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Oral history interview with Stewart Klonis,  
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**Contact Information**

Reference Department  
Archives of American Art  
Smithsonian Institution  
Washington, D.C. 20560  
[www.aaa.si.edu/askus](http://www.aaa.si.edu/askus)

# Transcript

## Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Stewart Klonis on 1970 February 3. The interview took place at the Art Students League in New York, NY and was conducted by Paul Cummings for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

This transcript has been lightly edited for readability by the Archives of American Art. The reader should bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose.

## Interview

PAUL CUMMINGS: This is Paul Cummings talking to Stewart Klonis in—what's the name of this room?

STEWART KLONIS: This is just the board room.

PAUL CUMMINGS: At the Art Students League. It's February 3, 1970. Let's see, why don't we start with when and where you were born.

STEWART KLONIS: I was born in the little town of Naugatuck, Connecticut. Actually the section I was born in is called Union City but that was part of Naugatuck, Connecticut. It's about five miles south of Waterbury. That's what you have to tell everybody when you mention the town. Now Naugatuck is becoming more famous because it's a rubber town and they've invented a leather which is being used for shoes which is called after the town, Nauga leather or something like that.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, really? You were born December 24, 1901—is that right?

STEWART KLONIS: Yes, 1901. I always feel that I started this century. And I plan to stay with it to the end of it. Some people contradict me because they say the century started in 1900. I say that's not right because 1900 was the end of the other century, you know, like the end of ten. You don't start off with zero and go to nine; you go to ten.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right. Could you tell me something about family background, if there are brothers and sisters, and the kind of schools you went to.

STEWART KLONIS: Yes. I was the oldest of seven children. There was not interest in art or any cultural activities in the family. My father and mother were immigrants from a community at little outside of Vilna; it was Russia, of course, which later became Lithuania. But I never spoke Lithuanian or never learned it. My mother always referred to us as being Poles. My father said we were Russians. So it's very confused. The area actually was Lithuania outside of Vilna, which after World War I for a short period of time there was Lithuania and Vilna became the capital. So I'm not sure what I am except that I was born in Connecticut and I feel more or less a Yankee.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Did any of your brothers or sisters—?

STEWART KLONIS: Yes. My brother came here to the League and studies art. He became pretty well known. There are examples of his work in a number of the major museums. He died in 1957 at the age of 51. He studied here. And I studied art at the League. It seems to be a natural thing to do. I came to New York and got a job and the evenings were long and lonely.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What kind of job?

STEWART KLONIS: I started working in offices, different offices. First I got a job as a clerk with the R. Hoe & Company, the printing company. I got a job with them.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, that was—what?—after school or something?

STEWART KLONIS: In other words, I quit school very early. As a matter of fact, I've had a job all the time since I was approximately twelve years old. I've never been without a job. I was the oldest and somebody had to go to work and make some money.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What was it like growing up in Connecticut pre-World War I?

STEWART KLONIS: It was wonderful. We as kids didn't have much to worry about. We went to school and after school we ran through the countryside. IN the fall we stole apples from the orchards. In the summer we picked

berries. We fished in the streams around there. I think it was wonderful. It might be said that we were poor but we never knew that we were poor.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You were close to nature and had lots of fun.

STEWART KLONIS: Yes. And there was enough to eat. And you didn't need much of anything else. And when you got shoes you didn't even want to wear them; it was much more fun to go barefoot.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What kind of school did you go to?

STEWART KLONIS: Public school. It was Prospect High School. Then Naugatuck High School for a short time. I didn't finish high school. I came to New York and got a job.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did you decide to come to New York.

STEWART KLONIS: Well, everybody was coming to New York. There was nothing to do there. I would say that everybody went to New York or some other large city to get a job. There were no opportunities in Naugatuck. You could either go to work for the rubber factory or you could work in a foundry.

And neither of these places needed any more people. They had all the workers they needed. It was very hard to get a job in the town unless you had some contact; in other words, unless you lived in what was called Swede Hill, which was considered the upper crust on the other side of the tracks, where the officials of the plants lived, or at least the foremen. They would get the available jobs.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How old were you when you came to New York?

STEWART KLONIS: Well, First I went to Bridgeport, Connecticut and got a job there. A relative of mine was working for a creamery and I got a job there as a timekeeper. I stayed there for several years. I think it was during World War I.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You would have been a teenager then?

STEWART KLONIS: That's right. I was there for two or two-and-a-half years. Then I decided to come to New York. Of course when I lived in Bridgeport the big thing was to go to dances. I went to a dance every night.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Really?

STEWART KLONIS: Oh, that was the big thing to do. Everybody did it. All kinds of new dances were coming out at that time. But I still did drawings. I even subscribed to a course with the International Correspondence School. But it didn't seem like anything that I really would be working on. And I didn't follow it through. Then I came to New York and got the job here.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What about R. Hoe & Company? Was that your First job in New York?

STEWART KLONIS: No. My First job was as an elevator operator in the University Club. I rented a small room nearby. Running the elevator gave me a good chance to read. The Club had a beautiful library there and the elevator was not that busy. So I always had a book on hand to read. Some of the members used to encourage me in my reading. I read interesting books. I even read Shakespeare while I was riding up and down the elevator. So that was it. After a while I didn't see any future in being an elevator man so I thought it would be better to look for something else. I went to an employment agency on Church Street and they sent me to R. Hoe & Company which was way over on the Lower East Side—I don't exactly remember the street—probably Canal Street or something like that. There I kept the inventory of the stock. This was where they had all kinds of parts of printing presses. They had to keep an inventory going so that as things were called for—always any part that was wanted was needed in a rush. All the orders were very rush. So that was that job. Then I felt that perhaps I could get a better job. I went back to the employment agency again and asked if they had any jobs in lower Manhattan; traveling was not too good there. So they got me a job at American Can Company as a cost clerk. There I started to figure how many decimals and points of weight it cost to lacquer a tin can for strawberries against the cost to produce a can for sauerkraut. Those were the two products that were the most difficult to can because the acids ate the can. And I'd figure the comparative costs of a thousand cans for ordinary canning—dry products—coffee and so on. These costs would be different, of course. That was my job there. The Guggenheim Brothers had offices in the same building. There was an opening there that paid more than I was getting at American Can. So I took the job with Guggenheim Brothers and stayed there for a long time. I became their cashier. While I was with Guggenheim Brothers I started to study art in the evening.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What kind of firm was that?

STEWART KLONIS: Guggenheim Brothers controlled a number of large corporations. For example, some of the

companies they controlled were—I don't know whether or not they still do —Kennecott Copper, Anaconda Copper, Anglo-Chilean Nitrate, Yukon Gold; all those are their companies. Any my job as cashier was to .... They had a lot of people, administrative and office staff and people like that, that they would send down to Chile. They worked there on a contract basis. Their salaries were split up, in other words. In Chile the area where they lived was very barren; they were practically living on a slab of fertilizer, of nitrates.

PAUL CUMMINGS: All the nitrates.

STEWART KLONIS: The ships would take these people down and bring nitrate back. With the people they also took down beer. That was about the only thing they had. They lived more or less in sort of barracks. They were contracted for a number of years. They would designate a certain amount of money to be sent to their family and so on. Part of my job was to prepare these monthly payments to different places, and make deposits. They also bought an interest in nitrate and the salaries were good. But people didn't like to stay in Chile. When they completed their contract they were brought back here for a vacation, like three months, with pay and so on. They'd get a raise, sign up, and go back again. That was the setup. Of course there were other duties. Then also I had to provide cash for the Guggenheim people. They'd come to me to cash checks for them, sometimes, say, for \$2,000. That was part of the job. In the meantime I kept on studying here.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What did you start studying?

STEWART KLONIS: Drawing. I studied in the evenings. I started drawing from casts. At that time that was the way practically everybody started.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did you decide to study drawing?

STEWART KLONIS: Well, you see, I drew well all the time I was in school. When holidays came around, Thanksgiving and so on, I was the one who was appointed to decorate the blackboard and things like that. I always drew. Sometimes I would copy things. Drawing was easy and comparatively simple for me to do. And I liked drawing more than doing other things.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You copies things from—where?

STEWART KLONIS: Oh, practically anything. I remember making a very careful drawing of a photograph in a magazine of Woodrow Wilson. It was about that time in history. I framed this drawing. That is a typical example. But like any beginner I thought of it from the surface; in other words, the imitation of trying to match the light and dark areas as they are in the photograph. In school we had drawing lessons, which was a silly idea in elementary school. The teacher would come in for one hour a week—it happened to be on Fridays I think. She would bring in a flower, say, a daisy. She'd get a sheet of very poor paper, pulp, yellowish paper and some few colors in crayon and pencil and she'd pin this real daisy on the paper and hang it on the wall. We were supposed to look at it and make a drawing. That was our art lesson.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What do you think of art teaching on the primary level, or even high school level?

STEWART KLONIS: Well, of course, there's been a great change. The concepts, the approach are completely different. I don't think anybody can be taught art in elementary school. They all have it, it's instinctive. Practically speaking any child can draw. I've seen drawings that were made by children in Russia and other European countries that were exhibited in the city here and they are universal in their way of thinking and in the way they symbolize. The problem comes when the youngster gets to high school. By that time he starts to think in terms of the pictures that he's seen, not in terms of his own way of putting things down. So I'd say that drawings by younger children are always much more interesting because they are their own. They don't think in terms of imitating any other picture. And basically they're almost the same. In other words, you'll find that a house is a structure with certain areas designated as windows, doors, a chimney with smoke coming out of it, and that's it. And a mother is somebody with a hat on [at least it was]. People come to me many times and ask, "Does my child have talent?" A child eight years old! Well, they all have talent. They can all draw. Later they can't draw. But they can draw when they're kids.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Wait till he gets to be sixteen.

STEWART KLONIS: Then it's not so good. Or they're not even interested.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes. So you began studying drawing at the Art Students League?

STEWART KLONIS: That's right. In the evenings.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Who was your teacher?

STEWART KLONIS: Homer Boss was my instructor. He had the antique class; that is what it was called at that

time. He worked from casts, and so on. I spent about eight months on that. Then I moved into a painting class. But there was also drawing there, figure drawing at first. At that time not everyone could do what he wanted to automatically. In other words, the student had to wait until the instructor felt that he was ready to, say, start painting or whatever it was. At First one drew and tried to get things pretty strong and accurate.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How was he as a teacher?

STEWART KLONIS: He was an inspiring teacher. Also he was an impressive individual. He had an authoritative presence. He had a system that worked very well. For instance, we would draw on the same pose, say from Monday to Thursday. Then he'd come in and criticize the work. He'd pick out the weakest part of your drawing and demonstrate on the side of your drawing why this was wrong and so on; he'd make a little sketch on the side.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But he never re-drew on something you had done?

STEWART KLONIS: No, he never re-drew. Then on Fridays we used to have sketches. We'd have about 15 to 25 minutes to make a sketch. These would be put up in front of the class and then he would criticize each one and also put his initial on the ones he approved of. He'd just put a "B" on the corner of the sheet. That was considered quite flattering. Of course George Bridgman, at about the same time, did the same thing. He did it on finished drawings, not on sketches. He used to put his initial "B" on the drawing. That gave the students in the Bridgman class at that time an advantage of selection of his place in the class the following week. Bridgman would put "B 1," "B 2," and so on. Then the student would have the choice of the place to sit in the class.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Let's see, you were working in the daytime and you went to the evening class?

STEWART KLONIS: That's right.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What kind of students were in your class.

STEWART KLONIS: All Kinds. There were a great many different kinds. They came from different areas. Some of them had finished college. Some were doing it as a hobby. But basically every one had the objective of becoming a fine artist. Also you must remember that most of the students who come to a school like the League think in terms of commercial art. That was particularly true at that time. They figured that they could get a job and earn more and be more free than being tied to a desk or, say, a cashier's cage as I was. Eventually some of those who studied with me became very well known in different areas. There was a man named O'Brien—we called him Obie—who became one of the top men for lettering; he got involved with that and he designed new letters for trucks or stores or whatever. He was well known. Also he designed for advertisements; like an ad is made up and he would design the individual style of lettering for that corporation. Another student was Wessel Couzijn—we called him Willie—he was a Dutch boy, born in Holland, but was brought to this country as a child. He had had infantile paralysis that affected his left arm. He was cockeyed a little bit. His left leg was weak too. But the left arm was the weakest; he couldn't lift it above his shoulder. He could bend it like that but he couldn't lift it like that. Today he is one of the best Dutch sculptors. He has an enormous reputation as a sculptor in Holland and elsewhere in Europe. It's a long story how he developed. He got the Prix de Rome from Holland which is a three-year setup; you spend two years in Rome and the third year you're free to go anywhere else. He went to Paris. While he was there Paris was invaded by the Nazis. I think he was of Jewish background. He was afraid. He abandoned all his work and his Paris studio and drove to the South of France in his little car. He arrived somewhere in southern France and there a Dutch consul or someone arranged it so he was given a diplomatic visa. With it he got into Portugal. And was flown from Portugal to the United States. On his return here he had no place to work so he came to the League to work in our sculpture class. Zadkine was here also at that time teaching. He married one of the girls in the sculpture class. After the war he returned to Holland and is now a very well-known sculptor.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's terrific.

