Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with William Bostick, 1981 August 11-19

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a tape-recorded interview with William Bostick on August 11, 1981. The interview took place in Detroit, Michigan, and was conducted by Mary Chris Rospond for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Interview

[Tape 1, side A]
[William Bostick has made many corrections in the draft copy of this interview. To preserve the spirit of the original spoken material, his additions or corrections have been placed in brackets.—Ed.]

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Today is August 11, 1981, and I'm with Bill Bostick at his home on West Outer Drive in Detroit. Bill, you have a little introduction for us.

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Yes, I do, Mary Chris. I thought that before leading you in this interview through my artistic and museum career, I would like to be permitted to philosophize a bit.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Oh yes.

WILLIAM BOSTICK: In the visual arts there are two very distinct sides of the aesthetic coin. One is the artist, the creator of the painting, sculpture, craft, print, or whatever pleases our ocular sense. On the other side are the many people who manipulate the work of art: curators, museum directors, dealers, art historians, archivists, collectors, professors, duplicators, and many others who do all sorts of things with the artistic creation. The artist would probably create even if there were not this great superstructure of which he is the foundation, but the superstructure could certainly not exist without him as a base. Often those who use the artist and his art overlook this fact. Repeatedly in this interview, as I assume in many others, the first personal pronoun will recur; it can't be otherwise. But I think I have something unique to offer in this recording of oral history which I pronounce with, I hope, no braggadocio. I have been both a museum administrator and an artist, which does not occur very often. My artistic career has not been one of a dabbler or a dilettante. I've sold my paintings, lithographs, ceramics, and calligraphy. I've won numerous prizes and am represented in important public and private collections. I've designed and illustrated books and executed numerous commissions. I've actually earned my living for a time as an artist as well as supplementing my museum salary with my art. So I think that I understand the conformations of both sides of this coin I refer to: how the artist feels when he's ill-treated by museums, and how museum people feel when they don't think that the working artist understands their problems. Most artists don't appreciate the art of [museology and the people] who have come forth to buy, conserve, guard, classify, promote, research, interpret, store, pack, ship, and perform many other services on works of art. But still the artist likes to have his creations seen and enjoyed. Art would assuredly not occupy the position of prominence it enjoys today if it weren't for the people who take care of artistic creations after they're born. Having been present at the birth of the Archives of American Art and been part of assuring that its cradle at the Detroit Institute of Arts was legally sound, I want to compliment this young American institution on its steady and rapid growth and the role it has played in the preserving of American art history. I'm especially honored to be interviewed by you today, Mary Chris. Admittedly most of the history has been of artists and their creative careers, is that correct?

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Yes.

WILLIAM BOSTICK: But my point is that many others have their part in this history and I hope that my museum and artistic careers will make an interesting part of this unique tapestry. Although I've written four books, the major part of my writing output has been minutes—from the standpoint of volume—44 years of them, 30 for the Arts Commission and 14 for the Founders Society. I consider minutes the lowest form of literary endeavor. They're really not made for reading, just for recording facts. But they come in mighty handy for bolstering one's faulty memory and showing how a great and growing art museum wrestled with the many problems, artistic and financial, which it faced. Looking back on my museum career, I reflect on what a lucky person I've been to have worked in such a rewarding atmosphere with beautiful works of art and sensitive, intelligent people. About the only thing I regret is that to my knowledge no artist was ever made an arts commissioner or a trustee while I was at the museum. I suggested it on a number of occasions, but the attitude seemed to be, "What does an artist know about art?"

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Okay. Thank you. We're going to go chronologically through your career and your life. Tell me a little bit about your family background: where you grew up, what your father did.

WILLIAM BOSTICK: I was born in a little town in northern Illinois called Marengo, named after Napoleon's Battle

of Marengo in northern Italy, why I don't know. About nine days ago I revisited it for the first time since my birth. It's little changed. It's a town of about two thousand people right in the midst of the northern Illinois corn belt. My father was a Baptist minister, and Baptist ministers have to find their own churches, not like the Methodists who are assigned. So we moved from Marengo to Freeport, Illinois, to Council Bluffs, Iowa, to Oshkosh, Wisconsin —where he took a brief detour in his career and became a Scout executive [before returning to the ministry]— but then to La Porte, Indiana, Rochester, Pennsylvania, and finally to Detroit in this Redford area. Both of my parents went to the University of Chicago as my grandmother lived in Chicago. My mother is still active at 92, and I may say probably a truly remarkable woman. However, I think that most of my art influence came from my maiden Aunt Tillie. She sent me to the Art Institute of Chicago one summer when I was only 13 years of age. As I look back now I'm amazed at the excellent watercolors that she executed around 1900 in the style of Cezanne. I'll show you one a little later. At the Art Institute I sketched plaster casts and sarcophagi in the galleries and learned about nude women by peeping into the life classes. Our family influence, I think, was permissive in that my mother especially let my brother and me do whatever we wanted—do "our thing." I had a print shop in the basement of one parsonage, and in another parsonage I had it up on the second floor, and every time the press came together it shook the whole house; occasionally plaster would drop into my mother's cooking. But my brother went in one direction: he got his Ph.D. in physics from the University of Chicago and has done important research into the origin of the galaxy and is head of the physics department at Stevens Insitute of Technology in Hoboken.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Okay. Let's talk about your formal education at the Carnegie Institute.

WILLIAM BOSTICK: All right. Can I begin a little before that?

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Surely.

WILLIAM BOSTICK: After a smorgasbord of grade schools and high schools to match my peripatetic household— and they're all kind of a blur to me now—I did go to Carnegie Institute of Technology, which has now become Carnegie-Mellon University in Pittsburgh. I received my bachelor's degree there in printing plant and graphic arts management, as it was called, in 1934. Whenever there was an elective I veered toward the artistic and humanistic printing of German fine printing, et cetera [Renaissance, Baroque and contemporary periods]. The professor who influenced me the most, I think, was Porter Garnett. You've probably never heard of him, but he was a very eminent fine printer, book designer, calligrapher [and scholar]. He taught a small group of students how to print books by hand on a hand press. He printed the text portion of the great Frick catalogue which you may or may not have seen. It's a beautiful job of printing [WB deleted lithography]. He printed it on a hand press with hand- set type. The banks closed when I was at Carnegie and the Depression was still very much on [very deep] when I graduated in 1934. My interest in art. . . Do you want me to continue that because that is part of my formal education?

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Yes.

WILLIAM BOSTICK: . . .really began about 1935. I attended the Detroit Academy of Art run by a really great artist by the name of Carlos Lopez who is very important in Michigan art. The school was located in the penthouse of the Metropolitan Building on John R just off of Woodward. Lopez was a great teacher. He'd get up in front of the class and do something I've seen few other art teachers do, and that's make a drawing—usually a life drawing— in front of the class to show us how to do it. It takes a lot of ability and bravura to do that sort of thing. I think I had my first painting in the Michigan artists exhibition in 1936 and probably met Clyde Burroughs, my predecessor at the museum, when I brought paintings in for this exhibition, or maybe when I joined the Scarab Club in 1939. After the Detroit Art Academy I went to the Arts and Crafts' original school on Watson Street where I studied with Sarkis for drawing and with Sam Cashwan for sculpture. John Carroll was director of the school at the time, and then followed by Jay Boorsma. They were very dissimilar people as have been all the subsequent directors of the Arts and Crafts School. Bob Tannahill I remember buzzing around and setting up exhibitions. It was a great period in art in Detroit. In 1937 I attended the Cranbrook Academy of Art. I studied painting with Zoltan Sepeshy who had a very strong influence on me and, I think, on my painting. But the thing in addition to his painting that I admired most was his ability with the English language which was not his native tongue; he was, of course, Hungarian. Dave Friedenthal and Harry Bertoia were there at the time. It also was an exciting place to be in the 1930s. After returning from the service in 1945 I went back to Cranbrook and studied there again for a short period with Zoltan and also with Maja Grotell, the great ceramics teacher. But my wife and I had our first baby in January 1946 and I had to go back to getting a livelihood. After transferring from the City Printing Division to the Detroit Institute of Arts in the fall of 1946, I started work on my master's degree in art history at Wayne State University. The art history division of the art department was rather infantile at that time. There were only about two professors. One of them was Ernst Scheyer who taught most of the courses, and George Lechler who taught the more ancient courses [the courses in ancient art], the archeological courses. I respect Ernst Scheyer a great deal. He was a great teacher, and I think he's had a profound influence on art and taste in this city. I also took ceramics courses with John Foster who was one of the great ceramists not only in the Detroit area but of America. He had one hand, his left hand. His right hand had been cut off in an industrial

accident at Ford Motor Company. If you know how a pot is thrown, he'd put his left hand inside the pot and then his right stump he used as a sort of spatula which he'd press against the outside of the bowl or pot. He threw porcelain which is a very difficult thing to do. But he was a great ceramist. I finally received my master's degree in art history in 1954, twenty years after my bachelor's degree. My thesis was on a very strange [interesting] subject: the use of printer's ornaments and other type to make illustrations. This is a very old art developed before the invention of movable type when the Greeks used to write poetry with the letters in the shape of what the subject of the poem was. And there were subsequent things like Guillaume Apollinaire's CCalligrames and other exercises in this esoteric medium. I've always been interested in languages and I took my entire remaining GI Bill entitlement at the Berlitz School in French, Spanish, German, and Italian. In the service, for every day of active duty you'd get so many points towards study on the GI Bill afterwards, and you had to prove that it was useful in your work. Well, being at the museum I had no problem of relevance. The problem was getting to the classes at noon and in the afternoon—I'd have to dash downtown. I'd go to the Berlitz School which was in a building down there. And also my problem was keeping similar languages straight, like Spanish and Italian which are very similar. In many words there's only the difference of one vowel between the two. Also I had another problem. I had two German professors, a husband and wife. One was from Westphalia and the other was from East Prussia. The wife would tell met to say kirche very soft, and the husband would say, no it's kirche! Problems like that. My postgraduate study after this consisted of numerous trips to Europe and the Near East. For two months in 1956 I was on a Belgian art seminar. And in 1970 I was guest of the West German government for the study of Late Gothic Art on the Upper and Lower Rhine.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Okay. Tell us about your service career. Where were you stationed abroad?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Could I first tell you about my working career before I got into the service? Is that all right?

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Sure.

WILLIAM BOSTICK: After leaving college in 1934 I went to work for the NRA. Do you know what the NRA was? Well, that was the National Recovery Administration. It was something that President Roosevelt initiated to get American back on its feet. And the printing trade authority was supposed to see that printers didn't undercut each other in prices. I was paid the munificent salary of $25 a week. I went around through Detroit and Michigan trying to enforce these regulations. I remember holding a stopwatch on a red-haired press operator one time to make sure that the prices that her boss was charging were legitimate because she was the fastest press feeder I had ever seen. One time I was chased out of a print shop by a Polish printer who had a hook instead of a right hand. But it was an interesting way to start a graphic arts career. Then I became a typographer. Do you know what a typographer is?

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Yes.

WILLIAM BOSTICK: [I worked] at the Detroit Typesetting Company, which confirmed my great love for type and lettering. But I got itchy feet and took all my savings and went to Europe for two months after I quit my job as a typographer. Ship passage and all cost me about $400. That was a great experience—England, France, Italy, Switzerland, and Germany, all during the 1936 Olympic games. When I came back I went to work for Evans-Winter-Hebb which was the biggest and best printer in Detroit. George Hebb was a very sensitive man much like Porter Garnett. But business was bad and I got laid off. I went to Chicago and became superintendent of a large printing plant, which was really too big a job for a young man like myself. I came back to Detroit, started a commercial art studio, spent all day pounding the pavement looking for work and all night turning it out, and then also trying to collect the money from the client. I even did illustrations for Father Coughlin's Social Justice magazine. About this time I met my future wife Mary Jane. She was making more money as a schoolteacher than I was as a commercial artist, and she saw a classified ad one day announcing an examination being given by the Detroit Civil Service Commission for a newly created job as city supervisor of printing. I didn't share her enthusiasm. Who would want to be a bureaucrat? But I applied, took the exam along with 129 other people with backgrounds in printing. Fortunately, I came out on top and was hired by the city to assemble all its multilith machines and other printing equipment into one consolidated shop. Most of the machines were junk and duplicated each other so I threw them out and bought new modern equipment, much to the dismay of the head of Civil Service who had conceived the whole consolidation project. This was in 1941. The draft board's hot breath was on the neck of many young men, including mine. So maybe I can talk now about my service career?

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: All right.

WILLIAM BOSTICK: My fiancee's cousin was a captain in the regular navy. His name was Daniel Barbey. Later when he ended his career he took all MacArthur's amphibious landings into the Pacific theater. So I tried to get a commission in the navy preferably—I hated camping out—before the draft board threw me into the army. Mine was a very close race but it came through and the President made me an Ensign in the United States Naval Reserve, told me to go and buy a uniform and report to the Naval Communications School at Noroton Heights, Connecticut. In a thirty-day wonder school I became a navy encoder and decoder and was told to report to the

amphibious headquarters for the Atlantic fleet in Norfolk, Virginia. There was just time to dash home and marry Mary Jane on June 14, 1942. It happened to be a Sunday, but those things happened in those days. We had a quick honeymoon which could have been longer had I understood the proceed orders orders that her cousin had arranged for me. And then see her off on the train back to Detroit five days after my father married us because the navy wouldn't let her stay in the bachelor officer's quarters. But we finally got a house in Norfolk until I had to leave for the invasion of Sicily in June 1943. By then I had been shifted to the intelligence section and was in charge of preparing and printing the map charts for the invasion. There was a print shop aboard ship down in the very bottom of the ship where we had a lithographic press and camera and everything like that. One incident I recall: one day we had general quarters and we had to grab our helmets and life preserver gear and go topside. Somebody forgot to shut off the press and when we came back from general quarters there was the press still turning out the printing of the maps for the invasion. I met a great and good friend at that time, John Mason Brown. I don't know if you've ever heard of him. He was an eminent drama critic in New York and one of the favorites of the creamed-chicken circuit, talking to ladies' clubs and various other groups which he did before and after the war. He wrote two books, one on the Sicilian invasion, the other on the Normandy invasion, in which I had illustrations. And also he wrote the foreword for a book which I published after the war—England Under GI's Reign. He was sort of Admiral Kirk's literary aide, [but] he didn't have such a title. Admiral Kirk was the commander in charge of the landings in Sicily and in Normandy. McGeorge Bundy was also on our staff at the time. He was the admiral's army aide. I made a lot of sketches in Sicily during the invasion, then came back to Norfolk to prepare for the invasion of Normandy. I went to England in November 1943 and prepared all the map-charts for the invasion of Normandy. This [a map-chart] was a combination of a map and a chart showing the water area and the land area in which the amphibious operation would be operating. I designed something called the amphibious sketch, which we gave to the landing craft pilots or skippers. What it was, it showed the beach and then it had a panoramic drawing in watercolor. It was actually of what they [the pilots] would see on the beach as they approached the beach, because there were a lot of disturbing factors—as you can well imagine—people shooting at them and that. And to find what beach they were going to land on was extremely important. The drawing was artistically interesting because it was made with multiple vanishing points. We had a P-38 plane fly very low over the water and make a continuous strip of film of the skyline and beach shore which then we converted into a watercolor which was coordinated with the map and the chart. I went ashore on D Plus Two, spent a night in a foxhole, and was very glad I didn't get into the army. I received a navy commendation ribbon for my work in preparing these amphibious charts. I spent the balance of the war in New York and San Francisco, then went to Washington and wrote a book along with another naval officer on what they call the "amphibious sketch."

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: What did you do after the service, after you got out?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Well, I came back. I was discharged in 1945. I've mentioned the fact that I went to Cranbrook for a while. Early in 1946 I returned to the City Printing Division which I had left—I had been given a leave of absence of course—much to the chagrin of the number two man who had been given my position while I was gone. Clyde Burroughs was about to retire in the fall of 1946 after 45 years at the museum. I had gotten to know him, as I say, from the Scarab Club and submitting paintings to the Michigan artists exhibition which he ran. He was a wonderful guy. I had a great deal of admiration for him. In his later years at the museum I think he kind of slowed down, but he knew all the great people in the field of art in the early part of the twentieth century. He arranged loan exhibitions, brought prominent artists to the museum. He was actually director of the museum for a few years in the early part of the century. He arranged for the museum to become a city institution when it was no longer feasible as the private Detroit Museum of Art. His title was secretary and divisional curator of American art. There was no other separate art curator. He handled all the administrative aspects while Dr. Valentiner looked after the curatorial and scholarly side, which Dr. Valentiner was primarily involved with. He [Valentiner] didn't like administration and that sort of thing. The doctor had retired about a year earlier and Edgar P. Richardson was director of the museum when I came [in 1946]. Apparently, as I can figure out, it was easier to transfer me from another city department, which the City Printing Division was, to the museum than to go out and find a fresh applicant and give him the Civil Service exam and all that. [Apparently Clyde Burroughs thought of me. I was interviewed by him, the director, and Edgar B. Whitcomb, President of the Arts Commission. They must have appreciated my administrative background, knowledge of city procedures, and art study.] I didn't have to take a civil service exam for this job—I was just interviewed—and I am eternally grateful to Clyde Burroughs.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Okay. You became administrator of the Detroit Institute of Arts in 1946, remaining in that position for thirty years until your retirement in 1976. Let's talk about your responsibilities and other positions that you also undertook during those years. Let's start in the late forties when you first came to the museum.

WILLIAM BOSTICK: I'm very nostalgic about it because I remember the day that Clyde left and turned his office over to me. It was a handsome office. He had been there when the museum was built and saw that he got a very nice office with adequate facilities: lovely big bookcases, [a desk, a handsome table], and everything like that. But there was no lengthy briefing [with his] telling me all the problems I was going to have, and there was no

returning by Clyde to see how I was doing. I compare it to rolling down a roll-top desk and saying, “There it is.” I was left on my own to administer both the museum and the Founders Society as I saw fit, of course under the supervision of the director. I reported only to the director and to, of course, the various officers of the trustees and the Arts Commission. Clyde just sighed with satisfaction that he was glad to be rid of budgets and fuss-budgets, which were two categories of annoyance that I would struggle with for the next thirty years. But as I look back on his career and mine as secretaries of the Detroit Institute of Arts I realize that between the two of us we spanned three-quarters of the twentieth century—which is a remarkable period. I thought I might just take the years chronologically from my review of the Arts Commission minutes that I’ve been looking over lately, after I’ve summarized briefly my duties and responsibilities. Civil Service, in its own codified wisdom, had drawn up a summary of what I was supposed to do which bore about as much relation to what I actually did as a thumbnail sketch does to a finished portrait. I remember one incident: One time my wife and I conducted a trip to Europe, an artistic and gastronomic tour for Founders Society members. We did four of them which were [all] very successful. Civil Service heard about it and objected that this sort of thing was not in my duties statement. Well, if I had conformed to my duties statement I would have done very, very few things. I had to more or less make my own duties statement. Here’s a typical list of what I might do in a given week during the period when I was secretary of both the Founders Society and secretary of the Arts Commission. Of course I didn’t do all these things simultaneously, but they might recur: Make a layout and purchase the paper and press plates for jobs being produced in our print shop, work on the layout and specifications for an exhibition catalogue and the invitations to the exhibition opening, confer with the curator about an exhibition budget and decide which parts would be charged to the Founders Society and what to the city, discuss city budget matters with our contact at the city budget bureau, prepare an Arts Commission agenda and a Founders Society agenda, discuss them with the director, dictate Arts Commmission or Founders Society minutes, confer with the Founders Society treasurer or president about Founders Society financial or administrative matters, discipline a Founders Society or city employee for repeated tardiness or other infractions of the rules. . . For instance, the Founders Society employee I could fire; the city employee I couldn’t fire. They have a lengthy grievance procedure and everything like that. I might go to City Hall and interview successful candidates for a city Civil Service position at the museum, interview and hire applicants for Founders Society positions, listen to a Founders Society or city employee’s grievance about mistreatment or overwork, go downtown for language lessons at noon or in the afternoon, attend an Arts Commission, Founders Society, trustees, or staff meeting, prepare city material or personnel requisitions, work on Founders Society and city budget, confer with Founders Society volunteers on plans for soliciting new memberships, confer with my secretary on the reservations for Michigan Artists Prize Awards dinner and determine the seating, consult with caterer on the menu, confer with the museum shop manager on merchandise to be sold and try to resolve the perennial problem of separating Founders from city sales—this was a terrible job in those days; we sold merchandise that had been purchased by both sources and we had to separate the receipts—confer with the building superintendent about security, condition of the grounds, sloppy guarding, et cetera. So the list goes on and on. When I was at the museum I initiated a number of innovative policies, some of which caused me more work and some of which caused me less work. A few of them. . . For instance, I initiated an active membership solicitation program for the Founders Society. It had been dormant for many, many years [and the trustees] didn’t seem to be interested in getting new members. I set up a museum print shop which has become a very important part of the museum’s operation. After we had seven commissioners, I intiated having Arts Commission luncheons [meetings] instead of just meetings, and that helped the attendance. We eventually had wine at the luncheons. I was involved—I can’t take credit for it—with the first alcoholic beverages in the museum, because I recall that in 1956 we had a big French exhibition called French Taste in the Eighteenth Century and it seemed appropriate to serve champagne. The Arts Commission was discussing it and K. T. Keller, then president, said, “Who made this rule about no alcohol?” I said, “Well, I guess the Arts Commission did.” Well,” said K. T., “if they made the rule they can break the rule.” So the liquor started flowing about then and as you know it flows very freely ever since. [My wife and] I started the first Michigan arts awards dinner, [at which the money for the prizes in that annual exhibition for Michigan artists was given out].

