

Xavier University Archives Oral History Series

Vytautas J. Bieliauskas, Ph.D.
Distinguished Professor Emeritus,
Xavier University Psychology Department

Interviewed by
Thomas P. Kennealy ,S.J., Xavier University Archivist

Date: December 4, 2008
Place: The Edward B. Brueggeman Center for Dialogue

Duration: 46 minutes, 39 seconds

Credits:

Videographer, Producer: Tina Meagher, Instructional Technology Services
Archives Researcher: Tim McCabe, Xavier University Archives
Xavier Discovery Services Assistant: Lamar Ford
Archives Technical Assistant: Timothy Berghold, Xavier Archives Student Staff

ABSTRACT:

Dr. Vytautas J. Bieliauskas discusses his early life in Lithuania, his escape from the Soviet occupation, life in Germany during World War Two, detention by the German Gestapo, and eventual emigration to the United States. Having come to the United States in 1949, Dr. Bieliauskas tells of his early professional days at King's College and the Richmond Professional Institute. His Xavier University career is recounted: early days on the Xavier campus in the late 1950's and early 1960's, Xavier personages campus wide and within the Psychology Department, changes in the campus over the years, his professional accomplishments and a personal assessment of his contribution to Xavier University.

Copyright 2009, Xavier University Archives (Cincinnati, Ohio)

Note:

Xavier University Archives is eager to hear from any copyright owners who are not properly identified so that appropriate information may be provided in the future. It is our policy to respond to notices of alleged infringement and comply with the copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) in an appropriate manner under such code and other applicable intellectual property laws, including the removal or disabling of access to material claimed to be the subject of infringing activity. Direct any notices of infringement to the Xavier University Copyright Agent.

Transcript of Interview with Dr. Bieliauskas [Edited]

Note: This transcription represents the best effort of the Xavier University Archives staff to faithfully record the interview as represented on the accompanying recorded program. Spelling of proper names is as accurate as possible but some errors may occur. The transcript makes note of those instances where dialogue cannot be properly understood.

Kennealy: Good morning. My name is Father Tom Kennealy, and I'm the archivist of Xavier University. Today is Tuesday, December the 9th, 2008, and I'm seated here in the Brueggeman Center on the Xavier campus with Dr. Vytautas J. Bieliauskas. Dr. Bieliauskas is a Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Psychology at Xavier and also say an esteemed colleague and good friend as well. And he's graciously agreed to be interviewed this morning for Xavier's archival collection of oral histories. First of all Dr. Bieliauskas, I want to welcome you and thank you for your willingness to share with us today your memories of Xavier and your long association with it.

Bieliauskas: I'm glad to be with you.

Kennealy: Good. Let me begin at the beginning if I may and maybe you can tell us something about your life before Xavier. First of all, where were you born and raised?

Bieliauskas: I was born in Lithuania in a rural household. My father was forester or forest ranger. I don't know what you call them here. And we were...three...three brothers, three boys and one sister there. And while my father's and mother's education was somewhat limited, they made sure that all the children finished university. All my brothers and sister finished university.

Kennealy: Very good. Good.

Bieliauskas: And so I finished grade school, finished gymnasium. And after I finished gymnasium, I went to the seminary college, in Vilkaviskis, where I have studied philosophy and probably would have planned to study theology in and towards priesthood.

Kennealy: Oh.

Bieliauskas: But then I had to leave the country and the seminary was closed, and life events changed everything.

Kennealy: Are any of your siblings still alive?

Bieliauskas: My sister is still alive. My two brothers passed away already. They were---, I was the oldest.

Kennealy: Mhmm.

Bieliauskas: Somehow I'm surviving.

Kennealy: Still with us, yeah, and your childhood in Lithuania: you obviously did your early education there?

Bieliauskas: Yes. In, in Lithuania...it's usual gymnasium. It was eight years...

Kennealy: Uhuh.

Bieliauskas: And, and grade school, grade school was four years. I went only two years. They...they allowed me to skip.

Kennealy: Uhuh.

Bieliauskas: And so I finished my gymnasium at earlier than usual.

Kennealy: Usual. And that would have been when?

Bieliauskas: 19...I finished 19...uh...

Kennealy: '39?

Bieliauskas: '40...'39.

Kennealy: '39.

Bieliauskas: '39.

Kennealy: And then one year of...

Bieliauskas:...Of philosophy.

Kennealy:...philosophical studies.

Bieliauskas: Ja.

Kennealy: And then you left Germ.... Lithuania?

Bieliauskas: I had to leave Lithuania because I, as a student, I was involved in working with the Catholic groups, and we wrote some articles, and I think I wrote one article which was against Communism. The Russians were not in at that time, but once they came in, the article was picked up and I was told clearly that they were going to deport me quickly.

Kennealy: Mhmm.

Bieliauskas: So some of the professors there at the college and my parents decided I should...

Kennealy: You should leave. Mhmm.

Bieliauskas: Leave. They were, they came on June 15th -- the Russians.

Kennealy: These would be the Russians.

Bieliauskas: Russians came in, Soviets.

Kennealy: They were the Soviets....

Bieliauskas: Ja, Soviets.

Kennealy: Mhmm.

Bieliauskas: And they came, and I decided to leave on August 25th. I went to the boardary...boarder, which was former Poland, but then it became German border, and there were Russian soldiers there. And I was told to hide, and then they made arrangements that when the soldiers, soldiers were changing the

guard, the Russians were to change the guard. They give the guns to those that remain and the others go home without the guns (laughs). So they, the farmer, started making some noises for the cows there which sounded like, like a wasps or something. So they started running and the soldiers were running after them and that then they told me to run.

Kennealy: And you ran across the border?

Bieliauskas: And I ran across the border. I didn't know where I went. I ran across the border. In Germany, I didn't know even where I was, and the Russians began to shoot.

Kennealy: Oh my!