STEWART KLONIS: He was visiting here about three years ago this past summer. He was invited by the University of California, I don't know which one, I think it was in Los Angeles, but I'm not sure. They wanted him to come there to teach. He said he didn't think he'd want to do that. So they said, well, come over for a visit in the summer. We'll pay your expenses. And you can decide then. So he came over. He stopped here. Went on to California and visited there. And didn't accept the teaching job. Was it Expo '68 they had in Canada?

PAUL CUMMINGS: 1967-1968, yes.

STEWART KLONIS: '67. Expo was held in Montreal. Anyway, Toronto wanted to build something comparable to it and so on. They invited a number of sculptors, as you probably remember, to do big projects. Couzijn was invited from Holland to come over and do a project in Toronto. Which he did, so this is one of the kids in our class.

My brother Bernard was in there at that time. Let's see, one of the people got involved, I don't recall his name, but he got involved with an advertising agency and became an official of this agency. Not many girls came out of that class that I can remember. I couldn't follow all of them. Many students, of course, now when you go back and it's a long time—it goes back to the late 1920s and early 1930s—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Do you remember what year it was when you started here?

STEWART KLONIS: 1927. The fall of 1927.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Were there any of the other instructors besides Homer Boss that you got to know?

STEWART KLONIS: I studied graphics for a while with Eugene Fitsch. Of course I got to know Nicolaidis. He had an evening class. At that time the practice was to take a drawing from each class each week and put it in the lunchroom under glass. Each week it was changed. Nick saw one of my drawings and liked it. He asked me if I would like to join his class. Then later on of course, when I became an officer of the Art Students League, I dealt with all the instructors. I had to. That position called for talking with them, contacting them. They'd talk about their classes. They all talk about their classes. "they're either boasting how good they are—" [interruption for phone call]

PAUL CUMMINGS: You haven't studied elsewhere? I mean all your art education was at the League?

STEWART KLONIS: I studied for a short time outside with George Luks.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, really!

STEWART KLONIS: George Luks was not teaching at the League. A group of about seven of us got together and asked George to teach us. We sublet an artist's studio, I think it was around 15th Street and Union Square, I'm not exactly sure. We wanted to use it in the evening only because I was still working days. The artist was willing to sublet it for the evenings. We asked George to come up. The studio was way up on the fourth floor. The first session was a disaster. George plunked his way up the four flights of stairs, got up to the top floor, took his coat off. I knew George from before. And there was another student who knew him. We introduced the rest of the students there. We had a model, a young girl of about sixteen. She wore a blue dress. In the studio there was an ordinary kitchen chair painted blue. This created a very big problem. The artificial light was not very good, the blue chair, the blue dress. Of course George didn't come until nearly the end of the week. We had started there on Monday and this was perhaps Thursday that he came in. He looked around and said, "No refreshments?" We were pretty innocent about George's habit and we didn't know what he meant. He said, "Well, I think I'll go downstairs and get some refreshments and have some here on Tuesday. I'll be back on Tuesday." That was it. He didn't give any criticism.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Who were the other students in that class?

STEWART KLONIS: There was no one who developed. There was one girl who I thought was very talented but I've never heard whatever happened to her. The following Tuesday George came. I had my picture that I considered pretty well done. I had it very nicely finished. But George looked at my blue dress and blue chair and the little girl's head and he said, "Well, that's too finicky, much too finicky. Your brushes are no good. They're too small." Then he threw aside all my brushes, squeezed a lot more paint on my palette. The girl I just mentioned who I thought was talented had bigger brushes. So George took two of her brushes and went over my whole painting. I was getting madder and madder. I considered he was ruining my painting. He put a big gob of white paint on the end of the knob of the chair, a highlight; bang! God! I was mad but I didn't say anything. As far as I was concerned he ruined it. Then he went on to the other students. He didn't do as much work on the paintings of the other students. But we had the pint there, he'd take a little glassful and he was telling little stories. One of the stories was this: he said, "The first drawing I ever sold was big horses like the horses in the Budweiser advertising. I made a drawing of those horses with the big kegs and the big men sitting there. That was the first drawing I sold. I didn't get much for it. But I learned one thing. Never give anything away. No matter whether it's to your mother, your family, your friends, never give your work away. If you only get a dollar for it, or five dollars, sell it. Because when they move they'll leave it if they got it for nothing. But if they remember that they paid five dollars for it they'll take it with them. Never give anything away."

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's insurance.

STEWART KLONIS: Those are the kind of stories he used to tell us. This was on Tuesday. As soon as he left I got the palette knife and scraped off all this fresh paint, and got it all back, it was a little messy and so on, so I cleaned it up. Come the following Thursday he came again. He looked at the painting and said, "You're doing all right." And just passed by me.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How long did those classes go on?

STEWART KLONIS: About three months I would say. That was all. But I got a lot out of George. I changed in my thinking. Under Homer Boss my painting was more directed towards avoiding the use of too much black; in other words, to get clean color, strokes of clean color. It was pretty precise and tight painting but not academic; in other words, it was completely changed in character. At that time we were considered to be quite modern in our point of view. Especially about color and the use of color. There was no great distortion of any kind. There was a strong emphasis, in other words, that an action was taking place in a body that had to be positive—a man not just holding the stick but actually gripping the stick.

PAUL CUMMINGS: The muscular tension, yes.

STEWART KLONIS: Muscular tension would be part of the thing. That kind of thing. So that was different.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's interesting. I just wondered because some of the things I've read about the League I guess up to the 1940s. In the 1920s it would be more apparent—that there was a rather formal arrangement between the instructors and the students and the students' areas were rather well defined in the way they spoke to the instructors?

STEWART KLONIS: Oh, yes. There was no intimacy. In the 1930s when certain younger people like Barnet and Harry Sternberg began teaching they became kind of palsy walsy. But before that I would say the instructor was very ... We had outside sessions during the whole time I was there. It was during Prohibition. We'd have bull sessions on Friday nights. After ten o'clock five or six of us would go out with the instructor. We'd go to some bar and we'd get—I don't know if it was near beer or what. But we'd drink this beer and talk about art. It was almost a continuous seminar going on, and there was greater antagonism between the students in different classes. The people who were studying with Kenneth Hayse Miller would look down on the people who were studying with DuMond.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Why was that?

STEWART KLONIS: Because they considered DuMond a rather corny academician; whereas Miller had the new philosophy of returning to the classical concept. There was strong feeling in that direction among the students.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes, that's the feeling I've gotten from talking to students about some of the instructors who were here.

STEWART KLONIS: Oh, yes. That was it. And of course the people in the painting classes looked down on the people in the drawing classes, or the beginners. This was just drivel.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It sounds as if it was really very stratified in its social attitudes.

STEWART KLONIS: It was. And it affected the school itself. Because you must remember at that time the premise of the board was that they had a sense of deciding what art is. And these different men were looked on as the most important in producing art as compared to others.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, I see. So did they select the instructors according to a formula?

STEWART KLONIS: That's right. Whatever their ideas were. The board was strongly dominated by the Miller group. There was a period of about ten years where the majority of the board members were Miller students, former or current.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, I see. So he had sway that way?

STEWART KLONIS: That's right. This was looked on as something different. Miller had actually two classes. One class was for the very advanced. And this was called the compositional class. They planned large compositional pictures and so on. It was the goal of the other Miller students to try to arrive at that area.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, I see. They all had their different levels.

STEWART KLONIS: That's right. That was one of the premises. And if you got too tight working with Miller (Nicolaides worked very closely with the Miller group) then you went to Nicolaides to loosen up, as they say, in sketching and so on; and then go back to Miller.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's interesting that Miller produced people who did very tight painting.

STEWART KLONIS: There's one characteristic that I've learned over a period of time: a really strong individual student can never become a good mimic of his teacher. Now Reggie Marsh was a Miller student; and he studied with John Sloan and with some others. But it was always Reggie Marsh. His work was never very good Miller, not very good Sloan, and it was rather poor Marsh; but it always was Marsh. The same thing happened to Kuniyoshi.

Homer Boss taught in the Independent School of Art before he was at the League. He and Henri had a school together called the Independent School of Art. And Kuniyoshi studied there with Homer Boss. But he never said that he had studied with Boss; it was important to say that you were a Miller student. You remember when the Whitney started it was strongly dominated by Miller people, like Alexander Brook and all those who were influential in the Whitney group, which first was the Whitney Studio Club. It was important to be in the group.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I see how that was. Well, why was he so important as a teacher?

STEWART KLONIS: He had a very strong point of view. His premise was based on a great foundation in the classic thing. It was based on the Renaissance, not on any contemporary academy. Only the subject changed. But you were doing things like the Renaissance artists were doing.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But he must have been a very dominating personality, too, wasn't he?

STEWART KLONIS: Well, intellectually. He attracted people to himself. And this group worked together closely. As you remember, when the Whitney opened there were all Miller people there running it. Juliana Force worked into this group very nicely.

PAUL CUMMINGS: In what way?

STEWART KLONIS: Somehow they were able to ... There were good men in that group, people like Alexander Brooks, who was very dominant and important at that period; there were very many Miller people who were very well thought of. Miller turned out some very good artists in the end, like Isabel Bishop; and Marsh and Kuniyoshi were students of his; and many, many others.

Laning is still carrying on in the same tradition here in the League now. His concept is identical to that of Miller. Except that I think that point of view isn't as strong today.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes. It's changed over the years. Or the world has changed over the years.

STEWART KLONIS: That's right.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's very interesting. Well, how many years did you work in the daytime and come here at night?

STEWART KLONIS: Four years. Then the Depression set in severely and I was let go down at Guggenheim Brothers. They cut back their staff and I was one of the people they let go. I decided I would be a painter and nothing else. And so I did. During this period when I was studying I got married. My wife's family had a place at Congers, New York and we went there for weekends. I started painting oils. That became a problem because of the wet paint and the paint box and everything else. It seemed like an awful lot of stuff. You had to get a second canvas and put things between and bring it back. And it was unfinished; it never got finished. So I decided that I would do watercolors as notes to bring back and I would work on these. I moved from 8 West 13th Street where I had a studio out to Astoria, where I got cheap rent, to the Blackwell House, a nice old house, one of those 1830 Revival classical buildings! I got the top floor for \$25 a month. So there was not much rent to pay. My wife was working.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Where did you meet her?

STEWART KLONIS: I met her in the class at the Art Students League. So I started to paint watercolors. Then the Washington Square shows started. One weekend my wife matted some of my watercolors and took them down to Washington Square, and she sold a few. And she also met Vernon Porter who was heading this thing. So I went down there and Vernon Porter asked me to join him in running the show. Which I did for the next four years. We put on eight shows.

PAUL CUMMINGS: In the Square?

STEWART KLONIS: Yes. We were responsible for putting on the shows. Our premise was a little different at that time. Our idea was that a good artist would get a chance to exhibit work. Mrs. Whitney, through Juliana Force, subsidized any expenses that we incurred. We had a room in the Brevoort Hotel for registration. There were no fees to the artists. And good artists came down there.

PAUL CUMMINGS: This was through the 1930s?

STEWART KLONIS: The early 1930s. The beginning of the Washington Square Shows, the first four years. Again, because of my background and so on, I became kind of their treasurer. I took care of all the funds and records and things like that. Then during the fourth year Christmas came and there was desperate need among the artists. But we didn't consider sales as important as making contacts. A lot of doctors came down. The wife of

one of the artists was pregnant and about to have a child. They made arrangements to exchange the artist's work for the doctor's services. The same with the dentist and people like that. That was one of the things that happened. And good artists came down. Pretty soon they began to get more of what might be called the hack artists coming in. We felt the usefulness of these shows had worn out. So we wanted to give up.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes. That's one of the things that has intrigued me about that show. The early ones did seem interesting and then all of a sudden something happened.

STEWART KLONIS: Yes. Well, some of the artists were picked up by galleries. Some of them made other contacts and so on. It's interesting to note that the better artists didn't sell much.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, really?

STEWART KLONIS: It was the buckeye things that were selling. The people who came down bought what might be called the buckeye corny things. There was one man down there, Dick Tereford [ph], who used to paint nothing but the Washington Square monument coming in through the park. He'd knock out one after another of that kind of thing. And he'd sell them like hot cakes. People bought one after another. And sell them for a good price. And the prints were selling. The printmakers would be getting ten dollars a print. I remember Tascin [ph] over two weekends sold \$800 worth of prints at ten dollars a print.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That was a lot of money in those days.

STEWART KLONIS: That was a lot of money in those days. But mainly the better artists didn't sell. I remember Juliana's coming by and picking up a few things at ten dollars and up to 25 dollars that are still in the Whitney collection. Things like Stuart Edie was bought there. Bruce Mitchell; and so on. Jackson Pollock had work there but he didn't sell anything. He wasn't doing the things that he became famous for. He was a Benton follower. The work was like, for instance, the Benton paintings where the train was tilting forward. That quality was in Pollock's work then. Jackson Pollock was a student of Benton's here for about four years. He also studied sculpture for a short time with Laurent. And also studied with Sloan for a short while. But he was really a Benton student. This was one of the characteristics at that time much more than it is now: that a teacher had a nucleus of students who were his disciples; they were completely disciples to their teacher. All the other stuff was no good.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That situation seems to have stopped after World War II thought, didn't it?

