

INTERVIEWER: Today is October 28th, 2009. I am Karen Arenson. We are talking with D. Reid Weedon, a 1941 graduate of MIT, Life Member Emeritus of the MIT Corporation, former president of the Alumni Association. He led the Corporation's Advisory Committee on shareholder responsibility, which was set up to help the Corporation think through its position on investing in South Africa during a time of apartheid, a matter of deep controversy at MIT and other colleges in the 1970's. And as chair of the national campaign in MIT's Campaign for the Future from 1986 to 1992, he was a central figure in pushing that campaign from its original goal of \$550 million to its more ambitious goal of \$700 million and helping it surpass that goal. Although he will turn 90 later this year, he is still an active fundraiser for MIT who has his own office with other members of MIT's fundraising team. Earlier this month he was on the road soliciting more gifts, energetic as always.

Reid, thank you for talking to us today. You seem to be willing to take on difficult jobs that other people might duck, like asking for money or analyzing politically fraught issues. Have you always been willing to tackle difficult jobs?

WEEDON: A lot of difficult jobs can be made easy by just tackling them. And I've had a few difficult jobs along the way, yes.

INTERVIEWER: What are some of the others? What's been hardest?

WEEDON: Well you mentioned apartheid and actually I worked for 17 years fighting apartheid in a very controversial role at the time, as you indicate. There were people who wanted to fight apartheid in different ways and I felt that most of them were ducking the issue by canceling out and that it was important to hang in and try and make things better. So I spent 17 years, not full-time, but working on that.

INTERVIEWER: How did you first focus on it? What caught your attention and said this is something I should worry about?

WEEDON: Well there was a man named Reverend Leon Sullivan who invented a set of principles for companies that were working in South Africa-- American companies. Others were eligible, but never arrived. And he asked my company to undertake to evaluate what the American companies in South Africa were doing. It was a voluntary participation on the company's part, but it was the best game in town. Because if they didn't do that, they didn't have much to lean on to deal with particularly the students on the college campuses, but also the churches, synagogues and so on that were thinking about divesting. And as I say, it was the best game in town and it was funded by-- my efforts and my team were funded by the companies who gave money to an institution which in turn paid my costs.

INTERVIEWER: So you would go to South Africa to look at what those American companies were doing in South Africa?

WEEDON: That's right, Karen, although most of what we relied on was actually an annual written response to a very elaborate questionnaire about what the companies were doing.

INTERVIEWER: That you and Reverend Sullivan devised, or?

WEEDON: Oh, he devised the principles that the companies were supposed to be striving to achieve. He did not devise the process for doing the evaluation.

INTERVIEWER: And the principles-- did you have any piece of shaping those or had they already been set in place?

WEEDON: Well I didn't have a lot in the beginning. But trying to interpret some general principles into some specific activities was a big part of what my team and I did.

INTERVIEWER: And so this was actually a 17 year job?

WEEDON: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: That ended when? And for what reason?

WEEDON: Well because apartheid-- when South Africa achieved the goal of getting a black government. And that's what ended it.

INTERVIEWER: And that was it.

WEEDON: That was it.

INTERVIEWER: And the committee that you led for the Corporation to think through MIT's role-- were you already doing this work as a consultant when they asked you take this on?

WEEDON: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: So did you have a point of view when you came to it?

WEEDON: Oh absolutely I had a point of view.

INTERVIEWER: And they knew that?

WEEDON: They knew that, yeah. But it was a-- everybody knew where I was and what I was doing and so on. It didn't really seem to be a big problem. Actually I was invited to a number of other college and university campuses that was what this-- you asked earlier what this tie was-- and I actually spoke with the Radcliffe trustees to undertake to explain the situation to them. They gave the Radcliffe tie in exchange for the effort that I've put into that-- not much effort.

INTERVIEWER: And this was a time when students were pressing the colleges to divest South African stocks versus--

WEEDON: Right across Mass Avenue we had some students who set up camp over there with a live-in demonstration. It lasted a week or so or something like that.

INTERVIEWER: Did you go talk to them?

WEEDON: No I decided that that wasn't a good idea so I didn't. That's when I ducked.

INTERVIEWER: So when the Corporation set up the committee were you the first chair or?

WEEDON: No. George Thorn was the first chairman and he was probably chairman for four years or something like that. And then he moved to Emeritus status in the Corporation and they needed an active member of the Corporation to be the chairman of the committee so I took over from him. And actually I'm not sure. The committee was not set up with the idea that it was dealing with just South Africa. It was set up to deal with social issues that were related to company proxies and ending up with how MIT should vote on these proxies for stock that it owned. And there were a lot of subjects that were on the table. Things like baby formulas was one of them was on the table. Should MIT be encouraging the use of those formulas instead of natural milk? And there were a variety of other issues but South Africa got a lot of the attention, there's no doubt about that.

INTERVIEWER: And during the years you were involved in the committee-- the advice that the committee was giving to the Corporation was to keep holding the stocks of companies that adhered to the Sullivan principles?

WEEDON: Yes. And we graded the companies. And so--

INTERVIEWER: The Corporation committee?

WEEDON: No, no. We-- my consulting team-- graded the companies. So that places like MIT could say-- we had three grades-- they could say, we'll support the people that are in one or two but we won't continue to support the people that are the threes. That was generally--

INTERVIEWER: And where did MIT then come out in terms of what to do in its own investing?

WEEDON: Oh it decided that if the companies were striving and achieving a one or two category in our grading system that it would continue to hold the stock. Now the Corporation-- excuse me, the faculty-- voted to ask MIT to divest all the companies that had anything going on in South Africa. MIT did not-- the Corporation did not go along with that at all.

INTERVIEWER: So it was a matter of tension for awhile?

WEEDON: Well, I think that there are only a relatively small number of faculty members who go to faculty meetings. I questioned whether if we had taken a vote in which a hundred percent of the faculty participated, I think it would have come out we'll hang in there with companies that are doing a good job.

INTERVIEWER: Democracy.

WEEDON: Yes, exactly.

INTERVIEWER: So let's back up to the path that lead you toward MIT in the first place. Where were you born and where'd you grow up and what were you like as a child?

WEEDON: [LAUGHTER] I don't know what I was like as a child but I was born in Newton, Massachusetts, not far from here. And lived there for the first 10 or a dozen years of my life-- I could go back and figure that out-- but then my family moved. I ended up going from a sixth grade to the twelfth grade-- they moved a lot-- and attending a different school every year except for the last two years. So--

INTERVIEWER: This was during the Depression?

WEEDON: This was during the Depression and my father had a variety of jobs, not unlike a consultant, where he undertook to help to bail out companies that were in trouble. But he had to move-- we had to move.

INTERVIEWER: Around the country, or?

WEEDON: Mostly on the East Coast-- entirely on the East Coast. So that meant changing schools. Which was, in retrospect, not a good way to get an education and also to make friends, but that's the way it was.

INTERVIEWER: And were you interested in science or engineering as you grew up?

WEEDON: I won the science prize at the prep school that I attended for the last two years. So I was on that track.

INTERVIEWER: What did it take to win the science prize, what--

WEEDON: Good grades in chemistry and physics and math.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have good teachers in those areas or?

WEEDON: Yeah.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

WEEDON: Yeah, we had two people in the school who were really I think outstanding teachers in science and math. But it wasn't a big school so two was adequate. You got a lot of attention. And I absorbed a lot of it. It was a good education.

INTERVIEWER: And what made you apply to MIT? Did you know people who were here or anything?

WEEDON: Williams refused to take me.

INTERVIEWER: What?

WEEDON: Williams refused to take me. At that time, several of the Ivy League, including Williams, had a program in which you went essentially half of the years at one school and half at the other. It might have been a five year program with Williams.

INTERVIEWER: For engineering maybe?

WEEDON: Well for any program at MIT-- any department at MIT. It was not restricted to engineering or science.

