CARNEGIE CORPORATION OF NEW YORK ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

The Reminiscences of

Richard W. Riley

Columbia Center for Oral History

Columbia University

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PREFACE

The following oral history is the result of a recorded interview with Richard W. Riley conducted by Myron Farber on September 18, 2012. This interview is part of the Carnegie Corporation of New York Oral History Project.

The reader is asked to bear in mind that s/he is reading a verbatim transcript of the spoken word, rather than written prose.

3PM | Session #1

Interviewee: Richard W. Riley | Location: Greenville, South Carolina

Interviewer: Myron A. Farber | Date: September 18, 2012

Q: This is Myron Farber on September 18, 2012, interviewing Richard W. Riley at his law office in Greenville, South Carolina, for Columbia University's oral history of the Carnegie Corporation of New York. Governor, do you mind if I call you Governor?

Riley: No, I don't mind that all. Normally, people in South Carolina still call me Governor. When I'm in Washington and elsewhere, I'm the Secretary. I go either way.

[Laughter]

Q: Okay. You were, actually, you were governor of South Carolina from '78 to '86, is it?

Riley: I was elected in 1978 but started serving in '79—January '79 to January '87. Eight years.

Q: Okay. I suppose I ought to put on the record that you're a Democrat, are you not?

Riley: I'm a Democrat.

Q: You're one of the few Democrats left in this state, are you?

Riley: Well, we're a growing number, I think, but we have a long way to go. [Laughter] We still seem to be a red state.

Q: Wasn't your father a head of the State Democratic Party?

Riley: He was. And my father, I might add, was the chairman of [President John] Jack [F.] Kennedy's campaign in 1960 when we carried the state for Kennedy. I chaired [President] Jimmy Carter's campaign in the '70s, mid '70s. And we carried the state for Jimmy Carter. So when my father was chairman and I was chairman are the only two times we carried the Democratic Party for our President. So I have to keep telling people you have to get a Riley to get us over the hump. [Laughter] My father was chairman for Kennedy and I was chairman for Carter.

Q: You won't go back to doing that, though, will you?

Riley: Oh, no. But, of course, I was chairman for [President William J. "Bill"] Clinton and others too and we lost the state. But we carried it for Carter the first time.

Q: Right. You knew Governor Clinton for some time?

Riley: Well, we were governors together. We were both elected at the very same moment, in 1978, to start serving in '79. He then got beat in two years, if you recall. They had two-year terms there in Arkansas and then he was out two years and he came back for a number of years.

But we served together for a lot of those years. I was emphasizing education. He was too. So we really bonded on public service and on education.

Q: You joined the Clinton administration at the beginning and served throughout the two terms, did you not?

Riley: Well, I was called upon by Bill Clinton and Warren [M.] Christopher, who also, at one time, was an active Carnegie member. But Warren Christopher headed up Clinton's transition team. Except for Carter's four years, the Democrats had not been in for quite a while, so there were an awful lot of young people trying to get into the administration. And then Warren Christopher and Bill Clinton called me up and asked me to head up transition for personnel. So I moved to Washington, my wife and I, and we stayed up there. I was planning to be up there two or three months. My law firm gave me a leave of absence. I helped Clinton put together his entire Cabinet on down. And that was a very exciting time. While I was there, of course, Clinton and I––and Hillary, also—were very close. He asked me, then, to go on the Cabinet and wanted me to be the Secretary of Education. And I told him that's about the only one I would do—come up to Washington for. So that was a temptation. I did it and I've never been sorry.

Q: Well, did he, in '93, ask you if you wanted to be nominated to the Supreme Court of the United States?

Riley: Yes, but that was '94.

Q: ’94.

Riley: In ’93 is when he started serving so I really had been secretary only for a year. And I put the staff together. The previous couple of administrations wanted to do away with the Department of Education, as you recall. So everything was out of date. The computers were out of date. Nobody had really done much to keep the department going. I brought in the very best education people in America to be in the department, and I really worked on that. We were modernizing the computer systems and so forth. And then, President Clinton called me. He was in Chicago I think and said he wanted to send my name over for the U.S. Supreme Court. There was an opening. Justice [Ruth Bader] Ginsburg ended up in that seat and I supported her very strongly.

Q: But what did you tell him?

Riley: I told him that I didn’t think that was my thing, that I was really a lawyer on a local level here and had had some success in law. But I thought about being a judge an awful lot. And I was very interested in the law, interested in courts. But my thing was people more than reading briefs and making big law opinions. And I thought I could do more good for him in the Department of Education than I could in the U.S. Supreme Court. Of course, he would just send my name over. My name then had to be approved by the Senate. The Senate was approving hardly anyone at that time, Democrats. And Clinton then felt like I could probably be approved. I was considered to be kind of a middle-of-the-road conservative, middle-of-the-road Democrat. And Strom

Thurmond had written a letter to the president and told him if I was nominated he would work to try to help me get confirmed.

Q: Oh, really?

Riley: That's South Carolina stuff. So I think he thought I could probably go through, when others probably couldn't. Anyway, he asked me that and then he sent a group in. I met with his general counsel and I met with four or five other people. I told him to let me discuss it with my father, who was a senior lawyer here at this law firm. And I talked to several other people. I talked to Claude [M.] Scarborough, the managing partner here. And everybody told me I ought to do it. And I thought and talked to my wife. I said, you know, that's not what I want to do. I'm with people. I'd rather be with people and working with education and I had— sitting over there—a tremendous honor to serve if I was approved. But I preferred to do what I was doing. And I told Clinton that and told him I would be glad to help in any way that I could.

Q: And no regrets on that?

Riley: No regrets. None at all. And I never thought back about it. It kind of amazes me, when I think about it. I had that chance and not many lawyers would have turned that down, I'm sure.

Q: Right. Well, I had an occasion, recently, to call a Federal Circuit court judge. I didn't know he was on the bench now. I only knew him as a lawyer. He hadn't been a judge before. And I called and he answered the phone. I mean, I got him on the phone and I said, what are you doing? He

said, well actually, right now, I'm staring at my navel. [Laughter] I guess you didn't want to be doing that?

Riley: No, I didn't want to do that.

Q: Let me go back to prior to you becoming Secretary of Education. When you were governor and especially in your second term it appears—what you thought the problem in education was here in South Carolina and how you addressed it. It's probably a bit of hyperbole but I had an occasion recently to see a quote by a teacher at a school in Columbia who said that you "brought South Carolina from the Dark Ages into the light." Tell me about it.

Riley: Well, I was a reformer in the state Senate for ten years and in the House [of Representatives] for four before that. And I was a leader in court reform in the state. We changed the whole court system around. I was a reformer in home rule, getting local government—major, major things—changing the constitution. I was very much involved in the state constitution. So when I came to the governor's office, I really knew state history and I was very much into the state. I love South Carolina and I was a reformer. So I had the clear understanding that we have a black, dark part of our history in the slavery days, and then, after that, with difficulty working out integration. And I said, if there's anything in the world I can do, I want to try and move the state forward to try to correct all that. We have a lot of great parts of our history, too. It wasn't all bad. But that was the dark side and I wanted to try to change it for everybody. Not just black kids but I didn't think we could move the state forward without pulling black kids up and poor kids

and that kind of thing. People knew that and I ran for a second term. I think you probably know that. They changed the constitution so I could run the second time.

Then, in the second term, I had enough experience as governor and people around me that I really realized I could make a big move. And I announced that. When I gave my inauguration speech, I named a young person that was born that morning and said he was what my governorship was going to be about. And the EIA, Education Improvement Act—the Rand Corporation said it was the most comprehensive and effective education reform in the nation. We were just southern governors who, like me, realized the history of the South and our way out was education. That was the way out. [President Franklin D.] Roosevelt said that the South was his biggest problem during the Depression in the ’30s. Education was our way out. I really believe that and I went to work on it and pulled all the people in that I could. I got everybody motivated and mobilized. We put out one heck of a program calling for a penny increase in taxes—everybody involved in whatever—and we had tremendous, tremendous support. We debated it in the House, I think, for fourteen weeks and in the senate for six or seven weeks. And it was a darn interesting fight. The people were behind it. The legislature was not. The people just finally demanded the legislature to do it. It involved some fifty programs. It involved a whole separate budget for education.

Q: But in essence, Governor, and looking back, what do you think you accomplished?

Riley: What I accomplished more than anything else was getting the people of the state interested in—excited about—education and improving the state. That is really what I think I accomplished. And that was accomplished. People really did get involved from then on.

Q: Is there any way of figuring out how it translated in terms of children's education?

