



Ramon P. Heimerl

Executive Secretary - 1956-65
Distinguished Fellow - 1978

Interview with Ramon Heimerl (Norman Silber)
Greeley, Colorado
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Prof. Silber: This is an interview with Professor Ray Heimerl at his home in Greeley, Colorado. The interviewer is Norman Silber. The date is March 16, 1984.

Ray, can I ask you first to tell me briefly how it was that you became interested in the consumer movement, and then more specifically, in ACCI?

Prof. Heimerl: I think that's very appropriate, and I'm very pleased that you'd ask it because I do want to honor two people that interested me.

In the '30s, I met a man named Arnold Snyder, who at the present time, is Dean of the School of Business at Kalamazoo. I met him at St. Cloud and he was very interested in the general business, as we call it, or the basic business area, which included something about consumers in the early '30s.

In my first teaching in 1938, I had the opportunity to have a one semester course in consumer problems.

NS: Where was this?

RH: Hancock, Minnesota. The people there were not very pleased. They thought I was a communist because I was looking at analyzing some of the practices of businessmen and business products with the class. This was my first introduction.

After World War II, I met Ray Price. I had met Warren Myers at meetings in Minnesota and decided I would work on my Master's at the University of Minnesota. Warren Myers suggested that I come down in January, which would be two months after I met him. He said that Ray Price was coming on campus and I should definitely talk to him.

After I talked to Ray, he said that I should work on the Master's with him as advisor. I took all of his courses, including some consumer emphasis courses and kept up my interest in that way. Of course, Ray is the one who got me into ACCI in the first place.

NS: Why was it interesting to you?

RH: Ray Price, of course, was such a dedicated consumer person that I was just amazed by his interest and tried to emulate him in my own teaching.

NS: What was the consumer movement like in the '30s?

RH: In the '30s, it was all "buyer beware," and the first book, *The Consumer Investigates*, the first book on the market, was by Zutavern and Bullock. It was all analysis of advertising, analysis of products, that kind of thing. I've kept the book just because it was the first one available.

Working with Ray Price, you just get the enthusiasm that he had. He doesn't have it any more, I suspect, but he certainly had it in the late '40s and '50s and influenced many people. Even all through the '60s, too, of course.

NS: For those people who don't know him, what were those classes like?

RH: He was stressing methodology most of the time when teaching a consumer class, but he did get into content too. He did teach an undergraduate class. I think it was called "Consumer

Problems," that was in General College. In fact, one year, he couldn't teach and he wanted me to teach it when I was working on a doctorate later.

It was interesting to have the combination of both content and method all work together and that's what he tried to do in his courses in the College of Education, and then, of course, working with him in his General College course. You could see him put the methods to work.

NS: Did you think of yourself as a young radical in those days?

RH: I did in the '30s when I was first teaching in the late '30s: '38, '39, '40. I taught three years in the first school I went into and I thought of myself as quite radical then, of course. Other people looked at me as a radical because I was doing things differently and the teachers thought that I was different also.

NS: Do you remember any particular examples of that?

RH: Oh, sure. I had a young man in class who was a sophomore at the time. He was lazy but very bright, and he would sleep through half the class if you'd let him. His father and his grandfather owned the local newspaper and I was the advisor to the school newspaper, which was one section of the local paper once a week. This was a small town of 1000 people. Everyone knew each other.

One time, I happened to go in to see about our school section of the newspaper, and the grandfather said, "I understand you're pretty radical in your classes, there." I said, "Well, what's Jack been saying?" I knew he was thinking of the grandson and he started to tell about some of the things he was saying, and I said, "Well now, look, I know you're ready to call me a communist." He said, "Yes, I was." I said, "Really, I'm just being analytical, teaching these kids to be critical of what they do and what they think and not accept everything just at face value." The grandfather and the father of this young man were both very bright people, and they believed that you should be able to think for yourself too. So, I got out of it that way, but it could have been a bad situation with an ordinary person who didn't have the background that these two people had because they were journalists, and they were good ones, too, for a small town.

NS: That was here in Greeley?

RH: No, that was back in western Minnesota.

NS: Was it a fairly radical thing to do to become a teacher in consumer education back in the '30s?

RH: Before World War II it definitely was. After WWII, people like Ray Price had gotten others like Gladys Bahr going on the road to educating consumers, and this helped a great deal.

In the '30s, Ray Price got his background from Henry Shields at the University of Chicago. Ray did his Master's with Henry Shields. There was a book by Shields and Wilson that was basically on business management. In that, was some consumer flavor from Henry Shields. That's where Ray got his start, I think, and then he went after his Master's work, which was summers mainly, I suspect, at the University of Cincinnati. He interested many people like Gladys Bahr and many others who had really come to the foreground. I don't think any of these other people who had been on the board were any of his students.

NS: Among charter members, maybe?

RH: No, they were all people that he worked with in the early years.

George Damon, incidentally, was the man who had the job here in Greeley before I came. He was leaving and going to Washington to work for the consumer education study and sponsored by the principal's association. Gladys Bahr mentioned this at a meeting. She said that she heard that Damon was leaving for Washington, so she said, "Why don't you check and see if you would be interested in that job?"

NS: So that's how you came to Greeley?

RH: Yes.

NS: Did you think of the consumer movement as part and parcel of the liberal or New Deal kind of causes of the '30s?

RH: It was partly that, but it had started because of the Depression too. People didn't have enough money to buy all the things they wanted or even that they needed. This certainly gave the consumer movement a boost.

If you look back at Henry Harap's study in 1923, *The Education of the Consumer*, I think it was of what was being done in the United States to educate consumers. You could almost answer it in one word, "nothing," or at least practically nothing. He had many suggestions as to what people should be doing, which was the valuable thing in his study, I think.

That got people started thinking and that's why Zutavern and Bullock came out early with their book. Have you ever seen Zutavern's book?

The book was interesting because it was the first approach and it used many of the ideas that Henry Harap had suggested in the '20s, but because people were having such a difficult time in the early '30s, their book really interested many people, and that's why it became very popular. I'm not positive about the date—1936 or '37. I used it in '38.

NS: Were you teaching in an economics department in those days?

RH: I was teaching in Hancock High School, Hancock, Minnesota. It was a very small high school so it wasn't departmentalized. I taught some social studies and some business. I taught business law for a half year and the consumer for another half year, because law was one of my favorites. That's the one that I still teach. I taught business law for 45 years. Of course, that gets into the consumer aspect because of all the consumer protection, and the consumers knowing the business law, the law of sales, commercial papers, etc., which is so important.

NS: You said it became quite different after the war?

RH: After the war, too, the attitude was entirely different because then we were in a period of prosperity which the war brought about, and the people just ignored the consumer educators, really.

They were more interested in educating consumers, and because of the consumer education study by the National Association of Secondary School Principals, there was more impetus to educating people as consumers. There were more materials available as a result of their study and they had a series of 11 pamphlets. I used those for quite a number of years.

Wilhelms put them into *Consumer Living*, then I revised that twice for the Gregg Division of McGraw-Hill.

After World War II, people were more accepting of what the schools were doing. It was a completely different atmosphere. Then, of course, in the '50s, the consumer movement really got started.

NS: You were an educator, of course, but were you also involved in the nitty-gritty consumer causes of the day?

RH: I wasn't as involved, no.

NS: Do you remember what the causes of those days were?

RH: During the '40s, there were 3-4 years of the war and that took up most of the time, but at the end, beginning in 1946 to 1950, there was a regeneration of interest in educating people as consumers. Then, by 1950, it really started to take over. That's when I was working with Ray Price, in 1949-1952.

NS: You taught secondary school, then you went back to get a Master's?

RH: Yes, and was in the service in the meantime.

NS: And you did the Master's for Ray?

RH: Yes. I got my first Bachelor's in 1938 and started teaching in 1938. I was teaching English, social studies, and business. I taught for three years, then went into defense work.

NS: The B.A. was at St. Cloud?

RH: Yes. It was really a B.Ed., Bachelor of Education. After three years of teaching, I went into defense work. I was auditor and office manager of the Lake Superior Shipbuilding Company in Superior, Wisconsin.

I was there for three years. They kept getting a deferment for me so I didn't have to go into the service early. I did go into the service in '42. I was in the Navy for three years, but because of my teaching experience, I was teaching all the time I was in the Navy.

In 1945, I got out of the service. I went back to St. Cloud and finished my business major which I hadn't finished before and then got a second Bachelor's degree—that was a B.A. of science and business. Then I went back to teaching.

NS: Then you taught at Hancock?