INTERVIEWER: So you would start at another school--

WEEDON: You'd start, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: --and spend two years?

WEEDON: Two or three years. And you'd end up at the end of this program with a bachelor's degree from the first school and a bachelor's-- in arts and humanities -- and a bachelor's degree from MIT.

INTERVIEWER: And did you ultimately do that or did you come here?

WEEDON: No, Williams refused to take me.

INTERVIEWER: And you didn't try others?

WEEDON: I didn't try others. And so when Williams refused, I applied directly to MIT. And in those days, it was a lead pipe cinch to get in. I did take the college boards, but there was none of this elaborate application business and so on that students go through today. It was really a pushover.

INTERVIEWER: So we were talking about your coming directly to MIT and you said admissions were much easier. How did people pay? I mean, paying for college is such a big deal these days. This was during the pression when you were there--

WEEDON: I was just very fortunate. My fathered paid. That was that.

INTERVIEWER: Do you have any recollection of what tuition was in those years?

WEEDON: It was I think that it was either 400 or 600 per year.

INTERVIEWER: Which was a lot of money.

WEEDON: In those days that was a real lot of money. As a matter of fact, the year I graduated was 600, because I remember that one of my fraternity brothers was giving them a full-sized, fully equipped Ford car and it costs \$607. So really tuition was essentially equivalent to a nice car. It was not a miniature car or anything. And today tuition is about \$35,000. And if you go out and buy a full-sized Ford car, fully equipped, you're pushing 30. So really, although people say tuition has gone up a lot-- it has gone up a lot in terms of number of dollars-- but it's been some sort of on a par with what's happened to the price of other things that we buy. And now it is true it's gone up a little on-- there's an appreciable difference between the cost of a car today and the cost of tuition, but not all that much.

INTERVIEWER: What did you study while you were an undergraduate?

WEEDON: Oh I'm just making trouble for you. But I wanted to study chemical engineering and I also wanted to get the benefits of the courses that were offered in textiles. Not department, it was a part of Course 2, mechanical engineering. And in those days-- I'm not sure about today-- but if you were taking or majoring in chemical engineering, for instance, you didn't have a whole lot of choices to the electives. They had a bunch of courses-- not all in chemical engineering, but in chemistry for instance-- that you had to take in order to meet the requirements of the department. And I went to my registration officer somewhere in my junior year and said that I want to spend more time taking some courses in textile technology. And he didn't like that at all. And I went down the hall and went in to see a fellow named Ralph Hudson, who was a professor of electrical engineering. I never met him before. But he was the head of general science and general engineering. And if you went to him and said here's the program that I want for these reasons and he said okay, you then were in general engineering instead of being in say chemical engineering. And he'd let you take the courses that you'd specified. So I said this is exactly what I want. So I changed department. This was a one man department; he taught in electrical engineering as I think I said-- but there were no faculty in general engineering or general science.

INTERVIEWER: It was essentially a special program--

WEEDON: That's right.

INTERVIEWER: --a different track.

WEEDON: And everybody in general-- I say everybody. Essentially everybody in one of the two generals had their own program of study which was unlike any other program.

INTERVIEWER: So it's kind of an independent study track.

WEEDON: Exactly.

INTERVIEWER: And what about textiles pulled at you? I mean, it's not something we trip over today in MIT.

WEEDON: No, everything's gone overseas.

INTERVIEWER: I guess we call it materials.

WEEDON: Well actually it was a part of mechanical engineering in those days. And it was really run by one man who had-- he may have had a graduate student or more than one who was a teaching assistant, but essentially he taught all the courses. But the textiles by then had moved out of New England and gone South pretty much entirely. And therefore it was a field one was not going to get a job in New England. And I knew that but I still--

INTERVIEWER: What about them fascinated you or what was the pull? Do you have any clue?

WEEDON: Yeah. My father worked mostly in the textile industry.

INTERVIEWER: So you had some curiosity?

WEEDON: Yeah I'd always been intrigued with how fabrics are made and how the patterns get there and things of this kind.

INTERVIEWER: I love cloth. I'm an old 4-Her.

WEEDON: Well, there we go.

INTERVIEWER: Was MIT hard when you got there? I mean did you find classes challenging, problem sets difficult, or did you breeze through?

WEEDON: It was challenging, but I had only one course that I had real trouble with. That was related to my changing departments, matter of fact. But living or being in a fraternity helped a lot because there were a lot of upperclassmen. In fact, I would say the upperclassmen-- you know, all of them-- were willing to help we neophytes. And you live together and you saw these all these people all the time. So it was pretty easy to get help when you were stuck. In those days, there was an ex-MIT instructor who had been removed from teaching that I invited to leave, I guess-- who set up a tutorial program for which you paid. And he had classes in the basic subjects-- physics, chemistry, and so on-- and you could go to him for tutorials all during the term, or you could just go for a brush up at the end of the term. And his brush ups were particularly effective because he made it a point to study the written term end exams. And he pretty much figured out the kinds of things you ought to focus on because this is where the questions will be. And if you went to that program, in addition to going to class, it really was a big help.

INTERVIEWER: What made you decide to join a fraternity and did you join before freshman year started as--

WEEDON: Practically everybody did in those days.

INTERVIEWER: Almost everybody?

WEEDON: You'd join before the term started.

INTERVIEWER: Uhhuh, right. But not everybody opted for fraternities?

WEEDON: That's true. I don't know from percentage standpoint-- things changed. Now there are so many women as a part of the student body. But they have their sororities too. But I'd have to think about the percentages of the freshman class that joined fraternities. I think it was a low-- I'm sure it was a lower percentage. There are about the same number of fraternities on campus today as there were when I was a student. That hasn't changed very much.

INTERVIEWER: Roughly 28, 30?

WEEDON: 30.

INTERVIEWER: And was joining a fraternity something you knew you wanted to do or you met some guys and felt friendly toward them?

WEEDON: I didn't know in the beginning of summer of that year. I really had no knowledge or view or position. But in those days, fraternities were given in probably July, maybe June, a list of students who had been admitted and accepted. And we took rushing during the summer. And a couple of summers I spent a fair amount of time driving around, calling on admitted freshman, to tell them about fraternities. But particularly tell them about mine. And of sizing them up to see if they were people that we might like to have as members. And so I was subjected to that process. And several people came to see me during that summer to tell me about their fraternities and the fraternities. So by the time rush week came the week before school started, I knew something and said this sounds much better than living in a dormitory. And so I joined in the rushing process and went around and visited houses and made a decision.

INTERVIEWER: And it sounds like you found it very supportive, certainly in terms of the academic. And socially it was congenial?

WEEDON: Yeah. Yep. I still think they represent-- for both men and women-- they represent a very good choice for someone coming to MIT. Because I think it's very easy for people to end up in the closet of their own room in a dormitory and not be able to interact. Now there are a lot of people who've managed to go through MIT and live in dormitories and turn out fine. But I think it helps being in a group and feeling some group responsibility.

INTERVIEWER: MIT's decision a few years ago to move all the freshman into the dormitories after the drinking death at one house certainly put off some alumni who had also had good experiences in fraternities while they were at MIT. And I think some of them either stopped giving or threatened to stop giving. How did you react? And I think maybe you were involved in the discussion of the proposed policy before it took place.

WEEDON: Well, there wasn't that much discussion, Karen. And I wasn't happy. But, as you say, it was driven by an unfortunate death. And MIT had to do something in order to indicate that it was concerned and sorry and so on. And having all the freshman live in the dormitories for first year was the best thing could be done. And it's too bad that what happened happened.

INTERVIEWER: Do you have any sense of how the system is working now given that students enter in their sophomore year? Or I guess they enter partway through the freshman year.

WEEDON: Well, they actually enter early still, but they just aren't allowed to live in the house. Doesn't mean they can't go there and participate in things like social events and so on, but they have to live in the dormitories. But most of the freshmen that join fraternities-- men and women who join-- backed that up a minute. Until recently, the sororities rushed mid-term. They now, however, are conforming to the male practice. Because several of the fraternities also take women at this stage of the game. I think there's no sorority that takes men. I'm pretty sure that's true.