Riley: Well, we went up, as I recall, after the EIA passed—and it took a while to get going but the next two or three years we went up in the SAT scores, I think, some seventy points. Some of that went up significantly for blacks. And for whites thirty points or something. Both groups progressed significantly over the next three or four years. And there are a lot of other ways to measure that too. The high school graduation rate went up. The thing about the statistics though, once you start including everybody, it looks like you aren't making the progress that you are because, in the past, kids would just drop out in the seventh or eighth grade and go to work on the farm or whatever. We really wanted everybody to finish high school and get on into college or whatever. That's what it was all about.

I think anyone looking at South Carolina would tell you that we had significant improvement over those years. The thing about the EIA, it's an ongoing thing. We have citizens involved right now on that revisit the various programs and see which is working and which is not. Then, they recommend to end this one and shift more money into that, and so forth. Then, that recommendation goes to the governor and to the legislature and generally they do wha is recommended. So, yes, I think it made a big difference.

Q: Okay. And then you got into Washington as secretary? Actually, after you were governor, you were in law practice for a few years, were you not?

Riley: Yes, with this firm.

Q: Right. Then you went to Washington.

Riley: Then I went to Washington.

Q: Now, have you any memory of—you started to speak about it before—what the situation was in terms of what the Secretary of Education, the national program? After all, schools are basically a state function, are they not? A state and local function? What could you do as secretary and whether any of it worked out in the two terms that you were there?

Riley: Well, one thing about it is that Bill Clinton was into education just as I was. We had common goals and common efforts. That was good for education. The fact that the Secretary of Education could send a memo over to the President—and I didn't do that often, maybe once a month—and it always, always came right back: go for it. He never hardly ever, I don't remember ever, questioned what we were trying to do in the department because he and I were of like mind and he wanted to do the same thing I wanted to do. That was good for education.

Really, [President Barack H.] Obama and Arne Duncan have that same relationship and that's good for education. Arne Duncan is very close to Obama. I was very close to Clinton and that in

itself was a tremendous boost as far as education was concerned. Because, really, education on a national level had been downplayed significantly in the years before, so we were trying to energize that while fully understanding it's a state responsibility. Most of our significant work there was sending money down with incentives for the state to move in what we hoped would be a good national direction. We got very much into standards. You couldn't have accountability without some standards. We didn't know what to account for and that was very difficult. We had no standards. Bill Clinton and I wanted to make sure every state had state standards. It was a state job. But we sent funds down and programs down and technical services down to the states to try to help them get going with their state standards. And when we left office, after eight years, all fifty states had standards. An example of standards is this: what a child in fifth grade should know about math, what a child in the fourth grade should know about science, and so forth. That's a standard. So we have standards all the way through K-12 in all fifty states.

Q: Not mandatory?

Riley: No, no. Well, no. It's up to the state. The federal government just supported each state in developing standards for all their children. Once you have standards, then you can know: are you over the standard or under? Are children reaching the standard by the fourth grade? Are they able to read like they're supposed to? Until you had standards, you had nothing to measure it by.

Q: How about in the area of higher education?

Riley: Higher education, we were very supportive of higher education. However, just like when I was governor, when I went into Washington, we really had a big job to do to get kids to finish high school and be prepared for higher education. You know what I mean? We had a lot of stuff on the national level to do. Higher education—we were very supportive of, for example, Pell Grants. I think we probably doubled Pell Grants while we were there. Very supportive of any number of programs in higher education. And that, also, was a priority of President Clinton. He was very much—

Q: Are you familiar with the term E-Rate [common name for Schools and Libraries Program of the Universal Service Fund]?

Riley: E-Rate was—we didn't have a whole lot of money to add to education. We were very much into getting technology into K-12 schools and to the public libraries. So we went before the [Federal] Communications Committee [FCC] and the people controlling all of that and I went before the Commission two different times.

Q: The Federal Communications Commission?

Riley: The FCC and also the committees of the House and Senate that were handling it. We got the E-Rate—the "education rate"—approved that goes out on the power rates. All that money was to be spent on equipping the schools and libraries with internet and computer capacity. Back then, that was really unusual. We were successful in getting the E-Rate. It's still out there. Once you get the school hooked up and connected—that was the first job, to connect up all the

schools. Then once that's done, you can use the E-Rate money to put high-tech computers into various classrooms or whatever. But it goes for electronics—education paid for through the power bill.

Q: So, let me ask you. Clinton's second term was mired in that whole Monica Lewinsky matter. Did that have any effect on you as a Cabinet member in terms of getting his attention or keeping his attention?

Riley: Not at all. He and I are close personal friends, in addition to being friends in government. And I had consulted with him a lot about difficulties he was having or whatever. He called us together, the whole Cabinet, and he said, you know, I've got some personal problems. They're my problems. They're not your problems. They're not the country's problem. They're my problems. And he said, I've got to deal with them. And he said, I want all of you to go back to your department, call your top people in, tell them I've got some personal problems. I'm going to have to deal with them. And he said, do more than you've ever done before. If somebody calls in to speak to one of your top people, tell your person, call them back quicker than you ever did before. Respond to the needs that people have. Get busy working with the Congress. And he said, that's what I'm asking you to do. We all love this country. I've got some personal problems. Go back to your department. And I did just that. I pulled my top people in. I said, you know, the President is dealing with his personal problems. He's a close friend of mine. I am asking you all to work harder than you've ever worked before. And every one of them went out and did it. They'd send word into me that they'd started doing this, they started doing that. And I think they did that all over the government.

Q: You served as secretary until the Clinton administration ended in January 2001. But it was not until, I think, 2004 that you became a trustee of the Carnegie Corporation of New York. Can you tell me what, at that time, you knew about the foundation world and about Carnegie, in particular?

Riley: Well, I knew a lot about the foundation world, obviously, as governor and as secretary. In about 1992 to chair a Carnegie commission dealing with early childhood education—children zero to three. It was a subject that I was very interested in, as I indicated, trying to bring South Carolina up. You have to start young, obviously.

David [A.] Hamburg was the president of Carnegie. A wonderful guy. He had written books on adolescence, the middle school years—transition years—and also early childhood. Those were the two interests that he had especially. And I was very honored. It was after governor. That was before secretary. But he asked me to head up this commission. Vivien Stewart, I remember, was one of the key people to steward and head up the commission. And so we met. We had a strong commission. One thing, Carnegie—when Carnegie asks someone to be a participant, the people respond well because it has such a great reputation. So we had the very top people with early childhood, with Head Start [Program], with all those early education programs on my commission.

I did that for about a year. Then, I was asked to come on the Cabinet so I had to get off the commission. They issued the final report not too many months after that and Hillary Clinton

gave the report. She was involved with the commission in some way, too. And they gave the report and a lot of it dealt with childcare and early education opportunities. That was a real introduction to me as to the kind of work that Carnegie does. They had a national interest in early childhood. It really had some carryover in all the states and the local schools. A lot of people became concerned about people in the childcare world who were not trained to do what they should have been able to do. They were low paid and it was just a job instead of really realizing that they were filling in, oftentimes, for parents who were not educated or whatever. And I think it made a difference in the country. And it really impressed me.

So I had a real introduction to Carnegie at that point. I had always heard about it. I had always dealt with the people that I knew, David Hamburg. So from that time on—when I was in the Cabinet—then I worked closely with various people from Carnegie. Bill Clinton was very close to them too and so was Hillary. So I've enjoyed that good relationship all along.

Q: Right.

Riley: I was invited to come on as a trustee. I was deeply honored and, of course, had a tremendous respect for Vartan Gregorian.

Q: You knew him?

Riley: I knew him and I respected him. I didn't know him real well but I knew him. I knew him very pleasantly. But I had enormous respect for him. He's one of the most interesting people I've ever worked with. And his board is just unusually strong. I was very honored to serve.

Q: Since you knew David Hamburg, can you contrast or compare—I sound like a test—can you compare Hamburg with Vartan Gregorian in terms of their capabilities or in terms of their style?

Riley: Well, that's interesting. They had different styles. Hamburg was a very thoughtful guy, a very caring guy. And he did get into these two areas in education. Of course, he was into international things too, as Carnegie is. I was not familiar with all of his involvement there. But I did know that he had spoken in a very clear voice in those two areas—the transition period of adolescents and also the beginning period. And was very thoughtful and I had great respect for him. He was a soft spoken, very polite, very intellectual person. Vartan Gregorian—you know it would take a lot to describe him. He's one of the few people that have total warmth.

Q: Total?

Riley: Warmth. Warmth and still brilliant.

Q: Are you saying warmth?

