



University of Kentucky
UKnowledge

Kentucky Law Alumni Oral History Collection

College of Law History

6-8-2015

Oral History of Student Life at the UK College of Law with Julius E. Rather (Class of 1960)

Julius E. Rather

Follow this and additional works at: https://uknowledge.uky.edu/law_oralhist



Part of the [Legal Education Commons](#)

[Right click to open a feedback form in a new tab to let us know how this document benefits you.](#)

Repository Citation

Rather, Julius E., "Oral History of Student Life at the UK College of Law with Julius E. Rather (Class of 1960)" (2015). *Kentucky Law Alumni Oral History Collection*. 2.

https://uknowledge.uky.edu/law_oralhist/2

This Oral History is brought to you for free and open access by the College of Law History at UKnowledge. It has been accepted for inclusion in Kentucky Law Alumni Oral History Collection by an authorized administrator of UKnowledge. For more information, please contact UKnowledge@lsv.uky.edu.



Interviewee: Julius E. Rather (Class of 1960)
Interviewer: Franklin L. Runge
Date: June 8, 2015
Location: Law Offices of Denney, Morgan, Rather & Gilbert in Lexington, Kentucky

This transcription is non-strict verbatim, meaning that it does not include all utterances (e.g., Mm-hmm, uh-huh, umm, uh, etc.). The audio timestamp will be added before each paragraph. New paragraphs are started at every change of speaker or at every three minutes, whichever is earlier.

0:00:03 Franklin L. Runge: This is the interview with Julius Rather on June 8th of 2015. We are in his law offices at Denney, Morgan, Rather and Gilbert on West Short Street in Lexington, Kentucky, and the interviewer is Franklin Runge. Thank you for taking time to be with me today. I just wanted to start with some questions about you and sort of where you grew up, and what your family was like, and then your decision to go into the legal profession.

0:00:45 Julius E. Rather: Okay. I was born in Scottsville, Kentucky, Allen County. My father was the county school superintendent, and my mother was a teacher. From the time I was in the fourth grade, I knew I would be a lawyer. I don't know why. My whole educational career was directed towards getting into law school. Graduating from law school becoming a lawyer. My mother and father were the first people to get college degrees in our family. We were a long line of tenant farmers and in 1950 we moved to Bowling Green. We moved from Scottsville with about 1,000 people to Bowling Green with about 11,000. Went to College High School, at a teacher training school, College High. And then I went to Western. Back then, you could get into law school with 90 hours. I only went to Western two and a half years. I was in the Army six months, and I got into law school with 90 and one half hours.

0:02:30 FR: Was there an application process, do you remember?

0:02:33 JR: No. I just came up and talked to Dean Matthews. And I always remember, the tuition in 1957 was \$87.50 a semester. I can't remember what the books were, but it was under \$50. And the money that I entered law school with was borrowed. My father had died in '57, and actually, I worked a couple years with Dorothy Salmon in the law library and worked one year supervising the club they had next to Lafferty, the educational dining room there, lived upstairs. I don't know if that building's still there or not. I don't know if the faculty hall's still there. Is it there?

0:04:00 FR: I'm not aware of the faculty hall still being there. I think that that is...

0:04:06 JR: It used to be a home. Is Lafferty still around?

0:04:13 FR: Well, I do not believe that the Lafferty building is still standing now.

0:04:18 JR: Oh, okay. Well, I worked my way through law school. They didn't want you working, but I always had at least two jobs. One of the best was a house boy for a sorority which fed me, and I graduated in 1960. Became a law clerk for the old Court of Appeals, and after a year there, I became legal assistant to Governor Bert T. Combs. And stayed on for a short period of time with Governor Edward Breathitt and then Governor Combs and I came to Lexington and practiced law for four years until he took a position on the U.S. Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals, and practiced with Ed Denney. Ed Denney had run for Governor on a Republican ticket in 1955, I believe. The year Happy Chandler won. So, I practiced law with the Republican nominee and the Democratic nominee, and I've been in practice in Lexington ever since.

0:06:32 FR: When you attended the law school, you started in 1957, that is...

0:06:37 JR: Yes, correct.

