

Dr. George Van Staden

GVS I think my interest in NIMH came from just having been budget officer for NIH and in the course of that position I became rather close to Bob Felix, both as a personality, as a man speaking as a program director, to me as a budget officer and helping put the budgets together. Clearly in my mind he stood apart from the run of the mill Institute Director and I guess in helping justify his budgets as he put them together for NIH I became quite impressed by the fact that NIMH was really the broadest program and the broadest spectrum of things involved, that it went really beyond intramural research and research grants and fellowships, and further, it really seemed to be at a jump-off point, something big seemed about to happen. Of course I was aware that there was something called the Joint Commission of Mental Health and Illness, because there was the regional grant and which I remember funded it, and I guess I was just interested in it as a program that was different than the others, and it seemed to be very interesting, because I was interested in it from the Budget Officer perspective, and occasionally could help Bob Felix make a point with Jim Shannon, I think that's why Bob got interested in sort of wanting me to come to work for the Institute. He said I'd do that at the point that Chuck Mills became ill and it was obvious that he wouldn't come back. Then Felix met with me privately and publicly made the point that he wanted me to come to work for the Institute. So it did happen and that was sometime in 59, I guess.

EAR Do you recall anything about that particular conversation you had with him? What were your impressions. You'd known him, of course, before then, but were there any particular extra impressions out of that conversation that you had with him?

GVS Bob Felix made it real clear that this was THE program at NIH, that it ought to be independent, that there was a challenge there that I could help be a part of, in making that all happen from the organizational standpoint, and he was right.

EAR When you went back, did you tell Jim Shannon that you were being offered this and how did that transition take place?

GVS I finally made up my own mind that, yes, I would go with Bob, and I went to see Jim Shannon. Jim just shook his head and said, Van, I don't know why the hell you want to go over there, working with all those shrinks. You've got the most promising budget officer career, not only so much of that at NIH, but clearly Jim Kelly views you as the outstanding budget officer in Shannon's opinion,

GVS cont. and that he heard from Jim and the department, and why in the world do you want to walk away from that to be an executive officer in that Mental Health Institute? And I told him, well, I just think that I've done my thing for you as budget officer, I don't think I can grow any more, and I don't want to go downtown and progress up through Jim Kelly's ranks. I think this is the program that seems to have both the promise and the challenge for tomorrow, and I'd sort of like to be a part of it. He said, well, you've been listening to Bob Felix. And I said, well, I also read budgets and help put them together, and this guy really has something. It's infectious. He said, well God Bless you, that's what you want. Go ahead. He also said Bob Felix is a great guy. I think they did have a good personal rapport.

EAR I think they did. In some respects they were real rivals as being the two main crows on the campus.

GVS True, but with Bob, in comparison with all the other Institute directors, it seems to me that Shannon dealt with him as a peer, not as a subordinate.

EAR Sure, I'm sure that's right. When was it, do you recall, that Bob was given the extra title of Associate Director for mental health programs at NIH, that must have come somewhat later, I'm trying to pin it down. I think that must have come just about the time that the Community Mental Centers legislation came up, does that ring a bell in your mind?

GVS I'll have to try to track that down.

EAR He did have that extra title and I think it must have been during your time, and in fact he was the one NIH director who didn't have to, literally, go through Shannon, although obviously they talked about the budgets but officially he went through Jim Shannon, am I wrong about that?

GVS No, you're right. It seems to me that as the community part of the program was being born and we were putting on a lot of pressure, both to avoid dismemberment on the one hand, and to really pull together in one focal clinic, duly reached for, getting the big program off the ground and Shannon supported Felix, that in fact his program was broad and that maybe Felix was ready now to have a Bureau, he thought that in the interum, it seems to me he said that it made sense if he had this extra title, so that he could in fact as Bob Felix would say, fend for himself, because those were Jim Shannon's words at one point, because Shannon said, very frankly, Bob

GVS cont. I'm not a psychiatrist, I'm really not that interested in your program and you're just going to have to fend for yourself. And Bob said, just so I know, I'm willing to do it, just let me go and fend for myself. Now it was in connection with the Community Mental Health Drive.

EAR Okay. Now let me also.....

GVS Does that pin point it for you?

EAR That's all right. I can find it. I just want to get that corroboration. (GVS - did you have 61-62?) Yeah. I think that's about right. Did you have any involvement at all when the Huntley report was being developed? What was your involvement, if anything, when that was going on?

GVS It was one of the reports that early on, more stand in for this than Bob's. I was pulling together, working with you and others, , concurrently, you see, there was the Huntley report, which was within the Public Health Service, and there was the Hearst-Sutton approach toward having two different groups review NIMH's budgets, which sort of went in the same direction of splitting us up, and it seems to me that there in that one period we were writing positions papers every other day on one or another aspect of all that, and Allen Pond, the sanitary engineer or something, wasn't quite a proponent of an integrated nationwide mental health program either, he was one of the dismemberment advocates, and probably one of Huntley's key advisors. I'm a little hazy because Pond went and worked in the Office of the Secretary for a while, on detail,

EAR Now, did you ever see the Edith Carper case history of the Huntley report? There was a detailed history done.....

GVS That was the unpublished one.

EAR That's right. But there was another one that was published.

GVS I never saw the published one. What I recall is the unpublished, which was the most fascinating reading. She told it like she found it and scared everybody to hell and somebody hid it away.

EAR Right. All the copies were supposed to have been destroyed.

GVS Of the original?

EAR Of the original unpublished one.

GVS I have one.

