INTERVIEW WITH DR. WARREN TOMLINSON
APRIL 23, 1979

Dr. T: What year did you come to the College of Puget Sound?
Dr. W.T: I came in the Fall of 1933.
Dr. T: Had you been studying in Germany before that?
Dr. W.T: I had been in Germany from '27 to '32, came to America in '32, stayed in Minnesota for a year and got the job.
Dr. T: Did you teach in Germany or just study?
Dr. W.T: I was doing both. I was teaching at the Berlin Evening College. I had taught in the Philippines before that. I then came to Berlin to meet with one of my college classmates from Carlton College and in the course of that summer they needed an English teacher in this newly opened evening college which was going to be a la the "American evening school" idea, something new in Germany. I happened to be there just in time to get the job, although the hiring of a young professor, only twenty-four years old, is almost taboo. I was there four or five years teaching in the evening college. During the day, I started attending classes at the University and ended up making my Ph.D. at the University of Berlin.
Dr. T: You graduated with your bachelor's from Carlton?
Dr. W.T: Yes.
Dr. T: Did your folks live in that area?
Dr. W.T: In Hutchinson, fifty miles west of Minneapolis.
Dr. T: What was your father's work?
Dr. W.T: A farmer.
Dr. T: How many were there in your family?
Dr. W.T: There were six of us, three boys and three girls.
Dr. T: You came to C.P.S. in what year?
Dr. W.T: In '33, to teach German. The German professor who had been there had been practically killed in a bicycle - automobile accident.
Dr. T: What was his name, do you know?
Dr. W.T: Maris. His wife is still living here.
Dr. T: I knew her when she was Dean of Women at Oregon State. We had a daughter here. When you came in '33 they were on the new campus but there would have just been Jones Hall and Howarth Hall.
Dr. W.T: Jones Hall, Howarth Hall, Women's Gymnasium and the old Music Building and that was it.
Dr. T: Dr. Todd was here. What do remember about Dr. Todd?
Dr. W.T: Oh, a great deal of all kinds of things. One inconsequential one - my wife and I were living near where he was living then, on Alder, we were inviting Mr. and Mrs. Todd in for dinner and we had these lovely California poppies, the best flowers in our garden. We put out the California poppies and by the time they got there at 4:30 or 5:00 P.M. the poppies had gone to sleep. (Laughter). Not very important but... I remember the interview - my wife and I were hitchhiking in Minnesota that summer and had a wonderful time. Out on Indian reservations and things like that. When we got home there was from the Albert
Agency in Chicago a notification that there was a position open. We walked the three miles into town and mailed the letter and caught Dr. Todd just before he was leaving on his way East. He made an appointment to meet me on the train from Glencoe about fourteen miles from Hutchinson where I lived. I bought a hat for the occasion, real formal, which I never wore after that. (Laughter). Dr. Todd was telling me all about the wonders of the Northwest and C.P.S. and all that. We had about an hour trip to Minneapolis where I would get off and with five minutes left he suddenly pulled out his little notebook and asked me rapid fire about six or eight questions that you should ask on such an interview. But he was telling me about C.P.S. that whole train ride.

Dr. T: Your children were born after you came here, weren't they?

Dr. W.T: Yes, in '36 and '38.

Dr. T: You had two daughters.

Dr. W.T: That's right.

Dr. T: Was Dean Regester dean when you came?

Dr. W.T: Yes, he was. Just a minute, it was Dean Drury and Regester was philosophy.

Dr. T: You must have had many wonderful associations with Dean Regester through the years.

Dr. W.T: Yes. We went to camps together and things like that.

Dr. T: What other professors do you remember?

Dr. W.T: Chapman, who had been here the year before I was. And of course, McMillan, he was a problem child I would almost have
to say. And Seward, and Slater.

Dr. T: Can you take just a minute and explain each one's place within the University?