RH: No, I went to Saulk Center, Sinclair Lewis' "Main Street." My wife was teaching there. It's nice to say, and I'll say it for the transcript, too, that they created a job for me, and I think that tells that they really wanted to keep her [laughter]. She is an excellent teacher, always has been. She was teaching math, physics and chemistry in the senior high school there.

NS: I see. Then you went back for your Master's after that?

RH: Yes, in 1948, I went back for my Master's. I got it in 1949.

NS: You were in Minneapolis then?

RH: Yes, then I stayed on at the university for three years working on my doctorate.

NS: That brings us to 1951.

RH: 1952.

NS: It was about that time that Colston Warne, Henry Harap and Ray Price and others were

developing the idea of an organization of consumer professionals. Was that their idea, do you know?

RH: I'm not sure if it was Colston and Ray together, or one of them that got the idea, but I think that the two of them got the idea together. I was working for Ray Price and also teaching at University High School and teaching at General College there at the university. I was also his assistant all that time and I knew pretty well what was going on because he kept me informed.

He and Colston got together quite often. Colston was trying to do lots of things at that time too, but I think over lunch—between the two of them—they just hatched the idea and it began maturing. Then they looked down the list at who they could get from all over the country. If you look at the charter members, they represent a cross-section of the entire country. I think they did that purposely. This was the group who were doing the writings at that time.

NS: This is sort of a hypothetical question. Do you think, that if the Consumers Union didn't have the largesse at that time to float the initial conference to get them all together, do you think something like that was in the air?

RH: It probably would have materialized anyway because there was enough interest. But it did help to bring these people together. Unfortunately, some of these people only came to that original meeting. That was the sad part, because they could have contributed a great deal, and some of them were elderly and not too well. Most of these people really contributed in the early years. I got in the very next year as a member because Ray was instrumental in working on it. I think it was formed in 1954, wasn't it?

NS: Actually that first executive committee meeting was in 1953, and actually, it was in November of 1952 that Colston sent a letter out which was the first written letter that we have. Then, in the Spring of 1953, was when the executive committee meeting was. I think it was '54 when, really, the organization took form. There was a meeting in Washington in June of '53 and then the second meeting was in Minnesota in '54.

RH: That's when they opened it up then for people to join.

NS: Yes. You were sketching for me, somewhat, the state of consumer education in the late '40s and early '50s, and I wonder if you could describe a bit more, why it was that an organization was a natural to form somewhere about that time.

RH: I think that, after World War II, the few people around who were interested in educating the consumer realized that the major writings that we had were basically economics and consumption type books.

Margaret Reid, Jessie Coles, Persia Campbell, Hazel Kyrk, Leland Gordon: all of these people basically were writing college texts for economics of consumption, and these people—and others like Colston, Ray Price, Gladys Bahr—were interested in getting more materials that could be used at the high school level. The emphasis was to get some materials available that the teachers could use, and that's why the Consumer Education Study was so popular. It gave the teachers materials that they actually could use in their classes.

That's why this group was so successful in starting this organization, because their primary purpose was to provide materials that teachers could use, and there was such a great need at that time in the 1950s for the material.

NS: Was the idea primarily for schools, or do you think the aspiration was somewhat broader? Was this going to be a national organization?

RH: Yes. At first, I think, they thought they could provide the materials but also could interest all of the people much like the Canadians have done. They have a national organization of consumers that swept all the way across the country.

NS: Which organization was that, with the Canadians? Are you talking about a recent development?

RH: Yes. That happened after this, but I think this is what the founders of ACCI were thinking of. I think they thought that not only producing all the material, but they thought of getting everybody across the nation into the organization.

NS: Do you think they had a model for what they were doing, if there was a model?

RH: If there was, I didn't know about it.

NS: I mean, was this like the AFL-CIO? Was this going to be a union type of situation or a professional organization like the AMA with doctors? Was it going to be a consumer organization like that?

RH: Of course. It became a professional organization, but I don't think that they originally thought that it should be. I think they thought it should be professional and it should be for amateurs also, for the ordinary consumer. I believe people weren't ready in the '50s and '60s to join this kind of group.

NS: Were you a young graduate student at the University of Minnesota in 1953?

RH: Let me correct you. I wasn't young [laughter]. I got my Bachelor's in '38 and didn't get my Master's until '49, so that was 11 years later. In the meantime, I had been teaching, was auditor and office manager for three years, was in the service for three years, and then went back and got my degree.

NS: So this was not an organization of youngsters, by and large, either?

RH: No, it wasn't. They would all bring graduate students and so on from the various schools to the first meetings, but basically, it was older persons. The people had experience teaching consumer classes, which helped the youngsters that did come.

NS: Could you generalize about that early group in terms of either their income level or their ethnic origins, or their race, or any other sort of way?

RH: They were just typical Americans. It was just a cross-section of typical American people, except that most of the interested ones were either college professors or dedicated high school teachers who were very successful, too, of course. I don't think that there were any stereotypes. They were very analytical people, and that's why they were drawn to this kind of thing. They were not going to accept everything at face value.

NS: But they weren't very political as such.

RH: No, not the group at first. I didn't think that they were at all.

NS: Were you there for any of the early meetings at which the charter was put together, or the bylaws?

RH: Yes.

NS: Do you remember any of the important debates or questions that came up?

RH: I was not really in on all the original meetings, because that basically, was charter members. A lot of the charter members didn't participate in this.

I think that Colston Warne, Ray Price, Leland Gordon, Henry Harap, Arch Troelstrup, were the ones that basically set up the structure of the organization. I came in shortly after that.

As you know, during the first three years, they had three executive secretaries: Eugene Beem, Warren Nelson and Fred Archer. They had things pretty well crystalized when they came to me and asked me to be executive secretary.

NS: In the May, 1954 issue—which actually was the third issue of the *Newsletter*—they reproduced the charter, and it seems that from the very beginning, they saw themselves, as you said, as putting out information.

In the preamble, the first thing that it says is, "Need information," and I guess they called themselves the Council on Consumer Information. Do you remember how it was that they decided on that name, CCI?

RH: No, I don't, because I came in after that. That was all settled.

NS: Do you think that they all had the feeling, really, that what the consumer needed more than anything else was information?

RH: No, I think that some of these people who were in the charter group dropped out of participation because they felt that there was more needed than just providing information.

NS: That's very interesting.

RH: I don't want to name any names, but looking at this list, I know that some of these people didn't participate after the first organization meeting. I think that one of the reasons was because some of them wanted to do more.

After 1956, when I took over as executive secretary, we had people coming into the organization that were definitely more politically oriented and were much more interested in doing more than just providing information.

NS: Can you tell me about this?

RH: I think that you know who some of these people are, anyway.

NS: I'm sure the record doesn't show who they are.

RH: I guess I may as well mention some of them. After the original group (Dick Morse, Stewart Lee, Fr. McEwen, Bob Herrmann, Gordon Bivens, Louise Young, Tom Brooks), some of the early presidents were very active in the group and as soon as they came in, they were interested in doing more than just providing information. All of those people definitely were, because from our executive meetings, their interest was greater.

NS: Those people joined up while you were executive secretary?

RH: Yes. Marjorie East was another one of those interested in doing more things.

NS: 1954-56 were the peak years of McCarthyists and the "red scare" in America. Do you think that had some impact on the information, apolitical nature of the organization as it was initially created?

RH: I suppose it did, but I had never made that connection. Not specifically, anyway, but I guess it would because that was an important enough movement that it did affect all the political life in the country and the general scholastic life too, so I'm sure it probably did affect the organization.

NS: How was it that they first came to you to be executive secretary?

RH: I had worked with Ray Price for a number of years. Ray knew me very well and I was one of the first in line when they opened up membership beyond the charter members, because I had worked so closely with him. A good many of these people hadn't started in immediately. I was at the first general conference that they held in Columbus where it was open beyond the charter members.

NS: Dayton, Ohio.

RH: Dayton, not Columbus, that's right. I'm sure Ray Price suggested it. Henry Harap called and asked me, and then asked if I would come to their executive meeting in Chicago because they were having a meeting and the group that didn't know me could get to know me better. They wanted someone who would take it for longer than one year because they had three in a row, one year each. Henry Harap said, "We need some permanency in this organization. We need someone to carry over policy from one year to the next."

NS: You said it was Warren Nelson, Eugene Beem, and Fred Archer. What were they like?

RH: They were interested in the consumer movement. Gene Beem, of course, went to S&H after he did the stamp study.

Then, Warren Nelson was in Ohio and was interested, so he took over for a year, but he had medical problems so he had to give it up.

Fred Archer was at St. Cloud, Minnesota. Fred was interested generally in consumers, not as much as some of the other people, and he took it just for a year. He really took it as a temporary thing and didn't intend to keep it.