Bieliauskas: And they were shooting "bang bang." And the Germans, I didn't see anybody. Suddenly, the Germans responded with machine guns.

Kennealy: Oh my!

Bieliauskas: "Ta ta ta ta" It was like crazy. So they let me go. And after that, the Germans picked me up. They wanted to...check what I am not...infiltrator. They put me into a refuge camp. I was there one month, and after that they allowed me to leave and go to Berlin. In Berlin, we still had Lithuanian embassy and there were Lithuanian community. So I went there and they arranged me a little job for me. And I was working there and at that time they made contacts with the German Catholic charities. They were working close. And they selected some students, where they, who would support. And I was one of them, they selected. So where do I go? They said, "You should go to the South" because it was not so dangerous. In the North, there were Russians fighting and everything there and also the attacks on big cities. Try to get to small cities. So what we would do -- the map-- I took a pencil and rubbed the pencil down and hit Tuebingen.

Kennealy: Tuebingen, the city of Tuebingen.

Bieliauskas: Ja (laughs).

Kennealy: So you went from Berlin to Tuebingen?

Bieliauskas: Tuebingen. Ja.

Kennealy: Mhmm.

Bieliauskas: And in Tuebingen there I there were some very famous theology professors: Karl, Karl Rahner, Steinbicker, and so on.

Kennealy: Oh yes. Yes.

Bieliauskas: And there is a lot I..well I had studied psychology, but I could go and attend those classes--- a free university, so.

Kennealy: Mhmm. So you did your studies then, your university studies, in Tuebingen at the University.

Bieliauskas: In Tuebingen, completely.

Kennealy: Is that where you received your doctoral degree?

Bieliauskas: Yes, I received my...

Kennealy: And when would that have been?

Bieliauskas: That was in 19...43.

Kennealy: '43.

Bieliauskas: In December 1943.

Kennealy: You received your doctorate?

Bieliauskas: Ja.

Kennealy: Well in other words, you spent most of the Second World War in Germany.

Bieliauskas: Yes, yes.

Kennealy: What was life like in Germany during the Second World War?

Bieliauskas: Well, there was a different situation because I usually had contacts with people who were not Nazis, so we could be discussing whatever we want, making sure that nobody overhears us.

Kennealy: Mhmm.

Bieliauskas: And then when the Germans occupied, the Germ...the Russians occupied, the the Soviets occupied Lithuania first, then in 1941 the Germans went and occupied Lithuania and then in 1942, I was allowed to go home and visit Lithuania. And while I was visiting there I joined the underground. And they have made arrangements that I could get underground information, which I then sent to Switzerland and to Spain, and then BBC would broadcast it.

Kennealy: Mhmm. This would be the anti-Nazi underground?

Bieliauskas: Anti-Nazi Lithuanian underground. Ja.

Kennealy: Ok.

Bieliauskas: Anti-Nazi underground. Then...

Kennealy: And they sent the information you gathered to Switzerland?

Bieliauskas: Ja. I, I would send it to Switzerland. They send it to me and I used to get, buy, Hitler's Mein Kampf, and they had bookbinder who would put those leaflets in there. Put together very nicely and then we would ship it. I had so many Hitler's Mein Kampf. I kept buying them, and they, people thought I was super Nazi! (laughter). I didn't bother to read...

Kennealy: ...best seller for a...

Bieliauskas: That's right. It was, it was, well...that was available, that book.

Kennealy: And I...

Bieliauskas: But then finally, they checked, and the guy who worked in at the newspaper, where he would transmit to me the information secretly-- they got

him, they tortured, and he gave them my name. And then they arrested me, put me in Gestapo jail, and they said that I will go to Dachau to concentration camp. And took me from Tuebingen to Stuttgart. I was there in jail. And they were waiting and waiting, and I didn't know what they were waiting for. Turn out to be that there was a guy, from Berlin, to come to interrogate me because he wanted to know where the underground is. He had old information. In those days they didn't have Xerox and things like that. The night before he came to ...to Stuttgart to see me was an air raid over Berlin and they wiped out the house and the...where he was and he was killed and all the information was gone.

Kennealy: Oh my!

Bieliauskas: So we're sitting there, finally didn't know why. Finally they let me out under police supervision, and I stayed under police supervision most of the time.

Kennealy: Most of the time.

Bieliauskas: Ja.

Kennealy: Down to the end of the War then, I guess.

Bieliauskas: That's right.

Kennealy: Mhmm. And then after the Second World War, when it ended in Europe, I guess that would have been in early '45?

Bieliauskas: Ja, I was in Munich at that time.

Kennealy: You were in Munich at that time.

Bieliauskas: After Tuebingen, I went to Munich, I became scientific assistant and then senior assistant. I was teaching at the University of Munich, junior faculty member you could say. And when the war ended the University was bumped

[bombed?] out and so on. The Germans went through procedure then to de-Nazification.

Kennealy: Mhmm.

Bieliauskas: All the professors could not be de-Nazi..... I was the only one that could be de-Nazified.

Kennealy: De-Nazified. Alright okay.

Bieliauskas: Ja. And so I could, I had to sign the salary voucher for my boss. Germans didn't like that. I didn't like it either but that (laughter)...and then, after that everything happened. I saw that it would be better for me to get out of Germany, because I couldn't go to Lithuania. They would have taken me to Siberia....

Kennealy: And by that time of course it was under Soviet control.

Bieliauskas: Ja, Russians, Russians, ja the Soviet control. And I couldn't go there, and I couldn't uh...uh, but I could go to United States. So I came to United States under the Auspices of Displaced Persons.

Kennealy: So you were a ... you came to these States as a displaced person?

Bieliauskas: As a displaced person.

Kennealy: And that would have been what year then?

Bieliauskas: Uh...'49, '49.

Kennealy: '49.

Bieliauskas: Yeah '49.