Riley: Warmth. That's southern. W-A-R-M-T-H, warmth. And that describes him to me. He is one of the most friendly, outgoing, meaningful guys you could ever meet. Of course, you know

him, I'm sure. But he's a very warm personality yet brilliant. And he has enormous vision. He's always thinking about what's going to be happening in ten years, twenty years, thirty years. And he has this enormous background of knowledge. [Andrew] Carnegie, himself, talks about knowledge and learning and all that being so important for democracy and for this country. Vartan is that. And it's been such a real opportunity to work with him and observe him. He's a very interesting person. He's a great leader. But he'll get you to do something that you probably didn't intend to do. And you would do it because he asked you to do it and then you would be pleased that you did.

Q: Of course, his background was more in higher education than K-12, wasn't it?

Riley: It was. And he's very much into higher education now. The programs that we had over the last seven years really were kind of, for the education side—as you know, it's divided into International and National—and on the education side of National, higher education was a key part of it. His thinking is that we really need to do work—and really he is into high schools, too—to get kids ready for higher education. But his thinking is centered around higher education. There's no question about that. His background was president of great universities, of course, and he got into the New York Public Library and performed so well there. All of this was into learning. But he himself learned on a very high level.

Q: But he was also very keen, was he not, on raising the level of scholarship in the former Soviet Union.

Riley: Oh, yes.

Q: And Carnegie has put—

Riley: And in Africa.

Q: And then Africa also.

Riley: And Eurasia, as he talks about. He knew the Middle East well. He grew up there. I've read his book. I'm sure you have. And what a fascinating childhood. How he ended up coming out of there and ended up at Stanford [University]. And of course straight As. They couldn't believe how smart he was. I'm sure from then on in it was straight on up. But he had that enormous background to understand the global issues that Carnegie very much deals with. Of course, Andrew Carnegie was an immigrant. And that's a big issue in this country right now, immigration. Vartan is very much into that. I'm into it myself. I think if we can't handle that better, we're going to be very sorry for it. And I think there's some move in the right direction. This thing last year about the DREAM Act—a lot of young Hispanic kids can get on the road to citizenship. But he's very much into citizenship. And he loves this country and he loves what it stands for. And he really connects education and the global economy. Global economy is up there. You can't be on a low level and compete on a global basis. And that's one thing Vartan very much—well, the Common Core Standards. I mentioned standards earlier—

Q: Let me come to that. So you came on in 2004. And just for the record, you were vice chairman of the board from 2007 to 2011.

Riley: That might be right. Four years, I think, three or four years.

Q: You're off the board now though.

Riley: I'm off the board. I came off in March or something like that.

Q: Right. When you came on in—

Riley: [Thomas] Tom [H.] Kean was the chair and he's one of my best friends. And we complement each other, I think, a lot. He's a moderate Republican, I'm a moderate Democrat. And I think we provided pretty good leadership for the group.

Q: When you came on in 2004, there were other people of prominence on the board. Over the years that developed while you were on the board, would you say that any particular of them were very active or kept themselves informed and provided valuable thinking on the board?

Riley: Well, practically everybody on the board has a lot to offer. If I flip back—because education is my main thing and I'm sure that's why I was asked to be on the board. But when I think—I love the international work. It's fascinating to me and of course it's connected with the education. And Carnegie's work in Russia or wherever usually is in education.

But one of the people that I've been so impressed with is [Thomas] Tom [R.] Pickering. Tom, to me—I met with Tom when I was Clinton's transition guy, looking for personnel. He and I were trying to pick out the top people for the State Department. We had dinner in Little Rock and met late in the evening, looking at these names of people, talking about who would be best at this, who would be best for that and so forth. So I knew him and had tremendous respect for him. Any time we got into an international discussion—whether it was nuclear proliferation or what—it'd end up Vartan would ask Tom Pickering his view. He was probably the top diplomat in America. Really. And he would come out with some of the most interesting things. I mean, he'd say, number one's so and so. Number two—and you'd say, this guy really understands what's happening there.

Q: I was with him the other day. I saw him the other day.

Riley: Isn't he something? He's an experienced—and he's the most self-effacing guy. You'd never know he's probably the top diplomat in America. Anyhow, that's the kind of person. That was an area that I was not all that familiar with, the international part. But, boy, I soaked it in when Tom Pickering would give an analysis of something.

And I can think of—of course, Vartan himself. Vartan is just a walking encyclopedia. And he comes forth with very interesting ideas about things. He's inclined to like to be innovative, to look at new ways, to start new—incubator, he talks about—to start new ideas going, that kind of thing. But we had all these college presidents. When you look at higher education, the board

really is heavier in higher education, just as Vartan is. And that's probably—historically Carnegie has been very strong into higher education.

Q: Was it your impression, Governor, that the main job or a key job of the board was to initiate ideas for Carnegie's money, Carnegie's programs? Or to soak in what the staff—from the president on down—was presenting and pass judgment on it? How did that work?

Riley: Well, that's an interesting question. The way I think it works is—certainly Vartan is a mover and a thinker and he's going to be involved in everything that Carnegie does. Everything, from the word go on. He has surrounded himself with perfectly wonderful staff. I deal closely with Michele Cahill in the education world. But in international relations, they've got wonderful people over there—the International side, the grantmaking. The grantmaking then on the National side—those people, they are involved in all of the things going on in the country. They're involved in what's happening in the Congress, what's happening with the president, what's happening now with other foundations. They're very involved, knowledgeable people. I see them meeting with four, five, six people and Vartan, discussing education and how far should we get into the STEM [Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics] part of it, the science and technology. How far should we do this with high school graduation? Whatever the subject is—and then coming up with a plan. Because the way we did in education was develop pathways. I think Vartan probably is a leader of determining those pathways but he listens very carefully to his top people. No question about that. And very good people. Leah [J.] Hamilton is the number two person, I think, under Michele. She's very good.

Q: But going back to the question of whether the board—whether the board was expected to come up with programs.

Riley: Well, as I say, that's a good question. I'm sure that happens from time to time. Normally it happens—like I said, in my judgment—I think they know what's going on. My feeling always was, if we as Carnegie—a foundation—if we're going to get into something, we need to look and see what's happening out here in the country. What are the trends? What are the focuses in the country? And what's the president pushing for?—whoever the president is. If big things are happening, we wanted to be in there with the big things—but maybe an innovative way of dealing with what they're talking about. But that's the right subject matter, if you see what I mean.

I think that's what they would determine as a staff and as Vartan. And they would come before the board and get the board all interested in it. Then the board does have some ideas: "well, I think this is a good idea but we've got too much of this, there's not enough of that." But it's kind of a reaction. Then some new things, I'm sure, come out of that. But really I think the very strong staff with a leader in Vartan is kind of where it all emanates. They develop these pathways to get things done and that's how I think it's done generally.

Q: Sometimes in league with other foundations, isn't that correct?

Riley: Oh, yes, a lot.

Q: Is that something that you had the impression was—

Riley: Absolutely. That makes so much sense. That's why I say you need to figure out what's going on. One of the best things that Carnegie did while I was there is that—they called it Opportunity Equation. What they did is, it was very clear—looking at the global economy, looking at the Common Core Standards that were going to be very difficult—that we had to get more into math and science, technology and engineering—so this idea of STEM work. America was way behind all the other countries that we tested with and compared with so it was a national decision—the president on down but a major decision—that we needed to do more in the STEM world. So you saw things happening on the national level. Well, Carnegie's staff people—and I'm sure Vartan was involved with it—they pulled together, I think, initially some thirty foundations, groups of people—I'm not sure all of them were foundations but groups of people––who had a say in it. And then they said, you know, the president wants to try to develop a hundred thousand quality STEM teachers in ten years.

Q: I think he mentioned it in the State of the Union [address] a couple of years ago.

Riley: Yes. I mean, it was a national effort. And he challenged the country to do that. Well, Carnegie took up the challenge.

Q: I think Carnegie had a commission with the Institute for Advanced Study.

Riley: Oh, yes. That was involved in the whole thing.

Q: I think they were there before Obama was.

Riley: I wouldn't be surprised. I think—and I know Arne Duncan was at the meeting when they announced their results—Carnegie was in there from the beginning, no question about that. But it had become a national thing. I think that's important for Carnegie to look at that—that's where things are happening, that's where you want to get. The idea, though, of one foundation—you know, it's a leading foundation—but when Carnegie called, they all came in. Thirty of them came in now. I think, what, over seventy groups—probably more than that now—that have come together and they reached pledges of how many STEM teachers they're going to give grants or whatever to develop. That's a hell of an important move for a foundation to make, that mobilization of foundations. I love that.

Q: Now, let me take that opportunity to go back to what you were about to say before about core standards and ask you to relate this core standard movement, which you were interested in even as a governor of South Carolina. But relate it to, if you can, to No Child Left Behind [NCLB] and to Race to the Top. With Common Core Standards, if I understand it correctly—and I often don't—as part of Race to the Top, the Common Core Standards were to be adopted by the states and some forty-five or so states did adopt them.

