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F O R E W O R D

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**I**N THIS ILLUMINATING MEMOIR, Marvin Wachman, son of Russian Jewish immigrants, reflects on his six-decade odyssey in American higher education. A quintessential liberal optimist, Wachman apparently never met anyone of irredeemable value or virtue. Nor did he ever encounter a problem that could not be resolved through patience, perseverance, understanding, good humor, and a willingness to put oneself in the other person's shoes, at least long enough to resolve otherwise irreconcilable differences. Marvin never sees people as friend or foe, hero or heretic, facilitator or roadblock along his intended path, and he did not write a memoir to avenge himself on his rivals or second-guess his successors. Rather, he seems perpetually inclined to see the best in all of us. Marvin Wachman's life and career as teacher, scholar, humanist, and lifelong advocate of human rights and equality of opportunity exemplify the better angels of our nature.

Some may choose careers in higher education as an outlet for their creative energies, and some merely as a means of livelihood. By contrast, Marvin sees his role in higher education as part of a lifelong quest to reify ideals ingrained in his youth. Those ideals, by his own definition broadly encompassed within America's liberal tradition, were nurtured in classrooms of a dozen prestigious institutions around the world, tested on the battlefields of Europe, dissected and reexamined in a series of difficult and challenging administrative positions. At the peak of the 1960s Civil Rights Movement, Wachman served with notable distinction as the white president of Lincoln University, the nation's oldest traditionally black university, and he set a steady, prudent, often inspired course in steering Temple University through the series of economic crises besetting higher education in the 1970s.

This first-person narrative tells us much about Wachman's career and his perspectives on ever evolving challenges facing American higher education. What it cannot tell us – because Wachman's modesty prohibits more than passing reference to accolades – is how great was his impact on the people he met and influenced and the institutions he has led in a long teaching and administrative career. "A teacher affects eternity," Henry Adams wrote, and surely in Wachman's case, "he can never tell where his influence stops."

Marvin Wachman's chosen title – *The Education of a University President* – immediately brings to mind *The Education of Henry Adams* (1907), in which Henry Brooks Adams (1838–1918), intellectual scion of the famous political family, offered sage observations on the human condition. But Marvin Wachman is not the preachy, pedantic type, eager to offer wordy philosophical proscriptions. Rather, his memoir is filled with common-sense observations, and one must often read between the lines to find the deeper essence of the lesson gained from each experience, as Wachman humbly invites readers to draw their own conclusions.

The organizing theme of Wachman's memoir is his continual effort to learn in an ever changing world, to become educated to its nuances and shifting boundaries, transforming social trends and political reverberations, all with respect to the challenges posed to American higher education and, therefore, also to him personally. Two of Henry Adams's postulates resonate throughout Wachman's memoir: "All experience is an arch, to build upon" and "Knowledge of human nature is the beginning and end of political education."

From his childhood in Milwaukee and growing to maturity during the Great Depression while overcoming the often rampant anti-Semitism of the era, Marvin advanced himself using his knowledge of human nature and keen political intuition. He leveraged prodigious skills on the tennis court and a congenial personality to open otherwise closed doors. Combining manifest social skills with an abiding intellectual curiosity, a strong work ethic, and a determined will to succeed, Wachman honed innate leadership talents in a succession of challenging situations of increasing responsibility.

Wachman received his undergraduate degree from Northwestern University and completed graduate work at the University of Illinois, defending his Ph.D. dissertation (on the Socialist Party in Milwaukee) the weekend before his induction into the U.S. Army in August 1942. Ultimately experiencing combat in France, Marvin Wachman may have been the only platoon sergeant in the U.S. Army during World War II who held a Ph.D. When the war ended, he taught at a GI College in Biarritz, France, before accepting appointment in the History Department at Colgate University, where he rose quickly to the rank of full professor. Wachman went on to pioneer the establishment of American studies as a separate discipline, first in the United States, and then in European universities through his directorship of the Salzburg (Austria) Seminar.

In 1961, two luminaries of African American history, Thurgood Marshall and Ralph Bunche, personally persuaded Wachman to assume the presidency

of Lincoln University in Pennsylvania. After an eventful eight and one half years filled with myriad accomplishments, during which the Civil Rights Movement shifted emphasis away from integration and became more militant, Wachman selflessly decided that Lincoln appropriately required an African American president, so he resigned to accept the position of vice president for academic affairs at Temple University. Some measure of Wachman's influence at Lincoln can be gleaned from his final commencement when he found himself embarrassed by a surfeit of speakers. When Supreme Court Chief Justice Earl Warren, Carl Stokes of Cleveland (the first black mayor of a large American city), and the Reverend Jesse Jackson all agreed to speak, Marvin seamlessly incorporated these three dignitaries into a deftly managed and memorable farewell commencement.

Arriving at Temple in January 1970, Marvin was greeted immediately by student sit-ins protesting university expansion plans and confronted that summer by the Black Panthers, who held their national convention on Temple's campus. That fall, I joined Temple's History Department, and in the years since I have worked with Marvin in various capacities, as a faculty member and in several administrative positions, including acting dean of the graduate school. Like many others, I came to appreciate Marvin's abiding commitments to academic excellence, to the responsibilities of the urban university as a vehicle for social change, and to Temple's mission and all associated with it.

