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David Brooks: So it's May 31, 2006, and I'm David Brooks, the interviewer for the University of Montana's Oral History Project. Today I'm talking with Fred Henningsen. Mr. Henningsen, I was hoping you could start out by talking a little bit about your educational and personal background and what led you up to coming to the University of Montana.

Fred Henningsen: My brother Rex got a law degree in 1936. I graduated from high school in '38 and came to the University.

DB: Your brother's law degree was from here?

FH: Yes. I think it was '38. The president then was not a very good one named [George] Simmons. I've been through a lot of presidents. The second was Jim McCain. The third one was Carl McFarland. The fourth one was Robert Johns, [then] Bob Pantzer. There was another one, Harry Newburn before Pantzer, before Johns actually. I only served under him a little bit. Then Pantzer. Then after Pantzer it was, it escapes me. [Richard Bowers.] I retired in 1984 at age 64. I've gone through a few deans too in the B [business] school. I started out [majoring] in Forestry but didn't like all the labs and stuff.

DB: You started out as a student in forestry?

FH: Yes. I left school somewhat under a cloud in 1940. I managed to break my leg above the knee riding a bronco. He ran away with me in a big corral. He carried me into a 2-by-12 upright. I hit an edge on it. I wound up—this leg was up over here. My arm was dislocated.

DB: What were you doing riding a bronco during school?

FH: I wasn't in school. My dad had a business buying and selling cattle, wheat, potatoes, and all kinds of stuff. Henningsen & Sons it was called. We were from Butte. It was a year before that healed. They operated on it three times.

DB: That's quite a scar.

FH: Anyway, [after a year at UM] I wound up going back to Antioch College. That's where I met my wife [Johna]. Except it wasn't at Antioch. I was working up at the Packard Motor Car Company in '43, or '42. She came up. Antioch was on what they called divisions at the time, 10 weeks on, 10 weeks off. Students would switch jobs, switch schools. That's where we met. One thing led to another and we got married in 1943. We went on a honeymoon to New York City

and down to Sea Island, Georgia, where my brother was stationed. He was a lieutenant in the Navy. That's history.

DB: How'd you make your way back to Missoula and the University?

FH: We got pregnant in a little house across the street. So I had to find a job and I got a job at Boeing Aircraft. My brother Bob was working there at the time. I was a machine shop inspector at Boeing until the war ended. So we came back to Missoula, to finish up school. I finished up my bachelor's degree, then my master's degree and then I got a fellowship to go to the S.S. Huebner Foundation at the University of Pennsylvania. That was in '48. We were there for three years. They hired me back here in '51. I had a magnificent—I think it was \$5,000, salary.

DB: What department was that?

FH: Salary.

DB: That was in the Business School?

FH: Yes. Ted Smith was the dean at the time. That's how we got back to Missoula.

DB: So what was the department and the University like at the time, in '51 when you got back here?

FH: The School of Business was a fraction of the size it is now. I think there were maybe seven faculty members. We were on the first and third floors of what's now the Education Building. Education had the second floor. The Bureau of Business was on the second floor too. I remember my office was 307.

I had a bright idea somewhere. We'd come back from New Zealand and after being there, oh, I don't know, was it one year or two? I taught at Victoria University in Wellington for one year. They hired me back here. I took a look at that office. It looked like hell. It needed paint. The stairways needed paint. I went down to see the dean. Rod Good, was his name, at the time. I told him what I wanted to do. I said, "I want to panel my office." He said, "I don't want to know anything about it."

So I went out to Thurman's and I measured up what I needed on the way of paneling. It was over the Easter weekend. My wife and I paneled that office. I had a student in a class, administrative accounting. I told these kids that I was planning to panel my office. I said, "I'm really kind of puzzled about how to go about nailing these panels up." One of my students said, "Well don't nail them up. Put them up with contact cement." He brought me five gallons of contact cement.