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Was there a noticeable increase in patronage after that time?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: I think so. Well, we had pretty good attendance at exhibition openings, but I think it’s become a warmer, friendlier place with the addition of some alcoholic beverages. With my wife Mary Jane we started the first staff Christmas party. I can’t remember what year it was, probably in the late forties or early fifties. She brought the food from home and it was just for the curatorial and professional staff. Now, as you may know if you’ve ever been to one of those [lately], they’re simply immense—a couple of hundred people, between our alumni and the active working people [employees]. I had much to do with arranging for the printing of *Art Quarterly* in Holland starting in 1955 in order to save money. So it goes.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Now was the *Art Quarterly* a publication of the Detroit Institute of Arts?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Yes. It was a publication of the museum and it struggled all during its life. At one time it was printed by [the Detroit] printer Evans- Winter-Hebb that I worked for for a while. But it never made its way. It always had to be supported for its printing and distribution costs with grants. It could never pay for itself with

advertising and subscriptions. Finally it died here—I don't know—eight or ten years ago.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Do you know when it was started? And was it primarily a scholarly publication?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: It was still going. . . I think Dr. Valentiner must have started it sometime in the late or mid thirties because it was going when I came, but it was about to die because they couldn't afford to pay the American printer any more. So with various negotiations I conferred with the printer Johannes Enschede en Zonen, one of the oldest printers in the world, founded in 1701. And we saved right off, oh, about $2,000 or $3,000 an issue by having it printed abroad. Of course it had a number of complications [such as] the shipping of the magazine back here for mailing.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: And did the *Art Quarterly* receive national distribution?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Oh, yes, international distribution. Articles came from art scholars all over the world. It was one of the great scholarly art publications. Usually the members of our curatorial staff were on the editorial board and wrote articles for it.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Did that later come under the auspices of the College Art Association, because they are now publishing an art quarterly?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Well, the College Art Association—don't they publish the *Art Bulletin*?

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: I believe it. . .

WILLIAM BOSTICK: They were publishing a publication simultaneously with the *Art Quarterly*.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: That's right.

WILLIAM BOSTICK: I'm not sure about the post-DIA [Detroit Institute of Arts—Ed.] career of the*Art Quarterly.* I think it was taken up by the Metropolitan Museum for a while, who kept it afloat, and frankly I don't know now whether it still exists. But I think the College Art Association publication is a different one.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Okay. All right, let's talk about your early years in the late forties under E. P. Richardson. What type of man was he?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Well, I have a great admiration for him—"Ted" Richardson, as he was called. He was quite a formal person, not in any denigrating way, but I wouldn't call him the warmest of personalities. He was a true scholar, a great writer. And what always interested me was the fact that the warmth of his personality didn't come through when you met him personally, but when you read his writings you realized what a warm, sympathetic, understanding person he was. I always had good relations with him. On occasion we had some serious disagreements but they were always ironed out eventually. After one of them. . .
[Interruption in taping]

WILLIAM BOSTICK: After one of these disagreements, when we were kind of getting reconciled, Ted said to me, "You know, each one of us is going to contribute something to this institution over the years. It's a great museum and each addition is going to make it greater, but what we have to do is not think about our own individual contributions and what we wanted to do, but how to make the institution as a whole greater." And I think that in my career at the museum I've seen some people who have gotten more out of the museum than they have given. There has to be a certain selflessness with this. After all, Ted Richardson was one of the fathers of the Archives of American Art. He and Larry Fleischman, with the assistance of Mrs. Edsel Ford, really conceived this novel organization. It's amazing to realize that nobody had thought of it before that. But I think it's one of his [great] innovative things. And he bought some great paintings for the museum when he was there. He was just one of the great scholarly directors we've had in the pattern of William R. Valentiner.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: In your estimation what were some of the best acquisitions that came into the museum during his tenure. He was director from 1946 to 1962.

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Well, it's hard to count them specifically. But at that time he had the unswerving support of Dexter M. Ferry, Jr. Mr. Ferry was very interested in American art, and when Ted Richardson found an important painting he was practically assured that Mr. Ferry would assist him in its purchase. And so much of our American art collection is attributable to Ted Richardson's eye and Dexter Ferry's pocketbook. One of the great acquisitions was the *Nocturne in Black and Gold*—the Falling Rocket of James McNeil Whistler. This was probably one of the most important paintings—in my mind even more important that the portrait of his mother—that Whistler ever painted. The fact that we were able to get this away from other institutions is very important. And there are other paintings: Winslow Homer and a whole galaxy of American artists mostly of the nineteenth century. I don't think that Ted was terribly interested in or dedicated to contemporary art. It was not a period

when we bought much contemporary art. But on the other hand we built up one of the great collections of American art in this country.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Okay. What other accomplishments could you recount about Mr. Richardson besides acquisitions?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Well, for an art scholar, I think he was a very good administrator. He had the ability to find curators and to direct their activities.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Who were some of the important curatorial staff during your early period?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Well, Adele Weibel was there when I came and so was Francis Robinson. They were already on the staff.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: And what departments were they associated with?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Mrs. Weibel was the curator of textiles and one of the great authorities. She wrote an [outstanding] book on the history of textiles. Francis Robinson was an expert in ancient and medieval art. During Richardson's time there, Paul Grigaut was brought in, although he left for a short period and was replaced by a curator by the name of John Skilton, who subsequently left. Grigaut was an expert on decorative arts.

[Tape 1, side B]

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Okay. Your other important position at the museum was that of secretary of the Arts Commission from 1946 through 1976. Let's talk about your early years as secretary of the Arts Commission and perhaps you can give us a recounting of some important events that happened?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Yes, Mary Chris. I have reviewed the commission's minutes. I wasn't able to complete past 1960, which I'll have to do subsequently, but I've taken excerpts from various commission actions, and if I could go through those chronologically it might give some idea of the background. At the meeting of November 11, 1946, I was appointed administrative assistant to the museum—this was a Civil Service position—to succeed Clyde Burroughs. The commissioners at that time were Edgar B. Whitcomb, K. T. Keller, Mrs. Edsel B. Ford, and Robert Tannahill, and as I remember these are the people who as commissioners stand out in my mind. Subsequent ones who were of some importance in my mind were Lydia Winston, who is now Mrs. Lydia Malbin, and a great guy, Doug Roby, who has been an Olympic Committee member and was a great athlete at the University of Michigan. Each one of these people had his or her distinctive personality. Would you like me to discuss them now, or. . .

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Yes.

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Well, at the time I came as secretary of the commission, Edgar B. Whitcomb was quite elderly. As you know, he was the son-in-law of James Scripps who founded the *Detroit News*; he was married to Mr. Scripps' daughter. When Edgar would come to the museum his wife often would accompany him. After about five minutes she would start tugging on his sleeve to get him to go home. I don't know why she didn't want to stay. She was a very modest and rather nervous woman. But Edgar was very dedicated. On occasions, when budget problems became insurmountable and he and I would go to the budget bureau and talk with Dave Addy who was the budget director. . .

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: At the city?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: At the city, yes; this was the city budget. Mr. Addy would say, "Well, Mr. Whitcomb, I'm afraid we just can't include that in the budget." So then Edgar B. would reach into his pocket and say, "Well, I guess I'll just have to pay for it myself." And then Dr. Addy would say, "Well, now, just wait a minute. Maybe we can arrange some little compromise." But he was one of the few people ever on the Arts Commission who took, I think, a deep interest in the city financing of the museum. In addition, of course, he gave works of art and money to the Founders Society. K. T. Keller was president of Chrysler Corporation and as such he had a lot of minions to scurry around every time he pushed buttons and he sort of had the idea that maybe the museum could be run the same way. We didn't have the personnel for that sort of thing. So he tended to make quick and decisive decisions which sometimes we weren't able to. . .

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Couldn't be implemented?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: . . .implement. At Chrysler he had the money. We didn't have it. Eleanor Ford, in her quiet way, was a very strong commissioner, as she had been a strong person in solving her family problems when her husband was having all his problems with his father and with Harry Bennett and that sort of thing. She seldom got into arguments or heated discussions in any of the meetings. But occasionally when poor Mr. Whitcomb

would lose his way in the agenda she would touch his arm and say, “Now, Edgar, I think we’re here on the agenda,” and kind of bring him back because he was becoming a little bit [confused] at the end. Bob Tannahill, of the four, was the real art expert. He was the honorary curator of American art. He bought modern art and [nineteenth century] American art. I recall a number of occasions when works of the French Impressionists were brought before the commission and Tannahill would say, “Oh, I’ve got a better one than that in my collection so you don’t want that. You’ll get my collection when I die.” We almost didn’t get his collection because when we were doing work on construction of the American wing, which was named after him, he must have had a premonition of something. It was not too many months before his death and there were all kinds of problems of getting black electricians, as we had to have this equal opportunity sort of thing. So Robert Tannahill made a threat that, “If this thing isn’t finished by such and such a date I’m going to give my works to the National Gallery.” This would have been a tragedy. It all worked out somehow. We were able to get it done through the intertwining of artistic and administrative affairs. But they were great [and dedicated] commissioners.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: When was his collection given to the DIA? 1970?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: 1970 was when he died. He was the biggest donor of the museum. This isn’t generally known. His gifts at the time of his death amounted to some $11 million. But then he also gave. . . He didn’t actually give the money—but the museum also receives additional amounts from his investments and financial bequests so that I’d say that by now his gifts amount to $15 million or more and are constantly growing because of this money which he gave toward the purchase of American art and European art up to about, oh, 1920, or something like that. He didn’t quite trust the museum administration to buy contemporary art with his funds. But he [also] was a dedicated donor and a collector with a great eye; he just didn’t depend upon dealers to tell him what was good art.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Over the years did, for instance, Mr. Richardson accompany him on many buying trips abroad? Or who was the. . .

WILLIAM BOSTICK: I think mostly Tannahill and Valentiner conferred with Richardson. They would talk about purchases, but if some recommended work would come up and Tannahill didn’t like it, it was dead. I mean he was the one who had to give the approval. In later years he and Paul Grigaut were rather close and they conferred on buying many works of decorative arts.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Okay. What were the other commissioners at that time collecting? Eleanor Ford had a very nice collection of early Renaissance. . .

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Yes. I think she was advised very strongly by Dr. Valentiner. She acquired a number of important things—cinquecento, quattrocento Italian paintings—which have now come to the museum, [as well as] French Impressionists, [American painting], and things of that sort which she had. But she was not a collector on the scale of her cousin Robert Tannahill. His taste was very catholic; he bought everything from African art to the work of Michigan artists from the Artists Market, American art, and a very broad spectrum of the arts. I put together an exhibition of his gifts to the museum for the Grosse Pointe War Memorial a few years ago and I was just amazed at all the areas that he covered. K. T. Keller collected tapestries and a certain amount of Oriental art, but it wasn’t his taste so much as that of French & Company with whom he dealt in New York. He trusted them as a very reliable dealer. Of course Lydia Winston had her own taste which still is pretty much twentieth century, [mostly Italian Futurists], so you get a bit of compartmentalization, her taste being broad. But an arts commission I don’t think should be all art experts or collectors; it has to be practical as well.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: In the 1950s the Scripps-Whitcomb collection came into the museum. Can you tell us a little bit about that?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Well, Edgar B. Whitcomb had been strongly advised by Dr. Valentiner on many of his purchases like the Poussin and other things. His taste ran more to seventeenth and eighteenth century French and Italian works. It was a significant collection, but here again it was advice from an art expert with a great eye, Dr. Valentiner, who was telling a man with a lot of monay what he should buy, and with an eye toward its eventually coming to the museum.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Okay. I didn’t mean to interrupt you.

WILLIAM BOSTICK: No, these are good diversions, but if I can just kind of go along. . . At the meeting of December 23, 1946, I was officially appointed secretary of the Arts Commission. The president of the Arts Commission—a little interesting incident—was authorized to confer with the city budget director and the mayor on the divorce of our reference library from the main library. Our library had been part of the main library and Mr. Ulveling, [its director, wished to retain it].

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Part of the city library across the street?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Yes, part of the city library [Detroit Public Library] across the street. It was in our building, but the books all belonged to the main library and our employees were on the main library's payroll. Well, it wasn't a very happy arrangement. Mr. Ulveling liked it but we didn't. So Mr. Whitcomb, in his direct, blunt way, just told Mr. Ulveling he'd have to give it up. And he did. The library was transferred on February 10th of the next year, at least it is so reported. It is interesting to tell you what our total budget was on February 10, 1947: $238,956. That was the city budget.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: What was the city budget when you left in 1976?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: The city budget at that time was about two-and-a-half-million. Let's say our tax-supported budget; some of it was coming from the state and some from the federal government. Now the tax-supported portion, practially all from the State of Michigan, is, I understand, about twelve-and-a-half-million dollars. So you can see what the growth of the museum has been and what our problems were in making this miniscule city budget stretch over all the things that we wanted to do. In early 1947, for instance, the City Plan [Commission] presented a plan for the Cultural Center. Well, the Cultural Center has never been finished to this day. They're always revising it, presenting new plans. The magnificent new front entrance to the museum might be considered a part of the Cultural Center plan, but it certainly wasn't what was approved back in 1947. One interesting thing [that—Ed.] happened that same year was that I proposed that names of Benefactors—those who had given $10,000 or more—be inscribed on the wall there in the front lobby just above the drinking fountain. This had never been done before. All the names were buried in the records of the Founders Society office. We found we had eighty Benefactors, and those names were lettered in gold. The minute they got that up, the number of Benefactors started to increase many fold. It wasn't too many years before it ran over that panel and had to be put on the walls going down the stairway.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Now who in your estimation have been the major benefactors of the museum?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Well, of course the Fords. And Mr. Scripps, Mr. Whitcomb's father- in-law. The Major Benefactors are those who have given $100,000: the Fords, of course, Edsel and his wife Eleanor—and strangely enough Dr. Valentiner became a Major Benefactor. He found a little painting which he bought—this is the story; I hope it's not apocryphal—for $300, by Botticelli. It was a Head of Christ. It wasn't known as a Botticelli at the time he bought it but with his great reputation he could authenticate it as a Botticelli. So the $300 painting became something like a $93,000 painting when he gave it. But it's interesting—and I say this again without any braggadicio—I'm one of the few people who've worked for the museum who is listed as a Benefactor. I don't think Clyde Burroughs, Edgar Richardson, or Willis Woods, or, thus far, Fred Cummings have become Benefactors. [Jack Newberry, curator of graphic arts, was a Benefactor, and] one of our [recent] curators became a Benefactor.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Who was that?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Sam. . .

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Wagstaff?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Sam Wagstaff, yes. He got our yard all torn up installing an earth sculpture. . .

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Oh, the Robert Morris piece? [It was a Michael Heizer piece—Ed.]

WILLIAM BOSTICK: The Robert Morris piece and the Arts Commission insisted that he replace the turf and it cost him over $10,000. But anyway, I think those were the major people. Of course if you see the Major Benefactors' roll now it's increased greatly. There are the Irving Burtons. . .

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Al Taubman.

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Al Taubman. The list goes on and on. Edgar B. Whitcomb once told me as he gazed upon the Benefactor's roll, "It's a lot better to have your name here on the wall or on a picture in the museum than on a tombstone in the cemetery." I think of this when I go to Woodlawn Cemetery and see the tombstones of many of the commissioners and trustees who have passed on and are buried there. Can I continue with. . .? I've noted that in 1947 the old Detroit Museum of Art building, which had been given to the city by the trustees, was transferred to the Department of Public Works. It subsequently became a welfare shelter and then, sadly enough, was torn down.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: And where was the location of that building?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: It was on East Jefferson Avenue. This was the building that was built. . . I think completed in 1888. [It was] started in 1885 with the [funds from the] first art loan exhibition _____. In 1948, air conditioning was first discussed. It wasn't actually installed for another ten years, but we had great problems at the museum,

especially in the summertime, with humidity expanding the wood panel paintings, and in the wintertime the heat would dry them out and they would just expand and contract, a very serious problem.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: What was the conservation department like at that time?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: There was no conservation department. William Suhr came in from New York and did some minor cosmetic work at the museum if we had a vandalism scratch or something, but we'd have to ship most of the paintings to him at his New York studio until the conservation department was started, I think somewhere around the late sixties or early seventies or something like that. [Suhr was actually on the staff in the early thirties but was a casualty of the Depression.]

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Do you recall in the late forties roughly how many objects were in the collection?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Yes. Somewhere I came across [documentation] that the number of objects was 11,800. Now I was told in the registrar's office the other day that there are about 80,000. These statistics give some idea of the growth of the institution. K. T. Keller made an interesting remark relative to people and art when we were discussing air conditioning. They didn't put air conditioning into the offices, only in the galleries. I brought this up because I knew that the employees like to work in an air- conditioned atmosphere. K. T. said, "Aw, people are expendable. Works or art are not!"

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Was this the Chrysler man, K. T. Keller?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Yes. In 1948, the city decided to elminate our branch museum at Alger House where Dr. Valentiner had lived for a while and which had been outfitted as a branch museum. As you know, it's now the Grosse Point War Memorial.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Now what type of adjunct programs did the Alger House offer?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Well, they had small exhibitions. We had a curator out there who was primarily interested in prints and drawings, Isabel Weadock. It had a sort of permanent collection that Robert Tannahill had much to do with, bringing works of art, furniture, and paintings there and installing them in this beautiful place—you have visited it haven't you?—on the ground floor. Upstairs the former bedrooms of the Algers were converted to galleries. But an interesting thing: It was eliminated from the city budget—we couldn't operate it without city funds; the budget was something like $29,000 a year—then it reverted to the Algers who had given it to the [City of Detroit].