STEWART KLONIS: No. It still goes on. In other words, I've had students come here and the teacher that they want is not here any longer and they just can't find anybody that they can find any interest in. Sidney Gross died here last November. Two little Oriental girls who were in his class came in to me. They couldn't imagine going to anyone else. They had been with him here about two years before and studied with him and all of a sudden they're completely lost. They break down and cry. They don't know what to do. This still holds true. There's more switching around of certain individuals moving from one instructor to another. But each teacher still has a nucleus of disciples.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's interesting. Well, that really is the continuity of the League isn't it? It goes on and on and on.

STEWART KLONIS: That's right. And one of the characteristics is that this kind of group builds up, say, over four years. Then in four years they're gone because they're already painters. Then the instructor has to start building up another group. This happens time and again.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How does that happen? Is that through their own exhibiting?

STEWART KLONIS: No. I would say that here you have a continuous seminar. They're in the lunchroom talking about art. They're in the gallery talking about art. They're sitting around in rest periods smoking and talking about art. That's all they do. They don't care whether you came from Park Avenue, whether you came from the ghetto or whether you came from Iowa. They don't talk about things that are in the ghetto or on Park Avenue or in Kansas. They're talking about art right here, now. That's all they're interested in. And they mix. I don't think they're interested in whether you're rich or poor. They judge you by your work. And automatically within a class there is a certain number that will become the most proficient. They're considered the best in the class. And the other students will in a way imitate them; try to get everything from them. It isn't only the instructor that the students learn from. They learn from the other students too. They work with them and are solving certain problems and that's the way they work. This is very, very characteristic of the school. If you go through the classes you'll see this thing going on. We don't have any discipline problems. If anyone is a disturbing element the other students will just put him on the spot and get him out like nobody's business. They will make it very unpleasant for that person.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, this is a place all the students come to because they want to. They're not forced to come. They're here by choice.

STEWART KLONIS: That's right. They don't have to be here. And because of that we have a terrific turnover. A lot of people come in with the intention of being a student. But within, say, a month or two they learn from being in the class, they see what is happening. They eliminate themselves. I'm going to give you a statistic which is something. Most of the good students stay here for three or four years. We average probably 1,800 students here. Yet every year over 2,500 new students come in. Do you see what I mean? They come and go. They switch. People say, "How do you eliminate the ones that don't have any talent?" They eliminate themselves very fast. They learn by seeing that it doesn't work and they're out. They can't get any credit for being here, the only thing they can carry out within themselves is what they can do with their palettes or their chisel or whatever medium they use; that's the only thing they can take out of here. So therefore they eliminate themselves. We don't have to have an attendance record. The person is not going to pay tuition and not attend classes if he's not going to get anything for it. Our problem is not to keep our students in here but to get them out on time. That's our problem. The class is over at 12:30 and they complain that they don't have enough time to clean up and so on; the next class starts a half hour later at 1:00 o'clock. The incoming class wants to get in early because they want to get set up and ready. So problem is keeping them out.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's interesting that there are that many new students every year.

STEWART KLONIS: Oh, yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What percentage of that will stay then?

STEWART KLONIS: A very small percentage. As I say, the bulk of the serious students will stay for three or four years, some more, some a little less. At lot of them have had a lot of experience before in other places where they've studied. Students come here from everywhere. Right now I think we have over 90 students from the Far East. They come from Japan, Korea, Formosa.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, you also have a group of students who seem to have been here for years and years and years and years and years? Don't you have quite a few of those?

STEWART KLONIS: Not too many. There are a few like that but basically they're in the sculpture classes. For the reason that where can they get a studio, a model, and somebody to clean up after them and pay 55 dollars a month? So some of them have been here and exhibiting regularly and they get a stone down there and they cut and build a statue and somebody cleans up and they finish the stone and then they exhibit it. But there's not much of that in painting.

PAUL CUMMINGS: They tend to come and go.

STEWART KLONIS: That's right. Well, I suppose some painters who have been students here in the past and want to get a different point of view of an artist, they may come in and spend three or four months with another teacher they want to hear. As a matter of fact, at one time Reggie Marsh, after he was pretty well established as an artist—this was perhaps sometime in the mid-1320s—he came here and registered with about eight different instructors in one year. He went for a month to each class, not so much for criticism but to hear what the instructor had to say.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, I see. A kind of little brush-up or something.

STEWART KLONIS: No, just to get an idea of what they were saying and how they taught and so on. They did that.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I didn't know they ever did that.

STEWART KLONIS: Reggie did.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's an interesting idea.

STEWART KLONIS: We have sort of an instructors' dinner annually. At one of these dinners the question came up of how many of the instructors had studied with Frank DuMond at any time. Of the 50 or so persons who were there I'd say that a good third of them said that at one time or another they had studied with DuMond. Reggie Marsh didn't get up. He was in his class for a month. You know, that month that I was telling you about. So DuMond, who was sitting right next to Reggie, looked at him and said, "Reggie, of course you didn't study with me. You came in for a month but you didn't study with me. But your mother and father did."

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, that's marvelous.

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PAUL CUMMINGS: It's February 10. This is Reel 2. Could we talk about the Depression and its effect on the League and then how you got involved with being a staff member and things like that.

STEWART KLONIS: Well, in 1927 I was working daytime at Guggenheim Brothers at 120 Broadway and I came here in the evenings and studied with Homer Ross in a beginner's class, working in what was called 'antique'—working from casts, block head, and so on. At that time that was what practically all beginners did. This went on for the First year.

In the second year I went into his painting class. And by that time everything seemed to be going fine here. There was no question of any difficulties financial or otherwise. By the end of 1929 things started to happen. But not noticeably. Actually the registration went up. A lot of people who were thrown out of work thought of it as something that was going to end in three or six months or something like that. They referred to it as slack times. But the League actually got more students right after 1929. The League didn't start feeling it until about 1931. About 1931 they went to my instructor and said something to the effect that maybe this class would not be continued. I was very upset about this and the whole class as well. We petitioned them to continue and asked for some explanation. We were told that registration was dropping off and they were losing money and this was one of the weaker classes in the evening. So I got more involved with it than ever. I was the kind of person who somehow was always appointed by the group to go and do the speaking. So pretty soon I got invited to serve on the board of the League the next year.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What year was that?

STEWART KLONIS: That was December 1932. It was in December that the board was made up. I started really in 1933. Then we started to work. Things were bad. There was even talk that at the rate we were going we would have to close up in six months. The League was losing approximately \$3,000 a month. There was an \$18,000 reserve and it would be used up in six months. So there were drastic steps to be taken. Different schemes were proposed, such as try to combine classes, cut down on the number of models employed, and all sorts of things. Then we called in the accountants, Leidesdorf, to go over our records. Many things were discontinued, such as small jobs were cut completely. The maintenance staff was cut. Students were taken on scholarships to do cleaning up, maintenance and such. Telephones were discontinued in all the classes. (There had been telephones from the switchboard in each class). Many items of that nature were cut back. The salary of all staff members was cut. I would say that half of the staff was dropped.

PAUL CUMMINGS: This was what?—teachers? Or administrative and everything.

STEWART KLONIS: This was administration, everything. The instructors were put on straight commission depending upon the registration in their class. I remember one instructor got \$3.50 for a month's work.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Wow! Who was that?

STEWART KLONIS: Well, he's not around anywhere. After that he went down to Temple. His name was Haddos [ph]. He had a class that was rather unusual. He used to take groups over to the Metropolitan Museum to do copying, especially of the baroque painters.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, really? Do you have that kind of class anymore?

STEWART KLONIS: No. That was his class. He was somewhat of a technician. He had studies in Munich before that. Anyway, his name was Raymond Haddos I think. Well anyway, by the end of the year things had changed completely. So that we were able to pay all the back salaries, full salaries to all the instructors.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, that's terrific.

STEWART KLONIS: They got it all in a lump sum. But they got their full salary that year.

PAUL CUMMINGS: This would be about 1932 now?

STEWART KLONIS: No, actually, this would be the end of 1933 and the beginning of 1934. In other words, the board always changes in December. I became the treasurer.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What actually is the purpose of the board and how is one made a member of that?

STEWART KLONIS: Oh, the board is really the most fluid administration that I've ever known. Because the board is elected annually. Six members are elected by the membership at an annual meeting.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How many members on the board?

STEWART KLONIS: The twelve board members come up for election. Six are elected. Of this six there is a president, two vice-presidents elected directly; then the other three are usually appointed treasurer, recording secretary, corresponding secretary. Then six others are invited.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Who invites them?

STEWART KLONIS: The six elected ones within ten days invite the other six. They all have to be from the membership which means that they have to be students here or former students, or even instructors. The instructors can become members. Now in this twelve, at least four have to be current students; however, usually it's more apt to be six that are current students.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Are they appointed as well as elected—the student members?

STEWART KLONIS: They're the same; they have the same power as any other. The only difference with them is that the elected ones cannot be dismissed by the board. But the invited ones can be if they don't feel that the individual is the right kind of person. As far as I know this has never happened, but the board can discontinue an invited member and invite a replacement at any time they want to. So you see this is very flexible and very fluid. Now no board member outside of the president, who has to be elected annually, can serve more than three consecutive years. Three years is the limit. They can drop off for a year and then come back again if they're elected or invited; but for no more than three years.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's interesting. So really it is a constant change. Every year and then every couple of years, three years the maximum.

STEWART KLONIS: That's right. Very few come back after their service of three years. Some of them don't last three years. Some serve a year or two years and that's it. So it's a continuously changing group.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How much active participation is there on their part in what goes on in the League's school?

STEWART KLONIS: Oh, that's very active. They have full charge of the school. They decide who teaches here. They decide everything. During the school year a meeting is held every week. Every Wednesday evening they meet and any expenditures over \$25 has to be approved by them. The committees can approve expenditures under \$25. They select the staff. They review everybody on the staff every year. They review the salary of everybody working here. They set the objective, they decide on what type of art is going to be taught here by the instructors they select. And the instructors are selected more or less on the basis of the number of students they have. So that an instructor that has a continuous turning over is very rarely questioned.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What about if they want to invite a new instructor? How do they decide on that?

STEWART KLONIS: Well, they're all entitled to bring any name that they suggest. I sit in with the board. I have no vote, but I sit in in an advisory capacity. I can bring in names, suggest names. Basically each section of the program for each morning, afternoon, and evening they try to get a cross section of the most active things in the art field.

PAUL CUMMINGS: And turning over the board as rapidly every year you really get new ideas from new people.

STEWART KLONIS: That's right. They get new ideas all the time.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's a very interesting idea. You don't get stale board members then, do you?

STEWART KLONIS: No. Not only that but, you see, by the same token a man like DuMond taught here for 56 years. He was contracted annually. There was no commitment here. There's no tenure here. Bridgman was here for 41 years. But each year somebody from the board went to him and asked if he would accept the job for next year.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's interesting. So a board member really has a job, doesn't he?

STEWART KLONIS: Oh, yes. Every item that comes in here, correspondence comes in here, they set policy on everything that's done. In other words, we're presently preparing this show for Atman's. Well, before we could accept the offer of this exhibition it had to be approved by the board. And if there's a controversy, it's put to a vote. And if the majority decides yes, that's what it is; if the majority says no, it's no. And that's it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's interesting because it keeps the faculty and the student body very involved with each other and with the whole thing.

STEWART KLONIS: You see, six members of the board are usually around in the classrooms during the week so they know more or less what the students are thinking and what the instructors are thinking and so on. The

instructor has nothing to say except that he can do something in an advisory capacity. We can suggest something. But the board decides whether it's good or bad. So that's how it happens. To get back to talking about the depression. Well, the Depression was very tough. After the cutbacks I've mentioned we carried on. Our gross around, say, 1934 or 1935 was less than \$100,000 to run the whole thing. We were down to 23 instructors or classes. An adjustment took place. They couldn't carry so many classes. More or less from year to year we had to live on what we took in. We had nobody coming along to pick up our deficits. We lived through that year after year the same way. Different board members did a great deal of extra work without compensation. Our staff was cut down to the bone. The student helpers helped with the maintenance. There were very few paid individuals except Chris Buchheit, the superintendent. Their salaries were cut in half from 1929. Exactly in half.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, boy!

STEWART KLONIS: They didn't have a director at that time. So when my three years were up in 1936 people suggested that I run for president. Which I did. It's the only position I could stay on in if I became elected. A president can serve indefinitely as long as he's elected.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, really? That's the only board member who can have continuity then?

STEWART KLONIS: Yes. But he has to be elected. Lynn Fausett was president before I was for three years while I was on the board. There were three of us running for president: Fausett and Frank Reilly and I. After the First ballot I had the largest number of votes. But you're required to have a majority, not a plurality. A majority of the vote has to be cast in order to elect a board member of president or anybody. I've seen as many as 15 ballots taken. Sometimes the voting goes on until two or three o'clock in the morning.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What kind of an election was that?

