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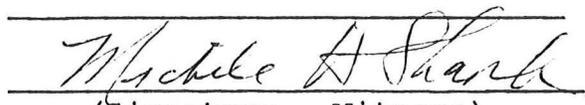
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SOCIETY OF YEAGER SCHOLARS

TAPE #6

November 5, 1987

AN INTERVIEW WITH: Marshall Reynolds (MR)

CONDUCTED BY: Michele Shank (MS)

TRANSCRIBED & TYPED BY: Gina Kehali Kates

MUH-YS-6

This is one in a series of taped interviews on the History of the Society of Yeager Scholars. This morning, November 5, 1987, I am interviewing Mr. Marshall Reynolds, the President of Chapman Printing Company, at his offices on 8th Avenue.

MS: Ok, I've already done the introductions Marshall, so, but what I'd like for you to do is tell me what's your profession; what do you do?

MR: Well, I'm in the printing business.

MS: Primarily.

MR: Primarily.

MS: And you're in the banking business, and you're in the hotel business.

MR: Well, no, I'm just....the hotel is just a civic responsibility. I work in the printing business almost everyday, and I'm Chairman of KeyCenturion BankShares, which is premiere bank-holding company of the State of West Virginia. And my hobbies' farmin, and I raise pure-bred angus cattle and that's about it.

MS: Were you born in West Virginia?

MR: Logan, West Virginia, in 1937. ("How long did...") I moved to Huntington when I was six.

MS: When you were six?

MR: And grew up here.

MS: Did you go to school in Huntington schools?

MR: I went to public schools in the west-end and of Huntington, and, yes.

MS: Uh-huh. Okay. Did you, what did you do when you got out of school; did you go into Service? Did you go into Business? What was....what was is like growing up in West Virginia?

MR: Well, it was, you know, truth of the matter is, growing up in West Virginia at that time, when you graduate from high school, they should have given you a bus ticket to Detroit, because that's where a lot of kids went to get a job. [MR's reply inaudible].

MS: Is West Virginia considered a hard place to get a job back in those...times?

MR: Well, when I got out of school, you know, we had what they called Eisenhower's recession; jobs were very difficult to come by and if you stumbled across one, the pay was extremely poor. And you know, that was, uh, time with the dollar an hour minimum wage and that's about what most jobs available to high school graduate kids were, you know, were uh, very frustrating time in our state, uh...

MS: At that time, was it considered an important thing to do to go on to college? Was it col...was it, a college education as emphasized as it is today, do you think?

MR: No, I don't think so, it was, uh, you know, a time where uh everybody said, you know, this is the age of education-if you don't have a high school diploma, you won't uh, you know, you won't make it, so most of [inaudible] of kids, most of my peers, you know, got out of high school and they

thought they were educated. (mmm-hmm) Probably two or three out of my graduating class, you know, planned to go to college, and went to college right out of high school.

MS: But most did not plan a college education at that time?

MR: No, probably within, by the end of summer, probably half of them were, uh, you know, in Detroit.

MS: Uh-huh. What did you do when you...were out of school?

MR: Well, when I got out of high school, I got a little piddlin job and got fired after awhile and uh, I got another job and uh, you know, worked for awhile and got laid off and got another job and you know, worked awhile and you know, went to school some myself at night first and (mmm-hmm) and if, you know, fumbled along and uh, you know, uh, you know, fumbled along with workin and uh, going to school both.

MS: When did you fumble along into the printing business?

MR: [sniffs] I got into the printing business, really, because they uh, really got started, I was going to Marshall at the time, and they-they sent me, they needed uh, combination janitor and delivery boy at a little printing plant, so it was four hours a day work and uh, and uh, you know, so that meant having lunch or paying the rent, and that's when I started in the printing business. (mmm-hmm) Was a delivery boy and a janitor, then later was an apprentice, and later a salesman, and, and uh....

MS: Worked you way from the bottom to the top.

MR: Well, not at that time; I mean I worked my way, uh, I was a general manager when I was 22, and then shortly after that, I got drafted (mmm-hmm) so I, in one respect, I worked myself to the bottom to the top and then back to the bottom in the Army; (mmm-hmm) I went in as a private E-2 (mmm-hmm) or private E-1, whatever they called it.

MS: How long were you in the service?

MR: Two years, [pause] two years. Uh, it was a great time-it was a good learning experience, for me.