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: What type of family were the Algers?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Well, the Algers were a very distinguished Michigan family. There's an Alger monument down in Grand Circus Park and. . . Oh, the Algers were pillars of Michigan diplomatic and artistic history. And they had given this to the museum. Well, when we couldn't operate it any more then it went back to the Algers, much to their chagrin because they had made other living arrangements and all of a sudden they got a tax bill, as I understand, from Grosse Pointe Farms for $6,000. So they tried again to peddle the house and very fortunately it was taken over as the War Memorial, [largely through the efforts of Robert Tannahill].

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Do you know where the Alger money was from?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: I'm not exactly sure. I think a lot of this early money in Detroit and Grosse Pointe came from lumbering in the northern peninsula and the northern part of the lower peninsula. There's a town of Newberry in northern Michigan; it was a lumbering town. They cut down all the white pine virgin forests in Michigan. Algers have given various things to the museum, but I don't think they were—I may be wrong—Major Benefactors. In 1949 we had an epic-making exhibition called For Modern Living, which attracted 149,553 visitors and was the most successful [exhibiiton to date from an attendance standpoint]. Now wait a minute. I'd like to back up a little bit to 1948. At the meeting of July 24 a Portrait of a Donor attributed to Raphael was returned to the Silberman Galleries on the recommendation of Dr. Valentiner. He was no longer the director but he had been instrumental in buying this painting. Silberman gave the museum two paintings in exchange, Saint Sebastian Nursed by Saint Irene by Georges de la Tour, and Morning Light by Degas. The problem was that the painting supposedly by Raphael had been bought with the Ralph Booth Fund. Ralph Booth, the first president of the Arts Commission, had given a $200,000 bequest to be spent over the years for important works of art. This particular painting had [part of] the word "Rafaello" [lettered] over it, or something like that on a bottom panel, and Dr. Valentiner had jumped to a conclusion—which he did occasionally—that it was a Raphael. Well, Mrs. Booth always hated the painting and insisted that we get rid of it. So the gallery finally took it back. But the interesting thing is that the Georges de la Tour that we got from them in exchange is subsequently being thought to be a copy of de la Tour or ecole de la Tour, or something like that. So, I don't know, we really ended up from this purchase with only the Degas.

The Berlin Museum's show—remember we had these paintings from the salt mines—was very successful. In only

seventeen days 145,000 people went through the museum. We sold 18,000 catalogues. And that same year the For Modern Living show was discussed and J. L. Hudson's made their commitment. In November 1948 the budget was $308,000; it had gone up a little bit. On January 10, 1949, there is reported a rather epic-making program: The Chrysler Corporation decided to sponsor a television program. These were the days when the only television sets were in bars and private clubs and that. But we had a thirteen-week program called The World of Art. Marshall Fredericks was the master of ceremonies for it. It was presented in the ground floor studios of WXYZ over in the Maccabees Building across the street [from the museum]. Unfortunately, no videotape was ever made of it so it has disappeared [into history]. One thing personally that happened [that year]: In April of 1949, my title was changed from Administrative Assistant, which is what I came in as, to Business Manager of the museum. Even though I was doing the same thing Clyde Burroughs had done for many, many years and he had the title of secretary, my salary still wasn't up to what his was when he retired. He made about $10,000 on retirement; my salary in 1949, three years later, was only about $9,000. Usually now you bring in a new person at a higher salary than the one leaving but this wasn't the case. Ted Richardson in the summer of 1949 was authorized to go to Europe where he hadn't been for a number of years. I was left to deal with Sandro Girard, Eero Saarinen, and Minoru Yamasaki who [were to] set up the For Modern Living show. Well, finally Eero and Yama decided that this troika couldn't run the show so they decided to leave it all to Sandro Girard. And he did a magnificent job.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Now Girard at the time was working for Herman Miller?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Yes. He was designing fabrics for Herman Miller. He was an architect but he specialized in interior design. This was right after the war and the company was just getting back into designing and manufacturing civilian goods once again. He assembled all things used for modern living and he set up interiors of rooms in the museum. And it was a terrible time. He's a nice guy but he just had such wild ideas. He brought in full-size trees 20 and 30 feet high. How he ever got them through the front door or however they brought them in I don't know. We had two great Italianate chandeliers in the front lobby—candelabra they were actually—which he didn't like. So out with them. And I don't think they were ever returned. My problem was I didn't know what from the museum policy standpoint we could let him do. But anyway he did it. The show was a tremendous success. We attracted the largest number of visitors we've ever had—149,553—and the catalogue was very popular. Even at the time I left, the museum requests [still] came in for the catalogue, which had been out of print for—I don't know—fifteen years.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Was this the first contemporary design show the museum had seen? Had they done any Bauhaus exhibitions?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Oh, if they did it was on a very minor scale—not on any [large—Ed.] scale. You see, Hudson's brought in their carpenters and that, and besides the $40,000 they contributed in cash they contributed all the services of these people to construct these rooms.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Do you remember some of the major designers that were included? Knoll International and people. . .

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Well, of course there was Knoll International. . .

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Herman Miller from Zeeland, Michigan.

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Herman Miller and all. And Girard did some very clever things. He showed the evolution of design: how modern chairs evolved from the seat of a farm tractor, and the scythe—how the utility of objects [such as the scythe] made their beauty, in many cases—and the simplicity of design and streamlining of it. I designed the catalogue [and worked] very closely with Girard. We used a plastic binding so we'd get papers of different textures juxtaposed page to page with great success. One other thing that happened that same year: We had purchased after the war a painting by Monet called *The Seine at Asnieres* from a Parisian collector by the name of Madame [Aufin?]. We published it on a color postcard. We published it in our bulletin. We were very proud of it. We paid only $13,000 for it. I think it was a Swiss dealer. We got a furious letter from Madame Aufin, "You have my Monet." We researched then a book the size of the Detroit telephone directory which listed and illustrated all the works of art that had been stolen from the French by the Germans during the Occupation. There was the *The Seine at Asnieres* reproduced. So we returned it to her and we got our money back from the dealer. [WB clarified: It was purchased from a Swiss dealer; the original owner was a Parisienne.] But we should have done something at that time to buy the picture. What did the last Monet sell for? I think over a million dollars. During the 1950s—and we've mostly forgotten about this. . . In 1951 first started the discussion through. . . I researched the minutes up to, oh, as late as 1958. The danger of atomic attack was discussed again and again: "What do we do in case the Russians drop a bomb on us?"

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: What could you do?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: _____ K. T. Keller [was very pragmatic and led the commission in a discussion of] all kinds of

things including having an evacuation plan to get the pictures out to Albion College.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: After the bomb was dropped, right?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: There were so many discussions on how do you get trucks laden with art through people who are dying from atomic attack. K. T. Keller said, “Build a bomb shelter in the basement and put everything there.” As you look back now, it all seems so ridiculous, but it was very, very serious. Detroit set up a Civil Defense Department and we made a request for $13,000 for Civil Defense supplies. We had all kinds of boxed food and bottles of water down in the basement in case the public would have to run [there]. It was reported early in 1951 that we had an air raid drill and we were able to evacuate the galleries in six and a half minutes. But it just seems all so [unrealistic]. . . I mean the danger is still there now but how to combat it has changed considerably. Mary [Mrs. Ralph] Booth, whom I mentioned before [in connection with the] Raphael, died in 1951 and left us the contents of her house on Washington Road, in Grosse Pointe. I had been there a number of times, and had examined the] paneling, wall coverings, and fireplaces. Well, she specified that the material be exhibited for at least eight months out of the year. This the Arts Commission could not do; they [decided they could] not take gifts on a conditional basis. So we refused the bequest. I remember very well a dinner I had at her house with John Mason Brown and Mary Jane in this immense dining room. John Mason was sitting at one end and Mary Booth at the other. She was a very interesting person—terribly myopic, but when she wanted to see something she could see it very clearly. One time she arrived at the museum with a truck and demanded a bed that she had given some years before which did have this condition that it had to be exhibited eight months out of the year. She said, “You haven’t exhibited this bed for eight months and I want my bed back.” The director was gone to Europe or somewhere so we had to give her back her bed.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Now this was George’s wife?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: No. Ralph’s.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Oh, Ralph Harman Booth?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Yes. George Booth married the other Scripps daughter and founded Cranbrook. Ralph Booth was the first president of the Arts Commission and convinced the city to build the Detroit Institute of Arts, which cost about $4 million. He was a very strong person, a great art collector. I think he was the one who bought us, gave us, the Gutzon Borglum Head of Lincoln. You know, the big one that’s been outside and inside and that. In 1951 we first started to investigate insurance. There was no insurance on the collection up until that time. Now the museum [collection]—much of it is self-insured. They don’t insure the objects for one hundred percent of their value. But we had no insurance before that. We’d had some theft and vandalism in that period of time. In 1951 we presented the great show, The French in America, which was assembled by Paul Grigaut to celebrate the 250th anniversary of Detroit’s founding. Grigaut was a bachelor and a really great connoisseur of decorative arts. What he loved was to pick up a work [of decorative art] and fondle it. I think what he enjoyed in installing a show was handling and examining the works—and he had such great taste. To organize the show he had to go to New Orleans where much of the material dealing with the French in America was deposited in museums [and private collections]. He told an [interesting] charming story about going to a [small] hotel. It was the time of the Mardi Gras and hotel rooms were very much at a premium. He went to a hotel and asked for a room and they asked him whether he wanted it for one hour or two hours. [Obviously it was a hotel which did not cater primarily to people who wanted to stay overnight and sleep!] [some taped words obscured—Ed.]
One of my larger problems was that I had to hire and fire what we called the “publicity writers” or “publicity counsels” in those days. Many of them suffered from the occupational problems of journalists—which is too much drinking. We had one by the name of Jacqueline Peck. The problem was that a curator was about to put on a show, and where was Jackie Peck to hear all about the exhibition so she could get the informaiton down to the papers? Well, Jackie Peck was usually in the nearest bar, so I’d have to go and find her and make sure she was sober enough to interview. Finally it got too much and I had to fire her and replace her with Jack Oliver. I don’t know if you know who Jack Oliver is. He was for many years the society editor of the Free Press. [He was a very good writer], but unfortunately he suffered from the same occupational malady. It was a constant problem to keep these people sober and writing.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Now were these people free lance that were doing public relations for you?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Yes. However, there was a city contractual amount set up. The Founders Society hadn’t yet gotten into it. The problem always was to conform, in some rather unusual job, to the city’s way of doing things. You had to write a contract with the person, or you had to do some other way to get around the Civil Service thing. You couldn’t go out and just hire anybody you wanted. You had to go through certain procedures. I remember a celebrated case when we hired a curator of American art who is with us no more. He was not a citizen and you had to be a citizen to work for the city.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Who was this?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Graham Hood, who is now vice-president at Williamsburg. Well, we had to write an elaborate contract. We had to go to the city's corporation counsel and get around this. The contract had to be renewed every six months merely because of this little clause about his—he was an English citizen, you see. We [also] had trouble with politicians. Councilman Van Antwerp, formerly Mayor Van Antwerp, was stirring up a storm again about the Rivera murals. He tried to draft a resolution in the Common Council to have the murals covered up or somehow hidden from view.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Was this during the McCarthy scare?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: This was in 1952. That was probably the McCarthy. . . But Van Antwerp had attacked these before when he was mayor. And of course they had been a subject of attack over the years. Then Van Antwerp renewed the criticisms which had been made [repeatedly]: Rivera's personal character—he was living with a woman he wasn't married to—the murals were communistic, so was Rivera; the workers were ugly; the murals were blasphemous and decadent. The Arts Commission approved a letter written by Director Richardson refuting this and we got by again. But I remember very vividly conducting [Councilman] Van Antwerp and Council President Mary Beck to the basement of the museum to inspect Sun Glitter by Carl Milles. Do you know Sun Glitter?

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Yes.

WILLIAM BOSTICK: It's a mermaid riding a dolphin. They inspected it very well, and Van Antwerp finally said, "Well, I'm not going to insist they put a brassiere on her, but if they ever try to put up that Indian without a breechcloth"—this was the Indian [Spirit of Transportation] that Alvan Macaulay had commissioned Milles to create [for the fountain outside Cobo Hall in memory of his father Alvan Macauley, Sr.]—"I'm going after him with a tomahawk!" Another problem that kept recurring was parking. Always our great patrons and donors were complaining they couldn't find anywhere to park when they'd come down.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: And in the Motor City you have to have. . .

WILLIAM BOSTICK: The Motor City's [art museum with insufficient parking]! So eventually we met with the Parking Authority in 1952 and talked about an above-ground parking lot on part of our property. That wasn't considered very aesthetic so eventually an underground garage was constructed. The same year Edgar B. Whitcomb was unable to attend meetings because of his senility, even though he was still president. Also that same year Mrs. Weibel's book on the history of textiles was selling well. I'm amazed in reading through the minutes and recounting my experiences at the museum how few books have been written by our staff. Now they've written a lot of catalogues, they've written a lot of articles, and they wrote for the *Art Quarterly*, but Richardson's *Painting in America*. . . He's written other books, and Valentiner was a prolific writer, [placing these two directors far ahead of other staff members in literary output]. In fact, in this book on him [Valentiner] written by Margaret Sterne [*The Passionate Eye*], she recounts how when a book of his was published and either the critics didn't take well to it or the public didn't buy it, he was somewhat discouraged. Mrs. Weibel's book, as I say, was one of the most significant books written by a DIA curator. There was a constant struggle, as I've said, to keep the *Art Quarterly* alive. Eventually we went to Europe [for printing]. Edgar B. Whitcomb died in 1953. He had been a member of the Arts Commission since 1931. The Carnaval silver was presented to the museum that same year by Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Firestone. It's one of the greatest collections of French 18th-century silver ever to be found. Of course they became Major Benefactors. But an interesting sidelight: They borrowed back the silver for use either in Akron or in Newport and the Detroit public practically never saw the silver from the time it was first exhibited as a gift. It was made by Thomas Germain, the great 18th- century French silversmith. I think this is what is called a "life interest" gift. No, no, excuse me; it was not a "life interest" gift, because this was cut out by the government a number of years subsequently. This was a "loan-back" [arrangement] by the Arts Commission to the Firestones. It may have been slightly illegal, but [was done] to keep their friendship [and assure future donations]. Subsequently they wanted to buy the silver back again but the commission wouldn't sell.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Just to interject for a moment. You briefly mentioned the lack of major publications by the curatorial staff over the years and certainly. . .

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Well, I'm talking about books. I think there are catalogues that ought to be considered a major publication but it's for a specific exhibit at a specific time.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Right. Who do you think over the years have been the major scholars on the staff? Certainly Dr. Valentiner and Dr. Richardson, but. . .

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Well, they are the major scholars. I think Fred Cummings [lays claim to being] an art scholar, but he's never written any books. And Willis Woods never wrote anything. I think you have to have in your blood the desire to write, to publish, to have such a thing [the impulse and the ability] that many politicians have. Many French presidents and premiers have been prolific writers. But a museum director should be, I think, by

definition, if he considers himself a scholar, not just an administrator. In 1953 the Arts Commission was increased from four to seven members. They just couldn't get a quorum often enough.

[Tape 2, side A]

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: I think we were talking about the increase in commissioners.

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Yes, the Arts Commission. We couldn't get a quorum wiht only four commissioners; sometimes two of them were not available. Edgar B. Whitcomb told me once, "The best committee is made up of two members, one of whom is bedridden." So anyway, to increase the number of commissioners, we just couldn't say, "Well, we'll have more commissioners." You see, we were appointed by the major and built into the city charter which was passed in 1919. So we had to go to the voters to have them approve a change in the city charter. There were other changes; it wasn't just for the Arts Commission. But it barely passed. We didn't campaign for it. We thought, well, certainly the public understands that more public-spirited citizens want to contribute their time. Well, I think what happened was that the people thought that the commissioners were somehow paid, so the thing was nearly defeated. But anyway, the [Arts Commission was increased from four to seven members]. There was discussion in December of 1953 about changes in the Pilafian contract. Now Suren Pilafian, who is a local architect, was doing some major changes in the building: a new reception area on the north side of the building, extensive additional educational facilities in the basement, and most importantly the removal of two huge fountains—or, one huge fountain in sections from the Rivera Court. It was originally built as a Florentine court but these fountains were very poor for growing plants with water bubbling up in the middle. Plants didn't grow very well, as I say, but also the fountain somewhat interfered with the viewing of the murals. So the idea was to clear them out and make the Rivera Court into its present condition. Well, the discussion was whether to preserve any fountain there at all. Robert Tannahill was somewhat opposed to it, but finally I argued very strongly that the public liked the sound of bubbling water and that. So Suren came up with this small fountain that we have now, in which he picked up some of the colors out of the Rivera murals and the mosaic that we have in the lobby. So we won that one. But poor Suren lost another one. Our air conditioning was part of this. We were working eventually to establish the air conditioning which came about in about 1957, or something like that. We needed an air-conditioned building, something where you can put all the machinery and enclose. . . Cooling towers, is what they call it. Well, Suren was a rather taciturn architect of Armenian descent and couldn't argue for his work like Yamasaki, for instance, who is a great salesman. Suren had designed what I thought was one of the most imaginative cooling tower buildings I've ever seen. All the equipment was inside and then around the outside was sort of a screen made of enameled metal in abstract design supported on [metal] stilts, as it were. And he had a beautiful rendering made of it and he came one day to the Arts Commission [meeting]. Nobody said anything—they were all kind of waiting for Robert Tannahill to speak. Tannahill had spent a year of his life [sometime in the twenties] in Paris—he was a translator. That's the only time, I think, he ever worked [as a paid employee]. Tannahill said, "It's the biggest pissoir I've even seen in my life." Poor Suren picked up his drawings, put them under his arm and slunk out of the room. I think it was most unfair because it cut off all discussion of [his design]. In looking at the minutes of 1954 I notice that my signature becomes truly calligraphic. I started to change it from my old signature in about 1948 or 1949, but I really took up calligraphy seriously in about 1954. Now the meeting of July 1954 is important; the Archives of American Art was established. It began as a very small little baby of an archives. It was established and housed in the reference library of the museum. Of course it was housed there. I was involved in making sure that it was legal. This was not a city activity and we had arguments in subsequent years about whether the archives could use or somehow requisition city tables and desks and bookcases and that sort of thing because the boys downtown didn't consider that this was germane to the city operation of the museum. So we drew up a [one-page] contract between the Arts Commission and the archives that made it all legal despite these sort of fringe arguments [the sniping from City Hall].

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Dr. Richardson was head of the archives initially, wasn't he?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Yes. It was really conceived by him and Lawrence Fleischman who, as you know, was a prominent collector here and subsequently became president of the Arts Commission. Now he's one of the partners in the Kennedy Galleries in New York. They enlisted Mrs. Edsel Ford's help for the prestige it gave and also for some money they needed to get started to buy microfilm and that sort of thing. It wasn't until many years later that it became national. [But its headquarters were] based here for many years. In the next year, 1955, we had problems with the communists. Pete Seeger—I don't know if you know him—he's a. . .

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: A folk singer.

