

CARNEGIE CORPORATION OF NEW YORK ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

The Reminiscences of

James B. Hunt, Jr.

Columbia Center for Oral History

Columbia University

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## PREFACE

The following oral history is the result of a recorded interview with James B. Hunt, Jr. conducted by Myron A. Farber on September 17, 2012. This interview is part of the Carnegie Corporation of New York Oral History Project.

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

3PM

Session #1

Interviewee: James B. Hunt, Jr.

Location: Raleigh, NC

Interviewer: Myron A. Farber

Date: September 17, 2012

Q: This is Myron Farber on September the 17, 2012, interviewing James B. Hunt, Jr. at his office in Raleigh, North Carolina for the Carnegie Corporation of New York Oral History by Columbia University. Governor Hunt, you were a trustee of the Carnegie Corporation from 2001 to 2009. Before that, you were a four-term governor of North Carolina, I believe, the only person ever to be elected four times here.

Hunt: That's right. I was the first two-term governor, and then term-limited after two terms and then, eight years later, came back for two more terms.

Q: Right. Should I interpret that to mean you were doing something right?

Hunt: Of course. [Laughs] Either that or I fooled a lot of people.

[Laughter]

Q: Well, yesterday I was buying a bar of homemade soap here in Raleigh at a fair and I asked this young fellow if he ever heard of you. I think he must have been born while you were governor, and he said he sure did and he had a copy of one of your books on education at home.

Hunt: You're kidding.

Q: That's right.

Hunt: Well, I'll be darned.

Q: Let me put it on the record. You were governor from 1977 to 1985 and then 1993 to 2001.

Hunt: That's correct.

Q: So you joined the Carnegie Corporation board just after serving.

Hunt: Right.

Q: And can you tell me why you joined and how that came about?

Hunt: I joined because Carnegie had at that time, and still does have—[Bill & Melinda] Gates [Foundation] may have caught them now—but certainly at that time had the reputation as being the most important education foundation in America, supporting education, supporting reforms in how we do it, supporting leadership that makes the changes we need. But Carnegie was “the” education foundation and I think still has that reputation.

Q: Well, that goes back at least as far as James [B.] Conant.

Hunt: No question. That's exactly right.

Q: Right. And certainly, would you agree, it was an emphasis of David [A.] Hamburg before Vartan Gregorian.

Hunt: He had a tremendous impact on it. While he was a psychiatrist—I guess that was his field—and very involved in international affairs—containing nuclear weapons, bringing peace in the world—he was also very interested in education and particularly interested in improving teaching and improving the knowledge and abilities of people to teach successfully. In fact, during that time, the Carnegie Corporation helped establish the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

Q: Which you chaired, I think.

Hunt: I chaired the big group that did a two-year study and that created the board. And then for ten years, I chaired the board.

Q: Right. But at the time you joined in 2001, Vartan Gregorian was already president for four years. Can you just tell me how it came about? Did he call you and say, “Would you like to join the board?” How did that happen?

Hunt: Yes, he did call me and invited me to join. I had known him somewhat but I knew his reputation and I was delighted to receive the call to serve for eight years.

Q: In fact, during your time as governor, and particularly in your second period as governor, didn't you yourself devote a great deal of effort to improving education in North Carolina?

Hunt: Absolutely. In both terms. In all four terms. In my second two terms—and I'll just say this, I ran for governor again after losing a Senate race, the only race I ever lost.

Q: To Jesse [A.] Helms.

Hunt: To Jesse Helms in 1984. I passed on the opportunity to run against him again in '88 because I was beginning to think that Washington was not where I wanted to be. And politically, it wasn't quite right for me to run for the Senate again in '88. But about 1990, I decided that I probably ought to think about running for governor again, that I had learned what it takes to make a state highly successful—more successful than we'd been before—and that I probably ought to run for governor again and be the best governor in America. And that's what I decided to do. It was all about education. Two big things, two big issues. One, having the best teachers you could have. And second, starting earlier. We were starting too late. The first five years of life are the most important years.

Q: You were starting late here? In what sense?

Hunt: You're starting at kindergarten. I put public school kindergarten in here, helped do that way back when I was lieutenant governor. But that's too late. You have to start with early childhood education. The things you do from birth onward are critically important. The first three years are the most important. The first five years are critically important. And that's why I ran for governor again.