INTERVIEWER: Interesting. Were you active in other things while you were going through MIT or student activities, student government?

WEEDON: No. I was not. I was very active in fraternity needs, but I was not. I worked for awhile for the Tech and for Technique, but that was not a major activity; neither of them were major activities for me.

INTERVIEWER: And did you have a plan for what you were going to do after graduation? Did you know what you wanted to be or was this something you were going figure out as you left?

WEEDON: Well I was going to look for a job in the textile industry, figuring that the combination of my textile technology education and my chemical engineering education was going to be something which was somewhat unique and therefore saleable.

INTERVIEWER: And is that what happened?

WEEDON: No. I went to school each summer between terms. And as a result by the middle of my senior year, I had all the requirements to graduate. And so I begin taking graduate courses. And indeed, at the end of my senior year, I think I had all of the course requirements to get a master's degree. So I was working on a thesis, trying-- and it turned out that I never did get the materials which I needed for the thesis. And so although I worked at it during the summer, I was not done by the end of summer. And I'd been Army ROTC for the four years. And in the spring of '41, the Navy came along and negotiated with the Army to have the Army let a percentage of its officer candidates drop the Army and go to the Navy. And being very interested in sailing and boats, I decided that was a much better thing for me to do. So I left the Army and signed up to go in the Navy, Naval Reserve. And they said we'll give you till September to work on your graduate program, but then you're going to have to come on active duty. So I didn't have a-- I was not looking for a job. It was, I just pushed in.

But fortunately, the Navy was very good to me and gave me a job which was a technical job rather than a going to sea job. As a matter of fact, one admiral that I worked for along the way, I proposed to him that I make a trip on a ship. And I remember his saying, you can go on the ship but don't let me catch you taking a vacation on the Navy, get the hell out of my office. That was the end of that good session.

INTERVIEWER: Where were you based during the Navy years?

WEEDON: Well I was based in Pearl Harbor at that point.

INTERVIEWER: Wow. For the whole?

WEEDON: No, no. I was in the Navy aeronautical materials laboratory for the first several years of the war. And then I went to Hawaii for I guess a year, 15 months. And then I was transferred back to Washington. But I was doing the same kind of work all the way through.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of work was it?

WEEDON: I was working on trying to maximize the number of aircraft engines, airplanes, and parts that were usable in the war theaters. Corrosion-- most of the Navy's activities was in the Pacific and corrosion in the warm Pacific atmosphere on atolls, which are barely above water anyway, therefore they're subject to a lot of salt in the air-- is very hard on aircraft and on engines, any metal parts. And so there was a lot of work that we did try to figure out how to eliminate, at least reduce, the corrosion.

INTERVIEWER: Did you find your MIT classwork and education very useful in that?

WEEDON: Well my chemical engineering education more than my textile one which was what brought to bear there.

INTERVIEWER: And so you left the Navy, what, in '45?

WEEDON: '45.

INTERVIEWER: And did what next?

WEEDON: I tried on my own to set up a little consulting business, and but in a few months I realized that wasn't going to work. And I was offered at Arthur D. Little. So I ended up going to work for Arthur Little. And I worked there for 50 some odd years.

INTERVIEWER: How big was it when you joined?

WEEDON: I think I was employee number three-- No wait a minute. Yes, 300 or something like that.

INTERVIEWER: 300?

WEEDON: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And by the time you left?

WEEDON: It was close to 3,000.

INTERVIEWER: And what kind of work were you doing for them? Was it technical or?

WEEDON: Well one of them included the South African project for instance, which was not technical--

INTERVIEWER: That was a little later, right?

WEEDON: --but not technical at all.

INTERVIEWER: But initially?

WEEDON: Initially I did work that was technical. But a lot of it then became market research work, marketing activities. For a while, I was responsible for the research-- laboratory research group at ADL. And then I moved on to doing marketing for ADL and ended up being the chief marketer for ADL for quite a number of years.

INTERVIEWER: Moving away from the technical into marketing type of analysis strikes me as a major shift, a very different kind of focus. Did you find yourself equally interested or more interested in marketing type questions or?

WEEDON: I found them-- you know I found them more challenging. I think I was not cut out to do laboratory work although I was closely associated with it for many years.

INTERVIEWER: But you didn't run the other way and look for a technical job again?

WEEDON: No, no.

INTERVIEWER: You made that kind-- you adapted.

WEEDON: That's right.

INTERVIEWER: And were you able to apply any of your analytical background?

WEEDON: Oh, yes indeed. Oh sure.

INTERVIEWER: Was that why it worked?

WEEDON: Yep.

INTERVIEWER: What kinds of questions or problems did you encounter as a marketing expert?

WEEDON: Well one of ADL's largest clients, in those early days I was there, was the government of Puerto Rico. And unfortunately the man that hired me at ADL who had been in charge of that whole activity died not long after I arrived. And I inherited that program. I should not have been in charge of that client. But that was just the way the ball bounced. It wasn't that I deserved it. I hadn't proven myself so to speak. But I was his number two guy. And he wasn't there and somebody had to run with the ball. So guess what? I was left with it.

And it worked out very well because I-- from the company's standpoint-- was able to develop that client into a much bigger and the largest client ADL had for quite a number of years. And much of the work was of a marketing nature. The Puerto Rican government hired Arthur D. Little to help it figure out how to develop and industrialize the economy in Puerto Rico. And I spend a lot of time pounding the pavement, going around to see companies here and try to encourage them to set up branches-- manufacturing branches-- in Puerto Rico. It was--

INTERVIEWER: Some of these were pharmaceutical companies? They put a big pharmaceutical.

WEEDON: --yes, that's right. But a lot of mundane things. The companies that made so-called pearl buttons so that they're made out of clam shells or the like from the Midwest. But we got the majority of that industry moved to Puerto Rico. Labor was cheap down there. Very intensive labor product. So buttons were one. But a lot of sewing activities moved down. Shoe making. It was a lot of fun.

INTERVIEWER: You were chairman of Arthur D. Little International at one point. What was that? Was the company developing a wider international business?

WEEDON: Yes. It didn't affect what we were doing, but it was a desirable thing to do from a tax and legal standpoint.

INTERVIEWER: Did you find that the problems and companies outside the United States were pretty much like those inside or were you mostly-- was it a question of overseas companies wanting to do business in the US?

WEEDON: There was a lot of that. But there were-- I don't know what the proportion was, but probably fifty-fifty-- was work to help the foreign companies improve their own performance domestically in terms of becoming more efficient and figuring out how to enter the US markets was a closely associated part of that.

INTERVIEWER: You were also chairman of A. D. Little's Management Education Institute? What was that?

WEEDON: I did quite a lot of work in developing countries, partly because of the experience that we got in Puerto Rico. Which in the economic development world was probably the most successful of any of those kind of efforts. Partly because the Puerto Ricans-- importantly because the Puerto Ricans had duty-free access to the US market. But nonetheless, it was a very successful program. And so a lot of other countries heard about it and so we got a number of assignments working for countries that wanted to develop their economies.

And one of those projects, which was paid for by USAID, was for the government of Nigeria. And we were asked to come in and set up institutions within the Nigerian government to aid it in its economic development. And one of the requirements was that we would educate, train, Nigerians to take over the jobs that we were doing. Well after the first year, we issued our report for the year and we could show that we'd been pretty successful in everything except train Nigerians to take over.

And our excuse-- and I think it was legitimate-- was that the Puerto Rican government, I'm sorry not Puerto Rican, excuse me, the Nigerian government on Monday morning would assign people to work with us to be the candidates, trainees, and by Friday they would have transferred them to other jobs because they were short of this quality of people. So our excuse was you can't do much in a week. And the concept was that these people would come and stay with us month after month.