WILLIAM BOSTICK: A folk singer, [quite far to the left]. He wanted to perform in our auditorium. Our contract for the auditorium—and of course this was part of my duties, signing contracts for the use of our rental facilities—said "the auditorium will not be rented to people engaged in subversive activities." Well, we tried to keep him out and finally Circuit Judge Murphy said that there was no way we could discriminate against him. There had been incidents at previous Seeger concerts. People would come in and drop bags of flour from the balcony, and

pickets [paraded] outside and that sort of thing. But we made it very clear that he wasn't to give a lecture on communism. He finally got on. We had to revise our contract and all that sort of thing. It's interesting that in 1955 the Arts Commission turned down a Founders Society request to establish a tearoom at the museum. When you see the amount of eating and drinking that goes on there now, you can't believe that at one time there were no eating facilities in the museum up until 1955. In 1956 there were also disagreements as to whether the Arts Commission employees in case of an atomic emergency were under the direction of the Department of Civil Defense or under the museum direction, and a [compromise] was finally agreed [upon] at that time. It's interesting that in 1956 the restoration appropriation from the city to restore paintings was $8,600. There was a constant discussion in Arts Commission meetings and outside of the meetings as to the difficulty of curators working under the restrictions of Civil Service. They [the city] had the sort of thing they call "C time." You accumulated compensatory time when you worked overtime. Then you couldn't accumulate more than 75 hours of compensatory time. When you got to that point you had to quit working. Well, curators couldn't stop working; they were professionals. It was difficult to compete with other museums for personnel with such restrictions, such straitjacketing of our employees. That was a constant problem. In 1956 Paul Grigaut was promoted to the title of chief curator. He was supposed to be Richardson's right-hand assistant for the curatorial side—as I was on the administrative and business side.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: So it was more like an assistant director's position?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Yes, but not exactly, because it branched out two ways rather than just coming down one way. When Richardson was out of the city, I was supposed to solve the business problems and Grigaut the curatorial. But theoretically the curators were supposed to go to the director through Grigaut. That was good [administrative] practice, just like my subordinates would go to the director through me before going over my head. It never happened that way [with Paul Grigaut]. Grigaut got furious about it that they wouldn't report to him. There was great jealousy between him and the other curators. I had a great admiration for the man. He was born in France and I used to practice my French speaking with him. But he was an intensely jealous person; he was always afraid of somebody invading his area of operation and he thought that my business activities were taking over his department. He was intensely jealous of Francis Robinson. So, I don't know. . . When he finally left the museum it was under rather trying circumstances and he felt that the only good friends he had were the guards and the cleaning women and people like that. He really didn't get along with his professional colleagues. Yet, strangely enough, he was very humorous in giving lectures. He gave absolutely great lectures and he was a brilliant writer on the decorative arts. He was a strange person. In 1956 there was what they called the Special Project. It was never referred to by name. In the Arts Commission minutes it was just called the Special Project. The Special Project was a purchase of a painting supposedly by Leonard da Vinci of *The Adoration with Two Angels*. Richardson got a group of about seven [international] scholars to say that it was really a Leonardo, and Pietro Longhi wrote an article about it [saying that it was half by Leonardo and half by his master Verrocchio], and, as it was reported, it was the progress on the _____ of it as well as the progress of K. T. [Keller] raising $200,000 to buy it. We published a color print of it. We had some printer who dedicated his plant and his workmen to printing [the reproduction] in about fifteen [ten] colors on this thing, and, oh, you know, it was just so. . . Well, anyway, it was finally purchased, I believe in 1957, and came into the collection. And subsequently the present administration doesn't think it's by Leonardo, but it'S by the Scuola di Leonardo. It's still exhibited ant that but. . . Do you know the painting very well?

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: I don't.

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Well, the idea was that Verrocchio made the sketch of the Madonna particularly, and the young Leonardo finished the painting. They proved [scholars claimed] that the brush strokes were made by a left- handed painter, and they compared _____ everything else _____. But presently it isn't believed to be. In 1957, on May 27th, Franklin Page was appointed curator of contemporary art, the first contemporary art curator we had. I had handled the Michigan artists show for [the first] ten years—since I had come to the museum. Also in some years I handled the Michigan artist-craftsmen's show. After conferring with the director, I selected the jurors, I handled the housing of the jurors when they came, I conducted the trustees around to pick prizes, because they awarded a Founders Society prize and also many other trustee's prizes. Then I was privileged to attend the great dinners that were held for the jurors. They were great affairs! Dr. Kamperman's house on Longfellow Avenue in Detroit was the scene of [most] of the great dinners. He was an outstanding wine connoisseur. He had a great cellar. He didn't serve any hard liquor. He served seven different kinds of sherry before dinner. It was just great. The artists were brought there to meet the jurors, artists like Sarkis and Zoltan Sepeshy and Bob Culver—you name them, they were all there. It was a great. . . There was a feeling of camaraderie [surrounding the annual show]. The shows—the openings especially—were well attended. The Founders prize was usually awarded to some artist who had kind of ascended the scale [the Michigan artistic ladder]. I hate to compare it to the French salon. It wasn't strictly that. But you got the Founders prize for really outstanding accomplishment, cumulative accomplishment. Now I regret to say—I don't know—the juror picks out some wild thing that meets his fancy, somebody that nobody ever heard of. So it was a great, great event. The Kampermans were outstanding patrons of the [Michigan] arts. Oftentimes, Dr. Kamperman, who was an obstetrician, would deliver the babies of artists in return for paintings. So he had a great collection of his own,

much of which was donated to the museum after his death.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Okay. Looking back over your ten or so odd years in organizing these Michigan exhibitions, who do you think was doing exceptionally strong work during that period?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Well, there were a few people who dominated. Sarkis was one of the. . . Of course, when I first came John Carroll was the head of the Arts and Crafts [School] and there were a lot of little John Carrolls being turned out. John Carroll was the favorite of the Grosse Pointe set and did portraits of many Grosse Pointe matrons. All [many] of them looked like his wife Georgia. You know John did that fresco in the museum [in the American Gallery]. He had a very strong influence. Sarkis was one of his students, but I don't think the work. . . For a while it was similar, but once Sarkis got out from the influence of Carroll and on his own, the Sarkis started to dominate the students. Jay Boorsma had a very Oriental way of working—you know, quick, slick [calligraphic] Chinese, Japanese [style] and that, but he didn't influence many people [students]. He [his painting] wasn't the type that [his students and other] artists and people would follow. But Sarkis was, and the wave used to go according to the way Sarkis went. On the other hand, it was interesting that Carl Hoeffer, the German artist, was a favorite of the Kampermans. They had a number of his works in their house and when the artists would come to these annual dinners it was amazing how many of them were influenced by Hoeffer. I think Sarkis was influenced by him—and also by Vlaminck. There was a period when the artists painted these somber [Norman] landscapes that Vlaminck used to do. So it was a combination of influences. But since Sarkis's influence was gone, I don't think there has been a strong influence. Sepeshy had a number of students who were his followers but he tried specifically to get them not to paint like he did. [He said], "Don't follow me." On the other hand, he had a very strong graphic sense in his way of working, and he did influence a number of his students.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Now during those years you had outside jurors, but mentioning the problem of, you know, people jurying the Michigan artists exhibitions more recently without really knowing the strong figures in the area—it's almost a blind type of thing.

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Right.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: And then they select those winners and then there's a lot of political problems within the community. Did you offer advice? Or who clued these people into who were the strong figures? Or, you know, meeting people working, I mean, who should be included in that show?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Yes. I mean, I have to admit, because this is what the artists—current artists in Detroit, particularly the old ones—they complain that the museum doesn't give a damn any more about the local art scene. We've had curators come in. . . Franklin Page had lived here—he studied at Wayne—and when he took over as curator of contemporary art, he continued on this tradition that Clyde Burroughs had started and I continued: that the local artists deserve recognition, particularly those who maybe weren't getting into shows as much any more, but they were [still] the patriarchs of the local art scene. Then they [the museum] started bringing in [contemporary art] curators who had no sympathy for or knowledge of the local art scene. The artists felt, "Well, the museum doesn't care any more about us."

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: When do you think this started, this apathy?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Well, I think it started after Franklin Page left to go to Kentucky. The brought in. . . I forget who was his immediate successor, but I think it was Sam Wagstaff. [Robert Kinsman was hired first, followed by Sam Wagstaff.] Sam couldn't care less [about most Michigan artists]. He had his own group of far out avant garde [artists, a few Michigan but mostly from out of state]. Then Sam was followed by John Neff who was a very sensitive person but they didn't really want to know what the local scene was. They didn't want to be bothered with it. I remember when I used to take the jurors around to select paintings I used to point out that this person teaches here and this person teaches there to avoid this [contradiction] that the student gets in and the teacher gets thrown out. Also we had the problem when certain [prize] donors were also artists. Anna Werbe, who was an art dealer, would oftentimes get thrown out. Her paintings weren't the kind that struck the fancy of [most of] the jurors. She would come in for the [local] prize- awarding day, right after the jurors were done ["varnishing day"]—the pictures were picked, but then the prizes were awarded—and she wouldn't find her painting and she would start to cry and her mascara would run down over her cheeks. And sometimes we had to stretch things a bit and put an Anna Werbe in [as she donated one of the prizes]. We tried to maintain good public relations with the artists and the prize donors. Nowadays. . .

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: It's not an issue any more?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: No, not any more.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Who awarded the prizes? Did the jurors? Or museum personnel with the director?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Well, for a while when I was running it the donors awarded the prizes. I mean, Lou Maxon [the

advertising executive], for instance, gave a prize every year. He came in and picked his own taste. Finally even the artists objected to that. Then the jurors would award certain prizes. But then there were other prizes which were purchase prizes which were awarded by the Founders Society trustees, and many of the trustees were involved in the donation of the prizes—like Robert Tannahill. And there was the Founders Society prize which, strangely enough, didn't always come into the permanent collection. Sometimes it was just an award, particularly when the artist was asking more than the money available in the fund.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Well, then where would those funds come from? From the Founders Society budget?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: From the Founders Society budget. Can I continue with this? One fascinating thing happened in 1957, the year of the Edsel. A special Edsel car interiorly decorated by the first Mrs. Henry Ford II was offered to any Founders Society member who could guess the weight of the Sintenis Donkey—you know the Donkey by Sintenis?—including the base. Well, a member of my church I go to here in northwestern Detroit who's been a contractor or in the cement business was able to compute its weight very exactly and he won the Edsel and had nothing but trouble with it from the day he drove it away from the museum. In 1958, Yamasaki's [plans for] museum extension was discussed. Yama had proposed that we put a. . .

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Was this the south wing?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: No, it wasn't to be a south wing; it was to be an east wing. Yama proposed an immense extension of the museum toward the east going over to where the Scarab Club is now. His favorite museum was the Uffizi [in Florence] where you don't get lost in a rabbit warren like you do in the National Gallery in Washington. You go into a gallery and then come out into that kind of corridor that runs along [its side]. So he was proposing a great interior court with full-size trees and a skylight over it and the galleries all along the edge. This thing was going to cost about $20 million. Well, K. T. Keller, being a very practical man, said, "Yama, that skylight will never cease to leak, so let's do it on a smaller scale first to find out." The Kresge Court at that time was open to the sky. The inner part of the museum, of course, is designed after the Bargello in Florence. So K. T. went to Stan Kresge and said, "Look, Stan, we want to put a roof on the Kresge Court"—it wasn't called the Kresge Court yet—"to see about this [skylight] leakage problem. How about giving us $150,000?" Well, Stan said, "Sure." It finally came to somewhat more than that. But we got the money, Yama designed the skylight, and he put. . . Did you ever see it before they put the new [present] one in?

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Yes.

WILLIAM BOSTICK: It had a great fiberglass curtain underneath it which was all stained with the water that picked up rust as it traveled along the steel members and dropped in, and it never ceased to leak. Of course by this time they had found out that Yama's grandiose ideas were just too much [too expensive]. So they [the Arts Commission] went with the conception of the north and south wings. But I remember being in the court one day with the contractor and Yama, who said, "You didn't build that roof the way I designed it." The contractor said, "You didn't design it heavy enough!" They almost went to court over it. I had another run-in with K. T. about the court because he had gotten a "curbstone" opinion from the corporation counsel that there was no problem to roofing it over. All you did was go ahead and get your contractors. [Since] it wasn't city money, go ahead. Well, the corporation counsel, whose name ws Nate Goldstick, had done some legal work with the Detroit Zoo on their chimpanzee theater given by James Holden, who was another donor of the museum. It was a free- standing building so there was no problem. But this would be an integral part of the museum, so when the city authorities found out about they were going to have to heat and cool and clean everything else on this [inside court], they said, "You've got to go through channels." Well, K. T., who as I've said was used to pressing buttons, got furious at me at an Arts Commission meeting that I would bring up such a thing, that Mayor Miriani said that we had to get the city engineer involved and all that sort of thing. Dr. Valentiner died on September 8, 1958. I never really knew him. I had met him a few times, but his influence was on the museum [and was strongly felt after he retired]. He left his estate in a terrible mess. When he got a divorce from his wife, the divorce settlement [specified that she was to receive] all the works of art that he owned at the time or would subsequently own, he so wanted the divorce. And then he hand-wrote another will—unwitnessed—which left the works of art to all the different museums he'd worked in. He worked in Cleveland, he worked in Los Angeles at the Getty Museum, and various places in North Carolina [their museum]. So we ended up with great legal problems. His widow was about to sue the museum for not releasing the paintings that she claimed were hers so it was a real mess. He was a typical man—a great art scholar but really in practical matters very deficient [naive]. In 1958 we made a survey of visitor reaction and we found that 95 percent of the people who came in through the front door liked us, were complimentary. We had a hearing on our budget before the Common Council and we were complimented on the fine job we were doing. So public relations was good. 109,000 people attended the Italian Decorative Arts exhibition. 4,000 were at the opening, the biggest opening we had had then to date. I don't think it compares to some we have now. In 1959 Paul Grigaut and I were finally put on what they call the administrative roster. Up until that time we had to sign in for the number of hours—not a time clock, but the number of hours we were putting in a week. Finally we were permitted a certain flexibility. This demonstrates, this was just part of the problem we worked under with the city. One of the recurring problems was always

security. I went to Cleveland to look at their television guarding system which I found to be really useless for us. This poor guard had to sit in front of about twelve television sets to see what was happening in the galleries.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: And it would have already happened.

WILLIAM BOSTICK: That's right. And over the years, gradually. . . If you've seen the elaborate systems now. . . This is something that began years ago. I have been on various international committees on museum security. I wrote a book published by UNESCO on museum security. It's been published in French and English. But this is always a problem. A few people bent on theft or vandalism can spoil the enjoyment of art for the others. We've had to put Plexiglas on many of the paintings because of the scratching [by vandals]. It's a recurring problem. In 1959 we successfully installed a mechanical electronic docent system called Lectour. I don't know if you've ever seen it in the museum. You have a little kind of wand; when you go into a gallery it starts talking. You have to go to the painting that it's talking about. It was very useful at the time. Subsequently we had many electronic problems. When you'd cross the threshold of one gallery to another, you would hear the gallery you had left rather than the gallery you were going into. But the biggest problem was you couldn't shift the paintings around once you had these stations all there and all on the recording—because it was a little radio broadcast that you were receiving—and if a curator can't move paintings he's eminently unhappy. In 1960, where my present survey temporarily terminates, we had the proposition, the architect's drawings, for Barat House, presented to the Arts Commission. Do you know what Barat House is? It's that home for semi-wayward girls just to the east of the museum.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Yes.

WILLIAM BOSTICK: It never really should have been built there in the first place. It was built by the League of Catholic Women and they had the inside track with Mayor Miriani, and so the day that the major was giving approval for the building permit the Arts Commission was turning down the plans of the architect on the recommendation of the City Planning Commission. We've had [other] real estate problems. You see, one of the great problems of the museum was that when Edsel Ford died—it wasn't too unexpected as he died of [a lengthy illness from] cancer—[most of] his worldly money went into the Ford Foundation, which became one of the richest foundations in the world. We received virtually nothing from the Edsel Ford estate. We did get some great art masterpieces when his widow died. So the only thing we actually got from the Ford Foundation was the Springwells Park Housing Development out in Dearborn. It was built in the thirties and we—I should say the Founders Society—collected rents off of this. Subsequently it was sold. But it was rather discouraging that the Ford Foundation really never took a deep interest in the museum. In fact, many of their donations were not directed toward museums; they were innovative social projects and that sort of thing. I remember talking this over with my former navy colleague, McGeorge Bundy, who became president of the Ford Foundation. He was a difficult guy. Much of the legislation [regulating] foundations, I think, enacted in the seventies, was directed against McGeorge Bundy and the kind of things he did at the Ford Foundation. Anyway, he said, "We'll never start giving money to museum or to art. That's a bottomless pit!"

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Hmm. Let's talk about patronage—when you started in the late forties up until 1960—about corporations and various companies in the Detroit area.

WILLIAM BOSTICK: An excellent subject. Because when the new structure was being built it took over the old assets of the Detroit Museum of Art, which meant the works of art became city property. The building [also] became city property, but the financial assets remained in the hands of the trustees, who became the Detroit Museum of Art Founders Society. At that time there was no such thing as corporate patronage. There was individual patronage—the rich people like the Scripps and the Fords and that sort. . .

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Now, we're talking about 1910? 1911?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: No, we're talking about the 1920s when the [new] building was built. But there was one great patron for the museum [in the twenties] and that was the City of Detroit. In the late 1920s when Dr. Valentiner was buying works [of art] the city gave as much as $250,000 a year, and when you walk around through the galleries, you will [often on the labels] see, "City Purchase," "City Purchase," "City Purchase." Dr. Valentiner could virtually make up a shopping list of what he wanted to buy, such as a Breughel, a Tiepolo, or a Van Eyck. I mean, it wasn't that simple, but you could buy the things [works by the great artists] and he had the money—plus the fact that he didn't have to satisfy the artistic whim or taste of some crotchety collector [donor]. All he had to do was: he had the money there, [locate the work], go buy it, present it to the Arts Commission, and it became city property. Then he encouraged people like the Fords and Bob Tannahill and others to buy things that temporarily belonged to them but eventually they'd come into the museum. But you would think that in this period automobile money would flow into the museum, but except for the Fords—and that's considered automobile money—much of the early funds, patronage, was newspaper money—the Scripps, James Scripps. There were many other people who gave, but he was the principal one. In the thirties the museum was virtually closed. But then it revived toward the end of the thirties.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: During the Depression years?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: During the Depression years. The staff was dispersed. They lost practically all the curators. Dr. Valentiner took a leave of absence. Edgar Richardson worked for some time without pay. George [Pierrot] came in and really helped with his World Adventure series, charging [ten cents admission] and turning the money over to the Founders Society. But it [the museum] was virtually dormant. In the early forties it [still] didn't get much of a [new] start. It wasn't until after the war. But the after the war when I was Founders Society secretary we started to reach out for corporate contributions and that gradually built up as we got companies to give money so that they could get their names on the wall as Benefactors. And now they have this very active corporate program, but I think we were one of the first [museums] to really go after corporate donors. At the same time, of course, the [number of] personal donors increased, but the problem is now he has to have things of more artistic worth than he did maybe twenty years ago to get something in the collection. The museum [in the last two decades] just doesn't accept every little [work of art some donor wishes to give]. They've got a lot of things in the collection that probably should never have gotten there in the first place.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: But politically you can't say no, if in fact they wanted another piece that. . .

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Yes. Well, a typical example: K. T. Keller had a crony [friend] by the name of Leslie Green who supplied all the fabrics for Chrysler automobiles. K. T. wanted Leslie's name engraved in marble as a Major Benefactor. Leslie gave a painting by an English seascape artist by the name of Montague Dawson. Well, it certainly was not. . . It was very competently painted, but not the kind of thing that a museum would go out and buy that had $92,000 [to spend], or something like that. But it got up there through that; [the donation was accepted]. And there are others. . .

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Yes. What role during that period did the automotive companies play, if any?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Relatively little. I think around the early fifties, we had an exhibition of automotive art. We didn't bring in a lot of automobiles. We had one or two plus mostly automobile drawings [illustrations] and that, because Detroit is a big commercial art center. This was supposed to be the foundation of a series of [such] exhibitions, but it was the first and last. We've had a few shows of commercial art circulated by the American Institute of Graphic Arts, now called Printing for Commerce, and that sort of thing. But relatively little. We've been photographed many times for automobile ads. They [the ad agencies] like to drive their Lincolns and Cadillacs up on front of the front entrance and have a photograph of that background.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Okay. So during that time, they would only patronize or contribute to projects associated with automotive themes?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Yes. We had K. T. Keller, being an automotive executive, [who was president of the Arts Commission], but he was on there on a personal basis with his own collection; he wasn't representing the [Chrysler] company. At various times they've had corporate officers on the [Commission and] the Board of Trustees, but I think they've been far outweighed by the number of banking officers—I think, on the board of trustees—and physicians and collectors and connoisseurs and that.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Okay. Do you want to continue with your review of the Arts Commission meetings, or. . .

