

# PRISCILLA MASON

1 December 1999

—  
Mame Warren,  
interviewer

**Warren:** This is Mame Warren. Today is the first of December, 1999. I'm in Washington, D.C., with Priscilla Mason.

As you well know, the reason I'm here today is because you were there at the very beginning of the School of Advanced International Studies. So tell me, how did this all get started?

**Mason:** This got started because a group of men here in Washington, led by Christian A. Herter, who was then congressman from Massachusetts, and Paul Nitze, who—I'm not sure what his exact position was at that time because he changed from one thing to another, but they were cousins, and during the summer months they used to bunk up together when their wives took their children back to New England for the summer vacation, and they would talk over breakfast about affairs of the world. Mr. Herter was a Republican and Paul Nitze was a Democrat, but they were great friends, and those were before the days of gridlock.

One of their great concerns was that the United States was not prepared to take the leadership role which they foresaw coming upon it at the end of the war, that we did not have people in either the business world or really even in the government who were trained in international affairs, and they felt the great need for further advanced education in that area. So they talked to various of their friends in government, and they decided to have a survey made of

the educational resources of the country, the advanced resources in the international field, and for this purpose they selected then-president of Harvard, James Conant, and the then-president of Brown—I can't recall his first name—Mr. [Henry] Wriston.

**Warren:** Wriston?

**Mason:** Wriston. He was a very famous educator at the time, and his first name simply escapes me. Anyway—and I have a terrible feeling there was a third member that I've been trying to rack my brain as to who this was. Maybe there wasn't one. But anyway, Conant and Wriston were the prominent people on this survey, and they came up with the result that there was absolutely no graduate program in the whole United States in any of the universities, with the exception of the program at Tufts, the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy.

So this group of men decided that that was not enough, and they would like to found a school located in the nation's capital where the students would have access to the people who are actually active in the field. So they set out a very complicated kind of a structure. They incorporated a foundation called the Foreign Service Educational Foundation, which had many purposes. I think it was drawn up by Mr. [Edward B.] Burling of the firm of Covington Burling, which was one of the first firms that did a great deal of work in international law. And this foundation, was, among other things, enabled to start and govern an educational program, a school or university. So the first and only thing that it ever did was to establish the School of Advanced International Studies, and it was established here in Washington and tried to open its doors, I think in 1943.

At that time they selected as its new director—of course, it wasn't a dean because it wasn't attached to a university. This was just a private, independent school plunked down in Washington,

D.C., and seeking its accreditation from, of all things, the board of education of the District of Columbia, which actually was a little bit more respectable in those days than it has become since, but not terribly respectable. They selected as the first director Halford L. Hoskins, who had been dean of the Fletcher School.

I, at that time, had recently received my master's degree from the Fletcher School and was working at the Fletcher School as an assistant in the library and did also some work in the registrar's office, and Dean—at that time Dean Hoskins of the Fletcher School asked me with Mr. Herter's consent to come down with him to help do the administrative work, be his administrative assistant in setting up the school. So that's how I became associated with it.

We came down to Washington. I think it was the summer of 1943. The group, in the meantime, had bought property, the old Gunston Hall School on Florida Avenue, but could not get occupancy of the building because there was a Brazilian military mission occupying the front part of the building, and this, of course, was the end of the war. The war was still going on when this purchase was made, and real estate was very tight in Washington, and the Brazilians no longer were attached to the Brazilian government, they were operating as a sort of a free wheel, freelance. I don't know what they were doing, but they refused to leave the building. So we couldn't established the school in the building.

So. Mr. Burling, who was among the trustees of the foundation, offered space in his law offices, which at that time were on 15th Street, for us to do the organization work necessary for the setting-up of the school, and this space was in two file rooms of the law office on the—I don't know, about the fifth floor, I guess. No air-conditioning. They were tearing up the streets down below, and we worked with one telephone, one desk, and a couple of stools, and I had a stool and

did all of my writing on top of a file cabinet.

**Warren:** Oh, my God!

**Mason:** I remember we had to order all the furniture and all the china. We had a cafeteria. We had a full dining room. Dean Hoskins always had the grand ideas. We had a full dining room. I do remember ordering china enough for fifty students, which is what we started with.

**Warren:** Now, was this at Gunston Hall that you had the cafeteria?

**Mason:** We had a full dining room for two or three years, sit-down meals served by scholarship students formally as waiters, I mean. It was amazing. Then, after that, it became a cafeteria. We always lost money on the food service. Finally it went on—even the cafeteria lost money. So we ended up with just nothing but food machines, and they lost money.