Q: What did you decide and actually implement that made a difference in the first few years of life?

Hunt: A program called Smart Start, using 501(c)3 organizations—not a government program out of the state capital, and for goodness sakes, not out of Washington. But having the counties—in some cases with little counties, several counties together—go together and form a nonprofit corporation that would have the critical people serving on the board: education people, human resource people, the librarian in the county, parents, including parents of poor kids, business folks, all the folks in the community that need to be involved. You might look upon it as a school board for little children.

Q: Right. But doing what for those little children?

Hunt: First of all, studying what the needs of the little children are. What kind of child care is available in that county—let's say it's a one-county 501(c)3—figuring out what needs to be done to improve, to have good, high quality, developmentally appropriate child care for those kids, working with the parents to make sure parents are getting help. A lot of parents don't know how

to be effective parents and you have to figure out a way to do that. We had a Parents as Teachers program looking at what needs to be done in terms of health care. A simple thing we need to do for all children very early on is to do some rudimentary testing, including their eyesight and their hearing. It's amazing how many children don't develop appropriately and we don't even know what's going on in their lives. Anyhow, those are all some things that we do with Smart Start. The Kennedy Library and the Ford Foundation gave that program its top award for innovations in government.

Q: And is that a continuing program?

Hunt: It is, absolutely. Absolutely. And it's funded largely by the state government. The problem is getting money for these things. It's about ten to fifteen percent funded locally. But there's no place in America where this is being done with state funding so that you could cover all the children of the state. We're not doing everything we need to do for all of them yet. We don't get enough money for it. But most places just have a program here and one over yonder and back yonder. It's not done on a systematic basis for all the children of the state.

Q: So you get to the Carnegie Corporation with a wealth of experience in government. Tell me about anything that you remember was on the agenda of the Carnegie Corporation at that time under the leadership of Gregorian that you thought was worth it or maybe not worth it.

Hunt: Well, the first thing that I was impressed with was the program entitled Teachers for a New Era. Vartan had brought in a former education dean and was developing a program to



change the preparation of teachers to ensure that they were being well taught and well prepared to teach, but also to put them out into the schools and work with those schools to make sure that they were being further developed. Sort of like we do with medicine, when you go through four years of medical school but then you go into a residency and maybe further training. You make sure that these people are getting the kind of follow-up help they need, that they are developing well and that they become excellent professionals who are effective.

This was Vartan's program, as I understood it. They had a nationwide competition to see which colleges of education would be funded. I think initially about ten or twelve were, but that was expanded, I think, onto ten or twenty, to twenty or more. The schools had to make a very strong commitment to improve themselves and to focus on this full preparation of teachers from the time they come into their college of education until they've gone through a residency type program and are out into the schools—and even then, in the schools getting help. I thought it made a lot of sense. My only concern about it was that I wanted us to move faster. I think the program initially was doing a fine job. I'm not sure how we followed up and the extent to which it's being carried out as a prototype and as an example throughout the country. But it showed clearly Vartan's concern. First, his commitment to higher education, which he's deeply interested in. But also his concern with and his interest in public schools, K-12, and his determination to try to improve them in the most important way that you can, which is to improve their teachers.

Q: Do you know why some people, both inside and outside of the Carnegie Corporation, would regard Teachers for a New Era as a disappointment? Did you ever hear anything in your time on

the board as time went on? I think that program dated back to something like 2001, actually to around the time you came on.

Hunt: I don't know. And frankly, I do not know exactly what happened to it. It was a bold program, to go in and just focus on every aspect of a teacher's learning and development, and then working further. I suspect it was a very challenging program. It took a lot of work. It probably took a lot of people, leadership, at the Corporation. And it was very expensive. The idea was to just do it in a comprehensive way. The program could have been watered down a little bit, so that they weren't able to do a thorough-going job. It was an expensive program. So I really don't know what happened to it. But it gave us good ideas, whether or not that full program continued and spread to hundreds of colleges of education throughout the country. It showed us what we ought to do. It created examples of programs in various parts of the country that were truly outstanding programs.

And by the way, another key part of it was cooperation between the arts and sciences and the schools of education—that they had to work together. And it did fund, even in the years after it ended, some of the excellent schools of education that others are continuing to try to emulate. So while I don't know the full extent of what happened, I do know that it was the right idea. It was a good idea. It set good examples. And education is better today because of it.