On July 1, 1973, Marvin Wachman succeeded Paul R. Anderson, becoming Temple's sixth president. His appointment won the unanimous endorsement of the nominating committee and the overwhelming support of administrators, faculty, alumni, and students. "All constituencies approve choice," read the *Temple Times*, an administration newspaper. He was anointed "Marvelous Marv" by the Temple student newspaper, and the Temple marching band, in what must have been a first for that or any era, saluted the president-elect by spelling out "Marv" during a football halftime performance.

The complex roles of a university president, University of California Chancellor Clark Kerr once observed, include those of "leader, educator, wielder of power, . . . officeholder, caretaker, inheritor, consensus seeker, persuader, bottleneck. But he is mostly a mediator." Indeed, most of Marvin Wachman's time at Temple appears to have been taken up with mediating one crisis or another.

A joke circulating among university administrators tells of a president who awakens one night from a nightmare in a cold sweat, trembling and ranting. His concerned wife asks, "What's the matter?" He answers, "I just dreamt that we had *two* hospitals and *two* football teams." Most of Marvin Wachman's

presidency was consumed by one financial crisis after another, the most serious centering on the accumulated debt of Temple University Hospital, which threatened the survival of the university itself. A creative political solution, engineered with the assistance of Board of Trustees Chairman F. Eugene Dixon Jr., insured the hospital's survival. Wachman's presidency also saw the return of Temple to big-time, Division 1-A football and several winning seasons and national rankings under Coach Wayne Hardin, although many remained skeptical of the commitment and costs involved.

To modernize the message of Founder Russell Conwell, who stressed the importance of providing access to higher education for all deserving persons, Wachman promoted Temple as "The People's University" and encouraged the further diversification of the student body, faculty, and academic programs. Marvin's many experiences abroad, including stints at the University of Maryland in Europe and the Salzburg Seminar and his service as State Department specialist in African affairs, led him especially to value international education programs. Under Wachman's personal direction, Temple strengthened its program in Rome and launched new programs in Paris, Dublin, London, Ghana, Greece, Israel, Nigeria, China, and Japan.

At home Wachman presided over a burst of capital construction that brought five new Commonwealth-funded buildings to the Main Campus. In addition, he directed expansion of the Ambler campus and construction of two buildings facilitated by gifts from F. Eugene Dixon Jr.; opened a new Center City campus (TUCC); secured funding for construction of a new Temple University Hospital and a new dental clinical facility; and negotiated a contract to operate the Woodhaven Center, providing education and training for the developmentally disabled.

Wachman also fostered improved relations with the immediate community in Temple's neighborhoods, formalized administrative procedures concerning alumni affairs, and, in 1981, persuaded the Board of Trustees to right a lingering wrong by reinstating Barrows Dunham, former chair of the Philosophy Department, who was fired in 1953 for refusing to answer questions before the U.S. House Committee on Un-American Activities concerning past associations with the Communist Party. Dunham's reinstatement helped alleviate the stigma of McCarthyism's most notorious and painful imprint on Temple.

Wachman's memoir relates his candid, forthright versions of other less palatable developments that occurred toward the end of his Temple tenure, including stressful negotiations with the Temple faculty union, which was formed in 1973. As rancorous as those first negotiations appeared at the

time, they paled in comparison to the two faculty strikes that occurred after Wachman left office.

When a sharp decrease in enrollments hit the university between 1978 and 1981, and as costs vastly exceeded net revenues, Wachman faced his most agonizing decision. Unable to stanch the flow of red ink and unwilling to dump the problem on his successor, Wachman moved to retrench fifty-eight faculty members in schools and colleges affected by the enrollment decline, eventually rescinding all but four of the notices to tenured faculty.

The once highly popular president faced unbridled faculty wrath. Liberal arts faculty condemned Wachman's "arrogant disregard for established academic procedures" and his "display of unreason." More than two decades hence, the painful memories of those final days echo in Wachman's explanations, but so, too, does an insistent note of pride in forestalling a looming financial catastrophe and in leaving Temple financially better off than when he assumed office.

A then mandatory retirement policy required Wachman to step down from the presidency at age sixty-five. On June 30, 1982, he was succeeded by Peter J. Liacouras, dean of the law school, and Marvin became university chancellor, a largely honorary office. Like those of former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, Marvin Wachman's "retirement" years have been filled with an impressive array of accomplishments. The stamina and athletic conditioning that served him so well as a champion tennis player allowed Marvin to undertake an amazing range of challenging tasks, including team-teaching a Temple course in American studies, assuming the presidency of the Foreign Policy Research Institute and the acting presidencies of Philadelphia University and, later, Albright College. He also survived a politically charged stint as acting executive director of the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency. Only when heart problems struck in recent years did he begin to slow down.