I remember one of the incidents—this is really digressing—but when Milton Eisenhower was president of the university, he watched everything like a hawk, and this is when his brother was President of the United States. He used to come over once a week to advise with his brother. And I'll never forget the phone call I had from him one time. He called, and he said, "Priscilla, this is President Eisenhower. I'm coming over Wednesday morning," or whatever morning it was, "at seven o'clock. I will meet you at the school. I'm coming over to meet with my brother, but I see that the food service is losing money, and I want you to show it to me." [Laughter].

He came over and he looked at those vending machines, and he said, "I can understand why the food service loses money. This is extremely unattractive." [Laughter] So after that, we went out of the food service entirely. Well, anyway, that's digressing.

So we started, got organized entirely from the file room of Covington and Burling while the trustees tried everything they could to dislodge the Brazilians. I don't remember how it was



finally done, but Mr. Grew, Joe Grew, was one of the trustees, and I remember Chris Herter saying to him, “Joe, you don’t have time to do very much in the way of fund-raising and all the day-to-day things, but at least you can get rid of the Brazilians. This is your area, diplomatic.”

And Mr. Grew said, “I can’t do anything about it, because they’re just freelance. They’ve broken off from the government and they won’t listen to anybody. We have to find them alternate space.” So finally somebody found them alternate space, and we moved into the building.

**Warren:** Oh, my goodness. Complications. That was international studies, wasn’t it? [Laughter]

So you moved into Gunston Hall, the former Gunston Hall building.

**Mason:** Yes.

**Warren:** And that was still during the war?

**Mason:** Yes. The war was just winding down. I’m terrible on dates. I’m sorry. But our first class was all girls.

**Warren:** That’s what I wanted to know.

**Mason:** With the exception of two men. One was a citizen of Panama. He was disabled in some way. As I recall, he was a little hunchback, sort of a dwarf, very bright, and he ended up being rather a communist agitator in Panama, much to everybody’s amusement.

Oh, there were three men. The second one was an Indian from India who—I don’t know what he was doing in the United States, but I think he’d been to college here, and his whole object in life was the independence of India and hatred of the British empire. [Laughter] Then there was one very nice young American who had been wounded and discharged from the Army. And then a group of very bright girls.

**Warren:** So who were these women? What were they doing? What were their interests?

**Mason:** They were just college graduates who were interested in international affairs. I mean, this was a whole new area. I don't know. Their interests were just piqued, and there are two or three of them that are still very loyal and show up at all the SAIS gatherings, and, believe me, that first class didn't really have much of an education. [Laughter] I mean, it was sort of hand to mouth.

We started late because of this business of not being able to get into the building, and it was a faculty that was sort of made up at the last moment. One of the faculty, part-time faculty, was John Dickey, who was later president of Dartmouth. He was in the State Department. This was his only teaching experience when he became president of Dartmouth. Hajo Holborn, who was a professor of history at Yale, he used to commute down once a week, and he also, in addition to teaching a few graduate students, we had a program for the military government to train Army officers for military government in Germany, and Professor Holborn had charge of that. He used to come down for periods, for longer periods than we had—I don't know, they were six-week programs, something like that. And then there was Professor Linebarger, who was full time, on the Far East. Dr. Hoskins himself was a specialist in the Middle East. He taught Middle East policy.

**Warren:** So once things got started, what was the classwork like? What were they doing?

**Mason:** What did they do?

**Warren:** Yes. What were classes comprised of? What did they do in the classroom?

**Mason:** Well, they were regular graduate classes. I don't know how to answer that.

**Warren:** Well, this was something new. It hadn't really been done before, the study of international studies in this country. So I'm curious about how they figured out how to go about

doing it.

**Mason:** Well, I guess it started with a great deal of emphasis on regional studies. Linebarger was a Far East specialist, and he taught courses on China. This was his area. It was somewhat of a disjointed curriculum. I mean, it sort of was—I'm sorry. I'm just trying to answer your question. I guess the curriculum was sort of fashioned according to who we had as faculty. I'm not sure about that first year or two, but very shortly the curriculum began to shape itself into requirements for a knowledge of economics, irrespective of the regional interests of the students.

So I think the curriculum started out as almost an emphasis on one area of the world but backed up by a knowledge of economics. In the first couple of years this was a one-year program but very shortly evolved into a two-year program. This is when it began to be really, really good. But I don't think the program developed into something that was really mature and competitive—four or five years before it sort of picked up and had a real focus. I think some of the early degrees were kind of a little bit shaky. But those people went right into the Foreign Service, I must say. Our graduates, even in the very early years, were competing with Fletcher graduates very successfully.