Q: Do you recall having a sense when you came on the board that other board members were as interested in education as you were?

Hunt: No. I do not think they were and that's okay because the board does many things. I have an interest in other things too. It's good to have a board that has diverse interests. But I did not think that it was nearly a majority of the board that had as much interest in education as I'd had hoped.

Q: Any sense of what the others were particularly interested in? In fact, do you remember any people on that board in the eight years you were there who [pauses] were outstanding?

Hunt: Oh, yes.

Q: I don't mean just outstanding in terms of their reputation. I mean outstanding in terms of what they did as a trustee.

Hunt: Well, I should've reviewed the membership of the board before I came in. The chairman was an outstanding leader, Helene [L.] Kaplan. She was a lawyer but also very interested and involved in the public schools of New York City. She was succeeded by [Thomas] Tom [H.] Kean with whom I had served as a governor. He'd been the president of Drew [University] and the Governor of New Jersey and he has done amazing things in his lifetime, including co-chairing the 9/11 Commission Report. We had the Admiral [William A. Owens], a great man, very knowledgeable about the world, which Carnegie focuses on a great deal. We had— [Samuel] Sam [A.] Nunn [Jr.] was on it when I went there—one of the best leaders this country's ever had and the man who was so key in dealing with nuclear weapons and so forth.

Q: Nuclear reduction.

Hunt: Yes. Of course, [Governor Richard] Dick [W.] Riley came on shortly before I left.

Q: That's a particular interest there. I mean, Governor Riley, he had been governor of South Carolina—

Hunt: South Carolina for two terms and then—

Q: A neighboring state here.

Hunt: —and then the Secretary of Education for eight years.

Q: Right, throughout the [President William J.] Clinton administration. This may be an unfair question but that never stopped me: was Governor Riley successful as Secretary of Education as far as you know?

Hunt: Highly so.

Q: You do think so?

Hunt: Absolutely. Absolutely. Governor Riley was totally committed to the high standards, the goals that were set out by George H.W. Bush. He had done a great job as governor. I remember

in his inaugural address, which I attended, he said South Carolina may not be able to be first in America in all the grades but we can be first in first grade.

Q: His inaugural address as—

Hunt: —as governor. As governor of South Carolina. He raised taxes to pay for substantial major improvements in the schools of South Carolina. As Secretary of Education, he brought that governor perspective—being interested and believing that we had to measure learning, that we had to have accountability, a great interest in teaching and improving that in various ways. He had these big goals. He was a constant champion of that and used the bully pulpit for those purposes. And he worked his head off. He was constantly going around America, as Arne Duncan has done.

Q: Now, there he is sitting on the board around the same time you are, isn't that correct?

Hunt: Toward the end. I think we overlapped a couple of years at the end.

Q: It must have been companionable to have him there, considering your interests.

Hunt: Well, not only that but we see the goals of politics the same. And we're just good friends.

Q: Right. Now, do you recall an interest that the Corporation had—more than an interest, an actual commitment—to dealing with large schools, breaking them into smaller schools, that sort of thing? Were you involved in that?

Hunt: Well, I was really interested in it. This is one of the biggest things that Carnegie has done in recent years in my opinion. They supported the efforts—and I guess we associate that a great deal with Gates, which was coming on the scene about that time—but Carnegie, certainly in New York, was the primary one pushing a commitment to reduce the size of schools to make them good places for every individual student, to measure learning, to certainly relate that and look at it in terms of the effectiveness of teachers. We did not have as much focus on teacher accountability as later developed in the [President Barack H.] Obama administration but we were leading up to that. Carnegie was very supportive of Mayor [Michael R.] Bloomberg and of course, Joel [I.] Klein, who came in—and the focus on just making changes, being dissatisfied with and intolerant of failure, and finding whatever we had to do to make major changes in the schools. We certainly had to make them places for effective individual learning and successful teaching, and you couldn't do that in these great, big massive schools where kids are anonymous, not known and not cared for individually.

Q: We're really talking about high schools.

Hunt: Well, the focus may have been primarily on high schools. It's true for all schools. And my impression is that we were focusing on schools generally but the main focus may have been on high schools.

Q: There was also support at that time, do you recall, for the charter school?