Steadfast at Marvin's side throughout, Adeline (Addie) Schpok Wachman perfectly complemented her husband. Fused by common origins, shared values, a penchant for teaching and service, the Wachmans' joy of being together radiated forth when entering a room or greeting old or new friends. Their powerful partnership deeply affected the people and institutions they touched. Wherever they served at whatever post, Addie and Marvin made their home a social and academic haven. A gifted teacher and theater enthusiast, Addie became confidante and adviser to countless students, faculty, administrators, and trustees along the way. For five decades, Addie served as ambassador-at-large (without portfolio) for her husband at

countless receptions, formal and informal gatherings, graciously assisting Marvin's advance literally around the globe.

In their lifetimes, the Wachmans met many national and international leaders, including presidents Moise Tshombe of Zaire, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, and Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria; prime ministers Edward Heath of Great Britain and Malcolm Fraser of Australia; and Chinese Premier Deng Xiaoping, to name a few who appear in the memoir.

All things considered, it has been a remarkable journey for the former Milwaukee newsboy. The story of that journey, as revealed in the following pages, serves several purposes. His personal testament, a self-effacing examination of his successful rise through academe, offers guidance and hope for those who may find themselves hindered by birth or circumstance from gaining access to higher education or to opportunities for social or economic advancement. Marvin's indelible optimism and quiet confidence yield a story mostly about what is possible and attainable, not about the impossible or the unattainable. In this age of relentless self-promotion and ruthless competition, Wachman's inner-directedness, natural modesty, and gracious manner are refreshing reminders of the timeless values and many sacrifices of America's greatest generation.

Marvin Wachman's memoir also reaffirms his devotion to the higher purposes of the university. "A university," British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli once said, "should be a place of light, of liberty, and of learning." Throughout his long, illustrious career, Marvin Wachman brought more light and diversity into each university he served, held firm to his liberal beliefs concerning the university's obligation to promote liberty and social justice, and maintained the high standards of scholarship and learning that have made American universities preeminent. Finally, and most important, Wachman has demonstrated through his own example that all of us, university presidents included, must never stop learning.

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P R E F A C E

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HARRY GOLDEN, the late publisher of the *Carolina Israelite*, titled one of his books *Only in America*. His title fits my story. I was born to immigrant parents from Eastern Europe who had little formal education, yet I graduated from college and became first a professor and then president of two unique and distinguished American universities. While teaching and serving as an administrator, I had the good fortune to live and work in Western Europe and to spend time in Eastern Europe, Africa, and parts of Asia, including Japan, mainland China, and Taiwan. I owe all these rewarding opportunities to the happy accident of having been born and educated in the United States.

I have often felt frustrated by America's seeming inability to live up to its lofty ideals – for example, in delivering civil rights and fostering equality of opportunity for all citizens. Also, at times, I have had serious reservations about our foreign policy. But compared to the alternatives (past as well as present), this is a progressive country. Scratch beneath the surface of those foreign critics who scold Americans as arrogant, self-centered, conceited, and chauvinistic and you will often find envy, jealousy, and a yearning to visit the United States or live among us.

For more than eighty-five years I have dwelt in a world in which change was a constant. Born during World War I, I grew up and attended college during the Great Depression of the 1930s, fought in World War II, lived through the Korean and Vietnam wars, democracy's Cold War with Soviet communism, two Persian Gulf wars, and three different types of revolutions: in civil rights, sex, and communications. I taught in and managed several colleges and universities from the 1940s to the turn of the twenty-first century. At one of these – Lincoln University in the 1960s – I found myself leading a historically black college at the peak of the U.S. Civil Rights Movement. At Temple University, in the 1970s and early '80s, I managed a very large urban university during the ups and downs of enrollments, crises in finances, and rocky race relations. Through all these events I often felt that I was receiving a greater education than my students were.

My ability to survive and even flourish through these chaotic times can be attributed, I believe, to the intellectual anchors acquired during my early

years at home and then in high school and college: such liberal concepts as secularism, relativism, multiculturalism, open-mindedness, and a belief in human progress. My concept of secularism does not preclude – indeed, it embraces – the notion of the sacredness of human beings and the critical importance of integrity among humans and their institutions. Only when these ideas are reflected within a body of laws can individuals function freely. My relativism is based on the role of reason – that is, the notion that no one owns a monopoly on truth or justice (including, of course, liberal relativists). My sense of multiculturalism grows out of the same notion: We must respect and accept other racial, ethnic, and religious groups – for our own benefit as well as theirs.

All of these principles, to my mind, fall under the rubric of “Liberalism.” Yet there was a time when I resisted as too confining formal classification as a conservative or liberal. Only during the so-called Reagan Revolution of the 1980s, when liberalism came under widespread attack, did I begin openly identifying myself as a liberal. It struck me that the kind of liberalism I stood for was the philosophy upon which the United States was founded and continued to exist, and those of us who subscribe to that philosophy should be proud to assert it.

The educational system in which I have spent my adult life has, I believe, played a major role in fostering the unique dynamism of American society and government. That dynamism stems from the conviction that we can always make our democracy more effective and productive for those who live under its umbrella. It has been my privilege to play a small role in this unending process through most of the twentieth century. I offer my experiences and insights here for the benefit of those who will continue the work long after my contemporaries and I are gone.



