

Benjamin Wright Interview

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SPEAKERS

Interviewer: Bedell Terry

Interviewee: Benjamin Wright

Bedell Terry

This is Bedell Terry. It's April 18 2023, at 11am. I'm with Professor Benjamin Wright via the online zoom platform. And we're going to begin our oral history interview for the University of Baltimore stories, the 100th anniversary oral history project. The purpose of this project is to celebrate the university's centennial by preserving the memory of those influenced by the University of Baltimore over the years, we will be creating a digital archive and exhibit and making these recordings available online. Professor Wright, let's get started with: Where are you from? Where did you grow up?

Benjamin Wright

I was born in Fayetteville, North Carolina. And obviously, for those who know, probably Fayetteville most probably because larger army bases near Fort Bragg North Carolina I grew up there. Basically, I was born there and grew up and went to the public schools there. Yeah.

Bedell Terry

That's where my grandfather was born in Fayetteville.

Benjamin Wright

Oh, is that right? We have something in common.

Bedell Terry

We have a tie.

Benjamin Wright

Now what was it? What was your grandfather's surname?

Bedell Terry

Radick? R a d i c k?

Benjamin Wright

All right. Yeah. No, [it] doesn't sound familiar.

Bedell Terry

So you grew up in Fayetteville? Where'd you go to school?

Benjamin Wright

Um, well, you want from elementary school all the way through high school.

Bedell Terry

Oh, let's start with college. Where did you go to college?

Benjamin Wright

I graduated from High School E. Smith, Senior High school that was doing segregation that was a predominantly black high school. By the time I graduated in 1970. The schools were starting to integrate. I mean, we had some white and Hispanic students in my graduating class, and then there were two other high schools there. But when I graduated in 1970, I joined the Marine Corps because, I mean, my family was basically a working-class family, so they couldn't afford to send me to college. But I joined the Marine Corps and for that specific reason to be able to go to college. So, I was in the Marine Corps 1970 to 1975 and punched my ticket and got out and went to school on the GI Bill.

I started college at a small, regional college. When I got out of the Marine Corps. I moved to South Carolina. I have family there in South Carolina, and I also met a young lady while I was in the Marine Corps, and so she sorts of piqued my interest and I was thinking I was going to get married. So, I went on and moved there and got a job and just out of school, so I started school at a regional campus of the University of South Carolina, University of South Carolina Lancaster, in South Carolina, they pronounced that Lancaster, Pennsylvania they pronounce it Lancaster. [laughs] But that's where I started. And I started there in 1975 and stayed there until I got my associates degree. So that was commuting distance from the town I was living in. I lived in Pageland, South Carolina Small, rural town, basically, at the time that I was living there in the mid-1970s. It was very popular. Textile mills were very popular there. I mean, most of the jobs were in textile.

You worked in a textile factory, or either you went out in the woods, and you cut lumber, pulp wood, that was what it was called. But anyway, so I was after 1975-77, by the time I finished me and the young lady had gone our separate ways. So, I went out and went to the University of South Carolina, the main campus, which was in Columbia, South Carolina. And that is where I got my bachelor's degree. I got my bachelor's degree in criminal justice in 1979, University of South Carolina.

Bedell Terry

And you worked as a police officer.

Benjamin Wright

I was working as a police officer while I was living in Pageland. When I got out of the Marine Corps that was basically, I needed a job and that was very familiar to me, and someone told me the police

department was hiring. And once again, keep in mind, this is 1975, in the south. So, there were not a lot of black police officers. But my grandparents were well known in town and so one of the folks uptown went to the bank one day for them. And he said, "Look, you know, they're hiring police officers' ". I said "Oh, really. I went on by the police department and got an application and so yeah, I worked at the police department from 1975 to 77. While I was getting my associates degree as a patrol officer, and when I transferred to Columbia to start my bachelor's degree, I developed a pretty close relationship with the chief, and he was very happy that I was going to complete my education.