STEWART KLONIS: Well, the nominee was not getting a majority. The vote was split up. There's no nominating committee at the League. A month before the election when they call a caucus meeting is held in which anyone can nominate anyone for any office. As a result you get a long string of names put up by different people. You have six positions to be elected and you'll have 30 names; and there is the requirement that the person elected has to get a majority. So it may take a lot of ballots. Elimination. So after the First ballot for president Lynn Fausett withdrew in my favor. And on the next ballot I was elected. I had a majority of the votes against Frank Reilly. I stayed in that position for ten years. I mean I was elected for ten consecutive years. The tenth year I was elected in December. So then because of the veterans they needed a director and they asked me to take that job. I wouldn't accept the job as director unless they sent a notice to all the membership and got the membership's approval, that they got a majority of the returned ballots in my favor. They did. So I became director on February 1, 1946. And that was it. The Depression years were strange in a way because they had this very tight operation financially. Yet we had probably the most intense, most gifted, most serious individuals we've ever had. This was the time when people like Jackson Pollock were students here, or David Smith, and many others. Also you must remember this was a period when there was a great deal of stirring up in the social kind of thing. Many of the young artists were mixing up with the John Reed Club. This was all reflected here.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Was there a lot of activity in the school politically on the part of students or faculty?

STEWART KLONIS: No, it was outside. And there were strikes, like strikes of models and things like that that came later.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, really?

STEWART KLONIS: I would say there was a constant idea of trying to make the League stand for a particular point of view, especially pressing it toward the social conscience. This extended also to some of our teachers who felt that the economic system was wrong, that the whole thing was bad. Some of our instructors even talked politics in their classes. But the League took no stand. As an organization it has never participated in any of these things. We limited ourselves deliberately I would say to get a cross section. What the instructor did in his class actually had no effect on the administration.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's interesting because it's always been such a changing meeting place that I was curious about instructors who were politically active on the outside, how they would carry it into their classes too.

STEWART KLONIS: Well, they spoke on a personal basis. Some of the students followed along with them. I suppose the same thing is happening right now in connection with the Vietnam war, with the racial difficulties, integration, and so on. You see, we never had the integration problem because we never had any restrictions. As far as I can remember we've never considered a person's race or color or anything else when he came in. As I say, it's open registration. Anybody can register in any class he wants to. No matter who they are. Neither age nor background and so on makes any difference. So we never had that kind of problem here.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What are the things that attract students from elsewhere to a particular class? Is it because they're interested in the way a man paints when they see his pictures? Or because he's famous as a teacher?

STEWART KLONIS: I would say that this is true to a certain extent of a small group of our students; not to a large group. My contention has been—and it has been proved over a period of years—that over 50 percent of the students that come in here have never heard of any one of our instructors.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Really!?

STEWART KLONIS: Yes. They came in because it's an art school and they can come in at any time. Even when you show them the catalogue or the pictures of the artists they make their selection from that based on what they admire of the type of thing. So that's all. It's probably truer of individuals who have been studying outside previously and perhaps have become more modern. They would be inclined to come in because Stamos or Poons or somebody like that was teaching. But that's a very small percentage.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's interesting. Because I'd always gotten the feeling that people went here because they found out about the painter and wanted to study with him.

STEWART KLONIS: That's true more of out-of-towners than of local people. I would say that perhaps sixty percent of the people who come here have never studied before. And then they switch when they're here. That's one of the reasons our drawing classes are so jammed up. There are so many of them that start there. Then they see what's going on. They make friends with different people. They talk in the lunchroom. They talk in the salon. And some of them will move to three or four instructors before they actually settle down to one instructor. Whereas others will go to one instructor and stay with him the rest of the time. I did the same thing. When I was a student here there were 23 instructors but I stayed with one. Except that I wanted to take graphics for a while, so I switched to a graphics class that Eugene Fitsch was teaching to do some etchings and lithographs.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How long do you sign up for a class?

STEWART KLONIS: For a month at a time.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So that every month or two months or whatever—

STEWART KLONIS: You can change.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You're incredibly flexible.

STEWART KLONIS: For instance, today is February 10. Suppose you come in and want to select a class. You pick your class and you pay only to the end of the month. At the end of the month you can switch, or you can re-register to the same class. But everybody registers every month.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So if somebody wants to come for two months and then go away for six and come back it's always there?

STEWART KLONIS: It's always there. There's no limitation. Another thing: you come in the first day and you go up to their class and spend the day up there, or a half day, morning or afternoon, and if you come back and say you don't like it, we'll give you all your money back and you go your way. There are no questions asked why. There's no questioning regarding whether the instructor is no good, or the system is no good and so on. There are no questions asked. If you want a refund you get it. If you remain a week and don't wish to continue you may come down to the office and say, "I'm discontinuing." We will charge you one-quarter of the tuition, or whatever proportion you've used, and 75 percent of the unused tuition will be refunded to you, and no questions asked, or after remaining a week in a class if you'd like to try another teacher we'll permit you to do that.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's really as flexible as you can get, isn't it.

STEWART KLONIS: The student decides everything for himself. The only counselling that's available in the school is with the individual instructor. Our staff is prohibited from counselling students.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, really?

STEWART KLONIS: Yes. Because we figure that it's bad enough for the student to make his own mistakes without us making mistakes for him.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What other kind of restrictions are there on staff members?

STEWART KLONIS: Well, the instructor is full master in his own class. The method of teaching, what he teaches is his own responsibility. Nobody gives him a program; he doesn't submit any teaching program. That is his own

responsibility. By the same token, our office staff is so set up that it takes care of all the details that are necessary for the proper person to be there. But that's all. When a person comes here in a sense he's not registering in courses. What he is doing is selecting an individual almost as if he were going to a private artist to study. We provide the model. We provide the cleaning, the equipment, we see that things are in order. But that's about it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's interesting. It's the opportunity and the space. The student has to do his own work and make his own decisions.

STEWART KLONIS: Yes. And the instructor is their guide.

PAUL CUMMINGS: There are no other art schools that operate like that, are there?

STEWART KLONIS: Not that I know of, no, there isn't. They can't do it. When the Art Students League started, within a period of five or seven years there were art students leagues all over the country. There was one in Buffalo, one in Philadelphia, one in San Francisco. They all folded. They all changed. For instance, Albright today—the school there is an outgrowth of the Art Students League of Buffalo. Then it changes; it became the Albright School, eventually became a gallery, and I think they still have classes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, yes, they do. Even at that time there was no relation between those other schools and the Art Students League here?

STEWART KLONIS: Never. No affiliation with any organization. We have not been affiliated with any organization or any institution. We've been approached by both NYU and Columbia to become part of their program. NYU approached us in the 1920s. And the board turned it down. We just don't fit in. When they come with the idea of affiliation they come with their program that we're to adopt and destroy ours. Columbia did that during the war; they came to us. We had a meeting with Columbia. Again the same thing happened. In other words, instead of becoming a department of Columbia's program we prefer to keep our own program. You see, one thing about the League is that in its initiation it never had the idea that it must continue. The premise of the League has been that as long as there's a need for us and for the way we operate that we'll continue. But if there's no need for us we can close down.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's been—what? 97 years or something?

STEWART KLONIS: Well, in 1975 it'll be a hundred years. But there's never been this alma mater kind of thing which most institutions develop which has got to be continued, money has to be rolled in to help get a school bigger and bigger and better and better all the time. We've never had that.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Is there any activity on the part of past students who, say, live elsewhere who went to school here, say, 15 years ago or so?

STEWART KLONIS: No.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Nothing?

STEWART KLONIS: Not related to us. Fundamentally those people are members. There are close to five thousand of them around the country. Not everybody continues their membership. A lot of people take their membership because there are certain privileges while they're here. Then they discontinue and don't pay their dues. Others automatically are kept as members but they don't participate. They can vote in the meetings. They send their proxies in and so on. I would say that probably a thousand individuals out of the total five thousand participate in elections.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's a pretty good percentage.

STEWART KLONIS: Yes. They have concern for the school. We had a drive last year, for the last two years, to match the Ford Foundation grant of a quarter of a million dollars. And we got money from the membership. Again about a thousand participated in that drive. They contributed anywhere from two dollars to five thousand dollars.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's a terrific range.

STEWART KLONIS: Yes. The great bulk of course was ten dollars and 20 dollars.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's fascinating that such a fluid organization with such a simple idea keeps going on and on and on and on and on.

STEWART KLONIS: It couldn't be done in a small area, in a small community. The League now has reached a

point where it draws its students from an enormous background, an enormous number of people. They come from every state in the union and from many parts of the world. As I said, right now we have about 90 that are from the Far East. We have students from the Near East, and from Europe, and from South America. We've had people from Australia.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Has tis always been true? Or is it since World War II?

STEWART KLONIS: I would say that it's been growing continuously through the Depression on. They started coming during the Depression.

PAUL CUMMINGS: From other countries?

STEWART KLONIS: Yes. And during world War II they came. You remember so many artists came to the United States from Europe during the war. Students also came from Europe then, too.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's fascinating. You never hear about that. That's very, very interesting. Getting back to our chronology here, in the 1930s who were the teachers with the largest classes?

STEWART KLONIS: During the 1930s one of the most important teachers we had was George Bridgman. He had a big reputation and drew many students.

The other one, surprisingly enough, was a commercial teacher, Howard Trafton. I can give you financial records to show that those two probably contributed more to carrying all the others than any of the others. That made it possible .... Basically that happens all the time. There are certain classes .... In other words, if each class had to carry itself right now, half the classes would be discontinued. But there are enough very popular classes that make it possible to carry other classes of limited registration.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's very interesting because when one thinks of the 1930s one thinks of Miller and Sloan and people like that.

STEWART KLONIS: Well, Sloan never had large classes. Miller had substantial classes always. But the big classes were Bridgman and Howard Trafton.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I wonder why? What was the quality that attracted people to them?

STEWART KLONIS: Trafton was a very successful art director and commercial artist before he came to the League. His reputation came with him. People in the field sent him here. People in big advertising agencies recommended him to me. They also hired his students.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, I see. So if they saw somebody who was talented they'd say, "You go study with him."

STEWART KLONIS: Yes. As a matter of fact, one of the big advertising agencies sent their whole staff here for several months and pay their tuition.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Who is that?

STEWART KLONIS: One of the big advertisers—I can't recall who—but they sent all their artists up here to spend time with Trafton. And Trafton didn't take everybody that came. His class was so crowded that he'd review the students and accept those that he thought he could do most with.

PAUL CUMMINGS: An instructor can do that, can he?

STEWART KLONIS: Well, under certain circumstances. Bridgman did that because he couldn't possibly accommodate all who wanted to come. He had two classes, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. In those days we'd put 50 in each class. And that would be the result of two hundred applications. Two hundred people would want to get in. They would be told to come to the gallery upstairs and all would make a drawing. Bridgman would pick out his 50 for the morning and 50 for the afternoon. The others would be put on the waiting list as openings occurred.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Those are huge classes, aren't they?

STEWART KLONIS: Oh, that's not very huge. We have some classes here now that run to 70 students. For example, Bob Hale.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Drawing class.

STEWART KLONIS: Yes. Anatomy in drawing. He demonstrates on the blackboard with a long stick, explains the

anatomical structure, shows how it's drawn. Then he has criticism of the drawings of certain individuals and the other students listen in on that. He can't possibly get to each student twice a week. So he moves around from one to the other. That procedure seems to be acceptable.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's incredible. I know his classes are famous for his lectures and the long wand that he waves.

STEWART KLONIS: Yes. And he's very skillful with it, too. Bridgman used to do the same thing. He'd give lectures—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Really?

STEWART KLONIS: Oh, God, yes. He had an enormous following for that. His lectures were always jammed. And so are Hale's. This month Hale started a series of ten lectures. He explains the anatomy of different parts of the body. The capacity of the gallery is 150 and it's filled. At each one of these lectures there are 150 students making notes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Every seat is filled.

STEWART KLONIS: That's right.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Are there other courses and studio courses that are taught here?

STEWART KLONIS: They are all studio courses basically. Maybe some individuals will do something a little different occasionally. They'll go upstairs and get slides and things like that to show what's going on in the field. Or they might invite a friend who is a well-known person to come in and talk to the students. But that's a very individual thing and is not commonly done.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I'm curious about people like Benton when he was here. How long did he teach here?

STEWART KLONIS: About twelve years. At that time Tom Benton was considered one of the more modern artists.

PAUL CUMMINGS: He came here—what?—in the mid-1930s?

STEWART KLONIS: Oh, no. He came here in the 1920s. I can look up the exact year. He quit about the mid-1930s. Tom may remember that in the mid-1930s the universities and colleges came here looking for artists. Grant Wood was the first one who left. He was taken by Iowa. This was the regional period of painting. Benton went to—where was it?—Kansas?

PAUL CUMMINGS: I think so.

STEWART KLONIS: Well, he was asked to come there. Curry was picked up a little later by Wisconsin.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's interesting. The man that hired Wood—his name was George Stoddard [ph]. His daughter is an art dealer now.

STEWART KLONIS: Well anyway, Grant Wood was hired. And I remember talking to Benton about that. Benton said, "They're crazy. They're taking examinations. Grant Wood told me that the students were locked into a room and they did a painting with the instructor out of it and on the basis of that credit was given. That's crazy."

PAUL CUMMINGS: What kind of fellow was he?

STEWART KLONIS: At that time, if anything he was pugnacious, very independent. Yet his students were terribly attached to him. They were a small group. But they were very close to him and he tried to create within them also a certain independence. As an example: we didn't have elevators at that time. His studio was on the fifth floor. It was a very small studio because he had only, say, a dozen students. He used to climb the staircase. When he got to the top floor he'd open the door, look in (and without actually walking in) and say, "anybody ready for a criticism?" And if nobody spoke up he'd turn around and go home. Well, usually somebody would say, "I'd like a little help here." Then he'd go in. He had a kind of method of his own. He used to have the students not only draw from the model but he'd have them build up out of clay, like sculptors' clay, general shapes from paintings like Tintoretto's or Rubens'.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, really!