## *The Apprentice*

THE ONLY EXCEPTIONAL THING about my family background is how unexceptional it was. My parents belonged to that huge wave of desperate Russian Jewish immigrants who, in the late nineteenth century, turned to America as a refuge from anti-Semitism, pogroms, and compulsory service in the tsar's army. These poor, trembling, parochial *shtetl* dwellers summoned up a supply of courage they didn't know they possessed and committed themselves to the terrifying prospect of an ocean voyage to a strange and distant land whose language was unknown to them. Their numbers were so great that, in the process of being transformed by America over the next few generations, they and their descendants transformed America as well, mostly for the better. Immigration to America was the best thing that ever happened to these families – and, I like to think, one of the best things that happened to America, too. My family was merely one of hundreds of thousands that made a difference in some small way. We were not unique, but America was, and what America did to us, and vice versa, is what makes each individual story so fascinating.

When I began writing this memoir, I searched for specific data in family documents and found some information about my parents. However, I had never been certain of their dates of birth and arrival in the United States, since they were both long gone, and my older sisters and brother had given me differing accounts of those landmark events. Finally, in August 1993, my wife, Addie, and I visited the National Archives in Washington, D.C., and found the facts we needed in the 1900 Census Report.

My father, Alex Wachman, was born in Riga, Latvia, in 1869 and migrated to the United States at age eighteen in 1887; my mother, Ida Epstein, was born in 1874 in Kletsk, a *shtetl* near Minsk, Russia (now Belarus), and arrived in the United States at age sixteen in 1891. Prior to their arrival, both Alex and Ida had received letters from friends who wrote about wonderful opportunities for young people in this relatively new country. Ida's mother had died, and when her father remarried she decided to lead her own life. Arriving in New York, Alex almost immediately continued on to join acquaintances and find his fortune in the Midwest. Ida worked briefly in New York sweatshops, rolling

cigarettes; then she, too, traveled by train to Wisconsin, where several young people from her Russian village had settled. These two young immigrants met by chance in Eagle River, Wisconsin. They were married in Ironwood, a small town in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan near the Wisconsin border, in 1893 or 1894.

Alex was then an itinerant vendor, or “peddler,” working out of Ironwood or the neighboring town of Hurley, Wisconsin. In his quest for a better life, Alex moved the family, in 1906, to a much larger city – Milwaukee – where he operated a second-hand store. Subsequently, he and a partner acquired a working-class restaurant in downtown Milwaukee. There he labored twelve hours a day, seven days a week, supervising waiters, waiting on tables, and keeping the books.

Like most immigrants of their day, Alex and Ida were largely self-educated. In Latvia, Alex had learned to speak Latvian, Russian, German, and Yiddish, and by the time I was growing up in the 1920s he was speaking English, as well – without any discernible accent. He received little formal education before immigrating to the United States. Ida – “Ma” to her children – did manage to receive a bit more education in Russia but still not much. Once in this country, she taught herself to speak and read English well enough to become an avid reader of newspapers and other publications, whenever she was able to take time from the grueling regimen of caring for her children, cooking, baking, sewing, and keeping her house and her family’s clothes clean.

I was the last child born to Alex and Ida, on March 24, 1917. My mother was forty-three at the time, and my sisters (Minnie, Anna, Lillian, and Helen) sometimes referred to me as an afterthought or a mistake. Despite this teasing, I grew up cheerful, confident, and appreciative of my membership in this large family.

Our flat consisted of seven small rooms and a single bathroom, which eight of us shared. My brother Harold and I slept together in a narrow double bed. It may seem an oppressive arrangement by today’s standards, but we measured our lives by a different yardstick. Our parents – surely the first relativists I encountered in my life – constantly stressed how lucky we were to be living in the United States rather than in Latvia or Russia.

The Brown Street Elementary School (called Grammar School in the 1920s and ’30s) was a solid, conservative institution, where children did their homework and teachers insisted that we redo assignments until every mistake was corrected. In addition to academic courses, the school offered boys what was called “manual training” – how to make breadboards, tables, and other presumably useful wooden objects. (Girls, conversely, received cooking

instruction.) Between the ages of nine and fourteen, I became a voracious reader, particularly of biography, history, and short stories. I read all of Mark Twain, P. G. Wodehouse, and many other authors, and spent much of my spare time at our neighborhood library, browsing through its books and magazines.

At about the age of ten, I began earning small amounts of money by shining shoes in our basement, selling magazines, and, at age twelve (the minimum legal age for that activity), selling newspapers on a daily paper route near our home. From each customer I received 12 cents a week – 18 cents if the customer took the Sunday paper as well. By the time I was sixteen I had accumulated \$89.83 in the Park Savings Bank, most of which vanished in 1933 when the bank failed during the Great Depression. Like most of my contemporaries, I emerged from that experience very conservative about taking financial risks.

Although my parents weren't zealously observant, our family belonged to a Conservative Jewish synagogue, and I studied Hebrew and Torah there several days a week, after school. At the same time, since we were the only Jewish family in our neighborhood, I often participated in sports and other programs at the Roman Catholic school next door – my first exposure to the virtues of what is now called "multiculturalism." In addition, I belonged to a Young Pioneers Club, a watered-down version of the Boy Scouts, that met regularly at the Methodist church in our neighborhood.