Riley: Let me speak about all of that. That's where education is right now, what you're talking about. I mentioned the fact of real standards when I was governor, way back then. Bill Clinton and I were—that's one reason he pulled me into Washington. We went all out for standards.

Goals 2000 [Educate America Act]—all those measures we got passed in that first couple of years—giving incentives back to the states, as I mentioned, and all kinds of technical help to get states involved in developing their own standards because that's the law. And that was done. So you end up with—I won't mention states. I probably shouldn't. But some state standards are not high. South Carolina's are real high because I made them high. Talking to the superintendent, I said, we want our standards high. Something to build up to. We've got high standards. A lot of states around us don't. So it makes us look bad. It looks like we're not reaching our standards and we're probably reaching theirs. You see what I mean? We've got different standards in all fifty states. That's the way education is.

So what do you do about that? You've got to do something. Because everybody's saying, well, the standards in Texas are so and so, and so eighty percent are doing this and in South Carolina sixty percent are—you know, that kind of thing. That wasn't going to work. That's not a way to move forward. So then the state leadership came around—and Carnegie's been involved in all that with different people, like [Michael] Mike Cohen with Achieve and all different people—really started developing this idea of Common Core Standards. Not top down. Not the federal government telling them they have to do it—they really can't do that. But to have the states do it. Well, the chiefs—and I'm very close to the chiefs all around the country—they were very instrumental in it. Governors, legislative leaders. They started this method of developing standards that are comparable internationally. That means they are up there. They're high standards. And there are fewer standards. They're shorter. And they're clearer. And they're higher. In other words, it moves this whole thing up as to what a child would learn in third grade, fourth grade, fifth grade, so forth. And forty-five states, then, have adopted those. Well, that took

some leadership. It took some leadership on a national level to get all these states in—governors, leaders. We in Carnegie were definitely a leader in that whole effort. And that's happening. We've got a long way to go. But that's exciting to me, to see the states working together to accomplish a national purpose.

And you compare, then, No Child Left Behind. No Child Left Behind came in. As people talk about anything created by a committee, it was questionable. A lot of committees created No Child Left Behind. I endorsed No Child Left Behind, but I said—I was not in office then—but I said that we really needed something to have some leeway between school districts and states that made it sensible. For example, in the hills of Kentucky and the downtown L.A., it's different. Education is different. Everybody's got to learn up to certain standards. How you learn is different in different areas. Anyhow, No Child Left Behind was very constrictive. I mean, it was top down. It was compliance-driven—you've got to comply or you'll lose your money. That wasn't what we did in the standards. We said, here's money if you get your standards out there and they're good standards. NCLB was compliance-driven, top-down, test-driven. So everything was measured by these tests. Consequently, learning was kind of out the window and testing was in. There's a relationship but, I mean, it was testing, testing, testing, testing. Well, nobody liked that. Over a period of years, those who would do well were the ones who just hammered on the test all the time, teaching kids how to take this particular test. And that didn't hold out. Nobody liked that—Democrats, Republicans, anybody else. So what we're trying to do, then, is to turn that around and have kind of a bottom-up effort, instead of a top-down effort.

All right, how do you do that? And I've advised with the Secretary of Education [Arne Duncan]. I met with him for three hours in a hotel room in New York before he was chosen. He's a good friend of mine, a very honorable guy. And his program, Race to the Top—I like the name, going up instead of hammering down—had four pillars: supporting Common Core Standards is one of them, helping low-performing schools, quality teachers, integrated programs. And Carnegie's been involved in a lot of that. Carnegie's involved in all four of the things. Those he set up as general reform efforts. And then if you do those things, you're inclined to get money from Race to the Top. So some states got it but all states got into those four things because they were trying to get that money. It was incentive driven, instead of top-down driven. Same way with Race to the Top. It hadn't swept everybody into these reforms but there's no question about them moving in all fifty states. Everybody's talking about Common Core Standards. Everybody's talking about failing schools. Everybody's talking about "teachers are the key to it and how do you get them improved?" New designs for schools. All those things that people talked about. Why? Because that's where the country is and that's what the president set up with Race to the Top—moving up.

Q: Are you familiar with the fact that half the states, under these Common Core Standards that were adopted by these forty-five states or so—by the way, I think, Texas is not among them—the children were supposed to be proficient by some measures, proficient in English and English language skills, including literacy and math, by 2014—half the states have now been given waivers by Arne Duncan. What does that mean?

Riley: Well, what it means is that he's got the same kind of reform under the waivers that he's got under Race to the Top. Now, you can get a waiver if you're using your own innovative ways to accomplish that, not telling you how to do it. But if you have thought it out and you're using your methods to try to improve your standards—Common Core Standards or whatever—then there are two or three things, you do these three things and then he'll talk to you. Then they negotiate back and forth and then he'll give them a waiver. And frankly, it's working. It's very similar to Race to the Top in terms of trying to get reform moving, get change going.

Q: Okay, except that a number of state superintendents have said that it was unrealistic to expect that by 2014 they were going to be able to deliver children who were—

Riley: That's why they got waivers. Because they couldn't. It was unrealistic to do it in just about every state—I think every state. Nobody os going to have everybody proficient by 2014.

Q: So that was a misstep?

Riley: It was a misstep. It was an overstatement. It was a committee. [Laughs] Somebody in the committee said, why don't we do this? So they said, well, that's a good idea. But anyhow, they had to get waivers or they'd be in default. And you couldn't have every state in default, if you see what I mean. So Obama and Arne Duncan used that crisis to build in another movement for reform. I have one of my favorite quotes—because we in Carnegie are all into change—we're into changing things for better. And that's Dilbert's quote. "Change is good. You go first." [Laughter] Anybody that thinks it's easy is wrong.

Q: Well, talking about being easy, would you say it's easy to give away money well as a foundation? Is it a real tough thing to give money away well?

Riley: Well, if you're talking about just giving money away, that would be easy and wrong. [Laughs]

Q: No, I mean grantmaking.

Riley: But if you're making grants in the way Carnegie does it—I mean, they have very bright people doing enormous research. And then the [Carnegie] Scholars program—that's a great program—the Scholars program. They get these bright young people who might be in a university, might be working on their doctorate or whatever and get them to fund them to work for a year on a project. I mean, some enormous work comes out of that—enormous good comes out of that Scholars program. So there's a lot more than just grant giving. Obviously I don't know of any grant they have given that they really haven't studied out, looking at what the results are going to be, measuring the results. They're very careful about those kinds of things. So I never have felt like it was a free flow of money. It was a very carefully thought out use of money.

Q: Right. Have you heard from recent times of this—also it could be described in a way as a movement—called Giving While Living? As opposed to perpetual foundations. People like, I think Warren [E.] Buffett and even [William H. "Bill"] Gates himself, and any number of

philanthropists have signed up a pledge—[Charles] Chuck [F.] Feeney—to give it while they're alive.

Riley: And there's something to that. That was not Andrew Carnegie's style. His idea was to have a perpetual good thing going on. My feeling is it's good for both. You don't want to have everything to be in a perpetual deal. Some people say, if I can make a real difference now, I'm going to take this grant and make it right now. Why just hold back, not do it and do a little piece of it? That's a very legitimate way to look at grantsmanship. Carnegie's different. And Carnegie, frankly, handles it very well, I think. They give a lot of money away through grants and through scholarships and through all the other ways. But it is perpetual. It is determined to be that way and they're very careful about making five percent of whatever it is that they—

Q: Right, right, right.

Riley: —at least. Probably more than that now.

Q: Just before you came on the board, the Carnegie Corporation was deeply involved in a movement to break up large schools. It was called the Small Schools movement. Do you recall that? I mean, had that passed by the time you came on the board or was that an idea that was still floating around?

Riley: I think it was.

Q: Especially urban high schools.

Riley: Yes, I'm very familiar with that. I think one of the presidents of Carnegie way back there in the '50s or '60s was involved in developing larger schools. The so-called consolidated school—

Q: Comprehensive.

Riley: —that could have Latin and Spanish and whatever. When I was coming along in high school and all, that was a common thing. The bigger the school, the more you could offer to kids. And then this idea that kids just get lost in the bigness of it—[Bill & Melinda] Gates [Foundation] has been very much involved in that. I'm on the KnowledgeWorks board out of Cincinnati and we do a lot of education—it's all education. We handle all the Gates money in Ohio, where they were breaking down these giant schools in Cleveland and Cincinnati and Columbus into smaller schools and trying to get parents more involved and students feeling more like they're part of the school, that kind of thing. And I think that was probably the right thing to do. I think the large, consolidated school idea kind of got too big and too much. And really, generally, I think numbers would show that a smaller school, not necessarily real small but a smaller school probably works better in terms of a young person getting engaged in school, engaged in learning. So I think the trend is back in that direction but it'll level off.