Dr. W.T: Well, I'll start with still a different one, Walter Davis. Senator. He was just about at the end of his career then and I was of course in German and he was in History. He was kind of a dear, respected, older professor. I got along with him very well. The fact of the matter is when the Encyclopedia Britannica Junior was getting some revisions and work that he had worked on previously, he turned that over to me. So I followed up on that. He, of course, was immersed in his subject, in the what shall we say, nineteenth century, old-fashioned way. But real good at it. Seward was just a young man back then, he was physically very active, by the way. And Raymond Seward was one of these people that you liked very well, got along with. He ran everything in physics very well in the old physics building. McMillan was sort of a big, jolly fellow.

Dr. T: He came as a chemist. He came with Dr. Todd from Willamette as a chemist, but he soon was aware of the fact that he didn't know too much chemistry. So he decided he would create a department of geology. He was a practical geologist really. As you say, he was a little bit of a problem. I remember one time I went in his classroom and there was a sentence on the board with five misspelled words. (Laughter).

Dr. W.T: He was a hale fellow, well-meant, jolly and all of that.

Dr. T: You must have been with Hanawalt then in mathematics.

Dr. W.T: Hanawalt must have been here one year while I was
here. I just barely touched him. I knew his family since then very well.

Dr. T: Evidently you have travelled most of the time you were teaching. Is that right?

Dr. W.T: Not during the depression years. Well, if traveling includes in the United States, it was after the Depression, after the war. Depression and war years one didn't go very far. After that I started summer schools in Canada and a college on Long Island. Then in '51, under Chris Miller, came the summer school in Sweden.

Dr. T: Gothenburg.

Dr. W.T: Yes, Gothenburg. Following that my wife started taking tours to Europe and in '53 was in Yugoslavia for the experiment in international living and starting '56 the Study Abroad Company wanted me to start conducting their around the world tours. So since then I've been going on and on.

Dr. T: Well, you've been a part of our Pacific Rim program haven't you?

Dr. W.T: No, I haven't been on the road with them.

Dr. T: Didn't you take some of our students to various countries while you were here?

Dr. W.T: Oh, I retired in 1973 and the last eight years I was never on this campus.

Dr. T: I knew you were Ambassador-At-Large seemingly for us. You were traveling all over weren't you?

Dr. W.T: I was taking students on the Semester Abroad before it was over, to Rome and London. Also one of two summer schools
with taking students abroad.

Dr. T: I consider this a very great educational program. It opened up new horizons for students all over and they would never be the same after a trip like that.

Dr. W.T: I didn't realize that until the Fall after the first Semester Abroad. These were fine students, I had taken them over there. And then there was the Parents Day here on campus and they asked me to report on the Semester Abroad. So I told about it, and then they came up to me - the parents - and they reported on the Semester Abroad. One said, "My son went to Europe a boy, and he came home a man." I found in practically all cases that in one semester they got much more than they could in a year at home in whatever college or university. What they were able to do, to meet people, to appreciate things, good or bad from some people's point of view. Frequently they would come back and change their majors to some field interested in people and working with people. One year's group had eleven Peace Corp members as soon as they had finished college. They got a different view of life abroad. There is no question but it was a great part of their education.

Dr. T: You have just returned from China, haven't you?

Dr. W.T: That was last summer. I came back in August.

Dr. T: How long were you in China?

Dr. W.T: The funny thing about that was, waiting as long as I did to get into China at all, I made two trips to China last summer. One of them was a ten day tour in South China and the other one was Peking and that area for twenty-four hours total
in which I had a taxi for the day and covered all the ground.

Dr. T: Didn't someone tell me you went to the Great Wall of China?

Dr. W.T: That is one of the things you do out of Peking. It is about a two hour automobile ride through very interesting countryside. You see some of China just making that trip. The Great Wall - I've heard about it, I've read about it, I've seen the pictures of it, television, movies, what have you. That's old hat. But when I got there, actually at the Wall, it is one of the great experiences, simply incredible. I compare it only with two others: The Taj Mahal in India and the Inca lost city in Peru. As they did, it had a physical effect on me. Your whole body reacts to this amazing thing.