So USAID people said well how are you going to do-- you have a requirement to do this training-- how are you going to do it? So we decided the only way to do it was to bring the Nigerians to the United States, not train them on the job, but get them away from Nigeria so that then they were more under our control, and the Nigerian government couldn't transfer them at the end of each week off to something else. So we made arrangements with a couple of colleges-- one of which was Tufts. I've forgotten what the other one was-- to provide training for these students which we set up with the colleges, kind of the goal of what ought to be done. And that we got to the Christmas season and realized that the Nigerian government didn't have the money to take these people back to Nigeria for the holidays and we didn't want them floating around at loose ends.

So we brought them into Arthur D. Little here in Cambridge. And we brought several of the people that we had working full-time in Nigeria back to provide this group of Nigerians with instruction as to what they needed to be doing. And at the end of the year, the Nigerians were asked by AID to give an assessment of what their experience had been on this one year here in the US. And they said being on the campuses was not great. They were black. There weren't that number of blacks, especially in Northern higher education campus at that point.

Item two, they were older than the students, so the interaction was poor. And they said on top of that, they said we learned a lot more at the two or three weeks they were in Cambridge at Arthur D. Little. So USAID said you better take this over and not rely on institutions because they're not relevant to these people.

So we took it over. And I've kind of forgotten when we actually set up the management institute, but I think it may have been after the Nigerian program. I know that the big slug of students that we had in the program in the early was from Iran and some of the Arab countries rather than the African countries, although we've kept getting African students. So we ended up with a student body which was mixed. It was not all Nigerians or all anything. And after awhile these people came to us and said, we're working a lot harder here at Arthur D. Little than we know our compatriots are at other schools, and they're ending up with degrees. And therefore they get a bigger paycheck when they get back home because they'd gotten degrees. So then we undertook a campaign to-- without changing our program because we felt we were doing what we should be doing-- but to become a degree granting institution. And that was quite an interesting process.

INTERVIEWER: So you became a degree granting--

WEEDON: We became a degree granting institution.

INTERVIEWER: College diplomas?

WEEDON: Master's degrees. It juggled a bit, but essentially it was a MBA. And then we became even more-- that improved our popularity with the students. So we got people from many, many countries.

INTERVIEWER: Did you develop the curriculum yourself or you had a team?

WEEDON: I didn't.

INTERVIEWER: You didn't?

WEEDON: But people who worked for me did. And actually that school was sold out of the bankruptcy estate of Arthur D. Little and is running not far down the river from us right here now.

INTERVIEWER: So it's still there.

WEEDON: A different name, but they're following the same sort of curriculum that we had devised. And some of the people who were employees of Arthur D. Little are still teaching in the school. It had a number of pluses. One of which, I felt was really important, and that was we did not have tenure. We hired staff year by year. And if they did a good job, they got hired the next year. If they didn't do a good job, they didn't get hired. And each year we evaluated each member of the faculty-- When I say we, the administration and the students participated in the evaluation. And one of the advantages that we had was that we ran a 12 month program and we covered everything that was required for a MBA in the 12 months program. Which was good for the sponsors because they only have the-- were supporting these people away from home for one year rather than for two years.

INTERVIEWER: How big an operation was this in terms of these of either the number of students or the a number of faculty or?

WEEDON: I don't know about faculty. A lot of our faculty, we actually hired professors who were in other schools and who just came in. Because we organized our program quite differently. We didn't stretch a particular subject out for a full term. We did it in concentrated blocks, one subject then one subject. And there are some schools that do that here in the US for US Students so--

INTERVIEWER: Colorado College, maybe.

WEEDON: I guess. That's right, I was saying Colorado. Actually, Colorado School for Women or something like that? I don't know. But anyway, if it isn't Colorado it's one of them for sure. But that was a big advantage that we had. And that way we were able to contract with professors for a block of time. And they and we knew what it and knew in advance and so. You asked about size. Sorry, I don't know the number of faculty members.

INTERVIEWER: But roughly students, are we talking a couple hundred or a couple thousand?

WEEDON: Oh, no, no, no, no. Come on. Way, way down.

INTERVIEWER: Order of magnitude?

WEEDON: I suspect that there were like 20 or 25 professors that were before the students during the course of a year. And the student body varied. One year, because of a ruckus with the State Department and federal funding, we actually canceled the program. And one year, maybe two years, we had to double up and we ran a morning program and an afternoon program because we had so many students.

INTERVIEWER: In talking maybe a few hundred or?

WEEDON: It's not a few hundred, but I think an average class would have been 30, 40, something like that.

INTERVIEWER: Kind of like the Executive Program to Sloan.

WEEDON: Right.

INTERVIEWER: So you've been a very active alumnus at MIT for a long time. What drew you back and what engaged you with the place once you graduated?

WEEDON: Well it was easy in that I was next door, because Arthur D. Little had a building just abutting the east end of campus. And I had a boss at Arthur D. little who was class of '17 and who was a very loyal alumnus and had been president of the Alumni Association. And he shoved me. And as a matter of fact he said-- and I started not being as diligent about MIT as he wanted, an he gave me the devil and said, you've got to put MIT higher on your priority list of the things that you do including the work that you do for Arthur D. Little. He said, so just keep that in mind because that's part of my evaluation of your performance in the company. And so I was given the opportunity, I was given the time, and I was pushed.

INTERVIEWER: What was your reaction to being pushed? I mean did you--

WEEDON: I thought-- I was very happy to have this marvelous opportunity.

INTERVIEWER: You didn't say this is not of his business?

WEEDON: No, no, no, no. Why do that? And as I say, I was right next door which made it right very easy.

INTERVIEWER: And where was the first toehold? Was it in activities of the Boston Club of MIT alumni or--

WEEDON: I don't think there was a Boston Club.

INTERVIEWER: --fundraising or?

WEEDON: Well, early on it was fundraising. MIT's first capital fund drive was the mid-century fund which ran around and over 1950. And I volunteered to work on the fund and ended up being a solicitor. And I was given some very unpromising prospects because I was looked at as, rightly, as a young kid. But I went out and went around and visited several alumni as a part of that campaign. And I have been involved in every campaign, capital campaign, since that time.

INTERVIEWER: How many is that, do you know? Two or three or four or five?

WEEDON: No, no, no. More than all those numbers. Oh yeah, there have been quite a few along the way. And somewhere along there I got involved in the alumni fund and I actually became the chairman of the alumni fund for a year or two years or something like that. So I've been involved in student fundraising sort of from day number one. So the alumni fund was started-- I didn't know it existed-- in the same year that I came to MIT as a freshman. That was the first alumni fund year was 1937.

INTERVIEWER: And so your first unpromising prospects, did you squeeze something out of them or?

WEEDON: No. As a matter, I was shocked at the unfortunate circumstances of some of these people. And MIT in those days knew very little about its alumni and therefore people like me who drew names were not given much help. Some of the people that I called on never should have been called on at all. But they were on the list of alumni so they were passed out.

INTERVIEWER: Did you work with the association over the years or the development office to begin to figure out ways to develop more useful lists and better support for fundraisers?

WEEDON: Yep. And kind of how we approached people and where we placed our [INAUDIBLE] in the-- when I was chairman of the alumni fund board there was only one professional associated with it, a fellow named Chic Kane. And one of the things I did accomplish was getting him to hire a number two person. And we began to grow our staff.

INTERVIEWER: How did you accomplish that? I mean somebody had to put up the funds. Did you have to--

WEEDON: MIT put the funds up.

INTERVIEWER: But did you have to go lobby the president or chairman of MIT at the time or what was involved?

WEEDON: I think the it was just another item in the Alumni Association budget. It was not that big an item in the total budget, so I don't recall that was any great challenge.

INTERVIEWER: How much of a culture of giving would you say existed at MIT then and what about now?

WEEDON: Oh, it was essentially none then except for the very wealthy people that essentially the president went after for big gifts. The likes of George Eastman for instance. There was no general approach to the alumni. There was no knowledge about their capacity. There was no interest in trying to inform them as to what needed to be done.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think MIT was trailing other elite universities at that point or were most of them in this stage?