Q: But it was on the agenda when you joined the board?

Riley: Yes.

Q: Well, are you aware that in 2008 the Gates Foundation stopped funding this movement?

Riley: Yes. I know that.

Q: Do you remember that having any impact at the Carnegie Corporation?

Riley: [Pauses] No. I don't remember specifically that. No.

Q: Okay.

Riley: I knew through KnowledgeWorks that Gates backed off of what they were doing in Ohio as their main place. They were trying to make Ohio a showplace for breaking up big schools and all. I felt like a lot of that worked. A lot of those kids were getting a lot more education than they were before. But Gates, of course, he's an engineer and he wanted to see the numbers and numbers and numbers, and he finally, I think, decided that the money could be spent for things other than breaking up big schools. So he kind of backed off. We still are into personalizing education. You know what I mean? You can do a lot of that with technology, where an individual and a teacher have a direct relationship or a kid and a computer. So I think that is one of the big trends now—and I think Carnegie is a leader in that—to get education more personalized.

Q: Well, Carnegie was putting money, was it not, into the charter school program?

Riley: Oh, yes. Yes.

Q: What do you think about that?

Riley: We kind of—I don't want to say we invented it. [Albert] Al [A.] Gore made that mistake, [laughs] inventing the internet. But Clinton really did start federal support of the charter school program. There was a big movement to try to shift public dollars to private schools, called vouchers. You're familiar with all that, I'm sure. I've always been very much opposed to that. I always have felt like that was hostile to public schools and I still think so. But we wanted to kind of shake things up, without just dismembering public schools and having money go to private schools so that there was nothing left in the public but the dregs. We wanted to create a public school that could have an original kind of administrative setup, bring in interesting people, smaller, focus on certain things as kind of a model then for the other public schools to go by. And those schools would have a charter. So long as they complied with the charter, they would move forward. They would get the public dollars on a per-pupil basis and they would do their own thing. If they didn't meet the test scores and they didn't meet the graduation requirements, they didn't meet all the other measures, then they would call them in. They'd lose their charter. And that's a good thing. I remember I was in Denver when I was secretary and somebody said, you know we had, I think, five charter schools and two of them had to close down. And that was a bad thing. I said, no, no. That's a good thing. The schools didn't work. Close them down, do something else.

Q: But was the idea that charter schools would be models providing some sort of lessons for the regular public school system—

Riley: Yes. That was—

Q: —as opposed to just being—

Riley: Absolutely. That was one of the ideas: that they were small and they were independently run and they could try things out and then share those back with the traditional public schools. Where it was done properly, that's what happened. But you're exactly right. Clinton and I very much started charter schools. They might have had one or two in the country that were just real pilot programs. But we really got into it. When we came out of office, I think there were two thousand. And we provided start-up money on most of those two thousand.

Q: I think there are five thousand now.

Riley: I wouldn't be surprised if it's ten thousand. It's just grown and grown and grown.

Q: But is that becoming—not a place where public schools [learn] lessons but an alternative to public schools?

Riley: You mean the tail wagging the dog?

Q: Yes.

Riley: Well, this is a democracy and people can do what they want to on local levels with whatever. I like the people to be thinking about schools all the time. If this isn't working, move into something else. You know what I mean? Charter schools really give voice to that. In some areas where people were for vouchers and they couldn't get them passed, then they went out and promoted charter schools, which was perceived by the public school people to be anti-public schools.

Q: Well—

Riley: That's not what the charter schools were intended for.

Q: Although it's sometimes seen that way today.

Riley: Yes. In many cases, they are seen that way today.

Q: Yes. In the George Herbert Walker Bush era, weren't they promoting the idea of vouchers as an alternative to public school? And, indeed, I had occasion recently to read—I keep wanting to call him George Romney, but that shows my age I guess—

Riley: Mitt.

Q: —Mitt Romney's plans for K-12 education. Have you had occasion to peruse that?

Riley: His plan? Mitt Romney's plan?

Q: Yes. Released last May.

Riley: Well, I know he's for vouchers.

Q: He's talking a lot about privatization.

Riley: Oh, yes. He's talking a lot about it and I disagree with him one hundred percent. If he is very much into improving public education, I haven't observed it. [Laughs]

Q: Maybe you haven't been paying attention. [Laughs]

Riley: Well, it might be. I might be tone deaf.

Q: Well, but—

Riley: I do know Obama is very much interested in education. He is interested in higher education now probably more than anything else. He really has a focus on getting into college and completing at least a certificate or a four-year program. And he wants the country to lead

other countries in college graduation. I think that's good. It's a reach but it's a good move for the country.

Q: In 1999, shortly after he became President of the Carnegie Corporation, Vartan Gregorian issued a report and I quote him, "Well-educated teachers are the key to successful school reform." Well-educated teachers are the key to successful reform. Now, shortly after that and before you came on the board I believe, the foundation put a lot of money into teacher education. I think—

Riley: Schools of education.

Q: Schools of education. Excuse me. Schools of education—eleven of them I think.

Riley: Yes.

Q: And maybe each got ten million dollars or something of that sort.

Riley: Yes. Yes.

Q: Now, some of your former colleagues on the board who are also interested in education—and even some people within the corporation whose names I've mentioned but I've forgotten—say that that was a disappointment, that program. Have you any sense of what that program entailed, how it ended or whether it was useful?

Riley: I think there was a general feeling that it was not a roaring success. It was a very difficult area to make change. Some of those people feel put upon by all the efforts of pro-private schools and their teachers coming out, being critical of their education. They had seven or eight or ten. I forget how many they did. But it was a good cross-section. And they came out with very good work. Seemed like they were finishing it up when I came on there. I believe they were.

Q: Maybe.

Riley: And I felt that it was work well-spent but it was not feeling that a major change had taken place. But sometimes, as they say, "Change is difficult. You go first."

Q: Right.

Riley: But it was an effort. I don't want to say it was unsuccessful because I don't think it was. I think it was in an area that is very hard to make change because people are so fixed in their ideas. And they're studying change too and then someone from the outside comes in—a businessman for instance comes in—and tells them how to run a teacher preparation program. And they say, he doesn't know what it's like to try to teach this kid with autism. And these other poor kids have been up all night and parents shooting each other and whatever. And he comes in and tells us how to do it like he runs General Electric. You know, that kind of thing.

So you get both of those sides. I'm sympathetic to the complications of public school, I really am. People that haven't been out there and haven't met with teachers and seen struggling kids—they really are struggling and so are the teachers, principals, parents. People who want to sit back and go to the board meeting and say, this is how we ought to do it, this is the way I would do it if I was principal. Yes? Well, he might go in there and find out it's totally different from what he thinks it is. But anyhow, I'm somewhat sympathetic to those people who are good people, who understand education, who understand learning, trying to teach teachers and find it very difficult for outsiders to come in and tell them what they're doing is right or wrong. I'm very much involved with Winthrop University.

Q: With?

Riley: Winthrop University. They teach more teachers than any other school in South Carolina. It's a state school near Charlotte, over there at the line. One reason is because they named their school of education The Richard Riley School of Education [laughs] so I can't help but be in support of that. However, they just got the highest NCATE [National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education] rating.

They are used by NCATE to help other schools improve. They really do have a wonderful clinical approach—students out in the schools teaching with quality teachers. Most everybody says that's the best way to make a good teacher is to work with a good teacher and that kind of thing. Well, Winthrop does all that. And I go up there and they tell me what all they're doing. They're into all the new stuff. They're very much into technology. They're very much into

project-based learning, as I am. So I don't think that everybody that's out there trying to teach teachers is a nut of that teachers would be better if they would just be a little more business-like. However, some of them are thinkers and not doers. So I don't mind people being observant and critical if they think it's necessary, but I do think there's another side to it. I felt like those programs—probably they're not the most successful thing that Carnegie has ever done. But there's another side to it.

Q: Since you've mentioned it and just parenthetically, have you noticed this movement, it seems, among some of the country's most prestigious universities, to provide online courses?

Riley: I am very much into that, Myron. I now chair a commission, a national commission, on distance education. Every university through their membership organizations is represented. I've talked with Michele about it and they are welcome to observe the commission. We're dealing with, not whether it's good or bad, but how in the devil you're going to handle it when every state law is different. You've got a kid in Columbia, South Carolina, who's taking a course from Denver. Who pays sales tax? Who pays whatever? Do you get credit? What if the place you have it at does not reach your standards for credit? And so you've got fifty states out there with fifty different sets of rules. So somebody like Princeton [University] and [University of] Pennsylvania that recently just got into it big time, they say we've got a kid out there, one student in Illinois, so we've got to change the law around in Pennsylvania to meet Illinois law because that one student is over there in Illinois. Well, that's impractical obviously. So my commission, we've got all of the stakeholders. We've got the private colleges represented, the for-profit colleges. Unfortunately, it's a very complicated structure they're working with. But it's very important.