That's why, when Henry Harap talked to me on the telephone, he also put Ray Price on, and they both said that they wanted someone who would take it for a period of time to give it some permanency.

NS: What did you think it entailed at that time? What did they say?

RH: Keeping all the records for the organization and doing the mailings, and so on. The membership was not very large at that time, but it grew during that 10 years, of course. I'm sure you have the membership records.

At first, it wasn't too much of a job, but then we put on membership drives. Then it became more cumbersome. Fortunately, I had a woman who had been a graduate assistant of mine here at the university, and she wanted something to do part time too, so she worked for me for at least 10 years, and that helped a great deal because I couldn't do all the clerical work.

NS: Here's the membership chart. The membership in 1955 was approximately 250, and then it came to nearly 500 by the end of 1956. By 1957, it was close to 750.

RH: This was the time when we were doing the intensive drives.

NS: That's between 1956 and 1960.

RH: I don't know why it fell off in the '60s. We kept driving in most of the states, but for some reason or other, it did drop way down. At least it didn't keep going up.

NS: Who did the organization appeal to?

RH: In those years, we were trying to appeal to the general public.

NS: Were you getting members who weren't teachers?

RH: Yes, we were getting some. We were getting some housewives.

NS: High school teachers?

RH: A good number of high school teachers.

NS: But mainly college teachers?

RH: Oh, no. I think it was an even balance.

NS: Between secondary and higher education?

RH: In fact, there were more secondary because there were more secondary teachers.

NS: And most of these people had backgrounds in economics?

RH: Not necessarily. There was a variety: economics, business and home economics. In the '60s, the drive went more toward home economics. Of course, that was because the Vocational Act in 1963 put consumer education in secondary schools under home economics.

NS: I didn't know that.

RH: Oh, yes.

NS: How did that happen?

RH: Teachers were not teaching it as commonly as they had in the '50s. After 1963, the business teachers, in many cases, did not continue to teach it. It was given to home economics because they could get federal help to teach it.

NS: So that had a major impact.

RH: It changed in the universities then too.

NS: The universities started shifting consumer education out of business schools and economics departments into home economics. That may have had some impact on the status of the field as well.

RH: I think that might have slowed down this rapid rise, here.

NS: You're talking about the dip in membership between '61 and...

RH: Between '65, '66. There is a big dip in '63; you see how it went down?

NS: Yes, and you think that relates to the Vocational Act? That's interesting.

Ray, you were talking about the members in the organization and who they were. Do you remember the early conferences? There were the '55 and '56 meetings at Dayton, the '57 meeting at St. Louis, the '58 meeting at Cincinnati. Do you remember what it was like being at those meetings?

RH: Yes. I wasn't executive secretary at the first two meetings. Beginning with St. Louis in '57, I was involved in setting up many of the things at the meetings. The first meetings at Dayton in '55 and '56—basically, we were discussing the plight of the consumer and what educators can do and what the organization could do to help educators. Of course, we were encouraging everyone to go out and get more members so that other people also could share in what we were doing.

Beginning in St. Louis, I think we had a larger membership than in '57. Then, we had better organized programs so that we weren't just talking to ourselves. We were providing materials of all kinds.

In fact, one of my students showed up at St. Louis with his father at the meeting, and I was amazed because I didn't think the young man would be there. He knew the meeting was there because I said I was going to be there, but he was back visiting his parents and he brought his father to the meeting. His father was very interested in what we were doing.

Beginning in '57, we started inviting the non-profit producers of materials to come in and exhibit their materials.

NS: What were the consumer controversies in that period?

RH: In the late '50s, the organization was mostly concerned about giving more materials. Beginning in the '60s, they were concerned about the major issues that we weren't representing in state and federal legislature agencies the way we should be. That was the concern, getting people to be heard by persons who were making policy in Washington or in the state capitols. That was the basic movement in the early '60s, I think.

NS: When you were executive secretary beginning in 1956, do you remember what your priorities were for the organization?

RH: Bacially, my priority was to get more members.

NS: That was your task?

RH: Right, and then to get the information that we had out to the members. The executive committee made decisions about what materials should be published, etc.

NS: Who were you targeting to become members?

RH: We were working on teachers at all levels and we were also working through some of the consumer groups like the St. Louis consumer group, and Cincinnati. Incidentally, that's why the meetings were at those two places in '57 and '58.

There was an organized group of consumers in St. Louis and an organized group in Cincinnati. Incidentally, Ray Price was responsible for the Cincinnati group being formed. That's why we went there, so that these groups could not only participate, but could also bring in others and increase their membership as well as ours.

My priorities, most of the time that I was in, was to get more members. Later on, it was to get the materials out because we were getting to the point where we had all of the pamphlets and all of the newsletters. This was before the *Journal*, you see.

NS: Why was it so difficult to get people to join?

RH: I thought the membership dues were very reasonable for the information that they were getting. I don't know why people weren't interested, because we had a very practical series about what you should know about life insurance, estate planning, another one on burial practices, etc., so that there was a very practical appeal in that series of pamphlets. On the other side, we had the fair trade and some of the more economic issues.

NS: So even then, you were divided in your purposes.

RH: That's right. We had two series of pamphlets, and the *Newsletter*, of course, always attempted to keep people up on what was going on nationally and the various state legislatures, so there was lots of information available, and people would get more than their money's worth.

Everytime we did raise the dues, we were always afraid that we would cut back on our new memberships, but we didn't really because we still kept continuing. It might be interesting to do a dues chart just to see.

NS: Just to see if an increase in the dues had any effect on membership?

RH: I don't think it did, but it might have caused some of these little ups and downs.

NS: Do you remember the National Association for Consumers, the NAC?

RH: Yes.

NS: I believe Helen Hall was the president of that organization while you were executive secretary. I believe they merged into ACCI.

RH: Right.

NS: Can you tell me anything about that? It was an effort to be a grass roots consumer organization, and I guess it didn't work somehow.

RH: She worked very hard at trying to have a grass roots organization for all consumers, but it just was not taking over. Either it wasn't the right time or else they weren't providing the right services for them or something.

The executive board, at that time, worked very closely with her. I did not have as much contact because most of this was not done in a big general executive meeting. It was done with members talking directly with Helen and working with her. I really don't know most of the thinking behind it, but all of a sudden, both groups decided, "Well, we're both trying to do the same thing and we're both struggling."

NS: Here, in the early '50s, we have this one group that's trying to do it in the very broadest possible level and then we have CCI at a narrower level, but still trying to reach out and then they merged together because both of them are struggling so much. I just wonder why it was such a struggle.

RH: Both of the groups were getting subsidies from Consumers Union, for instance, which could not make a profit, so they had to put their money into research or into other groups doing the kind of thing that they believed in.

Both were getting grants from Consumers Union, and I think someone in CU may have

questioned both of the executive groups, saying, "Maybe if you people were together, then we could help one organization instead of trying to help two."

We were trying to get the general public interested in the group with that very practical series of pamphlets and we were hoping—through the *Newsletter*—to get many of the people interested in what was going on in their individual states or in neighboring states.

NS: Was the organization ever attacked during those years?

RH: Not serious attacks. I think there were some when people mentioned that this was a leftist group trying to divide the American people in their thinking, and so on.

NS: Did you have serious hopes that when you first became executive secretary, you could turn this organization into a mass organization with real clout in Washington, and power, etc.?

RH: Yes. I was hoping this, along with the executive committee at that time, —or the board I guess I should say—because I had hoped, too, that we could have some influence on what was going on in Washington and in various states.

Oh, you do have this here. Gladys Bahr was really the first official editor.

NS: Of the *Newsletter*?

RH: Yes.

NS: Then Stewart Lee took over. I talked to Stewart and he told me a little bit about the *Newsletter*.

RH: Stewart has been one of the really dedicated ones. He's gone on for so long working at it. Ed Metzen took over after I did, and Ed always said, "I hope I can last ten years like you did," and he did. He lasted ten years, and he said, "It's time to get out."

NS: What was your working relationship with the board in those years? How did the organization function from day to day?

RH: I did all the routine things and I accepted the fact that I was hired by the board and was working for them so I basically kept most of the things going. After I had been in the job for two or three years, many times I was asked to sit in at board meetings of course, and I usually kept the minutes of the board—things of that kind—and providing people with information.

NS: I know. Henry Harap gives you a lot of credit for keeping the minutes.

RH: After two or three years, really, the board members who were newer than I was in the organization would then say, "Well, what happened previously; you have all the records, etc. Can you find out this for us?"

Many times I knew a lot of the facts that they wanted or had prepared them like membership reports and all of these kinds of things—which pamphlets were selling, which ones were not selling, so that they could decide on what they needed for publications in the future.