Kennealy: '49.

Bieliauskas: My wife and one son was born at that time.

Kennealy: Yeah. Where did you meet your wife?

Bieliauskas: In Munich.

Kennealy: In Munich.

Bieliauskas: I didn't know her -- she's Lithuanian, a physician and she was ...she came to Munich as a refuge later on. I was one of the early refugees. She came on as a refuge there, and then stayed. She couldn't go back, and we met and got married and one son was born there...

Kennealy: One son.

Bieliauskas : The oldest son.

Kennealy: How many children do you have...?

Bieliauskas: We have four children. Two, two boys...

Kennealy: Four children. Are all of them in the United States?

Bieliauskas: Ja, two boys and two girls. The oldest one who was born in Germany. It's interesting. We came there and was listed, we came under Lithuanian court and he came under German court.

Kennealy: Uhuh.

Bieliauskas: He...he...was ten months old so...it didn't make any difference... (laughter).

Kennealy: At that point. When you came to the States in '49, and where did you settle in the...?

Bieliauskas: Then I came to Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania. I had the two...

Kennealy: What was that?

Bieliauskas: Wilkes Barre.

Kennealy: Wilkes Barre.

Bieliauskas: Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania--- coal mining town. There was two cousins of mine who were there.

Kennealy: I see.

Bieliauskas: And they...took us in for awhile. And then...I, they thought that I should work in coal mines, and I said, "No, I'm going to work at the university." So I went to the university, at the Kings College, Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania. That uh...uh, I took my cousins daughter, my niece, to interpret because I didn't speak English. So the priest who interviewed me -- it was a Catholic school-- he said, "You speak, I said, you speak Italian?" I said, "No." I said, "Do you speak French?" He said, "No." "Uh...German?" He said, "No." He said, "Latin?" I said, "Yes." Tried, because I had eight years of gymnasium with Latin.

Kennealy: Sure, sure.

Bieliauskas: So the...my first interview was in Latin, and he said to me, "If you know that much Latin, you should be able to learn English." So [audio unclear here] helped me.

Kennealy: And you did.

Bieliauskas: Well I've learned better, I must say, unbelievable in three months.

Kennealy: Yeah. My, three months.

Bieliauskas: Oh ja. The whole summer I just...tried to learn everything. They told me, to go see movies or something like that. So I would go see movies on Saturdays and learned very nice cowboy language! (laughter) They told me that would not be good for the University.

Kennealy: How long did you stay there then?

Bieliauskas: One year.

Kennealy: One year.

Bieliauskas: And after one year, I went to uh...actually...I...one year because at that time they told Clivee [Spelling? Pronounced "klee vee"], my wife, cannot get license to practice medicine, and as far as...

Kennealy: Ah, your wife is a doctor?

Bieliauskas: Ja.

Kennealy: I think we should mention...

Bieliauskas: And, and I could not, my salary was just terrible, and they...they paid me \$3000 for twelve months. Even though dollar was more valuable, but for family of three to survive was impossible. So then I contacted, you know, through a newspaper advertising, Richmond division of the College of William and Mary, which was called the Richmond Professional institute, and I went there and they were very generous. They gave me a salary \$1000 more --- \$4000...

Kennealy: Mhmm.

Bieliauskas: Which was great!

Kennealy: A generous increase. Yes, yes.

Bieliauskas: Generous increase. Ja. And by that time the president of the King's College said, "You should have told me. We can give you \$4000," and I said, "It's too late. I signed the contract." So I went there and stayed there for eight years.

Kennealy: Did that school become Virg...Virginia Commonwealth University?

Bieliauskas: Virginia Commonwealth University.

Kennealy: Yes.

Bieliauskas: Actually, I started there and the department chairmen there was somehow after one year quit. So I had a whole mess there. I had to reorganize the department and spend seven more years and get master's degree program going, preparing for doctor program. When my successors came, they had everything ready and they just moved in. Ja.

Kennealy: Yes. Yes.

Bieliauskas: And then I, after that we had a problem there. We lived, my wife got her license. She practiced in the country, New Kent County. And in New Kent County was a terrible racial situation. They decided to close the schools, public schools, because they didn't want to admit black children. So we had to explain to our children how this is going, and we start feeling very uncomfortable. So we started looking for where the racial situation would not be so bad. And one of my students there in Richmond was from Cincinnati...

Kennealy: I see.

Bieliauskas: And he kept telling how great Cincinnati (laughs). So I saw the advertising and I applied here and applied at Loyola.

Kennealy: Mhmm, at Loyola University in Chicago?

Bieliauskas: At Loyola, Loyola in Chicago, and Loyola in Chicago offered me a job. But Fr. Herr, who was department chair at that time, wrote me a letter. He said, "I realize you were department chairmen, in Richmond. I want you...to be to clear understand that you can never be department chairmen at our University. Only Jesuits can be department chairs."

Kennealy: Oh. Yes.

Bieliauskas: So then of course...

Kennealy: Yes, of course, at a Jesuit University.

Bieliauskas: Ja.

Kennealy: Yes.

Bieliauskas: By the same time, I interviewed at Xavier. Here. And Xavier...McCoy was Dean.

Kennealy: Mhmm.

Bieliauskas: Hailstones was chairman of the department. And, and, the psychology chairman was Ignatius Hamel.

Kennealy: A layman.

Bieliauskas: Ja, a layman. So nobody raised that question. So I said, "I know that I don't want to be chairman, but I don't like this kind of a restriction." So I...we chose Xavier.

Kennealy: Xavier. So you were really hired by Dr. Ignatius Hamel.

Bieliauskas: Hamel, and interviewed by McCoy, by Father, Fathr O'Connor.

Kennealy: Who was president, Paul O'Connor, president at the time.

Bieliauskas: Ja, Father Paul O'Connor and Father Nieporte. They interviewed me and hired and I was teaching for work.