We're going to finish up—and I was doing something on it this morning—we're going to finish up in January and we'll have a report that deals with that subject. It's a very complicated, growing thing. You can do so much with online education.

What I'm interested in is the cost of higher education. It's out the roof as you well know. And there's not much you can do about it. One thing you can do is online education. And that works.

[Interruption]

Q: I don't know how you find any time to practice law. It seems like you're totally involved in education.

Riley: I have the best job in America. My law firm tells me, Dick, you do whatever you want to do for education, anytime, anywhere, seven days a week and you don't have to clear it with anybody at all. I'm a senior partner in a large law firm. We've got 450 lawyers.

Q: Right. You were telling me that online education is part of the future?

Riley: It is a big part. And what I was just getting into is how it can impact the cost of education. I don't know if you're familiar with MOOCs [Massive Open Online Courses]. Stanford, I think, was the first one that did the artificial intelligence.

Q: Yes, yes, yes.

Riley: So they put this course out there, I can pick it up right here. It's on the internet—Al Gore's responsible. [Pauses] And Al Gore is a great friend of mine by the way. That was an unfair deal. Anyway, MOOCs are free anywhere in the world. One of the top professors in the country on artificial intelligence, Pennsylvania—or was it Pitt [University of Pittsburgh]—two or three of the big Ivy League school are doing—

Q: Right. MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology], Harvard [University]. They're all in it.

Riley: Well, not all of them are doing this free deal.

Q: Okay.

Riley: This is free.

Q: Okay.

Riley: It's just out there. And you say, well, why are—University of Pennsylvania is one of them—you say, why are you doing this? You don't get any money for it. You've put it out there. The answer probably is, "I want to be in the game. It's coming. And we're getting into the game." It doesn't come under my commission because there's no charge. There's no credit. My commission is dealing only with credit courses, where you take a course and get credit for it.

Q: Right.

Riley: Then you get into this multistate problem. So that's what we're trying to work out. But it's amazing to me—big schools—and I mean they've got thousands of people taking these courses. So what do you do? You don't get any credit. However, you're filling out your resumé—these young people are big into that—you put on there I had an artificial intelligence course at Stanford and I completed it. And that looks pretty good. I didn't get any credit for it. I didn't get a doctorate degree but I took this course. Didn't cost me one dime.

Q: Okay. But there will be credit courses. There will be.

Riley: There are credit courses now, lots of them. Lots of them are shaky. Lots of them are not.

Q: But I mean credit courses—

Riley: They're giving credit, they're probably—

Q: —from a place like Stanford or Princeton.

Riley: Yes. Oh, yes. That's coming. That's here. I think if we handle it well, it can be a way that a young person could maybe finish college within two years, with online courses, interspersed with on-site courses. They finish college and cut their costs in half, if you see what I mean. The online course is relatively inexpensive. It'll start costing more. But I think it has a lot to do

with—to me, something has got to give on the cost of college and this is a way to get college education a lot cheaper than at present. You put it on the internet and you can have fifty thousand people take it. One professor. One deal.

Q: Right.

Riley: Also I think when you're looking at higher education—and I'm sure Carnegie is going to be looking at that, too—one thing we've been interested in is early college—taking college courses in high school. And then we get less—

Q: Were you doing that—you were promoting that when you were governor, I think.

Riley: Oh, absolutely. Absolutely. But it's come on. And one reason is the cost of college. I was making a speech—I taught at Harvard one semester at the [John F.] Kennedy School [of Government] and a kid in the audience—big, black kid—was questioning me. That was after Governor, before Secretary. And he said, Governor, I went to school in Irmo, South Carolina.

Q: In where?

Riley: Irmo, a small town in South Carolina. And he said, "your program, the EIA"—There was a big Harvard audience there and I'm the former South Carolina governor—he said, "your program the EIA gave me the opportunity to take college courses when I was in high school." And he said, "I entered Harvard University as a sophomore. I'm in my sophomore year, I've had

one semester. I made straight As." And he said, "I want to thank you for that." Boy, my heart was beating hard. That's policy turned into helping people.

Q: Right. Right. Right.

Riley: And I felt good about that. But that's what it can do. One year at Harvard would cost him fifty or sixty thousand dollars. He made fifty or sixty thousand dollars in high school. You can't do that in a drugstore working behind the counter. I tell these young people, you get these college courses in high school, you're making money for your parents to send you to college.

Q: Advancement placement courses.

Riley: Yes. I've been on the board at Furman University, which is here in Greenville. And I was chairman of the board for the last two years. I just went off of that board too. It worried me to death that it costs forty-five thousand dollars to go to little Furman here in Greenville.

Q: I paid it out recently. I know what you mean. But let me go back to teachers, K-12. When the Gates Foundation got out of the big school movement—putting its money there, making the smaller schools—it turned its attention to the quality of teaching. Melinda Gates on PBS last June said, "An effective teacher makes the fundamental difference." Now that's something that a lot of people have said over time.

Riley: Yes.

Q: Vartan Gregorian has said it.

Riley: Oh, yes.

Q: I'm sure you've said it a lot of times yourself.

Riley: I sure have. Oh, yes.

Q: How do you make an effective teacher? And how do know you've got an effective teacher in the schools?

Riley: Well, that's not easy to answer. The question, it's a very serious one. Teaching—every teacher is different. Every student is different. So you start with that. The demands on education are very much higher than they used to be. We talk about the global economy and the international standards and all that. Everything is more difficult. Then you have all the other problems that affect learning, like eyesight, hearing, ADD [attention deficit disorder], all the different hundreds and hundreds of things. Some people have a natural ability to communicate, some don't. Sometimes the ones that don't might be straight A students and they go right through school and are very highly qualified in every way except they just can't teach.

Well, it's important for a school itself or a school district to try to get people into slots where they can best perform. That's important. And it's very hard. It's like handling human relations in

a law firm or in a big business or whatever. Sometimes you have to tell people, you're a good person, you're a smart person. We can get you into something, but you can't—you aren't a natural, good teacher. Some people are natural teachers. They just love it. And you can tell they love it. And they love to see young people learn. I have a granddaughter like that. She finished college summa cum laude, never made a B plus either, straight As. She's not a big talker at all. She's got a cute personality. And she is into special education. She loves it. She calls me up and tells me about the little autistic kid that learned all of his numbers and all of his letters and what a brilliant kid he is.

What do you do then? I think that Melinda Gates is right and Vartan's right. That's the most important thing about education. I'm very much into collaboration in schools. You have some teachers that are weak in this, some teachers strong in that and whatever, but what you need is them working together and have the students have access to all these different teachers who may pick up their strengths. That is very important. It's important to get people from the outside in the classroom teaching. We're doing some of that in what we call learning studios. And I think Carnegie has just funded one of those.

Q: Yes.

Riley: NCTAF, National Commission on Teaching and America's Future. [James] Jim [B.] Hunt [Jr.] started that. I'm now the co-chair of it. They're big into collaboration. This guy [Thomas] Tom [G.] Carroll—he's a very talented guy—runs it. Teachers, students, parents, principals, all working together. That compensates for somebody in the deal that has trouble coming across as a

teacher. What they're doing though in these studios is bringing in outside people. We started with NASA [National Aeronautics and Space Administration] bringing in astronauts to develop hands-on projects that would help teach math to fifth graders. They eat it up. They just climb out of their seat to get into that class. And astronauts volunteer to do it. Well, you can get engineers. You can get lawyers in. Greenville High, my school, has a program in justice and we lawyers go in and lecture these students. Well, they love having the governor come in and lecture their students. You know, that kind of thing?

Q: Right.

Riley: And the teacher then just sits back and that's another way of collaborating. So that's one answer to all that, Myron. I don't know. There's no easy answer. I think schools of education are trying their best to get into the game better. One thing I'm into—and Carnegie is supporting that, by the way—is, I mentioned, KnowledgeWorks Foundation out of Cincinnati. KnowledgeWorks has acquired the high school design called New Tech High School. It came out of Napa, California and some very wealthy business leaders and education advocates put it together there. They wanted to ensure that their kid, coming out of high school, knew what she or he needed to know and is able to do—that's the second part, be able to do—to go to college and go into real meaningful careers. Well, they're getting basic knowledge. Their knowledge is going up every year. But they don't know how to use it.