0:06:37 FR: Could you talk a little bit about the relationship with the other law students? Was it a close knit group or were you working two jobs and were just there studying and got out?

0:06:50 JR: No. They was close. 46 started in 1957. Of that 46, 16 graduated. And I apologize, but I've got a picture in front of Lafferty Hall of all but one of those 16, 15. I should've brought it. I'll probably make a copy and send it to you. We were extremely close.

0:07:37 FR: Was it competitive in the classroom? Or was it more relaxed and sort of everybody was on each others' side?

0:07:51 JR: Every semester we'd lose about three or four people. And if you were close to the bottom like I was, they were always nipping at your heels. Three or four would lose, three or four... Fact is, my senior year in law school, a guy flunked out. It was easy to get in. With 90 and a half hours, but it was hard to stay there once you got there. My problem was that school was always easy for me. I didn't have to study too hard. I always got B's, occasionally an A. I came to law school, had no history of writing, and the essay finals, I didn't do too well. So, Professor Richard Gilliam worked with me one whole semester on writing and my grades improved a whole letter. And he was so kind. His name was Whiskey Dick. Called him Whiskey Dick Gilliam. When the law students would have parties, he was always there. He could drink anybody under the table.

[chuckle]

0:09:38 JR: And they told it and it's true. When he was drinking, he'd go home, he filled the bathtub with hot water, and he had a rest where he could hang his head and he'd go to sleep. And when the water would cool off it'd wake him up and he'd be alert, as if he had never gotten drunk. [chuckle] Back then we had Saturday classes. Do they still have Saturday classes?

0:10:09 FR: No.

0:10:11 JR: Oh. An eight o'clock Saturday class after a party was not fully attended by everybody. And he would be teaching to about a half a classroom and everybody would be about half asleep, still hung over. Let me put it this way, we were still young enough we were learning how to drink. And some of us didn't handle it as well as others.

0:10:54 FR: What was the class schedule like? How many days were you... Six days a week then?

0:11:00 JR: Six days a week. We always had Saturday classes. And we'd have maybe... Not more than two classes a day. Occasionally, we would have a day with no classes. Do you want some stories now about some of the students?

0:11:32 FR: Yeah, if you...

0:11:33 JR: Okay. Governor John Y. Brown, Jr. was a sophomore when I started law school and he was a sophomore when I graduated. He was reportedly, and probably true, he ran an encyclopedia salesman group. It was reported he made \$25,000 a year like that, but he lost \$40,000 gambling. And one of my great stories, we had Professor Dukeminier. You might've heard of him. He taught a class on Future Interest, so we started the exam at eight o'clock, and at about 8:20, John Y. entered. He... A casual student, took maybe one or two classes a semester. He came in and everybody looked up and laughed and laughed, because this is typical John Y. He sat down, first thing his hand up and said, "Professor Dukeminier." He says, "Yes, Mr Brown?" He says, "Everybody's got their books." He said, "Well, that's because it's an open book exam." And we just laughed and laughed and laughed and laughed.

0:12:57 JR: And in about 10 minutes his hand went up and he says... Professor Dukeminier says, "Mr Brown?" He says, "Can I borrow your book?" [laughter] That was typical John Y. He would come in the night before an exam, I'd be working for Ms. Salmon in the library, and he'd wander in at 10:30 or 11 o'clock. We got an exam at eight o'clock the next morning, and he'd look around and he'd get a book, wander off, and he'd always write a C. I guess even a C student can become governor of Kentucky.

0:13:57 FR: So, that professor you kind of have a memory of his relationship was to student. Were there other professors that really... And you mentioned Gilliam, and his taking time to work with you, were there other sort of professors that stood out in your kind of memory? Roy Moreland taught Criminal Law. There was Paul Oberst...

0:14:23 JR: Oberst taught Constitutional Law. Dean Matthews taught Property One and Two. Professor Ham taught Contracts. The professor that taught Taxation, can't remember his name. My memory is not as good as it used to be.

0:14:52 FR: I have a list of the professors at the time. What I'll do is maybe see if any of them ring a... There was a Frederick Whiteside.