Matter of fact, he was trying to convince me to get my bachelor's degree and come back to Pageland and you know, and he said he would move me into an assistant chief police position. I mean, it was a small department, a small town of about 5000 Police Department probably had about 30 offices, and 30 offices that pretty much covered everything seven days a week, day shift, night shift, afternoon shift. So, when I went to move to Columbia, I was able to go home on weekends, and I would work dispatched. In other words, I would work in the dispatch office on Friday night, Saturday night, and Sunday.

I had a Sunday day shift. I picked them up Sunday afternoon and grabbed them back to Columbia, which was probably about 70 miles from Pageland. And I did that until I got my bachelor's degree once I got my bachelor's degree. I had applied for graduate school, the University of South Carolina, and in my degree program, which was criminal justice, I applied for a master's degree program and lo and behold, you know, one of my professors would mentor me say, "look, we got some money here, graduate assistantships. Would you like one?" I said, "I sure will." [laughs] And so basically, I remember my Veterans Counselor.

I was one of the few people who, actually without getting my bachelor's degree and I was able to start with a master's degree on the GI Bill. I got halfway through my master's degree program, sort of managing my GI Bill money and my graduate assistantship, and pretty much I was able to finish my master's degree without any money out of pocket. So, a combination of GI Bill and graduate assistantship. So I got my master's degree in criminal justice. Well, let me start from that, because that's not really true. Because actually I started teaching.

Let me see probably about what I remember now I started teaching at South Carolina State College, in their criminal justice department. I started teaching there before I finished my master's degree. I started teaching at South Carolina University now it's the HBCU in South Carolina. But I started teaching there. I got someone offered me a job and I took the job. I was one of those people who sort of walked around and things were following me, sometimes bad sometimes for good. Some jobs kept falling on me and I kept taking them. So I started teaching at South Carolina State for the 1981 school term, and that was before I got my master's degree.

So actually, I had the last of my GI Bill money, and then I started working for South Carolina State, August 1980. And my GI Bill money went until December of 1980. So I was picking up a check there. I had to give up my graduate assistantship, right, obviously, because I had a job. And I saw I work basically 1980-81, you mentioned that you were working on your thesis. So, I was working, and I was writing my thesis and so I finished my thesis in time enough to march and get my master's degree in

May 1981. So I started teaching before I got my master's degree but at the time I finished I had a master's degree,

Bedell Terry

Ambitious

Benjamin Wright

Opportunities present themselves and I took advantage of them.

Bedell Terry

Now what took you to the University of Florida State University?

Benjamin Wright

Well, I had my department chair, and she got her doctoral degree from Florida State University. And so, you know, I mentioned to her that one day, I might want to get a PhD, she said, "Well, why not now?" And I said, "well, because I, you know, I need to save some money and everything." And so she said, "look, the university that I may head up, they had a program in place where I could take a leave of absence. And, in essence, they would even pay for me to go to school. I thought about that. And, and I had a very good chair, she was a good mentor. I mean, I have, I'll be honest with you, I had some very good mentors.

It was my mentor at the University of South Carolina who told me about the job at South College State. And now she is my department chair. And she told me she said, look, take a leave of absence, don't take the money because you might when you finish your PhD, you may find a better opportunity. And if you take the money, then you got to give him back year after year. And so I said okay, and so I worked at South Carolina State for school year 81 And I applied to more than just Florida State I applied to Florida State of Florida, University of Georgia. I was a plan where they had criminal justice program Georgia State had a pretty good program at that time in the 1980s and I said well I'm going to go to the school that gives me some money [laughing] because once again, I mean the idea was well let me see if I can get out of school with a little

Bedell Terry

You're frozen

Benjamin Wright

Are you there Bedell?

Bedell Terry

I'm here.

Benjamin Wright

I don't know why for some reason I dropped out.

Bedell Terry

Yeah, you're back on audio.

Benjamin Wright

Okay, well, let me see if I can get back on video

Benjamin Wright

Alright, so I don't know where I was. Okay.

Bedell Terry

All right. We were discussing

Benjamin Wright

Florida State?

Bedell Terry

Florida State. And so you got your PhD from Florida State in 86?

Benjamin Wright

I got my PhD from Florida State and 1988

Bedell Terry

1998.