MS: So, when you came out of the service, what got you back in the business world?

MR: Well, when I came out of the service, you know, I [pause] the fellow that I had worked for, [pause] the company was in trouble and was about to go bankrupt, that I had worked for, so we, you know, he asked me to come to work for awhile, and I needed to put some, you know, put a little bread on the table, and uh.....

MS: Were you married at that time?

MR: No. No.

MS: Your family was still in Huntington? Your mother, and father and family?

MR: Yes. Yes. My mother and father was still living in Huntington.

MS: So that...is that what held you in Huntington was, was it roots? Would you say?

MR: You know, worked at it, and it worked out alright.

MS: Okay. This, uh, when did you first hear about uh, The Society of Yeager Scholars, as a scholarship program for Marshall University?

MR: Well, I first heard about it in Ashland one day. Dale Nitzschke [pause] you know, shared with me, uh, [pause] you know, what the Yeager idea was, and it was Joe Hunnicutt's idea. He was gonna put some uh, you know, put a few things together and have at it.

MS: Had you met....

MR: He...he was very exciting about it.

MS: Had you met Joe Hunnicutt at that time?

MR: Mmm.....no, I.... (No, you had not.) You know, I knew him, you know, when I passed him on the street. He....he was three or four years older than me; I remembered him, you know (Mmm-hmm) from Marshall University...he was on the basketball team up there years ago. (Mmm-hmm). But no, I don't recall that I'd ever met him.

MS: Then....then basically, your first thought of Yeager Scholar program came through Dale Nitzschke...it wasn't named at that time. We didn't know it was going to be Yeager Scholars at that time. Or did he know it was going to be Yeager Scholars?

MR: He didn't...you know....he didn't know what he was going to name it at the time he talked to me (mmmh-okay), it was....you know, it was an idea and he was putting it

MR: No, no, I don't know that.....

MS: Why didn't you go to Detroit?

MR: [pause] Well, I went to Detroit, but I didn't like it, you know, when I got out of the army, you know, I worked in New York for a little while.[long pause] It was a wonderful opportunity, very exciting, but I was awfully damn lonesome up there. People, ah, people was awful suspicious, it was kind of difficult (mmm-hmm) to...and, and it was a ratrace and I don't know, I don't know that anything held me here. You know, I was a kid with uh, [pause] I, I don't know the answer to the question

MS: Mmm-hmm. Okay. So you went into the printing business, and [pause] when did you end up owning the printing business? What...did that take time? Did you do a buy-out from him, as he or did you just take over?

MR: No, no. I started a little printing company, another fellow and I started a, a little printing company and, of course, the company that I had worked for, was about to file for bankruptcy and uh, [pause] and so the creditors talked to me, and said, "Why don't you buy the thing?" "You can buy it on paper and if you can make it, you can pay for it and if you fail".....that's what we did and we bought Chapman Printing Company, because of that situation.

MS: Mmm.....

MR: And, uh.....

MS: So.....

together, but...the big concept is they'll have tutors and they'll have coaches like, ah, athletes and so on and so forth. And he was very excited about it; enthusiastic.

MS: So, what was your first feelings about it?

MR: Well, my first reaction was uh, gee that's great; I mean, even if it's a poor plan, it beats no plan, and uh, and then the guy's got a little enthusiasm for it, so he'll probably make it work.

MS: Did he ask you to help it...help make it work?

MR: Not at that time.

MS: Not at that time.

MR: No.

MS: He just ran the idea of...by you, to see what your thoughts were?

MR: [sniffs] I don't think he was interested in my thoughts, you know; I think he was sold on it. It was...somehow he decided to, uh, to make it happen (mmh) and uh, and probably his purpose was to take temperatures, and see if, other...other you know, some other people, in retrospect, I would say that was probably his reason for throwing it on the table. (mmm-hmm)

MS: So....when did you meet Joe Hunnicutt?

MR: Oh, I don't know. Uh...I, I, don't remember when I met Joe Hunnicutt....

MS: Was it...was it...when...when, when did Dale come....

MR: Dale Nitzschke introduced Joe Hunnicutt to me.

MS: Right. Okay. Now, was this at a time when they were going to ask for your financial support? Or was this just....you just met him first [pause] and I'm trying to get the sequence of...of things that have happened....to develop your...support for the program. How did that sequence happen? You talked to Dale and then you met Joe.