0:15:10 JR: That's who it was, Frederick Whiteside.

0:15:14 FR: Yeah. He and Paul Oberst, their picture is up in the faculty lounge. We have a nice photo of the two of them up there. There was a... Looks like a... Richard Gilliam you mentioned. And it's Jesse and is it Duke... How did you... Dukemine...

0:15:35 JR: Dukeminier.

0:15:37 FR: Dukeminier.

0:15:41 JR: Dukeminier, the Mississippi queer with the Ivy League veneer.

[chuckle]

0:15:46 FR: How did it go again? Say it again.

0:15:50 JR: The Mississippi queer with the Ivy League veneer.

0:15:53 FR: There you have it. His father, if I'm not mistaken, was very famous in the legal profession.

0:16:00 JR: Don't know anything about him.

0:16:01 FR: Really? 'Cause it's such an uncommon name, and there's a very famous trust and estate book that's written by a Jesse Dukeminier. That's not the junior. So, I think it was his father who wrote it. And then there's Burt Ham, Tom Lewis.

0:16:24 JR: Tom Lewis... My first day in law school, he was there. I never did have a class under him. But I looked around. I wore a suit. Going to law school, I had no idea what to expect, had a white shirt and tie. I was the only one back then that sat next to a guy with an old Army overcoat and hair sticking up. And I said, "That fella won't make it." Well, he did make it. He was about third in our class and had a wonderful career practicing law in Washington, DC. One of my more famous memories in law school, we used to sit on the front porch, and it had about two or three steps, a sidewalk leading up to it. And we would pitch pennies at a line that they had in the sidewalk. And the closest one to it would get all the pennies. And in 1959, we pitched pennies with Bobby Kennedy who was there to make a speech. And he had to borrow some pennies to pitch with us.

0:18:14 FR: Did he tell any good stories?

0:18:17 JR: Who, Bobby?

0:18:18 FR: Bobby.

0:18:18 JR: No, he was quiet. Which leads to one of my more famous memories. It was wintertime. And we had one old great big gawky kid, I can't remember his name. And the football team... It was snowing... And the football team, 20 or 30 of them were yelling and screaming and going en masse around the campus. So we decided to throw snowballs at 'em, and then lock the door where they couldn't get to us. And we looked at each other, without saying anything we knew what we were gonna do. We told him, said, "You go out there, and we'll let you throw the first snowball." He went out on the porch, got ahead, we backed off into the building. He threw that snowball and screamed at 'em, says, "Take that, you son of a bitches." And we locked the door where he couldn't get in. Pounded on the door, "God dammit, let me in. Let me in." And then he took off running. And in about 10 minutes he was pounding on the door, "Please let me in. Please let me in." And he'd run and the football team chased him all over that campus. [chuckle] Tricks we played...

0:19:49 FR: That is funny.

0:19:49 JR: Were not so funny sometimes.

0:19:53 FR: Now, how was the behavior in the classroom itself when you all were in lectures? Did everybody... I assume every... There was... Were there any sort of high jinks or sort of jokes or things that you all passed amongst each other?

0:20:08 JR: No, I don't remember that. It was quiet. We had fellas that would take down and write, keep notes and head down, would not participate. Others would sit with eyes glazed over. We would participate because they'd called on you, "Give that case." And everybody had a series of the cases from the... You could buy from Chicago or some place in Detroit. And they would be... Have the case briefed. I think it was Forrest Cool, if I'm not mistaken. And we'd get together every semester and ride off and get the cases. But they were not well briefed. The question... They'd get the facts and ask the question and discuss it. The question was, "Is there a contract?" Well, that's no help. But it saved you some writing, sometimes.

0:21:44 FR: Was there any one of the faculty members who was particularly good in their lectures?

0:22:00 JR: Ham very seldom asked questions. Oberst would... And he was pretty good at dissecting a case.

[pause]

0:22:27 FR: Was there a subject that you liked the most?

0:22:36 JR: Well, I liked the Criminal Law... And the Constitutional Law, I guess. Those were my two favorite subjects.

0:22:47 FR: So when Roy Moreland... Was he... I think that he was the Criminal Law teacher at the time.