Pa and Ma took their religion quite seriously, even though Pa was too busy managing his restaurant to attend synagogue services regularly. Ma kept separate (kosher) dishes and silverware for meat and nonmeat meals. Still, she said to me on one occasion, "You really don't have to be kosher to be Jewish, as long as you live by the fine principles of Judaism." That comment revealed the broad religious beliefs of our family, which stayed with me throughout my entire life.

Pa suffered with diabetes, and by the time I was sixteen years old, he had been ill and in great pain for months from a gangrenous foot. He was eventually hospitalized but refused to allow the doctors to amputate. At the age of sixty-four, with my mother, my sister Lillian, and I sitting by his bedside in the hospital, Pa died. His death was a deeply felt loss for all of us, and it was only our religious beliefs, and the closeness we shared as a family, that enabled us to begin the adjustment to Pa's absence from our household.

After a period of formal bereavement, I returned to my high school classes. I attended Milwaukee's Washington High, a large, traditional high school that was very similar to the one described by James B. Conant in his 1950s book *The American High School Today*. All students were enrolled in a curriculum that included American and European history, civics (now called

political science), literature, geography, science, mathematics, and a foreign language. There were also courses in the arts, but they were not emphasized. Speech courses, which included debate, were quite valuable in teaching students how to organize an oral presentation, and how to think on our feet.

It was while delivering newspapers that I discovered the Washington Tennis Club off one edge of my peddling route. It consisted of only two clay courts and a practice backboard surrounded by alleyways and modest single- and two-family homes. I had been practicing hitting tennis balls against a garage door near our house but wanted to perform on regular tennis courts. I persuaded the club's caretaker to let me play on his courts in return for helping him sprinkle the courts at night, roll them in the morning, and paint white lines on the courts each day. I also learned how to string tennis rackets by using ice-pick-like devices called awls to keep the strings taut in the frame (this was before stringing machines).

Largely as a result of playing at the club, I became a fairly skilled tennis player. By age fifteen, I had won several tournaments, including the Western Boys' Tournament at St. John's Military Academy in Delafield, Wisconsin. In the spring of 1934, my athletic career at Washington High School reached its peak when I won the state high school tennis championship. In 1935, I reached the quarter-finals of the National Junior Tennis Championships (for those eighteen and under) at the Culver Military Academy in Indiana. I lost in a very close match to Bobby Riggs, who later became the Wimbledon champion. As a result, I earned a high national ranking in the junior category. Those victories did wonders for my self-confidence; they also led to my being recruited by Northwestern University.

I came to realize that tennis wasn't merely a rewarding physical outlet but an entrée to other fields that had no direct connection to athletics. It was at the Los Angeles Tennis Club in the mid-'30s that I met the movie star Errol Flynn, who came there one afternoon looking for a game and subsequently played with me several times. It was also through tennis that I met Arthur Nielsen, chief executive of the A. C. Nielsen Company, the nation's largest polling company at that time. Because he was a tennis buff, he invited me, as a college student at Northwestern University, to play with him or his son on his private court near the campus, and he subsequently offered me a job at a company that was not otherwise known for hiring Jews.

My tennis ability led to matches with such champion players as Don Budge and Alice Marble. Alice, who was recognized as the best women's tennis player in the world in the '30s, came to the Chicago area to play some exhibitions during my freshman year at Northwestern. She liked to play with

men to get good practice. Coach Paul Bennett was approached by Alice's coach, Eleanor "Teach" Tennant, and asked to provide a young, male player who would play a practice match against Alice one day and a mixed doubles exhibition event with her the next. These events were to take place on the new courts of the North Shore Tennis Club in a northern suburb of Chicago. Paul selected me.

Alice came to the Northwestern University Tennis Shack to pick me up in a large black Packard automobile with red wheels. Accompanying her was Ms. Tennant and a professional tennis promoter, Jack Harris. Jack sat in the front seat of the limousine with the driver, and I was asked to sit in the back seat between the two ladies. Their perfume almost overwhelmed me. By the time we reached the Tennis Club to play our practice match, the combination of the perfume scent and the trepidation I felt at having to oppose such a celebrity player had made me quite nervous.

After we warmed up and started playing, I felt more at ease. However, Miss Marble soon began playing as if this were a tournament match. She hit drop shots on the very slow red clay (*en tous cas*) court. The court was so new and soft that, when I raced forward to reach the drop shots, I slid and cinders came up through the clay surface. At that point, I was no longer overwhelmed but getting angry. Miss Marble had won three games very quickly by using the drop shot and then passing me or lobbing over my head for the points.

I had heard that women run much better from side to side than they do forward and backward, so I thought I would give her some of her own medicine. I began drop shooting and lobbing and won the next six games, winning the set by a score of six games to three. Alice then decided she would just practice hitting balls back and forth with me in front of the crowd so she could get ready for the real match the next day against Eugenie Sampson Kamrath, a popular player who hailed from Chicago.