Hunt: Yes. And by the way, later on, the Corporation let Michele Cahill go over and work with the mayor and the [New York City] school system. When Michele, who had led this work and is terrific, went to the school system—that was a great thing for Carnegie to do, to both be supportive and to put their top person over there helping—

Q: Well, when she went, I don't believe she was the top person. She came back to Carnegie as a vice president after serving in the Bloomberg administration.

Hunt: She was the most knowledgeable.

Q: And she's still there. You had a high regard for her?

Hunt: Absolutely.

Q: Do you recall, as a trustee, having had discussions on the board of pursuing charter schools?

Hunt: I don't remember an awful lot of talk about charter schools but I know New York had some. Initially, at least, I didn't fully appreciate their potential. I do now. My grandson enrolled in one last week in Charlotte. But again, Carnegie was a pioneer in studying what's effective in terms of school size and make up and organization. Of course, with the City of New York system

there as sort of a guinea pig, but a huge system too, the biggest one in America, about the size of North Carolina.

Q: Oh, really?

Hunt: We're the tenth largest state. But Carnegie was very supportive of the creation of charter schools—"good charter schools," I always like to say—and gave a lot of help to creating them and working with them. I don't know what others might have been doing at that time.

Again, Gates is given a lot of credit for having been involved and that's nationwide. The New Schools project here in North Carolina—and I guess they put out money across the country. But certainly in New York City I think Carnegie was the leader, was the pioneer working on charter schools.

Q: Do you recall, as a trustee, having much interaction with the senior staff of the Corporation?

Hunt: Some. I wouldn't say a great deal.

Q: Would it be mostly at meetings?

Hunt: Yes, mostly at meetings.

Q: At trustees meetings?



Hunt: Yes, that's right. Yes. I always would have liked to see them a little more. But we had some interaction.

Q: Right. Apart from Michele Cahill, is there anyone else—and perhaps there isn't—who stands out in your mind as being an exceptional staff person there?

Hunt: Well, she's got a fine new person now working with her, Leah Hamilton. And Andrés Henríquez, who works in the Literacy and Standards area is outstanding. I just had him down here. My Hunt Institute for Education Leadership and Policy puts on a seminar for the state legislature every year before they convene. We have a hundred and fifty or so members of our legislature. Seventy of them came last year for a day and a half. Andrés was down here to put on a part of the program on literacy. So that was always something that we focused on.

But Carnegie was always, I think to a certain extent, interested in how do we change now? We're not doing well enough. What do we need to do to change? Obviously, having more good teachers is an important part of it. And you can go back to the time when they were focusing more on early childhood as they did back in earlier days and then coming along to the organization, the makeup of the schools. They were not deeply involved in school leadership, which has been done by the Wallace Foundation in recent years. But they were constantly keeping an eye on what's going on, where are the points that we need to make changes and helping bring those about.

Q: Do you remember another trustee, Bruce [M.] Alberts?

Hunt: Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. I should have mentioned Bruce. Outstanding.

Q: He certainly had a keen interest in education, did he not?

Hunt: And the great leader in science and mathematics in America. A keen interest in education and I know that Carnegie supported him in science rather than math. I don't know the full extent to which they supported his own work but he certainly brought probably the best opinions and thoughts about what we need to do to improve education, particularly in that area, that anybody could have had.

Q: Given the fact, as you pointed out before, that the Corporation had a lot on its plate other than education, can you assess how much education occupied Vartan Gregorian's agenda? His own agenda? How much he thought that that was of great consequence, as opposed to, let's say, reducing nuclear arms?

Hunt: I can't answer that question. I just don't know the answer to that.

Q: And do you recall whether—

Hunt: He had a great interest, I know, in the libraries and the universities in Africa and around the world. That was a great interest of his. He had a great interest in the arts and in history and so forth. I would say that education was a great focus of Gregorian.

Q: And him as a leader there—you knew David Hamburg—is there some way to characterize Gregorian as a leader of an organization? Whether he was retiring, whether he was the—

Hunt: No, about the opposite. Vartan was a very strong, commanding leader who had this great range of interests in all kinds of issues, domestic and international. He was a higher education man—a university man—in the main. But he was interested in all of these things. Certainly, he and his predecessor were very different kinds of leaders. I think Vartan's main experience was involvement in higher education, having been the President of Brown [University]. But he also had this great international experience, partly in his own life, as well as having a great interest in international affairs. But Vartan is very strong and a great leader in the Carnegie tradition.