**Warren:** So how important do you think it is and was that SAIS be located in Washington?

**Mason:** I think it exposed the students to a whole new world of how international relations worked and gave them contact with people who were active in the field. I think it is important.

**Warren:** Now, this was an extremely important time, right after World War II. Would you talk about that, about the historical context for the early evolution of the school?

**Mason:** Well, yes. I think that was actually one of the reasons for the founding, and the original idea that the founders had was that there would be an equal division, theoretically an equal

division, between the students going into government and going into business, and that gradually they would build up a core of people in the private sector and in the public sector who would have the same training and background and they would meet each other out in the real world and would make things go better. Because in those days, the business world sent, for the most part, incompetent people, people that they wanted to get rid of.

And I saw this myself right after college, after I graduated from Smith. I spent six months in Japan visiting an aunt and uncle, and my uncle was military attaché in Tokyo, and I saw the American businessmen community out there, and it was absolutely shocking. These people didn't care about the Japanese, didn't care about Japan, didn't care about the society. They would just send out their—and it was wonderful because they had servants to look after them, and the ladies could play bridge, and they did nothing but see each other, and they didn't learn the language and they didn't care about the culture.

And to some extent it was even true of the diplomats. The men, the diplomats themselves, of course, had to concern themselves, but for the most part the State Department wives paid no attention to the cultural—to the country where they were. They had this social life going on in a circle, just seeing more Americans. And this whole group that founded this school were much deeper thinking, much broader thinking, felt we must get out of this self-centeredship, we must get people educated, more broad-minded, more interested in what they were doing.

**Warren:** So when SAIS was started, was it with the intention to educate American students?

**Mason:** Yes. In fact—

**Warren:** Tell me about that.

**Mason:** —almost to the exclusion of foreign students, and wanted to educate young Americans to

go abroad and do a good job in both the public and the private sector and to have an interplay between the two to advance American foreign policy, America's position in the world. They thought that the leadership was going to fall on America and we weren't ready to assume it. We didn't have the people who understood it.

**Warren:** So how long did it take before they realized that the mix would be better if everybody came?

**Mason:** Well, that just evolved. It just evolved. Now there's a tremendous mix.

**Warren:** Tell me about that. Tell me about whether foreign students started coming in.

**Mason:** Well, I would say in the late '60s, almost '70. There were some foreign students then. I don't know. It just sort of evolved naturally. Now, after it became part of Hopkins, this same group of men didn't have any control. This just disappeared. They were under the Hopkins trustees. And you got applications from good foreign students, and, well, the admissions committee—I don't know. I wasn't in that admissions, but it just evolved gradually.

Then we had the Bologna Center and then this brought more European students into the program, and then we began setting up Asian programs. It just evolved naturally. I don't think it was any conscious—

**Warren:** Now, before—I want to pursue all those things you just talked about, but before we do that, tell me—because I really don't know much about them—tell me about these founders. Tell me about Christian Herter. Tell me about Paul Nitze. Who were they as people? I mean, I know Paul Nitze is still with us. But tell me about them as people.

**Mason:** Christian Herter was a—oh, gosh, I don't know. He was an absolutely wonderful person, dedicated to better government, dedicated to doing the right thing for the country. Gosh, I just

don't know how to describe it. He was governor of Massachusetts. He was in the Massachusetts legislature. He was an old, complete gentleman, a complete—I don't know if you'd call him a Renaissance man. No, he was very practical, hard working, himself very modest, simple, interested in others.

**Warren:** How much time did he spend at SAIS?

**Mason:** He spent a lot of time at SAIS

**Warren:** And what would he do when he was there? What was his role?

**Mason:** In the early days he followed every detail of what went on in the founding of SAIS. He was completely and utterly a man of complete integrity. SAIS was his great interest. His work in Congress, it was absolutely—well, it was due to him, I think, that the Marshall Plan went through Congress. He was just dedicated to that.

But when SAIS was being founded, he got his sister-in-law, who was at the time divorced and probably floating around doing nothing, to have a desk in his office. He had a separate telephone line put in. He bought separate paper, separate paper clips, separate everything for her to use out of his own money, to use for SAIS. Not one stamp that belonged to the government went to the founding of SAIS, not one telephone call, not like today. [Laughter] He was absolutely meticulous about all this.

When we finally came and started the school, he would come to the school two or three times a week to check on administrative things, and at least once a week he would come and talk with the students. He was part of the school. He was just seeing that this was done right.