WEEDON: I don't know the answer to that. Unlike today where we share information back and forth with other universities, we didn't do that at all in those days. And so I really don't have any idea.

INTERVIEWER: Do you remember being solicited by your prep school for example for donations at that time?

WEEDON: Not very effectively. And my prep school really does theirs-- at least for those of us who aren't in close geographically. I don't think that anybody has ever solicited me. I got mail pieces, some of them very good. I know I've never been visited and I think I've never had a telephone call.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that personal solicitations are very much more effective than just general mailing?

WEEDON: No question about that. I don't think anybody is stimulated to-- I say I want to take that back. You should never say and anybody or never because there are surprises that happen all the time. But people respond much better to face to face solicitations.

INTERVIEWER: Is everybody willing to be solicited?

WEEDON: No. And I was thrown out of a house by a wife almost physically. And she was very athletic.

INTERVIEWER: How long ago was that?

WEEDON: Probably 10 years ago now.

INTERVIEWER: But only once in all these years of fundraising?

WEEDON: Yeah, but mind you I had an appointment with her husband who knew what I was coming to talk about and wanted to talk about it. And was thinking of setting up a life income plan for her. And she joined the meeting after we'd been at it for five or 10 minutes. And she said, I want you out of here right now. She said, I don't want him doing any plan of that kind. I want all of his money. And she was a good deal younger than he. And it was obvious who was likely to be around.

INTERVIEWER: Were ever able to come back to him without her?

WEEDON: Yes, but unfortunately he was beginning to lose some of his mental capacity and I never got the big gift which we should've gotten from him. But he did give us some. And anyway.

INTERVIEWER: Is there some trick to doing solicitations? How do you do it?

WEEDON: Well you have to be willing-- you have to be willing to be prepared to ask. And people who undertake to solicit but don't ask don't get anywhere. And you don't get any gift. My largest gift was from a man who told me that he was delighted see me periodically and appreciated learning more about what was going on at MIT. He's not in this local area. But he said, if you pester me for a gift, you're not going to get very much and if you don't, MIT will do very well. Now I've had people say that to me before and they up and die and MIT gets zilch. So I'm kind of used to that. But in this case, I thought this man was telling me the way it was. So I never did end up asking him for a gift. And he unfortunately passed away. And he left MIT \$93 million.

INTERVIEWER: Wow.

WEEDON: It was the biggest chunk of cash to ever arrive. Not the biggest gift, but the biggest piece of money.

INTERVIEWER: Can you tell us who that is?

WEEDON: Yeah. A fellow named Richard Dickson

INTERVIEWER: Did he live in this area?

WEEDON: No. He lived in Arizona. That's why I said-- he hadn't been back to campus in many, many decades. But he was a -- the way that the bulk of that money got to the family was that his father invented Band-Aids and Johnson & Johnson paid him very handsomely for that invention. It obviously has paid Johnson & Johnson very handsomely. And this fellow had inherited that money from his father. I think he made some money too, but anyway it started with the J&J Band-Aids.

INTERVIEWER: So you say your first regular campaign dated back many years. What was that like? Do you recall how it was structured or how big it was or just how they went about it in those years as they were trying to figure out what to do?

WEEDON: I was at the lowest level absolutely, a solicitor rather poor prospects. And I really wasn't in on the planning or evaluation and of that. So I really--

INTERVIEWER: Did you have thoughts about it from the outside besides, gee, it would have been helpful to know more about some of these prospects before going out and asking?

WEEDON: Oh, I think there were a lot of us who worked in the same boat. As I said, it was the first capital drive MIT had ever had. So the alumni fund was operating entirely on a US mail basis. And as a result, the solicitations-- the goal was achieved really by getting a few very large gifts. But that's almost-- that's really par for the course. But we certainly didn't make as much progress in developing or cultivating people. Now I think at the end of it everybody realized that more of that had to be done and I think MIT became more thoughtful about how it raised money.

INTERVIEWER: And so by the time MIT got to its second capital campaign, had it learned from the first one?

WEEDON: Oh, yes. I think it's still learning. There are new things to try and not just because they're new but because we learn how to be more effective. And today that's a much bigger role, at least in pursuing substantial donors. But more involvement of paid staff. And it's kind of disappointing to me. But in the development office, there is not anybody who's a MIT graduate.

INTERVIEWER: Has there been in the past? And in other words, is this unusual or is it just that somehow it doesn't work that way.

WEEDON: It's not unusual at all. The development professionals tend to move from institution to institution as campaigns-- they come with a new campaign and they leave when that campaign tapers off and ends and go to the next institution. And so there's a lot of movement. There have been times when we've had-- well, I can think at one point for several years in the campaign that we had that I ran in the late '80s-- we had three MIT graduates on the paid staff. But now and in the recent past there haven't been any. And it's interesting because donors occasionally ask-- because I travel around with these people-- and donors ask the paid staff, where did you go to school. And then when it turns out to be XYZ, there's a certain amount of disappointment I think on the part of donors that the person isn't really from MIT, and it just--

INTERVIEWER: What is the balance between? I mean even if you had paid staff who aren't necessarily graduates, don't you at the same time have a volunteer organization and how do you pair them together?

WEEDON: Well not-- I say not easily because there are unfortunately-- there are importantly some, but there are not many people who really look forward to going out and asking people for money. And so a lot of people will say, well I'll introduce you, I'll be a host at an event or something like that, but don't ask me to ask someone for money. And I understand that. But once you realize that you're-- I'm really quoting from Tom Cabot-- I remember when we were starting up a campaign, I was a member of the Corporation at that time. I've forgotten which campaign, but that probably puts it in the '70s or so. And there was a discussion about how we were going to run this new campaign. And Tom Cabot-- who didn't himself go to MIT, went to Harvard, but was on the Corporation-- stood up and said, remember that you are providing an opportunity to people in asking them to give. And don't think that it's not an opportunity, because in their hearts they'll feel it as an opportunity and you'll want to present it with that attitude. I always remembered that.

INTERVIEWER: Did it change the way you ask for money?

WEEDON: Yes, I think it did.

INTERVIEWER: Did you present it that way to potential donors?

WEEDON: In some degree, yes.

INTERVIEWER: So if you could structure, change fundraising, create a whatever-- I mean, you've been at it so many years, what would you do?

WEEDON: I don't think there's any magic. I think just getting out and hitting the payment, so to speak, going around asking people is all you can do. You have to try to figure out what their interests are, what's going to stimulate them, or what is turning them off in the case of the people that are turned off. And those people exist. But I think it's just a matter of going around and making contact with people.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think there are ways to get the volunteer portion of the fundraising effort geared up more than it is or is it doing very well?

WEEDON: Well MIT has embarked on a new structure for the development committee which is devised try to do just what you're talking about. And I think it's a good way to try. And I don't think it will be anything but more successful as a result of this approach.

INTERVIEWER: Because? What about it makes you think that it might be effective?

WEEDON: Well, because MIT-- in selecting people for the development committee-- MIT has tried to find people who are both able to give themselves, as well as being willing to work. And up until now, the structure of that work has not really been that apparent to anybody. In other words, we want you to work on helping us to spread MIT's name, spread the word, but that's kind of loose and a person can't really respond to that. But now MIT is going to come up with specific kind of assignments for members of the development committee and I think everybody-- I think the members will like that better and I think that MIT will benefit as a result.

INTERVIEWER: Assignments being, here's a list of five or 10 potential givers?

WEEDON: And how do we-- can you give us ideas on how we should approach Mr. And Mrs. X. And that really has been intended but it's not been asked for as specifically as it is now.

INTERVIEWER: The Corporation under Dana Mead as chairman has tried to institutionalize the training of certain things such as participation on the visiting committees, which always just happened before. But now there's a kind of boot camp that says here's how you go about it. Does something like that need to happen on fundraising or is it happening? Could it happen? Would people sit still for it? Can it be taught? That's a whole bunch of questions.