EAR You do? Can you lend it to me?

GVS I'll have to mail it to you.

EAR Please. If you would. Incidentally, let me ask you....

GVS I'd almost bet my bottom dollar, because it seemed to me that that was

GVS cont. a part of history that was untold and I refused to spin my top.

EAR Okay. I have a copy of the published version and Stan has one too, but incidentally, let me also ask, I don't mean to impose on you too much, but if there is anything else, when you look for that, that you think might be useful, please mail it to me. I'll leave you my card and then I'll duplicate it and send it all back to you, so that you'll have it for your files.

GVS I'll be glad to do it.

EAR Okay. That's terrific. Let's go back, then. You decided that you were going to join and Jim Shannon gave you his blessing and then you came, I think it was mid or late 1959, and then, what do you recall of those early days?

GVS Well, it seems like the first big chore was the big, "what do we do about the final report of the Joint Commission on Mental Health and Illness and we were getting ready for the hideaway, it seems like the whole Institute was involved in analyzing the report and coming up with the way to go, the biggest decision, I guess, to be made with respect to that report, whereas the report would have had the big expanse in program essentially only federally funded, the final program we came up with was federal, state, local and practically the private sector also involved. I guess concurrently Bob thought that we ought to start restructuring the Institute with respect to how to implement whatever program that we came up with, under the impetus of the final report of the Joint Commission and he had asked me personally to take a look at the organizational structure, but that sort of was over in a couple of years. Initially, I don't remember doing anything from the organizational standpoint other than trying to shore up the administrative management component, so that we had our own staff and could do our own staff work. I remember among other things we were striving for our own budget officer and our own personnel officer because we were wholly dependent on the NIH system who really treated us like any other Institute, when as Bob said, we weren't. We were different. And even as we said earlier, Jim Shannon agreed that we were different too. We got, in that vein, by initial priorities, we were the first Institute, as I recall, to get our own organization management officer, who was Tilly Pollack, we did get a full time personnel officer, although he was a part of NIH, but full time physically located with us. He was a fellow named

- GVS cont. France, who maybe wasn't the greatest in the Institute. It might not be fair. And we did expand our little budget group. Those were some of the first things I was trying to get a handle on.
- EAR Were you beginning to work with Stan at that time? What was your perception of those early days of your relationship with Stan, and Stan's relationship with Bob, because he came on board, you know, at about the same time as you did, maybe a little earlier than you did. Let me just refresh your memory. What had happened was that Joe Bobbitt was put on detail for that Twenty school study for six months, and Stan was pulled in from Prince George's Mental Health Center to serve on an acting basis for Bob, and it quickly became apparent that here was a man with a tremendous amount of ability and that in one respect or another, with all of Joe Bobbitt's abilities, he really wasn't the executive type. I think one of Bob Felix's strengths was his ability to use people for what they can do and not really expect them to do things that they couldn't do. Joe Bobbitt had been his friend from year one. Joe Bobbitt was never heir apparent, but I think he thought so.
- GVS Yes, that's true and he was very disappointed and he took it very very personal. I guess it was in putting budgets together that I first started rubbing shoulders with Stan, and the ideas he had with respect to what kinds of points of emphasis were important and he was starting to talk community mental health then.
- GVS This is an important point, Van, and I wonder, I'm frankly getting conflicting messages from people, and I think it's understandable because everyone saw things from their own point of view. A couple of people have said, in fact, that the first real presentation of the idea of the formulation of a community program was Bob's. Stan feels it's his. Were you in at any of the early meetings and do you recall who really first used the phrase or the concept, I don't think community mental health center came along as a phrase until it was well into the game. Do you recall anything as to where it really began? If not, it's okay.
- GVS In my view it's hard to put all the pieces together after all these years. What I've come away with all this time in having been involved and subsequently is that Stan Yolles was the moving force with respect to the whole community mental health concept and he picked up where Bob left off with respect to mental health generally, but it seems to me, I can recall I used to sit down in Stan's office and

- EAR cont. and Felix said, Senator, if it had not been for the light of this committee, I would not have been able to throw a shadow at all.
- GVS Yes, I've used that.
- EAR Yes, that was lovely. I remember telling Bob that I would trade 12 of my puns to be able to do one like that.
- GVS And the whole thing was absolutely spontaneous and extemporaneous. There were no notes in that exchange. That was a thing that rarely does anyone see and they liked that. And that was only the highlight. There was an exchange, about a six-time exchange, between the two and each one became more eloquent. I remember sitting there with Stan as observers, and we just couldn't believe it.
- EAR I know, that was Bob at his finest. Let me ask you, I don't mean to divert you, but maybe this will kind of help to bring your memories back. There's one other very important contrast between Bob and Stan, giving them both full credit for the tremendous things that they did, and that was in terms of their participation at Council meetings. You attended Council meetings when Bob was still the Director and you attended Council meetings when Stan came in, it was like night and day. Bob would sit up there and he just loved it, he just absolutely revelled in being able to interact with those guys. He played them like someone plays a violin. And Stan really had done all his work before the meeting and he thought they weren't as bright as he was, and he was intolerant of the time it took to try to tell them what he had to tell them, and besides he really didn't like them talking back to him, which they often tried to do. So very soon thereafter, as you know, he cut it off in two parts, and he took care of the policy part of it, and then, you may have been gone by this time, but he turned over the grants part of it to me. And he didn't even share the grants part of it. He would be there, but sometimes he would even walk out. That was an unheard of thing, as far as Felix was concerned. That was his Council, and we was going to be there from the start to the finish, and noone else was going to chair that thing but him.
- GVS And it seems to me that this is another mark of Felix as an extraordinary individual. I don't recall that other Institute Directors with their Councils either could match Bob Felix. I think he viewed them as an absolutely necessary and essential resource to the future progress of the Institute and I think in his personal opinion it was important that he play on their pulses and their feelings and get them