MR: I don't.....I don't remember.

MS: Okay. Alright. Do you remember when they ask Yeager to, to represent the program? Approximately at that time?

MR: I...I...I remember when they packaged it as the Yeager Program (mmm-hmm) you know, which was, uh, probably a...brilliant idea of [inaudible] uh...yeah, you know if you put a name on something, it's a lot easier to sell it.

MS: Mmh....

MR: So, if they can put Yeager's name on it, it's alot easier. (alright) [reply inaudible].

MS: Did you....when you heard about, when you first heard about the program, did you think that Marshall University [pause] could raise 8-10 million dollars? Did you think it was possible?

MR: What? To raise 8 million?

MS: Mmm-hmm.

MR: What they told me, they took 2 million in class...you know...in annuities and it may take more than that, now, I

don't know, you know, the way interest rates have gone down, but ah, yeah, I thought they could raise it. Sure. Sure they can raise it.

MS: When did they ask you for financial support?

MR: You know, they still haven't asked me.

MS: They still haven't asked you for financial support, for the Yeager Scholar program?

MR: No. (Marshall....) To answer your question, in retrospect... (okay) They never asked me, but I probably told em that I would help em, in December of 87 [inaudible] you know...whenever that time came around, which I intend to do that. Ah...if your question is about supporting Joe Hunnicutt, and how that came about, or [inaudible] that came....came about by...you know, it's going to a....some meeting with Dale Nitzschke, in Charleston, or maybe Ashland. And Nitzschke appeared to me to be a little frustrated that day, and he was talking about his Yeager program and you know, that he needed to uh, you know, what a great job that he felt that Joe Hunnicutt had done, for the program. But he [pause] shared with me that Hunnicutt was like most of us, and had to put some groceries on the table, uh, you know, for uh, before his children would be leaving, you know, to pursue his endeavor of earning some money. And...and I suggested that maybe I could find someone that would pay his salary for ah, for a year, if he could do it, you know, if he thought he could get the job in a year, and Nitzschke seemed to me that that would really be extremely important, you know, to the Yeager program and ...and uh,

[inaudible] if you'd do that, or find somebody to do that and...and pass it around and I think it'd be awful important, you know, I'd need to talk to Joe to be sure that I can...can get him lined up for a year and I'll give you a call and uh...

MS: Did you go out and solicit other help then from community leaders to organize it, or did you just take...take the responsibility yourself?

MR: Nah. No. There was...actually the way it worked out, you know, I...I paid his salary for six months and the 1st Huntington National Bank paid his salary for six months, so, it was uh...it was a....you know, just to buy....no I didn't spend any time beatin round the bush. I probably could've. My original thought was the idea for three months and get...you know...somebody else for three months and somebody else for three months, and somebody else for three months. But I, you know, I didn't do that.

MS: So...you....you did...you provided the salary for Joe Hunnicutt for one year, uh, because you believed in...believed in Dale Nitzschke's thoughts about the program, or Marshall University or....

MR: I think, you know, I think the program, once it's put in place, would ah, you know, have a positive impact, more the community of Huntington, West Virginia, than the Marshall University, to be perfectly honest. And ah...you know, you know...nobody can row all the oars themselves and Nitzschke seemed as if....you know...he probably needed some help on this project and...ah....he seemed to have a lot of confidence and appreciation for what Hunnicutt had already

oughta...it ought, you know, adhere to the benefit of Marshall and Huntington.

MS: Is that the expectations that we should have? Or these kids, that they should be successful that all the....all the ingredients are right?

MR: I think so. I think that's the expectations; they should be successful, if they truly are, you know...if they are truly are talented and gifted, if the screening committee did their job and really have their in the game of life, then..then...then it should uh, be to their benefit down here. We should get something back.

MS: When Ashland Oil gave their million dollar gift to the Society of Yeager Scholars, it was quite a feather in Dale Nitzschke's cap, because, if someone like Ashland Oil and John Hall would choose to do that, then....then others would pay attention. Were you instrumental in...in any of that or the introductions or...not?

MR: No. Not at all. I mean, I'm...you know, obviously I know John Hall, and I have a lot of respect for him...did not, uh...try to sell him, and truth of the matter is, uh, you know, he...nobody probably sold him. He just thought it was something that needed to be done and came forward and did it. If I was guessing I don't that....

