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## Harold Bate and Community within the Department of Speech Pathology and Audiology

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WMU Professor Emeritus Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences Harold Bate

Friday, Feb. 24, 2023 at 10 am

Virtual Meeting via Phone Call

**Cassie:** Okay, so we are recording now, so go ahead and introduce yourself whenever you're ready, and then we'll talk about your connection to WMU.

**Hal:** I am Harold Bate, I go by the name of Hal Bate actually. I came to WMU in 1964 being hired by Dr. Charles Van Riper to develop an audiology program at Western.

I had just completed my PhD at the University of Wisconsin. And so my employment started here in 1964 and I was part of the department of, eventually, the Department of Speech Pathology and Audiology and finished my career in 2004 at the rank of full professor.

**Cassie:** And so you mentioned this, but I'm wondering if you can talk about this a little bit more, how you came to WMU and how you started talking about this opportunity with Dr. Van Riper.

**Hal:** I first met Dr. Van Riper in 1962 at a national convention. I was working on my doctorate and beginning to look for employment and a number of universities were looking for a PhD in audiology because of developments in the field and the need to add to speech and hearing programs, people with expertise in the hearing field.

So I first interviewed late in 1962 with Dr. Van Riper and visited various campuses in interviewing and came to Kalamazoo in January of 1963 for the interview and the visit to campus. And we were very impressed and pleased with everything we saw and talking with Dr. Van Riper and the staff here at that time and decided to take the job.

**Cassie:** Okay, and so when you started at WMU in the program, what did your job look like?

**Hal:** It was interesting in coming here my main job was to teach audiology classes and also be part of the Speech and Hearing Clinic and supervise students in that clinic. We were located in the Speech and Hearing building on the East Campus, primarily on the bottom floor of that building.

Actually, when I first started here, we were part of the Speech Department. So there were people in Speech Debate and Theater that were colleagues of ours. In fact, Zach York was the chair of the Speech Department, so he was my first department chair. Pretty shortly after that, our speech and hearing became Speech Pathology and Audiology Department later on.

But we were primarily on the basement level of that building because the second level of that building was health services. So it was the health clinic for the campus, which moved

out in 1969, I think it was, became the Sindecuse Center that we know today. The third floor of the building had, I think, the psychohead clinic, reading clinic, and then a few offices for, I think, theater people and others.

**Cassie:** Okay and obviously that building is gone now. Do you remember what the building looked like or what it felt like? Did it have any specific characteristics or quirks that stood out to you?

**Hal:** It definitely had quirks. (Both laugh) When Health Services moved out, we were able to also take over the second floor and we began to have most of the third floor. But it was interesting on the second floor, of course, because the various offices had lockers and bathrooms, and what we used as a seminar room had lockers and bathroom because those had been, I think, two or three-bed wards for the health clinic.

So that was an interesting aspect of we just made do with what we had in terms of the facilities. We had very little classroom spaces early on, and at one point in time or another, I taught a class in every building up there Walwood, West Hall, North Hall, and East Hall.

Even though the College of Business was primarily on the campus, we needed classroom space, so we grabbed whatever we could in teaching some of our classes. Eventually, we did get some remodeling, and we had classrooms, a couple of classrooms in that speech and hearing building that we were able to use, and seminar room and so on. So that helped a great deal.

**Cassie:** Yeah., and so in those early years of your career at WMU, what did a typical day look like for you on East Campus?

**Hal:** Well, fortunately, the Walwood Union was still there as a union, and then it was a dorm, I think also maybe the dance department.

I don't think it was a department at that time, but the dance unit was in that building. But that was great because I would come in and have breakfast at the Walwood Union before I would go over to the speech and hearing building for my day of classes and clinic work.

And it was also nice in the afternoon sometimes if I needed a break, I could go over to Walwood Union and get a good ice cream cone (chuckles). And in fact, some of my seminars with six graduate students, we could go over and meet in the Walwood Union and have our class back in part of the cafeteria there where we could have some quiet space together.