So we did the whole job on one weekend. I never will forget it. I served on a lot of committees in my time: Faculty Benefits Committee, the Faculty Senate and all that kind of thing. I was in a committee meeting and Don Habbe, who was then the vice president, came in and he said, "Fred, you've made my day." I said, "How'd I make your day?" He said, "I was shepherding a group of—not students, parents or something like that around—and one of the things we always do is show them your office." He said, "When we opened the door to your office, [Facilities superintendent] Ted Parker said, 'That son of a bitch, he even paneled his desk.'" And I had. Because they were ugly desks. I paneled that and I paneled the bookcases, not the bookcase, but the file. Anyway it looked pretty good. I put an air conditioner in there too, without permission. I did a lot of things. I built mailboxes for that school. Pat Douglas was the vice president then. She wrote a real stern note about [it], because I violated union rules. Oh, well, a renegade.

DB: So you started out by saying that president when you came in, Simmons, was no good. Explain a little bit about that.

FH: He wasn't. He didn't last long. I don't think he lasted more than a year or two [1936-41.]. He wore rimless glasses, Pince-nez sort of thing. He wasn't any good at all. I tell an amusing story about Carl McFarland. He was the president for—after Jim McCain left McFarland was appointed. He served until '59 I think. I was doing a lot of legislative work with him, appearing before committees and the House and the Senate, trying to get social security. We didn't have social security in Montana at the time.

This was 1953 or '54. McFarland's office—you know where Dennison's office is—McFarland's office was in the hallway, between Dennison's office and the one in the back. He had a desk in there. There was a davenport or couch across from it. I was sitting there talking to him about strategy. He had his feet on the desk and he had these big long office shears. He was cutting the hair out of his nose with it. [Laughs]

DB: It sounds like things when you first got here, campus wise and the relationships between faculty and what not were pretty casual and cordial.

FH: When I first started in the School of Business, it was in the—we had the first and third floors in the old Math Building. I shared an office with Don Emblem (?). I was the grad assistant at the time. We taught all over campus, in the forestry school, in Quonset huts. You name it. It was a whole different affair then. Now, I think it's 200 faculty and staff in that school. It's big, it's huge. It's grown immensely. It wasn't that big when I left in '84. It's exploded in the last 20 years.

DB: What are some of the things at the time that you recall that you think are unique to being smaller, fewer faculty, fewer students?

FH: You know almost all of the faculty. Not now. It's so huge.

DB: Did you participate with the other faculty in many ways?

FH: Sure. I started the UM Credit Union in 1954 along with—I had to get my wife to come over to sign. We needed seven people to sign. I'm member number one, my wife's number two. Lud Browman was number three. We even got the janitor in to sign. You had to have seven people. We got them. The first time, I remember, the first loan we made, we made a \$200 loan. I would go out and put the arm on people to join the credit union and put some money in. The first \$200 we loaned to a woman named Netty Henderson, who was a maid in one of the halls. It took us 11 years to get paid back. That credit union is the biggest one in Missoula now. It's got hundreds of members, thousands of members.

DB: What was your interest in starting that?

FH: It just seemed like a real good idea. Some people from the Montana Credit Union League came to meet with us and explain how credit union work. We bought the idea. It just took right off. We didn't waste a minute. It's now the Missoula Federal Credit Union, not the U of M. I'm still member number one and my wife's number two.

DB: When did that change?

FH: I remember when I was the treasurer, we bought this little building across the street where, whatever that guy's name is—the, oh never mind. We bought the little house across the street that was owned by the chairman of the psych department. He killed himself and rolled his Beetle downtown. So we bought that house and converted it into an office. We finally wound up building a permanent office. We just tore the old one down and moved it away some place. We built a good office.

That was a good year. It really worked. The credit union has done a lot of good. It's got branches all over the place. One downtown, one out here. How many are there? One, two, three, they've got at least four branches around Missoula.

DB: So you mentioned also being a member of a number of different organizations on campus, like the Faculty Senate and Faculty Benefits. Tell me about that.

FH: I was chairman of Faculty Benefits forever. Well, we did a lot of good. We got social security through. Did I say we—the Faculty Benefits Committee started the credit union. We lobbied social security through the legislature. We didn't have any social security back then. In 1967 or '68, somewhere along in there, we got the retirement setup going. That's been a boon. We hooked up with TIA-CREF. I made many, many trips to Helena to get things done. We got a lot accomplished.