STEWART KLONIS: In other words, he would have them make these clay forms without say, a face would not have features, it would just be a shape and the clothing would flow down, and so on. Then he would have them make drawings in the round to make them conscious of the volumes of the forms moving all around.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, isn't that interesting.

STEWART KLONIS: Then another thing they used to do was egg tempera. And sometimes the place stank like hell because the eggs would spoil and so on. And they'd use that as a medium with these short little strokes. There was a great deal of camaraderie among the students. It was a very close group. Tom Benton used to take them down to his studio. He lived at 8 West 13th Street in one of those big loft studio buildings. He had his studio there. I lived in the same building at the same time on a floor above. They used to play the harmonica. This was during the Prohibition era or just before. And they'd have a jug of whiskey there. They'd sit around, pass the whiskey jug, play the harmonica, and so on. This was part of the closeness that he had with his students.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's interesting. Are there many of the instructors that develop close relationships with their students like that as a group?

STEWART KLONIS: To some extent it happens to many of them. Bridgman never did. Bridgman walked into his class at the precise time and class started at the precise time. He practically counted how many were there. And he was finished with every student on an individual basis by the time the class was over. In other words he could figure out that he had so much time for each student. Let's say there were 50 registered in his class. If he'd spend a little more time with one student he'd give a little less to the next one and so on. And if the student wasn't at his place when Bridgman was there for criticism—they were in solid rows, sometimes three rows against the model here on the stand, there'd be the First row on very low chairs, the second row on regular chairs, and the third row would be on stools. So it would be like three steps. He'd start at different parts but he'd start at one place and if you weren't there when he got there you just lost a criticism. That's all. He'd go to the next person. Some other instructors would come into their class and talk generally to the students. They would criticize one or two; the others would look on. Some instructors would spend a lot of time with one person and very little with another. Depending on how the work was moving along. I think the objective always has been that basically the artist instructor is much more interested in the person who he thinks has got a lot on the ball. And if he feels a student doesn't have much on the ball he sort of just passes him by or does very little; considers it's a waste of time. And in time the student gets that message and very likely will go to another teacher. But the instructor always has a nucleus in his class of which he thinks a great deal. And the other students learn a great deal from watching what this nucleus is doing. So it's not only a question of what the teacher is giving but what's going on in the class that counts.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's fascinating. Did things improve then towards the end of the 1930s?

STEWART KLONIS: Things got worse. The war came. Between September and the end of December of the First year of the war about 600 of our students were drafted and taken from the school.

PAUL CUMMINGS: This was 1942?

STEWART KLONIS: 1941 or 1942; well, anyway it was the First year of the war. Things looked so bad that we called an emergency meeting of our members and staff. In that December our projection was that we would have a deficit of \$20,000 by the end of May. And there was no \$20,000. At this emergency meeting people made pledges and gave contributions. We sent out a letter to the membership. Within a month, by, say, the end of January we had gotten about \$12,000 to carry us through the year. That was as far as we thought at that time. Another strange thing happened: many, many of the former students and members registered in the classes. Our registration doubled in January. And they stayed with us. So by the end of May instead of having a deficit of \$20,000 we had a surplus of \$20,000. We were operating so tight because of that so we had a surplus of approximately \$20,000 instead of a deficit.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's a huge raise. That's \$40,000.

STEWART KLONIS: That's right. Tuition accumulated and the classes doubled. More than 600 people—former members or students—came and registered in different classes just to draw and paint at the League. We didn't know what to do with this \$12,000 that we had collected on the premise that we expected a deficit. So we kept it right through the war. But the registration kept up and we were able to carry through without any fund drive or anything else. At the end of the war veterans started coming here. So we sent the \$12,000 back to all the donors. We did this without any publicity. We just made out checks and sent the contributions back to the donors.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But that was nice to have during that period.

STEWART KLONIS: Well, we had it during the war. But we didn't use it. A former student, Edmund Duffy, who was editorial cartoonist on the *Baltimore Sun* (he used to be political cartoonist on *The Saturday Evening Post*) who lives down in Baltimore, I think Duffy had sent us a hundred dollars. He was one of our more prosperous artists. I would say that most of the League's artists or most artists—90 percent of them—are not prosperous

and had a hard time sending us a ten-dollar bill. So we returned Duffy's hundred dollars to him. He went to his editor and said, "Do you know of anybody or any institution that you've made a contribution to and they've sent it back to you after some years?" So there was a brief editorial in *The Baltimore Sun* entitled "Believe it or not" telling how the League was returning donations. That was the only publicity this incident ever got. We deliberately didn't send out any release or anything like that. That's what happened to the \$12,000 during the so-called emergency. Then of course things changed completely.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What was the effect then of the GI's when they started swarming in here I understand?

STEWART KLONIS: They jammed us up just in an impossible fashion.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did you get approval from the government?—because you weren't a degree-granting institution?

STEWART KLONIS: That's a story in itself. First of all, we presented to Albany our usual program, the way we conduct our school. We got to the top man there, Martin Sand, our attorney, and I went up there. They were very sympathetic. Very cooperative. But in no way could they see how we qualified under the GI Bill. They suggested that we arrange our program in the same way that all the other institutions are; in other words, entrance requirements, prescribed course of study, attendance records, evaluation of the work, set a definite period for what might be called graduation, even within the range that we work in; in other words, get some accredited teachers, probably offer courses in art history and maybe one or two other courses. Well, that seemed impossible to us. At Albany they were not in any way derogatory to the League. They just said, "We can't do anything." We said: "Since this is the case, where can we go now; we feel that the veterans should be given an opportunity to study art." He suggested that we go to Washington, to the central authority. We flew down to Washington. We had an appointment at, say, one o'clock. The weather was very murky. When the plane arrived at Washington it circled around and around for about an hour or an hour and a half. We were late in arriving. We got a cab which took us to the place of our appointment. When we arrived at that office a secretary wanted to know why we were late. He said, "Your appointment was at one o'clock. It is now three o'clock. What happened?" We explained. All right. He took us into an office. He brought out some forms. He asked us the name of institution, the address, when it was founded, and so on. Then he asked, "What are your entrance requirements?" "None." "What is your prescribed course of study?" "We have none." "What accreditation do you have?" "None." This man said, "Well, I can't do anything about this. You'll have to see somebody else." There were about a hundred desks lined up in this big room. We had to see somebody else. So we went to the office of another man. He said, "Art Students League? Fine! I know all about you. Sit down." Then I told him what had happened in Albany and what had just happened in Washington. He said, "Well, there's no question that you can't get approved the way you are. But I'll suggest what you can do. Go back to New York and make up a course of study and so on, keep the same teachers that you have, give them a choice of where they can study, give them an objective. And send this down to me when it's ready." We did that. He okayed it and approved it, sent it to Albany, and Albany approved it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Who was he?—do you remember?

STEWART KLONIS: I don't remember his name. But do you know what he said to me? He said, "The man you were just talking to is a principal of a high school in Indiana. He thought he had just discovered the biggest fraud in education in existence. But my wife was in your school for three years." So we worked up a course and followed it. We had to take attendance records. The instructor had to evaluate the students' work. It was very simple. They could mark the work every two months either excellent, good, or poor. If it was poor we had to drop the student. There were a number that were "poor" not only on the basis of the work he was doing but also poor on say, attendance or interest. They were dropped. We had a waiting list of over 5,000.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Really! For how long?

STEWART KLONIS: For three or four years.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's fantastic.

STEWART KLONIS: The waiting list was unending. We added another session. Our classes then ran from 8:45 to 12:30; from 1.00 to 4:45; from 4:45 to 6:45; from 7:00 to 10:00. We had over 3,000 registrations to this building. It was fantastic! Another thing: restrictions were that a person had to take two classes; he had to be supplied with materials; and within a year this cost could not exceed \$500.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's not very much, is it?

STEWART KLONIS: God! It's very little. In other words, the student had seven-and-a-half hours a day, five days a week.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, that's nothing!

STEWART KLONIS: He usually had a drawing class which was seven dollars for pads and pencils, the other was 15 dollars; so he had 22 dollars worth of supplies. He had two classes. For eight-and-a-half months. This was limited to under \$500. But we had to operate. We had to take an attendance record. We had to set up people. We had to have evaluations. An inspector would come down from Albany at least once a month to go through the classes to see how they were conducted. It was a real operation.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How long did the big influx of the GI's last?

STEWART KLONIS: It lasted quite a long time; for about seven years. You see, because they were allowed a certain period of time from the time they were discharged. Then others that were in service who came out later. There was overlapping. And then it diminished. So it lasted for about seven years actually. But it was much more diminished toward the end. But in the beginning, say, the second and third years were just fantastic. That was when Gus Peck at the Brooklyn Museum got the appointment there to open a school. Brooklyn Museum expanded to have a museum school. Gus Peck came here. So we turned over to his everyone on our waiting list who was living in Brooklyn. Also we had already established here a method of operation. We had a veterans' department. We had a girl, Inez Chadfield, who was the ex-wife of the painter John Ferren. She was very good. I turned her over to him to set up the operation for him. And that's how they got organized and going at the Brooklyn Museum School.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Do you have any correspondence from other art schools around the country who want to send students here? Do you have that kind of thing? Or do students just come here?

STEWART KLONIS: No, there's no correspondence. Occasionally someone who I meet will tell me that they've sent such and such a student here. A number come here from Pratt Institute simply because the program there is all-inclusive and these people want only painting or drawing or sculpture. So Pratt sends them over here. It might be said that the League doesn't make any kind of effort to go to other schools and ask them to send people here. We don't do anything like that.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You get enough to keep you busy.

STEWART KLONIS: Yes. They come by themselves. They come from everywhere.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I don't remember seeing very much advertising on the part of the League.

STEWART KLONIS: Well, we do advertise our program in what might be called the trade magazines; in other words, *Art News*, *Arts*, and so on. We have an ad running usually every month. At the beginning of the season we have a large ad put ... We advertise on the art pages, not on the school pages. We have an ad in the *New York Times* which gives our whole list of instructors for that year. Then we have small inserts that you can register any time and things like that. But our main advertising, our medium, is our catalogue, this thing here. This catalogue is extensive. We distribute about 27,000 of these a year. The first batch is sent to our members. That accounts for about 5,000. Then about another 2,000 or so are sent to institutions, such as colleges, libraries and so on. So there's an initial mailing of about 7,000. Then during the year we use up about 20,000. We mail a copy to persons requesting one by mail. It is now February and our catalogue for this year is all gone out.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What time of year does the new catalogue appear?

STEWART KLONIS: The new one will appear probably in June.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Boy, that's a lot! And it's all from people who've seen the ads or know the instructors or students?

STEWART KLONIS: Mainly people who write to us. We don't try to follow up these requests. We don't keep those addresses. When a person writes in requesting a catalogue we mail out the catalogue and throw away the letter. We couldn't keep up with it otherwise. The files would be just jammed. Or people come into the office and pick up a copy.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Is it free? Or a dollar or something like that?

STEWART KLONIS: It's free. This is the big expense. I would say the cost of a catalogue is about \$1.20 for preparing and printing and mailing.

PAUL CUMMINGS: The cost goes up every year, too, doesn't it?

STEWART KLONIS: Oh, sure. It has all the information. There was a change in prices as of January 1. So this is inserted now noting those changes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How many instructors do you usually have here?

STEWART KLONIS: That fluctuates, though very little. Right now there are about 59 individuals teaching. Some classes are replaced. Basically the replacement is somewhat similar to the class that was discontinued unless— You see, there's a constant shift. For example, what might be considered academic 30 years ago today is practically passé. What was considered somewhat modern is now very moderately modern.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's almost the academy now.

STEWART KLONIS: Yes. There's always that continuous change taking place. And that is the result of the demand. Classes that are very popular and considered even by the moderns a little old hat ... Now take, for instance, a class like Kantor's or Vytlačil's. Back in the early 1930s these two were very, very modern. Today they're considered almost academic by the people that are doing the Earthworks and so on. They consider that very passé.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right. Did Larry Poons attract a lot of young people?

STEWART KLONIS: No. Not only that but he didn't attend very often. He was very irregular in attending his classes. He was too busy with other things so that he couldn't give the necessary time to his teaching. So by mutual agreement he was discontinued. The League would have kept him on if he had wanted to stay. Although he didn't attract students. And that's very typical. In other words, Benton's classes were very small. Kantor's classes were very small. So were Vytlačil's. Now they are very popular classes. There's a great deal of talk about the great teacher Hans Hofmann. Well, he didn't turn out any artists that studied with him. The only artist I know of who studied with Hans Hofmann and who has developed a reputation is Larry Rivers, and I understand Hofmann didn't like what Rivers was doing.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, well, there are quite a number really that have come out of Hofmann's classes.

STEWART KLONIS: Mention some of their names. They never studied with him.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Allan Kaprow, who is in California. A tremendous list which I can't think of.

STEWART KLONIS: Well, he was only in California for one summer. When he came to New York he started teaching at the League.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I mean Kaprow is in California now. But Kaprow studied with Hofmann on Eighth Street.