The next day, Alice played Eugenie in a two set exhibition match, and Alice and I played against Eugenie and her husband, Karl, a fine player from Texas, in a mixed doubles match. It was customary for a man to play the backhand court and poach as much as possible in order to cover more than half the court, since women were considered to be slower. I did this a few times in the match, and Alice, who volleyed better at the net than I did, came up to me with anger in her eyes and said, "Marvin, the next time you poach on me I will wrap my racket around your head!" I promptly ceased poaching, and we won the match quite handily.

That episode taught me never to underestimate women athletes. It also led to something of a friendship with Alice Marble. Over the next several

years, whenever I was playing in a tennis tournament in the New York City area, she invited me to the West Side Tennis Club in Forest Hills to practice with her on the grass courts – a real treat for a nineteen- or twenty-year-old.

Had it not been for tennis, I probably would have attended Marquette University in Milwaukee, where my brother went to law school, or the University of Wisconsin, both of which were less expensive than Northwestern. Although there were no tennis scholarships at Northwestern in the 1930s, and I was not a brilliant student, my high school grades were high enough that the coach could help me get a tuition scholarship for my freshman year (tuition was then \$300, a sizeable sum in the 1930s). He also helped me get a job for my room and board, waiting on tables in a university dining room, and hired me to string tennis rackets at the university's Tennis Shack. In the depths of the Great Depression, such an arrangement was too good to turn down. Many of my acquaintances in Milwaukee had to go directly into the workforce as bookkeepers, shoe salesmen, or laborers during the continuing Depression.

In offering me the dining-room job, the director of dormitories, J. Leslie Rollins (known to everyone as "Whitey"), stressed how lucky I was to be at Northwestern. "There is a general understanding," he added, "that the enrollment of any one religious group at the university should not be greater than its percentage in the general population." Although I was offended by his reference to my Jewish background, I bit my lip and did not respond, knowing that I needed the job. It was certainly not the last time in my career that I subordinated my pride to some larger goal. In this case, as in most similar situations, I'm glad that I held my tongue. Eventually I came to realize that Rollins was sincerely interested in the growth and development of young people of whatever background; in his remarks about Northwestern's informal quota system, he was simply talking to me candidly, as one adult to another. In later years, Rollins and I became good friends, and after he went to Harvard University as an assistant dean of Harvard Business School, I had a number of contacts with him, particularly after I became a college president.

By the time I entered Northwestern, my mother had sold the family home and moved in with my oldest sister, Minnie. So Lindgren House, a men's dormitory, became my home for five years, through the completion of my bachelor's and master's degrees. In my junior year I became the dorm's president. While living in Lindgren House, I was able to win a Big Ten divisional title and a Western Regional Collegiate Championship and to get to the semifinals (final four) of the National Intercollegiate Tennis Tournament, the climax to my college tennis career.

Near the end of my junior year, our house resident assistant – a graduate student charged with supervising the undergrads – was asked to leave school for both academic and personal reasons (he had a drinking problem). Although resident assistants were always graduate students or instructors – usually with master’s degrees in hand and working on Ph.D.s – Whitey Rollins recruited me for the job. “Even though you’re an undergraduate and it will violate our normal practice,” he said, “you know all the men, you have been working with them, and you’re very active as a leader here.” This was to become a recurring theme in my career: An administrative or supervisory job would open up, I would be asked to fill it, and I – flattered by the offer – invariably accepted.

My skills as a counselor were severely tested one spring evening. A group of mischievous students unhooked the fire hose and turned on the water while I was out; when I returned to Lindgren House around midnight, water was running out the front door. I had a hunch who the culprits were, and who was probably the leader, so the first thing I did was bang on the door of Bob Blandford, a big, red-headed junior from Grand Rapids, Michigan.

“Bob,” I said, “get your ass out of bed and round up the rest of the guys who worked with you on this thing and clean this place up.” I knocked on doors, routed everyone out of bed, and had them all mopping floors and drying carpeting with fans until the sun came up.

I learned a valuable lesson about dealing with college students that night: If you treated them firmly but fairly, and they knew they had gone off the deep end, you could usually convince them to do the right thing and make amends. Student pranks were *de rigueur*, but if you were constantly alert to booby traps, like finding a bucket of water over the door to your room, you could survive them with good humor. Besides, this was tame stuff compared to the civil rights demonstrations and antiwar protests of the 1960s. But then, as we shall see, even those incidents tended to roll off my back like water. For whatever reason, I was blessed with the sort of temperament that sees value in even the angriest confrontation.

My parents, like many immigrants of their generation, hoped their sons would become doctors, lawyers, or successful businessmen. By the time I entered Northwestern, three of my sisters had married professional men, and my own brother had finished law school. But my passion was history. I wasn’t terribly interested in making a fortune; I just wanted to live a fairly comfortable and interesting life. Teaching history struck me as the ideal career path.

For my master's thesis, "The Chicago Race Riot of 1919," I spent a good deal of time on Chicago's South Side, combing through the files of the Negro newspaper the *Chicago Defender*. My thesis provided a historical account of the movement of Southern blacks to Chicago and other Northern cities before and during the First World War. This movement resulted in a series of race riots, and my thesis, while focusing on the Chicago riot, discussed other riots for the purpose of comparison.

