one I always feel is the outstanding person is Ray Brown. Ray really was the intellect—a prolific mind, and the most charming, delicious person. I heard him give a talk here on hospital development to a community group—100 people or so. The leadership. And he stood up for an hour—he did not have a note. You could have sat as a student or a stenographer and taken off by paragraph, proper sequence, without ever overlapping or going back. The clarity of thought he had was just stunning. The mentality is so highly structured. Clarity of thought was fantastic. And, therefore, he was able to convey it. And he was a real force for change around here. He thought our West Bank thing was fantastic. When he thought it was good, that's when I thought we'd better do it. He was a special person.

DUNN:

What else should we talk about that we haven't so far?

PLATOU:

Well, one thing I might mention is I'm on a number of boards of IDS. IDS is one of the nation's largest investment houses, Investor Diversified Savings. I've encouraged Rick, and in another couple of years as people get to know you, you're going to get invitations to be on boards, and you take them. You take them, 'cause you'll add to them, and then they will add to you. And you'll just become a broader person. I think it's like a musician who takes classes from so and so, and some classes from somebody else, and you learn different things—appreciations or techniques from different people. And it's a matter of personal discipline to do it, as against just driving home in the evening and saying, "Well, phooey, I'll have a beer." It's a matter of personal discipline what you become. That's what leadership is all about. It's a matter of personal discipline. You will do it, or you don't have to. It's a matter of how you school yourself. And the other thing I think is very important in the health field, in any field, is don't take yourself too seriously. You see people today in the hospital, "Oh, my gracious, it's never been like this." Well, of course, 20 years from now they'll say it's never been like this, too. And probably 40 years from now. We tend to get so ensnared with our own stresses that we sort of—that you don't really grow the way you should.

DUNN:

I really enjoyed your statement. It's a matter of personal discipline what you become.

PLATOU:

One of the things that I mention to the students is find yourself somebody who to you is a giant and who to you really rings true in what a human being should be. And always keep that in mind, so when you get in a position of stress—I wonder, what would he do? I have a person like that—Elmer Andersen, who to me is just a magnificent human being. He's 82 years of age, and I've always sort of modeled myself after what Elmer would do. And then there's a little couplet by William Shakespeare, which I also told the students. I said you're going to get criticized some day. You're going to get in an argument, or somebody's going to, and you're going to feel hurt or misunderstood or maltreated. You can be maltreated, too. That little couplet by William Shakespeare: "Never soured, nor embittered be." 'Cause the moment you are, you'll sort of convey it. When you convey it . . .

DUNN:

. . . you're giving further damage to yourself.

PLATOU:

Definitely. And it's very important. It's very, very important, and that's self-discipline. You have lots of reasons to feel sorry for yourself. He didn't understand me, or whatever. No doubt about it. But it's a matter of how you conduct yourself. And . . .

DUNN:

You mentioned a while ago Ken Holmquist.

PLATOU:

He's retired, lives up in Northern Minnesota, has a lovely home on a lake in the woods. He just loves it. He's totally retired. I wouldn't wish to do that, but that's what he's done. I just love what I'm doing. Mornings there and afternoons here, at St. Thomas, and . . .

DUNN:

Staying active and busy.

PLATOU:

Yes. You're getting involved in new issues and new things, and change. So it's . . . And the other thing that's really lovely is that when you get to be 70, people sort of appreciate to see you around. Oh, that sweet old guy, you know? It's sort of nice.

DUNN:

Oh, it is. I can agree. I can perceive it. I'm close enough to it to see that. Who were others in your class at Minnesota?

PLATOU:

Jim Mainguy, who went up to Canada. He was in the Canadian health system for a long time. Fred LeRocker, who went to Cornell. He had the Cornell program for a while. Jack Rivall, of course. Bill Wallace was the year behind us. Wade Mountz, of course, was very, very prominent. Wade's done extremely well in his career. Then we had a Sister Bernadine. I remember we had a class on speech, and we all had to stand up and give a five-minute biography of ourselves. And she wore—in those days they had the habit, and

everybody talked about how nervous they felt. I'll never forget Sister Bernadine. We never thought she had any sense of humor. She said, "I'm standing up here, I'm so nervous, but I think I better tell you my knees are shaking, but you can't see them."

DUNN:

Was Ray Woodham in your . . .

PLATO:

No, he was the year before. He was with Stan. He was in Stan's class.

DUNN:

Is there anybody in the greater Minneapolis area that was with you in the class of 1952?

PLATO:

Nope, I'm the last of the Mohicans. See Gordy Sprenger started at Fairview as an orderly, and his wife was a head nurse in pediatrics. Bob Spinner, who's at Northwestern now as the CEO, was at Fairview as an administrative intern. We have a lot of friendships around. It's nice. It's very nice. It's very lovely. Jack retired quite a while ago, and he's the only other one. I haven't had him over to see St. Thomas. I've got to do that. He'd like that. But in the program, there's just Dornblaser. He's the last one left, really.

DUNN:

Vernon Weckwerth?

PLATOUE:

Vernon's here. He hasn't changed a bit. Just like always. He loves his students.

DUNN:

Is he up to any mischief?

PLATOUE:

I don't think so. He loves to keep needling the management of the program in health administration, his ISP program. He says it's much better than they are. He's just Vern all the way through.

Well, Donald, I think this is great.

DUNN:

Thank you.

PLATOUE:

I hope it's of value to you.

DUNN:

Oh, tremendous value to me, and it will be of value to this collection. I really appreciate it.

PLATOUE:

If I might just add one more comment—that is that the most significant contribution any of us can make to society is to be a parent whose children make one proud. I'm deeply honored and totally proud of my daughters and son as outstanding and wonderful individuals. They are one's greatest joy.

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