MS: Mmm-hmm. They say that the...that the Society of Yeager Scholars is to produce leaders--that these students are to be...language proficient...that they are really to excel and from...from looking at their records, they have already

done. (mmmh) And I...obviously, you know, he could've been the most incompetent and he needs to come down the pike, but ah...certainly Nitzschke's....you know, did not reflect that thought...you know, he...he seemed to want him and appeared to be very pleased that somebody offered to, you know, provide some bread for the....for his table while he...while they was wrapping up the Yeager program.

MS: What is...what is your opinion, Marshall, of scholarship programs, that help the gifted? Of course you're supporting the...this one, so you support it.

MR: Well, obviously I'm supporting this one, you know, because, you know, if you bring twenty bright kids through here, you know, ten years down the road, you know, you...we ought to have uh, some contacts that have some warm feelings about Marshall University and Huntington, West Virginia, you know...up in the business world somewhere, and it's always good to have friends and contacts, ah....they're obviously a multiplicity of places that ah....and all gifted kids don't have any difficulty gettin a scholarship. So, you know...it's not uh, you know, important, it's not uh, in my opinion, the scholarship programs for the gifted are not as...are not as important as scholarship programs for uh, either the kid that graduated with a B+ average from Logan High School, to be perfectly honest. But, but this is uh, a little bit of a self-serving situation and it does raise the standards at Marshall University; it does raise...you bring twenty very gifted top kids in, it obviously raise the and the image of Marshall University. And these kids...should be destined for success in the business world.

achieved this in high school. [pause] What....is your definition of leadership?

MR: [pause] My definition of leadership is...is the people that makes some things happen. You know, there're three types of people in this world--people that makes things happen, people that watch things happen, and the people that wonder what the hell has happened. And, uh, my definition of a leader is someone that makes some things happen.

MS: Mmm. [pause] Getting back to Marshall University, you have been really...since you have, ah, gone into business you have regularly supported the community and the state and Marshall University, and...and uh, with special gifts, special endowments, and that sort of thing. Umm...have you helped any other institutions outside of West Virginia or outside of Marshall University, have you given any major gifts?

MR: Well, I...you know, gifts...that's...I've helped other institutions, but I haven't helped any...any institutions outside of the State of West Virginia.

MS: ~~Okay.~~ Do you know, Marshall...in interviewing alot of the people who are involved in creating this, Ralph Albertazzi and Dick Jacks and, and yourself...I found out that they were, course I don't know about your school records, I don't want to include you in that, but I've found that they are not A students. That they are very, very successful people; extremely successful, but they were just a medium kid, who they think maybe was in the right place at the right time. But alot of it I think they traced back to....to growing up

opinion about growing up in West Virginia. Was it something your mother and your father...is it...is it the roots of West Virginia that made you be a hard worker? Because you have achieved probably what most men would feel would be the greatest success possible...[pause] in a career, and a lot of other Marshall graduates have done the same, and that looks very well on us, but these kids were not scholars...they were just kids.

MR: [pause] So, what's the question? [laughter]

MS: What's the question! [laughter] The question is...how important do you feel your roots in West Virginia and Huntington is to the fact that you're so successful?

MR: Well, [long pause] that..that really is a tough question, you know, certainly, Ralph Albertazzi is my senior, but Dick Jackson is...graduated from high school the same year I am...I imagine, the same year, and I knew him when he was...a kid and played uh...basketball at St. Joe and switched schools and played football at Huntington High. I think...uh....you know, from the plus side, uh...growing up in West Virginia, we all go to some very small high schools...for, if we have any athletic tendencies, you know....we all get an opportunity to play. You don't have to be 6'6" and 250 lbs. to play...like you do in some of the big schools and big cities...uh...I think...uh...on the positive side...I think most of the kids that are educated in the public school systems in West Virginia....grow up in a normal family, you know....do have a sense of love and belonging and that's very important to youngsters. And, uh,

West Virginia is, you know, a very...

frustrating experience for the lack of economic opportunity for young men, and ah...young women, too, I'm sure. But, you know...you do...you know...if you can...stay on the track, you know, and people...you know...your family they..we have a tendency around our families in West Virginia, you know, we love em, you know, even if their failures or even if we're alcoholics or regardless. you know, I think there's a tendency to say, "What the hell; might as well succeed"-you know, you know...all, you gotta do is play the game by the rules. It's really pretty easy to succeed in America...you know...it's extremely easy. And all you have to do is decide to do it and pay your dues...and...and most anybody can do it, if you have average intelligence or certainly if you're a talented and gifted kid, it would be more...it certainly would be easier.