Professor William Byron of the Sociology Department, a member of my thesis committee, resented the fact that a history student was writing about what he felt were sociological issues. He argued with my adviser, Professor Tracy Strevey, that I should have chosen another thesis topic. But Strevey defended my approach, arguing that it was necessary to cross academic disciplines in order to tell a full story. (Byron doubtless also objected to the injection of my own integrationist viewpoints into the thesis.)

Although I had no way of knowing it at the time, this entire research and writing experience would greatly increase my growing interest in race relations and culminate, a generation later, in my appointment as the white president of the historically black Lincoln University. (Unfortunately, this rigorous master's thesis experience, which provided much of the foundation of my subsequent professional life, was denied to later generations of graduate students, since many universities downgraded the M.A. thesis into little more than a perfunctory exercise on the way to a Ph.D.)

In the summer of 1940, Professor Strevey invited me to continue studying at Northwestern for my Ph.D. in history. But once again, tennis entered the picture. Howard Braun, the head tennis coach at the University of Illinois, invited me to move to Champaign and assist him with the tennis team while I worked on my Ph.D. there. (I had come to know Howard when Northwestern played against his teams.) Illinois, Howard suggested, had a much larger history department than Northwestern's, and I would be able to study under a new and larger group of professors. Even my Northwestern professors, to whom I felt an emotional attachment, agreed that it would be better for my academic development to change scenery and work in the Illinois graduate program. In effect, they put the welfare of their student ahead of their institutional loyalty, a demonstration of their academic integrity for which I remain grateful to this day.

Howard Braun arranged meetings for me with several professors as well as with the chairman of Illinois's History Department, who offered me an assistantship. Between that teaching post, a job stringing rackets at a local sporting goods store, and a job as an adviser at Tau Delta Phi (a Jewish



fraternity house), I was able to support myself while I finished my Ph.D. work.

"I came to Northwestern with \$25 in my pocket," I remember thinking as I loaded my rickety 1927 Model-A Ford for the move to Champaign, "and I'm leaving five years later with two college degrees, a little money in the bank, and a car." I had acquired something else, as well: the confidence that I could adjust quickly to a new life in a new place.

The Ph.D. program in history at Illinois required courses in four fields of history, as well as one full-year course in a related field. Thinking that I should build upon my study at Northwestern, I chose American, modern European, English, and Latin American history. World War II had begun the previous year, and so I was eager to study the ramifications of the military invasions and territorial acquisitions of Germany, Italy, Japan, and the Soviet Union. As a result, I chose international law as my course in a related field. After taking the lecture courses and seminars, doctoral students had to take oral and written examinations (called "prelims") in each field, as well as read tests in two foreign languages (my choices were French and German). The final requirement was a book-length dissertation and a published synopsis of it.

Today such an extensive program is rare. Fewer courses are required of doctoral students, and study in fields outside the major is not considered essential. While two foreign languages were required before World War II, subsequently only one, or sometimes none, became necessary. To be sure, one foreign language is required today to earn a Ph.D. in the study of a foreign country. But the increased use of computers and the Internet and their ability to translate seemingly everything has often eliminated the second language requirement. However, if we truly live in a shrinking world, that strikes me as an even stronger reason for *all* educated people to know at least one widely used language other than their own, and for doctoral candidates to know two.

When I arrived at Illinois in the fall of 1940, Hitler had conquered Western Europe and was preparing to attack Great Britain. Most male students (and their girlfriends) didn't want their lives disrupted by service in the armed forces, and by 1941 antiwar demonstrations had become common at Illinois and other universities. Even after Germany's invasion of Russia in the summer of 1941, most students continued to hope for a settlement that would keep America out of the war. I sympathized with the British and strongly supported President Roosevelt's Lend-Lease Program of aid to Britain, but I was still somewhat torn on the subject of U.S. involvement in the war.

Against this backdrop, my work as a graduate assistant to the distinguished European history scholar Albert H. Lybyer was no mere academic exercise but a front-row seat at the great unfolding events of the day. Lybyer was a baldish, stooped, and serious man who resembled the stereotypical ivory tower professor; in fact, he had served as a U.S. adviser at the Versailles peace conference following World War I and had written a landmark study on the “opening up” of the Middle East (which concluded that the Middle East had never been closed).

Dr. Lybyer belonged to the William Allen White Committee, which long before Pearl Harbor had advocated U.S. military intervention in the war against Hitler’s Germany. He began many of his lectures by discussing the war and comparing contemporary events to World War I or other previous conflicts. As German bombs rained down on London during the Battle of Britain, for example, Lybyer emphasized the threat to the United States should Germany overwhelm Great Britain. “The British are defending us as well as themselves,” he would say, “and we must help them.”

This position put him at odds with isolationist history professors at Illinois, like Theodore Pease and Frederick Dietz. When these three professors occupied the same room, you could feel the chill in the air. Lybyer defended the Treaty of Versailles, while Pease and Dietz denounced it as an act of vengeance that had inadvertently provoked Hitler’s rise to power.