DB: Who was in support of those sort of things on the campus?

FH: Oh, I think everybody. Sure. We had to do—the hardest part about getting the retirement thing through was the school teachers around the state. They thought the cost was too high, six percent or something like that. But it's been a real boon. We now have three sources of income when you retire: social security, your Montana retirement fund, school teacher. There's the teacher's retirement system and the public employee's retirement system.

So we've got social security, teacher's retirement system, and our own private plans TIA-CREF. My income after I retired was three times what it was when I was working. Mostly because I squirreled a way a lot of it. I must have—during my working years, I must have saved 35 percent of my salary that way. It's made a big difference.

DB: How about the Business School when you first got there? What was the curriculum like? What were concerns of students and faculty in teaching business? When I think of that time period in this state, I certainly think of the Anaconda Company, when you think of business. So what was going on in the business world on campus at the time?

FH: I don't know how to answer that question. Among other things, the School of Business taught shorthand and bookkeeping and stuff that doesn't really belong in the School of Business. It belongs in the School of Education. I remember we had two women teachers, Cleo Crow and Brenda Wilson. They taught shorthand and typing and stuff like that. I learned to type that way anyway. I have been able to touch type since 1946 or '47, not very well. I can do it.

DB: What were you teaching?

FH: I started out teaching—the way I got into teaching, it was 1946. We had a huge influx of veterans. I was helping register. Dean Smith called me over and he said, "Fred do you think you could teach a couple of courses in accounting?" I'd had quite a bit of accounting by that time but I didn't even have my B.A. I said, "Sure." I wound up with two sections of about 100 students each, teaching beginning accounting. I learned a lot in those—we were living down on South Fifth Street West, 301 South Fifth West, in an upstairs apartment.

Our first child was born in '44. We had a brand new baby in '47. We were living in this little one-room apartment with a Murphy bed. You know a Murphy bed that hangs on the wall. Twenty five bucks a month, though, for that apartment, furnished. I rode my bike back and forth. We took the kids everywhere on bikes. We didn't have a car. We didn't own a car until I went back east to the University of Pennsylvania. That was one of—my brother was the manager of Christie Furniture in Butte. He sold us one of their vans. We traveled all the way back East in that thing. That was quite a trip.

DB: So you also took some leaves, or quit and were rehired by the University, to travel elsewhere.

FH: Yes, I've been rehired a couple, three times. The first time was '51. Then when we came back from Pakistan in '62, they hired me again. At the time, Bob Johns was the president. He said well now, they promoted me for—my first job when I came back from Penn, I was an acting assistant professor, which is pretty silly. An acting assistant professor?

After we came back from Pakistan, I was promoted to associate professor. Bob Johns told me he said, "This is your last promotion unless you finish your doctoral degree, your dissertation." I had everything done but the dissertation. And I never did get that damn thing finished. Anyway, Johns left and Pantzer promoted me to full professor. So I was full professor from '64 all the way up until I retired. I bet I've taught between 15,000 and 17,000 students in my career. I probably didn't do a good job with all of them, but I did a pretty good job with some of them.

DB: Tell me about the changes in your students over those years.

FH: I don't think students changed all that much. Students here are totally different than the ones in New Zealand for example. New Zealand students tend to be rambunctious. These students tend to be fairly pliable. I remember going in—the lecture halls in New Zealand are tiered. There might be 200 or 300 students in a lecture hall. One of the things—I'd go into this lecture hall and the floor would be covered with paper darts. Kids would take their notes and make darts out of them. I knew how to make a real airplane, not a dart.

So I introduced those kids to a concept they weren't familiar with, 10-minute quizzes. I was giving a 10-minute quiz and while they were doing that, I made one of these airplanes that I know how to make. When they got through, I gave them a little lecture about littering out the floor with these paper darts. I said, "I'll show you how to make a real one." I threw my little paper airplane. It was spiraling around. They clapped. I had a great time.