WEEDON: Individuals are different. And it's hard to say any particular approach applies to everybody. There are a lot of people on the Corporation development committee who, if you inquire in a little depth, you'll find have been active in raising money for their hospitals or for their schools before they went to college or university, maybe for another college or university. There's a whole lot of that kind of background which is in the capability memory of people who were trying to get to ask for money for MIT. So a lot of those people you won't sit still for-- and understandably, they've been out and beating the pavement, many of them very successfully-- and so it's a training program for them. An educational program, things that MIT is trying to do, what it needs money for, why, so on and so forth. They'll sit still for that, but not a program on how to be better solicitor. But there are some other people who would love to learn and one of the best ways I think to learn is to get somebody who's been doing for awhile to go out with people and actually make live calls.

INTERVIEWER: Interesting. When you make live calls, how much do you do over the telephone and how often, what do you do face to face? Do you always try to see them, and if so in their home or their office or some neutral place? Is there a formula?

WEEDON: Well, there's no formula. All of those-- literally all those apply. And there's one man-- unfortunately he's showing his age-- who used to like to meet at Dunkin' Donuts for instance. So we met at Dunkin' Donuts. That was his choice of location. Not his office, not his home. So I think you can indeed find an example to support any one process.

INTERVIEWER: So who-- are you responsible for a certain set of potential donors at this point or do you get a new list every month or how does it work?

WEEDON: I have a list of a dozen or so people for whom I'm the prospect manager. And I try to keep that list down actually because the staff is supposed to-- and they are the prospect managers for-- my dozen is a tiny percentage of the total prospects after all. They are people that I've worked with over the years and where I have built a relationship that nobody else has with them. And they are candidates for, and some of them have made, really large gifts. But by and large each member of the staff has two or three hundred prospects. And I really spend my time in the field going around with prospect managers who want me to go visit people that they have as prospects. And so I join them with that.

INTERVIEWER: And you're the one with the MIT degree who, if they ask did you go to MIT, you can raise your hand?

WEEDON: Exactly. There are enough people on the staff who would like me to spend some time-- to use up the time that I have available.

INTERVIEWER: Are you coming into the Institute every day or several days a week?

WEEDON: No. Several days a week, but I don't go in every day.

INTERVIEWER: And how do you personally think through what somebody might be willing or able or able and willing to give? Do you try to think that through?

WEEDON: Yeah. And I called on two men, one actually, one was a husband and wife, with one of the staff people just last week. And they both are retired. They live in houses that probably have a market value of around a million dollars.

INTERVIEWER: One million.

WEEDON: Yes. And they're both getting onto an age where they have to be thinking about what's going to happen to things and where they're going to be and so on. And in both cases-- much to the surprise of the staff person I was with that, much to their shock-- I said, you know what? I'd like to get you to think about giving your house to MIT. And neither of them said no. Neither of them said yes. But at least the idea that making a million dollar gift is on the table. And the house is an example of how it might be done.

INTERVIEWER: Is that the first time you tried that?

WEEDON: With them, yes.

INTERVIEWER: But you've tried it with other people?

WEEDON: Oh, I've tried it with other people.

INTERVIEWER: How did you get that idea?

WEEDON: Well, I was sitting there looking, in both cases, sitting there, looking out at the ocean. They're on the oceanfront. They live fairly close, know each other. And I said, you know these people probably have no mortgage and therefore it's all equity and they could give this away. And I figured I had to introduce, get them thinking a little bit about-- because neither one of them had given us a million dollars-- but getting them thinking a little bit about magnitude. The house was a good vehicle without talking money.

INTERVIEWER: That's an interesting idea. I mean somehow it feels less like you're asking for their money and money that they might be giving to children or grandchildren.

WEEDON: Well I've had two MIT professors give us houses, both of which were in that order of magnitude. And one--

INTERVIEWER: Because you had asked or just because they thought of it?

WEEDON: We ran luncheons for a little while-- we ought to do it again, but we don't stay at it like we should-- but we did run two or three. There were luncheons for faculty to try to interest them in giving. And giving their houses was one of the things that we brought up as a way to make a gift. And we invited our 20 senior faculty members, probably all of them retired but still active, and I'd say out of that we got two houses.

So I think we put the bee in their bonnet, but in fairness one of the people came up to me in the Infinite Corridor one day and said, Reid I'm thinking about giving MIT my house. And indeed he did. And I had two houses. But he's moved from a house here in Cambridge to a house on the North Shore in the process. And he was thinking about moving at that point anyway. So it was timely. And I kind of have forgotten how the other-- I think the other fellow raised his hand, so to speak, after that luncheon. And I sort of think that he said how about coming to my office and let's talk about my house. And he gave us his house but he retained-- his wife had died-- he retained the right to live in the house. Although he gave the house and got his tax deduction at the time that he made the gift. He's now, they're both now deceased. But that's the way those things happened.

INTERVIEWER: Do you have any idea how much money you've raised for MIT over the years?

WEEDON: Well, I've never-- 93 million dwarfs the total.

INTERVIEWER: That boosts the number.

WEEDON: Yeah, that's right. But the answer is I don't know.

INTERVIEWER: You don't keep a little running tab in your head.

WEEDON: No I don't.

INTERVIEWER: Any other tricks or gimmicks besides house that sort of have come to you or have worked along the way that not everybody might think about?

WEEDON: I'll tell you about one which has worked but I haven't been able to sell. But from the beginning and continuing today, we're not in quite such bad shape. But people graduate from MIT with little realization of the fact that their MIT education cost double what they paid in tuition. And that's been true at least since the early '30s.

Because Paul Gray undertook to have someone go back and look at what the costs have been.

Now you have to do some allocation of the money you spent as saying whether it's education or research or whatever. But anyway, presumably on a somewhat consistent basis, it's been since 1930 it's been half the tuition charged and half has come from other sources, notably endowment income. And I think it's a shame that graduates should leave here not knowing that fact. And we don't. We are beginning to encourage them to think about fundraising and to think about giving to the Alumni Fund and so on and making a gift when they graduate. But recognizing that some two thirds of the students, undergraduate students, are on scholarship or other financial aid. They're not just in an ideal position of thinking about making a significant gift the day they graduate.

But I have been proposing to the presidents of MIT, I think beginning with Jim Killian and everyone since, that we issue a tuition bill which says that the cost of your education is \$70,000. From that we're deducting the income that we have from gifts from people, which is \$35,000. Therefore we're expecting \$35,000 from you and then you deduct the financial aid and so on and finally come out to the bottom line. But at least you start out showing them what the true cost is, namely the \$70,000. And by putting it on the tuition bill you force them to at least see that.

And I think that would set the stage better for future fundraising with our alumni than anything that we could do.

There's one donor that I've been working on for years-- not very successfully but I haven't give up-- who, when I said that his education costs were covered by half with his tuition, he said, well what is tuition today. And I told him. He said well I guess I have to multiply that by four for four years and take half and say until I give that amount of money I haven't made a gift, I've just repaid what the Institute has gotten from other sources. And he proposed to use current tuition to take care of the inflation issue. And that that was an easy way to do it. I like that kind of figuring and told him so. But he hasn't come through.

INTERVIEWER: Have any of the presidents you've suggested this to given you any kind of formal reaction?

WEEDON: Yes. Paul Gray wrote an article in some MIT publication which I can't find in which she included this idea of putting the full cost on the tuition bill and attributing it to me. And it was a paragraph in article that he wrote I think primarily to the MIT campus, students and faculty, about the Institute's financial situation. And so he at least did go that far. He heard me.