They don't know how to use technology well. They don't know how to work in teams. They don't know how to get into critical thinking—those issues, the so-called 21st-century skills. New

Tech High Schools—we've got over a hundred of them now. And I've gotten two in South Carolina partially funded by the federal government, located in what we call the Corridor of Shame—all black, all rural, all poor, never had anything in education. I've gotten two New Tech High Schools in that very poor area in the lower part of my state.

Q: Let me interrupt for one second. You said poor. You know, there are people—here's a professor emeritus at University of Southern California Rossier School of Education and I've seen him say this, the same kind of thing, elsewhere. The problem in these schools is poverty. Poverty, poverty, poverty, he says, not testing them more. You've got to go back to the problem of where they come from. And in fact, Michele Cahill was pointing out in the *Carnegie Reporter* last fall that immigrant children represent one third of children living in poverty.

Riley: Yes. Not only poverty, they can't even speak English—I mean, they're learning English. Well, I just spoke at a luncheon here with the Harvest Hope Food Bank. You're probably not familiar with that. But they gather food in, third-day bread and all and they have millions of tons of it and they distribute it all around. We've got something like fifty thousand poverty-level people right here in Greenville County and this is a very successful area. And I mean, I'm into that, I'm telling you. As I say, I had someone from my law firm here at lunch, just before you got here, talking about poverty.

But let me tell you about New Tech and you'll see how this fits with helping poor students. I went into one New Tech school in Sacramento, very successful, probably seven hundred students—small, not a large school. Most of them try to have around five hundred students.

There's no teacher in the head of the class or a desk, none of that. There were four teachers in the class—but they were walking all around—and a whole lot of students. But the students were in little groups of four, five, six and they were doing projects, project-based learning. They all had their computers. Every one of them has a computer, working on computers. Every one of them was listening and talking to each other, learning from each other. The first group I looked at, they were studying geometry. How were they studying geometry? Well, they were laying out a golf course. If it's interesting enough, these kids are eating it up. I mean, they were figuring the angles of this and whatever, right angles and straight. They had every kind of project you can imagine going on. A lot of them go out of the classroom. They go out into court and sit in court and listen to court. But they have projects and they're learning to state standards. That's their goal. They're learning standards through doing things, taking knowledge and using it. Poor kids—this class was a very mixed class. They try to have it mixed, not all poor, not all rich, whatever. It was very mixed. But probably half of them were Hispanic and black. Over a third of them were poor. They love to learn like that. You see what I'm saying?

Q: Not only—Bruce Alberts, for example, who sat on the board with you—

Riley: Oh yes, a great guy.

Q: Okay. Well, No Child Left Behind, he says, is an absolute disaster. Race to the Top, a little better, except for STEM education and the Opportunity Equation that Carnegie has financed. And his main point is you don't educate kids by having them fill in these bubbles on these tests.

He says the science in this country is a travesty because it hasn't focused on how you think—how to learn how to think—not to fill in a test.

Riley: That's exactly what I'm talking about. Do you see what I'm talking about?

Q: That's right.

Riley: And he's into science big time.

Q: Big time.

Riley: But he is a wonderful, thoughtful guy, and he's exactly right. I mean, this idea of taking these tests and learning how to take the test and figure it out, that's not bad for you, I don't guess. But it sure as hell doesn't make you able to go out and get a big job and do what you're supposed to do: use knowledge.

Q: Right. Have you had occasion to follow the Chicago strike?

Riley: Yes, I followed it. I don't like it, obviously.

Q: Okay. It appears that one of the key sticking points in this strike is teacher evaluation-based on student tests.

Riley: That's one of the biggest issues out there today, evaluating teachers.

Q: Yes. Can you talk about that? I mean, after all, somebody might say, well, wait a minute. How are you going to know if this teacher's teaching this stuff or the student's learning it? You have to give them these tests. You've got so many students, you can't make an Einstein out of every one. We've got to know what's going on.

Riley: Well, of course, what the big fight is with teachers is really negative about No Child Left Behind—They do all these tests and that's how you're going to measure the teacher. That's how you're going to measure the school. That's how you're going to measure the school district and how you're going to measure the state. And all the money comes down based on those measures.

Q: Not only how much money but whether you've got a job.

Riley: A job is part of it, a big part of it. I've got a class in Chicago and all black kids, all poor, all struggling in their families or whatever, get offered drugs every night, guns in their daddy's pocket and all that kind of stuff. And that's the real world out there. So you come in and this teacher is maybe Mother Teresa and trying to help these kids and really teach them something and at the end of the year, these kids don't do well on the test, so she loses her job. Well, that's what they're fussing about. I go into a suburb here in Greenville and all the parents are college educated and they've got plenty of money. They're covered up with books all over the house. The teacher doesn't have to do anything but show up—you know what I mean?—and they do well. Same way at Harvard. Every student at Harvard does well because they're all brilliant.

That is a legitimate concern, how you evaluate teachers. Well, this teacher that's teaching this very poor class I mentioned—and I'm into some of it down in the lower part of the state, as I told you. But I'm getting project-based learning down there and these kids love it. If you measure some kind of way—and that's what the teachers said. They wanted—I think, Rahm Emanuel ordered forty percent based on achievement tests and that was one of the big things they struck on. Well, they ended up, hopefully, settling on thirty percent. And that's all right with me. I don't care if it's thirty or it's forty, whatever. It ought not to be a hundred but something. And that's up to the school board and the school. But evaluation is very difficult. I don't think you can evaluate a teacher on one evaluation measure. I think you have to have multiple things to look at. It's got to be based on different things. I mean, I'd be for videoing teachers.

Q: Peer review?

Riley: Peer review. Achievement level is something. Kids who regularly attend is something. Parent involvement is something. You know what I mean? You get all these things together and then you've got a good, successful teacher. The collaboration is something. Does a teacher work well with other teachers or with other students? So I think there are a lot of ways to evaluate but not just one thing. Some business people would want it based purely on achievement scores.

Q: Do you ever hear much conversation at Carnegie, on the board, about this kind of problem?

Riley: Yes, a lot. Carnegie, the members of the board, very much would like to have some kind of way to evaluate teachers. Generally, the discussion I've heard among them—many are big business people too—is they're very much pro-achievement levels. And I'm for achievement levels too for a part of their evaluation. But I think most business people will tell you if a teacher's teaching and they do well on tests, then the teacher's good, move forward.

[Interruption]

Q: Let me read you this sentence from the *New York Times* coverage of the Chicago strike the other day: "The Education Commission of the States says that thirty states require that evaluations include evidence of student achievement on tests, and at least thirteen, and the District of Columbia, use achievement measured by test scores for half or more of a teacher's rating." Now, that's a lot and when I say that's a lot, I mean—as you pointed out, you can take a school in Winnetka, Illinois or a school in inner Chicago—and they're both in Illinois. [Laughs]

Riley: Yes. I know. I know.

Q: It's a different problem, though.

Riley: Yes. Well, I think, the answer to that is that the local school district has to say whether it's thirty, forty, fifty or a hundred or what. I think it ought to be a portion of it. And it's up to them to say what it is. Thirty or forty percent sounds good to me. But I don't know. I'm not a teacher and I'm not into measuring students or whatever. But I do think you can get things like project-

based learning, where a teacher becomes a coach. The teacher then manages small groups of children in projects and makes sure they're learning to high standards. Then a teacher could understand where a principal is all into collaboration, if a teacher is willing to work with other teachers. So those kinds of things are the answer, instead of just hammering on whether it ought to be fifty, sixty or seventy percent or whatever. Come to some percent and make it something one of eight or ten other measurements.

Q: As a member of the board, were you involved at all with the immigration issue that Carnegie has addressed? I think it's Immigrant Civic Integration.

Riley: Well, yes. I mean, I'm involved in it as much as anybody else. Of course, schools are a big part of all those issues.

Q: I noticed in the *New York Times* today that the administration, the White House, has decided that these immigrant children who grew up here who they won't deport aren't going to be entitled to coverage under the Obama health care law. Did you notice that—are not going to be covered under it?

Riley: No. I didn't notice that. But now, on this DREAM Act—that includes people who were young when they came over here or are born here or something.

Q: That's right. But they're not going to get the health coverage part.

Riley: But the health coverage they left out, huh?

Q: Well, evidently so. But let me wind up a little bit with the—

Riley: Now, Vartan, for good reason—and I think Carnegie itself—is very concerned about the immigrant situation in this country. I am too. And I think he's exactly right. Vartan himself is an immigrant. You know what I mean? So he's tuned in to it and he knows it. He keeps up with it and we get into that a good bit, in a very intellectual, good way, I think. So we've got to do something with that. You can't take thirteen million people and say, all right, get on the bus and go back to Mexico. Obviously that isn't going to happen.