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Well, I've about terminated now. I mean, what kind of. . .
[Interruption in taping]

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: I'd like to talk to you at this time about your artistic career. You've been well known in the area as a watercolorist. You've been president and a member of the Scarab Club for many years, also being one of the founders of the Michigan Watercolor Society. Can you recount some of the highlights of your career?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Happily. To recall these, I've had to go back to a scrapbook that I just put together. I think probably the first one-man show I had was in Norfolk, Virginia, when I was in the navy. We lived in a little navy housing development called Oakdale Farms. It was one of the original Leavittowns. They went through and first they put the chimneys up and they they put the basement [the foundation] up, and all that sort of thing. Anyway, I had a nice review in the Norfolk Virginian Pilot and the Norfolk Ledger Dispatch on April 7th. And while I was in the navy, about the same time, I had an exhibition at the Scarab Club, which I wasn't present at, but my wife was here [in Detroit] and she put the show together, and my good friend Bob Culver also helped. The interesting thing was that at that time women were not permitted to eat lunch in the Scarab Club dining room, so she had to be served sitting out on the stairs going up into the second-floor lounge. The club was extremely chauvinistic. When I was president of the club in 1962, it was the period of very desperate financial straits for the club so I suggested the idea of admitting women members. Well, we searched the bylaws and could find no prohibition against women members so we admitted them and they have been the backbone of the club ever since. I also at that time won some prizes in the Michigan artists show. I shipped the paintings here, and I'm very proud of the fact that Clyde Burroughs wrote me a letter of congratulations when he sent me a check.

Immediately after the war, on October 30, 1945, I was in a big exhibition called Portrait of America, which was a show of many of the artists who had been in the service. This was just immediately post war and got a very nice in the papers. And there were other shows such as Artists for Victory, sponsored by Pepsi-Cola Company. But the artists in this Portrait of America show got a nice review by Emily Genauer. And I notice in the clippings here that they reproduced some Zoltan Sepeshy painting which won the fifth prize in the Portrait of America exhibition.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Where was the Portrait of America exhibition held?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: I'm not sure where it was. I think it was held in Rockefeller Center. But there was a very great feeling that artists deserved being represented. They hadn't had much chance during the war. A number of Michigan artists I know. . . Carlos Lopez [who I had studied with] was actually a combat artist then. Although I did many watercolors and paintings during the war, most of my art was for more practical naval purposes, as I've outlined to you—these amphibious sketches [which were combined with map-charts I designed to guide the landing craft skippers for the invasions of Sicily and Normandy]. After I came back from the navy in 1945, the firm that I was doing some commercial art work for by the name of Conjure House, a small publisher here in Detroit, published my book called England Under GI's Reign, in which it reproduced sketches I had made in England during the American occupation, the only foreign occupation [of England] since William the Conqueror arrived in 1066. It didn't sell very well, but I still have all the copies that are left in print. I also [designed and] illustrated a book, Alfred Street, about a street in the inner city, by Russell McLauchlin. You're too young to remember, but he was the [music] critic on the Detroit News for many years. My activities also embraced a considerable amount of teaching. I've taught children's classes and adult classes in mostly painting [and calligraphy]. And I also did a lot of lecturing. We had no speaker's bureau at the museum at that time, and so when some luncheon organization like the Lions, the Kiwanis, or the Rotary needed somebody to talk for nothing, they would call the museum and I went out on it.

[Tape 2, side B]

WILLIAM BOSTICK: In 1946 a number of us interested in watercolor painting got together and formed the Michigan Watercolor Society. Emil Weddige, professor and subsequently a prominent lithographer from Ann Arbor, and I were the first co-chairmen of the watercolor society. We had the first exhibition at Alger House. I'm proud to say that the society has continued on for 35 years and is still going strong. There still is great interest in watercolor. I think it's rewarding because it's a medium that I think is perhaps changed less [than the others]. There's less trickiness, less avant-garde experimentation. It has evolved but I think watercolor is still. . . You have to put it in a frame to exhibit it, and it's not confused with sculpture and that, [as are other paintings], though I have some watercolors [and assemblages]. . .I love to teach children. I think they're fresh and uninhibited when it comes to expressing [their ideas]. I taught a while at a church in the northwest [Detroit] area. I had one child, and even though I gave her a piece of paper about twelve by eighteen, she never made a painting larger than about four by six. I asked her, "Why so small? You've got all that paper." Well, in school this is the size paper they gave her; she was used to conforming to that sort of format. In the fifties I did quite a bit of book designing for Wayne State University Press and because my interest had been in typography and in book design and they were just getting started really. . . And if I could digress a moment, because I think it's in the artistic field. . . In the fifties I had a book in the *Fifty Books of the Year*, which is rather prestigious—a book that I designed and illustrated called *The Mysteries of Blair House*. And then one of the museum catalogues that I designed in 1960 was also included in the Fifty Books. Up until the time the museum established its own publications department in 1971 I designed and produced—saw through production—practically all the museum publications. This was all the way from ephemera like invitations—you know, little leaflets and membership literature—to considerable, full-scale catalogues such as the Tannahill catalogue, the Nesch catalogue, and many others. Many important catalogues. . . The catalogue of the Flemish painting [exhibition] in 1960. All of the catalogues that Paul Grigaut wrote on the French decorative arts and Italian decorative arts. I had to do this [publications work] along with my own duties. One of the problems, on occasion, was getting the catalogues printed [in time]. We never missed a deadline for the production of a catalogue on time for the opening except for Paul Grigaut's *The French in America* [in the forties] which didn't come out by opening date [because it wasn't written in time]. Oftentimes we had to have them [catalogues] printed abroad because of the [lower] cost which meant that with delays and editing and that sometimes the catalogues had to be airmailed to get here in time for the exhibition [openings]. One time Hawkins Ferry had an exhibition of his collection, which is a very prestigious one in the field of contemporary art and the catalogues were being printed in Germany because we wanted a number of color plates. Well, the ship on which the catalogues were to arrive was all on schedule. It left Hamburg on time, it got into the St. Lawrence Seaway and had some delays, and it finally got to Detroit on the morning of the day that the exhibition opened—which is a pretty close call—and then proceeded on up to Lake St. Clair [and Lake Huron], and in the St. Clair River it had a collision with another ship and went to the bottom. Luckily, our catalogues had already been taken off. Mostly it was German beer that ended up in the bottom of the St. Clair River. I must say that the art critics were very cordial to me. An article by Morley Driver, who was [the art] writer on the Free Press, talks about my design of catalogues and museum publications. I also won a number of prizes, as I say, at the Michigan artists exhibitions. I think I'm proudest though that my painting *View of Toledo*, won a prize in 1961 which brought it into the museum collection.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: This is Toledo, Spain?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Yes, Toledo. [WB pronounces it according to Spanish rules—Ed.] It was also published by the New York Graphic Society in a full color print. I have had [many of] my paintings in Michigan Watercolor Society exhibitions. One of my prizes won a nice comment from Morley Driver in 1961. I think I'm a frustrated architect, because my favorite subject matter is buildings—not new buildings but old buildings, buildings that have had the opportunity to become seasoned by time. Many of my watercolors have an architectural background in them. My son happens to be an architect and building designer [and builder], so I think this is my real bent. I did a series of lithographs of Detroit buildings, oh, about seven or eight years ago, which have been very popular and were widely sold. I think I've disposed of over three hundred copies of ten [twelve] different buildings done in lithograph and then hand-colored. In 1962 I was included in an exhibition called Watercolor Panorama at the Flint Institute of Arts in which many outstanding watercolorists such as Arthur Dove, Charles Burchfield, Dong Kingman and others like that were included. Around 1960 I became involved in calligraphy—the teaching of calligraphy and the practice of calligraphy. And I do think my paintings have a certain calligraphic quality to them. I do my watercolors by making the drawing first in [waterproof] ink. It's not real India ink; it's [called Fount India and flows in a fountain pen]. I then put the watercolors over on top [the drawing] because I like the linear quality of it. Many of my lithographs were first done as watercolors in this method. It's interesting to know that back in 1963 the J. L. Hudson Company devoted some of its space to exhibitions by the Detroit Artists Market. For a period of three or four years they had exhibitions they called Hudson's Salutes the Detroit Artists Market. Now artists submitting to the Detroit Artists Market are back again in those unoccupied floors and Hudson's are using them as large galleries. I've done quite a bit of jurying of other shows which I've enjoyed very much. I try to be catholic in my taste. There was a show I judged in Grand Rapids in 1964. I think some jurors are much too rapacious [narrow] in their exclusion of anything that either doesn't fit their taste or they consider the least bit amateurish. There is a [fine] line, I know. I remember one time when a lecture was being given by Ben Shahn at the museum for an organization that Hawkins Ferry and I were co-chairmen of, called the Metropolitan Arts Assocation. Ben Shahn at the dinner said—maybe you've heard this story—"I've been asked often what is the difference between an amateur and a professional artist, and I will tell you. An amateur artist is one who works all week at something else so he can paint on Saturday and Sunday. A professional artist is one whose wife works so he can paint all the time." And I think that's about the difference between them. I'm also involved in religious. . .

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: If I can interrupt for a moment. . .

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Surely.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: I've heard about the Metropolitan Art Association, just coming across it in various sources, but can you tell me about that organization?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Yes. Oh, well, this is sort of the forerunner of the present Friends of Modern Art. Hawkins Ferry has always been deeply interested in contemporary art, and especially in the lecture aspects of the art. And he engaged—largely out of his own pocket, because I don't think the organization ever broke even—prominent people like Kuniyoshi and Ben Shahn and you name it, practically any luminary in the world of art who could deliver a platform lecture was engaged. He took care of that and I took care of sort of the business aspect. The lectures were presented at the museum and then Hawkins would have gatherings of the board of directors in the attic of his father's great house on Lake Shore Road, which has now been torn down. Who's the. . . My memory sometimes fails me. Oh, Buckminster Fuller was one of the outstanding ones. Hawkins brought him. The lectures begin like at eight-thirty in the evening. At a quarter of twelve at night Buckminster Fuller was still going strong talking about putting ping-pong balls together and his geodesic dome and everything like that. Poor Hawkins had a terrible time closing the meeting. Another interesting lecture was by Smith, the sculptor who did. . .

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: The Gracehopper?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: No, not that Smith [Tony Smith]; the other. . .

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: David Smith?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Yes. David Smith. There are two Smiths. David Smith was a very rugged type and he got up on the stage and started this lecture in which about every fourth or fifth word was some form of profanity and poor Hawkins was squirming in his seat. [But it was a great lecture by one of the giants of American sculpture.] It performed a very useful purpose and it had quite a good following. I'm sure that the folders of the lectures must be somewhere in the archives.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: So this was in fact one of the support groups of the museum? Or not affiliated with the museum?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Well, I don't think. . . They supported it, let us say, forensically. But I don't think it was much

of a support financially. They just didn't make enough money out of it.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: In what years was the Metropolitan Art Association?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Oh, it would be in the fifties or early sixties. I mean, the Friends of Modern Art sort of took over after a while, in which Hawkins is still very active; he's perennial president of it. I have a deep spot in my heart for him because he does things in such a very quiet way. He and his brother don't at all see eye to eye on art acquisitions. So Hawkins goes out and buys modern art, and his brother dabbles in science, machines, and that sort of thing. I don't know how to summarize some of these things. I also did some Christmas card designs. I had one of my paintings included in the Michigan Heart Association's annual Christmas card, which they sold for their benefit until the IRS, I guess, kind of caught up with them and said, "You can't buy Christmas cards and make them tax deductible." So I advised them for a number of years when they selected outstanding Michigan artists to [reproduce] on their Christmas cards. One of my paintings was included in the art that had been circulated to U.S. embassies around the world when [Nancy] Kefauver was in [charge of the program]. I don't know whether that program is still going. It seems like it should be very worthwhile, so that when you walk into an American embassy or consulate in a foreign country you see something by an American artist or representing an American scene. Maybe with headquarters in Washington or something like that. One of my good friends in the field of art was Charles—or as he was known as: "Bob"—Culver. When I had an exhibition in the Arwin Galleries in 1967, he wrote a very laudatory article about it [in the Free Press]. Bob, of course, was a prominent painter himself. But he very often got in conflict in his writings with established collectors. One time he wrote a very derogatory article about the sculpture we have in the museum by [John] Chamberlain. Do you know that one? It's the mashed-up automobile. I forget the title. [Coo Wha Zee]

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Yes. [John] Chamberlain made it.

WILLIAM BOSTICK: He [Bob] stated that, "If any damn fool could become an artist by running his car into a solid brick wall, then the art world is in a very bad state." Well, Brooks Baron, a prominent local collector who had purchased [and donated] the work, took issue with Bob and there was a vicious battle waged in the columns of the Free Press over whether it was art or it wasn't art. I was in a distinguished alumni exhibition at Wayne State University in 1968. And I note here we opened the Nesch. . . Do you know Rolf Nesch, the great Norwegian. . .

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Printmaker, yes.

WILLIAM BOSTICK: . . .printmaker. I designed the catalogue for that. Mr. Nesch and his wife came to the opening, which was one of the outstanding affairs at the museum.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Did Clifford West bring him over? I know they were good friends for many years.

WILLIAM BOSTICK: No, I don't think so. I think Ellen Sharp really had to do with initiating the exhibition. And she assembled it. It was one of the epoch-making exhibitions at the museum. My wife and I conducted artistic and gastronomic tours for the museum. We did four of them: two to Italy, one to France, one to Spain. They were called like Italia Magnifica, or La Belle France, or some other catchy name. She picked all the meals ad menus at the various restaurants we ate at, and I took the people to the museums—and we had some local guides as well. I was rewarded by both the Italian and French governments with decorations for spreading their culture about. It was very rewarding [satisfying]. One big artistic commission that I did—I notice the dedication ceremonies here—was a series of [calligraphic] panels for a big mausoleum in Chicago called the Resurrection Mausoleum, on the southwest side of Chicago. The panel is about like the one you see on the back of my neighbor's garage there—you see—quotations from the Catholic Bible. In fact it was quite a job. My son helped me out some. I was able to buy my swimming pool with the receipts from the commission. One aspect of museum life that livened things up a bit was when we had a ransom case. A young man, as it turned out, stole a small painting by Henri Met de Bles called *Christ in Limbo*. It's a Flemish painting of the fifteenth century. And then through his attorney he demanded a ransom. We finally paid the ransom off, but we made a policy of no more ransoming of works of art; it's very dangerous. But we had another case in which a young man stole part of a Calder mobile—or stabile it was—with a revolving [wire arm on a] platform. It belonged to Joseph L. Hudson [Jr.]. The young man tried to demand a ransom by calling us from the washroom of the museum. Bill Woods was director at that time. We traced it. I kept him on the line long enough for the telephone company to find out the number he was calling from. We rushed to the washroom and he was just dropping the part of the sculpture into a trash can. We caught him. A lot of notes. . . I've had exhibitions at the Women's City Club and that. When I retired I was named an outstanding alumnus of Wayne State University in 1976. Subsequent articles have been mostly about my teaching activities, mostly calligraphic work. I consider calligraphy an art. It's certainly one of the oldest arts, particularly because of the fact that our writing comes from origins in drawing and painting. All the abstract symbols that we use today for writing originally were hieroglyphics or some other kind of ideographic writing, so the writing and drawing are very closely allied. I think that about finishes the artistic aspect.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: You've touched upon the Michigan Watercolor Society and your affiliation with them.

Let's talk about the early years when you were one of the founding members of that institution.

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Yes. The founders were the following people: Mary Jane Bigler, Wayne Claxton, and Helen May from Wayne State University [and myself, Donald Brackett, Thad Brykalski, Donald Gooch, Ernest Scanes, Emil Weddige, and Nelson Welch]. Wayne Claxton used to be head of the art department [at Wayne State University]. Mary Jane just retired a few years ago after teaching there for many years.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: And Mary Jane studied with Helen May, too, along with Louise Nobili.

WILLIAM BOSTICK: That's right. I represented the Detroit Institute of Arts. Emil Weddige and Donald Gooch from the University of Michigan. Donald Brackett from Cass Technical High School. Thad Brykalski, who is an art director, and Nelson Welch and Ernie Scanes from the Scarab Club. the Scarab Club at that time—this was in 1946—had also started a sort of watercolor exhibition, and some of our formative meetings were held there. But it [the Michigan Watercolor Society] has been a very active and vital organization. In fact it's in the bylaws that once every three years it has to have an exhibition outside the Detroit area. We've had to do this, but not without many problems, [mostly] problems in transporting works of art. In the last show, which was held in Battle Creek, they judged from slides, which is not always satisfactory.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Now who over the years do you think have been the key figures in that organization and also important peole working in the medium in this state?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Well, I think among the founders Mary Jane Bigler has been the flywheel in this organization because she has kept it going. She has preserved many of the records of it and is really a dedicated watercolorist who has done a great deal for watercolors. She now teaches at the Birmingham-Bloomfield Art Association. Some of the present board members are good watercolorists. Igor Beginin was chairman for a number of years. Electra Stamelos is [also] a very good watercolorist. Nancy Hawkins who is the present chairman is very good. Lula Nestor, Paula Zacks—they are present board members—Carroll Weisenauer and Evelyn Wright [are good painters in the medium]. They [the board] are somewhat sorry about the fact that it seems to be mainly a female organization. There aren't many males on the board of directors nor can they get them to serve. This is regrettable.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Why do you think that is? You always hear stories of women that never have studios doing watercolors in their kitchens, whereas men would have these big studios and could do larger scale pieces. You know you hear things like that.

WILLIAM BOSTICK: I don't think that has anything to do with it. I'm always baffled by the fact that I think 90 percent of my calligraphy students are women, and 95 percent of my students in art history, as when I teach at the Grosse Pointe War Memorial, are women. Is it because they have more time? I can't believe it. There are many men who are retired and have plenty of time. I seem to agree with John Mason Brown who said in one of his talks here in Detroit, "Women are the Typhoid Marys of culture; they carry it and they infect their husbands and their children." But seemingly they don't go terribly deep into it. But they're in all the cultural activities much more so than men are. If you find the answer sometime let me know, will you?

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Okay. You've mentioned your involvement with the Scarab Club, and perhaps you can recount some more information regarding that institution.