Another thing was different there: They'd have wine and cheese parties on campus. At that time, we didn't have wine here. That would be unheard of. They'd have it in the commons room. They'd have a wine and cheese party. So when I left I invited all my students to a wine and cheese party. I treated them royally. They appreciated that.

DB: So in contrast to that, what was the classroom like here at the university and what was your relationship with students like here?

FH: As I said, I think our students are considerably more pliable than the rambunctious New Zealanders. They tend to drink too much, of course. There's no stopping that that I know of. I think our students here are easier to get along with. The Pakistani students, they were fine. I didn't have any trouble with them.

DB: How about the quality of the education here in your time?

FH: Oh, pretty good, I'd say. Higher education does a pretty good job almost everywhere. And it shows. The world's getting richer all the time, mostly because of higher education. Certainly not the grade school or high schools.

DB: How did curriculum change in the Business School in those years?

FH: There have been huge changes in that. Huge. I could look up and see how many professors there are in that School of Business but it's big. Larry Gianchetta became dean right after I retired in '84. He's done a hell of a job, promoting the school, that is.

DB: Back to the change in the business in climate in Montana during that time, I just used the example of the Anaconda Company being most of business, and that certainly would have changed in your time here. So were there effects from that change in the Business School? What you would teach, what the emphasis would be?

FH: I think the biggest change was in the newspapers. The demise of the Anaconda Company meant that the newspapers were no longer Anaconda Company property. They became Lee Enterprise papers. I'm not sure how good they are now but they're a lot better than they were back when Anaconda was calling the shots. I used to take my students on a field trip. We'd take a couple of van loads of them and take them over to Anaconda and take them through the smelter there. Then up to Butte and down one of the deep mines.

DB: These were business students you were hauling down there?

FH: Yes, sure.

DB: How'd that relate to your class?

FH: They thought that was pretty good. Then we'd go out to Meterville to the Rocky Mountain Café and have dinner. Steaks that thick for a buck. It was good living.

DB: This is outside the classroom? This is just you with some of your students?

FH: Yes.

DB: Did that change as a possibility of something to do with students in the time you were here, those sort of relationships?

FH: Oh, I don't know. I don't think it changed anything much.

DB: What are some of your other memories or stories from your time here?

FH: I've got so many good memories. Let me think, what's one of the real good ones? I don't know. I think my work on the Faculty Benefits Committee was one of the best memories I have. Because we did so much good. You know, our health insurance plan, that was also started by the Faculty Benefits Committee. I don't know if you're familiar with how much it costs nowadays. But when we started that plan back in '67, the state had passed—the first time they ever made a contribution to health insurance, an insurance plan—was in 1967.

They committed \$7.50 a month. For that, we used \$5 of it to buy the health insurance with \$100,000 limit. We used \$2.50 to buy life income protection insurance. I think today, the state almost every legislative session, has increased the amount by \$25 or more. I think it's up to \$300-some odd dollars a month now. Of course it's buying a lot more too. It's been a boon. That health insurance plan has really been a boon. It saves a lot of people big bucks.

DB: Of course you can no longer rent an apartment in Missoula for \$25 a month either. So we're sitting here in your house and we're right across the street from the university. You've been retired for over 20 years.

FH: Twenty-two years.

DB: Do you still keep in touch with the University?

FH: Oh, sure.

DB: In what ways?

FH: Along with Emma Lomasson, I've put on a retiree luncheon at the Missoula Country Club in October, February, and May. That goes back to when we were on the quarter system, before we went on semesters. They do that. We had 50 of them just last Friday out at the Country Club. People ranging in age from Jerry Doty's—do you know Jerry Doty's a music professor. He's 96 and a half. Emma is 95. Members of that group range all the way in their 70s all the way up into their middle 90s. Good bunch.

DB: How about affairs on campus, do you keep abreast of how the university is changing or progressing?

FH: Yes I guess so. I'll be attending Dennison's retiree luncheon next Tuesday mostly because I want to get the names of the new retirees so I can add them to my list. I send a letter out to all of the retirees inviting them to these affairs. I can get a good response. I've had as many as 85 at the country club having lunch.