GVS cont. to feel that they are important and then when the chips were down, they would be there when he needed them. All this was a mark of the broad gauge leader that he was. Now Stan, as you said earlier, was the hardnosed business leader, outstanding guy but somewhat, I think, because of his age, a young man in a hurry, as compared with Felix, who, all this had happened over a couple of decades, and therefore his time was important, and to spend three days in a Council meeting really at business that one could conduct in one day, was frustrating, and to have to go through the necessary political niceties, I think he felt time was too short, he had other important things to do. There was a marked contrast, and I didn't realize that he had split them into two different kinds of reviews that were subsequent.....

EAR Yes, that was after you left. Okay, so that the early days, as you say, were really devoted, when you came on board, to kind of mounting this new development towards a community program. What do you recall about the point at which the Joint Commission report as it eventually came out, and the transition towards this new approach, how did that new relation start to develop? And what were some of things that happened in there that you think were very important and key points of demarcation?

GVS That's funny, trying to pinpoint that. You know, we spent days and weeks trying really to find what's the key thing that we would really use this final report for. For the life of me, I can't figure out what was that one point in time where the light went on and we figured this was the leeward for the community push.

EAR It was clear early on that just pumpint more money into the existing services wasn't the way to go. That was clear. I think you're right that it was an evolutionary sort of thing that developed over time.

GVS I remember monkeying around quite a while, wherever it was that we held those retreats, and it's funny the kinds of things you do remember. I remember Mort Cramer quoting all those statistics and these were professional, and Bob said, now, what's your source? And Mort Cramer quoting Mort Cramer.

EAR Yes, everybody remembers that.

GVS It brought down the house. Mort was trying to prove out whether statistically the final report stood up, or whether it didn't, but I can't remember that point in time. It all came together and we said, okay, well, here's what we are going!....

EAR Now, all during these early days, though, Stan was kind of building up a staff operation of his own, literally coming to the point where it was becoming increasingly clear that eventually he was going to have more responsibility than he had....

GVS It seems to me that under the impetus of the final report and his interest and foresight, that this was what was going to happen. He was going to build that staff so that he could in effect take the leadership, even if nobody else did. It seems to me also that that was before we really knew that Bob was going to leave, so I think Stan just was using great foresight in being prepared, and he did a good job in getting the kind of interested staff people to be part of his immediate team.

EAR What was your early recollection of the time that Bert Brown came on board, for example, do you recall his first coming, and as you mentioned he was going over to kind of be a spy for us?

GVS Yes, it seems like that almost happened before he finally had his feet on the ground. the decision had already been made to take over the community health center as the nucleus for what we want in the future, and it seems that Bert had only been around a very short time when it was important that he be detailed right then. At that point in time I don't think that I had seen enough of Bert to really size him up, other than that he was a new kid on the street, so to speak, and Stan felt very high on him, about his potential for the future. It seems to me I didn't start working very closely with Bert Brown until he was on detail to budget and then, for one, I was....refresh my mind now. He went over to Budget Bureau after we had the three department committee?

EAR He went to the White House for a while on detail. I haven't got the date straight in my own mind, frankly, but he went to the White House because at Harvard he had known, this was after Kennedy came in, so we are talking about 1960, or thereabouts, he went on detail to the White House because Janet Travell, Kennedy's own physician, and Bert had known her at Harvard, at the School of Public Health, and he had been called down to help out with the Mental Retardation Program. I think he went to the Bureau of the Budget after that, rather than before. Does that fit in with your memory? And then, at the time that he went down to the Bureau of the Budget was when the whole ^{EAR} ~~Billy~~ Jones thing started to develop, and Jones was the chairman of the Interagency Committee which consisted of HEW, Department of Labor, VA and Bureau of the Budget was involved, Council of Economic

- EAR cont. Advisors, with Ashley Fine coming in, and as you know, the representative of the Department of Labor was an Assistant Secretary by the name of Pat Moynihan.
- GVS Moynihan and I did deal on the telephone quite a bit, because he was giving us alerts and whether he was going to get enough strength from the statisticians over there in manpower. Then also we used him as the guy who could tell us from his perspective when to push the next button, so we didn't get a piece of a program instead of a full program. Also I ran my statistics by him on my projections and he was very interested in NIMH continuing to take the initiative and going around Public Health Service to do it. He said there was no leadership in the Public Health Service. I remember him saying, if you are going to do it, you've got to do it yourself, and I'll help you from where I sit.
- EAR What were your feelings, if any, about Beau Jones, because that was an unusual man, besides from the unusual first name. Had you known him before at all?
- GVS No, I had met him a couple of times, but only in connection with that committee where I was pulling quite a bit of staff work together for NIMH after the session. I was impressed because I also gave him a personal briefing on those projections and I found he was a good planner for the future and a good staff man for a position like in the officer sector. I think we owed him a lot with respect to the way he pulled together.
- EAR Yes, he was very supportive. And you know, I think one very important attribute of this whole story which comes out clearer and clearer is that at key points, as the program grew, there were people who appreciated and respected and supported the direction in which NIMH was going. In no place did someone throw a major monkey wrench at us.
- GVS That's right. We had irritating little things that were nibbling away at our ability to put it together and get it off the ground and they ranged all the way from the Hearst Seventh to the the Hill Burton people who didn't even have mental health in their amaratarium (?) and yet were staking it out as another bench in their platform, and having to work through NIH there for a while although we finally did get permission to pretty well go it on our own.
- EAR Did you have much interaction with Bob Atwell warly on when he came on board for the Bureau of the Budget?