Benjamin Wright

Yeah. So along the way, I mean, what I was saying I went to Florida State and 1985 I went back to South Carolina State because I had my three year leave of absence and work there 1985 to 1986 And get offered a job at Louisiana State University. So I was very happy. I didn't take the money from them. And I discussed it with my department chair. She wasn't happy I was leaving. And at that time, I was ABD, I hadn't finished writing my dissertation.

She wasn't happy I was leaving. But when I explained to her, I said here's a much more progress I've made on my, on my dissertation since I got back. Since I got back in August 85. She said I know Ben and she said, You know, when you get back here, you know, they were very happy that you were working on your doctorate and I got back there and they put me on every committee that could possibly be available.

I mean, I was on the faculty senate, I was on the Facilities Committee, I was on the business committee and so she said, Look, I don't blame you for leaving. But I'm sorry, leaving but I saw I took the job at Louisiana State University started in August 86. I was still ABD, working on my dissertation. And so I basically worked on my dissertation. And they gave me a little bit, they gave me some flexibility to reduce my course load. And I actually finished and defended my dissertation in January 1988. The next graduation was with May 88. So, my PhD was conferred in May 1988.

Bedell Terry

Now, what was your PhD?

Benjamin Wright

It was in criminology. So I got my bachelor's degree in criminal justice, the Masters in criminal justice and a PhD was in criminology.

Bedell Terry

So you have this deep background in criminal justice. And basically in the south, what brought you to Baltimore?

Benjamin Wright

Work.[laughs] So, by the time I got offered a position at Louisiana State University, I got married and my wife was finishing up medical school in Florida. She was at the University of Florida working on her MD while at the time and I was in Tallahassee working on my PhD. So, I finished before she did and then she moved to Louisiana, for her residency.

And so she did a residency at LSU Medical Center in New Orleans. And so she got offered a fellowship at Johns Hopkins to finish a residency. And she had followed me to Louisiana. So I told her if she got the fellowship, I would leave the job there and follow her to Baltimore. And so I did. I did a little background along the way I had met at a Criminal Justice Conference; I had met a colleague of mine; his name was Deral Cheatwood. And at the time, he was here in the criminal justice department at the University of Baltimore. So I had talked with him and he said, Look, we may have a position open. And so I talked with him and it wasn't a sure thing.

But by the time my wife knew that she had the fellowship, it was a sure thing. So, basically, we moved here, she had a fellowship at Hopkins and finished up a residency there. And I started working here and we moved here in 1991. I took a position here at the University of Baltimore, as an Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice with my wife, she had a fellowship at Hopkins, and eventually she ended up getting a position there. And so, she has been for the last 30 some years.

Bedell Terry

So your wife is still at Hopkins.

Benjamin Wright

She's still at Hopkins.

Bedell Terry

And what's her specialty?

Benjamin Wright

She's an anesthesiologist.

Bedell Terry

Ah, yeah.

Benjamin Wright

But now she's moving into administration, she's now the Vice President for Medical Affairs. She moved into administration about seven, eight years ago. Yep. So she goes into the operating room every night. I mean, that's sort of one of the things they do, in Hopkins this sort of allows them to stay current and up to date, you know, the various types of procedures and things of that. So I think she got an operating room probably about once every six months.

Bedell Terry

So you've been with the University of Baltimore since 1991?

Benjamin Wright

August 1991.

Bedell Terry

Have you seen the university change over that time? Was at a two year institution?

Benjamin Wright

It was in the upper division when I got here in 1991. It was an upper division and we had, when I say we, at the time I came here, criminal justice. Basically, when I came, there were three colleges. It was the Yale Gordon College of Liberal Arts, criminal justice within that college. There was the business school, and then that was the law school. And so pretty much it was, the upper division. So we will get our students from the community colleges, and then graduate. And we had a graduate program and undergrad program in criminal justice, among other things, and so yes, I, when I started it, we were upper division and along the way, we had real strong connections with the community colleges, I mean, the faculty, we will go out to the community colleges, do presentations, recruiting students, very strong. very good relationship.