DB: What keeps you, as well as perhaps a lot of the retired faculty here in Missoula, active in the university?

FH: It's a great place to live. As I said, we've lived in a lot of places, traveled through Europe camping, three different times, all over the place. When we came back, our first trip back from Pakistan in '57 or '58 we picked up a new Mercedes-Benz in Stuttgart. We had three kids at the time. We drove that all over the place, down into Italy. Down in Spain and up to Norway. Then we took a steamer back down to England. We disembarked at Edinburgh, I guess, drove on down to London and put the Mercedes on a boat back to Karachi.

Then we flew on around the world to say hello to the folks at home. Those were the good old days. When we first started out in '57 we were on a DC-3 out of here. DC-6s, -7s and Stratocruiser, and on every one of those flights, we were in first class. I was on a government contract. On every one of those flights except the DC-3, the pilot would come back and ask me if I wanted to bring the boys—I had two boys, a 12-year-old and a 10-year-old, up to see the cockpit. So I always did. We were on a flight from Rangoon to Karachi. The pilot was a jolly American pilot. He asked us to come up and see the cockpit. So he took a look at my son Ken who was 12 years old at the time and said, "Hey, do you want to fly the airplane?" Ken said, "Sure."

He told the co-pilot to back and entertain the passengers. He put Kenny in the co-pilot seat and told him how the controls worked and what to watch, the instruments, and basically what to do. So, he said, "Okay I'm taking her off of automatic pilot. You've got the airplane kid." Well we went through the air like this and like this. A purser came up and he said, "Captain, passengers are complaining about (about 10 or 15 minutes) the motion of the aircraft." The pilot says, "Tell them we're encountering some turbulence." He let him fly it for another 10 minutes.

That was before jets now. Our next trip home was all on jets, not prop jobs. There was none of that foolishness. A 707 over the Atlantic had some kind of a malfunction in the tail structure. It was locked in a vertical dive. The captain had been back entertaining the passengers. He literally had to scramble on hands and knees to get back to the cockpit. He finally did get back and helped the co-pilot pull the plane out of that at 5,000 feet. It put a 10-foot set in the wings. You could imagine the stress on it. It was probably a drop of 700 or 800 miles an hour.

DB: So with all these travels—

FH: So that stopped all this business of going back and entertaining the passengers.

DB: So with all those sorts of travels and living overseas you said Missoula's a great place to live. What's great about living in Missoula?

FH: Oh, just about everything. The climate is not ideal, but it's not bad either. It really is a garden city. The people are basically decent. At least I haven't had any trouble with any of them, not that I know of anyway.

DB: Have you felt like being at the University, you've still been fairly integrated with the community, the city as a whole?

FH: I think so. We bought this house from Bill Gallagher in 1956. I was holding down three jobs trying to stay alive. I was lecturing at the University. I was controller of Rother Lumber Company and handled the books for Wright Lumber Company, Rother Lumber Company, Rother's Incorporated, and Mission Homes Incorporated. I was making about \$14,000 a year, and doing income tax returns at the same time. Basically I had three different jobs. About that time, Don Emblen (?) came back from the University of Pennsylvania and said, "Hey do you want to take a job at the University of Pennsylvania and go to Karachi?" That's how I wound up in Karachi. I said, "Yes that sounds like a good idea." We'd only had this house for about a year. I paid Gallagher \$25,000 for it in 1956.

DB: Now is this the Gallagher of the business building?

FH: Yes, that's the one.

DB: So you knew him?

FH: Well, he was a director, the third owner of Rother Lumber Company. So I knew him pretty well. He was building an \$85,000 house over on Beverly, on the corner of Beverly and Arthur. I went into a director's meeting one day. We were living out by Fort Missoula in faculty housing at Fort Missoula, \$22 per month. It was hard to beat, but the Colonel then, his name was [Fred] McManaway decided to recapture the Fort. So he did. He took it away from the University. We had to leave. So it was a question of finding another place to live. So I told this story to Bill Gallagher and he said, "Well, if you want to, buy my house."