Dr. T: It must have been an enormous engineering project and a great cost in lives.

Dr. W.T: Six thousand, or maybe many more than that, as far as lives.

Dr. T: Getting back to C.P.S., you had two colleagues and you people were sort of a threesome. It was Frank Williston and Marvin Schafer and yourself. Tell me about those two.

Dr. W.T: Frank Williston was by far my best friend. And also his wife and my wife together. I had been here a year before. The whole relationship is rather unusual. I was, of course, in language, German and literature. He was in history and some of the political science. He was active in the community as much as anyone. He was out in the community giving talks as the three of us called it, "the PTA circuit." He would be the one - he was three years older than I was - he had been there first
and then I would later do that. When he was - it must have started before he went to the University of Washington - I simply moved in and took over the work he had been doing. Including the history. And the series of lectures with teachers I followed and picked these things up. So in many ways what he was doing was what I would be doing later.

He was a very marvelous person. One of the very interesting things about him - he had sort of an inferiority complex he was always surmounting. But yet he had this sort of a negative feeling about himself that from any point of view I would have, wasn't justified at all. One thing that he and I did, this was during the war years, when we both had victory gardens. We had been confined and not getting around teaching summer school. We decided, on the Fourth of July, a holiday, we needed some exercise. He was a great mountain person, among the other things, the YMCA and various activities where I also came along with him. So we went up to Mount Rainier. The year before my wife and I had done an eighteen mile hike and gotten pretty well worn out. Well, Frank thought that wouldn't be far enough. We only had one day for this so we had to really go all out. We made a thirty-three mile hike that day, getting lost off the path for part of it. I had done quite a bit on mountains but that was the day that, by the last ten miles, my legs were totally lead. But that was Frank Williston for you.

Dr. T: How about Marvin Schafer?

Dr. W.T: Marvin Schafer, well, by the way, I should name
another name not at UPS, Harold Long. There was the four of us - I've forgotten what name we had - for the people who were always called out to give the lectures and the PTA circuit. We had a name, and signs, and Marvin we held just outside of it, but actually part of it. Among other things, he and I both went moonlighting during the war, working at the carpenter shops and different things like that. He also did the lecturing for a while, which I did for a long time in the orientation and later the information-education programs at the military bases around here. He did quite a bit of that.

Dr. T: You actually had courses at Fort Lewis didn't you?
Dr. W.T: During the war years I was under Clover Park. They had a fund from the State Legislature. I went out and gave the orientation lectures. Especially at Fort Lewis, these were frequently for military that were crossing the Pacific to the Asiatic field of war and it so happened I had been almost every place they were likely to go. Later we had the classes at Fort Lewis and McChord Field - I taught classes in the UPS program out at the military bases.

Dr. T: Weren't you president of the Soviet and American friendship society during the war?

Dr. W.T: Yes, I was. There is a very interesting sidelight to that. We decided we would have some day's celebration for this and called on a judge to speak for us there. We seemed to be getting pretty good response in Tacoma - after all, Soviet Union, my! I was a little bit amazed at that. I had
heard so much of the opposite side of that kind of a story for years. I asked some business man, "Well, how is it, is this all right? Do you think we should do it?" "Yes, go ahead, we'll give you our fullest support in that," he said. "But isn't this supporting the Soviet Union?" I asked. The man said, "Yes, they are our allies aren't they?" That was the whole story and that was enough for him.

Dr. T: Did you ever feel afterwards that you were criticized because you did that?