And, even got to the point. I'm trying to think probably around the end of the 1990s. We, at least in criminal justice, started trying to get what we call them bridge courses, where we would actually have some of our courses taught at the community college. So when the student transferred to the University, it would not be all of the schools were doing that we were doing it in criminal justice. And I think there may have been public administration may have had some courses at the community college at the time and our strongest relationship with Community College of Baltimore County, we but in criminal justice, we have some relationships also, Prince George's Community College is down in and around the county, and also up in Harford County. So we have some bridge courses and that was a way to see our relationship.

We put some of our primary courses as core courses, I mean, one of the courses with our entry level course was a basic intro level course and then our criminological theory course. So that's what we're when I got here. We were three colleges when I got here in 1991. And, by the time Turner retired and the new president came in President Bogomolny started pushing to have a full four year degree program. And by the mid-2000s, we went to a four-year school, about 2006, 2007, something like that. I started in one of those committees, where we were looking at whether or not it was feasible to go from

upper division to four year, part of the reason we have been offered division, at least what I've been told historically was that so to compensate, compensate, had a criminal justice degree program and, and it hit so that we didn't really bump heads with them.

Because we bought both cops and ended up in schools in the University System of Maryland. So that's why we remain at the upper level at least while Meb, President Turner was here and may have turned it when he was known. But Bob Bogomolny came in and started pushing for a four-year degree and, and the Higher Education Commission gave us permission to go in that direction. And so we went, and so now we're four years, like I say, somewhere around 2006-2007. And then in 2010, and 2010. Criminal Justice along with the negotiations and conflict and public administration, we bonded together and we became the College of Public Affairs. So, we left the College of Liberal Arts, and then the Gordon College Level, Ross became the College of Arts and Sciences College this year in history that you worry in.

And so criminal justice, public administration, Human Services Administration, and negotiation and conflict became the College of Public Affairs as of the beginning of the school year 2010. That jam being that we're now four colleges, public administration, college, arts and sciences, business, and then the law school.

Bedell Terry

How did They affect your ability to pull from community colleges, did we still have that?

Benjamin Wright

not as strong a relationship as we had had, you know, and the committee that I served on, I mean, that was part of our report, we told the administration, we're going to lose that community college connection. And we did, not as we still had some students who would transfer but not as many as had. And then and then we worked on some other kinds of relationships. And we started developing these articulation agreements, where we would look at students coming from the community colleges, and we would take, they allowed us to take with this new thing with this new four year University of Baltimore. We worked out agreements so that the students could come in pretty much most often with their full associate's degree in hand. So the articulation agreement helped us to maintain some of those relationships. But we did lose some students though.

Bedell Terry

And specifically in the criminal justice program, did you?

Benjamin Wright

I think, across the board, we lost students. Yeah, we lost students across the board. Yeah. And the and the in brand new freshmen and sophomores that I mean, we. I mean, they were I think we did okay. I think we did okay. But once again, it wasn't what the administration had forecasted. They were talking, you know, knee deep and freshman and sophomore was one point when we would tell them, that am not going to happen. It isn't going to happen.

You know, I mean, they were forecasting somewhere between three to 500. After about year three, A, we're talking three to 500. I don't think we will. We're getting over 200 Freshmen , a freshman class. Matter of fact, I don't think we have gotten over 150. I don't, I'm not there now. I used to serve on those types of committees. But I'm not serving on those types of committees now. But I don't think we're getting the number of freshmen and we've never gotten the number that they forecasted. And then COVID came, of course, and everybody in the law student population. So

Bedell Terry

and you have a graduate program.

Benjamin Wright

We have a grad program in criminal justice and our graduate program. We've always had a very strong graduate degree program. And we have had a time when I first got here, I think. When I first came about in the mid-1990s, graduated from the criminal justice degree program. We will probably pull in about the same number of students, probably about two to 300 students in our undergrad program. And then eventually the grad program sort of smoothed out but yeah, we will put in people.

There was a point early on. it used to be there was a program, there was a federal program that was called Leap, leap, Law Enforcement Assistance Program, and they would pay for police officers to go to get their bachelor's and master's degrees, and when I got here in the mid-1990s, we still somewhat Leap money was still there. And so we have police officers who were working to get their master's degrees but eventually that money ran out near the end, about 2000. But we still maintained a reasonably healthy graduate program in criminal justice into the mid-2000s.