Q: The kind of fellow who didn't leave the trustees in any doubt as to what he wanted to do?

Hunt: I'd say so, largely. But also open to other ideas. I don't know anything about the relationship of the staff. I have no idea about that. But I suspect he took a lot of initiative with them. Certain everything we got into he was deeply interested in and was a strong, powerful leader who wanted to see us move forward.

Q: Is it the job of the board of a foundation like that to generate ideas for programs? Or to more or less evaluate what the staff brings to it? And do you recall any programs that you were interested in that actually were trustee-driven?

Hunt: I don't recall a lot of that. Certainly, ideas were listened to and some of them, I'm sure, were inculcated. But I think most things were staff-driven.

Q: How about in terms of cooperating with other foundations? Did you have a sense as a trustee that that was what Carnegie wanted to do? Whether it was necessary to do for financial or any other reason?

Hunt: I think Carnegie wanted to do it, and was the leader of it. I can't answer the question about whether they felt it was necessary. But right now I'm about to respond to Vartan's invitation about a higher education conference that they're putting on with Time Warner Magazine [Time, Inc.] and one other foundation. I think that Carnegie has always felt—and under Vartan has felt—that its working relationship with other foundations is important and they often took the initiative with others. I just don't know the answer to that. But they were a good partner, I think, with other major foundations.

Q: Do you have a sense, as a trustee, that the Corporation was willing to—or even felt obliged to—be a risk-taker?

Hunt: Well, I think they were. Teachers for a New Era was a risk-taking venture. Whether we continued with it when challenges became perhaps even greater I can't answer. But certainly getting involved in education reform in New York City was risky. No question about that.

Q: Probably everything in New York is risky.

Hunt: I'm going to tell you, it's darn risky everywhere if you're talking about education reform. But we have to do it. We've got a long way to go and we have to finish it up. What we are failing to pay enough attention to right now is the preparation of excellent teachers and principals, both initially and professional development. Everybody's talking about measuring student learning, measuring teacher effectiveness. How do you get good teachers to start with and how do you make them better all the way through their career.

Q: Absolutely. It seems like that is of paramount interest today. Whereas, when you first came on the board, for example. Or after you were governor, there was a lot of talk about the size of the schools, for example. As worthy as that was actually, Gates poured a lot of money into that and pulled out of that in 2008 to focus more on teachers. And Melinda Gates, just the other day I noticed her saying that the effective teacher—this was this past June, on PBS [Public Broadcasting System]—the effective teacher makes the fundamental difference. And Vartan Gregorian in his '98 report, when he became president around that time—this is before his tenure—he says that well-educated teachers are the key to successful school reform. And virtually everybody seemed to agree with that today. And indeed, it's gotten wrapped up somewhat in politics and in the teacher union contracts and how we—witness Chicago, for example. The matter of teacher evaluation. How do you know what's a good teacher? How do you measure it? Could you comment at all on this current effort to use student tests to gauge a teacher evaluation?

Hunt: Sure. It's absolutely important. It's necessary. We have to measure student learning. Are the students learning? It's about the students. And we should measure it accurately. There are various ways to measure it. But to say that we are not going to have standardized tests—that means they're common—is absurd. It's unfortunate that too many in the teaching field don't want to be measured.

It was very important that we moved from the term “teacher quality,” which was the original term in No Child Left Behind, to the term “teacher effectiveness,” i.e., did the students learn? Not “did you teach them.” They used to say, “I taught them but they didn't learn.” Well, who the hell was responsible for that? There were a lot of studies showing students didn't learn. We have to measure increases in learning, not where they are—we know that's a function of family and resources and so forth—but the important thing to do is to measure how much more students learned. I think it's very important that the foundations of America—and I give Carnegie good credit on this—stand up for measuring student learning, measuring the effectiveness of schools, how they're organized, how they operate and the effectiveness of the teachers.

Again, Carnegie did this. Michele was over there after she left us and went there with with Vartan's support. I give Carnegie very good marks for having supported this effort to reform the schools of America and make them more effective.

Q: How best, though, to measure student outcomes? Is it standardized tests? Is it peer review by superiors or colleagues in schools?