So it was really great to be able to enjoy the Walwood Union. Also, of course, the Little Theater was across the street, and so we early on would go to some plays and dance concerts over there at the Little Theater.

**Cassie:** Wow, and so you mentioned, too, that you were teaching classes and working the clinic. I'm wondering if you can tell us a little bit more about what the clinic was like, what you did there, and how long you worked in that for.

**Hal:** Well, I worked in the clinic area. We had the clinic there until just about the time I retired in 2004 and actually just a little before that, maybe a year or two, they moved. The clinic was established up on Oakland Drive in the medical center there, on the third and fourth floors of that center. But one of the things I had to do was to develop the audiology program.

So we had an area down in the basement of the speech and hearing building where we had soundproof rooms installed for hearing testing. And so I would supervise students there as people from the public came in for services, hearing services and or speech services. We had three, four, eventually eight or more rooms with the two-sided mirror so that I could observe on one side the students working with their clients on the other side.

There would be some clinic work pretty much each day. Not every day, but then usually my classes were usually Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and then Tuesday, Thursday was spent more in clinic.

And then I also conducted that night I would have what was called aural rehabilitation with adults on the nights with students, working with them one night a week on lip reading and auditory training and helping people with their hearing aids and adjusting to life with hearing loss and so on.

**Cassie:** Wow. Okay, so what classes did you teach?

**Hal:** I taught basic audiology, which all the students would take, speech students and those who might be looking ahead to audiology, and then courses like Pediatric Audiology and Rehabilitative Audiology Communication Problems of the Aged. Let's see some courses related to hearing aids. And I think that's pretty much it in terms of the different classes that I taught.

**Cassie:** Okay, and so how did the department, do you think, change while you were there throughout your career? How did it grow?

**Hal:** Of course, Dr Van Riper was well known nationally and internationally as one of the fathers, you might say, of the field of speech pathology.

**Cassie:** Right.

**Hal:** And there were changes being made in the profession around the time I came, and the profession nationwide was moving toward a master's degree requirements for people in speech pathology. And so there were a number of changes that we had to make. We became a department of our own, and then we had to develop more coursework, hire on more faculty, and then my task was to also develop the audiology to support the speech pathology program. And then I was also given the task of developing a master's degree in audiology by 1972.

**Cassie:** Wow.

**Hal:** The department was seeking accreditation nationally, and we were among the early programs to receive that and became a nationally recognized program in the field of speech pathology and audiology.

Then over time, beyond the master's degree in audiology, the department developed a doctoral degree in audiology, an AUD degree. And that's in existence today.

**Cassie:** Right. Wow. And I'm wondering, do you remember anything about the people that you worked with during your career? Was there anybody that you were particularly close with or worked closely with during your time?

**Hal:** Well, yes, quite a number of people. Of course, one of my closest friends was Dr. Robert Erickson. He eventually became chair of our department and then retired a few years before I did in terms of when I came in 1964, there is now only one other living colleague, and that is Donna OS, who also lives in the retirement community where I live now as well and I don't know whether she's been interviewed, but she was here before I was actually, she was a student here—

**Cassie:** Wow.

**Hal:** —prior to my coming here in 1964, but she and I think are the last remaining ones of that 1964 group.

**Cassie:** Okay.

**Hal:** But the department grew pretty fast in the late 60s.

**Cassie:** And do you remember anything about your students at the time? Was there anybody that stuck out to you or any memories with any students or student groups?

**Hal:** Well, yeah, there are some students I have still stayed in touch with from back fairly early years.

But one of the students I remember well, who has unfortunately now passed in the last couple of years, was Richard Baldwin. And we developed a friendship over the years, and he went on to become Superintendent of Special Education for the state of Michigan. But he and I would meet in our later years both after he retired.

Once a month, he lived in the Lansing area, we would meet once a month over at Windshulers in Marshall for lunch. But, yeah, a number of students that I had, many of them are now working here in Kalamazoo area as audiologists, and some of them actually also became members of the faculty at one point of time or the other.