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Yes. I think I became a member in 1939. That's 40 years ago. I've been a member ever since. I've served as president, as I say, and chairman of various committees. The Scarab Club's reputation for many years was of a bunch of old fuddy-duddies sitting around drinking beer and playing dominoes and their exhibitions were supposed to be very dull. But I think it's as I've mentioned about Mary Jane Bigler—it's a flywheel organization that keeps art activity going. It's the oldest art organization with a building in the Detroit area, maybe in Michigan. The only art organization that is older is the Society of Women Painters founded in 1907, and they don't have any building. They have their exhibitions at the Scarab Club. The club started in 1910. They built the present building in 1928. [In the thirties] they got in very serious financial difficulties and they couldn't pay their mortgage payments, so they brought in the trust officer from the Detroit Trust Company headed by Selden Daume, who subsequently became an arts commissioner, to see what could be done if they'd foreclose on the club. Well, it was during Prohibition. They looked around and somehow they found some liquor to drink, and they had a delightful, convivial luncheon and the trust officers said, "Well, if we foreclose I don't know what we'd do with the building, because it's galleries, studios, lounges and that." So they convinced the heirs of one of the former Scarab members, who held most of the mortgage, to turn the mortgage over to the club and they got it free and clear.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: And who was that person?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: I'll have to find his name; I don't have it now. Recently they always escape me. [I believe it was James Swan; this has to be checked.] Early in the club [history] they had prominent people sign the beams

of the club [lounge]. The last one was Helen and William Milliken, the only husband and wife team we've ever had sign. This [honor] is for people who have made significant contributions to the arts. We have about 150 names on there. Some of them are people nobody ever heard of, but a lot of them are prominent artists: Louis Bouche, George Grosz. . . We've got John Sloan up there. Lydia Winston around the time of the war had a seminar with all these prominent New York artists who came and talked and signed the beams for us. So it's a club with a great deal of tradition, and it has recently been entered on the Historic Buildings [Register] list of the city and of the state, so no project with federal money can tear it down. But it's had some rough times.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: In your 40-plus years as a Scarab Club member, who have been, you know, real strong figures in helping to sustain that organization?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Well, Clyde Burroughs was one of the pillars. He, of course, was at the museum at the time it was founded. Actually, the Michigan Artists Exhibition was started at the Scarab Club in 1910 or 1911—there's some doubt of the date. It wasn't until 1928 or 1929 that the show officially moved over to the museum's sponsorship. Actually it had been presented at the old Detroit Museum of Art on East Jefferson, but. . .

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Originally it was the Hopkin Club and then it became the Scarab Club.

WILLIAM BOSTICK: . . .Hopkin Club and then it became the Scarab Club. But it was the Michigan artists show, and its sponsorship was combined between the museum and the Scarab Club, you see. And many other people. . . But I think Clyde Burroughs really stands out in my mind as a continuing force. [He started the Michigan artists show.] He went to the Scarab Club every day for lunch. He was very vital in its future and they now have a prize fund in his honor, called the Clyde Burroughs Memorial Prize Fund. A guy by the name of Jim Swan. . . Many of the artists who were prominent in the twenties were members of the club. It was quite prestigious to be a member. If you've ever seen the mural over the fireplace by Paul Honore, it shows a lay member looking through a keyhole seeing in where the artists [members] are cavorting.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Over the years there have been a lot of different artists that have taken up studio space in that building. Can you now recount some of those stronger figures?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Yes. John Carroll, when he was running the Arts and Crafts School and was also president of the Scarab Club—at one time he had a studio there. John Coppin, the portrait painter, held out as a club member in residence in a studio. I had many delightful lunches in his studio where he painted his portraits. George Rich, who was a prominent local teacher—he taught at the Meinzinger Art School—had a studio. Joe Maniscalco now has a studio there. And Patricia Burnett, the portrait painter, also has a studio currently. Beaver Edwards, who for years fashioned missing parts for people—if you lost a finger or a nose he'd make you a new one out of rubber—had his studio there. He did quite a business right after the Second World War [with such prosthetics].

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Let's talk about the commitment of the DIA, as a public institution, to educating its public and what the different positions have been under the three directors you served with over the years: [Edgar P.] Richardson, Willis Woods, and the present director Frederick J. Cummings.

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Well, let me go back a little bit to one director before I came. I understood Dr. Valentiner to be mostly involved in and interested in the scholarly aspects. He wasn't too involved in the popular acclaim for things—for large attendance figures and that sort of thing. He wanted to build a solid institution from an aesthetic standpoint. And this I think he did. When Mr. Richardson took over—in 1945 I believe he became director—his approach was scholarly but not quite so esoteric as Dr. Valentiner's. He put up with a lot more fanciness—dinners and that, eventually liquor in the museum, and limited eating facilities. There was a gradual evolution to make the museum more and more used after hours in the evening—evening openings and that sort of thing. You see, to a European director this is a no-no; you close the museum down at five o'clock and nobody comes back, whereas gradually when I was at the museum we were open for longer and longer hours, sometimes from nine o'clock in the morning until midnight—not to the general public. Not to the general public at all these things, but we had these [exhibition] openings. Paul Grigaut was very much opposed to [such] popularization. He took much more Dr. Valentiner's stance in keeping it restricted to those who could appreciate the works of art [at least after hours]. He wouldn't be disappointed by large attendance figures, but he didn't do things obviously to attract the public. I think Willis Woods was perhaps more conscious of a public relations attitude. The museum was becoming bigger, we had more educational staff, and there was a constant attempt to popularize it through our publications, through our lectures, through docents, and that sort of thing. A docent program got started about the time—let's see, Willis [Woods] came in 1962, was it—and they helped to explain the works of art to the public.

But I think it's really blossomed during Frederick J. Cummings' directorship, in that he is very conscious of playing to the gallery, as it were, and getting acclaim in the public press and seeing that the museum's image is polished. He wants the scholarship, yes, but he also wants big attendance. And this is what impresses people [donors]—to get publicity for new acquisitions and that sort of thing. The museum is constantly spreading out now that we are supported by state money. It's carried out in[to] the state in the outreach program, not just the

exhibitions, but the youth theatre and other theatrical productions as well. So I think with its growth it has become more and more popularized.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: And they need—and in fact they must have—those figures and that large attendance to get state support.

WILLIAM BOSTICK: I think you're right. It's always a question for a scholar: He puts on this show. Maybe it's a show of decorative art; there are no big names. What's going to happen if the show bombs, if people don't come? Well, I think it's a very difficult decision, but sometimes it has to be made with the aesthetic considerations and then try your best to attach popular interest to these aesthetic aspects.

DATE: AUGUST 19, 1981
[Tape 3, side A]

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: We were talking earlier about the arts commission, and we were going chronologically and had talked up until about 1959. Would you like to continue?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: I would be delighted. My next meeting was on May 19, 1960, at which the arts commission was asked a very important opinion on the old City Hall demolition which had become a cause celebre. Major Miriani had decided to tear it down and he told the arts commission in no uncertain terms that it was none of their business and they were to keep their noses out of it, though it was an architectural treasure of the City of Detroit. At the same meeting William Woolfenden was transferred to the archives [of American Art] staff. It was approved with some reluctance. The Civil Service Commission was asked to check on whether he could be given a leave of absence. He is now, as you know, head of the archives. July 17, 1960, is the first mention of a luncheon meeting for the arts commission. This is interesting because of the fact that all the weeks before, except on special occasions, they [the commissioners] just had meetings like at three-thirty in the afternoon. The luncheon meetings from then on were not consistent but they proved very profitable. Later on wine was introduced from various great cellars around Detroit, and they became much more gemutlich, let us say, but it seemed logical to transact business while eating. I've reported that I appeared before the city plan commission to argue against Barat House. They were very sympathetic but they were not the last court of appeal, unfortunately. October 10, 1960, the Flanders Fifteenth Century Exhibition opened with great national publicity. It was shown in only two places: Detroit and Bruges. There were enormous problems of security because we had to have the sort of great huge [humidity-controlled] boxes, that are more like freight cars, brought over from Belgium on naval vessels because the paintings could not be subjected to changes of humidity, which would have occurred had they been transferred from one storeroom to another. The humidity had to be maintained at 55 percent during the exhibition, which caused the skylights to rain [condensation], and the exhibition had to have buckets around. Much of the work was on wood so the humidity was extremely important. The catalogue, which I had a hand in designing, was included in the *Fifty Books of the Year* that year. January 9, 1961, there was a death resolution for Lillian Henkel Haas, one of the great benefactors of the museum. Unfortunately, toward the end of her life she thought she had to sell a number of her art objects. Apparently she had some financial problems—I don't know. It was somewhat of a blow to the museum because they had looked forward to receiving [as a bequest many of the works still in her collection]. She was particularly interested in ancient and medieval art. The next meeting, May 12, 1961, there was a resolution on the death of Dr. George Kamperman, who for 37 years had given support to the Founders Society and the museum. His great contribution, from my standpoint, was the Michigan artists jury dinners which he had held. I enjoyed them for about ten years when I was runing the Michigan artists exhibitions. He was a great wine connoisseur and had one of the great cellars in Detroit. He would serve no hard liquor at his meals—sherry usually before, and beautiful wines during. Yasuo Kuniyoshi, one of the jurors one year, imbibed a bit too much and fell asleep on the dinner table. All the [prominent] Michigan artists at that period attended these. Dr. Kamperman was a particular patron of the German artist Karl Hofer, and after Karl Hofer won the Carnegie international prize, Dr. Kamperman bought the painting that won it, which is now in our collection. It shows [a couple huddling from] a coming storm; this was the period when Hitler was starting to become powerful in Germany. And when Hofer won the Carnegie prize, he was not permitted by Hitler to leave Germany to come to receive his prize. On September 11, 1961, the parking garage contract was awarded and the arts commission—rather rightly, I think—decided to have no direct access from the garage to the museum. You have to come above ground to get in. On November 13, 1961, Commissioner Ben Long presented a proposal to obtain tax support from federal and state governments. This, I think, was a milestone, because as you know now both of these governments contribute heavily to the museum. I compare the monetary support of the museum over the years like Little Eliza crossing the ice floe; as one sinks, you jump to another one. This has been a constant history, going from a private museum to a public museum, then getting state and federal support. Now the museum depends largely on its private support and state support; the city is no longer in the picture. I credit Fred Cummings for being both pragmatic and opportunistic in this regard. On December 11, 1961, the formal contract with the archives was concluded [finalized—Ed.] for the use of space in the museum. This had to be done to make it legal. On January 8, 1962, Dr. Richardson presented his resignation effective the following month after 31 years. I credit him with [being responsible for great growth in the museum's collection and prestige]. In the first place, he was involved in starting the Archives

of American Art. And the next thing, the museum's collection from the eighteenth century through the first quarter of the twentieth century was largely of his own making. I've commented on him before; he was a great director and a great scholar in the field of American art. [I admired and respected him very much.] On March 12, 1962, the terms of K. T. Keller, Selden Daume, and Leslie Green expired, and what happened in the past didn't transpire. Usually when a commissioner's term expired, the commission was asked did they want to have him reappointed or did they want somebody else. In this case, the new Mayor, [Jerome] Cavanagh, did not consult the commission; he went on his own. There was a great argument over whether Robert Tannahill should be reappointed, because Mayor Cavanagh, not knowing too much about the art donor community, had expected the resignation of [all commissioners, including Robert] Tannahill, until people told him that he was one of the great donors of the museum. But Cavanagh did appoint Lawrence Fleischman, Mrs. Roy Chapin, and Fred Romanoff to replace the retiring commissioners. On April 30, 1962, in an election of a new president for the arts commission, there was a tie between Larry Fleischman and Robert Tannahill, if you can imagine that. Larry Fleischman diplomatically withdrew and Tannahill was unanimously made the president. Paul Grigaut was made acting director. Fleischman often presided when Tannahill couldn't be at the meetings. Another milestone: Mrs. Chapin suggested food service in the museum. It was the first time that [regular] food service to the public had been introduced. It was started on a trial basis for July and August. On June 11, 1962, the Founders Society first reported [real] progress on the corporate membership campaign. It was really the first time they had gone after corporations for contributions. On July 23, 1962, Tannahill resigned from the commission, and Fleischman became president. He was a very mercurial person, but full of a great deal of originality. After all, he was involved in founding the archives, he had all kinds of fresh ideas, and I think he blew a new breeze into a somewhat stodgy and self-serving and self-repeating organization. I have a great admiration for him.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: How was the organization up to this time self-serving?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Well, in effect the commissioners were self-appointing in that [for many years] the mayor, as I've pointed out, didn't go out and get new blood. He just asked the commission, "Who would you like to have?" And the trustees were a self-perpetuating organization; they re-elected themselves. Well, this is like a private club: you tend to select those people you feel safe with. I think Larry brought a kind of new concept for both of these boards. On October 21, 1962, the new director, Willis Woods, was introduced. Again, I have a considerable admiration for Willis, [even though] he was not a great art scholar. One of his drawbacks, I think, which he admitted, was his indecisiveness on occasions. On his desk he had a plaque which said, "My answer is maybe and that's final." But he was there during a great period of building when both of our wings were under construction and financing. On September 10, 1962, the announcement of the dedication of the Kresge Court was made, and it was dedicated on October 9, even though the roof still leaked, which was largely Mr. Yamasaki's fault. There was discussion about the museum basement being a bomb shelter. This thing, this paranoia about being bombed and guarding [and preserving] pictures [the art treasures against atomic destruction] went on for over ten years. On October __, 1962, Mayor Cavanagh brought pressure to loan Sun Glitter, the sculpture by Carl Milles, to the Civic Center Commission, where it was to be placed in a fountain in the bar in Cobo Hall instead of lending it to Wayne State University—previously action had been taken in that direction. I must say that over the years I think that city interference has been minimal, such as things where, say, the mayor or some councilman will bring specific interference into its [the museum] affairs. But dependence on the city budget was maximal and this was where many of the problems resulted. On October 15, 1962, the financing of the south wing was approved, with Eleanor Ford pledging $1.8 million [and the balance of $3.7 million coming from the federal government]. January 7, 1963, was the ground-breaking for the new underground garage and again it was discussed as a fallout shelter. February 21, 1963, the Van Gogh show had brought in to date $70,000—100,000 visitors and 27,000 catalogues sold. I think these statistics are significant because Vincent was our all-time money-raising champion. Although he had hardly sold a painting during his own lifetime, he was extremely popular [in the mid twentieth century]. The final attendance was 150,000 and the revenue was about $100,000. And the important thing was that it was a very economical show. The paintings were shipped over from Holland while they were awaiting the construction of the new Van Gogh Museum. I think all the paintings were shipped in one plane. So except for insurance. . . So [generous] Vincent Van Gogh financed exhibitions for years hence because of all the money that was raised out of the admissions and catalogues for this exhibition. March 21, 1963, there was the resolution on the resignation of Paul Grigaut. He was very dissatisfied that he had not been appointed as director and he left to become a professor at the University of Michigan. He was a great teacher [and decorative arts scholar], but I don't think he was a very good administrator, unfortunately. On April 3, 1963, there were reports on two estates: the Cameron [and Kogut] estates. Mr. Cameron was a professor at Wayne. Nobody knew him. He [left an estate and] gave donations of about, oh, somewhere around $50,000 or $60,000. Cycladic Greek figures were bought out of that. And then Fiodosi Kogut, who was of Ukrainian descent, a greengrocer on the near east side, left us about $185,000. Nobody had ever known [or met] him [when] he came to the museum. His lawyer arranged this because Mr. Kogut once said that he'd been treated nicely by some guards in the museum. After he died his estate was claimed by the Russian government because he still had sisters over there. The city corporation counsel went to Cleveland and argued in the [federal] courts there, and Detroit was awarded the money with nothing going to the Soviet government. And together with a donation from Mrs. Edsel Ford we bought the great painting of St.

Ives by Peter Paul Rubens. Very interesting. [A very unusual collaboration.] The museum insurance was finally placed. We insured $20 million worth of objects on May 21, 1963 [which was only a portion of their market value]. On June 5, 1963, I reported on the American Association of Museums [meetings] in Seattle, in which our former director, Edgar Richardson, had talked. He advised [museums] spending more time on interpreting the permanent collection rather than so much time and money on temporary exhibitions. This had been a point of contention before and since among museums: which is the more important? On July 30, 1963, Mr. [Stanford] Stoddard, a commissioner at the time, proposed an illuminated sign for the front lawn. Fortunately, it was eventually killed. As you know, Mr. Stoddard was in the banking business and signs are very important. On September 12, 1963, the commissioners met with the mayor and the common council in the Richardson Room, and there were many bouquets thrown back and forth—problems discussed—but nothing was really decided. It was more social than financial things. On September 26, 1963, a resolution was passed on the death of James Whitcomb, which was significant because here are three generations [deeply involved in the museum], starting with [James] Scripps, who was in the original incorporation of the museum, then his son-in-law, Edgar B. Whitcomb, and then [finally] Mr. Whitcomb's son, James Whitcomb, [all] devoting their money and interest to the museum. On December 17, 1963, Morley Driver, the art critic of the Detroit Free Press, came to the commission meeting and talked about the lack of continuity in our exhibitions—not enough contemporary art was being displayed—and made other criticisms which I don't think the commission acted on very much [or took too seriously].

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Previous to this, was the only contemporary art shown just basically the Michigan artists exhibitions?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Michigan artists, [yes]. Occasionally [there was] a national show, [such as] we had an exhibition from the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: A touring show, but nothing organized from the DIA?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: No, with one [other] exception. That is the exhibition the Friends of Modern Art. . . They brought paintings from New York. John S. Newberry organized this, assisted by Hawkins Ferry. These were relatively small shows. But there was a growing interest in contemporary art and contemporary collecting. On April 29, 1964, Fred Cummings was appointed curator of European art. The first of August, 1964, the publications sales operation was finally moved to the Founders Society. It was a very complicated thing, which was one of my great headaches in that whenever a clerk in the publications sales [shop] sold something he had to identify how much of it was founders and how much was city, because some of the stock was owned by each. So it was much simpler to move it all under the Founders Society operation. But this is just an example of how the Founders Society started to take over more and more operations. On October 4, 1964, the Adventure in Etruria tour was discussed [and approved], which my wife and I had handled. We had been to Italy and seen the [archeological] digs that trustee Fernando Cinelli had near Spannocchia [his ancestral home]. On December 15th of this same year, there was a draft of a procedural manual by Edward Rothman. He had formerly been a high executive in Campbell-Ewald Company. It was a great procedural manual, but it never came to fruition. John Newberry had died in Paris on October 23. He left a bequest worth about $200,000. A very important person [and donor], very low key, a great eye. He held the unique position of having been actually a museum employee and also a trustee. He was privately rich. He didn't need to work. But it seemed to do something for his ego to have a salary from the City of Detroit, and they gave him a special dispensation for living outside the city. Every year when he wanted to go off to Europe, he had to go on a leave of absence and then take a physical exam when he came back, which annoyed him greatly. On February 5, 1965, the Arts Commission meeting was held at the American Natural Gas Building in New York, and many important art figures, dealers, museum curators from New York were present. It was very successful. This was Larry Fleischman's idea again; he had arranged it.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Why did they have their. . .