Hunt: Well, of course we ought to have standardized tests. They ought to be good tests. We ought to measure what they learned at the end of the year but we should also measure what they're learning as they go through the year.

Q: Yes, I know what you mean.

Hunt: So that you can adjust the teaching as you go through it. But absolutely, we should have standardized tests and they should be effective tests. Now, this gets us all into another place where Carnegie has been involved—working on the common core state standards. I always say that carefully, so people will understand it. It's not national. It didn't come from Washington. It came from the states. My Hunt Institute for Education Leadership and Policy has been deeply involved in getting the states to do it and I have personally. Carnegie's been helpful in that, especially now with the science standards, which they have taken the lead on for our nation.

Q: Why are states taking waiver? Why are as many states asking for waivers of the National Child Left Behind standards, these common core standards?

Hunt: Because they are available. Well, there are two reasons now. Wait a minute. Toward the end of the [President George H.W.] Bush administration, I worked closely with Margaret Spellings as we began to measure progress on learning, not just where you were, but giving credit for a year's progress. Not just where you were, fifth grade, fourth grade, whatever it may be. But still, the schools had been sort of burned in the public arena because the results of testing

did not show the progress. If only a few students failed to make AYP [Adequate Yearly Progress], the entire school was labeled as “failing.”

Q: Yes. Right.

Hunt: That was unfortunate. We should not have called those schools “failing” if they just missed “that much” on one of the four or five measurements. That was a mistake. No Child Left Behind was a very good thing. First of all, we set the goals. We wanted every child to be at grade level in twelve years, or whatever the number was, I think by 2014. Every child to be at grade level—a great American goal. Do we want to set a goal of only fifty percent? Of course not. We want every child to learn. That was the goal. Second, we wanted to measure to see if they were learning. Every state had to do it. A lot of states weren't measuring. I put in the first statewide test in North Carolina when I was governor of North Carolina. When I was lieutenant governor sitting on the State Board of Education, I went around the state going to schools and there were no statewide tests. How do you measure how you're doing versus others? Or versus yourself and then compare it with others? So we measured. And then there were consequences for success and for failure.

But how we reported on how the schools were doing was not appropriate and it gave a wrong impression to the taxpayers or the citizens. First of all, in many cases they had brought their schools up a lot but they still weren't at grade level. And second, oftentimes the grades on average were fine. The grades for the increases in learning for African American children were fine. And you just had that many students for whom English was not their first language. That



many left who didn't quite make it and you said the whole school was a failure. That was a mistake.

Q: I hear you. But in sum—because of our limited time—not only No Child Left Behind you regard as a success but also Race to the Top?

Hunt: Oh, absolutely. Race to the Top is a great idea. We aren't moving along as fast as we thought we might but we're on our way. I'll give you an example in Tennessee. My Hunt Institute for Education Leadership and Policy brings in the governors once a year for a Governors Education Symposium and I co-chair it. A few years we did it with the National Governors [Association]. This past year, I did it with [John Ellis “Jeb”] Jeb Bush and his organization down in Florida. At our meeting here in May we had a session on teacher effectiveness. The governor of Tennessee is a very good education governor and he and the chief state school officer did the presentation. In measuring student learning, leaning towards some pay for performance, Tennessee has worked very hard. And they've worked with their teacher organizations. They're not just fighting unions. In the South, you don't have teacher unions. They're organizations. They can't strike. They don't bargain. But they are effective, still.

So they're spending probably a couple of years working out how to effectively measure teacher effectiveness, including standardized tests but some other measures too—what you observe when you go in. A lot of it's got to be observing the teachers teaching. Much of that's done by principals. It may be done by peers or others. And so they explained how they are very carefully developing their evaluation process. Some states have done it by just slapping in some kind of

measurement that turns out not to be fair, not to be good, not to be accurate—and comes across to teachers as very arbitrary. Not so in Tennessee. Tennessee has worked at the state level to develop an approach to this. They're very carefully, across the state, spending two years developing their measuring of teacher effectiveness. Then as soon as they're finished with that they're going to put in some pay for performance. I don't know how much but a fair amount. And I think we should have some pay for performance.