**Cassie:** Okay. And. I also was wondering, over the course of your career at WMU in the department, what did Dr. Van Riper's role look like and how did that change as he began to leave?

**Hal:** At first he was the chair of the department, of course, developing the program. I can't remember the year that he stepped aside from that and we had a new chair, and then he became a distinguished University professor, but he maintained an office in the department and was an active member of the department for a good while. But then he stepped aside, retired to his home out on Milham Avenue.

**Cassie:** And I just had a few more questions for you. Do you have any recollections about events that were held on East Campus? I know you mentioned that sometimes you go to the Little Theater to watch different performances, and I'm wondering if any memories of events or any performances stick out to you.

**Hal:** Not specifically, no. I liked being on the East Campus cuz I was up on the hill. I just felt like I was in a small college up in the hills, and the West Campus was someplace else in a different university, you might say. Of course, I had to go over there on occasion for the library and committee meetings or something like that, but otherwise I enjoyed the isolation up on the hill.

I was never involved in the other facilities across Oakland Drive on the west side other than the Little Theater, and I don't remember specifics of plays there and so on, really, cuz it's been so long.

**Cassie:** Right.

**Hal:** I do remember unique things related to our building, which was interesting. It was a challenging building because of the steam heat. Registers were always breaking. You couldn't control the steam heat well.

So even in the middle of winter, you might have windows open because you could not control the steam-

**Cassie:** My goodness!

**Hal:** Steam heat, despite having some of the registers replaced, it just was a challenge. And they were always breaking down. And I remember, I think it was usually in the spring, quite an outbreak of termites you would encounter.

Eventually, the front doors were replaced with better doors and so on. We did have some remodeling money given to us to develop some classrooms and other things. However, much of the money got used up in code regulations, which, if you have a lot of remodeling money, then you have to bring some things up to code, like fire doors and so on. So a lot of that money got used up that way. But we did manage to get some classrooms set up and so on.

**Cassie:** Okay.

**Hal:** And that building also had an interesting attic, which you could only access through the men's restroom on the third floor. And we had found some interesting things up there that made us think somebody was sneaking in and even staying there at times.

**Cassie:** Really??

**Hal:** But no one was ever discovered.

**Cassie:** What was discovered up there?

**Hal:** Just some clothing and other articles and so on that led us to believe that somebody had been up there at some time or another. But nothing was ever discovered.

**Cassie:** Wow, that's interesting.

**Hal:** And, of course, I remember all of the buildings that were on the grounds of the state hospital, almost all of those are gone now it's just the main building.

But it was covered with several buildings when I came here. And I remember the tennis courts down below. I played tennis. We'd go down below on the east side of what is now Heritage, I think, but East Hall. So that was some great memories down there as well.

**Cassie:** Yeah, were those nice tennis courts, too, or were they pretty old?

**Hal:** No, they were pretty nice. I mean, not like today, but they were very decent tennis courts.

**Cassie:** Okay.

**Hal:** In fact, that was where I think the tennis team played at that time.

**Cassie:** All right, okay. Wow, yeah. And I just had a few more questions for you, but I wanted to ask, what do you think impacted you the most over your 40-year career at WMU— whether it be a person, an event, something that happened, or a place, whatever else it might be— what do you think impacted you the most?

**Hal:** I think probably the primary thing that stands out was the collegiality in our department. We had a group of faculty members over the years who got along very well, not terribly political in terms of factions and so on. Unlike other departments, we had, I think, a good ability to come together on getting things done.

And we all enjoyed a lot of things outside of the department like get-togethers and so on. Some of us would get together with our families and go out and cut down Christmas trees and all that sort of thing. It was a very good group to work with. And so those are outstanding memories for me in terms of that.

**Cassie:** Yeah, and what sort of department get-togethers would you have?

**Hal:** Well, we would have events where we would involve the students, invite them to our homes or whatever for Christmas party or whatever else.