Kennealy: Now what year did you come? In 19...58?

Bieliauskas: In '58. 1958. Ja.

Kennealy: 1958.

Bieliauskas: I was teaching for one year and at the end of the year, apparently Dr. Hamel's health was failing somewhat. His vision was not working.

Kennealy: I see.

Bieliauskas: And I didn't realize that Dr. McCoy and Father O'Connor were already planning me to make me a chairman. I was not planning on that. I was just being a regular teacher. Now what happens then...uh, in spring semester, I got a letter from Father O'Connor saying, "Please look at the schedule. Prepare schedule for the faculty, for the next year of classes."

Kennealy: For the next year of classes. Uhuh.

Bieliauskas: So I thought, "Well that's...Dr. Hamel is not well." So I help. I am helping him. So I prepared everything myself. Full work. Nothing happened. I

came in the fall, came to teach. The dean at that time, I think it was Father Wirtenberg, or something.

Kennealy: Wirtenberger, Father Henry Wirtenberger.

Bieliauskas: Ja.

Kennealy: Yes. Yes.

Bieliauskas: And he, he said to me, "We have to move your office." My office were in the barracks, army barracks. So we moved...

Kennealy: Where was that located, the army barracks?

Bieliauskas: Where Alter building now is.

Kennealy: Where the Alter building now is.

Bieliauskas: Ja. Ja.

Kennealy: Oh, okay.

Bieliauskas: There were some army barracks [audio unclear here] and so, I was transferred to a house, which was where now Bellarmine Chapel is. There was a little house there.

Kennealy: Bellarmine Chapel. There was a house there.

Bieliauskas: Ja.

Kennealy: The Boylan Hall-- I think they called it at that time.

Bieliauskas: Probably. Ja. I don't remember, but I was, I said, "Why did you transfer me?" He said, "You are department chairman." I said...

Kennealy: This was the first you knew of it?

Bieliauskas: I didn't know about it. And I said, "I was never appointed." So I said, "I would like to negotiate that." He said, "I wouldn't advise you to do that because Father O'Connor will be very ticked off." So he said, "Just sit still and do

it.” So I did it. And this went on and on, I was never appointed as department chair.

Kennealy: Well how long...?

Bieliauskas: For eighteen years I was.

Kennealy: Eighteen years you remained chair...

Bieliauskas: And Father...

Kennealy: Never having received an appointment.

Bieliauskas: No. And Father Brennan uh...

Kennealy: When he was president?

Bieliauskas: Ja. When he was a...academic vice-president, he said, “I don’t know what to do with you have been so long chairman. The time would be to release you. I cannot do it. You have never been appointed.

Kennealy: You were never appointed in the first place! (laughs).

Bieliauskas: But then finally after eighteen years, I or actually nineteen years...

Kennealy: Well how many hours did you teach each semester, when you first came?

Bieliauskas: In the beginning, I...seventeen hours.

Kennealy: Seventeen hours.

Bieliauskas: Ja.

Kennealy: My. And you became chair after just one year?

Bieliauskas: One year, ja.

Kennealy: One year.

Bieliauskas: And then, there was no extra pay for being chair.

Kennealy: For being chair at that time.

Bieliauskas: And then later on, second year after I was here, I got an offer from UC. Xavier was paying me \$17,000 and the University of Cincinnati wanted to get me for nineteen and a half. And I discussed that with McCoy, said, "I will have to leave probably." So...three days didn't pass, Father Nieporte called me and said, "We have decided to increase your salary." (laughs).

Kennealy: Ah...yes.

Bieliauskas: And they matched the salary, so I stayed.

Kennealy: Well what were your first impressions of Xavier?

Bieliauskas: I said...was a male school, strictly male school.

Kennealy: Uhuh.

Bieliauskas: Kind of strong disciplined, uh...academic standards impressed me. I always liked academic standards, so we could do this at that time. Department of Psychology was, would...Dr. Walter Clarke used to call "refugium peccatorum."

Kennealy: Uhuh.

Bieliauskas: Everybody in had to...

Kennealy: "Refuge of sinners" (laughs).

Bieliauskas: Ja. Uh, everybody when they couldn't get in anything else, so we decided to change that, and we, our department, reduced in size but increased in the value. We got more students at that time, by the way, when I was told that I will be department chairman, I went to my faculty members at that time: Walter Clarke, ...

Kennealy: Walter Clarke.

Bieliauskas: Dr. Mr. LaGrange,

Kennealy: Glen LaGrange.

Bieliauskas: Glen LaGrange,

Kennealy: That's right.

Bieliauskas: Uh...Father Reinke.

Kennealy: Father John Reinke.

Bieliauskas: Ja.

Kennealy: Yes, Father John, who later went to Loyola in Chicago, I believe.

Bieliauskas: Yeah.

Kennealy: Yes.

Bieliauskas: No, Indianapolis.

Kennealy: Indianapolis?

Bieliauskas: Indianapolis. And so he, I asked him, "What do you think? Do you want me to be chairman?" Dr. Clarke said, "Well, I don't know. We'll look at it. If you do a good job, it'll be alright and we'll support you. If not, we'll do something to get rid of you" (laughs) So we had a very good understanding, and they were very supportive. I had no problem with the faculty here.

Kennealy: The... you had talked about the administrators in those days; maybe you could describe some of them for us: Father O'Connor, Father Nieporte?

Bieliauskas: Well, Father O'Connor was uh...it was a difficult, financially very difficult time, and he was...

Kennealy: In '58, late 50's.

Bieliauskas: Oh yeah, oh yeah, late 50's was very difficult time. I remember that he, one time as Christmas bonus, he gave to each faculty member \$10.

Kennealy: Mhmm.

Bieliauskas: He couldn't give it anymore. So it was difficult time. But he was very good. Father O'Connor had one thing. If he appointed you to something he

said, "You do the job, I will not interfere in any way, and if I don't like what you are doing you will be gone."