Dr. W.T: No, not at all. Here's a story that you probably wouldn't want to use, but one of my memories of those days, before that rather, during the Hitler years before the war, I was the only person in the area who really knew anything about Germany and Hitler. Practically, at least in this area, the only actual authority. I knew that it was a bad show all the way. Some young man who was very impressed by hearing me had asked me if I would speak to the American Legion. So I went to them, and told all about Hitler and Mussolini, whom just a few years earlier, the American Legion had made the Man of the Year. It was fairly obvious and was the reason for all this. I gave my talk on Germany and Hitler and the danger that he was. Now came the question period. There was one question: "Which do you consider more dangerous, the Fascists or the Communists?" My answer was, "I consider them both equally undesirable" etc. "But the one which is a genuine danger to us is the Nazis." There were no more questions and I walked out of a dead-silent room.
Dr. T: Those were strange days.

Dr. W.T: Fredericks in Religion was here and he was a perky little man. He and I were invited by some kind of officer's association. It was said that there were three professors at UPS who were in the pay of Russia. Somebody downtown had cooked that one up. We figured out, Bursar, Robbins, Lou Grant, and one other - the people who had new automobiles - must be the ones who had enough money. (Laughter). Anyway, they went to the Officer's Club to get converted or something and we just had a delightful time with them. They were nice and we were nice.

Dr. T: As I recall, weren't you once president of the Northend Shakespeare Club?

Dr. W.T: I was in the Club, and president at times, and vice-president once or twice.

Dr. T: Tell me about the Northend Shakespeare Club.

Dr. W.T: It was a delightful organization. It lasted until fifteen years or so ago. We met every month at different persons homes and had our assigned reading and roles in a Shakespeare play. Usually one play would finish in one night, I think. That was a really fine bunch of people. They actually went to the ground ultimately because everybody had to agree to a new member. Couldn't have anybody who didn't fit. And the older members couldn't agree to some of the younger members and finally it literally died out that way. In the very first years I was here they were still putting on public performances. Not a whole Shakespeare play, but
scenes from plays, in costume. The big night of the year was of course the Twelfth Night. That is when we would have our programs, our invited guests. In the First Congregational Church, I believe, that is where we held it rather regularly.

Dr. T: I remember the Kennards were a part of it.

Dr. W.T: The Kennards were in that, yes, and the Gordons.

I was in the Little Theater the first years I was here and acted in some of the plays. It was just getting started again after a period of dropping off.

Dr. T: Bouncing around a little, when you were in Berlin you met your wife and married her?

Dr. W.T: She was a student in my class, yes.

Dr. T: Her mother came here and lived with you people for a long time.

Dr. W.T: Yes, she came in 1935 I think. The family is Jewish. The mother, well, her son had gone to Paris to get out of the mess. She really needed some place to go and as I looked at it at the time even, their coming here saved them from prison and possible the incineration camps.

Dr. T: I'm sure that's true. She told me that on several occasions. She once told me that when she came to leave she just had to close the door and walk out and leave her family silver and mementos and everything else.

Dr. W.T: That isn't totally true. I don't know how much she left. She had packed up and shipped to us a great many things, dishes, silver and all of that. Most of that did get out.
What was still there when she left - she of course carried nothing with her.

Dr. T: Evidently you and your wife were able to discern what was going to happen and got these things out of there.

Dr. W.T: Well, not the ultimate that happened. But the fact that it was bad business, a troublesome place, yes. One of the things I had in those years, this was back in the thirties, was the summer language camp, the German Summer Language Camp up on Orcas Island. There we had refugees already.

Dr. T: Tell me, who are some of the outstanding students you remember?

Dr. W.T: Roger Mastrud would be one of them. He almost made the Rhode Scholar. He was the one who didn't win it in the final. That was '39. The Rhode Scholars were in England and were all shipped home. He had gone on for some fellowship in Budapest and stayed through the first of the war years there. Although Hungary wasn't in it. From that same period Ber Baisinger was one of my fine people. Willard Bellman, a professor in a school in California. They were in my first summer camp, so I remember them especially for that. Of course the skiers, Bob MacRae. I just saw him at the concert the other night. Bob Kemp was a very active person. I haven't seen him now for two or three years. Of course there was the ski team of which I was "coach."