Pease was a large, portly man known for his unusual policy of placing the young women in his classes in the first two rows, apparently so he could peer at their legs. (It was also rumored that he gave them better grades than male students.) Dietz, by contrast, was fair-minded, straightforward, and very well organized (perhaps too well organized; he often lectured from yellowed notes he had used many times before). He was the author of an outstanding English history text and a sensitive, supportive teacher. “If you work hard in graduate school and produce some publications early in your career,” he once astutely advised me, “you will lay the basis for success in the rest of your professional life.”

At the same time that I was exposed to these historians’ heated debates about the European conflict, I was also attending the international law lectures of Professor Valentine Jobst. A lawyer, political scientist, and dyed-in-the-wool skeptic, Jobst scoffed at the very notion of effective international law. He periodically reminded us that most national leaders were hypocrites. World peace could readily be achieved, he noted, if nations merely abided by the principles and laws that they had already agreed upon. This simplistic notion appealed to skeptics who blamed World War I on blunders by European leaders and

feared that the United States would stumble into World War II in much the same way. Whether he was right or wrong matters less than the feeling I derived, wherever I turned in my doctoral work, that the work I was doing truly mattered in the world.

The best lecturer I had at Illinois was Raymond Stearns, professor of European history. He kept his classes awake with his lively delivery, his voice rising to a crescendo whenever he described an important action or event. He always maintained good eye contact with students, so we didn't dare let our minds wander. Stearns epitomized the large and admirable segment of American professors, at that time, who believed their duty as lecturers was to bring their subject to life. This model has declined over the last half century as academicians have emphasized "student-centered" learning – that is, focusing more on the students and less on the subject. The instructor's central role has been further undermined in recent years by the popularity of on-line teaching programs and e-mail communication. These technological advances have made higher education accessible to far greater numbers of students and stimulated a diverse variety of teaching styles. But the downside of this bargain, I am afraid, is the decline of the truly fine live classroom lecturers to whom I was exposed.

In the early fall of 1940, while still getting settled at Illinois, I met a young lady named Adeline Lillian Schpok. She had received her bachelor's degree from the university that spring and was teaching and directing plays at the junior high school while doing graduate work. Like me, Addie Schpok had worked at various jobs to pay for her education, serving as a secretary in the university's health services department as well as in the office of a chemistry professor. She also had led several student organizations. The two of us were introduced at what I later realized was a matchmaking dinner at the home of Joseph Katz, the university's ROTC commander, who had known my family in Milwaukee. Given my full agenda at that time, a serious romantic involvement was the last thing on my mind. But toward the end of the evening, when I got up to leave, Addie jumped up and asked if I would give her a lift home – all of four or five blocks. As I escorted her upstairs to her mother's second floor apartment and casually proposed that we get together sometime, she quickly suggested that I'd probably need her phone number. Years later she confessed to me that, despite the fact that she was going steady with another man, she awakened her mother, Mary Schpok, that night and whispered excitedly in her ear, "Mom, I think I've met the man I'd like to marry."

It's often been observed that, while in theory men are supposed to initiate romantic relationships, in practice it's usually the woman who finds a way to get the ball rolling. My first encounter with Addie was no exception. We were married a year and a half later, and she has remained by my side ever since, for more than sixty years.

For my doctoral thesis, I thought Milwaukee's socialist history would make an interesting topic. Daniel W. Hoan, Milwaukee's socialist mayor from 1916 to 1940, had just been defeated for re-election, and it appeared to me that a unique political era in American history – the control of a major city by a party that rejected capitalism – had ended. No organized history of this experience had yet been written. Like many of my contemporaries whose families were devastated by the Great Depression, I was skeptical about the blessings of capitalism and impressed by the effectiveness of two socialist administrations in Milwaukee. All I needed was to find a history professor willing to serve as my sponsor. Then as now, the taint of socialism was not recommended for advancing one's career, especially at a state institution. Fortunately, a suitable professor was on hand at Illinois. Frederick Shannon – a nephew of Eugene V. Debs, the perennial socialist candidate for president – already had a personal interest in my subject and readily agreed to be my sponsor.

Barely had I resolved the question of a sponsor to direct my work when a global crisis seized control of my life and the life of the nation. Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, ended all debate on isolation versus intervention at Illinois – and virtually everywhere else. Two weeks later, I joined many other Illinois students in registering for the draft at an armory in Champaign. My physical exam indicated that I was definitely fit for induction into the army.

In the hope of landing an officer's commission, I decided to enlist rather than enter via the draft. During a visit to Los Angeles, I filled out applications for Officers' Candidate School (OCS) at all five branches of the armed forces. Unfortunately, the OCS physical revealed that, for military purposes, I was color-blind (I couldn't visualize numbers formed by dots of certain colors) and thus ineligible. There was nothing for me to do but return to Champaign, resume work on my thesis, await the call from my draft board – and marry Addie. We were married in Chicago on April 12, 1942. It was a small religious ceremony, attended by the few family members and friends who could get wartime transportation. Our plan was to move to Milwaukee for the summer so I could work full time on my dissertation and, I hoped, finish it before being drafted.