Bedell Terry

As the location of the Baltimore City Police Training Center had an impact on your program.

Benjamin Wright

Not ever Yeah, I think it had a beat to be very honest with you Bedell, I'm trying to remember now would that with the consent decree that the city police department was under they were looking for more up to date facilities I mean, and actually as serve as served and I'm still serving on the on the community committee that they look at the academy training facility, but whenever we're down when they were down on Northern Parkway, northern Parkway in Park Heights, I mean And it got to the point that they parted the consent decree where they needed to have a more modern facility.

And the university we had the law school it moved out of, we call it the commons. Now in the last school, they moved into the new building. And there were mostly administrative offices there. So it worked out very well. But to be asking your question, I actually when, before COVID, and just at the beginning of at the beginning, when BPD first moved into there, probably, I think, one of our first undergraduate classes, so about 10, or 12, of my undergrad students who have graduated, they were in one of those first classes.

These are undergraduate students now. So, I don't I haven't really noticed that. And I'm not the undergrad Criminal Justice advisor right now. But I don't think we're seeing very many students yet. It may improve, though, it may improve over the years, but I haven't seen very many.

Bedell Terry

So, we talked about the COVID period. did that have a big impact on the program on the

Benjamin Wright

It affected the degree program and the university as a whole. And I know, our enrollment has fallen. Once again, I can't tell you exactly how much, but I mean, you know and doing during the spring term, I'm not sure when you were here, up but during the spring term of 2020. I mean, we went from spring break, where we were faced just before spring break face to face, and then we made that real quick pivot to zoom.

And so, our classes maintain pretty good that fall 2020, spring 2020. And then at least I started seeing classes where there were 20, 25 people in the class. Now we were saying what zoom classes, five or six. But then the web based online classes picked up the 20 to 25 students now. I mean, they didn't, I mean, they didn't want to be tied down to a specific day and time for class. So, like, like what spring, which spring 2021, at least for my classes, I noticed that the online classes increased in his own classes decreased.

And now pretty much I would say I mean, I'm speaking off the top of my head, but I would say that probably at least in criminal justice, withdrawal, we have more students in our in our web based classes than zoom, except for our the forensic science program is in the School of Criminal Justice too and now those classes remain. They will probably resume for spring 2020 fall 2020. But because they're in the lab, and they're doing these types of things, by the spring of 2021 I mean they have pivoted back into the labs, and they have their classes face to face. Not very many of our criminal justice courses are face to face. Now they're either web based or zoom.

Bedell Terry

You are talking about web based and face to face and zoom. How do you think that's affected the way students are being taught at UB?

Benjamin Wright

Personally, I mean, I'm, I guess I'm, I'm an old timer and, and I really feel that there are things you pick up in the classroom that you were not going to pick up on the Web anyway. And On zoom, the sort of zoom and if it was, if a student wanted to turn the camera on fine if they didn't want to turn it on, don't push them to turn it on. And so, I never really pushed them to turn it on. And now I can have a zoom class with 15 students in there. Probably three of them have a camera. But I think I mean, I think that there are tools, there are tools and there are ways to get content and information to students. zoom and online.

I mean, online, I mean, I'll be very honest with you, I mean, the business school has been really moving online since really the mid-1990s. And they do it and they do it very well. I mean, they have tools that I

wanted to teach them. And I mean, you know, like, like, the cameras and stuff like that, that where you can recover Panopto where you can record various types of lectures and things, especially when you get into, I have a colleague and business teaches economics and, and, you know, and he, I mean, he was telling me about, you know, having the tools available.

The camera tools, I mean, the audio tools and, and being able to do and then and then they have the tools available, where they, you can actually have students that monitor them when they take exams online, I think it's called RP. And now. And so, they are the techniques they are for me personally, I prefer to teach face to face, but I have adjusted, I have adjusted to do the best I can to get the content available to students. And so most semesters since last fall semester, I am usually able to teach one on one face to face class, one zoom class, and one online.