Now, Paul was not so involved in the early days. He was the treasurer. He was the financial wizard of the foundation, the Foreign Service Educational Foundation. He came to

meetings. He oversaw the finances, but that was all when he was in office. But later what happened was, when the Republicans were in, Chris was in the government and Paul was out, and Paul would come and be resident at SAIS, and then he would teach. He loved the students and the students loved his teaching. And he would oversee the finances, and he had an office at the school. And then we'd have an election and the Democrats would be in, and Chris would be out of office. [Laughter] And he would come back to the school. So they were both extremely involved. In the early days, Chris was the one. The first four or five years, he really, really got the school on its feet.

**Warren:** So what did Nitze teach and what did Herter teach? What were their subjects?

**Mason:** Chris never taught a class. He just would talk with the students sort of informally. Paul taught—I think his courses are listed in the catalog. I can't remember. Usually defense courses, strategy, that kind of thing.

**Warren:** So defense was what he was interested in.

**Mason:** Yes. But Paul was also that sort of thing in the State Department, director of the policy planning staff at one point, but he was assistant secretary of defense several times. And he was very active also in the arms negotiations with the Russians.

**Warren:** Now, you made a reference to, and I certainly want to pursue, the affiliation with Johns Hopkins. How did that come to be?

**Mason:** Well, that came about—that was engineered by both Paul and Chris together, I guess.

After the school had been going on its own for about four years, it began running out of money.

How the school was financed, many of the trustees contributed themselves, but it usually was—ten thousand dollars was the limit that anybody was ever asked for. Imagine that. [Laughter] Mostly

five or ten thousand dollars.

Then Chris was the one who got the idea that business should contribute because we were going to train these people for international business, and the terms for that were five or ten thousand dollars, with the understanding that these were free gifts and that the company would have no say about academic policy. I don't think until this point that business had ever been asked for money. This was a whole new thing. I mean, now it's just—well, you know what it's like now.

And the first budgets were about, I think, fifty thousand dollars a year, and full professors were paid seven thousand dollars. It was just a whole different world. So this financed the school, and I think we got a little money from the government for this training of colonels and military government, but it came to the point where we felt we needed some foundation money. So this was the period when Paul was president of the school, and he went around to various foundations, and finally he went to John Gardner, who was at that time at the Carnegie Corporation. John Gardner, after a great deal of negotiation and thought, came back and said, "All right, we will give you sixty thousand dollars over five years." Not very much money, but it seemed like a lot. "But that is all," he said. "If you're going to continue to exist and get foundation grants—and you can't continue to exist without foundation grants—you've got to have a university affiliation. You're not going to be able to make it on your own."

So Chris and Paul went to work to try and get a university affiliation. And they tried everybody—Harvard and Yale and Princeton and Johns Hopkins. Well, I think they started with Harvard. That's where they both graduated. Harvard sort of toyed with it, but then they said "No, thank you, it's going to be too much nuisance having it down in Washington." And the others didn't work out.



John Gardner said—I don't think this probably the sort of thing that should be in print—that the local universities wouldn't do. At that time they were—I think they've all improved, but they were considered not much. So we went to Johns Hopkins, the nearest. The then-president of Johns Hopkins jumped at it. He was just intrigued and right away said, "Yes, we'll do this." And he signed us up, took us over, without consulting the Johns Hopkins faculty. And that was a grievous error. We became part of Johns Hopkins, and we weren't very popular.

**Warren:** Why was it an error?

**Mason:** Well, it was an error not to consult your faculty. The then-Johns Hopkins faculty were very critical and very unfriendly. They hadn't been asked. You know what a faculty is. I don't blame them, as a matter of fact. Dev Bronk was a law unto himself. For us it was very fortunate. [Laughter] Anyway, that passed.

**Warren:** So how did that get sorted out?

**Mason:** Well, when Milton Eisenhower became president, and we turned out to be, you know, not so bad. Some of the history—I remember one of the history professors, I don't remember his name, he just thought that Grove Haines, who was a wonderful teacher, but he was an imposter. I mean, he taught history beginning in the 19th century. He should have gone back to the Greeks and the Romans. International relations was a whole new field.

**Warren:** So how did that work? Was there much interaction between the Homewood campus and SAIS?

**Mason:** On the administrative level, yes, but not on the substantive level until—I guess it's a lot more now. That was much slower in developing. It was always very cordial on the administrative level and on the fund-raising level and all. At least it was when I was there, and I think it

continues today. Now, I think, as far as I can gather, there's a lot of cooperation.

**Warren:** Now, one thing that I'm honestly confused by, I know that before SAIS became part of Johns Hopkins, Johns Hopkins had something called the Walter Page School for studying international studies?