I would say in the last half of the ten years, I was sitting on the board helping them make decisions more so than the first half, and I think I was more useful because I had the experience and could carry it over from one board to the next, too.

NS: You were writing the checks and sending out the bills?

RH: Yes. We had no secretary or treasurer. I was the executive secretary, so that I kept the books.

NS: Were you paid?

RH: Yes. I was paid a very modest honorarium which was alright because it didn't make any difference. When I took over the job, I got permission from the chairman of business and the president of the institution here because I needed more space for this kind of thing, and I needed to have a little time available, which they saw to. They cooperated because they felt this was good to have a national office on campus.

NS: Did you find that some boards were easier to work with than others?

RH: Oh, yes. Individuals are entirely different, and there were lots of individuals.

NS: Who would you say were the most dynamic and forceful of leaders of the organization in the years you were there?

RH: At the beginning, Henry Harap, Leland Gordon, Ray Price, Colston Warne, Arch Troelstrup. I think they were the real basic leaders of the group originally. Then they brought people in to take over and I suspect that some of the early presidents such as Marjorie East, Dick Morse, Marguerite Burk, and Stewart Lee gave a lot of help to the organization. They were the next group, then, coming in to take over.

NS: What differentiated these groups other than their age? Was there a generation gap there somehow?

RH: No, I don't think so. Of course, Stewart Lee is younger than many of the others, but Fr. McEwen, for instance, was almost the same age as Ray Price and Henry Harap. Marguerite Burk was almost their age.

NS: Were there different interests that had to be reconciled within this organization?

RH: Yes. Some of these were thinking more politically than the first group and this got to be quite a discussion several times at board meetings.

NS: I'd really like to get inside at what some of these discussions were so we can really talk about the particulars, if you can remember them.

RH: Basically, some of the early board members felt that we should continue providing information because that was still one of the greatest needs. This was when there were other possibilities of political influence, such as through labor unions, etc., that people had another avenue and this is what the early leaders seemed to always emphasize. But not one was providing the right kind of consumer information; at least there wasn't enough.

It's true that there were government agencies that were providing some, but the consumer still had to interpret it for his own needs many times. I think that the first dissention that I saw at board meetings was that there were some who felt that we should be much more political.

NS: What did they want to do?

RH: They wanted action. They wanted the consumer council to be an action group instead of just producing information. They wanted to do both, of course.

NS: Can you remember any of the things they wanted?

RH: There were not only board meetings. This came up at some of the early conventions. I can remember that at the St. Louis convention. I haven't read any of the minutes for a long time.

NS: That must have been a good convention.

RH: There were several.

NS: [Prof. Heimerl receives some mimeographed correspondence that was re-published as a result of the convention, from presidents, etc., including a bulletin about Kennedy's consumer address].

RH: His was very opportune at that time because Kennedy had mentioned, in his Brooklyn address, the needs of consumers. Therefore, many people then took over on this. People like Leonore Sullivan participated in the conference, so this was especially good because the group was getting a message to some of the legislators.

NS: Do you think people were just impatient with this information phase?

RH: Yes, I think so.

NS: What were the first areas that they wanted to launch into? First of all, where were you in this controversy? What was your position?

RH: My position was fairly neutral because I had seen the organization grow in membership. I had also seen the increase in consumer information being produced, because I was handling it. It was going through the office and I carried many, many boxes of mailings to the post office, so I knew what the organization was doing, how much it was getting into the mails and into the hands of the members.

I guess I should say very honestly, that at first I probably was with the old board members, that we should do well the producing of information and not go out in too many directions and do everything poorly.

The founders of the organization felt that way, that we should do well what we were doing and not try to do everything for the consumer. But many of the younger people at the St. Louis convention, which is evident from that special *Newsletter* that was in addition, incidentally, to the *Proceedings*.

NS: This is the special *Newsletter* from the Council on Consumer Information, documents from the 7th Annual Conference in St. Louis, April 6-8, 1961, put out by the executive committee. It says, "Edward J. Metzen, Executive Secretary." Is that possible?

RH: Oh, no. This was put on afterwards.

NS: You were the executive secretary in 1961.

RH: Yes, I was. This [sticker] was in addition, though, to a complete transcript of all of the proceedings of all of the addresses and discussions.

NS: You were doing that?

RH: Yes, we were doing that. We had our own mimeograph machine that belonged to the university. We cranked it out. We had our own little mimeograph room, actually, and this the administration did provide.

NS: You were saying that you were first rather neutral about this and then began to favor it.

RH: As the discussion was going anyway, at St. Louis, I felt that probably we were doing about as much as we could do well.

We didn't have enough good members that wanted to do things, to do the production of materials as well as do the political work. It's true, that eventually, we did have people like Stewart Lee who not only did the *Newsletter* regularly, but went to Washington and lobbied for consumer causes.

NS: Were you worried about the tax status of the organization?

RH: The board was, because they felt that some of the industries—the drug industry which has a big lobby in Washington—could get to us in that way.

NS: I've talked to some others who thought that your non-profit mailing status would be affected by becoming more political.

RH: We were able, during the ten years that I worked with the postal department, to keep this, and there was no question about it at any time, no question at all. Later on, Ed Metzen had some problems, but that was because we were getting more political at that time.

NS: If you had to pick a watershed, then I guess 1961 would be one of them, in some ways—is that what you would say?

RH: Yes. I think that was one of the eventful years of the organization, or turning points, because after that there were more new members that were interested in political action as well as information.

NS: Were you traveling around or did you do most of what you needed to do right in Greeley?

RH: I did most of the work here. I did go to board meetings at various places around the country. Usually it was in a central location, like Chicago, because it was easier for people to get into Chicago at that time. It is now, too.

Then, of course, the board would come early before the annual conference. We would have two or three days of meetings before the conference, and then stay one more day afterwards with the new board sitting in on the meetings. Basically, that was the only travelling that I did unless we had a board meeting at other than the conference. We usually had one about half way through the year and then had it just before the conference to take care of most of the things.

NS: Was this a consuming activity for you in those years? Were you writing and publishing other things? Were you involved in other activities at the same time?

RH: I was teaching a full load, which meant I was teaching 15 hours which was lowered to 12 hours a week later, but I had the same classes usually, and they were well organized so that was basically no problem.

I had the backing of the administration, so they knew I was doing the job in the classroom as well. I was asked to take over as Dean of the School of Business in 1965. That's the main reason that I asked for out at that time, because I just couldn't do it any longer.

NS: I would really like to return to this question of politics in the organization. What would a political ACCI have been? What were the kinds of political steps or political activities that ACCI might have become involved with?

RH: I suspect that consumer protection of all kinds would have been one of the concerns of the organization and that the organization would have been doing many of the things that Ralph Nader and some of these other people were doing later on. I think that they would have been uncovering many kinds of things that consumers didn't know about the products that they were using.

NS: In retrospect, then, do you think that it might have been a mistake not to become more activist earlier?

RH: No, I really don't think so. I think the organization had only so many people who really wanted to get out and do something, and there weren't enough persons to do all of the things. There were some of the younger people who were doing both writing and doing some of the political things, but they had lots of energy.

NS: Were you one of those who helped design and formulate the pamphlet series, put together the agenda for the pamphlet series?

RH: No. The executive board decided on the topics and we had information from members who had suggested certain kinds of things that we needed. Stewart Lee, as editor of the *Newsletter*, would get suggestions so we had a running list of topics, that at every board meeting we'd look at again and discuss, add to, and subtract from it, etc. I could provide some feedback from the members, of what they wanted, because many times they suggested some other area that we could do something in, so Stewart and I basically had the two channels feeding into the board.

NS: Did you write any of them?

RH: No.

NS: What was your special interest academically? Did you have a particular scholarly interest at the time?

RH: Law and legal protection is the one area that I've taught in longer than any other.

NS: Is that something that you felt ACCI covered in those pamphlets? They did do one on consumer credit.

RH: Yes, they did the consumer credit. Also, they did one on insurance, which brought in the legal aspects of insurance; one on estates, which brings in wills and that kind of thing. There was another one, "What Every Consumer Should Know About the Law."

NS: So, in a sense, your field was represented.

RH: Maybe that was some of my input, I don't know, because I can't remember if I said anything at the time.

NS: Your interests were, in fact, represented through that pamphlet series.

RH: It's interesting that in a secondary school, my teaching of business courses were business law and consumer problems, and typewriting of course, is the first business subject, you know, in high school.