STEWART KLONIS: But I haven't heard of many. In other word, a lot of people think that Jackson Pollock ... But he didn't have anything to do with Hofmann.

PAUL CUMMINGS: No, he didn't have anything to do with Hofmann.

STEWART KLONIS: They talk about Helen Frankenthaler. She never studied with Hofmann. She studied with Kantor. Kantor and Vytlačil taught more artists: Rosenquist, Rauschenberg; all those people were students of Kantor and Vytlačil.

PAUL CUMMINGS: There's a whole group of—oddly enough—figurative painters now, Long Island landscape painters who had studied with Hofmann.

STEWART KLONIS: Like who?

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, Jane Freilicher; she shows at Tibor de Nagy.

STEWART KLONIS: There are not many. The better-known ones have not studied with Hofmann. The better-known ones—say, Barnett Newman, or Jack Tworokov, even Burgoyne Diller who actually was a disciple of Mondrian but he was a student of Matulka and Benton for a while I think.

PAUL CUMMINGS: In the early 1930s, yes.

STEWART KLONIS: There's a kind of thing that happens all the time. Back in the mid-1930s it was very popular to say that you studied with Kenneth Hayes Miller. Somehow that was an entrée to the Whitney Museum and so on. In recent years it's become very popular to be a disciple of Hans Hofmann.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes, but that's sort of faded away now.

STEWART KLONIS: But I'm saying that in recent years it's very popular to say one is a Hofmann student. Actually very few of the better know artists studied with Hofmann.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's interesting. Reginald Marsh taught here for a long time. I'd like to talk about some of the people that were here.

STEWART KLONIS: Well, Reggie Marsh taught a lot of people. He was very strong on the drawing classes; he had a big, strong drawing class. He was a very skillful draftsman. His classes were very crowded. He was so skillful that when the class was crowded—as I said, there was a group of chairs lined up against the model with the students sitting on the other side. When he was criticizing a student's work he wouldn't even sit where the student was but he'd just look over the drawing, he'd glance up at the model, then look over the drawing (which he'd be looking at upside down) and then make a little sketch on the side showing where the weaknesses were. I mean like this. He'd look down like that, look at the model, look down like that, and then reach down and make a little sketch down here on the side of the paper to show the student where he was weak in his drawing.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's extraordinary.

STEWART KLONIS: It was such an easy thing for him. I went to lunch with him one day. He took out little slips of paper, a little bigger than that, and laid them on the table. He said, "Those are some notes." I said, "Notes of what?" He said, "Well, I went over to Union City, New Jersey to a burlesque show. They don't permit you to draw anymore; they don't permit cameras or anything like that. I used to take a pad and sketch. So I have this little pad and a short stubby pencil and I keep my hand in my pocket and make sketches. This gives me the idea of the pose, the posture at the moment. Then I make drawings from those sketches."

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's fantastic. Really tiny little wiggles.

STEWART KLONIS: Yes. The pad was a little bigger than that. He'd keep it in his pocket like that with this stubby pencil and make the drawing in his pocket; tear the sheet off, and make another one. It was just discouraging to be near him and try to draw. He did it so casually, with such ease, and so beautifully. The thing just flowed along with no effort whatsoever. The opposite of that was Curry. I remember being in Curry's class when he was trying to make a drawing on a student's pad. He was erasing and putting it back; it was very difficult for him to get it down on the paper. And this discourages the student. In other words, the student begins to think, well, the teacher doesn't know how to do it himself. But when the student sees how easily Reggie Marsh draws, my God, he knows too much. Curry always had small classes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I didn't ask about the quality of the work of the GI students as opposed to the regular students, or was there very little difference?

STEWART KLONIS: No, there was a big difference. First of all, of course the GI's were older. I would say the preponderance were in their upper-20s. I should say that a goodly number thought of themselves as becoming commercial artists; in other words to acquire skill to make money. And they stayed that way; they never changed. This happens very often with a young person at the school; that a student will come to the League with the idea of becoming a commercial artist—probably has never heard of fine art—and somehow or other within a short period of time he becomes fascinated with fine art and forgets about becoming a commercial artist.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Does it go the other way around very often?

STEWART KLONIS: No. It's more the other way. There is a certain number who come in with the idea of being a commercial artist and stay with that idea. But I would say that the switch is more from commercial art to fine art. Somehow the artist by his own action, since he himself is a person who is not concerned primarily with making money, somehow this passes on to the student and he becomes dedicated to the fine arts. This is very characteristic of the students.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's interesting because it's an ancient tradition almost that's been passed on from instructor to student?

STEWART KLONIS: That's right. They become dedicated. They don't even think in terms of whether they can—if they can't sell the things it has nothing to do with what their objective is; it's simply that the world is not ready for them or doesn't appreciate them. But they don't blame that on what they're doing. There's no need for it. There's no demand for it. That has nothing to do with it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: They just do what they were going to do and that's it. Their work.

STEWART KLONIS: Yes. This is something I'm very conscious of in the League: what happens to the student once he gets involved with fine art. He doesn't want to give it up even if somebody should advise him to go into some applied form of art so that he could get a job. He will not be interested. A good example of that: a little over a year ago we had two men from General Motors Corporation in Detroit come here to visit us. One man was a sculptor and the other was from the employment office. They were looking for young sculptors to work in

their design department. All they would be doing—First they would work with a group designing cars. Because of their background in sculpture it was felt they could work well three-dimensionally. General Motors has eleven or twelve such sculptors working there now doing that kind of work. The salary starts at something like \$8,000 and within two years the sculptor can earn as much as \$12,000 if he applies himself and their designs are found to be good. It isn't a question of whether or not all their designs are used; it's just a question of having this group working there all the time. I passed this information on to recently hired League students and to some of the advanced students. Not one was interested in going to Detroit to do this for this salary. Not one! And the General Motors men told me that they had great difficulty in getting people who had been trained as sculptors to accept these jobs.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's really a craft job that they were doing, in other words?

STEWART KLONIS: That's right. Well, basically they figured that these people have a feeling for form, three-dimensional conception and so on. They use them and they've told me that any time I hear of anyone who is willing to go to Detroit to please let them know and General Motors will contact them. They told me they've been going from school to school. The two men took me to lunch and I had one of the instructors come along. But there was no interest.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Every business seems to have that problem of finding people.

STEWART KLONIS: You see, another thing they have open all the time is those schools that are preparing people for industrial designing. They told me that they can get these people. There are graduates from industrial design departments every year. But they can't do it. They've had them and it doesn't work. But now they have a dozen or so out there and they're working out fine. And also they say they can't keep them. After a period of time they quit.

PAUL CUMMINGS: The industrial designers?

STEWART KLONIS: No, the sculptors. They take these jobs for a period of time and then they quit. They want to go back to their own work.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's interesting.

I'd really like to get a list of instructors and just have you talk about them, and what they were like.

STEWART KLONIS: Well, we can start talking about some of them. You see, I would say that instructors in a way become almost an entity in themselves here. They get their own following. Some of them have been here for so long that their grandchildren are here now. The son comes, then the grandson comes. It becomes an entity unto itself.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's like family tradition.

STEWART KLONIS: Almost a tradition. A good example of that: I think I mentioned last time that we have an instructors' dinner each year and at one dinner DuMond was asking Reggie Marsh—well, Reggie was there for only a month and didn't get up—but DuMond said, "Your mother and father were in my class." And a great deal of that goes on here also. Of course this doesn't mean that it's always going to be that way. They'll change. And very often you'll find a case where the father was a good academic person and the son will be a very radical person. Sandy Calder is a good example of that. His father was a very prominent academic sculptor. He taught at the League here. But Sandy didn't want to be academic. He started making music things. He started to make circuses and things like that out of wires. First of all, he was not trained to be an artist. He was trained as an engineer first. He graduated in engineering and then he came over to the League. He went to that very famous engineering school over in Hoboken—the Stephens Institute. He went there first and then came here. Then he went to Paris.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Do you find that the instructors are people who were students here at one point?

STEWART KLONIS: Some. But most of our instructors have not been students here. They studied at other places. And that is not a consideration when we hire an instructor. Our premise is to start out probably with the best-known person in a given area, whether academic or modern. We start off with that person. If he does not accept, we go on to the next, or the next, and so on till we get to the person who accepts. That's the basis of the selection. The eminence of the individual is the first consideration. And of course many of the eminent artists will not take on our drawing classes. They're not interested in that area. Let's say, now they're interested in expressionist or hard-edge abstraction or something like that; they're not interested in going into figurative work. An example of that is Philip Guston. He was teaching figure drawing at N.Y.U. For years, but now he doesn't want to teach figure drawing. But when he had to do it earlier he took it.

The same thing is true of Gorky. Gorky was teaching academic figure drawing at the Grand Central School. But not later, not when he became known; he didn't want to teach it. He used to spend many afternoons upstairs in our lunchroom after morning class and just yak around with the students, talking about modern art. This was the kind of place where they congregated and talked about what they were doing. There's one thing I can say which is pretty true: that each instructor no matter what he says wants disciples to mimic him. They think in their own way, the way they paint themselves. So that what they're actually putting out all the time is what they are doing. And occasionally they'll find something that a student has done that will startle them and may even add to their own thinking. So the teacher still learns something. And I would say that the good student, the one who is going to amount to something is one who can't exactly imitate the teacher. The good mimic is going to be a skillful craftsman in time. But the original artist is going to evolve and be something else. He can't become completely absorbed in his teacher.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How soon do you think that becomes apparent in a student's work? Does it take a long time?

STEWART KLONIS: A long time. Basically the student that's selected at the time that he's a student and representing, say, a certain teacher, even if he's good it isn't going to mean anything. He'll change. But the other one won't. The other one might, say, develop a little more skillfully in the same way. But I have not found anybody yet that could tell me who's going to be an important artist 20 years from now. And it takes something like that.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, sure. Times change.

STEWART KLONIS: It takes that much time. It takes ten, 15 years before you notice any individuality that's developed enough to say that the person is himself.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's true. With all the modern teaching methods they can't cut it down. It still takes time.

STEWART KLONIS: There are no modern teaching methods. The stress seems to be very much on trying to be different. I saw the work of colleges and universities for nine years—I served on the Fulbright jury for nine years—and I saw the work of the applicants and you could read the work and tell who the teacher was in the individual institution.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did you get involved with the Fulbright?

STEWART KLONIS: I was invited to serve on the jury. I was chairman for three years. Nobody is supposed to serve for more than three years; they're supposed to switch them. But for one reason or other they liked me so much. So they dropped me for a year and then I came back; and then on some excuse that they needed someone as chairman I was continued for six more years. I've served with many different artists, different groups. People from the Museum of Modern Art, from the Metropolitan, and so on. There was a group of seven people involved each year. It was a big job, not only seeing all the different work but also you got a very broad conception of what was being offered in different areas. You could very easily read from the work submitted from any institution who was there and which teacher in that area had the influence. For instance, Albers is at Yale. Well, you had no difficulty that this was a Yale student and influenced by Albers; not necessarily only in the box and so on but the way the drawing was done. It was a very thorough, methodical kind of thing that was going on; it was very precise and very carefully worked out. Then you'd get a place like Iowa. There the great influence was Lasansky. You could tell that it was Lasansky's method that was used by the students. It was always there, you see. You could see the same thing almost all over the country. And very often because of that the jury would turn the person down because the person was just reflecting, imitating his instructor. But another applicant would come from a university that was not heard of and you never heard of the teacher there and you might accept that as original because you don't know who the teacher was. So that this guy would get it and the guy from Albers would not. That was the reaction of the seven people around, you see.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's very interesting. I've always been interested in the Fulbright because it seems that they've picked more people who've become professional artists than almost any other—

STEWART KLONIS: Well, at the beginning that was true, but later on they became teachers. They got jobs in universities and so on.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's right. The First few years they had a lot of—

STEWART KLONIS: Well, those were the years I was on the jury, at the beginning of the thing. And we did stress artists much more. For example, more people came from New York at that time or large art centers, say, like Chicago. Then there were a lot of complaints from Washington and so that we had to spread it out over the different states and not only in painting and sculpture but the whole Fulbright program. One person would be selected by the educational authorities in each state, which we had nothing to do with. If they happened to be painters or sculptors they were sent to our committee. But we had nothing to say about it. The selection was

already made and added to our list.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How many things would you look at in jurying the Fulbright?

STEWART KLONIS: First of all, we would start off with slides and photographs. We'd have probably 300 to 350 applications. Something like seven to ten items would be sent to us. We'd sit there for three solid days except that we'd be taken out for lunch and so on. We'd go through those items. There would be a lot of recommendations. But the Fulbright people condensed these into meaningful summaries. With some you'd get long-winded recommendations running to three pages which would be immaterial because they'd be talking about their family or background and so on. This would be condensed probably to a good-sized paragraph. These would be read. The work would be shown. First we would find out how many scholarships we had, say, 33, 35. Then we'd cull these down to 75. Then the original work was sent in, two or three examples of original work. Basically the work more or less reflected the work that was shown in the slides and the photographs. But occasionally you'd find an original that was so damned lousy and yet the photograph of it made by a good photographer made the work look very attractive. And likewise the opposite would sometimes happen. Sometimes the work would be much better than the photograph would seem to indicate. So we'd cull these down to the number of scholarships that were available.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So it was a two-part thing. You'd look at the slides and at a later date look at the work.