GVS Yes, quite a bit. Well, of course, having been handling the budgets anyway I was dealing with Bob over there, and he, I believe, from his perspective in the Bureau of the Budget sort of looked at the NIMH the same way I did when I made the crossroads and the that clearly, this was of the same nature as NIH's big push a few years before that when it had its greatest growth in a small period of time. NIMH was at that point then and I think he sat over there and I sat over there and both of us wanted to be a part of it.

EAR The other thing that I think was important and about which I really haven't had a chance to get a good fix, and you I think were involved in it, was the political side of it. As this whole thing developed and the actual legislative package started to be put together both Bob and Stan and some other people started to make important contacts with people on the Hill. What do you recall about that part of the story?

GVS Well, the key political decisions were whether or not our friends on the hill were going to let us get dismembered and whether they weren't how retardation was going to fit in with mental health in the same bill, whether we were going jointly to be involved with the Hill-Burton people on a construction aspect in centers, and finally did they need to legislate a bureau in order to mount all this expansion program. It seems to me that those were the key things that we were working both openly and behind the scenes on at the time, and of course Lister Hill I believe on the Senate side always was the key guy. I don't recall that we had much difficulty in the House then, Fogarty was still there, Felix had a good rapport with him. In fact with that committee Felix had a good rapport. His only problem was what he could say on Alcoholism with Fogarty and Schizophrenia with Denton, so that he could make his points without having somebody feel persons about it. Again, he demonstrated the kind of finesse that I think is part of the extraordinary makeup of the man. But the Bureau thing we were trying to finesse behind the scenes, Bert was too, when he was on detail. He kept writing in on the bottom line "and this shall be implemented through a new newly established National Bureau of Mental Health " and then one of the big staffers over there kept wiping it out again, I forget that person's name.

EAR I'll have to find out who kept wiping it out. Not Feldman?

GVS I always thought Feldman might have been had. It was somebody else over there.

- EAR What do you recall about the specific background to the development of the actual message of the president on mental health which really was an unprecedented sort of thing?
- GVS I know we had a weekend session when we were all brainstorming the key things that ought to be said, but that there would be a special message, Bert brought that word back to us. And whether that was the man's personal decision that he brought back, I don't remember. But it seems to me that Bert brought the word, and we had to make this thing ring, it had to ring, that was the charge we all had and we all did a lot of writing at the time. Actually, I think most of it was written at NIMH, multiple office, I don't think that any one person could take the credit. But it rang.
- GVS No, but I think Stan massaged it and put a lot of it together. Incidentally, I think that after you left, Stan was no different before that. I had a very interesting session yesterday with John Adams and the point about Stan's work habits that I think was true from the very day he began was his infinite and painstaking care with details, whether it was congressional letters, or letters over his signature or whatever, he read everything that he was responsible for and often made changes. The interesting and most unusual part of his character is that he rarely, if ever, produced an independent document, but he almost equally invariably improved somebody else's document. He had an amazing capacity to take stuff that was pretty good to begin with and make it better, which is a real gift.
- GVS I think that was one of my strongpoints too, because as a part of being a budget officer you take whatever everybody else sends in and you've got to make it ring, and I think Stan and I both worked over a lot of other people's work, but his standards are extremely high and in detail, now talking about your manpower projections, he had to know when you were taking off with some guesstimates versus a hard estimate, but if you had a logic to go with it, that was the kind of detail he looked for. You had to be able to say the basis for the estimate and you couldn't say, I did that. He penetrated to the point where he was convinced that there was a logical basis for a presentation and then you made it sound as good as you could.
- EAR Exactly. I want to concentrate for a moment on this process, (GVS - It seems like such a long time ago.) It is a long time ago, but it seems to me that there is a very interesting point to make about how people of that caliber work, just per se again the differences between Stan and Bob Felix, even though they were both very extraordinarily

EAR cont. competent in their own ways, but Bob Felix would work with people in a way, especially in the early days, where essentially he trusted them in a sense, he kind of encouraged them to do the best they can through this very warm feeling that he had about individuals and kind of excite people as he did when he got you to say yes, although you had made up your own mind of course, but it certainly didn't hurt in terms of making you feel that was the right decision to make. And yet Stan works very differently. Stan to overstate the case, almost starts with the premise that something is going to go wrong, now how do I prevent it from going wrong? And Most of these other guys that I work with don't have, can't have, the overall perspective that I have on this, so I kind of have to get their input but it always has to be carefully looked at, carefully evaluated whether even in terms that you said a moment ago. I have to make sure that that logic is correct. Bob Felix wouldn't quite go that far. Felix would kind of assume as you do with a man like Mort Kramer. I've sat at many Council meetings when Bob would say we have the world's leading biometrician working at NIMH. Now Stan would never say that.

GVS Now first of all, because it wasn't that true...

EAR But that's not Stan...Now Stan would say to Mort, now tell me how you got there. It's a totally different approach. And yet both of them were able to get things out of people.

GVS That's right, but through much different manipulations.

EAR Can you think of your own examples of situations which illuminate each or either or both of them in this kind of way. I want to be able to nail that down through specific vivid incidents what sorts of things happened between you and Bob, for example, or between you and Stan that would either illuminate this attribute or others that you think are important about their working styles.