Q: These common core standards you mentioned were directed toward mathematics and, broadly speaking, English Language Arts, including literacy. The Carnegie Corporation, at the time you were leaving as a trustee, got involved in something that people like Bruce Alberts have a lot of hope for, called Opportunity Equation, which is establishing core science standards. Do you recall any discussion of that before you left or was that after your term?

Hunt: Not much. I did serve on the commission that was developing those science standards with Bruce after I left the board and I followed that some. But Bruce was very active on the board, regularly was involved in board discussions. And Carnegie has generously supported science education things—various kinds of symposia and meetings and so forth.

Q: I think the President [Barack H.] Obama, a couple of years ago in his State of the Union address, didn't he make reference to the STEM teachers—science, technology, engineering and math?

Hunt: Yes, as I recall.

Q: Right. And the hundred thousand in ten years or something.

Hunt: That's right.

Q: Finally, is it fair to say that, as far as you're concerned, having served as a trustee or just as being head of the Hunt Institute and having been an education governor, that the bottom line is a good teacher? No matter what, no matter what the background of the child has been, no matter how impoverished that child might have been, the bottom line in education today is how do we get an effective teacher? Is that the main question?

Hunt: The main question. Two main questions. One is early childhood opportunities for learning and development. That's one question and of course that involves teaching too. And the second one is effective teaching—effective teachers and teaching. Now, there are all kinds of things, including the fact that good teachers won't teach for sorry principals.

Q: Sorry principals?

Hunt: Sorry. "Sorry's" a Southern term meaning no good.

Q: Oh, I'm sorry.

Hunt: You knew that term? Sorry. You don't know that term.

Q: Well, I grew up in Maryland but that wasn't South enough.

Hunt: You didn't have any sorry people in Maryland?

Q: Well, now that you say it that way. [Laughter] That's right. But the point you were saying was good teachers won't—

Hunt: —won't teach for bad principals. Won't do it. They may take that job when they come out of college when they need a job and that's the only one they can get. They'll quit the next year and go to a better school under a better principal, see? So, yes.

But now of course go back to earlier Carnegie work on the early years, which was good. But you can't do everything at one time. Vartan has been a great leader—is a great leader for the Carnegie Corporation—in so many areas. One of them is improving teaching in lots of ways, focusing on literacy, focusing on school reform, with New York City being sort of the big pilot project area there.

But also—and let me say this finally, before you leave—one of the great roles of the Carnegie Corporation is to help America succeed. They had been, in Vartan's own statements—and he puts these out regularly, he writes his columns and so forth—they have focused on the important issues for America. They have been especially an effective foundation in helping America be successful in the world: the work that has been done on world peace, on dealing with nuclear

weapons, on being a place that great leaders come and speak and get the kind of bully pulpit that they need to have, their willing and frequent partnership with other foundations, Vartan taking a personal lead on various things, the association with Africa. Africa is now maybe about to start having the strongest economic growth of any area in the world. That's just very recent. You hear about China, you hear about India. Well, they're saying now that the strongest economic growth rate, although they start from a very low base, is going to be in Africa. Well, how much of that is coming from the focus on good libraries and good respect for academics and outstanding academicians and the kinds of grants that help make—

Q: —and in the former Soviet Union also.

Hunt: Absolutely there. But also the rest of the world. And one more thing I've got to mention to you—and that is the focus that Vartan's had on democracy and civic development. You're seeing it right now in the presidential race—this business of people buying elections through Super PACs [political action committees]. Carnegie has had strong programs in developing the opportunities for candidates to run and to get financial support based on their own merit—not just because they have access to money or have money themselves. Right here in North Carolina, we've seen it. We started out with public financing for judges. Then we moved to public financing for some of our statewide candidates, although some new leadership is now trying to cut that back. And we'll get back to that—there are tides in the affairs of men and women. But Carnegie has had a major goal in that regard and has spoken to it regularly.

Q: Even before McCain-Feingold [Campaign Finance Reform], I think.

Hunt: That's right. And I guess the final thing I'd say to you is that Vartan is a strong leader. And he maybe overwhelms people at times but he is powerful. He is unafraid. He speaks out. And he does it as a private person. We see plenty of the folks in Washington—but we need to have some powerful people out in the private sector that help us focus on the right things and work on the right things and say the right things. Vartan Gregorian does that. And this nation is better off for it.

Q: Thank you, Governor Hunt.

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