**Mason:** Oh, yes. Well, that was a strange thing that was set up for--what was the name of that man who was accused by [Senator Joseph] McCarthy of being a communist?

**Warren:** Owen Lattimore.

**Mason:** Owen Lattimore. He was no more a communist than you or I. As far as I can make out, that was simply sort of his program, and Walter Page maybe gave some money to it, but it was never a real school or anything.

**Warren:** And so did Johns Hopkins have two schools of international studies for a while?

**Mason:** No. That was never a school. That was just Owen Lattimore and some of his courses.

**Warren:** I see.

**Mason:** And then Owen Lattimore left and went to England, to Manchester University or someplace like that.

**Warren:** Leeds. The University of Leeds.

**Mason:** Yes.

**Warren:** But so there really--as far as you know, there wasn't any--

**Mason:** No, there wasn't any.

**Warren:** It seems like one died at about the same time the other came in, but it's not clear to me whether there's any relationship or not.

**Mason:** No, there is no relationship.

**Warren:** It just seemed to have happened at the same time?

**Mason:** That's right. Yes, that I'm sure of.

**Warren:** Did you all ever have to deal with anything with McCarthy? Did he ever cause any problems at SAIS?

**Mason:** No.

**Warren:** The Lattimore case just seems to have split Johns Hopkins for a while.

**Mason:** We had Owen Lattimore up—we had a program before we joined Johns Hopkins and a summer program in Peterborough, New Hampshire, and the reason for that was that Dr. Hoskins had a summer home in Peterborough, New Hampshire. [Laughter] And we rented a girls' school which had been somebody's private estate, and we had a six-week program. It was financed largely by some of the wealthy people who went to Peterborough and Dublin, New Hampshire. The quid pro quo was that we were to produce a national-level speaker on international affairs every Sunday evening in the Unitarian Church while we were there, and we had some very good speakers, but after three or four years we sort of ran out of speakers and had trouble. But we had Owen Lattimore once, and he was a good speaker. We didn't have any opposition to it. Some people said, "Oh, you're going to get into all sorts—" This was before we were part of Johns Hopkins. "You're going to get into all sorts of trouble having Owen Lattimore," but we didn't.

**Warren:** He was probably thrilled to be asked at that point.

I need to turn the tape over.

[Begin Tape 1, Side 2]

**Warren:** So another thing that you mentioned that I want to know all about is the Bologna Center. How did that come to be?

**Mason:** The Bologna Center was the brainchild of Grove Haines, who I mentioned before, who was a wonderful, wonderful teacher. He just thought that Italy, Bologna, was the place to set up a study center, near the oldest university in Europe. There was never anything really formal, but he spoke fluent, fluent Italian, and there was a great deal of cooperation with the university there. There was a lot of opposition here to setting it up, that it was going to be too expensive and that it wasn't going to work, and so forth and so on. But we did get government money for it to start with, and it just took off, and now it is extremely successful. I guess about two-thirds of the students are European or even East European now, and I guess maybe a few Asians and perhaps one-third Americans. It's a one-year program, or it can be a two-year program, but you can't get a degree by just going to the Bologna Center. You have to spend one year in Washington to get a degree.

So the American students go to Bologna either their first year or their second because they want the degree. The foreign students usually spend one year in Bologna, and if they can get a fellowship and so on, come for their second year here. But a good many just go for a year for the experience and don't get the degree. However, I understand that a tremendous number of European graduates of—not even graduates, those who have been to the Bologna Center—have jobs in the various foreign offices in governments of Western Europe. So it's been a very successful venture for its product as well as for the studies that go on. They're expanding the curriculum, I think, to include a lot of Eastern European problems and trying to get more East European students.

[Note: Static on the tape begins at this point.]

**Warren:** So I presume you've been to Bologna? You've seen the center?

**Mason:** Yes.

**Warren:** Describe it to me. Tell me. Obviously I haven't been, so tell me about it.

**Mason:** Well, Bologna is an absolutely charming old city. The University of Bologna, I think is the oldest university in Europe, and the whole city is arcaded. The streets have arcades, and the sidewalks are all covered with these arcades and statues everywhere. The Bologna Center has its own building, which is sort of modern, including an apartment house. I don't know—I've been away so long—how many of the students now live in the apartment house. Originally each apartment had four students, and two of them were to be European and two of them American so that there was a mixture and they'd get to know each other.