Bedell Terry

I'm of the old school I like to learn face to face, I have to be able to ask questions and

Benjamin Wright

absolutely, students ask questions in Zoom, but because they have, I mean, I can get into some points and a discussion. And I can bring the students into the discussion on Zoom. But face to face, face to face, I can see a student and I can know those who are ready and willing to participate. I can see those who seemed to be a little shy, or who may be maybe not following the discussion quite as well. I could pick up those kinds of cues better. I mean, I pick them up real good in the classroom.

And I think if we move more, as we bring in more electronic tools, I think we're going to lose some of that to be honest with you. I'm not. I'm not sure how much I mean, because I have colleagues who swear by online, and once again, I mean, they use Panopto and things of that sort. I mean, one of our courses uses some of the statistical packages and things. And so, one of the professors in criminal justice, she does very well she record.

So, the students know exactly how to do certain types of techniques. And, and they and they, they seem to be doing very well, in the class. So but yeah, I mean, I'd be honest, I wish we had I wish I wish the entire university had the same type of accreditation requirements that the law school has because law school, I mean, they were they were on Zoom, they were on Zoom spring 2020, fall 2020 And the ABA, get back into classroom, I guess you're going to do two accreditation. Yeah, I mean, I don't know exactly how they said it.

But I know about spring 2021 The law school was back face to face; they made the adjustments they needed to make if they needed to have a mask they needed to distance themselves. Because obviously, by spring 2021, they still hadn't started a vaccine yet. But the university made a combination that needed to be met because the American Bar Association said they needed to be in the classroom. And so, they were the first to really get back into the classroom on a regular basis. Along with that followed that with our forensics program and where the students need to be in the lab and things of that sort. So.

Bedell Terry

So, you've been at the University of Baltimore for quite a while. What are some of the changes you've seen? Good or bad? But, you know,

Benjamin Wright

Like I say, I mean, we went from three colleges to four colleges. I used to joke with some of my colleagues and we and we also went to many more buildings. When I went back when I came in 1991 there was where to business school is that was a parking lot. When I got here 91 That was a parking lot. So, when I came in 91 we had we had the old library, it was Langsdale Library. It's been updated now it's the Bogomolny library.

It's been really updated very nicely to be honest with you. The comments were the post actually is that was the law school. So now the law school has its own twist or rebuild and so on that corner there that the law school is now that was faculty parking that was that was that was called the mount let me see. Mount Royale. So, the Business School is on one side of the old parking lot in law school is on another of the old parking lot.

And, and like I said before, so the student center that was a commercial building and that went out of business, the university, I guess, the university system bought it, and sold it. And they built the students center in on that corner there. It was the old what's called the Odorite building that was the Odorite building was, I think they I think they had various types of maintenance and things like that. So, for people who are involved in cleaning and things of that sort. So, so I've seen I've seen the I've seen the real estate change. And quite obvious, obviously I've seen one president go in another one comes up. So Meb Turner was the President when I got here in 1991. He remained a president until the early 2000s. And then Bob Bogomolny came in. And so Bogomolny was president.

And then Kurt Schmoke became president. And I think and what he actually started this July 2014, was officially inaugurated in the spring of 2015. So, he's been the president since 2014. So, I've seen changes in presidents, I've seen changes in Dean's. I've seen changes in the teaching curriculum, our curriculum has changed based on various types of requirements from the Commission on Higher Education. And I'm trying to think, probably more than anything else, I mean, I've seen, you know, I've seen colleagues and friends, friends come and go, be believe, like Deral Cheatwood, the guy that really helped me to get the job here. He left t about mid-1995, 96.

He was a full professor, and he took a position as a dean at a college in Texas. Deral was born and raised in Oklahoma. And when I, I just didn't see him, criminal justice being at them. And that's exactly where we met at a Criminal Justice Conference. And I remember him telling me he was born a cowboy. And he was trying to get back to his cowboy who had so when he got the job in Texas, he said, I got what I want. I'm going back home. I'm going to cowboy world. [laughing] So what? Yes, that's up. So I mean, that's been some changes, and people come and go, very good friends. And some of them I kept up with going to conferences, criminal justice conferences, and criminology conferences. Um, you know, all the changes.