0:22:53 JR: Yeah, quite a character.

0:22:55 FR: That's what I... [chuckle] That's what I've heard. He had a small book that he wrote, correct? On homicide.

0:23:01 JR: Yeah.

0:23:02 FR: Did he teach from that book, I assume?

0:23:05 JR: Yeah, and you had to buy it too.

0:23:10 FR: What were some of the sort of, kind of bizarre character moments about him?

0:23:23 JR: Well, he'd come to class with mismatched socks. He had big belly hanging out... Not buttoned. A tie that was as old as the law school... And if I remember anything about him, it was his ranting and raving. And very seldom would anybody challenge him, because it was understood that when you're given a number on your test, the teacher didn't know who it was. He knew, he exactly knew. And it was wise not to cross him. And that was... The most challenging moments, was when they'd post your grades on the bulletin board. That was... Your heart would stop. Your heart would exactly stop, and you went over to the bulletin board and read your grades.



0:24:54 FR: Now, that bulletin board, did they have your name or did they have your number?

0:24:58 JR: Number.

0:25:00 FR: They had your number. But did a bunch of people know who...

0:25:02 JR: Who...

0:25:05 FR: Did the other students know who the other number... No?

0:25:08 JR: No.

0:25:09 FR: But you would go and look for your number?

0:25:12 JR: Yeah. Very little talking. Occasionally it would be, "Oh, shit." Or, "That God damn son of a bitch did it to me." Or, "How could I have just made a C? I wrote a B paper." Comments like that.

0:25:42 FR: Did Roy Moreland ever talk about his World War I service in class?

0:25:46 JR: Yes.

0:25:47 FR: Wow. [chuckle]

0:25:50 JR: And...

[background conversation]

0:26:01 JR: I don't know exactly what he did; I don't know... I think he was overseas, if I remember correctly. Professor Gilliam had been in World War II, and I don't know whether he was in World War I or not.

0:26:36 FR: Did you think that they were fair with their grading, or were you just sort of like, "Meh"?

0:26:41 JR: I got the grades that I deserved. I didn't deserve better grades. The best grade I made was in the Civil Practice, when they had a mock trial. And I did better at that because I'm really a ham bone. And if I'm famous or noted for a trial in Kentucky, it's the Francis Jones Mills trial. He was the State Treasurer, and in Kentucky, you know we elect a State Treasurer, and an Attorney General, and an Auditor, and a Commissioner of Agriculture. He was indicted. The first and, as far as I know, the only state officer ever to be indicted.

0:28:13 FR: When was this?

0:28:15 JR: 1985...

0:28:18 FR: Alright. Ballpark, 1985?

0:28:20 JR: 1985. So I represented her and the deputy. It was televised daily, and it was a six-week trial. Jury was out four and a half days, and if you know how tired you are after a one-day trial. If you ever had a two-day trial, you're completely exhausted. Do it for six weeks sometime. The trial was in Frankfort and I lived here in Lexington, and I'd get up at four o'clock in the morning, and prepare to drive to Frankfort. At the end of the day I'd come back and need more preparation, and I'd try to get to bed by 11:00. It wore me out like anything, and I've worked construction work in the summertime. But I won the case. The very first words out of my mouth... Had a full courtroom, 'cause it was a noteworthy trial. She was indicted on 38 counts of misfeasance, malfeasance, nonfeasance.

0:30:01 JR: We were giving our opening statements. The courtroom was filled, the jury box faced the judge. The judge was up in an alcove, had double doors behind the judge. It's an old courtroom. So he said, "Mr. Rather?" I get up. About that time, the doors opened up behind the judge and two old women came out, and said, "Is this the clerk's office?" Well, you can imagine how it did to your concentration. And he got up and talked to 'em, told 'em where to go, sits down, says, "Mr. Rather?" I wait a good 30 seconds. Nobody's saying anything, everybody iss... I finally turn around to the judge, and said, "Judge, I forgot where I was at." Well, it broke up the jury, broke up the whole courtroom. Everybody laughed, pounded their knees, it's the funniest thing they've ever heard. But a laughing jury won't convict. A laughing jury won't convict. I always say that I won the case on the very first words out of my mouth.