Kennealy: You will be out.

Bieliauskas: Ja. And so...and he also, I tried to introduce the master's program, which succeeded.

Kennealy: You did introduce...

Bieliauskas: Oh ja. Master's program and a very decent and good program, and then after that, uh...I wanted to get doctorate program and Father O'Connor said, "You know, what we do here at Xavier we do, we either do right or we don't do it. And I don't think we're in the position to support PhD program here, so we're not doing it. Don't do it." And so I couldn't get, but the plans were made there. And uh...

Kennealy: The seed was sown.

Bieliauskas: Oh ja. The seed was from the beginning there. And of course it was very difficult for us to get faculty because psychologists were very rare at that time. So what we, I tried to do, is to try to get our own students to place them into doctoral programs...and then try to get them back. And so this way quiet a few faculty members were our own graduates.

Kennealy: Whom did you hire in your years?

Bieliauskas: Uh...well...

Kennealy: ...As chair?

Bieliauskas: Um no...I was not chair, well when I was chair...

Kennealy: I suppose you don't remember...

Bieliauskas: I hired Kronenberger, Quatman...

Kennealy: Gerald Quatman.

Bieliauskas: Gerald Quatman, and uh...

Kennealy: Dave Hellcamp?

Bieliauskas: Dave Hellcamp.

Kennealy: Okay.

Bieliauskas: Uh...Norm Barry.

Kennealy: Norm Barry.

Bieliauskas: Uh...then we had a...

Kennealy: Chris Dacey?

Bieliauskas: Chris Dacey was a student at that time. Chris Dacey was hired later on.

Kennealy: Mhmm.

Bieliauskas: And Hellcamp was a student and he was not... What we did in order to enable us to survive --our salaries were very low-- we made arrangement with Longview State Hospital where our faculty members could work part time there and teach.

Kennealy: I see and supplement their income.

Bieliauskas: And they would get extra supplement income, and that way we had...also we had quite a few assistantships for our graduate students, and that way we could survive better and get faculty. So I, I, we got Dr. Hans Schmidt as experimental psychologist.

Kennealy: Ah yes, Hans Schmidt. I remember him. Yes.

Bieliauskas: And so the faculty were growing, we adding this. Dr. Norman Barry was still here -- as also with Longview. So what we do was sometimes we would get them back--- Dr. Nelson, for instance. I sent him to Virginia Commonwealth University.

Kennealy: Michael Nelson?

Bieliauskas: Ja, Michael Nelson. Then to Virginia Commonwealth, he came back and we hired him for Longview State Hospital, and then we hired him fulltime at Xavier, and then he became department chairman. He succeeded me. Norm Barry was graduate from University of Toledo. Hellcamp was our graduate. Nelson our graduate, now Chris Dacey's also former student of mine. So they...were all my friends.

Kennealy: Within the field of psychology, Vitas, what is your own specialty? What have your been, your particular interests...

Bieliauskas: Clinical psychology and family psychology.

Kennealy: And family psychology. What were the students like when you first came to Xavier in '58?

Bieliauskas: Well they were all, as I said, all male students.

Kennealy: All male. Mhmm.

Bieliauskas: Male. And they were pretty much, you know, very disciplined. We had universal ROTC.

Kennealy: Ah that's right.

Bieliauskas: Everybody was, and so on, and actually ... more or less we could ...whatever faculty said to you-- do it, it was...like army discipline.

Kennealy: Unquestioned.

Bieliauskas: Unquestioned. Ja.

Kennealy: How did the students change over the years?

Bieliauskas: Well we got...we became co-educational.

Kennealy: In '69. That's right.

Bieliauskas: In '69 but we became co-educational...

Kennealy: Was there opposition to that at the time?

Bieliauskas: My daughter, oldest daughter, was one of the few that, the first few women who came here, and one of those who opposed women being here was Father uh...English professor...

Kennealy: Oh, Thomas Savage.

Bieliauskas: Thomas Savage. Father Thomas Savage. He was totally opposed to it, absolutely. And I remember that he -- my daughter couldn't get an "A" in his class because she was a woman! (laughs) That was not discrimination totally.

Kennealy: She just didn't deserve it huh? (laughs)

Bieliauskas: But three years later when my other daughter came, and there were many more women here, he was as friendly as he can be to her. Although I remember him as very nice, friendly and so on, but in the beginning he was fighting to...we wanted to have male school and I think that its good it finally change that. I think it has the change...the image of the university has changed, but I think its for the better.

Kennealy: And of course during the late 60's the students changed rather radically too. Those were very awkward years.

Bieliauskas: Oh Ja.

Kennealy: The years of rebellion and so forth.

Bieliauskas: Oh ja, sure.

Kennealy: Yes.

Bieliauskas: We had, we had this here.

Kennealy: Yes.

Bieliauskas: We were uh...some universities were closed. We were not closed. We had people coming from UC to boycott us, to encourage that we stop attending classes, and our ROTC people took baseball bats and told them to get lost.

Kennealy: (laughs) Who were your close friends in your years at Xavier, people with whom you worked, people you admired?

Bieliauskas: Well, I think McCoy, Ray McCoy. We were very close. We used to go to Florida with his family to vacation uh...and his brother-in-law, Lozier.

Kennealy: Oh yes, Gilbert Lozier.

Bieliauskas: Gilbert Lozier.

Kennealy: Yes.

Bieliauskas: Ja, he was there, and then Father Felten. Father Felten was...

Kennealy: Father John Felten.

Bieliauskas: Yeah. But Father uh...let's see...Father Deters was a good friend.

Kennealy: Oh Richard Deters.

Bieliauskas: Yes Richard Deters, dean of the Evening College.

Kennealy: Mhmm, mhmm...those would be some...

Bieliauskas: And uh...actually...Father Foley was a good friend of mine.