STEWART KLONIS: That's right. The work came in. Usually we juried in January or early February. It was cold. We'd be at some warehouse where there was no heat. God, it was an ordeal! Then the five of us would select. Then that was not the end. The State Department or something would go through it. They would check them. Then it was a question of assigning them to the various countries. I remember we selected a girl supposedly for Ireland. Well, somehow it worked out that there was no opening in Ireland for a painter. The countries are alphabetical. The next one was India and there was an opening there so the girl was sent to India. She did very well, too. She was very charming. Had a wonderful background. She went to India and stayed for two years. She not only stayed in the metropolitan areas, but also got mixed up with the little villages, and she did a lot of good sketching. And she made friends there. She was considered an exceptionally good person to be sent there. Not only was there the opportunity for the artist to work at his art but also there was involved the element of creating good fellowship by Americans in these countries. She was very well liked.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You were involved with the MacDowell Colony at one point, too, weren't you?

STEWART KLONIS: That's quite recent. I got involved with George Kendall in this connection. We had a program that was funded by the Ford Foundation for the summer of 1968 up in Vermont. This was a program that was to take minority groups (not necessarily exclusively) of obvious talent, teenagers and more or less younger artists, for a two-month program to be conducted in Vermont, take them to the country for July and August. The Ford Foundation asked us to work out this program with Vermont Academy. So we selected people here. Most of them came out of high schools, the art departments. A heavy percentage of them came from Art and Design—very gifted young individuals. They were provided with housing, food, counseling, instruction. We employed only Negro artists. The preponderance of the 90 students there were black. Of the 90 students there, there were, say, 60 blacks, 15 Puerto Ricans, and 15 white students.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Do you think the program worked?

STEWART KLONIS: Oh, yes! Oh, God, yes. Both the teachers and the students got an enormous amount out of it. They never had an opportunity to be completely involved in this one thing they did, whatever they did whether it was sculpture or painting or other things and everybody working with them. The instructors were supposed to work only mornings but they got so involved with the students they were there all day, every day, working with them. I thought it was a wonderful thing. When the students came back from the summer at MacDowell there was a strike of the instructors. We opened our doors here for any of that group that wanted to come here. They came and they were very good in our classes. There were no fees. They stayed around. And before they came here they had applied for scholarships. I think something like about 25 of them got scholarships here. Others got scholarships like the Mellon—you know, the Pittsburgh institution. I would say that ten or more of them got scholarships in different places in other schools. About half of them went back to high school. They were in their final year, or almost in their final year. One of them, a 17 year old girl got a \$4,000 prize to go to Europe—the Chaloner Prize—to study sculpture. I think that's terrific. She's in England now studying. She wrote me that this fall she plans to go to Italy to work on her sculpture. A 17 year old girl!

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's incredible! Do you find a great deal of difference between the male and female students when they get scholarships as far as continuing?

STEWART KLONIS: Well, the girls ... Well, it's natural. For instance, a girl gets married. She has a child. She can't give the time. I know hundreds of artists who during the Depression did their work and still painted and sculpted. They were artists. Their wives went to work. They were schoolteachers. When the WPA came along that was a

blessing. My God, that was the greatest thing that ever happened in this country. They got teaching jobs with limited time taken from them. Others were put on easel projects.

PAUL CUMMINGS: The mural commissions.

STEWART KLONIS: Well, the commissions were a little different. They were not based on need. They were open competitions. They were the Treasury Project. Say, for instance a competition for a major job would be held. A person would be selected. They would have 20 or 25 runners-up and these would be given smaller post offices around the country to work on. This was probably the most fantastic opportunity for artists that ever existed in this country. Even now there's nothing comparable to it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Did you have anything to do with any of those projects?

STEWART KLONIS: I was on it. I was on the teaching project First. As I've told you, I lost my job at Guggenheim Brothers. Then I went on independently. Subsequently I got a teaching job. It was not the WPA but a project with another name—PWAP.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes. Public Works—

STEWART KLONIS: Yes. Something like that. I got on the teaching job. I was teaching at 42nd Street on the East Side in a public school. The principal was Mr. Gumbartz. I had a part-time teaching job there. Subsequently I was put on the Easel Project. Then I got the teaching job at Queens College. I think that period had an enormously important influence on whatever is happening in the art world today. You must remember that the Art Centers originated in that period. People saw artists come down and install murals in their local post offices. Before that these people thought of an artist as nothing more than some kind of a ragged playboy who lived with models in Greenwich Village. And here they showed up in a broken down flivver with their wife and kids and painted the mural in the post office or installed it if it was painted otherwise. I think that opened up an enormous amount of understanding of the artist in areas where he was not even known. In the small communities around the country nobody knew artists. If there was a guy around who was doing posters of lettering and did things for the local drugstore window he was considered the artist; not the guy who was painting pictures somewhere.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I've often thought that the money the government spent on that project was one of the best investments they've made.

STEWART KLONIS: Well, the point is you must remember that these things on the Easel Project were being allocated to different places. Many of them were not allocated and were stored in Flushing or somewhere and subsequently, at the end of the Project, were sold as waste material. I understand that the men who bought it culled through and saved a lot of stuff and they've made a fortune.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, it's very possible.

STEWART KLONIS: Because some of the work was done by artists who are very prominent artists. When I was teaching at Queens College I was in charge of putting on exhibitions. They had no appropriation; there were no funds for doing this. It was prohibited to hang anything in the halls in case something happened, and the pictures might fall. There was no molding put up. You couldn't put any nails in the wall. So in the lounge at one end we built a false wall. It was about six inches away from the original wall. We used pine boards and frames and so on. We covered that with burlap. Then I had to get pictures. So I used to come in town with my flivver, make arrangements with some dealer or artist to pick up their work and bring it out there and hang it. I'd hang, say, ten or twelve pictures, a Max Weber or something like that. And that was it. There was no insurance. That was understood. There was no money at all. There was no carfare or nothing. The exhibitions were put on like that. The building used to be a reform school and originally our painting studio was the laundry. The laundry equipment had all been taken out but the walls were tiled and so on, so they would be easy to wash off. That was our painting studio. The room next to it was a little bigger than this room. It was a broom closet where the maintenance staff kept their brooms and buckets and other things pertaining to cleaning. A lot of the WPA Easel Project work was given to the colleges. The things were stacked up in this broom closet. Sculpture, paintings, prints. They were just piled up in there. They couldn't handle it or use it. There was no way to.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How long were you at Queens College.

STEWART KLONIS: 1940 through 1945; I resigned at the end of January and started here February 1 as director. I've had the good fortune to live with many artists for a long time.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I'm just trying to think what other things we should go into here. What actually is the American Fine Arts Society?

STEWART KLONIS: Originally the American Fine Arts Society was composed of three component societies: The

Society of American Artists, which was a rebellious group from the National Academy; they considered the National Academy as being old hat and they formed their own group. It included such people as Whistler and many others. I have a list downstairs of the people who belonged. And today if you look at the catalogue of an exhibition going back to the National Academy in 1906 one of the conditions was that they will always be identified as being members of the Society of American Artists. If you go through their catalogue of deceased members—most of them are deceased now—you'll find a little star there. That means that they were members of the Society of American Artists. The other member is the Architectural League of New York. And the third member was the Art Students League. These three groups formed the society known as the American Fine Arts Society with the object of building a building to accommodate all their activities. Up until 1941 the first floor was galleries both in the National Academy. Originally the Society of American Artists and the Architectural League held exhibitions. The League had the third and fourth floor for classes. The second floor was Architectural League offices. The Architectural League were the first to acquire their building first on East 40th Street and they moved out of here. But they raised the money originally to build this building. Then in 1906 the Society of American Artists went back to the National Academy and became part of it. And the Academy took over all the interests of the Society from that time on. While I was a student at the League the galleries downstairs here were always referred to as the National Academy galleries. I'd never heard of them referred to in any other way. I understand that from 1992 on all the most important exhibitions in the city were held here on the ground floor. So that's the story of the American Fine Arts Society. As the Academy acquired the property that they have up on 92nd Street and Fifth Avenue the League acquired their interest, so the League is now the sole owner of this building.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's interesting because the Board fluctuates a great deal. What kind of corporate entity or legal structure does the League have?

STEWART KLONIS: It's a membership organization.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So it just keeps changing and existing as the membership comes and goes?

STEWART KLONIS: That's right. It was incorporated in 1878, three years after ... Before that the responsibility was actually directed to the board members. If there were any difficulties financial or otherwise the board members would be personally liable. Now it's a membership corporation and the liability doesn't rest on the individual. That's why it was incorporated.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You were involved with the I.I.E. at one point here in an art advisory committee or something?

STEWART KLONIS: They have an exchange program and I was serving with them. There are a number of them that I was in on the exchange of people being brought over. They had grants from Carnegie, grants from Ford Foundation and grants from other organizations in which there was an exchange of students. Some were sent from here; others were brought over from Europe. I would say that most were brought over from Europe for short periods of time. One of the things that I thought was weak about it was the short period of time. A student would be brought over for six months. We would travel from coast to coast visiting all different places and he's never get really organized. There was not enough time to get actually acquainted. They'd spend too much time traveling and meeting new people. Usually they'd spend a month, say, in New York, then go somewhere else, and finally wind up on the West Coast and then return.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It was a nice little trip, but nothing really happened.

STEWART KLONIS: Yes. Then they had another program—I don't know whether or not it still exists—presumably I'm still on their advisory committee but we haven't had a meeting for a couple of years—but this program was a little different. It involves different areas; in other words, people in the theatre, say, would be brought over one year. Or writers would be brought over. And in the music field composers and so on. And painters and sculptors. They would be brought from different parts of the world—Africa, Asia, Europe.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Do you think those cross-cultural activities like that are useful?

STEWART KLONIS: They have to be done on a much more magnificent scale than they are. They're terribly expensive and if a very small number of individuals is involved I think they're ineffectual. For instance, I think our Fulbright is enormously more effective.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Because there are more people and they have more money and time.

STEWART KLONIS: At the time I was on the jury there were approximately 1100 people involved each year just coming from this country. There were very few brought over here because there was a proviso that they would get money to get here; but once they got here the institution—the university or college or whatever—had to take on the responsibility of the individual while he was here. So that was very limiting. I think we do this cultural thing in a kind of ... If they could do something ... I don't care if they brought only five people but if those five

people were given an opportunity to really spend more time here, a year, two years; but, no, he's her for three months, six months; it doesn't mean anything.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I think you're right. When you go to a new country it takes a few months to get your feet wet.

STEWART KLONIS: You see, under the Fulbright, for instance, a person went over for a year, say, and in many instances the scholarship was renewed so they'd spend two years. By that time the person had not only learned what was going on there, he had also learned something for himself; he developed his own work with it. So it's meaningful when they get back. The League has our own simple little program. We send over approximately two students each year for a year. There is no restriction; you go where you want to. Under the grant that was given to us to do it there is only restriction: the person has to be in Paris sometime during the year, but that's all. We find that they get a lot more that way. Some of them stretch it by going to places where it doesn't cost too much. I know one girl who stretched it to two years and she made an around the world trip studying different places. She is a painter. She came from Scotland originally. So first she went to Scotland and stayed with relatives which didn't cost her anything. Then she spent three months around Europe. Then she went to India. In India she got a job teaching English or something like that. From there she went to Japan. She speaks Japanese. So she taught English to the Japanese. And then she returned to San Francisco from Japan and spent a lot of time getting across the country on \$3,500.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's marvelous. Who is that?

STEWART KLONIS: No, we don't do our programs significantly, especially our government programs. I don't know why this is. But, well, you might put it this way: the artist in a sense is the bottom of the totem pole. Art is still not considered essential. It's much more important to send people that are involved with agriculture, manufacturing, different sciences.

PAUL CUMMINGS: They don't see an instant product.

STEWART KLONIS: That's right. That's the direction it's been in. I think probably the more successful programs that have gone over so far have been the performing groups.

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PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, certainly as far as publicity or general reception I think—

STEWART KLONIS: Well, not only that. But they had something to show, their performances. A dancing group or a dramatic group and so on so it's obvious.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Okay. Well, could we stop now.

STEWART KLONIS: Good!!

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PAUL CUMMINGS: Okay. It's February 17th. Reel 3. Paul Cummings talking to Stewart Klonis. We've talked about the 1940s and the GI influx of students. What happened when that great surge was over with?

STEWART KLONIS: Well, it wasn't that abrupt. It seemed to decrease over a period of about two years. At First the numbers became less and less. In the beginning we didn't notice it. Towards the end the numbers decreased abruptly. Because of the GI's we had a very large staff. The last year we operated under this program we had a very large loss. We were carrying on the whole program and of course the veterans' benefits ran out. Then the unfortunate thing—which is always unfortunate—we had to adjust in order to be self-supporting. So we had to drop a great many instructors. I don't think there was a great deal of resentment because the instructors themselves saw what was going on. In some instances their classes were reduced to practically nothing. Of course the popular teachers still had large classes. The less popular ones petered out. And those were dropped. I think this process of dropping affected the school in a way. Because during the GI days we had a great many men studying here also in a very interesting age. They were predominantly in the middle- or upper-20s. They had a much more serious and attentive approach to their work. It was quite different from teenagers who were sent by their parents, sometimes just to get rid of them and sometimes because the student doesn't want to go to college and so on. So the effect was quite different. Then again there was a change not only in that way but there was a change in the type of thing that was being done. There was much more stress on more advanced work, more avant-garde work. You must remember that during that period very few students, although they are avant-garde artists now they were not avant-garde students. This was the time when Rauschenberg was probably the most avant-garde of the group. He studied with Vytlačil and Kantor. I think Rosenquist was in the Reilly class, an illustration class.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, that's interesting. Well, he was a sign painter, too.