The faculty, there's a full-time director who is an American, and that changes. Usually the director is there for maybe five years, maybe six or seven. And the faculty, the Americans, one or two from the Washington faculty usually go over for a year or two, and otherwise they're European faculty. I don't know, maybe one or two are resident and then the others come in part time from the university, from other universities in Italy.

**Warren:** So I just can't imagine that this couldn't be a huge boon to mutual understanding of countries, to have these people talking to each other and getting to know each other well.

**Mason:** Well, the same thing is being done in Nanjing, you know.

**Warren:** Well, let's talk about that.

**Mason:** That is more under Hopkins itself than SAIS. Well, it's both, actually, but Hopkins is paying for it, which is nice. [Laughter]

**Warren:** So what's the distinction you're making there? That Bologna is funded in a different way than Nanjing?

**Mason:** Yes.

**Warren:** Tell me what you mean.

**Mason:** Well, Nanjing was—as I understand it—that all happened after I left, although I went over for its dedication. Let's see. Who was the president before—

**Warren:** Steve Muller?

**Mason:** Steve Muller. This was Steve Muller's baby. No degree is connected with Nanjing, but it's sort of the same idea, half Chinese students and half American. Well, it doesn't work out that way because there aren't that many American students who are sufficiently fluent in Chinese to equal the number of Chinese students that one can take who are fluent in English. The American students are taught by Chinese professors in Chinese, and the Chinese students are taught by American professors in English. And they room together, as far as possible, one Chinese and one American student.

The really distinct thing about the Nanjing Center, it's on the campus of the University of Nanjing, and so it's sort of protected by the University of Nanjing. It has a library with open stacks. It's the only one in China that has open stacks. Absolutely unheard of.

When Tiananmen Square massacre took place, the thought was probably that Hopkins would close it, and Steve Muller and Dean [George R.] Packard at that time went over. The University of Nanjing was pleading, apparently, with Hopkins not to close it, so they negotiated. I'm not sure whether Ambassador Lord was ambassador then still, but anyway, whoever the U.S. ambassador was in on the negotiations. Hopkins said, "Okay, we will keep it open on certain conditions. There is to be no interference with our faculty in teaching. There is to be no interference with our students, Chinese or American. There is to be no interference with library

materials shipped in.” I guess that about covers it. “If any of these things happen, we’re gone.” So far there’s been nothing.

**Warren:** Tell me about that dedication that you attended. What was that like?

**Mason:** Well, there were a great many speeches, a great many speeches, but it was—oh, I haven’t thought about that for a long time. You can get that from Ross [Jones], too. He and Lynn [Jones] went.

I don’t remember all the details. There was a lot of feasting and eating, and then ceremonies with people speaking in Chinese and then being translated into English, and people speaking in English and being translated into Chinese. [Laughter] A lot of formalities. I just hadn’t thought about that for quite a while. Ask Ross about that.

**Warren:** Okay. All right.

**Mason:** Their memories may be clearer.

**Warren:** Well, let’s come back to Washington, and one thing that I’m curious about—of course, I’m assuming that part of the reason that SAIS is located in Washington is so that people can come, people who are here in Washington can come and speak at SAIS, can come and give speeches or give classes at SAIS. So I was wondering if there are any particular stories or anecdotes that you remember of people who’ve come to SAIS that are memorable.

**Mason:** Well, I certainly remember the dedication of our present building, and this is typical of the kind of things that went on at SAIS, the building on Massachusetts Avenue, and we had a big ceremony, and they brought over the official mace from Hopkins and so on to dedicate the building. We had three secretaries of state coming, either present or former: Christian Herter, Dean Acheson, who was a trustee, Dean Rusk, who was then secretary of state and who was then

involved with SAIS when he was president of—let's see. What foundation was he president of?

**Warren:** Was he Ford Foundation?

**Mason:** No, it wasn't Ford. Was it Carnegie? I think it was Carnegie, but I'm not sure about that. Anyway, this was great formal business and a reception afterwards. There was champagne and so on, very great, elegant, for our faculty in full academic robes, which was something our faculty never did. So they all dug out their robes, brought them to the office for me and Mrs. [Doris] Jackson, who was director of conferences, to iron for them. We had an ironing board set up in the dean's office in the afternoon, and both of us—I guess there were two ironing boards—we were ironing like mad.

The telephone rang about four o'clock in the afternoon, and it turned out to be some panic call for me. A young man, an assistant at the Brookings Institution across the street, had just walked through one of our new plate glass windows on the front and he was bleeding. So I dropped the iron, disconnected it, and rushed downstairs, and here was a very bloody young man. His hand was all bloody. So I whipped him into my car and whipped him down to the emergency room, got him sewn up, and brought him back.