0:31:30 FR: That's good.

0:31:31 JR: But... It also showed what a moral character I was. And I regret it, in a way. It showed I was a moral character. Francis Jones Mills got in trouble, 'cause she's using her employees in her campaigns, and taking 'em out of work, and making 'em do campaign work. And I'm smoking a cigarette at lunch time, everybody's going into the courtroom, and I look up, and there's the Chief Justice of the Kentucky Supreme Court with his... John Scott, Clerk of the Supreme Court, trotting along behind him with an armload of campaign posters. He's campaigning, and I said, "God damn, I'll win this case, I'll get his summons, and have his ass in court." So I went running and got to the clerk's office and stopped.

0:32:49 JR: My legs wouldn't move. Do I really want to summons the Chief Justice of the Kentucky Supreme Court? Do I? And my legs are trembling, and I just couldn't make myself do it. I couldn't make myself do it, and he was a personal friend of mine. John Scott was a personal friend. And a stronger person than me would have got a summons. Of course, to prove that everybody in Frankfort was doing what Francis Jones Mills was doing. I got a summons for the Lieutenant Governor, the Attorney General, the Auditor, all of the public officials, and they came to court screaming and yelling and carrying on, but they worked the court pretty good and didn't have to testify, but I always wonder what would have happened if I had done it.

0:34:07 FR: Would you... I wanna go back to when you were working at the law school for the library. About how big was the library? 'Cause I just had no sense of that building.

0:34:23 JR: Well, the library itself was about the size of this office floor plan back to the way you entered in both sides. That was about the size of where you studied. It had volumes along the walls, back behind, they had stacks, maybe five or six stacks. Wasn't the biggest law library. Had some additional stacks. Of course... I had a key to the library, I worked there. And it would open on Sunday afternoon at 1:00, but there was people that love to study all the time, so they came to me, since I had the key, and wanted to go Sunday morning. [chuckle] Yes. I was the big man. I had the key. And I'd let 'em in, and that went on for a couple of months. One Sunday, I opened the door, and the lights were off, and I was going back through the stacks, and an arm came out and grabbed me, and said, "Mr, Rather." Ms. Dorothy Salmon turned us in to Dean Matthews. Turned me in to Dean Matthews. And met with him. And he could hardly keep a grin off his face. What can you say about students that so...

0:36:21 FR: Wanna study?

0:36:22 JR: Who wanna study on Sunday morning? And he said, "You're gonna have to stop it." And he sorta grins, and shakes his head and said, "We need to keep peace with everybody and I'd appreciate it if you'd stop it." So that stopped it. But my heart stopped when that arm come out, that "Mr Rather." She had a low voice. [chuckle]

0:36:57 FR: And what was your job? What did she hire you to do? Just work the desk at night? Or...

0:37:02 JR: Well, work the desk, it had a little desk between the big room and the stacks. And if they wanted a book, they'd come tell you, and you'd go get it. And I worked one summer... And I forgot what I did, but I worked all summer, worked all day and got paid for it. I think she told me she had a budget, and she needed to spend... Not turn a penny back on the budget because next year's budget would be a little bit more. You know how that works.

0:37:48 FR: I do.

0:37:48 JR: I suppose?

0:37:49 FR: Yeah.

0:37:55 JR: Worked... That's the same time I was working at the faculty club.

0:38:02 FR: So the faculty club was a dining room?

0:38:06 JR: It was in a big house next to Lafferty Hall. And the faculty club had turned the living room into a dining room. They didn't have a big crowd to take there. Food was terrible. And it would be three or four students that would wait on tables. And it's... Running the faculty club, I got to choose who got to eat. And nobody had any money. It was a prized possession. And they had a pool table upstairs. They had a bedroom I slept in. And occasionally we'd play pool.

0:39:10 FR: And did the faculty members at the law school eat there?

0:39:18 JR: I don't remember them ever doing that.



0:39:22 FR: So, it was faculty members from other departments who would come there?

0:39:26 JR: From all over the whole university.

0:39:30 FR: I wonder where law's faculty went? They just ate at their desks maybe?