GVS Well, perhaps the best comparison I could make is having worked with both as their number one guy in administrative management, it seems to me my biggest concern working with Bob is because of the enthusiasm and the trust he had in everybody that he could be had, and my job was to make sure from my perspective and he usually brought me in more often than not, not everybody appreciated that, but he would do it, and I'd try to say, I think there's a little exaggeration there, I think somebody is being carried away and you'd better look at it a little bit further. You didn't have to do that with Stan because intuitively he knew when he was being had, someone was getting carried away and didn't quite have the to go with that.

GVS cont. So Stan was better in that regard than Bob. Perhaps he was a better manager as a manager, as a program leader probably Felix is one of the world's greatest as a program leader. But they're just different breeds of cat.

EAR Okay, let me ask you about some other people. When did Joe Douglas come on board and what could you say about Joe Douglas?

GVS Did he come just after I did? He came out of the Office of the Secretary with a deposed super grade? When I first, something called program planning, we were going to use him for. Rephrase your question how do you want me to fix it?

EAR What were some of the interactions you had with Joe and how did you see him being used. I don't mean that in a pejorative sense. How did you see him being used by Stan, because in fact you're exactly right. He came to us, we kind of saved him from a fate worse than death, so to speak.

GVS I think Stan was trying to find out how best to plug him in. He tried him out in program planning, and I thought at first it was going to be some of the kinds of things like Chuck Kidd used to do, and Chuck's role at the NIH, and then observing the kinds of things the pilots that I was seeing, it seemed to me that Joe was a whizz at detail. But then you'd say, well Okay Joe, what does all this mean? And I didn't find the answer. Now Chuck Kidd would then take the data and go from there, conceptualize or invent or whatever, he could interpret it in broad terms or narrow terms, I thought Joe had a hell of a time with that. You could give him gathering a lot of detail and cataloguing it, indexing it and he did that. He was one of the principal staff guys for our staff's reviewing the commission's final report, but if you said, Joe, you come up with what are the highlights and what are the key recommendations, I don't think that Joe Douglas could have done that. It seems to me that he didn't quite meet the need that Stan was looking for. As a detailed staff man to gather data and catalog, but as a conceptual type, a future program planner, he didn't have it. It was sort of a disappointment for Bob to see. I sensed his disappointment at the crossroads....

EAR And it was a tragic little story, because in some ways Joe was a very competent and hardworking and dedicated guy but there was a point at which it went beyond him and he couldn't really reach.

GVS He had his limitations.

EAR Were you still there when he was asked to set up this office of communications? You may have been gone by then.

GVS I think it was just about when I was leaving.

EAR Tell me a little about Tillie. There were a number of women at NIMH, especially among the secretarial level who played key roles, Hattie Arnold, Aggie Cosgrove, Doris Smith, all the people in the then branch, then grants operations program were absolute whizzes at at being able to handle all the paper work etc, get things prepared for meetings and all the rest. Tillie was one of the few people who really worked her way up from the branch level of operations up into main management and maybe you'd like to say something.

GVS She came on the scene at the time NIMH was having its quite marked growing pains and to the point where it was clear both inside and outside NIMH that there needed to be a more disciplined way of publishing our methods and procedures the way we did business, and she had freshly come from the NASA headquarters where she had helped develop for them a disciplined approach to official communications. Initially, the things I used her for was just to come up with, if we were going to be successful in going from Institute to Bureau, the way I was looking at it, then we've got to start getting our own manuals because we won't be working through NIH's. That's when she started coming out with this Dewey Decima~~l~~ or whatever kind of system it was, a numbered system of memorandums which some people, even myself, I always hated to get overly structured, overly , and yet it does become essential that you have that kind of a written discipline when you start getting to the size where the right hand has to know what the left hand is doing, particularly since we weren't just a headquarters gathering, we had field offices throughout the country you had to get out a uniform consistent set of policies, procedures

. It seems to me that Tillie played a key role in the maturation of the Institute, looking toward a possible Bureau and that was her strong point. I think she did a very excellent job in that regard. Now whether she was a to Charlie Miller or Zelda Shipman who had similar jobs in NIH proper, I don't really know because I wasn't there long enough to really see could she handle the total job that position called for. I did find out that from time to time the various bright young interns that we had stolen out of the training program who I had work with Tillie, she had difficulty delegating authority making decisions even on a given set of procedures. My friend Wayne Kimmel found her very frustrating, for example, working with Tillie for he was a tremendously bright young man and felt like he was more in a student kind of a mold

GVS cont. and found it very distasteful. Notwithstanding that, her big contribution was helping the Institute mature with respect to its procedures. She got carried away on one having to do with ashtrays.

EAR Yes, I remember that one. I wish I could find that famous memo. There are some amusing little sidelights in the whole history which I think help. What's interesting about the Institute is that in the face of all the pressures and all the efforts that were overstated like life and death struggles of the Institute, that's purely overstating, with all the serious business every once in a while somebody could step back and see the funny side of it. There were some absolutely fantastic memoranda that were prepared over the years that got lost somewhere.

GVS And one of them was the ashtray one. At the time that we were publishing all these procedures, I did that one just for kicks. I did not intend, truthfully, that it be published and it got out of the system and there was the Surgeon General's Report on Smoking and there was also the fact that I had checked, and it was just my fun and games approach, I had checked and saw that we had ashtrays coming out of our ears, and decided we were not going to buy any more. I should never have published it. It got away and I couldn't blame Tillie because I was having fun and games at the time, and then I thought, the damage was done, now let's write it out and see what happens. They said the famous Seymour Kety letter, and the ashtray was one of a kind. Here was our highest single paid professional and he must have spent hours on that, and someplace I have that.