Q: Wasn't one of the politicians recently recommending—what is it called, voluntary deportation [self-deportation]?

Riley: Oh yes. That might have been your guy, Romney.

[Laughter]

Q: My guy, Romney.

Riley: He's said some dumb things.

Q: You mean "George Romney." [Laughter]

Riley: No.

Q: Someone sprung upon me an article in the *American Educator* in spring 2011, by a Richard W. Riley and an Arthur L. Coleman. You recall this article, don't you?

Riley: "Turning the Page on the Equity Debate." Yes.

Q: Okay.

Riley: I am very proud of the article, by the way.

Q: It says here, "…two of education's timeless questions: What should our education policymakers do to ensure the students of all backgrounds have the same opportunity to succeed? And, what can we do to ensure that our commitment to 'education equity' is more than rhetorical flourish?" Now, that's something that Carnegie certainly has been interested in, that you've been interested in and that you've discussed today. But one of the themes of this piece is that, here's a quote: "If we're going to do more with less, we had better be smart about how we're going to do it." You seem to want to be finding some way of doing things just as well or better but cheaper, in K-12.

Riley: You've got to do it cheaper, it looks like. I mean, they won't pass any taxes. [Laughs] So really, you need to search for ways to do things better and cost less. Actually, if you spend money on education, it turns out to be a very good investment. It brings back more money than

you put in, if you spend it right. But right now, the country is so split and the anti-tax people are so powerful, education is kind of stuck with what we've got. And we need to think about things to do smarter and better, without saying give us so much money and we can put it in this program, that program or that program. So I think that's a good statement.

Q: It's not a question of throwing in the towel and saying, well, we've got to cut this and cut that and cut this and cut that, just to reduce the bottom line?

Riley: I hope not. I hope not. But do better with what you've got. Again, that's why I'm looking at things like this project-based learning. That's totally different. I mean, to go into a classroom and not have students sitting there in the desks in line and the teacher up there talking—people my age say, well, you know, that's very disorganized. [Laughs] Why don't they get these children in their desks?

Q: Well, toward the end of this piece, you say, "So, to ensure that we are meeting as effectively as possible the needs of our students, the central question to be addressed, with respect to each of the five areas"—meaning better teachers, better resources, focus also on family traditions and health—"is this: what, based on research and practice, are the key indicators of cost-effective investments that are likely to yield successful outcomes for all students? In other words, where and how should we be spending our limited resources?" Now, where do you find these indicators? Where do you find this data? Actually, Vartan Gregorian made a point not long ago about data, in 2007: "Few would argue that data-driven decision making is the hallmark of accountability. Yet developing effective and reliable systems of collecting and analyzing data in

support of advances in teaching and learning is a daunting challenge for public schools, where data has been organized not for purposes of informing practice but for reporting to regulatory bodies." Now, Carnegie has been supporting somebody like Education Trust for some years, which collects data. But is it a lot easier to say we need this data and these indicators than it is to get it? Where do you look for that kind of stuff?

Riley: Well, it is difficult. I think it's difficult. But I've always felt like—of course, I have great confidence in the Education Trust. I think that's a very good organization. I've always approved Carnegie's investment in that because we ought to be into something to help with the difficult area of poverty. Data is hard to get from those kinds of things, but you can get it. I think the numbers there probably are relatively accurate—the point being that poverty is a major, major problem in this country and in every country and in education. You've got to educate poor people and you have to educate them a little differently. Again—I don't want to get back into New Tech High Schools—but most poor kids, who won't sit at a desk and listen to a teacher, will get involved in laying out a golf course, if you see what I mean. That's smarter, it doesn't cost any more, you don't have any more teachers per group. But you do have this: kids are teaching each other. And they're bringing in other people. They bring in a golf guy and he works with them. You see what I mean?

Q: Right.

Riley: And I think that's smart. That all comes under the heading, I think, of collaboration. I'm very big into that. There are all kinds of things that schools can call on, teachers can call on, to collaborate with them and reach poor kids a whole lot better. I really do think that.

Q: At the end of your piece, you say things have to be done, et cetera, et cetera, "to ensure that America maintains its international prominence." I think you're speaking of education there. Now, there are a lot of people that think that we're not as prominent as we think we are in education and that it's only gotten worse.

Riley: Well, you have to look at that too, Myron. I've been to Singapore and Finland. I know about all that. Look at their people—indigenous culture very much into learning, very serious learning habits. Finland, similar. Finland, interestingly enough, their big thing is how they attract teachers. They pay them five times what we pay them. I mean, it's a big thing. They get one out of ten applicants to teach in Finland, all of them college graduates, all of them relatively good grades and pick one of the ten. I mean, it is a real honor to get to be a teacher. Well, we're way off from that. Attracting young people to teach is a very important need this country has and that would go a long way toward this business of quality teachers. Now, maybe Gates and Carnegie and others will get into that somewhat but we've got to somehow—and then people raise Cain, like in Chicago or wherever, the battle—let's don't just pour money on them. But attracting good teachers is Finland's answer. And all those teachers, by the way, are in unions.

Q: Yes.

Riley: In Finland.

Q: Well, actually, a major American celebrant of this Finnish model is a former assistant Secretary of Education, Diane Ravitch.

Riley: Yes, I know Diane well.

Q: Well, she's as rabid a critic of the kind of testing—

Riley: She switched.

Q: Yes.

Riley: She did a 180. And that's fine. I think people need to switch. But she's always been for vouchers. She's always been for all that. She switched on the whole deal.

Q: That's right.

Riley: She says testing, testing, testing is dumbing down the school.

Q: That's right.

Riley: And vouchers are wrong.

Q: At the cost of art and literature and other things.

Riley: Absolutely. Absolutely. Music.

Q: That's right. Is she right?

Riley: Well, I think she's a lot right about that. I am very big on—I keep talking about the skills thing. Music education, arts education, civics education, foreign language, those are things that I am really big on. We did Goals 2000 and the governor set up goals. And we added music—music and arts is one thing—civics and foreign language.

Q: Yes, you wanted every student to know at least one foreign language.

Riley: Absolutely and also know enough about music to where they appreciate it, that kind of thing. And civics. Of course Carnegie is big into civics, as you well know—they're democratizing things in other countries and all too. But civics—Carnegie connects up civics and education. It's a connecting point and it's a very good one. I love the fact that Carnegie's very much into civics. And I am. But I'll tell you, music and civics and foreign languages—those kinds of things, you cut those out in favor of testing, testing, testing—

Q: And civic responsibility.

Riley: Yes, that's another aspect of it.

Q: I mean, the whole democracy theme is one of Vartan's themes, is it not? One of Carnegie's themes is that you've got to have this education to be able to have a democracy.

Riley: Absolutely. Absolutely. Well, the people, in a democracy, are in charge. That's the meaning of democracy. It's the people's government. People own the government. If people don't know what the hell the government's about and how to register to vote and how to serve on a jury and how to appreciate what's happening with the government, democracy gets shuffled down. But that's a strong emphasis—it was—of Carnegie. He was big on that.

Q: Let me not keep you any longer. I know you've got to go to this funeral. All in all, the experience of having been on that board for seven years, eight years, as against all these other activities that you've been engaged in and these offices you've had, how does it shake out? Really worth it, worth it—?

Riley: It was absolutely worth it. One of the best things about it, frankly, is the other board members. They're very interesting people. You know what I mean? And you get to know them. You hear them interact with you and the staff or whatever. That's enlightening to me. That's a real opportunity, to sit down with the president of Pennsylvania, the president of Duke, the president of MIT and all these other people. And it just really is—you don't mind going to a meeting. The meetings are very interesting. They always have presentations for the staff. They bring in key people, people you read about and want to hear from. It was a tremendous

experience for me. I loved it. I really loved it. And I've been on lots of boards. That's the most important board I've been on and I really enjoyed it.

I was on the Duke Endowment Board here, which is a very sought-after board in the Carolinas. But I had to go off of that when I went to Washington. I'm the only person that's ever resigned from the Duke Endowment in the history of the Endowment. [Laughter] But it was a conflict, serving as education secretary because schools get grants, whatever. But I was on Furman's board for a number of years and loved that. And I'm now on KnowledgeWorks, I mentioned. It's all education. I love that. And I'm on ACT [American College Testing] out in Iowa City. That's the only other major board I'm on. And I love that too.

Q: Well, I'm going to call you at three o'clock tomorrow morning to see if you're working.

Riley: All right. I'll be working.

Q: Thank you so much, Governor.

Riley: Well, I loved meeting you.

Q: Thank you.

Riley: That's another advantage of being on the Carnegie board.

Q: Thank you so much.

[END OF SESSION]