0:39:37 JR: Maybe there or at the Student Union building. It had a cafeteria. My first year in law school, I lived on Maxwellton Court, up by the College of the Bible. Had two fellas that worked at the Student Union building, and they'd come back every night with their pockets full of fried chicken, biscuits, milk, and we'd put the milk outside and wind it, keep it cold, and they got a little bit too rambunctious, started stealing more and more food. They finally got fired. If nothing else, because of their greasy pockets. And...

0:40:47 FR: So those were your roommates in law school?

0:40:51 JR: Yeah. My room cost... First room cost \$12 a month. My senior year, I lived in an attic. I was working three jobs, and you couldn't stand up straight in it. And I was forever forgetting that, but jumping up and "BAM," knocking my ass off. In the winter time, I depended on them keeping the door open up to the attic, so I could get some heat, otherwise I'd freeze my ass off. And they had one guy, John Collace, law student, forever shut that door. Finally, I lost my temper, grabbed him, and put him up against the wall, and told him I was gonna kill him if he shut that door again, and I meant it.

0:42:07 JR: I meant it and he knew I meant it, and John Collace later was a famous disbarment. He was disbarred, and he finally sued the members of the old Court of Appeals. I don't know... I was president of the local bar association, and it got out that he was gonna sue me too. He must have remembered that incident, because I sent word back to him if he sued me I'd wind up breaking both his arms and both his legs, and I meant it, so he didn't sue me. [chuckle] But he's the first disbarment. Back then the local bar association would basically initiate disbarment proceedings.

0:43:31 FR: In essence you took care of you own in a way?

0:43:33 JR: Yeah, we took care of our own.

0:43:35 FR: And so...

0:43:36 JR: We knew when a good guy made a mistake, and knew the bad ones.

0:43:41 FR: Yeah. So what was he disbarred for?

0:43:49 JR: I don't know how he did it, but he'd get some poor people in and charge them \$7,500 for something and never do it. He's forever charging and getting money. I can hardly get \$150 for a divorce case, and here he's getting \$7,500 for it. I don't know how he could do it. And he had all these cases when he was finally disbarred, and the cases, the bar association and the courts, our local court, or judges only. This was the Circuit Court decided that we would get volunteers to take over the cases and finish them at no cost. And I was sorta in charge of getting... The Court would say, "We need two lawyers and these are the cases." Well I'd call around and convincing lawyers to take the case and finish it up, and we finished up 50 or 60 cases that way. It earned me a Henry T. Duncan award that year. Plaque on the wall.

[pause]

0:45:31 FR: So could you, as far as the classmates that you were with, you had mentioned the sort of John Y. Brown story of him sort of just coming to that test and that sort of... Were there classmates of yours that were really impressive to you? That always just "wowed" you with how amazing they were?

0:45:55 JR: Well, John Bonderant was the number one student, he made all A's. I understand he finally made a B, and he and his brother and his daddy came to talk to the professor that gave him a B, and...

0:46:13 FR: And that sort of thing still kinda happens. [chuckle]

0:46:16 JR: Yeah.

[pause]

0:46:34 JR: Impressive is not the right word for the students that I was with. I really loved them all, and I think they all loved each other, we were very close. I should've brought that picture of the... Maybe you don't want it, I don't know.

0:46:53 FR: Oh, I would love to see that, yeah.

0:46:56 JR: We all went out and bought us a bowler... We had a bowler hat, and we turned out a pretty good class, we turned out a federal judge, Emmett Wilhoite. Charles English was the leader in the Bar Association, President of the Bar Association, his son was president. A District Court Judge... Several Circuit Court Judges.

0:47:55 FR: At the kind of end of it all, do you remember the graduation program?

0:48:05 JR: Yes, because I only had one pair of clean socks. They were red, and my pants were short, and I was probably the only graduate that you could really see with red socks while going up there and getting my... But I was so happy to graduate. And back then, you took the exam in the old House of the Representatives, three days of essay questions. They didn't have air conditioning. It was done in July. Hot. People would tie handkerchiefs around their head to keep the sweat from messing up your papers and everything. And announcements were reserved... Results were announced in September, but they always came out in a Courier-Journal. And I was living in Bowling Green, the truck from Louisville brought the papers to Bowling Green, but it arrived at four o'clock. Well, I was down there waiting for the truck, and for three or four days. My hand was shaking so hard when I raised up the paper and I saw my name.