EAR Do you? Listen, Please, I promise to duplicate all this and send it all back to you.

GVS But it's sort of one of the humorous ones.

EAR But there are others. George Kingman was saying that at one point he told Phil Sapir that they had gone on the annual budget and that the research grants program had lapsed \$279 at the end of the year and there was something wrong with a program that was able at the end of the year to lapse \$279 and he was worried about that and what could be done about things like that. And Phil Sapir wrote back a memorandum saying that he proposed that the next year there be another microgrant program at \$1.00 a grant and once that was done he would be able to take care of those amounts that had lapsed, but until he had that flexibility he was going to be in trouble.

GVS Well, they were both tongue in cheek, buy mine wasn't intended to be, but it got away. Tfn en the damage had been done and I could have said, God dammit, you knew, but I wonder if she really did, if she didn't see the tongue in my cheek, maybe she thought I was writing something serious. Anyway, it was done so fast. And then a reporter got a hold of it, that fellow in the intramural, that fellow Gold who wrote the column, Dick Gold and he called me up and said, what's all this about the ashtray bit. I told him, give me a bad time in your column or no, that's your job and it's as you wish, and I told him, and he laughed and said, okay, forget it. But I did want to know what the hell the story was, a newspaper could have a lot of fun with something like that. I'm not sure whether it would do any of us any good and I think the damage was done, it was meant to be a tongue and cheek kind of thing and it got away. But I said, now I'll put on the Surgeon General's hat and say people shouldn't be smoking that much any way and put on my money hat and say, we shouldn't ~~intxpeopletxbuy ashtraysxanywayx~~ be buying ashtrays anyway, let people buy their own. Anyway, I said, it's your decision, this is everything that happened and he didn't do anything.

EAR Yes, Bill Gold was his name. He had a column on the last page of the Washington Post and wrote humorous little stories. Talking about that side of it, can you recall any other incidents where things got into the newspapers in one way or another, sometimes they were some grant things. There was flak over a lot of things that we did. Any particular incidents stick out in your mind that kind of were human interest stories about that? I know it's hard to dredge these things up.

GVS I can't seem to recall; some things were interesting at the time. I didn't have the newspaper, other for the coverage of the Saturation Grant in Harlem, but I do remember the kind of pressure we got put on us when we put out, what was it, a million and a half dollars on a saturation basis on something that hadn't gone through double review, and our professionals said we were just going to be wasting money going at it that way, and then I remember we were under a great pressure from the office of the Attorney General, people whose names we didn't even know were calling up and saying that Bobby wanted this thing to go personally and we didn't even know whom we were talking to on the phone, would take the number, and when we called back we found that there was that number, and in fact there was that person, and we never could turn him down, Bobby Kennedy personally wanted this

GVS coant. thing to go, and even if he did, it went against the grain that we had to go around the system. There were a lot of things that would hit the media at the time but it's funny, none of them jump out at me.

EAR Well, actually, in some respects we were kind of lucky. We didn't hit the papers too often in terms of lapses....

GVS It was just candles. We didn't have the kind of stuff I put up with in Tallahassee at the State level.

EAR That's right. We had no real scandals of any kind. Let me ask you, just jumping around a little bit, when we started talking initially, we said, as a kind of aside, that had you known perhaps that Stan was definitely going to stay on that you might have thought about staying, although obviously you very much enjoyed what you did down here. When that whole thing first began, and when Bob first indicated that he was leaving, do you recall the sequence of events and could you say a little bit about that and what happened subsequently. How did you first learn that Bob was seriously thinking of leaving?

GVS He told me.

EAR It comes as some kind of personal decision.

GVS Yes, and the only question was when, exactly. There was about a six month's period before he had tipped his hand, both Stan and I, and it kind of makes sense that the man is on the point of retirement because in the immediate six months before that immediate six months, we could stimulate, it's important that this position be taken now, and he'd go with it, and all of a sudden he didn't seem anxious to go to the mat when things in the opinion of the top group who felt that it was important, and these things go back to the Huntley, the Sutton, those kinds of things, and it didn't seem as if he wanted to really jump in and fight the Hill-Burton principle, whether they were going to run the program or were we. As I recall, he seemed willing to fight to a degree for a Bureau or status as a kind of a thing he had always been fighting for, beyond that I didn't see him do anything, so it seems like the clues were there before he told any of the others. Now as to when he told Stan versus when he told me I just don't know. Maybe he told us at about the same time, but he did call me in one day and said he made this decision. All of us knew that it was coming and so the deficiency was that there was a six month's hiatus, near hiatus, where in spite of the great leader that he was, he had to be leaned on, and Stan

GVS cont. was the biggest leaner, and you and I or whoever had to do the staff work for Stan to lean with and to keep Bob charged until the last day. There were several things at the time that he sort of was waffling on. I guess he was going to leave some of the fight for his successor.

EAR Yes, in his opinion Stan was the successor....

GVS But how many months did it take?