Meantime, the maintenance men had plastered up the window. I guess they had broke it out and had boarded it up. So I said, "Can we get new plate-glass window?" Well, of course they couldn't. So here was our grand opening with a boarded-up window. [Laughter]

**Warren:** I'll have to see if I can find a picture of that.

**Mason:** This was typical SAIS, that we have a crisis like this, absolutely typical that they have a conference and the administrative assistant would be ironing the faculty's robes. They couldn't seem to have it done at home. [Laughter]



**Warren:** That sounds to me that there's a certain degree of informality?

**Mason:** Oh, yes. We had lots of fun.

**Warren:** Tell me about that.

**Mason:** Oh, I can't think of—let's see. I just—that just flashed in my mind, that this was the kind of thing that went on. Oh, dear. I should have somebody else with me to think. Some of the good stories were—well, I know this business thing, I didn't tell you, ended up by having a series over a good many years held usually down in the Statler Hotel, a series of conferences for business corporations, and this for many years was directed by Doris Jackson, who was really gifted at getting good speakers and setting up good conferences.

But the story of Dorothy's hiring is rather amusing. She came from Boston. Her family were friends of the HerTERS. She knew Chris Herter, had worked in his campaign. She was a widow, two children, and it was suggested in Boston that she might be good for this job. So she came down for an interview, and as it happened, she came down—that's another story. I, at the age of forty-something, had gotten the mumps, and I was home with the mumps. I wasn't very sick, but I was home.

And she went for her interview, and she was interviewed by Dean [Philip Warren] Thayer and Paul Nitze, and they couldn't seem to—she said she'd never had such a strange interview, that they didn't seem to know what to ask her, what she could do and what she couldn't do. Finally, Paul said to her, "Have you had the mumps?" [Laughter]

And she thought, "This place is crazy." She said, "Yes, I have."

He said, "Oh, that's wonderful. You can then go and have lunch with Priscilla, and she can interview you."

She said, “Well, I didn’t know who Priscilla was, and about having lunch, what did mumps have to do with it?”

Well, it turned out that I had said, “If this gal has had the mumps, I’m not sick, and she can come over for lunch and I will interview her.”

So she arrived, and we immediately hit it off. She and I are great, great friends. I’m going down to see her this afternoon. We spend an afternoon together, now we’ve both retired, reading aloud.

But at any rate, we didn’t know each other from Adam at this point. So I interviewed her, and at the end of it, I said to her, “Well, Doris, you know, this is all very grand. I think you can do the job,” and so forth and so on, “but you must know that at SAIS things usually end up by everybody doing things like licking envelopes.”

Actually, she didn’t start out as a full director. She was working for a man who was always late on everything. So about one month after she’d been hired and came, one Saturday morning, she and I and her twin boys, age ten, were sitting in her office licking the mailing, which was late because of her boss. [Laughter]

**Warren:** So you gave her an honest appraisal of the job.

**Mason:** Yes. So this was SAIS. If something didn’t work on time, we did it some other time.

I can think of another thing that she and I did. There was one time when it was the end of the month or for some reason we had to get out a statement of the—it was a financial statement. I guess it was a report for Hopkins. And the bursar was out sick, and she and I went—Paul Nitze said he had to have this statement for some reason and would we get it to him. Well, we had all these figures, and neither of us were mathematical, and we tried to get out this statement, and the

damned thing just wouldn't add up. I mean, we weren't trained, neither of us. She wasn't, and I wasn't, I think. Anyway, it was a mess.

So Monday morning we went into Paul's office, and he said, "Have you got the figures?"

We said, "Paul, we can't do it. We just don't know how. Can you help us?"

"Oh," he said, "sure. I can do it." [Laughter] So he just went and looked at the figures.

He said, "There you are, girls. This is what you want." It was just a nice relationship with everybody.

**Warren:** How about the social life there? Were there attempts to have formal or semiformal social events among the faculty, with the students? How did that work?

**Mason:** It was all very informal. Yes. The students had a lot of things going, and then there was always occasions when we were invited. The faculty and staff, we had—you know, we were all friends. So we went to each other's houses.

**Warren:** One of the things that I've seen a number of photographs of, they seem to be dinner parties with a mixture of faculty and students, and I presume it's an attempt to have everybody get to know each other's cultures. But I'm making an assumption there.