[pause]

0:50:04 JR: I went home, woke up my mother, and both of us cried. Maybe my emotions get too much for me, but I stayed in school when probably I shouldn't have. No money... But I was determined that someday my picture would go up on the plaque that said "Class of 1960". And it did, because I was not... Sort of below an average student.



0:51:39 FR: You found the results from the bar, and did you start practice there in Bowling Green, or did you...

0:51:44 JR: I started as a law clerk on the Court of Appeals.

0:51:47 FR: That's right, on the Court of Appeals, which at the time was the Supreme Court of Kentucky?

0:51:52 JR: Yeah.

0:51:52 FR: Yeah. It was the highest court of...

0:51:55 JR: Yeah, the highest court.

0:51:57 FR: And so, you clerked for one year.

0:51:58 JR: One year, and then there was a vacancy, Wendell Ford was in the Governor Combs' office, and he was gonna go back to Owensboro and start his political career. Well, they moved Ed Faucette into his job, but that's a vacancy for a legal assistant. Back then, Governor Combs only had... There's a picture of me with Governor Combs, one, two, three, four, five. He only had a staff of six guys at least in there. And the Court of Appeals, which Combs had been on before he became governor, they recommended me, and I don't know why they did, but they did, and so I went down and talked to him, and in about a week, he called me back. And he talked with the mountain twang. I don't know if you've ever heard Governor Combs make a speech, or no?

0:53:30 FR: No, I haven't heard, no.

0:53:32 JR: Okay. I went down, he says, "Well, we will try it. If you don't like it, you tell me, and if I don't like it, I'll tell you." And back then, on the Court of Appeals, I was only making \$396 a month. Secretaries made \$400. And so I started off at \$7,500 a year. Well that was more money than God made, And finally, when I left, I was making 10 grand a year. More money than anything...

0:54:26 FR: How did you view the legal profession? I would to hear about your vision of the legal profession when you were in law school and then how it sort of evolved over time. Did you have a certain vision of what lawyers were like when you were in law school, and then sort of how did that line with reality?

0:54:49 JR: Well, you thought of the legal profession when you're in law school as sort of gods. They had made it. They were pillars of the community. And when you first started practicing, you soon found out that they drank, they chased women, caught 'em too often. You got caught too often. And you got a taste of reality. You soon decided which ones in the bar were the old farts. They should have quit practicing years ago. Which were good lawyers and which were bad ones. Which ones, you wondered, how they ever got through law school. And some of 'em to this day I've wondered, "How in the hell did they get ever get out of law school?"

0:56:34 FR: You had mentioned the parties that you all used to go to in law school and sort of you had mentioned with Whiskey Dick Gilliam...

0:56:46 JR: Yeah.

0:56:47 FR: Where were the parties held? Who would throw 'em?

0:56:51 JR: There were two legal fraternities. I forget what their names were.

0:57:02 FR: Did they have houses on campus?

0:57:04 JR: No, they didn't have houses, they were honorary memberships. And each one of them would throw a party at the beginning of the year. And maybe one other before the year was over. And we'd go out to bars and they would turn into drunken brawls. Pretty bad. I remember one, they just figured they could do anything and I remember once, there was a group of five or six sitting there talking, all of a sudden they spread 'cause one of them had unzipped his pants, took his pecker out, and was pissing on the floor. And as soon as he's through, he zips himself up and the crowd would come back again. [laughter] And they would leave. There never was a fight with the... There would be a lot of people there with dates, so we started dancing and they took umbrage, and there was all these words but no fights.

0:58:48 FR: So that's a couple of times a year you'd have those parties. Did you all have any sort of regular Friday night or Saturday night place that you all would all go to, or a couple of you would go to sort of drink and relax and kick it?

0:59:00 JR: No, 'cause nobody had any money and I didn't have any money.

0:59:07 FR: Yeah.