He gave me the keys and my wife and I took a 15-minute look at it and fell in love with it right away. It's a lovely little house actually. I went back to him and I said, "Sure, how much do you want for it?" He said, "\$25,000." [Don] Sokoloski, who was a realtor at the time, said I paid \$4,000 too much. [Laugh] There were a couple of catches to it. One was, he wanted \$5,000 down. I didn't have 5. But he said he'd carry the contract for deed at 2.5% interest. That's the time when mortgage rates were like 6%.

So I didn't even think twice. I said, "I'll take it." Then I had to raise \$3,000. I had \$2,000. So I had a rich aunt over in Butte, Teresa Christie was her name. I put the arm on her for \$3,000 at the same 2.5 percent. Anyway, I paid the whole bloody thing off in nine years. We took that job in Karachi and rented the house for five years. We didn't charge much, \$125 a month or something like that.

DB: How was Bill Gallagher associated with the University? The business building is now named for him, right?

FH: He provided the first million dollars for the School of Business. That was the seed money they needed. They needed a hell of a lot more than that. Basically that's how it happened to be called—is it William Gallagher and Rosemary, William and Rosemary Gallagher Foundation?

DB: Were you here when that was happening? When the money was being raised for the building?

FH: No we were over in Karachi at that time. Of course Denny Washington is another big factor too.

DB: So you saw that growth in the department by the time you came back?

FH: Sure.

DB: Why was it growing?

FH: The School of Business?

DB: Yes.

FH: I guess because it was in demand. Let's count up and see how many there are in the business. [Looks in the directory.] This is back in 2002 but it will do.

DB: How many were there when you first got there, just for a point of reference?

FH: You mean in '38?

DB: When you first came to the University to teach.

FH: That was '47. Even then, the faculty was pretty small. Back in '38 all of the students' cars and faculty cars could be parked around the oval. Now there are thousands of them. Let's see—

DB: Hard to find a parking place these days.

FH: Okay, about seven or eight.

DB: So any other memories you have of the university that you want to share?

FH: There are so darn many of them, David, I go back a long ways. One of them, as freshman we'd have to climb up that damn trail, straight up the mountain and paint the 'M.' I was a Bear Paw, I joined Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity, mostly because we were living in what's now—I would call South Hall at the time. It's got some other name now. I was living on the third floor in

South Hall with a bunch of other guys from Butte. I do remember one thing. I was one of the brighter students.

Some of those Butte athletes weren't worth a damn. And they were good friends of mine. We all lived on the third floor of South Hall. At that time, they had these big tests in the gym. They had chairs all around the gym floor. After fall quarter, I figured out how they did things. And a couple of these athletes were flunking out. So I figured out a scheme to help them. It was a question of cheating.

What I'd do is—they were mostly true and false or multiple choice questions. I worked my way through the whole test as quickly as I could, but when I first went in there, we shifted the papers around so that our tests were all in a group, not scattered all over the place. We did this without getting caught. I'd wait until there were no proctors nearby and I'd say, "Okay fellas, page one, number one..." And I'd go down through all the answers. We got all those athletes through that. That was pretty bad. But I bet that sort of thing still goes on.

DB: Likely.

FH: Except at a more sophisticated levels with computers and whatnot. Antioch College was a whole different experience. I never will forget. I know exactly where I was on the Day of Infamy. Do you know what the Day of Infamy is?

DB: Tell me about it.

FH: December 7, 1941. I was in the basement of Main Hall on the day that announcement came through. That was Franklin Delano Roosevelt, "This day will live in infamy." It did. Oddly enough, that's the day [years later] that my daughter got married in December 7 down in New Zealand.

DB: Anything else you'd like to recollect about the University, favorite president?

FH: To shows you how much change there is, the medical, the health service was in the basement of Main Hall in those years. Now it's a huge place. After that it was in a house on the corner of University and Arthur over there, I think. It was a long time ago. What else? Oh, you've got enough stuff.

DB: I appreciate your stories and your time.

[End of Interview]