EAR Oh, it would take many many months. And it wasn't really settled. It was touch and go for a long time. A lot of people behind the scenes, as you know, Mike Gorman, Frank Braceland and a whole bunch of people behind the scenes going one way or the other and people like Jack Ewalt in the running and all kinds of other people in the running and it really didn't get settled. In fact at Bob Felix's farewell party everything still seemed to be very much up in the air. It seemed to be settled one day and the next day it was unsettled. It was a very very tricky business and Stan deserved a lot of credit for being able to ride that thing out the way he did. It was a very rough time. But actually Bob told me, for what it's worth, I always have to take it with a grain of salt, he once said that when he first came on the job he was always thinking about who might be his successor and always looking at people that might be the heir apparent. I kind of think that he remembers that in retrospect more than it actually was the case. But it is true, and in fact this has been corroborated by a lot of people that early on, in the mid 50s, which was a long time before he retired, he was looking and wondering who might be the person. At one time it was Alan Miller, who you didn't have that much interaction with. There was a problem there of a kind of personal nature, and Alan was the only one considered by Bob as the person. Then what happened was again, when this 20 school study took place and Joe Bobbitt was put on detail and Stan came in, and Stan was brought into the Institute, and you may not know, because Mabel Ross recommended him to Bob Felix as an up and coming guy who someone that Bob ought to think about, and so Bob brought Stan into central office from the Prince Georges County study center and it was obvious within a short time that this man really had something. Bob said that Stan was indefatigable. There was no amount of work that he couldn't give him that he wouldn't come back the next day with all of it done and ready for more. It was impossible to overload the guy.

GVS And in turn the rest of us. But nevertheless he did get the products and he was very rigid about it.

EAR And so I think it was from that time on that Bob did have that feeling, and of course, that's when the internal splits took place and people started to side with Joe Bobbitt, the John Eberhardts, the Phil Sapiers and the Seymour Ketys and Stan started to build up his own troops and those people were loyal to him and a lot of people who never have forgiven Stan, there are people out there who still think very bitterly about the things he has done and don't know the whole picture.

GVS I always felt that Bob Cohen really appreciated Stan's intellect.

EAR Well, Bob's a very gentle guy and just by nature he is a man who has no enemies. John Eberhardt is an interesting man, because he is a very competent guy, a very dedicated man, a man who protects his own but I think in his own way, he's not an outspoken guy, he is an outspoken man in so far as program is concerned, he's not an outspoken man as far as people are concerned. I think he never has forgiven Stan for what he did to Joe Bobbitt, for one, and to Phil and to a couple of other people, Let me ask you a question which you may not have seen, you may have been too close to the inside to see this, but please comment on it if you will. Now I've lived with Stan now, and that's the right word to use, for a lot of years and I think I know him as well as anybody does, and I have the same admiration for him that you do and a lot of other people have, but sometimes all of us have our blindspots, and I'm certain Stan has his too. He sometimes says things too people that, because his mind is so complicated he sees things on three or four levels simultaneously and he'll say something and recognize that what he is saying has to be qualified in this or that way, there are all kinds of as it conditions, but the person hearing it often isn't that complicated, and doesn't hear all those wheels going around in his mind, and they have a somewhat different interpretation. There have been some people who have had interactions with Stan and who felt that they had been promised some things by him in terms of their own responsibilities and duties and later on it turned out that it wasn't what Stan had in mind and he turned around and said.....Do you recall an instance in which something like that may have taken place? It wouldn't have taken place, obviously, with you because you were working on a day to day basis with him, although I'm sure he could have been harsh with you on occasion because you weren't doing what he wanted you to do.

GVS Yeah. Well he was always very nice about it to me, because we had an unusual rapport for some reason. I know what your'e talking about

- GVS cont because there are times in dealing with, let's say, the intermural people, that if he had taken the time to give the additional background, the rest of the three dimensions, but he really was all too prone to say, no, this is the way it's going to be without elaboration, and that's what I think probably was one of the single most important things that perhaps alienated those who were not his supporters. Again, his mind did, as you say, work in three dimensional ways, even if he had taken the time out to go into the reasons, the full logic, he could have persuaded some of the Eberhardts and the Bobbitts. Although John Eberhardt is a unique kind of aguy, I happen to like the guy, but he really had as much trouble with Jim Shannon and Beau Mider as he did with Stan Yolles. If John doesn't get his way, then he almost pouts like a child. And so did Joe Bobbitt, they were both sort of highly sensitized guys.
- EAR Do you recall any personal interchanges between Seymour Kety and Stan that might illuminate that interchange?
- GVS I'm trying to remember the meetings I was at with the two of them. I can't really remember.
- EAR I think most of it was not on a one to one basis. Who were some of the other people while you were there in addition to working that closely with you on a one to one basis did Stan work that closely with, perhaps in another capacity, is there anyone else that you can recall?
- GVS I think I was during those years the closest of anyone, even Bert. Now of the others, Ray was rather close for a while, but not quite, somehow Stan and I had a sort of a sort of thing.
- EAR You were responsible for the part of the program that he felt most committed to in a real sense, and that's what made the engine run so to speak, and that's what he was interested in - what made the engine run.
- GVS Another thing about Stan is that he couldn't tolerate anybody lying to him, and George tore his tail, I think that's twice in a row that he backed and filled and lied to Stan, and he never forgave him. He has a mind that's very unforgiving.
- EAR He has very high standards.
- GVS Yeah. And if you blow it, you say, look I blew it, but you don't lie about it. And that's where George got into trouble. I really enjoyed my rapport with Stan, but then anybody would who could get that close to him.

EAR Did you bring George into the picture? He was a trainee early on and I think you're the one who asked him....

GVS I made him assistant executive officer but he was already working for the Institute.

EAR Chuck Mills was the one who brought him in.