NS: We talked about the activists at CCI who were interested in perhaps pushing the organization further than it was willing to go towards consumer protection. What about concerns on the other side? I know you briefly mentioned the Eugene Beem episode, but was the organization—while you were there—concerned about the possibility that it would be influenced by business interests or commercial interests?

RH: I suspect you probably know a little bit more about the Eugene Beem episode, as we commonly refer to it. Gene Beem did take over as the first executive secretary when the organization was formed, which was good. He was interested in all the areas of consumer problems.

He did do the trading stamp study, and basically, he was to write a manuscript for the Council to publish, which he did. I still have a copy of it, but the board said, "We can't publish this."

After the board decision, we heard that he had gone to S&H. The board had already decided that this was slanted too much in favor of trading stamps and the board was not ready to put their stamp of approval on that kind of manuscript.

NS: How did that affect the organization? Did you take steps to make sure that there would be no conflict of interest, that somebody couldn't be a member of the executive board and also be a member of a commercial group?

RH: I guess unconsciously—at least I thought it was unconscious. The board was concerned but wasn't doing anything in particular. They were just being a little more cautious on who was recommended for leadership positions in the organization, and so on. I don't think the board was ready, then, to have it dominated by business people who would have their own viewpoint, and not necessarily the consumer viewpoint.

NS: Was there ever any pressure that you remember from business groups?

RH: No, there were no pressures during the ten years that I was with the group that I knew of. We were encouraging business groups to participate, especially those like Household Finance that published the consumer pamphlets, etc., which were good consumer education materials.

We encouraged those kinds of people to come to our meetings and to participate. After that, I know that there was more interest on the part of business. One of the early ones interested was Sears, of course, because they had little consumer pamphlets.

NS: Did they try to get those approved by ACCI or something?

RH: No. They would come and we'd ask them to bring their materials along to show so that members could see what materials were available. The Department of Agriculture, for instance, had lots of booklets.

NS: Maybe I could ask you a present-day question and move backwards. What's your attitude about the consumer's relationship to business? Is it adversarial, necessarily?

RH: No, I don't think so. Since my close association with CCI, I've gone through 16 years as Dean of the School of Business, so we were helping many young people to go into business of all kinds. Of course, I've worked for many businessmen in all capacities during those years. I don't think that there is a conflict, necessarily, between business and the consumer.

Business wants to produce a product that sells, and to produce a product that sells, it has to be pleasing to the consumer and useful to him. It has to be what he wants, and basically, business knows that. I really feel that. Sometimes the journalists don't make it look that way on the surface. They think the business view is an entirely different viewpoint, but I don't think that's true.

NS: Has that view evolved from what it used to be?

RH: I suppose it has, yes.

NS: What do you think it was back when you were executive secretary?

RH: It was evolving then, I think, in the late '50s and '60s. I think the '60s was a turning point in much of our thinking on many things, and certainly business changed then.

When I first took over in 1956, and the two years before that when I went to the annual conferences, I think the emphasis was that the consumer had to protect himself from business and that business wasn't necessarily concerned about the consumer.

NS: Do you think that there were a wide variety of views about that question on the executive board?

RH: Oh, yes. I don't think everyone felt the same.

NS: Could you discuss whatever subgroups there were on the board in those years?

RH: In the ten years that I was most active, I don't think that there were any real clashes over the role of business as far as the consumer was concerned. I really don't think that there were any real serious ones.

NS: If there was consensus, what would it have been? Consensus, as you've said before, that really there was a harmony of interest between the two and that CCI should really cooperate with business, but somewhere short of the trading stamp.

RH: It wasn't that. I think that, basically, most of the early board members felt that we had to be better informed as consumers to protect ourselves because business wasn't going to go out and protect the consumer.

Business was going to produce products that they could make a profit on, and I think this was a carryover from the '30s and '40s that most of these board members had grown up with, and I have too, of course. I think that, probably in the '50s, there was a change in thinking of some of our people.

Most of the younger people coming in were much more interested in consumer protection than the older ones. The younger people felt that we had to protect, we had to do something to get more protection for the consumer because he wasn't getting it automatically from his governments, either state or national.

NS: By the young people, do you mean the Sam Myers' and the Tom Brooks'?

RH: If you look at the presidents, I suspect that everyone after the original board members.

NS: Starting with Dick Morse, probably.

RH: Yes. Dick Morse, Stewart Lee, Sam Myers. I remember Fr. McEwen, Gordon Bivens, Bob Herrmann, Louise Young, Tom Brooks.

NS: That difference was really in an attitude about government's role?

RH: Yes, I think basically it was more government's role than business.

NS: Maybe that would be a more realistic way of thinking of that, but what should government do to protect consumers?

RH: Basically, business isn't doing it so government has to do it for the people, or if you want to

look at it, we are the government, so we have to do it for ourselves. I think that's what this new group was saying. Business isn't doing as much as it should be doing. I guess that's part of the economics of the times, too.

During World War II, we went through a rising economy, and since businesses were prospering, we approached the '50s with business not being very concerned except producing products. During the '50s—I suspect that certainly by 1960—we had people criticizing business for not being as interested in the consumer use of their products.

This probably has brought about a change, then, in the thinking of the '60s. Certainly the thinking of the '60s was questioning everything and questioning business motives as well.

NS: We were discussing this matter of willingness to get involved in consumer protection. As you look at the board that you were part of between 1956 and 1966, can you see the board transforming in any way? You talked about this older group to the newer group. We mentioned the presidents.

RH: Probably, from '56 to '66, most of the board members basically thought the way the previous board members had, or I should say, the charter members of the organization. I think that the charter members of the organization, and some of the other members coming on, felt just as strongly about action—that it was more a difference in the way they would go about doing it.

Many of the people that came onto the board during my ten years of working with the board members felt that we should be doing some political action, but that we should do it carefully and diplomatically. There were a few that wanted to jump in immediately on both feet and tramp on some of the congressmen to get them in line [laughter].

NS: For example, what kinds of things did they want to do?

RH: I don't want to mention names. It's difficult now to think back to some of the specific things, but I can remember, at one of the business meetings, there were two members that felt that we definitely should get into action because of something that was going on in Congress at the time. I can't remember what it was, but most of the membership felt that we should do it diplomatically, and then we could probably have more lasting results.

NS: Was that after 1961 or before?

RH: After. It was in the beginning of the '60s. Basically, I think that there were two differences in the way people felt about political action. Some thought we should do it right now to get it done. There weren't too many of those. Most of them felt we should do it, we should get involved, we should be considering the lasting effects for the consumer which they wanted. They wanted things that would stand up over a period of time and not just make a big splash now. I think that even the original charter members would go along with that kind of thinking.

NS: Would you say that the board members were particularly adroit at political maneuvering in those years? Was there a building of coalitions going on in the board, or were things settled before the board ever met sometimes?

RH: I would say that in the first five years that I was working with the board, basically, things were talked out, probably in advance. They were really decided at the board meeting, finally and officially, but all of the people knew each other so well and they saw each other at other times at other meetings, that they could discuss things. It wasn't necessarily that they were trying to get it done ahead of time.

NS: And afterwards?

RH: The latter five years was more different people coming from different disciplines. I think it made it a little different because they didn't have as much commonality in their thinking, and that's why they had such diverse views being expressed at the general business meeting as well as at the board meeting.

NS: Those general business meetings became more and more fiery.

RH: Yes, a little bit. I don't know if we toned these down in the minutes. I can't remember anymore.

NS: Probably.

RH: They probably were toned down in the minutes—at least they didn't show that there was an open clash.

NS: Can you remember what the general business meetings were like?

RH: At a couple of the meetings, the feeling came out in the open, that if we were going to do something about this, we had to get right into Washington right now and get our feelings felt and heard by the congressmen. Then there were the other people that felt we have to think of the long run of the consumers' benefit, too, that we don't want to make enemies of these people, but we want to get in there and convince them that this is what is best for the American public. These were the two views that clashed several times. I suspect that you probably have gotten some of the feeling in interviewing people.

NS: I know there's been some discussion about it. I gather that, at some point, they wanted to recommend Persia Campbell for a position in the government and it became a question of whether ACCI would endorse recommending her for a post. I think Tom Brooks may have mentioned food stamps to me at some point, etc.—whether or not to consider food stamps. Do you remember any particular issues that struck you as interesting?

RH: The only thing that I can recall at all is that it had something to do with the Food and Drug Administration. That got the most violent reactions from people. I don't know what it was, whether it was budget for Food & Drug, or something of that kind perhaps.

NS: It was that kind of issue, funding for a federal agency, or whether or not to support a particular bill that was before the legislature, or something of that sort.

Were these people on the board coming mainly from academic backgrounds? Were they also activists? Most of them, I gather, were consumer educators who had university positions.

