

**T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History Collection**

**ABSTRACT**

**INTERVIEWEE NAME:** Peter A. Soderbergh

**COLLECTION:** 4700.0184

**IDENTIFICATION:** [1928 – 1998] Dean of College of Education (1976- 1981)

**INTERVIEWER:** Andrew Mark Holden

**SERIES:** University History – Distinguished Faculty & Administrators

**INTERVIEW DATES:** 11/11/92, 11/18/92, 12/2/92, 12/4/92

**FOCUS DATES:** 1928 - 1992

**ABSTRACT:**

**Tape 265**

Family history; educational background; attending parochial schools; Christian Brothers order and education; reasons for sending him to parochial school; reasons for his interest in history; childhood play in Brooklyn, N.Y. and Newark, N.J.; his father's immigration from Sweden and attempts to become an American culturally; growing up an only child; family size in the 1930s; impact of parochial school education on building his character; Christian Brothers strict disciplinarians; impact of World War II on high school textbooks; attending Seton Hall Preparatory School; attending Lawrenceville (a college prep. boarding school in NJ); high educational standards of Lawrenceville; parents' fear of raising a teenager; developing an interest in writing; Lawrenceville's educational philosophy; reasons for becoming a teacher; describes headmaster Alvin Heely; deciding which college to attend; reasons for choosing Amherst; reasons for majoring in history and fine arts; veterans attending Amherst on the G.I. Bill; impact of Amherst on his development; desire to become a college professor; Professor of Drama Curt Canfield ; reasons for joining the Marine Corps; outlines career in the Marines; instructor for "Charm School" (Instructor Training Section) at Quantico; working as Marine recruiter; decision to resign from the Corps and attend graduate school

**Tape 266**

Family history; parents' reasons for sending him to boarding school; interest in history; fascination with movies; attending Harvard for master's degree; balancing graduate school with having a family; first teaching job in Andover, Mass.; job as principal in Andover; director of student teaching at Emory in 1961; moving family to Atlanta; enrolls in doctoral program at the University of Texas in 1963; describes UT's doctoral program; Charles Whitman killing people from the Tower at UT; teaching at UT after earned his doctorate; interest in diverse subjects and writing about them; making time for his children while in the doctoral program; job as professor at the University of Pittsburgh; reasons for taking the job at Pittsburgh; describes the courses he taught; sending his children to public schools; Vietnam War; takes job as Associate Dean of

Academic Affairs at the University of Virginia in 1973; fear that his age will become a deterrent to his ability to find administrative jobs; using UVA as a stepping stone to getting position as the dean of a college of education; describes UVA; duties as associate dean of academic affairs; decision to apply for position of dean of the College of Education at LSU; state of the College of Ed. in the mid-1970s

### **Tape 267**

Nature versus nurture; fate; qualities of a well-rounded professor; qualities of a good teacher; describes his parents' reaction to his becoming a teacher; impact of frequent moves on his family; faculty of the College of Ed.'s reaction to him; hired to revamp the College of Ed.

### **Tape 268**

Administration's reasons for hiring an outside person to be dean; problems in LSU's College of Education; fear and resentment of faculty members; composition of faculty; organization of the College of Ed.; describes his predecessors; backwardness of College of Education when he arrived; hired to revitalize the College; describes the changes he made in the College of Ed.; status of Education on campus before he made changes; faculty perception of him; students' view of Education when he first arrived; bringing in new faculty members and improving quality of teaching and courses offered; securing grants; support of Chancellor Paul Murrill and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Otis Wheeler; drawing up plan of action for revitalizing the college; support of State Board of Education for changes in the college; lack of organization on part of his opponents in the college; accomplishments as dean; describes his administrative style; resignation of Murrill and the end of his deanship; division develops within the college as he brought new people in; graduate students; poor quality of dissertations when he arrived; reorganization of the College of Education; "hands on" approach to being dean; dismissed by Chancellor Wooden days before the start of the semester

### **Tape 269**

Describes the impact his changes made on the College of Education; feelings about being replaced; describes how his replacement was selected; banished to an office in Himes Hall; discusses his goals while he was dean; creating a student evaluation system for professors; failure to implement peer evaluations; bringing in research funds; decision to remain at LSU; role in formulation of the core curriculum at LSU; describes the course (EDCI 1000) he taught after leaving the deanship; discusses his publication history; inability to become member of the graduate faculty

**TAPES:** 5 (T265, T266, T267, T268, T269)

**TOTAL PLAYING TIME:** 4 hours, 40 minutes

**# PAGES TRANSCRIPT:** 150 pages

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