Kennealy: Daniel Foley.

Bieliauskas: Ja, oh ja.

Kennealy: He was in your department.

Bieliauskas: Yes uh, he was in our department. I talked him into going to Ottawa to get his doctorate.

Kennealy: And he did.

Bieliauskas: Yes he did.

Kennealy: Got his doctorate, yeah.

Bieliauskas: I did that with several people: Dr. Kronenberger was sent in there to get doctorate, Chris Dacey got doctorate there, and also Dave Hellcamp.

Kennealy: Mhmm.

Bieliauskas: I, and there were some people there that I knew, and we used to do this. We would pick out good, really excellent graduate students to send them to doctoral schools and some of the chairman or committees there, they said that if you send and guarantee this is a good we student will take him in.

Kennealy: Oh! That's high praise!

Bieliauskas: Ja.

Kennealy: Yeah that uh...quite a compliment.

Bieliauskas: And we used to do that and best, all our students wherever when they graduated got free scholarships and so...

Kennealy: Wonderful. And I'm sure in the long years that you've been here, you've served on various committees.

Bieliauskas: Yes on faculty....

Kennealy: And some more memorable than others....

Bieliauskas: Faculty, faculty...

Kennealy: You were on a faculty committee?

Bieliauskas: Yes, I was faculty committee, and faculty committee chairman.

Kennealy: You were chairman?

Bieliauskas: And then DiUlio came.

Kennealy: That's right, Albert DiUlio.

Bieliauskas: Albert DiUlio came. I was faculty committee chairman that time and he was very nice. He allowed me to do whatever I wanted (laughs).

Kennealy: Ah...a wise decision on his part.

Bieliauskas: Well, he was looking whom to appoint, what to appoint and so on, and after I finished my duty as chairman of the committee...somebody else came in and he said, "No way. I will make all the appointments. He make recommendations." He allowed me to make all the faculty appointments.

Kennealy: Uhuh.

Bieliauskas: And we got along pretty well there at that time, but then afterwards he decided to actually to do appointments himself without consulting faculty and made some few mistakes.

Kennealy: Mhmm.

Bieliauskas: And then he went to Marquette.

Kennealy: That's right. That's right.

Kennealy: Yes, and at which point Father Hoff came to Xavier as a successor.

Bieliauskas: As a, as a president.

Kennealy: Yes. Yes. And so, do you remember in the late 60's there was a committee set up to revise the core curriculum?

Bieliauskas: Mhmm. Mhmm.

Kennealy: And that was, I understand, quite a long discussion.

Bieliauskas: Oh ja. Oh a long battle, and we had to, what we achieved there -- we included psychology into the science...uh...

Kennealy: Module.

Bieliauskas: Module.

Kennealy: Oh yes. Oh yes.

Bieliauskas: Was quite a fight. It's only science departments. Our students had to take six or ten hours science: biology, chemistry, physics.

Kennealy: Mhmm.

Bieliauskas: We decided to get, add, psychology. And it was quite a battle but we had Father Peters, who was a good friend of mine. We worked...and we...

Kennealy: Father Joseph Peters, who was a biologist as I remember.

Bieliauskas: Biologist. And I, we worked on some research together and so on, so he thought that psychologist could be scientist.

Kennealy: Mhmm.

Bieliauskas: And then...

Kennealy: He was an important ally, I'm sure.

Bieliauskas: Oh ja, oh ja. And then uh...Hart.

Kennealy: John Hart.

Bieliauskas: John Hart.

Kennealy: In the physics department.

Bieliauskas: Oh ja, psycho-physics. He liked psycho-physics. So we talked with...the only one that was a little bit reluctant was chairman of the...chemistry department, but they went along. And that program, that course is called general experimental psychology, and it's existing even now. And this is a very important thing for the department. It's a bread and butter course.

Kennealy: Mhmm. And it does fulfill the science requirement in the core to this day?

Bieliauskas: Absolutely. Yeah, today...this day. And they have, the program, the way we designed it is working very well.

Kennealy: Mhmm. As you look back, Vitas, what do you regard as your...most significant contributions to Xavier?

Bieliauskas: I, I think Father O'Connor allowed me to do what I thought I best can do, and that uh...was great, because I, some other presidents later on were

not so generous. But he was very generous, and he allowed to do what you want; if you're doing it right, if not then he'll warn you...

Kennealy: He wanted a quality program.

Bieliauskas: Quality program, absolutely. And I think we contributed to quality program. Psychology Department became one of the leading departments, and actually they, the students, my students, who succeeded me as chairpersons, they have continued my work to a doctoral program, introduce doctoral program in psychology.

Kennealy: And I think you're absolutely right, I think that psychology has been and remains one of the University's really strong departments.

Bieliauskas: And uh...after doctoral program was introduced in 2005, they gave me Honorary Doctorate PsyD..

Kennealy: Uhuh.

Bieliauskas: So that's nice to have it. I appreciate that.

Kennealy: As you look back over your years, who were the individuals, in your opinion, who contributed most to Xavier's success over the last fifty years since you've been here?

Bieliauskas: I would say...Hailstones, Thomas Hailstones; Ray McCoy...

Kennealy: Mhmm. Thomas Hailstones who founded the business school.

Bieliauskas: Oh ja, he founded business school. Ray McCoy.

Kennealy: Ray McCoy.

Bieliauskas: Graduate school and Department of Education.

Kennealy: Mhmm.

Bieliauskas: We worked very closely. He was dean of graduate school, chairman of the Department of Education. Psychology was kind of under his wing.

Kennealy: Uhuh.