MS: How can we improve education in West Virginia, for the average student?

MR: Well, education is very easy to improve. I really think this junior achievement program, where you expose some kids to some real people, is uh..you know, it's a great program, it's an important program and uh...[pause] you know, I think it's you know, there's a tendency to have people teach you from business, the businesses we want to support, so they'll pick the kids who's the fourth rank in one out of the Marketing department or the eighth rank in one of the other county departments that really doesn't understand business themselves, so the concept of "Do it" but, when you get the top people, you know, from companies, I think that's great...you know...all my...my education, you know, they had one guy for one day from Houdailles Industries that didn't

know what a bumper sold for, so, you know...they sent it up...at least you did..you know, you did...I did remember it. [pause] The concept of, you know, the teachers are always, you know, harranging about, you know, gee we have , not the answer, you know, really, because all you get's the same tired, old teacher with a new coat when they get a raise. Uh, that's obviously not the answer. Some of the school's that you have in West Virginia, are uh...you know, the teachers really are good; they're pretty solid citizens, they're probably a lot higher average individuals than they are most states. Uh...I think we have the nucleus for very good education. Obviously this teacher strikes and threats of strikes is a tremendous deterrent to the youngsters, you know, they...why are they supposed to be serious when the teacher's aren't serious about their education. Uh...you know, obviously it's something that you've got to work at and get away from the seniority standpoint; you work yourself away from the tenure standpoint...getyou know...get some sort of a merit standpoint, uh...you know, outstanding teacher's awards, whether they be in a high school or junior high or the elementary or the, you know, you know, in my experience, you know, I had two good teachers all the time I was in school, and uh...two outstanding teachers I thought, one in the fifth grade, Mrs. Ward, who taught me, you know, whatever mathematical skills I have, you know, and mathematics is the basis from which your capacity to reason comes from. You know, I...I probably owe to her, Miss Ward. I went to her funeral last year; she was a very, very special lady, and in the seventh grade, I had a math teacher and an english teacher, Mrs.

MR: [sniffs] Well, I think, you know, that's probably one leg of a three-legged stool, but uh...

MS: What are...what are the other two legs of the three-legged stool?

MR: Well, the other two legs of the three-legged stool are commitment...a bit of self-sacrifice for the sake of the overall program and the third leg is the capitol. You know, if you have all three legs, then, then the stool will float...you know, sit there...it'll stand on it's three legs and make it.

MS: If we had a Yeager scholar that wanted to stay in West Virginia, and we're hoping that we do, have some that wanta come back after their graduate studies, what would you say to the, to encourage them to come back?

MR: Well, I mean...that's what they wanted to do, you know...what I would say to em, is that the cream rises at the top anywhere, and uh...certainly there...there are opportunities in West Virginia the same as they're in New York City or any place else in the world. And if...if you really have, you know, rise to the top, no matter...you know...no matter where you are.

MS: Okay. Well, thank you for your time. I appreciate it.

MR: Thank you, dear.

Tape ends.

End of Interview.

White, who was just an outstanding teacher. And, other than that, I think most of the teachers I had were...were just there for the 1st and 15th, you know; they had to do something and this was easier than digging a ditch, uh...but, but you have the same problem in...industry and a lot of people are there to punch their timeclock, and we don't, you know, education is no worse than businesses as far as somebody being involved, you know, really involved and...uh...you know, you see a lot of young men that have a job [pause] that they go through the motions that they're interested in, but their true interest is some little side line, you know, "I wanta be a promoter on this day", or "I wanta to this and that", diversions and distractions...you know, their job and their execution of it.

MS: [long pause] What is the West Virginia roundtable? [sniffs]

MR: Well...the West Virginia roundtable is uh...a group of fellas that uh...uh...you know, are...are the heads of their companies...that ah....you know, really originated to be a think-tank I guess, to assist our state in some economic development and uh....and a situation where, if you have a real positive situation, you could bring a lot of pressure to bear a lot of force behind it, to bear.....

MS: Do you think that education is important to economic development?

MR: Sure. Absolutely.

MS: So...in improving the education in West Virginia, could we improve our economic development, to draw the kind of people in here that we need, to make the state go? Would you say?