

Williams College Oral History Project Interview with Bennett Boskey
July 5, 2005

Interview Length: 47 pages

Bennett Boskey (b. 1916) graduated from Williams in 1935, and at the time of this interview was a practicing lawyer in the Washington, D.C. area.

In his interview with Charles Alberti, Boskey discusses coming to Williams at the age of 15 and asserts that he didn't rush for a fraternity in his first year for two reasons: Jews weren't allowed to, and he felt he was too young. Boskey talks about the presidencies of both Harry Garfield and Tyler Dennet; compulsory chapel (which took place daily at 7:45 a.m.) and compulsory Latin; professors Newhall, Birdsall, T. C. Smith, and Charles Keller; the few African-American students in his time; and the importance of the Commons Club. He asserts that being Jewish was not a problem for him at Williams.

Boskey discusses the Economics Department, and faculty members Walter Buckingham Smith, known as "Pinky" Smith; Ed Beach; and David Taggart Clark, or "Prize Fighter" Clark. He talks about going to college during the Great Depression and his roommates and friends Herb Stein, Ellis Swartz, and Irving S. Ribicoff. He describes his decision to go to law school, made after his first year of graduate school in economics, and his time at Harvard Law School; his early career clerking for high level judges and justices; and his later career in Washington, D.C.

Boskey ends his interview with a discussion of current College issues, and talks about his relationships and communications with current College figures, including Steve Birrell, Morton Schapiro, and Cappy Hill.

The transcript of this interview and the accompanying audio files (if available) may be accessed only in the Archives/Chapin Reading Room.