RH: All of the people that were on the board during my ten years of working with the board were basically educators. In the last year, there was one, David Angevine.

NS: Was he with cooperatives?

RH: Yes. There was somebody else from one of the coops, too. David Angevine was on the last two years, and he was with coops. Otherwise, they were basically all educators.

NS: Stewart was very concerned. If you read the *Newsletter* you could be kept up to date about what was happening.

RH: That's right.

NS: When do you date the consumer movement as having started, if it started? Was it while

you were an executive secretary?

RH: Maybe all people don't agree with me, but I think the consumer movement started in 1906 [laughter], when Professor Baker had a meeting of the home economists in Boston. At that time, it was called domestic science, I'm sure. When the national met in Boston, Prof. Baker just ranted and raved and said we have to protect the American public as consumers. I think this was one of the beginnings of the consumer movement.

I think that Henry Harap, with his study, gave impetus to the consumer movement so that the movement was growing, growing, growing. During the Depression, when people didn't have enough money to go around to get their needs met, they really had to be thinking of something. I think this gave more impetus to the consumer movement.

NS: So you're saying that you thought of yourself as part of a movement?

RH: I could see it growing all the way along, and I felt that when I was teaching my first class in 1938, that was part of the growth of the consumer movement.

I will admit that in the '50s, it gained momentum, and certainly in the '60s, it gained momentum. I believe John Kennedy deserves some of the credit nationally for giving recognition to the consumer, who he is.

NS: So, are you defining it as self-identification, as regulation, or as political power?

RH: I think it's all of those, really, but it's clear identification as we come along decade after decade. Then, as we identify, there is more political clout that comes as a result. That comes in the '60s, I suppose, because of our rethinking everything and reevaluating everything in our whole life situation.

NS: Were you in touch with other consumer groups while you were executive secretary of CCI?

RH: Not as much as Stewart Lee was, because Stewart, as *Newsletter* editor, was digesting all of this for the organization. I would give Stewart Lee things I thought he would be interested in that came to my attention, that he may not have seen. Every time I saw Stewart, I'd have a stack of materials or I would send him some. But I wasn't in contact with the other groups as much as Stewart was.

NS: Were you trying to get people from the various groups that formed around the country over this issue, or that issue, to link up with CCI?

RH: Yes. That's why I mentioned especially the Cincinnati and the St. Louis consumer groups, because they were doing things that our group was interested in.

NS: Did you ever think about chapters of CCI starting here and there?

RH: Yes. The executive board discussed chapters quite often, and having local groups that could have their own meetings once a month or something of that kind, and then everybody get together. I really don't know what happened to that. But it was discussed several times and that was part of the major idea of going around and having the meetings in various parts of the country instead of always in the same area.

NS: Stimulate interest.

RH: We had the meeting here one year. We had it at a big new motel right outside of town. It isn't as large now because one whole section burned down. There were two other motels right nearby, so that was enough to house all the people and we got pretty good rates. We had a good

turnout for it, as good as we've had at any other place.

People had to come into Denver, but we had a table set up at the airport and had buses waiting outside and transported them up here. On the way back, one bus had to get back to the airport right away, but we had two buses that had time, so we sent them up to Estes Park through Rocky Mountain National Park, and then back down into Denver, so they had a nice tour of the mountains.

Really, having the meeting in Washington was political.

NS: That was an important decision?

RH: The meeting was there. There were some important decisions in '63.

NS: If I remember right, that's when Stewart Lee was president.

RH: Stewart Lee was president then, Sam Myers was vice president.

NS: And the Washington decision reflected the kind of realization, really, that here's where we ought to be paying attention?

RH: Yes, there were several issues then. The board felt that this might emphasize the fact that the consumer wasn't completely helpless, that there were some organizations for consumers, and so on.

I don't know how effective it was, but that's what the board felt and that's why it was set for Washington.

NS: If I remember, wasn't that the very weekend that Kennedy was shot? Is it possible it was in November of '63?

RH: No, it wasn't November. It was earlier than that. It's usually in April or May, so it was just before that. But there were several issues and this was shortly after. Oh, I know the exact issue.

NS: That's right. It was March 21, 1963.

RH: Kefauver and a whole group of senators and representatives were presenting a bill to create a Department of the Consumer in the legislature at that time. It was being presented to both the Senate and the House, and Kefauver was one of these; I can't remember the others.

I still have a copy of that initial bill too. That was one of the main reasons we met in Washington, because some of our board members helped draft the bill. Colston, Ray Price, and Stewart Lee were very active in that. I guess Leland Gordon was too. I know that was one of the major reasons why we met there particularly. I was surprised that it hadn't gone back to Washington other times, but it hasn't.

NS: Interesting.

RH: The group always said, "When is it going to meet in Greeley, so we can meet in Colorado and see the mountains?" and I said, "When I'm no longer executive secretary, you can meet there." Afterwards, I was organized enough so we could get a group to work on it here, and then we had it here in 1969.

NS: We were talking about the chapter idea. Do you think money was one of the major impediments to the chapters?

RH: I don't think that it would make that much difference, because people meet locally and still belong to a national group. I don't think it was that.

NS: I meant that CCI couldn't really do all the things it wanted to do because it didn't have the money to put out to launch these ventures.

RH: I see, yes, that's true. There wasn't the money available and there wasn't the manpower available to go out to organize local groups, that's true.

NS: Would you have liked to have seen consumer organizers out in the field, just professionally organizing groups of consumers?

RH: Yes. I think that could have been possible because it is done for labor, for instance. There are labor organizers going around just organizing local groups, then they become a branch of a national group. But it would have taken some professionals to really help these people organize.

It's amazing that two groups did organize and have kept going for many, many years. I don't know if the Cincinnati and the St. Louis groups are still active, but I suspect they are because they have good foundations and have many good people working with them.

NS: Do you remember any other projects that you would have liked to have done but couldn't, because you didn't have the money to do it?

RH: I personally wanted to see the two series of pamphlets continue, but they went by the wayside shortly after. Ten years was the end of it. They went down the drain shortly after that, and I think that those were two of the very, very popular things that brought in members, because people would see these in libraries or see someone else with them, and they would like to have that kind of pamphlet.

Toward the end of the ten years that I was working on the board, some of the new board members were much more interested in having something more scholarly, and that's where the *Journal* came in. They were already talking about a journal as I was stepping out because the college people were dominating the board, of course.

The high school teachers and the general membership wanted the practical pamphlets. This is one of the things that I would like to see them continue because I think that the *Newsletter* and the pamphlets were getting to the people much more than the *Journal*. The *Journal* is a good, scholarly journal, there's no doubt about it, and I think it has given ACCI prestige.

NS: I know that there were as many as 3500 pamphlets as late as 1968. That's the year it really ended. I guess most of those were going to schools or for distribution.

RH: Every member would get one when it was published and then they would order a set for their class or their library, or something of that kind. There were none published when I finished in 1966. I sent them all boxed up to Ed Metzen, and in 1968, they just decided they weren't going to publish any more and that's when they really dropped off.

NS: Do you think that the emergence of the *Journal* and the end of the pamphlets was a symptom or a cause of CCI's being an organization of professional educators in the field of consumer education, or either one? I don't mean to preclude other possibilities.

RH: I know that many of the board members wouldn't agree with me on this, but I think the board has been dominated by college professors and they all were more interested in seeing a scholarly journal, but the bulk of the membership did prefer the type of information in the

Newsletter and the pamphlets.

NS: What leads you to think that?

RH: Because of the sales that we had. When we had the pamphlets, they sold well, but when we quit publishing pamphlets, we had nothing to give them.

NS: They started putting out the *Forum*.

RH: Yes, but the *Forum* was something else. That was positions and things of that kind, jobs available, so that wasn't providing the same kind of information.

Let me add this, too. In the years afterwards, after I packed up all of the office and sent it to Ed Metzen, I had these labels made.

NS: What labels?

RH: These labels. I'm sorry. We had a label which gave the new address of the executive secretary, and in the years following—at least for 15 years after I was no longer executive secretary—I was still getting requests because my name was on some of the original pamphlets and people would want to know, can I still get ten of these pamphlets. So I kept sending all of these requests on to the next executive secretary. So, there was still demand after they weren't even available.

NS: Why did you cease to be the executive secretary?

RH: Because I was asked to be Dean of the School of Business. I couldn't continue any longer and I thought ten years was long enough and that somebody else should take over.

NS: Did it have anything to do with the end of the pamphlet series?

RH: Oh, no. The pamphlets didn't end until two years later.

NS: But you continued after. You were still a member of the organization and so forth after you became Dean of the Business School.