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Well, it was just. . . Larry wanted us to see the New York scene: the dealers, the museums. We were taken to museums, we went to various dealers to see their collections, all this thing. He was so enthusiastic about art that he wanted this to extend to other people, and I think it was really infectious. On February 24, 1965, Robert Tannahill was back as an Arts Commission adviser. This was another thing that Larry Fleischman created with these people. There was room for only seven people on the Arts Commission, but he had these advisers who came to all the meetings. There never was a crisis when only the commissioners could vote, but Larry had these [advisers] sort of in training to be commissioners because oftentimes when a commissioner would resign or die then an adviser would [be moved by the mayor] into the position. March 24, 1965, the plans for the north wing were ready for bidding. On June 2, 1965, fifty Michigan artists and Joy Hakanson, art critic for the Detroit News, and Morley Driver of the Free Press were invited to an Arts Commission meeting. They were supposed to present the views of the contemporary Michigan artists about the museum's relations with them. Welll, there was much disagreement. They [the artists] didn't all come to the same points of recommendation. Most of the disagreement was on the jury system. The consensus was that there be no gallery set aside just for Michigan artists—which we had had for many years—but there should be a special group of

one-man shows annually. They also recommended that there be no prescreening of artists in the Michigan artists show and that the prizes be larger. I think it would be interesting to have these minutes in the archives files because they represent the views of the working artists as of June 2, 1965. In January 1966 the Arts Commission again had a meeting away from Detroit in the Stanhope room of the Dorchester Hotel in London. It was a joint meeing with the Founders Society trustees and here again the meeting included visits to museums and dealers. I remember it very poignantly because I flew next to K. T. Keller on the way to New York and then I had dinner with him at the Dorchester on the night of the seventeeth, and he died the next morning after the meeting. He was 80 years old, and he had a great career, and I think he died happy, if you can say that about somebody. On May 31, 1966, Lawrence Fleischman resigned to become a partner in the Kennedy Galleries in New York, in which has has, as you know, put most of his collection. Unfortunately, the museum had hoped to get many of his paintings, but they went into his partnership agreement I'm afraid. It always somewhat discourages me to walk around museums such as the Cleveland Museum and see a painting on the wall that I used to see in Lawrence Fleischman's home. At the same meeting, the commission recommended to Mr. Charles Meyer, the head of the Civil Service Commission, that my title be changed to Administrator and Secretary, 20 years after I had actually assumed the duties—the same duties that Clyde Burroughs had been performing for 45 years. There was oftentimes a battle between Civil Service and the incoming mayor, particularly Mayor Cavanagh, because the mayor would become very dissatisfied with the red tape of Civil Service. On June 28, 1966, Lee Hills was appointed commissioner by Mayor Cavanagh and elected president, and Ralph McElvenny vice president. Later on when I suggested that the north wing be named after Mayor Cavanagh because of all he had contributed in the way of [his interest and making possible] city financing [through bonds], Lee Hills was one of the ones who opposed it. Why, I don't know. On July 22, 1966, Mr. Hills reported reading two-and-a-half years of minutes and complimented me on their clarity. He didn't mention anything about the verbosity which I'm afraid sometimes creeps into the minutes. Hills made a very good commission president. As you know, he was publisher of the Knight newspapers and was the right- hand man of Mr. Knight. He had started his journalistic career by learning how to take shorthand, and he often took notes in shorthand. One thing about him as commission president was his decisiveness. He ran a beautiful meeting. He cut off lengthy debate, which is very important in a meeting. He came to decisions and just handled it with the experience of a good meeting chairman. At the same meeting a successful opening of the south wing was reported. On the first of September 1966, we received a $90,000 grant from the National Council of the Arts which made the Detroit Institute of Arts a pilot center for lecture and exhibition programs that would be sent out through the state. I don't think this is known by many people but we had this outreach program, which was funded for a number of years.

On the 22nd of that same month, the Arts Commission voted that the theater arts program, except the puppet shows, be dropped. It was eventually saved by the mayor and the Detroit City Theatre Association, but it was really in a very precarious position at that time. On February 11, 1967, Roger Stevens attended the meeting. He was head of the National Council of the Arts, and he recommended that the museum assist artists more in selling their work and becoming organized in the community. He complimented the Detroit Artists Market very highly because of its relationship with and the sales job that it did for Michigan artists. I'd like to recommend very highly that the archives go into this problem of how do [can] artists make a living. This is very important. Are they better artists for having devoted their whole lives to art? Or are artists better if they have some other means of livelihood? John Sloan once said that if a person wants to become an artist he should become a bricklayer [or some other trade] first so he's got a means of making a living.

On March 23, 1967, it was announced that Harold Shaw would retire after 37 years. He was our building superintendent and he was really a superb employee. I found him easy to get along with. He had all the problems of packing and unpacking and all the building maintenance with a very limited staff. He did a superb job. On May 11, 1967, a joint Arts Commission meeting [was] again [held] in New York at the Metropolitan Museum with Thomas Hoving and Joseph Noble, two high officials of the Metropolitan, talking to us. We visited the Kennedy Galleries where Larry Fleischman was by this time, the Whitney Museum, and had dinner at the Carlyle Hotel as guests of the Hills. It was a very lovely combination of business and pleasure. On October 10, 1967, the commission discussed the restoration of the Gutzon Borglum Abraham Lincoln. Are you familiar with that statue? Some vandal got up on a ladder and knocked its nose off, and [Lincoln] looked like the great Italian sculptor Michelangelo, who you know had a broken nose. We got a Michigan sculptor, Beaver Edwards, who was used to restoring missing parts—noses and ears—to mold a new nose from photographs, and then an Italian sculptor to carve the nose in Vermont marble which is the marble of the sculpture. It's been affixed with epoxy. The trouble is it hasn't quite aged in the same way as the rest of the face. The meeting of January 17, 1968, was largely devoted to the union contract grievances which we continually received. My hair shirt in this period was the union with all its imagined insults and grievances. You had to have a session with the person who was grieving and long sessions at City Hall and at the museum on the union contract. It was just something that the museum hopefully should not be involved with. On March 7, 1968, Joseph Chapman gave us the results of a security survey he had made and recommended training for the guards. Now here—what is it?—13 years later we are finally installing a security system which Joe Chapman recommended—with some difficulty. Strangely, the possibility of a riot was discussed at that meeting, but there was no report in any meeting that I can find about the riot in 1967—in the summer of 1967, I think it was, June or July. It was horrendous. It began on a Sunday. Buildings started burning in this area. I had just returned from a trip to Europe at that time and we were, of course, perplexed as to what to do [as the director was out of the city]. I had a big argument with

Assistant Director Cummings as to whether to close the museum, whether the major wanted to keep it open as evidence that the city wasn't afraid of what was going on. But there were liquor stores and supermarkets burning all around the museum. We had the National Guard with machine guns on the roof. We had big sheets of plywood ready to put up at the big windows on the ground floor, which had no defense at all. Well, it was very, very disturbing to be in the midst of a riot. I don't think many museums can testify to this. The result of being in this [was that we put into effect] stringent security measures that I advocated for handling riots. Luckily [knocking on wood—Ed.] we've never had any since.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: So the museum did remain open during that period?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: No. We were closed for a few days. But we had people sleeping—guards [and other staff] were sleeping in the museum. We had more than usual staff because people were afraid to come back and forth to work. We couldn't even have any staff except those who slept inside the museum. Right over here on Woodward Avenue I witnessed people breaking plate glass windows and reaching in and taking out radios and televisions and everything like that. And, as you know, quite a few people were killed. It was a horrendous experience. On June 5, 1968, there was a joint Arts Commission-Founders Society meeting in Boston to examine the purchase of various Egyptian objects that were [being] bought for the museum. We finally ended up buying about $200,000 worth. We were hosted by a former museum curator, Perry Rathbone, who at that time was director of the Boston museum.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Okay, I have a question. You've just mentioned that the riots were not mentioned in the Arts Commission meetings. I mean, what has been the extent of deletions? Did they really edit out what they want, you know, in the commission. . .

WILLIAM BOSTICK: I think now the director edits out what he doesn't want or what he disagrees with in any statement. When I was taking the minutes [there was comparatively little editing by the director]. [Interruption in taping]

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: On June 20, 1968, Andrew Tomaszyck, our museum accountant, was awarded the city employee of the year award, "representing the competent diligence which assured the success of more spectacular operations." This is significant becuase I think oftentimes visitors, trustees, and commissioners see the curators, the stars of the show. It's like a movie or theater performance: you don't see all the people behind the scenes who make this possible. In a museum there are many people behind the scenes: the handymen, the guards, the stenographers, the accountants, and other people like that, who contribute mightily to the success of installations and exhibitions, and oftentimes are not recognized. The Detroit Institute of Arts was reported in that meeting as ranking second nationally in public dollar support of art museums, second only to New York City. Now we are the most generously supported state [art] museum in the country. On September 11, 1968, Sam Wagstaff and Graham Hood were added to the staff—Sam as curator of contemporary art, Graham Hood as curator of American art. Sam was a free and abrasive spirit, I must say. Graham Hood was an Englishman—he never took up American citizenship—and I must say is [was] a great expert in the field of American decorative arts, but somewhat a snob, if I can be frank. I had my problems with both of them, mostly being a liaison between them and the employees, like photographers and others whose work they didn't like. I had to pacify the employee and try to soothe the ruffled feathers of the curator. At this same meeting the operation of the theater arts department was declared as chaotic and the operation of this department by the Arts Commission was indefinitely suspended pending financial reorganization. Now it's one of the most vital and important departments in the whole museum, and of course is [now] called the performing arts department. On January 30, 1969, the Michigan artists exhibition enjoyed publicity from one exhibit which consisted of nothing more than two strips of masking tape the length of the gallery. They didn't hold up very well. Arts Commissioner adviser Hawkins Ferry published his great book on the buildings of Detroit. On February 26, 1969, I reported that we had 33 full-color reproductions in print by various publishers. I continuously had a time trying to get curators to approve color reproduction prints, because they didn't understand the process, that only four colors of ink went into the making of these. Instead of talking about, "It's too yellow or too green," they would always talk about, "It doesn't have enough life," or "There's more ecstasy in the mauves of this painting than show in the reproduction," and it caused continuous problems. On the first of April, 1969, I was congratulated on the fine design of the catalogue for the Rolf Nesch exhibition. This catalogue was quite a horrendous [nervous] experience. It was printed in Germany and arrived [by air] the day [evening] before a champagne brunch at which Mr. Nesch and his wife were present [as the honored guests]. On May 21, 1969, [it was announced that] the new Tannahill wing [of American art] would open on June 1, and [that] a catalogue would be published listing 455 Tannahill gifts to date. Here again, we had a terrible problem finishing [the wing] in time because the city insisted that there be a certain number of minority workers on the job, particularly electricians, and the poor contractor couldn't find enough black electricians in the city to satisfy the quota. Tannahill at one point said, "If that [wing] isn't finished I'm going to take my collection and give it to the National Gallery." But fortunately, with much legerdemain, we were able to finish it in time.
On July 29, 1969, we were on the look for a staff conservator. This was the first time that we had talked about having conservation in our own museum. Before that time, William Suhr and other freelance conservators had

either come to the museum and worked or had taken the pictures to their own studios. September 23, 1969, the success of the L'Italia Magnifica tour was reported in which 29 Founders Society members had participated. My wife and I took them on this tour of the great art and food of Italy. We were received, oh, I think by the American consul in Florence, the [American] cultural attache in Rome, and even Lee Hills and his wife joined us for dinner at a great restaurant in Milan. On November 5, 1969, the archives asked that the Arts Commission relinquish all rights to any archives' assets, since it was being transferred to the Smithsonian Institution, which I think is a great milestone in the archives' history. December 12, 1969, after a morning Arts Commission meeting, we met with the mayor to discuss the Tannahill bequest which was by far the greatest that the museum had ever received. The value of the works when we received them in 1969—or rather I think 1970 was the date of the bequest—was about eleven and a half million dollars. Then Robert Tannahill left the income from an endowment fund which produced—I'm not sure about the figures now—many more thousands of dollars a year. So that when I set up a [small] exhibition at the Grosse Point War Memorial [of some of] his gifts about three years ago, the value at that time was between fifteen and sixteen million dollars, which makes him by far the biggest donor, by more than twice any other donor to the museum.
On January 28, 1970, we had a meeting to honor former Mayor Cavanagh—he had by this time succeeded Mayor Gribbs—for his help in making possible both the north and south wings, and he was given a medal for meritorious service. The report at the meeting of February 26, 1970, was on the Rembrandt exhibition. The opening had been the most successful in our history. We had been officially commended by the Common Council because there had been about 7,800 Founders Society members as guests at the opening; 195,000 people eventually attended the exhibition. The revenue was about $156,000, but Rembrandt doesn't compete with Vincent [Van Gogh] as a money-raiser because the show, you see, was so expensive. In the meeting of April 28, 1970, there were 25 pages of the Tannahill bequest, if you can imagine [which gives you some idea of its extent]. On October 9, 1970, Dr. Marjorie Peebles-Meyers, an adviser to the Arts Commission, and I reported on the La Belle France trip which had taken place in September. We had been lavishly entertained in Paris and other places, besides seeing a lot of great art. The total number of stars in the restaurants at which we ate added up to 29, according to the French Guide Michelin. At that same meeting I recommended more publications on the permanent collection. Out of the 150 [publications] issued [to date], only 33 had been on the permanent collection, and of those only 13 were still in print. In the meeting of January 8, 1971, the year 1970 was reported to be the greatest year ever in attendance and gifts, largely because of the Rembrandt exhibition and the Tannahill bequest. On March 2, 1971, there was a lengthy discussion of the Heizer Earthwork exhibition. Involved in this exhibition [which consisted mostly of photographs of treeless landscapes] was the dragging of a huge piece of granite weighing about 24 tons through our lawn on the northeast corner. It was supposed to sink majestically into the ground but it didn't sink. Particularly Ralph McElvenny was very upset because he'd look out of the Arts Commission meeting room and see this "tragedy" on our lawn. Eventually the block was hauled away to a storage place of a contractor, and then later on Ralph McElvenny had the pleasure of [pushing the plunger and] exploding it with dynamite. It was called The Resculpturing of the Heizer Earthwork. We had all kinds of discussion on, "Were we destroying a work of art or not?" But it got a lot of publicity for the museum.

WILLIAM BOSTICK: And then Mr. Wagstaff had to pay for the resodding.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Yes. That's how Mr. Wagstaff became a Benefactor—you've got a good memory—by paying for the resodding of the lawn. When the contractor was about to explode the piece of granite, we repeatedly tried to get hold of Wagstaff, who by this time had left the museum, and his assistant, who had also left. And also [we tried to locate Mr.] Heizer to see whether they wanted this great hunk of granite. They got no response so they blew it up. On April 6, 1971, the Detroit Art Dealers Association presented a request asking the museum to refrain from having an exhibition and sale of late nineteenth, early twentieth century art. They claimed it was unfair competition for their galleries. The rebuttal was that the Detroit Institute of Arts sold pictures in its rental gallery, crafts in its museum shop, and had commissioned Michigan artists. All the commission did was promise to examine the question. May 4, 1971, was the first meeting that was held in the new north wing board room. On September 9th of that year Sam Wagstaff resigned. As I've said before, he was a rather abrasive guy, but I had a certain admiration for his iconoclastic tendencies, if it can be reported that way.

[Tape 3, side B]

WILLIAM BOSTICK: From now [1971] until I left the museum there were many discussions about the problems of insufficient personnel and budgets [appropriations] from the city. For instance, at the meeting of November 3, 1971, we reported on the opening of the north wing and had to mention that seven guarding sections in the main building had to be closed. You see, the problem was that the museum had practically doubled its gallery size, but the city had not provided enough personnel to take care of guarding and cleaning this additional area. And then on October 10, we added 20 guards under the government PEP program. I think that meant Permanent Employment Program or something like that. All the galleries would be open. This was the first time in many years, especially since the new wings had been opened. So the government program came right at the right time. Francis Robinson retired in January 1972 after 32 years, a great scholar for whom I have deep affection. But one problem with Francis was that he couldn't seem to bring projects to a fruition. It was continually

annoying to assign him an article for the bulletin and then have to hold up publication of the bulletin because Francis had to check his last reference. I suppose this is typical of art scholars, but anyway he was a great curator of ancient and medieval art. In the meeting of January 15, 1972, a voluntary admissions policy was approved. This was the first time in many, many years that admissions had been charged. The first week brought in $2,500 from 2,700 visitors, or about 93 cents an admission visitor. We got another headache at the same time: the Manoogian Mansion which was the sort of on-and-off residence of the mayor. The mayor had another house, but he didn't live there—he did and he didn't. For instance, when Mayor Cavanagh got divorced from his first wife, he moved into the Manoogian Mansion. Mayor Roman Gribbs only used it for weekends. Mayor Young is now living there permanently.

There was a protest in the report of the meeting of February 9, 1972, from the library commission that the holder of the insurance contract on our two buildings as well as our art collection didn't have enough money to honor the employees in its employ [and didn't have enough black employees in its employ]. There was no other bidder on the contract. What do you do if you go without insurance? So we in effect told the library commission that we would continue with the contract. May 3, 1972, a number of idiotic proposals relating to the new city charter were proposed. We were still operating on the charter that had been adopted in 1919 and they [the city] wanted to drastically revise many of these provisions. Finally it was resolved with our section greatly reduced and admission charges permitted. July 7, 1972, John Wilker, our current building superintendent, was transferred to the public lighting commission. I'm afraid to say that he didn't do too topnotch a job. One of his problems was a sort of basic antipathy toward Poles, [blacks], and Jews. Lawrence Jackson was made building superintendent in the tradition of some of the great superintendents we had before. It was long overdue. On October 16, 1972, the commission decided to ask the common council to remove the mandatory admission charge which had been imposed. Larry Jackson and I presented a report on urgent personnel needs. We were eight guards short, and 35 galleries—about one-third of our galleries—were closed daily, and we [urgently] needed two more handymen and six building attendants. For the first time [State Senator] John Faxon—and this was a prediction for the future—brought the special arts committee of the state legislature to the museum to see the operation. As you know, this finally evolved into state support. November 15, 1972, the Wedding Dance reproduction in an ad in the New York Times was discussed. The Wedding Dance was always one of my problems from publishers who wanted to publish it in the emasculated version [without codpieces], and we insisted since it had been cleaned—I believe sometime in the late thirties—that it be published the way Breughel had painted it. The particular problems were the school book publishers; they didn't think that their high school students should see codpieces. Well, there wasn't anything we could do about this ad except write a nasty letter to the advertising agency. But it was always very amusing. We had a number of years ago placed glass over it to keep it from being scratched by vandals. Walter Stretcher [the city budget director] came to the meeting of December 8, 1972, and told us that the city situation was very sad, there was no hope for more personnel, there were 1,600 vacancies in the city that were frozen, and if we removed the admissions we would cause him all kinds of problems with the zoo and the historical museum. The first of the next year, on January 10, 1973, we reported that the museum had a city-financed staff of 62 in 1928 and now with doubling in size after 44 years, we had only 84 people on the city payroll. This shows how meager has been the growth of city financing. Of course all this time the costs had gone up. If it weren't for the 45 CETA federally-financed employees, the museum would have had to close [to the public]. At the same meeting, Michigan artists James Pallas and Roy Castleberry criticized the Arts Commission for its neglect of Michigan artists and said that the current biannual for Michigan artists had been judged by people with a New York aesthetic. They were very critical of the museum's policy. They said we needed a rotating gallery of Michigan art. First of February, 1973, a presentation was made to Mayor Gribbs and his top financial advisers on the sad plight of the museum. Here we had a unique city asset valued at $100 million and it was slowly being strangled, and we needed $350,000 to avoid closing. Gribbs declared, "It won't close," but he didn't quite come forth with the money, although we did get some relief. We conducted a survey in the spring of 1973 and showed that most Michigan artists favored an annual show but that it should be more representative of what was being done. This was the continual criticism, that the show was not a cross section of what was going on in art; it was just a taste maybe of a few avant garde curators and jurors. On September 14, 1973, a special meeting was held on security. There were many reports and ideas, and what emerged was a statement in the report of the American Association of Art Museum Directors on security which stated that "nothing can prevent a random act of vandalism but the protection of an object must still take precedence over the aesthetic advantages of display." This was a [continuing difficulty]. I always had a problem convincing the curators that security really came first. They thought that display of the object came first. October 12, 1973, I reported on the Espagna Splendida tour which was very successful; again it was a gourmet and art tour of Spain.