The fact is that when Gretchen Fraser was here, I don't know if you were at the Alumni meeting that day, I was introduced as
her "coach," speaking of her first Olympic Gold Medal for America. I could just barely ski! But the school had to have somebody with them and I was available and was friends with Don Kosner who was the one who got me into that. He was superintendent or assistant up in Seattle for one of the districts near there.

Dr. T: One of your daughters lives in Seattle?

Dr. W.T: Both are and one granddaughter there. Vivien is a member of the Tall Timber Gang. She and her husband, who is in his father's law office, the youngsters have a recording company of their own and Vivien was three times women's national fiddling champion.

Dr. T: Is she the younger one?

Dr. W.T: Vivien is the younger one. Barbara has a daughter and is working at the University now.

Dr. T: Tommy, you have been one of the outstanding professors through the years and you are enshrined in the hearts of hundreds and hundreds of students. They always ask about you when I go to alumni meetings. We have such great admiration for you. It seems like you grow younger every year. I hear of you in China, and I hear of you in Indonesia and I hear of you in South America. It's really wonderful.

Dr. W.T: I'm away to Europe at the end of this week. I am going to Malta which I haven't seen. That trip last year was such a big one that I don't need any bigger trips for a while. So this time it's just a forty-five day affair, Pan Am ticket to Malta, then back to Germany, my second home, where my room
at the Pantheon is waiting for me and I have friends there. Then my favorite mountain spot in Austria and Switzerland and then to Belgium and Holland where I will be living in the homes of students who have lived in my house. I had Dutch and Belgium students there.

Dr. T: You have done that through the years haven't you?

Dr. W.T: Yes, ever since I started going to Europe on the Semester Abroad program. There was the house - my wife had passed away and children gone - so having students living there was a blessing for me.

Dr. T: Then they reciprocate and you can live with them for a while.

Dr. W.T: Exactly. I don't feel bad at all about moving into their homes. They write me letters saying, "There is always room for you."

Dr. T: Well, I am certainly grateful for you coming in. We will transcribe this and I will have you read it and help with the spelling. This will become a part of the oral history of the University. We will keep it permanently and will be a primary source for the history which will be written for the Centennial in 1988.

Dr. W.T: When I heard that I would be interviewed and you talked about Dr. Todd, in those days Mrs. Jones, of Jones Hall, was still alive. In her will were the conditions that until she was dead there would be no smoking on the campus, there would be no dancing on the campus, and so when she died there was a little problem in the late twenties. Some of
the fraternities would go to dances around. The students who wanted some of that kind of social life had it off campus. It was logical that there should be an attempt to have dancing and parties on campus. Dr. Todd did give into that. The hell-fire Methodist preacher from Iowa! The first dance was in the Old Gymnasium, the Women's Gymnasium, and my wife and I were chaperones quite frequently. I remember at that dance standing by Dr. Todd and here was some cheek to cheek dancing and Dr. Todd would watch that go by and watch the circle around the floor but not say a word and accepted it. It must have been awfully hard for him I admired him doubly for that.

Dr. T: I do know that there were some rather strong restrictions.

Dr. W.T: Oh, yes. They clamped down on us. A follow-up on that, PLU being strictly Lutheran of course, didn't approve of these things at all. I won't name names for that. The president there was very viciously attacking UPS. That was in the forties. The faculty had a New Year's dance and these people dancing "pelvis to pelvis." He was really roaring about that. He said his PLU faculty were on their knees praying!

Dr. T: They were as critical as they could be in those days.

Dr. W.T: We compromised on our hostilities by our ski team inviting them to go with us for a ski weekend at the mountain. So we went with these righteous young PLU students to the mountain and our students got nothing out of this association because the PLU students spent the whole time guzzling beer! (Laughter).