**Cassie:** Oh wow, yeah.

**Hal:** And we all helped each other out with our children. And as our families developed that we would go to plays or concerts together or movies together, many of us. And we, of course, we'd have events out at Dr. Van Riper's home on Milham Avenue. And saw a variety of potlucks together and so on.

**Cassie:** It sounds like it was a really tight knit community then.

**Hal:** Yes, it was, yeah.

**Cassie:** Wow, and do you have any memories or any stories that you remember during one of these get-togethers?

**Hal:** Nothing that comes to mind immediately, I'm afraid.

**Cassie:** That's alright, no worries.

**Hal:** Yeah. I mean, I just remember a lot of fun, whether somebody was retiring or special birthday or something of that nature. We would all get together at one of the homes and just have a good time celebrating.

**Cassie:** Yeah. Now, on that note and coming to the end of your 40-year career, then, did you celebrate your retirement in any way?

**Hal:** The department actually there were three of us who retired at the end of 2004.

And so the department had a nice big dinner and celebration and toasting and so on. And we held it down at the downtown, at the women's library, I think it is, building. And that was a very memorable event.

**Cassie:** Yeah. And were there any other memories that you'd like to share? Were there any topics that we didn't touch on that you wanted to end our conversation with?

**Hal:** Well, I think we have covered everything that I had in mind here.

I do remember that James Miller was the president when I came. And Russell Seibert was the vice president. Corny Lowe was the dean at that time. We were in the College of Arts and Sciences, or liberal arts maybe it was called at that time. Eventually, we became in the new College of Health and Human Services.

But I have good memories of having good relationships with the president and the vice president, the dean... just a very friendly group. Over on West Campus in what is now the Bernhardt Center, there were bowling alleys and pool tables and so on, so you could go there and bowl, play pool and Miller might be there doing the same thing.

**Cassie:** Wow.

**Hal:** So it was a nice congenial group. I think it was only... when I came here in 1964, it was only 12,000 students. So it really grew quite fast through the 60s early 70s.



**Cassie:** Right, yeah. So when you came, the relationship with faculty and higher-up administration was pretty good. It was fairly strong?

**Hal:** Very good.

**Cassie:** Right. And then you said it grew rapidly in the in the 60s and 70s, how did that impact your department at the time?

**Hal:** Well, of course our department grew as well. So in terms of the undergraduate program, some of the class sizes were starting to get up and we needed to divide some.

We tried to keep them under 30, certainly in terms of undergraduates. But my classes would usually run 20 to 25 in the undergraduate classes. And my graduate classes in audiology would be only about six or eight. In speech pathology, it would be more like 20 or so.

But yes, we had to start controlling enrollment more in terms of what we could handle. And then also in terms of what we could provide in the way of clinical experiences, what was required there.

**Cassie:** Yeah. And do you feel that after Miller there was still support from administration for your department?

**Hal:** Yes, very much. So because of both our department and occupational therapy in particular had nationwide reputations and so it was important for the administration to support those and also to promote them. They were talking about the university, so yes, that was very important.

**Cassie:** Okay. Yeah. So I don't have any other questions. Was there anything else that you wanted to say at the end of our time?

**Hal:** No, it's been interesting looking back over, trying to think back over the things. I even went online to look at some of... there's several pieces of history online related to the campus and so on, but it's very interesting to think back.

**Cassie:** Yes. Well, I'm glad that we could connect and that you could share your story. I really appreciate you talking to me today.

**Hal:** Okay, well, thank you very much, too.

**Cassie:** Thank you. And I'll send you the form to your email, but if you ever run us any photos or if you want me to go looking for some of the archives, just let me know and I'd be happy to do that.

**Hal:** Okay, thank you very much.

**Cassie:** Thank you. Have a great rest of your day, Hal. And stay warm.

**Hal:** You too.

**Cassie:** Thank you. Bye.

**Hal:** Bye.