Trying to think, like I mean, the university, I mean, we, you know, unfortunate thing, I think is, is that since I've been at the University of Baltimore, I mean, I mean, we've, we've always been considered to

be second-class citizens. I mean, when I went out when I came in, and in the 1990s, there was some talk about the university being absorbed by Morgan State University, the University system. At the time, there were some questions as to whether or not you knew that really there were only two systems schools in the city.

I mean, that was University of Baltimore and Coppin State. Morgan is not part of the University of Maryland system. I mean, they're independent. So I've seen that I mean, we're basically there was a talk that maybe we did law school will become freestanding law school and then most of the programs at the UB will become part of Coppin and they will split us up between Coppin and Morgan State.

None of that ever came to fruition because we had good strong degree programs here. And good, strong. The graduate programs have always been very strong, and we've always had very good. We've always had very good alumni, strong alumni out in the community. I mean, one of the police commissioners graduated from our program. I mean, we've had, you know, we in the business world, I'm sure there are many business people out there in law school. have, you know, Angelo's because have his name on it.

But there are many other prominent lawyers and people in public administration and from the history side of it, and in the arts and sciences side so, but that's been one thing, always questioning whether we will be here tomorrow or not, but we're still here, the university remains, as the folks say, it remains and it gets knocked down, stands up brushes itself off, and then and then and then stands up even taller, and moves forward even better.

So that's what I've noticed over the past 30. Some years, I've been here constantly fighting, trying to, for our, for our place. And, and, and we do, and I'll be honest with you, we do some of the heavy work for the system. I mean, I can remember, I can remember the system. We wanted to have a presence out in Western Maryland. And so, the University of Baltimore, we went to Hagerstown, because that's where it was located, that was before Shady Grove. They had a presence in Hagerstown. And so, we took our criminal justice program there.

And that was, that was before there was a web based online. And so, the criminal justice faculty, we went over there, and we taught courses for about two years, we went up to Harford County in the county, because the system wanted a presence up there. And we, and we, and we located up there, and it strengthened our relationship with Harford County Community College. But now and now we are at Shady Grove. So, we've been around a little bit, where we try to establish a presence when the system tells us that might be a good place to be.

And I think we still have some of our programs still at Shady Grove, without criminal justice, we have our master's degree program and never got a good foothold at Shady Grove. And when and when the numbers started falling, they closed down criminal justice. But I know our Health and Human Services degree program is still at Shady Grove. And I think some of the one or two other degree programs from the College of Arts and Sciences are still there. I don't know if business has a presence at Shady Grove right now, not a kind of business that has been steadily moving online. To my knowledge. But yeah, that's probably the biggest downer has always been that the University of Baltimore sort of been that.

You know, it's been that sort of stepchild, redheaded cousin that that nobody really cared a lot about, but then they stand up and they do the marvelous thing. And they continue to exist. And they say, Oh, you're still here? Well, I guess we'll give you a place at the table.

Bedell Terry

Well, looking at your time here, you've accomplished a lot. And is there anything you'd like to say as we close?

Benjamin Wright

Well, I greatly appreciate the opportunity to share with those who may someday have the opportunity to review this and read the transcript. I guess in closing, I would probably say that I am extremely happy to have had the opportunity to do work here at the University of Baltimore. I mean, I've been rolling my sleeves up, my sleeves up. And I have and have done. I've done the hard work and have carried, as the folks that have carried the buckets of water.

And I'd be very straightforward and honest with you and I can see very strong people walking behind me and I think and I feel that they're going to roll up their sleeves and the University of Baltimore is going to continue to be and do some great things on the horizon for the university. I really do. I think the stepchild is going to get a place at the table and they are going to be able to bank on that.

Bedell Terry

I appreciate your thoughts and I agree with you. So, I want to thank you for your time. It's been a pleasure for me to learn these things. And we're going to be celebrating the 100th anniversary. So, when absolutely. Thank you for your time.

Benjamin Wright

Thank you. Thank you very much. Appreciate the time now Y'all have a great day. You too. All right. Bye.