0:59:16 JR: I didn't have any money for liquor. I didn't have any money for beer. I didn't have enough money for a date. Although, I was a houseboy and met this girl and wanted to date her, but the houseboys couldn't date, so I quit and I wound up marrying her. We didn't go out, we didn't date, we didn't see a movie, we'd sit around her sorority house... That's all I could afford. I really, really didn't have any money. And I was envious of the ones that did, but I don't remember them going out though. Friday night, we'd still be at the law school. Football games, I helped sell programs. I could make \$12, \$14. And \$12, \$14 was a ton of money for me. A ton of money.

1:00:46 JR: Everybody in the house that I lived in, once a week, we'd take our clothes to Annie's We Wash. And they had a sack they gave everybody, and you could take a sack over and get it done for \$1. Well, we would spend two hours cramming clothes into that sack. And if there was a crease in it, that meant that it wasn't full, and we would cram more clothes in. And I got maybe one haircut a year. I didn't have any money. I would love to have gone through school and had an apartment and a car. But probably, I would've flunked out.

1:01:49 FR: Yeah, the distractions of it.

1:01:52 JR: And I don't understand it. I was sitting down behind the courthouse. I'm on a cane now. I'll probably be in a walker before the year's out. I'm on the walker most the time. But anyway. I was sitting down behind the courthouse, and met a young lawyer, and I got to talking to him. And I was curious. I said, "How much do you owe?" And the young guy says "100,000." And I can't believe it. \$100,000 that they spend that they get... And they only take about the top 10 or 12, and the rest of 'em can't pay that back. But they all have an apartment. They've got a car. They go out on Friday and Saturday nights, eat out. Of course, they're gonna owe \$100,000.

1:02:58 FR: I think some people's relationship with finances are sort of not in sync with reality sometimes.

1:03:07 JR: Well, no, it's not reality. They don't sit down and say "How much am I gonna earn when I graduate?" I wouldn't go back to law school. I couldn't pass the bar exam today. I couldn't pass the bar exam. But I think I'd be a teacher.

1:03:40 FR: I think we're about near the kind of end. I just wanted to wrap up with a question about what you think the College of Law sort of has meant for you over your years in your practice, and also what the College of Law has meant for the community?

1:03:58 JR: Well, it's meant everything for me. I worked one summer in construction, running the Georgia buggy. That's a wheelbarrow. And at the end of the summer, I'd saved \$18. It only pays 75 cents an hour. I don't know if it paid that much. But in law school, the jobs I had only paid 50 cents an hour. But it meant everything to me, my life. When you get to thinking of my life of ease, 'cause the only thing I'm exercising is my mind.

1:04:54 JR: But I think we've got, probably in Kentucky, one law school too many. But that's Louie Nunn's fault, for establishing Northern Kentucky when we didn't need it. But, we've got a Circuit Judge here in Lexington that drove back and forth, graduated, used to practice in his office with Tom Clark. What it means to the community, I don't think the community knows the law schools there.

[pause]

1:05:46 JR: It's not influential in the community because none of the professors will step out and take a case that affects the community and that's, to me, the only way that you're gonna effect the community is to establish a precedent, take a murder case for the defendant. So I really don't... You can wipe UK Law School of the map and the people wouldn't miss it. It might be harsh terms, but that's what I think.

1:06:34 FR: So you think that there should just... One way to improve that, if we decide that that's a priority, is to be engaged in that manner, in doing occasional practice?

1:06:48 JR: Yeah, because the professors are teaching students, students go out, practice, and then become maybe professors. But that doesn't have any influence in the communities. A classroom with 50 students is not affecting the community any.

1:07:16 FR: Alright. Well I wanted to know if there's anything else that you would like to add before we come to a close?



1:07:24 JR: Well, I had a great time in law school. Maybe I'm affected by how poor I was when I went to law school. And I don't mean to beat on that. School and wondering where the next dollar is coming from, and all your friends are getting married, and happy, and having babies, and got jobs, and making money, and you're not. But that affected me, as I reflect back, probably more than it should have, 'cause I can't get over it. I just can't get over it.

1:08:33 FR: Yeah. Well with that I will end our recording.