GVS He did a lot of good work for me, tremendous work, but at the point where he tore, he lied to me too. And I don't even remember the details. George was a great talker, he would articulate, and if he didn't know the answer he would talk around it until maybe he'd think of it. When there's nothing there to articulate about, he would invent something and you'd say what's supposed to have been done and just wasn't done.

EAR Is there anyone I left out Van? I know again that we're talking about things that are quite some time in the past, but is there anyone I left out that you think ought to be mentioned in terms of either their responsibilities or particular incidents or whatever?

GVS No, I think of the key people that helped really push, helped get through the community mental health program, we talked about Jones, I think Pat Moynihan was a big help, Rashley Fine.

EAR The VA person, I don't even remember the name....

GVS That's how important his rank was. And one of the good things Beau Jones did was that in spite of the complete lack of interest, let alone support of the VA and Labor except for Pat, Moynihan personally was the one that helped get Labor support, staff people weren't that supportive of the . Jones pulled all that together and he kept it on the track and he knew this program had to fly, and I think he deserves a lot of credit from all of us that were involved in the program. And I guess Mike March was only manipulated by Bert, in the final analysis I guess powerfully so, without Bert being over there to help, I'm not sure what would have happened. He had a lot more power than I ever would have thought. I had never even heard of him until we got involved in that . I had heard of Herb Sutton and that bunch, but not March. It seems to me that he was just there as an accountant.

GVS Yeah, but I think he had that internal reputation. It's interesting because he was like the dragon slayer and anytime anybody really had to be pinned to the wall, they would bring him in and he played that role to the hilt.

EAR I guess Mike Gorman helped behind the scenes when we were getting ready for the hearings on the mental health bill.

EAR What was your feeling about Mike? Did you have much personal interaction with him?

GVS Not as much as I did with Herb and Donny. Mike was still a newspaperman and he also liked all the credit for everything, but when he helped us he'd always throw in a few wrinkles which didn't quite fit with what we thought we were talking about, but I guess he was one of the key people behind the scenes.

EAR Politically he was a very savvy guy and of course he had all those contacts. Of course, by his accounts, he ran Lister Hill, wrote all his stuff for him and everything else, and it's certainly true that Mary Lasker was a very powerful force behind the scenes and she was the man in Washington, there's no question about that, but as with some people, I think, he had a somewhat inflated picture of his own importance. Was he on the council meeting there, I think not, I think he was on the Council later on. Well, actually he did a very good job. He was very articulate, as you well know,

GVS I believe he was on the last Council meeting I went to.

EAR He also did his homework and he had a very wide knowledge.....

GVS That's right. Now that you mention that. Because there were a couple of things that he had a personal interest in and that he could do personal research on, so he could speak eloquently...

EAR Absolutely. He came there with an agenda, everyone I think came there with some kind of an agenda, but his was more obvious than anybody else's. His was right on the damn table and he made no bones about it.

GVS. Sure, they all had an agenda. Take Eli Ginsburg. Somehow there was always somebody who was manipulating his role as the nation's outstanding expert on mental health.

EAR On everything.

GVS Oh yes. But they all had something.

EAR You just reminded me of something and I should have mentioned it before. I got a reply from Eli Ginsburg when I wrote him this letter thirty-five pages. I'm not kidding. What he did was, at first he wasn't available, and I wrote back to these people, and then he said, well, I'll tell you what I will do, I'll write something down as a kind of a retrospective reminiscence of the NIMH and I'll send it to you. Which he did. And when he sent it to me he said that he had spent so much time and effort on it he was thinking of publishing it as "A Council Member looking back at his involvement with NIMH" It was an interesting piece, the major thesis of it was that he

EAR cont. understood the political realities, but one, the Council was not used effectively by the NIMH. There were many things that the Council recommended and the NIMH did not do, they were not told many things, they should have been told that they were advisory, but in fact less than advisory, and above and beyond all that his feeling was that we had spent money on some things without really trying to evaluate, he didn't say cost effectiveness but really to evaluate whether we were going to get our money's worth out of the project. After having said all of that he ended up by saying he did understand the political realities and maybe this had to be done that way but he regretted the fact that the program didn't have more planning and careful evaluation, more regard for the expenditure of federal funds and more really of the way of organizational anticipation of things and problems, etc. Well, that's an easy criticism to make but I think it's a point of view worth mentioning. I think he was not alone feeling that way. There were other people on the Council who felt the Council was used less than it might be used. That's par for the Council.

GVS I always felt that Braceland felt that we were using the Council in the proper way.

EAR Frank is another gentle soul, a lovely man. I spent a lovely couple of hours with him some weeks ago, really delightful.

GVS He would always say, what can I do to help?

EAR I don't know if you were aware of all of the ins and outs around Stan's appointment, but he had some involvement behind the scenes and his support of Stan, that whole story ^{doesn't} deserves a lot of discussion but I think it's worth putting in some kind of perspective. Listen, let me ask you one last question, is there anything in all of this comment that I may have left out and that you think we ought to put on the record?

GVS I'll think of something later on, why don't I reserve the right to send some thoughts I have. I haven't had time, this may sound funny, since I am essentially idle for the time being, to really sit down and prepare myself like I really should knowing that you were going to come, but now that I'm stimulated.

EAR Yeah, do that, you'll really enjoy it. It's a pleasant sentimental journey to go back this way and everyone seems to have enjoyed it. Please feel free to send me anything. I promise to send you back everything that you send me, if you allow me the right to make copies of it, don't send it to me if you don't want me to copy it.