And Chuck Vest has indicated that if it was possible to get any other school to go along with this idea so that we weren't out there alone. And he-- I don't know how forcefully, but he said that he brought the subject up at the Ivy League plus Stanford and MIT group of presidents at a meeting. But anyway, it didn't fly. With the people saying, we wouldn't dare do that-- the presidents saying that. I don't know why they have to worry about that I must say. And Susan Hockfield and Rafael Reif-- I talk to them about it, and they both said, yes that's an exciting idea, but we haven't moved. INTERVIEWER: Isn't one potential problem that some policymakers and many on Main Street already see tuition as being too high? And even if students aren't paying for all of it because they have grants and loans or grants and work, it's that high number sitting out there that becomes a target? And to double it would make it even more of a target rather than saying well, we're paying it, don't worry, it's really less than that. In other words, universities are paying some portion of the \$35,000 or \$38,000 that many are charging right now. But that doesn't get picked up as widely and it's not part of the public perception.

WEEDON: That's right.

INTERVIEWER: And I wonder if raising it doesn't exacerbate that problem rather than help.

WEEDON: Well it is a fact and I think hiding it is not the thing to do. I understand what you're saying.

INTERVIEWER: I guess the other-- I mean, I think it's an interesting concept and I wonder if there's another way of coming at it. But the question I wonder, in relation to that, is the extent to which universities maybe are picking up more and more of the research bill because the federal government has been backing off on some fronts. And as you say, the research and teaching are really intertwined. And yet to some extent, if you're analyzing it, you want to try to separate them. And so if, for example, MIT is doing more research than ever or carrying a bigger share of the cost of it, when you divide that number by the number of students, it's going to look higher and higher even if maybe the amount being spent directly or even semi-indirectly on education may be not growing or not growing as fast. And I don't know how you account for that portion of saying, well it's really we're paying much more for you than it looks like when you look at the tuition bill.

WEEDON: Well that's the argument against my idea. I just really think that the you're ahead if you come clean and tell people what the facts are. And that you're better off going that kind of route-- no matter what the subject or topic is-- than if you try to hide something which doesn't get anybody anywhere.

INTERVIEWER: I wonder if, short of putting that kind of price tag on it, there are other ways of educating both your student body as they come through and your alumni to the math, the arithmetic of college finances. Particularly in an area like this one, the question of how big the endowment is and what kind of income and other support there is in everybody's face.

WEEDON: Well you hit the nail on the head when you talk about the research because how you allocate that research is a critical item in this whole calculation. And in the case of our school at Arthur D. Little, we ran it to at least break even. And in fact if we could make a profit, which we did from time to time, that was even better. And yet our charges were not out of line with major universities-- private universities. And a substantial part of that was we didn't have any research that was carried out by the school. A lot of people who taught at the school were doing research, but they were completely separate budgets.

And this whole issue of allocation is much more of a challenge for MIT because the cost of an education here is surely a lot more than a liberal arts education. And the research costs in the liberal arts arena just are so much lower than the costs here. To set up for a new faculty member that you bring on board, just to provide the laboratory facilities, you're talking a half a million, million dollars, or more. And that's got to come from somewhere. But clearly it's not appropriate to charge all that up to education. But some of it certainly is appropriate because faculty have students in their laboratories working all the time.

INTERVIEWER: The size of some of the big university endowments has drawn a lot of attention in recent years, particularly before the markets plunged. Do potential donors that you're courting throw the size of MIT's endowment-- which I guess was up at \$10 or \$11 billion and is now around maybe \$8 billion-- at you as a reason they don't need to give because MIT is so rich already. Do you find that a challenge very much?

WEEDON: Yeah, but by and large those are people who aren't going to give and many of them don't give to anything. So I kind of shrug and say they're a poor prospect.

INTERVIEWER: And go on to the next one.

WEEDON: Yeah. It's a way of saying no.

INTERVIEWER: Let's move to a different topic. Another area that you've spent a lot of time examining for MIT and at MIT is student affairs and student life. I think you ended up chairing the Corporation committee in that area for quite a few years. How did you become assigned to that and what did you find and how did you do it?

WEEDON: I got on the Corporation as a result of being the president of the Alumni Association. And I guess that therefore I was looked at as sort of being a tie to graduates and students and that's how I fell into that particular visiting committee. Why I stayed there for so many years is not something that I think I can answer. But it's been a fun experience. MIT has had a lot of turnover of the deans of whatever. The titles have changed, but essentially Dean of Students. I think actually he didn't have the title, but yes he did-- Lobdell--

INTERVIEWER: Harold Lobdell.

WEEDON: --Harold Lobdell may have been the first Dean of Students. And his office I think consisted of himself and an assistant.

INTERVIEWER: And this was in the '60s or when you were a student?

WEEDON: This was, I think, in the '40s and into the '50s and then I can't tell you the succession because I wasn't--

INTERVIEWER: I think you became chairman of that committee, the student affairs-- and it had different names at different times-- from '62 to '67 and then from '71 to '89, which is quite a number.

WEEDON: But we had a lot of different deans. Most of them didn't have long tenure unfortunately. I think it was kind of a thankless job.

INTERVIEWER: The deanship, the Dean of Students.

WEEDON: And as a result, a lot of people turned it down. But that has made that area a difficult area. I can remember conversations with various presidents along the way about who can we get as a new Dean of Students because people were not knocking at the door for the job.

INTERVIEWER: So as chair of the visiting committee you would come in and look at how the dean was doing or you would look at how students were doing? Or how did you choose, how were you able to focus, what did you focus on?

WEEDON: Well the dean's office during my early tenure actually included athletics. There's now a separate visiting committee which I was in favor of for athletics just because we were spread so thin that it wasn't fair. But we undertook to-- and well always I sat down with the dean and said, which are the hot areas so to speak at the moment-- and we undertook at each visiting committee to dig into what was going on in two or three areas in some depth. And then you're just in a cursory manner to sort of expose the committee to speak their thoughts about other areas, but without any great penetration.

And so we looked at a lot of issues like availability of dormitories, of the quality of dorm living, the quality of the facilities. And we got into the area of student advisers, both faculty as well as graduate students who would be residents in the dormitories. And we pushed for things like let's dedicate an area for a suite for a house master and a much more modest for the graduate students who served as mentors and advisers. Those were the kinds of things that we looked at. And I think we were successful in stimulating a number of constructive changes along the way.

INTERVIEWER: Were there any areas where you thought it made sense to do something where you found you weren't successful? That somehow either they didn't agree with you or that it costs more than they had the money for?

WEEDON: We always go think of-- I haven't seen a visiting committee that has come in and said we have all the money we need or all the space we need. That's almost never happened. So we always could figure out, oh we ought to have more faculty residents and more graduate students living in the dorms. But I don't remember any specifically that are worth mentioning.

INTERVIEWER: Did the Dean of Students' office change much over the time you were looking?

WEEDON: Well that's what I was saying in the beginning, that we had a lot of change.

INTERVIEWER: What do you think were-- I mean, did it grow or what were the biggest, most important, or significant changes in how it operated?

WEEDON: It's one of those things which has driven up costs around here. The Dean of Students operation has grown very substantially over the years. There's now a heavy component of advising for instance. That's a one-on-one proposition and therefore very costly. And yet when I was here, I suspect when you were here, there were no such things as full-time advisers. You may have gotten some help--

INTERVIEWER: There were faculty advisers that I remember that I had.

WEEDON: But you didn't get help on social issues or things of that kind which are now a part of the output of our student advising programs.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that's a good thing or necessary?

WEEDON: Well it's a good thing. I guess it's necessary. The number or I should say the percentage of people that get psychiatric help is really quite high, the number of the students. In fact I think over the four years, I know it's the major-- I've been told it's the majority of students will have at least some psychiatric help. Now that's a part of the medical operation, different from the advisers, but pretty close and a substantial overlap.

INTERVIEWER: Do you have any clue as to why that is, why those numbers have grown?

WEEDON: I don't know the answer to that. But I know that it does add a lot to cost and it's added a lot of challenge for the dean's office to carry on that function. I can remember one of the early deans that I dealt with who had an open door policy for a group of students, small percentage, he was the adviser. And those people were at him all the time, like full-time. And they hung around his office or the waiting room outside his office. I really don't think much of that.