RH: Yes. I still continued to be a member and to go to meetings. After about three or four years they said, "You're not very active. We want to make you a member of the board at large," or something like that, so they put me up for board membership, and I was on the board again in 1973.

NS: I'm very interested in knowing more about the pamphlet series and its appeal. It seems to me that you really were in touch with having sent those out for so many years to people who were interested.

RH: If you stop to look at the possibilities across the country, the college people, of course, liked the *Journal of Consumer Affairs*. I enjoyed it too. It was well done and it took a lot of editing to continue that caliber of publication.

There aren't that many colleges, if you compare it to the number of high schools, or if you compare it to the number of people that could use some of the more practical things. There are some practical things included, of course, in the *Journal*, because they were research-based so the findings often could be applied, and that's what the people could use, but I think the down-to-earth, how-to-do-it hints are the things that most people want. If the organization wants to have a wide membership, then that was the kind of thing they should continue to publish, I felt.

If a breakdown were made of the membership, I'm sure that there would be more high school teachers than college teachers. I'm sure of that. There always were, because there are more high schools in existence. It would be interesting to see how many people are members other than teachers or educators. I don't think we've made a breakdown of that.

I think that the business members have come in because they want to know what the gripes are and that was one way to find them out, to be in on the firing line.

NS: Do you think the *Journal* became too technical for a lot of the members?

RH: Yes. I'm sure that most of the high school teachers couldn't understand most of the *Journal* articles.

NS: Today they're very quantitative. But, on the other hand, I suppose the argument is made that it helped advance people in the field and that there weren't outlets for publication by scholars in the field.

RH: Yes, that's true. It did provide a vehicle for research in the consumer area and that was needed because the general economic journals were not publishing it.

NS: Do you think it would have been possible to keep them both going at the same time?

RH: I think so. It would have been good to have kept them both going because I think that we've lost some members. If they can't understand what they're reading, I think they're just going to give up.

NS: Did you have an idea for a journal earlier on than when that occurred? Did you decide not to do a journal earlier?

RH: The board had considered the prospect of a journal for several years before it was finally approved. I think part of it was finances; they were just deciding what can we do, what do we need most? When the group got enough support for a journal on the board, then that was brought to the total membership. The board made the decision first, and then it was brought to the membership and the membership approved it too.

I think there's a transition from the very practical consumer educators that evolved from the original charter members to become the board of this new group. They continued this very practical aspect. In the original charter members, the more theoretical, or the economics of consumption group, dropped out.

NS: So you're saying that it went from theoretical to pragmatic and then back to theoretical?

RH: No. The original charter group was the theorist and the practical consumer educators. There were the two groups. The practical consumer educators are the ones that really were interested in seeing the group formed and they're the ones that remained. The other group dropped.

NS: But then later, when the *Journal* was formed, it became theoretical again.

RH: Yes. As the organization grew, more and more theory-oriented and research-oriented people came onto the board, and that's the group that took over.

NS: I've heard the argument made by people who loved the consumer movement and by people who don't, that the consumer movement is a lot of chiefs and no Indians; that there are so many leaders and no base to the movement. Do you think that is a legitimate criticism, or do

you think that's a real problem and that CCI reflected that problem?

RH: Not necessarily. I wouldn't feel that they were all chiefs and no Indians. I think that there were a lot of Indians, but that changing from the very practical kind of publications to a more theoretical kind of publication scared off all of the workers and all we had left were the leaders.

There are a lot of high school teachers that still are looking for all kinds of practical information and practical help for their teaching. I think, in education in general, we've gone to a more research-oriented way of thinking. If we can't do some research, then that's the only way to solve the problem. There's no other way to solve the problem and I think sometimes we need a lot of practical research. In the '70s especially, we've gone to such theoretical research instead of practical research, and I think this is evidenced in our consumer organization too.

NS: You became a member of the board again in 1973. How had it changed?

RH: It had changed enough that I really wasn't very interested any more. I can say that very honestly.

NS: Why not?

RH: Most of the interest, as I saw it, was in the research emphasis in publications and so on.

NS: What was different about the board in '73 from the earlier years?

RH: I think most of it was the emphasis of what the organization would be doing. I'm probably growing too old [laughter] keeping up with their thinking.

NS: What were they talking about then, in 1973, that they would not have been doing ten years earlier, in 1963?

RH: The emphasis was the *Journal*. That disturbed me somewhat, and no emphasis on practical publications for the general members.

NS: You saw this from your own point of view as an educator at Greeley, I guess, at that point, right? Did you have an idea of what it ought to have been doing? I gather practical publications, but what else?

RH: Yes, and providing something for the persons oriented to research, too, but not to cut out the other completely. By '74, the only practical information was in the *Newsletter*.

NS: I notice they were putting out the consumer resource materials. I gather you didn't think terribly much of the *Consumer Forum*.

RH: It was a source of information, yes.

NS: I know that was one approach that they did decide would help in that secondary school area.

RH: They had some teaching in it and a few things like that. I don't think that most of the teachers felt that they were getting much out of it.

NS: You mentioned a law that was passed in 1963, the...

RH: The Vocational Education Act.

NS: Is it your view that it really influenced the way consumer education was perceived at the

university level—the fact that consumer education now fell into the home economics area?

RH: I think, before that time, that the people in home economics, the people in business, the people in economics all were interested in educating the consumer, and if you look back at the charter members, it cuts across the board. There's some of all of them there and when the Vocational Education Act—which affects high schools and affects teacher education in the universities—when that act specifically placed the people in home economics, the people in business were not as interested. I found it very difficult to keep our people who were planning to be business teachers interested in this organization.

NS: Do you think that was because it was not so much a male organization as a female organization?

RH: I don't know if it would make that much difference. I don't think male or female would make a difference because there's a pretty good balance if you take teachers across the board.

I suppose, probably, there are more high school business teachers that are female than are male. Now we have quite a number of males in home economics.

NS: Do you think it affected the status of the consumer field?

RH: No, I don't think so. I just think that the other areas are not as interested because of the emphasis placed by the government and the money goes along with it, of course, so that makes a difference too.

I was surprised when some of the home economics teachers realized that I was a business teacher and that I was in the organization and they couldn't figure this out. They felt there was something wrong someplace. I said, "Well, no. I've always been interested in this, and I've always been a business teacher. I never have been in home economics."

NS: So you did try and interest people who were in business, in this area?

RH: Oh, yes, because as long as I was dean here, we had business teacher education in the School of Business. Now it's in the School of Education, but as long as I was here, it was in the School of Business because I believed that that's where they took most of their work. That's where the preparation of teachers should be. I always encouraged people to be a member of this organization if they were going to be a business teacher.

In fact, I always fought with the board to keep a good low student membership dues so we could get students, because once we got them convinced that this was a good organization and they were getting materials, they'd keep on after they started teaching and pay regular membership dues.

Stewart did the same thing, too; he had his students become members.

NS: But the business groups were less interested after that?

RH: Yes. I think it took a while, but after '63, there was a gradual decreasing.

NS: When you were back on the board in 1973, the membership was much larger, actually, in absolute terms.

RH: Oh, yes.

NS: It was a big organization by then. I suppose you didn't know a lot of the members.

RH: Right. But I had been going to meetings. Recently, I've missed meetings because I just can't go to as many as I used to go to.

NS: When you saw the group, did it seem to you to be more oriented towards business than it had before?

RH: Yes, much more so.

NS: In fact, was there anybody who taught it other than yourself in '74—who taught at a business school?

RH: Yes, Garman.

NS: Tom Garman did?

RH: Sylvia Lane, ECOP, but those were the only two. Well, there were three of us. Clinton Warne is home economics, Fasse, Monroe Friedman is ECOP, that's right. Goetz is home economics, Hall is economics, Vickers is home economics.

NS: It's interesting that, even in 1964, the leaders of the consumer movement aren't there. I mean, Ralph Nader's not there. I don't suppose Rachel Carson was there. Kefauver wasn't a member of ACCI or CCI, so it was really just an educational group. When I say "just," I don't mean to minimize it, but its scope was relatively narrow. It didn't claim to represent the whole movement in that fashion.

RH: No, it never did. We had hoped that we could have all of these people in. Some of the politicians, of course, were afraid to become a member because they would be accused of having a biased viewpoint. The transition has been interesting as I follow through. I'm certainly going to be interested in hearing what some of the original people have to say; sometime I hope I can.

NS: As you look back, what would you say the critical turning points in the organization were?

RH: I've mentioned two of them already. The decision to spend the organization's money for the *Journal* rather than for practical pamphlets, I think, was an important turning point. I think the Vocational Education Act of 1963 was an important step because that set the direction.