Bieliauskas: Well, we had quite a few battles until we, I got out from his wing, because we wanted to be independent and that was fine. You can argue with Ray McCoy, but he accepts when the things are done well. He was accepting and so on. Father Felten was the dean of the Undergraduate School. He decided at one point to divide classes, because some said that classes in psychology were taught by education department and some by us. So he decided to, and then he decided, for instance, psychological testing will be taught by Department of Education (laughs). Some other classes like personality theory would be taught by psychology. And so he mixed it up, some of those classes like psychological testing is genuine psychology class.

Kennealy: Mhmm.

Bieliauskas: So finally, Ray McCoy said, "You know what? We'll just forget about Father Felten and we do it the way we did. We're not fighting anymore."

Kennealy: Anymore. Mhmm.

Bieliauskas: And so that way, I think Ray McCoy contributed a great deal to Xavier. So did Thomas Hailstones, and many others. You see...

Kennealy: Dr. Bob Helmes. I'm sure you worked with him over the years.

Bieliauskas: Ja. I remember. He worked in Evening College. Father Deters.

Kennealy: Father Richard...both of whom really built up the Evening School.

Bieliauskas: Oh ja, very much so. He, he did...

Kennealy: Yes. They, they were really responsible for its success at a time when that was a very important contributor to our economic welfare.

Bieliauskas: Oh ja. Absolutely, absolutely, and he was also...it was an interesting thing, being department chairman I had...three bosses: dean of Graduate School,

dean of Arts and Sciences, and Evening College. And I found that that was wonderful, because when you have three bosses (laughs) they don't know who allows you to do what.

Kennealy: Divide and conquer right! (laughs).

Bieliauskas: No, I did not divide. I just do it so they think that the other guy let you do it. So it was very fine. No problem.

Kennealy: What would you regard as the most significant things that have happened at Xavier in fifty years? I guess going co-ed would certainly be one.

Bieliauskas: Going co-ed would be one, increasing the academic standards I think they are very high, and also the building.

Kennealy: Mhmm.

Bieliauskas: The construction of the campus.

Kennealy: Yes.

Bieliauskas: When we came here since that time, dormitories were, only Brockman Hall was there when I come.

Kennealy: When you came, that's right, there was Brockman and Elet, I guess.

Bieliauskas: Brockman and Elet, ja.

Kennealy: So there were two dormitories when you came in '58.

Bieliauskas: That's right and the rest were where Joseph building is. There used to be a cafeteria for club house. There was a...

Kennealy: Old Red Building the students called it...

Bieliauskas: Oh yeah. Ja.

Kennealy: ...which I think was the original building on the grounds when the Jesuits purchased it in 1911.

Bieliauskas: Ja, but that was the building for the uh...that was country club there.

Kennealy: Mhmm. Yeah.

Bieliauskas: And so the other buildings, other buildings [audio unclear here]-- the whole you know were built since we were here. I think it was, chemistry was here.

Kennealy: Mhmm. I think it was.

Bieliauskas: And physics, ja that whole ... and

Kennealy: But Bellarmine Chapel?

Bieliauskas: Bellarmine Chapel was not built, Alter building was built since, Kuhlman dormitory, ...

Kennealy: Husman?

Bieliauskas: Husman dormitory was built.

Kennealy: Library?

Bieliauskas: The library was built.

Kennealy: The Schott building?

Bieliauskas: Schott building.

Kennealy: Yes.

Bieliauskas: So it is really...

Kennealy: In fact, there wasn't even a University Center, when you first came. The University Center, I think, was built about '65.

Bieliauskas: Yeah but that center was kind of eliminated and now new one was built.

Kennealy: That's right and put in its place. Yeah.

Bieliauskas: Ja.

Kennealy: How would you compare Xavier today to the Xavier you first knew?

Bieliauskas: Well, I think Xavier now is..., we were struggling to maintain ourselves in that time, to maintain our status, to prove that we could do things. We don't need to do that anymore. Everybody knows that at Xavier people are quality people. They do good job.

Kennealy: Mhmm.

Bieliauskas: And the interesting part is that co-operation between faculty, the Jesuits and laymen--- we never had any problems.

Kennealy: Mhmm.

Bieliauskas: And then we didn't feel like that you would be a second rate type of person because you were not Jesuit.

Kennealy: Mhmm.

Bieliauskas: You did your job and they did their job, and we had interesting phenomenon. When we had department meetings in Department of Psychology, we couldn't have it on First Friday because the Jesuits had to do the church service. So I introduced department meetings second Friday, and can you believe it that is still enforced?

Kennealy: Is that right? Yes.

(laughter)

Bieliauskas: Second Friday of each month's their meeting...

Kennealy: The meeting takes place.

Bieliauskas: And they don't know why.

Kennealy: Over the years you have brought some important figures to Xavier, speakers...

Bieliauskas: We had, we had Riley Foundation giving us the money, and on the...

Kennealy: Was this an endowment of some kind?

Bieliauskas: There was. There was a couple who had produce business downtown Cincinnati.

Kennealy: I see.

Bieliauskas: They saved some money and then they died--- and before dying, established a foundation. And this foundation were giving money to different places, and we discovered that they would give a little bit for the blind, a little bit for the soci..., for Catholic charities, a little bit for this. So Ed VonderHaar, who was vice-president...

Kennealy: Oh...Ed VonderHaar...

Bieliauskas: Ja. He said, "Let's go and talk with them." So we went and talked with them and tried to convince that instead of giving some money to all these agencies, give it to the University who is training these people.

Kennealy: I see.

Bieliauskas: And so we prepared a program, submitted that, and they decided to give.

Kennealy: Mhmm.

Bieliauskas: And they started giving ten thousand dollars later on. In the years to come they grew and grew. Last time I remember we got fifty thousand dollars from them. It was a wonderful, wonderful thing for us. In the beginning, we couldn't do much with it. We used that money to bring some outstanding psychologists here. So...paying the trip and the little honorarium. We gave honorary doctorate to Dr. Abraham Maslow. And brought him here...

Kennealy: Yes. That was quite a coo.