INTERVIEWER: What did he say? Was it a he?

WEEDON: It was a he, that one, yes.

INTERVIEWER: Did he have a comment as in, it's ok, they need me, I'm willing to be here?

WEEDON: Yeah that's really what it was kind of by default. But he lacked control of the situation which was the unfortunate thing.

INTERVIEWER: Do you-- the question of whether students have some kind of adult figure that they relate to as they're going through, whether they develop a relationship with one or more of their professors or with some other staff member, seems like an important one. Is that an issue that you've thought about? Or that you and your committee thought about explicitly?

WEEDON: Well I think that Margaret MacVicar's idea for UROP is the answer to the problem you're raising. And UROP does provide the opportunity for undergraduate students to get to know a professor and vice versa because of an establishment of a relationship which has a limited number of people around him. So I think that that idea of Margaret's was a great idea and it's been copied by many other universities--

INTERVIEWER: Right, with support from Congress I believe to replicate.

WEEDON: --I think that's right. And I think that's proven to be the way to do what you're implying [INTERPOSING VOICES]

INTERVIEWER: Do you have any sense-- I know that the 40th anniversary of UROP was being celebrated this week in fact-- I wonder how effective that has proven as a vehicle for students to bond with, I don't know, a professor or a post-doc or a graduate student, above and beyond the ability to carry out research in a supervised situation that really gives them opportunities to learn how to do research?

WEEDON: Well I haven't done any surveys of the subject, but I've been told that there's a lot of that bonding that exists as a result of UROP matching.

INTERVIEWER: And I guess your proposals or your point about creating housemasters and graduate tutors is another avenue for putting people at close availability to students with whom they might consultant and turn to when there are problems or issues.

WEEDON: Yeah and I've felt that the dormitories really had a real plus in having housemasters and graduate tutors or whatever they're called. And a number of years ago I went-- and those people in that role report to the Dean of Students-- and a number of years ago I went to the Dean of Students and said, we ought to be offering fraternities the same kind of advantages. And indeed a program was set up to have graduate students in fraternities. Graduate students who were not members necessarily of the fraternity and who would act as the resident tutor. I don't know how many fraternities or sororities have those people. I should know. I don't at the moment. But I know a number have and I think some still do.

INTERVIEWER: Well it sounds like when you were a student that the older fraternity members in a sense played that role. And they might not have been as much older as a professor or an adviser would be. They did have some experience and some seniority but not as much as you might want, I guess is what I'm hearing.

WEEDON: Yeah. I know that some of those-- I don't think there were any professors that played this role-- but graduate students, they were included in the meetings and briefings and training and so on sessions for the graduate students were in dormitories. So that they shared what a program might look like. And a number of them actually conducted classes, especially for the freshman, in the basic subjects--

INTERVIEWER: Kind of like tutorials?

WEEDON: --tutorials.

INTERVIEWER: The way your fraternity--

WEEDON: Yeah, like on a weekly basis.

INTERVIEWER: The Alumni Association I guess set up an alumni relations award for recognizing the importance of alumni involvement in independent living groups? Did you have a hand in shaping that or was it done? It's in your name.

WEEDON: Yeah, it was a surprise to me.

INTERVIEWER: Have you become involved, do you have any involvement in?

WEEDON: Well I've endowed the prize. Somebody twisted my arm to go to the dinner where it was announced. And as I say it was a surprise to me when it was announced my name was on it. And there was no-- actually it was a sorority that got the first award and all they got was a plaque. And I said, you know that's not going to do them a whole lot of good. So it seemed like a good idea to provide some endowment so that they would get a cash prize as well. And fortunately, I gave the money before the rapid growth of the market values in the '90s and so the fund turns out to be worth a lot more than I gave. But I can't take credit for the idea.

INTERVIEWER: But is the notion maybe that alumni can begin to fill some of that advisory role for students or?

WEEDON: Actually you're on little different-- same subject--

INTERVIEWER: I wonder if they came together in some way.

WEEDON: --yeah, but if you go back to I don't know when, there was a man who was a very active Corporation member and indeed he was secretary of the Corporation. And as such he signed for a number of years every MIT degree. He signed. I know him separately from MIT because he and his wife were good friends with my parents. So I saw them in that--

INTERVIEWER: Who was this?

WEEDON: Marshall Dalton who was the class of I think '15. And somehow he and I got to talking about the plight-- there were no sororities on campus at that point-- the plight of the fraternities and specifically this lack of just basic safety elements in the fraternity houses: working fire alarms, property egress, all those kind of things. And we knew that fraternities and now, they run very close to the line financially. And they didn't have a whole lot of money to spend on these niceties. He and I thought they were necessities.

So we began scratching our heads about what do we do about this. And out of that came the concept for the Independent Residence Development Fund, which is a way for people to give money to MIT which is a tax deductible gift and which will be available on a low interest basis to the fraternities to do things like improving the physical facilities particularly from safety standpoint. Not necessarily limited to that.

And at the same time, we thought that we needed to get to the point that our alumni leadership was much more active in their fraternities. So we set up an alumni Inter Fraternity Conference, paralleling the undergraduate student IFC, independent residence -- excuse me, Inter Fraternity Conference. And undertook to recruit people from every house to the alumni group. So Marshall and I decided that he would head up the IRDF and that I would head up this alumni Inter-Fraternity Conference. So that's the way it was set up simultaneously with the two of them. Independent but cooperating. And it's gone along like that ever since. The IRDF has been raising money over the years. The IRS has become somewhat more flexible as to how the money can be used, which is nice. And the IRDF is actually a component of our current drive for student related financial resources. And the alumni AIFC has never been stronger than it is today. They're really rolling on and actually doing things like accrediting houses and developing standards that houses have to meet in order to be on the campus.

INTERVIEWER: And are there any teeth in it or is it simply, this would be nice? In other words, do they have to meet the standards or are they simply there?

WEEDON: It's getting to the point that they're going to have to-- I think it isn't quite there yet, but it's getting close.

INTERVIEWER: Let me come back to one fundraising issue. You chaired the national campaign of one of MIT's big capital drives. Could you talk a little about what you did there and how you went about it and?

WEEDON: Well, actually, because I'm a believer in alumni and volunteer involvement, we spent much more time trying to develop alumni participation in the operation of the campaign than we have done since, or than has been done since.

And as a result, we relied in considerable measure on alumni in various geographic areas to solicit the alumni who lived or worked in the area. And so in kicking off that campaign we held a number of kickoff events. Some dinners, some were luncheons, some were breakfast, but anyway usually associated with a meal. And we had campaign committees-- well, we had a big one here in Boston and then we had one in Hartford and New Haven and New York City of course was a big deal and Philadelphia, Washington, Wilmington, and then through the rest of the country.

INTERVIEWER: And you had to show up at each one?

WEEDON: I showed up at most of them. And a paid staff person was responsible for working with the members of those on the committees. We had a kickoff occasion for the perspective donors, but we already would have had a local committee. And the staff worked with the local committee and did the follow-through after our general kickoff in the area. And it worked. We raised a lot of money that way. And I liked it because of the involvement of a lot of alumni. Now a number of alumni we thought were going to be involved didn't contribute at all in terms of work, but a number did. Enough so that we pulled that off.

INTERVIEWER: That was the one where you pushed from the original goal of 550 to 700. And I heard tell that if it were up to you it would have been higher still?

WEEDON: That's right. I lost that one.

INTERVIEWER: But maybe MIT came close even if it didn't articulate that goal?

WEEDON: Well, we didn't go much above seven hundred. Actually if one takes a hard look at the staff when we hit 700 pretty much quit and we were not able to-- since we were over, we weren't able to stimulate the staff in keeping the pressure on out in the field.

INTERVIEWER: So the lesson is aim high?

WEEDON: Yes.