NS: Did anybody at CCI have anything to do with that?

RH: No, I don't think so. Maybe some of the people did indirectly. I don't know.

NS: What do you take the most pride for having done while you were with CCI?

RH: I suppose it's building up membership, because we were trying everything imaginable to build up membership and we did have a good rise in membership at the beginning. Toward the end, we'd reached a plateau and couldn't get anywhere.

I was especially pleased that we could do the *Proceedings* of the conference for those people who couldn't come. I always felt that this was something that members should get. If they couldn't get to the conference, they should get a complete transcript.

After my ten years, no one wanted to work that hard on it, but I had this woman who helped me type out all those things and run them off. Both of us spent many nights in one of our buildings over there running off the things and stacking them up in stacks, and then I'd get youngsters from one of the high school classes to come in and help us assemble the thing so we could get it done inexpensively.

Afterwards, when they couldn't get a lot of this free labor, they found that they couldn't publish it anymore. I felt that was definitely a help to keep members active, because if they couldn't go to the meeting, at least they could read all the talks and the discussions, but it was difficult to get all of this in writing.

NS: Do you think, that in those early years, it was touch and go as to whether or not the organization would continue?

RH: Yes, it was. We had people out beating the bushes trying to find sources of money from foundations and so forth, and were not very successful because the foundations are very skeptical of giving it to a consumer oriented organization.

NS: Is that right? Why?

RH: I don't know.

NS: Who did you go to, do you remember?

RH: We went to the Ford Foundation.

NS: Did you?

RH: No, I wasn't there. Arch Troelstrup made the contact there. But most of the foundations were skeptical of us. They wanted to see the results.

NS: Do you think it was a question of them accepting you, rather than the other way around?

RH: Oh, it could have been, yes.

NS: If you had taken money from a foundation—for example, the Sloan Foundation or a business group—I don't think CU would have continued to fund ACCI.

RH: Yes, that's true. There was a stipulation there too.

NS: I imagine it was sort of a tightrope in some ways.

RH: CU had wanted to maintain its tax exempt status, and as long as it gave to organizations that were tax exempt, then it would.

NS: But also non-commercial.

RH: Oh, yes.

NS: They just didn't want to be associated with groups that had a commercial interest for their own testing purposes and stuff like that. Did you ever have to go to CU and make an appeal for money?

RH: No, I didn't personally go. I prepared a lot of the information that we needed to present all the time.

NS: Where did you channel all this energy that you devoted to the executive secretary after you left?

RH: To the dean's job. After that ten years, I had learned to work many more hours in a day because I was teaching a full load. But when I became dean, I taught half time. I taught two classes and was dean full time, and that went on for 16 years, so I was ready two years ago

when I quit.

NS: So, you didn't take up the cudgels of consumer activism?

RH: No. I had too many things to keep me busy here.

NS: Looking back at that period, what would you say your involvement did for you personally?

RH: I was working with many of the people that I admired greatly and enjoyed being with and then met many, many new ones, of course, as they came into the organization and onto the board especially, because then I got to know them much better. When we had a smaller board than this organization usually had, you got to know the people pretty well. That, to me, was the most rewarding—working with many of these people.

NS: Do you think ACCI might have become that organization that you were talking about in the beginning, that organization of grass roots members with the membership in chapters in every city, if things had been done differently?

RH: Possibly, yes. The driving force, as I see it, for starting the organization was to help provide information to educators or to people who were trying to help others not only through schools, but through YMCA groups, through labor unions, etc.—any place where people were helping other people be better consumers. Since that was the driving force, there wasn't the manpower, there wasn't the energy to do the other. It could have been, I suppose.

NS: Why don't consumers see their own interests? Why do they need an organizer to convince somebody to join up?

RH: It's very strange. Basically, we're all concerned how we earn our money, not how we spend it. How we earn it comes first, and I suppose that our society drills that into us. We have to know where we're going, what we're going to do the rest of our lives, and so on. I think that it's just a stronger driving force.

NS: Do you think there will never be a stronger consumer movement than there is now?

RH: I don't think so. We've had the shocking things of Nader and some of these people that should have awakened the people to the need for some organized way of getting things, but they haven't responded, and a group of educators in ACCI trying it didn't get the response. I don't know. We have a number of people from Canada, of course, that are quite active in ACCI. They kept coming to meetings.

NS: Who were they?

RH: I can't think of their names now. I'd have to go through a membership list. But there are a group of people who have belonged for several years and they had a little different situation there because of Canada being more of a frontier country than we were. They had more need for organizing into local and then province groups, and then the national group. Then, of course, they were way behind in food and drug laws and things of that kind, so they have a great need for bringing pressure on their legislature and they had some natural forces helping them to organize that way. They had some very dynamic women. I can see why they have such a good organization.

NS: Who are you talking about?

RH: I can't think of their names now, because I've been away from it for so long.

NS: But the American movement, despite all the stimuli that you've been talking about, has not

really grown in the way that you expected it to when you started out in 1955.

RH: No. I thought, too, that we could build a tremendous membership. I think it was about 250.

NS: What was?

RH: The membership, when I took over. I think it must have been about 1500 when I left.

NS: That's quite an increase, but out of 200 million people...

RH: That's the thing that's so ridiculous. We have such a small showing, really.

NS: If you had to go back to those, what made you identify with the consumer cause when other people didn't? You take it back to what?

RH: I suppose to my exposure to teachers I've had. Otherwise, I don't think I would have been as interested.

NS: If you'd never been a teacher, but just an ordinary person, would you have felt compelled to get involved with ACCI?

RH: No, probably not.

NS: So, it's no wonder that other people don't, in that sense.

RH: Through student memberships, though, many times we've been able to get people interested and then stay interested—even if they don't go into education, but not to the extent that we should have.

NS: It's an interesting riddle, I suppose, in some ways. I mean, the labor movement seems to be able to do that although it's had its troubles.

RH: But there, you see, you're getting back to making a living, how you earn it. It may not be right, but I have a strong conviction that we're far too interested in how we earn in comparison to how we spend, or how we live our lives, I should say.

NS: Do you think that what became ACCI—I guess the name change occurred just after you left—but do you think that the emphasis on information, as you said, if you had changed the emphasis from information to protection, it might have been a different story? Do you think that would just be changing new wine to old bottles or old wine to new bottles?

RH: It might have. Many people thought that changing it to "Consumer Interests" would attract more persons, but it didn't seem to.

NS: Well, it did increase the membership. The peak appears to have been in 1972, but it hasn't dropped terribly. It has stayed above or near the 2500 mark.

RH: The top was around 3000.

NS: That's right. Do you have other kinds of memories that you'd like to inject at this point? People you'd like to talk about, perhaps?

RH: I've tried to talk about most of the people as we were discussing some of the issues.

I do think that the reason that I kept up for ten years was that I was enjoying working with these kinds of people and felt that I was doing something that needed to be done, coordinating

all of it, and as I've said, I was not necessarily one of the leaders making decisions. Rather, I was keeping the store running, keeping the things going, providing information to help make decisions.

NS: As executive secretary, you also sat on the executive board, so in some sense, you—more than anybody else—knew what was happening.

RH: Yes. At first, I was not a member of the executive board. I was there, keeping minutes, providing information, but didn't have a vote. Then the board wanted a change. They felt that since I was providing the information and had probably many times more information than some of them had, that I should be helping to make the decisions. I did help with the decision-making later. At first, I was basically the one handling most of the information.

NS: I gather that the people were congenial.

RH: Oh, yes. That's what was so nice working with these people, really. Everybody got along well.

NS: It was a mixed group, although I gather there were more women than men. I talked to Colston Warne, and at one point, he said he remembers going to meetings where he was the only man at many meetings of consumer groups and sundry organizations.

RH: There are more women in this group, of course. Now there are even more women in it than there were before proportionately, and I think that's because of the vocational act. It does point it in one direction, but there are some wonder women in the homemaking area and there are some very good men in that area. That's Metzen's area, of course. Although Metzen's Master's was in business at the University of Minnesota, he did it with Ray Price. That's where he got his consumer interest.

NS: There is definitely a Minnesota thread here.

RH: Then, he went on and got his doctorate.

NS: It's got a Midwestern foundation.

RH: Ray Price and Colston Warne were the two influential people in this all the way through. Henry Harap, Arch Troelstrup, and Leland Gordon were certainly right there too. It was so nice getting into this as early as I did to get to know all these important people, you see. I'd read all of their books, and all of a sudden, here they were, all spread out in front of me.

I can't think of any other startling revelations or feelings. I think I've expressed most of my feelings.

NS: Thank you very much. We'll send this on back when it is transcribed.