Clyde Burroughs died on October 5 in San Diego at 91. We've talked about him before. He was one of the great secretaries of the museum. [He was responsible for transferring me from the city printing division to the Institute of Arts in 1946, a change that made a truly rewarding 30-year career for me.] The new charter for the November 6 election drastically reduced the wording on the arts commission, as I've stated, but it also created a Detroit Council of the Arts, and this bothered the commissioners greatly. They thought that this would be competition for the museum and that it would drain off support. On November 13, 1973, Willis Woods resigned as director and Frederick Cummings was appointed. November 30, was reported the criticism of the archives auction, because they thought it would interfere with fund-raising for the museum and there was a certain confusion in

the minds of people on the difference between the Founders Society and the archives. Voluntary admission had produced $6,500 a month and mandatory admission $8,500 a month, so there really wasn't a great difference between the two. December 13, 1973, the Russian exhibition of paintings from Leningrad took in $148,000, but with all that income, it lost $800 because it was so expensive. January 10, 1974, the Caravaggio accession was announced and got great critical acclaim. As you know, it was the subject of great [intensive] scholarly research. The conservation department found by testing another known Caravaggio that Caravaggio had put the paint on our painting in the same way he had put it on the Supper at Emmaus at the National Gallery in London. As you know, it came through the generosity of Eleanor Ford and the Kresge Foundation. February 13, 1974, we finally got authorization to increase the guard force from 44 to 62. We made efforts, as reported in the April 30, 1974, meeting, to get about $400,000 from the Michigan Council for the Arts, which was the first significant contribution the state was to make. I was asked by the commission to make a strike plan in case of a strike by AFSCME, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees. At that meeting, Ralph McElvenny reported on his "resculpturing of Michael Heizer's Earthwork." September 13, Ed Rothman's death was reported. He, as I've said before, was a high official in the Campbell-Ewald advertising agency and brought back to the commission and the trustees much of his expertise. But like many other businessmen he wanted to get things done in a hurry, and oftentimes they don't quite understand that museums can't move quite as quickly and decisively as private business can. We received a grant from the State of Michigan for an outreach program—$147,000. At the meeting of October 30, 1974, to my other multitudinous duties was added the complete responsibility for the guard force [which the building superintendent formerly supervised]. I had to meet with them every morning and brief them on what was going on in security for that day. November 26, 1974, our city budget for 1975-1976 amounted to $2,145,000 compared to $2,406,000 the year previous. Ten guard positions had been eliminated, and this was the start of our toboggan slide from the standpoint of budgets. I was able to see the opening of The Age of Revolution exhibition which later on would come to Detroit. When I was there, I also discussed the writing of a manual for UNESCO on the guarding of cultural property. On January 9, 1975, there were laid off: four junior art curators, one assistant art curator, four typists, two building attendants. The morale was very bad, but I think the employees understood what the problem was—the city just didn't have the money. Only half of our employees were on the city payroll. The balance were paid by either CETA, which is a government operation, or the State of Michigan, or the Founders Society. At the same meeting, the construction of the archives offices [at the archive's expense] was approved because they had had very poor offices up to then.

The 1975-1976 budget was cut in the next meeting on April 29, by $685,000 to $1,602,000. It was getting near to half of what it was a couple of years before. Twenty-one employees had to be laid off, only 40 percent of the galleries would be open, and only five days a week. At the next meeting in May an additional 8-percent cut was made and so the galleries open were reduced to 25 percent, and we had to look to the State of Michigan for support. A million dollars was being requested. But even with all this "disaster," we attracted 166,000 visitors and took in $179,000 for the Age of Revolution exhibition, but that was practically all that was open in the museum. The galleries—the permanent collection—were closed. On June 16, 1975, final layoffs and cuts came to 58 employees and $786,000, and it was decided to close the museum. This was the first time it was closed for reasons other than riot or construction. It was a sad day. I remember very vividly how it was opened again three weeks later on the fifth of July which was normally not a very busy attendance day. I think all three television stations were in. I was the only one around [in the museum administration] and I was interviewed on all three asking me how it felt to be open once again. Thirty-two percent of the galleries were open and our final 1975-1976 budget came to $1,400,000 versus $1,300,000 for the Founders Society. So you see the Founders Society and city budgets at this time were just about equal. Then September 19, it was announced that the governor had signed a bill granting $680,000 from the state making it possible for us to hire 49 new personnel, removing the mandatory admission charge, and all sorts of things. Voila! We had success. There were some problems over one of the state legislators, Representative Wierzbicki, who opposed the removal of the admission charge because, he said, "If people want art they have to pay for it." But it succeeded. The next year our city budget request was $1,727,000 but was still below what it was three years before. The Hermitage exhibition was reported as making a profit of $63,000 which was pretty good. Now this was different from the other Russian show, which was of the Impressionist and post-Impressionist painters. On February 27, the city proposed cutting the budget to $1,100,000, and the governor was proposing a $3,500,000 grant. With this addition to our 1976-1977 budget, we had a budget of $3.9 million from public sources and $1.2 million from the Founders, for a total budget of $5.1 million. So here in this period the museum was saved, but it was just about to go down the drain. [If the state had not come to the rescue], it could have been closed, or had only a few of our galleries open. On June 25, it was announced that the Founders Society had obtained a Class C liquor license which was the first time we could sell liquor in the museum. Before that time, we had given it away and were considered one of the biggest blind pigs in the area. But we became legal then. July 23, Michael Kan was welcomed as the first deputy director under the new charter. September 10, 1976, the theater arts department was changed to the performing arts department and put wholly under Founders Society management. Here is another case where a major museum operation has gone under Founders Society, like the publications department had. October 8, 1976, a chief museum security officer was finally appointed, something I had been trying to get for about five years. November 9, 1976, there was a resolution on the death of Eleanor Ford on October 19. As I've mentioned before, she was one of the great donors, one of the great commissioners. She and her husband carried on

another tradition, and her son Henry Ford II and his brothers and sister have also. So here we have two generations of Fords that have contributed to the museum. Of course, [Robert] Tannahill was a cousin of Mrs. Edsel Ford, but you have this tradition of great donations. At that same meeting there was announcement of my retirement on December 8 and my receiving a Distinguished Alumni Award from Wayne State University on December 7. At the meeting on the first of December, 1976, a resolution was adopted on my retirement thanking me for my 30 years of service and also thanking Ralph McElvenny for organizing a retirement party for me at the Detroit Club on November 30 with over 100 commissioners, trustees, and close friends present. So that's the end of my career as secretary of the Arts Commission. I was awarded that beautiful book of poems by Francois Villon printed on vellum, and I think it speaks [of my interest in fine book printing and French literature].

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: It was my understanding that you retired two years earlier. . .

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Yes. I could have worked until I was 65; I could have worked until 1978.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: What prompted this? Were you having any problems with a new incoming director? I mean, Dr. Cummings started in 1974.

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Well, he had been there for a year. Frankly, yes. I sort of represented the city, and I think [that he and] the hierarchy of the Founders Society resented that. The city's contribution to the museum was going down, and I'd had a number of arguments and rather nasty memos from Dr. Cummings, who tried to blame me for some things that were in my area of operation but weren't my fault, such as some steam pipes bursting in the basement. I thought it would be more pleasant if I would leave, not only for me, but to permit him to put his own person in, which he did. Robert Weston, who was comptroller of the Founders Society, was moved into my job. He had to move into the City of Detroit, and he became a dual employee really of the city and of the Founders Society. As you understand, the situation now is that the state and the federal government and the Founders Society contribute virtually all the funds, but the city still has the control. They own the building. They own the collections. The mayor of the city appoints the commissioners, and it says in the city charter that he also has to approve whomever the commission appoints as either director or deputy director. So the city maintains control, and they contend that this money from the state is channeled through them, that they have a certain right to it. However, their attempts to divert it to other expenses have [so far] come to naught. But the city still has managerial control, and the state, although it does not try to exercise it, has financial control. How it's going to end up will be an interesting thing to witness.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Who is secretary of the Arts Commission now?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Robert Weston, my successor, is secretary of the Arts Commission. He's also administrator, as I was, but he's also comptroller of the Founders Society.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Do you think over the years. . . For instance, people have said that Clyde Burroughs, the man who preceded you in that position, was a very powerful man. And you had a lot of influence. And since Dr. Cummings has come, the power in your position has in a sense been usurped—or responsibilities have changed since you've left. Would you like to comment on that?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: I think that is true. You have to remember that the museum operation [during the time I was there] was somewhat smaller than it is today. [Now] it's a very big, complex. . . It's a big museum now. I don't know how many employees there are, city and Founders. It would be interesting to know. But when I was there, between the two staffs there were, oh, maybe 120 or 130 people, something like that. We weren't as compartmentalized. Each one of us had to perform more functions. Now with the compartmentalization. . . For instance, in the registrar's office, I don't know, they have six or seven people. It used to be the registrar and a secretary, period. That was it to take care of everything. Now they're all computerized, and they've got Telex and all these modern inventions. I think that as an organization becomes bigger perhaps concentration of responsibilities in fewer individuals is essential and necessary [changed to: or distribution of responsibilities to more individuals is essential and necessary]. I think you're right, that there is less power now in the position of the museum secretary.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: What criticisms do you have about the museum since you've left—or where it's going, its policy toward a lot of different building improvments which recently. . . You know in 1981, many exhibitions have been cut out of the museum schedule for the following year. For 1982, due to a lot of problems or financial problems with new building and the new front of the museum and the proposed modern sculpture garden, is the museum [moving in—Ed.] that direction, of becoming a more recognized major institution?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Well, first, before making any criticism, I have to compliment it and the director very sincerely for salvaging the museum when it was just about at the bottom. Back in 1974 or 1975 it almost went out of business, as it were. Fred Cummings' work wih the state legislatrue was significant. I think in a way, if I could criticize it, the expansion, the growth, has almost been too rapid, the balooning from. . . When I left [in 1976] the

budget was maybe about. . . Well, in the last year of course it was about $5 million, but just before that the city budget was reduced to between a million and two. Now the public budget is over $12 million. That's a tremendous leap and I think there have been some growing pains. The fact that [some] exhibitions have been cut out, I don't think you can score the museum on that; it's just [one of] the facts of life as far as public financing goes. As I've mentioned before, we had the same thing; we couldn't put on many exhibitions. If we had one big exhibition every two years, that was phenomenal. Now they put on two or three big exhibitions a year. And of course there are more curators now. Curators want to have exhibitions, and they have to have them. But I think from my standpoint—and I say it nostalgically—the museum has become a more impersonal institution. I don't think they care any less about the Michigan artists than they did before. The curators of modern art are not oriented toward the local community and they don't care whether people [artists] have been painting around here for 40 years. They want the latest avant- garde thing from some young painter over on a Cass Avenue lawn or something like that. I'm not saying it's wrong, but I think the two sides of local art should be shown. But let me say it [the Detroit Institute of Arts] is a great place to be an alumnus of and to go back to.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Okay. We have to talk a little bit more about the Founders Society. We've talked briefly and mentioned it early on in the interview.

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Yes. I became secretary of the Founders Society on December 19, 1946. It had been a rather dormant institution. We had about 2,000 members. Oliver Cromwell, our membership solicitor, used to call the members and say, "This is Oliver Cromwell. Wouldn't you like to renew your membership?" So we immediately began a new membership campaign. Our publications campaign [program] was [also] rather dormant, so I started a very active campaign of publishing and selling publications. Mr. Edgar B. Whitcomb gave us a grant of $5,000 to begin that [to purchase color plates for postcards]. But here again it [the Founders Society] was a very small operation [in the latter forties]. The first budget [I] presented was only $10,000 and took care of only two employees—I received no salary from the Founders Society. And at this time the city, the Arts Commission, was very much the dominant partner in this partnership which has continued ever for many years [since 1919]. Our membership efforts were very successful. We added as many as a thousand members in a year and kept increasing them. Ernest Kanzler, who is [was] Mrs. Edsel Ford's brother-in-law, had an idea for a campaign, a snowball campaign that everybody would go out like a chain letter and solicit another member [who would in turn get another member]. He projected 10,000 [new] members, but it never quite came about.

In 1949, we had our first industrial benefactor and it started our going after business for contributions. The size of the Founders Society trustees staff began to increase to 12, 15, 18, 21. The interest in Michigan artists became greater and they awarded [more] prizes to the Michigan artists show. The trustees used to award the top prize in that show, largely guided by Robert Tannahill. But sometimes the prize was so meager that it didn't equal the cost of the painting, so they eventually made it as though any painting would be acquired that was chosen [the prize equal to the cost of the painting chosen] but for no less than $300.

The Arts Quarterly was one of their constant problems—financing it. It almost went under four or five times. We finally had to take it to Europe to have it published [printed]. Edgar B. Whitcomb was one of the dominant trustees, and he was also president of the Arts Commission, and here's another—this is the generation [thing—Ed.] that I've mentioned before, but unfortunately not extended to the fourth generation—is the Scripps-Whitcomb family. When the archives was established—and I think this is important—it was a sort of a child of the Founders Society. On September 27, 1954, when it was brought to the Founders Society to be established, people [the trustees] said, "Why hasn't this been done before?" The trustees agreed to give it whatever assistance [it needed]. And for a number of years they appointed the trustees of the archives and the Arts Commission housed it and everything else. At an important meeting in 1955 we received the great Leonardo da Vinci painting, and the director was able to get eight other important, distinguished museum directors to declare that it really was a Leonardo. It wasn't accessioned actually until 1957. There was a long period of getting all these critical acclaims and bringing all these directors in to see it. It cost $200,000, from 17 different donors. Now the present museum administration believes it's only of the "Scuola di Leonardo." In 1958 the executive committee of the Founders Society was first formed so that it could handle all the business and the trustees would only look after gifts and purchases. Mrs. Henry Ford—this is Mrs. Henry Ford the second—in 1958 took the chairmanship of the opera benefit performance, and from that benefit we were able to purchase an important Flemish painting of the fifteenth century. Dr. Valentiner died on September 6, 1958, and I've mentioned before that I think he was the greatest force in assembling the scholarly collection and making the museum what it is today, aided [of course] by succeeding directors. A pension plan was first adopted for the Founders Society in 1959. Before that time, the employees retired with just a simple honorarium. Poor Mr. Cromwell got $1,000 after many, many years [of work]. And then finally in 1960, on March 28, Director Edgar Richardson decided that my workload had become so excessive that the Founders Society needed a full-time secretary and a bigger staff. So they hired, [on the advice of trustee] Alvan Macauley, who had hired a director for the Money Museum at the National Bank, retired Navy Admiral [Carl] Tiedeman—who I must say, very frankly, was not qualified to be the secretary of the Founders Society. My only compensation from the Founders Society was a $2,500 honorarium, but I never received any salary. They [also] gave me a nice resolution and that. It was a very interesting [growth] period, and it was one that I think was necessary for the secretary of both boards to have been the same person. Now, of course, Dr. Cummings is executive director of the Founders Society and director of the

museum as well, and this was created when it was founded. [Until Willis Woods had these dual titles], the director of the museum really had no power [no administrative authority over the Founders, except [that he was my boss and I was secretary of the Founders Society].
When Admiral Tiedemann came in, the director of the museum had no authority over the secretary of the Founders Society. [He really reported to the trustees and not to the museum director.] So this was corrected when Willis Woods became director of the museum and also executive secretary of the Founders Society. So that, very briefly, is the trustee's story.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: We have discussed major donors and trustees and what makes good ones, and the succession of donors and trustees, and that relationship, and perhaps you'd like to continue that.

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Well, I think I can speak with a certain amount of [experience and] authority since I've known many of them. What makes a good trustee, particularly since major donors often become trustees: a good artistic eye, lots of money, or business and financial expertise, [or professional experience]. Well, a good eye is good if it's backed with real expertise. Often, however, a curator has more knowledge about a certain area of art than a donor, unless he's a real devoted collector who has studied. I mean, I think Robert Tannahill had a great eye, great expertise [as did Lydia Winston]. But there are many other donors who have collected [but] who have been guided in their purchases by other people [such as art dealers] and really don't know the field as well as the museum professional. Money helps as long as it is not tied to some narrow artistic taste and the desire to interfere with the day-to-day operation. I've seen not only in our museum but in others where monetary gifts seem to entitle the donor to come in and tell the director what to do and where to put the exhibits and how to arrange the cases. There have been signal cases where the director has just put up with as much of it as he can and then had to resign. Business and financial acumen are good if the people [who possess them] realize that a museum is not like a business. You can't get all these decisions made quickly and finally the way you can in a business operation. Sometimes you can decide something too soon and you're wrong. So what happens is that the people who don't bring either money or artistic expertise usually bring business acumen with them and it's all right as long as they use a certain amount of restraint. So I think it might be good for the archives to research the great art collectors, many of whom become great trustees of museums in this country, because this is the other side of this coin of the arts: [first] the production and then the conservation, buying [and interpretation], and everything like that. I've mentioned practically all the major donors: the Scripps, the two generations of Fords, the Ralph Booths. Irving Burton and his wife are first-generation collectors. Mrs. Lillian Henkel Haas was one of the great ones. She let the museum give her advice but she had great taste herself. Mrs. Allan Shelden and her daughter-in-law [Fran Sheldon, were very generous]. Governor Williams has been a great donor. And really a great donor that hasn't been given as much attention as it should is the City of Detroit. In the late twenties, the City of Detroit gave most generously to the museum, a quarter of a million dollars some years, in the days when you could buy a lot of artwork. I think I've commented on that before. So it's all these people that combine to make great donors and great trustees [and a great museum].
[Interruption in taping]

WILLIAM BOSTICK: We're taping the last half of this interview in the lounge of the Scarab Club, a continuing art institution originally located in a very important place just to the east of the institute of arts. In fact, it was built [in 1928] just the year after the [new] art institute opened. We can see here the beams signed by prominent people—and some not so prominent—who have come to the Scarab Club over the years. This is based on a quotation from the Bible [lettered on the beams] which reads, "Take thence every man a beam and let us make a place there where we may dwell." II Kings, 6th chapter, 2nd verse. So whenever we have an important artist [personality in the arts] come here we try to get him up on a ladder and sign the beam. Let me just name some of the more outstanding: Appel, Louis Bouche, Margaret Bourke-White, Charles Burchfield, John Carroll, Aldo Ceccato orchestra director, [Antol Dorati], Marcel Duchamp. I remember [well the day] he ascended the ladder and put his signature on there in 1971.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Do you know why he was in Detroit in 1971?

WILLIAM BOSTICK: He was here to get an honorary degree from Wayne State University, _____ very, very good. [Some of the other greats who signed the beams are] Rockwell Kent, [Yasuo] Kuniyoshi, Reginald Marsh, David Stone Martin, Carl Milles—who wrote in 1933, "We have to fail."—Diego Rivera, Norman Rockwell, Zoltan Sepeshy, and John Sloan—who was one of the first signers in 1930. There were a number of politicians as well as mayors. And the last persons to sign were the governor of Michigan and his wife [Governor and Mrs. Wm. Milliken], the first husband and wife team to sign the beam.
But it's a great old place. I've been a member since 1939. It's been the scene of Scarab Balls which were a leading social event back in the twenties and early thirties. It's sometimes been criticized for being rather stodgy in its exhibition programs and that, but it's, I think, a flywheel for the art community [and it keeps on going after 71 years]. I mean it's a place for meetings, for exhibitions, [life drawing classes, balls, dinners, celebrations], and that. And the great mural over the fireplace by Paul Honore—some doctoral candidate some year will do a dissertation on it, investigating all the iconography they see in it and everything. It's a great place and it's the only permanent art home, other than museums, that Michigan artists have.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Thank you.

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Oh, one thing I want to mention since I'm being interviewed by a female. When I was president in 1962, I was the first one to make it possible to have female members at the club. Before that time, they were excluded, and they've been the backbone of the club ever since.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Right.

WILLIAM BOSTICK: Thank you very much.

MARY CHRIS ROSPOND: Thank you very much.

[End of interview]

Addendum by
WILLIAM BOSTICK:
As we end this interview, I would like to make one final comment. When I look through an illustrated catalogue of the museum's masterpieces, I realize how many of them came into the collection during the 30 years I was there. I take no credit for the location of the works or the persuasion of the donors, but I was deeply involved in the accessioning process. For instance, when I look at a reproduction of the Dutch painter Gerard Terborch's seventeenth century painting, *A Lady at Her Toilet*, I recall the lengthy process in 1965 before and after it was hung on the museum's walls: acceptance by the collections committee, trustees, commissioners and city council; accessioning by the registrar; installation in the Dutch galleries; publicity in a news release (and in this case a press party); discussion in a Detroit Institute of the *Arts Bulletin* article. Most of these steps had to be taken for every object entering the permanent collection: complicated but memorably rewarding!

END OF INTERVIEW

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