Bieliauskas: Oh ja. We brought him here and was a..., it was a good, good for us because the [Audio unclear here] all American Psychological Association, under my advisement, we did that. [Audio unclear here]

Kennealy: Oh okay.

Bieliauskas: And we were incidentally, I and some other faculty members were, quite involved in the American Psychological Association. I was president of two divisions and so we...we were known there and we used the money we brought for instance uh...Magda Arnold, Magda Arnold.

Kennealy: From Loyola in Chicago?

Bieliauskas: From Loyola in Chicago. Who was very known psychologist. She did the research in emotion, measuring of emotions. She was teaching the method of the perception test. Then we brought back Dr. Zygmunt Piotrowski from Temple University, who's specialist in Rorschach, spent here two weeks. We would get them for a semester or for two weeks because the money was limited, but never the less we could get them here, and that was...very good. And actually, unfortunately that money from the foundation is not being received anymore, but as long as we received it, it helped me. At one point when I retired, I became Riley Professor of Psychology, and my salary was paid from that foundation.

Kennealy: What are your fondest memories of Xavier?

Bieliauskas: I would say I felt very comfortable here. This is like my real home, my academic home. And we had, all my children graduated from Xavier. We worked together. We have uh...we helped also outside Catholic charities, the Mount St. Mary's Seminary and so on. And probably the fondest memory is was is that I felt at home, was accepted, and even now after I retired I still don't feel

like I've been written off. I still come. I have a chance to uh...I have an office that I share with somebody, and I come and do some consultation with students. I teach a class in a House-Tree-Person projective testing, that's my specialty. So two of the students and...uh...I used teach more classes, but I tried to get out, but this one I cannot get out of because it was my specialty. And I'll be teaching that in the spring semester too.

Kennealy: How's your basketball these days?

Bieliauskas: Oh it's still going (laughs).

Kennealy: You play...how often do you play?

Bieliauskas: Three times a week.

Kennealy: Three times a week. Wonderful.

Bieliauskas: Well this is play. The people who are playing there are kind of considerate. They are not allowed to knock me down. So that's a great thing.

Kennealy: They better not.

Bieliauskas: No because...

Kennealy: And you also have been very involved Lithuanian affairs...

Bieliauskas: That's right.

Kennealy: ...over the years.

Bieliauskas: Oh ja.

Kennealy: Do you go back frequently do you to Lithuania?

Bieliauskas: I was last year in 2007. There I, I was a, I taught at the University of Vilnius there.

Kennealy: I see.

Bieliauskas: And of my students was finishing his dissertation so I went there and allowed him to defend his dissertation. That was my last, my last work

there at the University of Vilnius. But I was quite involved when the ...when Lithuania declared independence. I went there several times. I was president of the Lithuanian World Community.

Kennealy: Which community?

Bieliauskas: Lithuanian World Community.

Kennealy: World Community.

Bieliauskas: Representing all the Lithuanian communities.

Kennealy: Okay.

Bieliauskas: And so by virtue of that, I participated very active there in rebuilding of the country. And now I have contacts with with them and uh...

Kennealy: Have governmental contacts?

Bieliauskas: Governmental contacts? I could have them, but I really don't. Well the new prime minister is a friend of mine who has just been appointed, but uh...they wanted me to be, I was advisor to the president for six months there.

Kennealy: I see. President of the country?

Bieliauskas: Of the country. I stayed there uh...Brazauskas, president, and he was, I was there and I think I helped a little bit but after a while I discovered that they do not like people coming from another country and trying to influence the president. So I gently eased out because I didn't want to upset people.

Kennealy: As you look back over your years at Xavier, are there any regrets? Any unfulfilled dreams? Maybe not?

Bieliauskas: Probably not. They would have been, no doctoral would have been unfulfilled dream...

Kennealy: Mhmm. But it was eventually fulfilled.

Bieliauskas: It's fulfilled. It's fulfilled.

Kennealy: Yeah and that's to Xavier's advantage.

Bieliauskas: Ja.

Kennealy: How did you retire then?

Bieliauskas: 1988.

Kennealy: So you're retired twenty years?

Bieliauskas: Twenty years ago.

Kennealy: And what are you doing in retirement?

Bieliauskas: Well I have done some private practice. I just, this year I decided not to renew my license in psychology.

Kennealy: I see.

Bieliauskas: Ja. I will not practice anymore. But and then I did some consultation with some students for their doctoral dissertations and so on, and uh...

Kennealy: I know you help out with examinations on occasion.

Bieliauskas: Ja, I do. And so actually...seems to be there's always something to do (laughs).

Kennealy: [Audio unclear here]

Bieliauskas: That's right. And it is a...I hope that all this economy and stuff will not do too much damage to Xavier University because we are in the process of developing.

Kennealy: Yeah, so much.

Bieliauskas: So much! But it is needed what, what is planned.

Kennealy: That's right the buildings, the Hoff Quadrangle, yes, yes.

Bieliauskas: Oh ja. Oh ya. Oh ya. It's really a very courageous step Father Graham is doing. I'm admiring him.

Kennealy: Mhmm. Yes. Is there anything else then, Vitas, you'd like to say for the records and our history that I forgot to ask about...or have we covered things pretty well?

Bieliauskas: I think so, I think so. I think I, I consider Xavier a very nice place to be, and I would not, I feel, even after twenty years of retirement, I still feel very comfortable here.

Kennealy: Well, I can't think of too many people who have contributed as much as you have.

Bieliauskas: Well, I don't know. I did what I was supposed to do.

Kennealy: And you did it very well. Well, this will conclude our interview. Thank you very much Vitas for being with us today.

Bieliauskas: You're very welcome. Thank you for inviting me.

Kennealy: I think we found this very interesting and very enlightening and this will become part of our history.

Bieliauskas: Thank you.

Kennealy: Thanks much.

Bieliauskas: Thank you.

[END]