

## Lewis W. Webb, Jr.'s recollections of the separation from William & Mary

*To fight for the separation in face of the whole support — the entire Board of Visitors being opposed to the separation, then I had very little future in store. But I never was too concerned about that. Because I felt that the institution was much, much more valuable than any one person or any hundred people could be. This institution will go way beyond all of us, and that's the...really the value of working with something like this is to see that you're taking part in the long range development of something that will be here for many, many years to come.*

Sweeney: At that particular time, did you feel that it was Albertis Harrison, Governor Harrison that turned the tide with the feeling so strong on the Board of Visitors at William and Mary against the separation?

*Webb: No question there. The legislature was being worked by every alumnus at William and Mary and the Board, of course, by Mr. Chandler, and all of them were determined to develop the William and Mary complex as a total University of Eastern Virginia, and they had pretty well sold the legislators on it. The announcement came during the day, the night of which was going to be devoted to a cocktail party to entertain those legislators to encourage them to hold the unit together. And when Governor Harrison came out publicly and declared that he felt the need to the state would be best served by the separation, it was all over. The cocktail party that night was the flattest one I've ever attended and the dullest.*

Sweeney: Did you feel that...or did you see this change of mind come into Governor Harrison or did you personally persuade him or did it come as a surprise to you that he took this position?

*Webb: It came as a surprise to me and to everyone because he would listen and, of course, I did my best to show him the advantages of separation. So did many others, members of our advisory board. We met with the Governor and pointed out things that could be done if separate that were not being done under the William and Mary development plan. We hoped, but we didn't know it would come as quickly as it did, that Mr. Harrison would, if not support it, would have not gone for the development, which would have made it a little more difficult to keep the breakup. But when the Governor made his announcement, we were quite pleased, needless to say, and it was a great celebration on our part.*

Full interview at:

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