**Mason:** No, I think there was. There were events, sometimes costume parties, and there was always a—was it at Christmas that the students did a takeoff of faculty and vice versa. There usually was a dance at some point. There were parties where there were foreign meals. Somebody would give a Chinese meal. Somebody would give us another kind of a meal. Yes, there was a lot of that when the school was small. Then it got—we moved into the new building, the new building which is the old one now on Massachusetts Avenue, but it was all very elegant. A lot of that got lost.

**Warren:** Were you there for the dedication of the Rome Building?

**Mason:** No. No, I don't think I went to that.

**Warren:** I saw a picture of that, and there was quite a line-up of people on the dais. I was impressed.

**Mason:** No, I don't think I went to that. That was after I left.

**Warren:** Well, now, what haven't we talked about that we should?

**Mason:** I don't know. Where do you feel something lacking? My memory, I guess.

**Warren:** Well, you've given me what I came here for. Now, do I understand that for a while you served on the advisory council after you retired?

**Mason:** Yes.

**Warren:** What does that mean? What was that?

**Mason:** Well, that was a group of people that just met twice a year, and then in the interim the dean used for fund-raising help or for advice on academic matters or whatever, but it got very unwieldy. Dean [Francis O.] Wilcox added to this thing, so there were about fifty or sixty members, and, you know, it just got out of hand. It was so big that people weren't really contributing. And Dean [Paul] Wolfowitz abolished the whole thing and started over again. I think it was absolutely right. When you get something so large and people lose interest and it loses focus, I mean, it wasn't a big fight, it wasn't anything wrong, it was just that it just got amorphous, and there wasn't time for whoever was dean to be in touch with so many people. What you need is a small core of really dedicated people and change them.

**Warren:** So what's your role now? Do you keep in touch?

**Mason:** My role now is not really a role. I gave two endowed fellowships a while back, tuition

fellowships to be awarded for students who want to go into public service as against the private sector. It had gotten so graduates were going almost entirely into the private sector, for two perfectly good reasons. The underlying one was that they really couldn't afford public service because of the huge debt that piles up in getting yourself through college and through graduate school. And public service doesn't pay that much compared to what some of these kids are getting going into the private sector in New York in corporate work. They're making so much money, it's fantastic.

And these fellowships state they have to sign a thing that they're interested in public service, and they'll get their tuition for the full two years. Then they are obligated to go into public service of some kind for five years, or to try to. If they, you know, don't seem to get the opportunity or can't, this can be deferred. But it's supervised by a committee, and they don't have to pay it back. But if they don't fulfill these obligations but have the opportunity to, then they have to pay it back.

So I do keep in touch through my fellowship students once or twice a year. They correspond with me and I meet with them, and it's very rewarding. But I don't interfere. I don't interfere at all with the operation of the school. After I retired, I didn't go near it for two years.

**Warren:** So do you think SAIS has fulfilled the initial idea?

**Mason:** More than fulfilled. Never dreamed it would do so well.

**Warren:** So I presume you're pretty satisfied with it.

**Mason:** I'm very satisfied, more than satisfied.

**Warren:** And how important do you think the affiliation with Johns Hopkins turned out to be?

**Mason:** Oh, I think it was the making of the school.

**Warren:** Tell me more about that.

**Mason:** Well, you know, just the Johns Hopkins name enabled the school to recruit the best faculty and the best students in the beginning, and now it's well known. I really think it probably is certainly if not the top one, certainly amongst the four or five top schools. I really have no way of knowing. The present administration of the school says that it's the top school. I don't know.

**Warren:** Well, we always like to think we're the best, don't we?

**Mason:** Everybody likes to say they're the best, so I take this with a little grain of salt. Although several of the SAIS graduates have told me that they have not run into nearly as many Fletcher graduates in the public service and all as they do other SAIS graduates. So maybe it's true. Fletcher at one time was a monopoly, and apparently SAIS is pretty well flooding the market at the moment, for whatever that says. But I do think they seem to be very innovative. They've got so many programs going that I sometimes wonder whether they can keep them all tops.

**Warren:** Well, I can certainly understand why Ross Jones sent me to see you. This has been a wonderful--

**Mason:** Oh, Ross sent you?

**Warren:** Oh, absolutely Ross sent me. He said, "You want to know about SAIS? There's only one person to talk to."

So is there anything more? I have what I need. Is there anything more you'd like to say before we stop?

**Mason:** I can't think of it right now. Probably when you're gone I will. I'll telephone.

**Warren:** You have my number, and I would love to hear from you.

Thank you so much.

**Mason:** Well, I thank you.

**Warren:** This has just been great.

**Mason:** I'm sorry that, you know, my mind begins to go a little bit.

**Warren:** I hope my mind is like your mind when I reach your age.

[End of interview]