STEWART KLONIS: That's right. He was a sign painter. I don't remember exactly who Lichtenstein studied with. The most avant-garde, most advanced painters probably were Kantor and Vytlačil. So that whereas before the war these classes were pretty well attended, after the war they were jammed.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Really?

STEWART KLONIS: Yes. The character of the student body changed at that point—a great deal of it. Then moving in that direction we started taking people like Stamos and Poons and so on with the idea of filling that bracket. In all the time I've been here, which is now over 40 years, there has never been a predominance of the avant-garde student. This has always been a rather small minority group. It may vary from time to time between ten and 20 percent of the student body. The others were studying what you might call the fundamentals; they were studying drawing, regular drawing from the model, figure drawing, academic portrait painting, painting, landscape and such. It has always been so. To tell the truth, we've never had very large avant-garde classes. Even now those classes still are small.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Are there classes that are considered as avant-garde classes? Or is it the reputation of the instructor?

STEWART KLONIS: Regarding avant-garde, I would say this goes on the reputation of the artist teacher himself. Of course the avant-garde student has been studying for some time before he arrives at being avant-garde. For instance, it's very characteristic to register in a regular drawing class than go more or less to a realistic painter. Then by talking, by conversation, by getting involved in the art world, they'll switch and become ... This doesn't mean that all of them will. A great many will stay right where they are, in the realistic field. But some of them will switch and then they'll seek out an instructor who might be called more avant-garde.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Have you found an increase, say, in the 1960s over the 1950s? Or not? Or is it pretty much the same?

STEWART KLONIS: It's increased more in the 1960s than it was in the 1950s. As I've said, in the 1950s I don't think we had anyone more advanced or avant-garde than, say, Kantor and Vytlačil. Today these men are not considered at all avant-garde.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes. Who in the 1960's was considered—?

STEWART KLONIS: That's when we started adding people like Stamos—who is probably the best example—and a few others: Charles Alston came in just before that; he was moving more toward non-objective painting. Then some of the teachers themselves change in their own point of view.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Does that affect their classes a great deal when the instructor's own work changes quite rapidly?

STEWART KLONIS: Not so much. I can show you an exhibit now of Vytlačil's, outside (last week it was Kantor's)—and you will find a pretty broad range there even to the extent that some people are doing realistic things right in the class.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Really?

STEWART KLONIS: Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's interesting. So it's almost indicative that they're more interested in the man than in what he's doing?

STEWART KLONIS: That's right. The personality of the instructor counts for everything. We've had teachers come here who have a beautiful reputation outside, who are well known and so on and they didn't draw any students.

PAUL CUMMINGS: People didn't think of them as a teacher maybe?

STEWART KLONIS: Well, when we hire a teacher we never go into it to see whether he's a teacher or not. We hire him simply because of his reputation. But the personality sometimes ... And some people can't give out. By the same token many of our teachers don't have a big reputation but they are very successful in teaching. Their personality is such that they have very successful classes and very superior work comes out of their class. I might say that sometimes the student turns out better work than does the artist who teaches him.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's very interesting how that goes. Are there any special events or things that would

characterize the 1950s? I know there was that 75th anniversary exhibition at the Metropolitan.

STEWART KLONIS: Well, there were many unique things that took place at that time. You will remember that we had that very large exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of 75 artists associated with the League. At about the same time we had a juried exhibition of work of members of the League. This was held at the galleries of the National Academy. This was a very large juried show. Also at that time the League initiated for the first time a policy of acquiring works of art for its collection. That originated in that show at the National Academy. The pictures at the Metropolitan were practically all borrowed from various museums around the country as outstanding examples of the work of the artists that we had in that show. The show at the National Academy was a show of contemporary artists. The board initiated this policy by simply allocating \$7,500 (this being our 75th anniversary) to buy \$7,500 worth of work out of that show. I think this helped in getting a higher standard in that show. We acquired a number of pictures out of that show for that \$7,500. And from that time on we've been adding on not regularly but consistently buying works so that today we have probably somewhere around 80 items collected. (This includes painting and sculpture, not prints.) Practically all bought in one way or other. Sometimes we buy from an artist who is in financial difficulty. We help him out by buying his work. Somehow it seems that we've always bought things from artists who we were afraid might die—older artists. We never got a Kuniyoshi nor a Reggie Marsh because we didn't expect them to die when they did. We expected them to be with us for some time and we were buying things from people who were older. And some of those people are still here.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What about all the other paintings that are downstairs and around the building?

STEWART KLONIS: Practically all of them belong to the League. Except for a few examples across from the registrar's office which show examples of the work of some of our current instructors in case a student wants to know what kind of work the instructor is doing. But practically all the work you see belongs to the League. And there is even some work down in the cellar that we have no room to hang. We put paintings in the corridors, in the lunchroom, in the offices. We lend a number out for different exhibitions that are sent out like the American Federation of Art which sometimes prepares exhibitions and occasionally they borrow some of our paintings. Right now we have three pictures on loan over at—what do they call it now? —the old Huntington Hartford Museum—the Civic Center.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, yes. Right.

STEWART KLONIS: There are three paintings there; one by Shinn, one by DuBois, and one by John Sloan. And we have acquired a good collection of prints by different artists. The latest we bought was a set of Reggie Marsh prints that the Whitney Museum is putting out. Another thing that happens: Alice Murphy died and she left all her work to the League for the League to sell and half the money that's realized is to go to a scholarship in her name and the other half is to go to the instructors' endowment fund. And I know of the work of several other artists that is coming to the League conditionally. I really don't know what we're going to do with them. Some of these artists have a great many pictures in their studio and they have not been too successful in selling them and now they are going to be handed over to us.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Then what do you do?

STEWART KLONIS: Yes. Then what do you do?

PAUL CUMMINGS: The board has a problem then.

STEWART KLONIS: Yes. Well, of course, these people are not unknowns. And I believe that eventually, if there's no way of selling them that probably they'll be offered to different non-profit education institutions, art centers, or small museums, and so on. Where I think they will be very gratefully accepted.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Who organized the 75th anniversary show? And how did it come to be held at the Metropolitan?

STEWART KLONIS: Francis Taylor was director of the Metropolitan then. He was very friendly to the League. ON a number of occasions I had an opportunity to sit with him and talk about the art world. He consulted with me on certain activities that he planned. This was more or less in confidence. He felt that my being in New York and working with so many artists that I had some feed-in. Also it was at this time that he hired Robert Beverly Hale who was an instructor here, as curator of American Art at the Metropolitan. Before he hired Mr. Hale he asked me what I thought of his choice. I said, "I think it's a very good choice for the simple reason that nobody can accuse him of leaning in any one direction. He's not known for being avant-garde or an old academician either. He's a man well prepared for that job. And, you know, after all, many museum jobs are based on the background of the individual to the extent of centuries. And since Hale is a descendant of Nathan Hale, from that branch of the family, his choice is certainly a good one."

PAUL CUMMINGS: He's got some tradition. Who actually organized the show?

STEWART KLONIS: The actual selection of the work was made by the Board of Control. They decided on the names. They went over the names of the past and cut the list down to 75. Then Bob Hale (who was also at the Metropolitan by this time) and also teaching here, and E. Leslie Waid, who was president of the League at that time, the two of them toured the country, visited different museums, saw examples of the work of these individuals that they were looking for, and invited those pictures which were loaned to us by the various institutions.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's very interesting because it's painters themselves that picked the show; the artists rather than museum people.

STEWART KLONIS: That's right. Well, a great many of them were in the Metropolitan's collection anyway so we borrowed examples of them which didn't put us to much expense to get.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Did that produce any kind of effect as far as the League is concerned?

STEWART KLONIS: No.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Really nothing? It was a nice exhibition.

STEWART KLONIS: We had a very handsome opening. I think we served champagne. We had music there, men in red coats playing classical music, you know, the typical violin, cello and piano combination. I think it had an effect primarily on the Art Students League membership. They came, they saw their daughters. The show lasted for a number of months so it had a good audience. Probably hundreds of thousands of the people that came here previously to study were attracted to see what the exhibition was like and the attendance was very good. We also printed a very elaborate catalogue of that exhibition and set a pattern for our catalogues in that we reproduced every piece of work in that exhibition on one page and on the facing page was a piece written by a person prominent in the art field with some comments about the particular artist. So that set a pattern for us to follow more or less. In the most recent exhibition we've had the Federation circulated a number of pictures from the Art Students League.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I know that's a marvelous catalogue on that show.

STEWART KLONIS: To me a catalogue is very important in an exhibition. The exhibition comes from many areas, many distances, from many individuals and it's a unit there for a relatively short time. But if it's well done it's a permanent record of who was there, what they represented, and so on. I always insist on a good catalogue for any exhibition.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's interesting. Do you think it does anything as far as attracting students to the school? Or was that not perceptible?

STEWART KLONIS: Well, this is the general [inaudible] of becoming to be known as a national institution. Publicity of that kind is a record somewhat of achievement, a record of the kind of standards that your institution has, it has a general effect. I believe that the Art Students League has a reputation in Europe as well as in this country as a place to study art. I have a funny story about one of our members who went to Russia some years ago. She had difficulty in getting around. There were certain restrictions on going to certain places. She showed her membership card in the Art Students League and then she was admitted. This is a true incident. And not recently, but some years back we had a group come over here from Russia. They visited the League. We showed them around. They talked to the students. They had interpreters and so on. The young people were probably in their 20s. They were on guided tours around the United States. One of the places they visited was the Art Students League.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Were they art students?

STEWART KLONIS: Yes, they were connected with art. They were involved with art. As a matter of fact, the debate was rather funny. There's a gallery upstairs that might be called the auditorium. There were probably 150 to 200 of our students there and there were about 25 or 30 visitors. The Russians asked our students how much they paid here to study. Well, in Russia they don't have to pay anything. But some of the visitors said they would rather be here and pay than be in Russia and not have to pay. The argument went on back and forth. There was quite a discussion about the way things are operating here. That was one interesting incident. Then also about this time the League used to have a series of very, very well publicized balls which were called Dream Balls. There was a series of those. They were held annually. The party was usually a costume party. They were usually sold out weeks before the event. The chairman was Richard Kollmar who was married to Dorothy Kilgallen. Of course they had their morning radio program on which they would publicize the ball. They also had their friends publicizing the ball. The object of these balls was to raise money for scholarships. In addition to that

our instructors gave minor pieces of work which were auctioned off. People like Dorothy Kilgallen, Lillian Steele, and Lillian Boscowitch would be in the better night clubs selling these chances at 50 cents a piece. A substantial amount of money would be raised. At the ball a lottery was drawn and works of art were distributed to the winners. One day Lillian Boscowitch came in and told me that she had just sold two books of changes to the Duke of Windsor. The Duke and Duchess were in one of these night clubs and they bought two books of tickets (a book was five dollars). They didn't win any prizes though. But that was the kind of thing that was going on. These balls were held annually for years. The publicity was phenomenal across the whole country. Even in Japan a magazine that is similar to *Life* reproduced pictures of that ball. We received copies of the magazine. The same thing happened with an Italian magazine. So the balls created quite a stir. We didn't make too much money on them because they were very expensive. We usually had a Dream Girl—usually a prominent actress or one that was being built up as a prominent actress. This girl was featured in a procession at the ball and so on. The costumes were extremely elaborate and some of them were very skimpy, which attracted a large audience. The ball usually started at eleven o'clock. Before that parties were held by different people. They started at eleven and went on until four or five o'clock in the morning.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That made an all-night show.

STEWART KLONIS: That's right. We had continuous music from two or three well-known orchestras which played for us for dancing and so on. Student tickets sold for very little. Outsiders paid substantial amounts for tickets. But still the expenses ran so high.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, there were a lot of people and orchestras. How many would you get to attend a party?

STEWART KLONIS: Well, at the Waldorf we would get 1800 if we had the main ballroom and occasionally one of the smaller auxiliary ballrooms would be added to it. We got kicked out of that because we created too much publicity. The press usually stressed the nudity of the ball, which was not predominant. You had to come either in costume or in black or white tie. I would say that there were many more black tie and white tie than there were costumes. The students usually came in costume. In fact, the queen one year was costumed as a star.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Who was that?

STEWART KLONIS: I don't know—she's that Swedish girl that is in Italy now—I don't hear much of her now but some time ago. She was exceptionally well developed. I can't think of her name at the moment. I'll have to give it to you later. While she was being publicized here—we had a publicity agent promoting this—she received a telegram to make a picture in Hollywood. So that started her off in the beginning of her career. She did a lot of films in Hollywood and finally she went to Italy and did films there. She was Swedish. While she was being promoted she came in to visit the school, visited the classes. We learned that she was also an art student in Sweden before coming to this country.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Who did the publicity for those things, do you remember?

STEWART KLONIS: Oh, gee 0 it's an easy name. Actually Dick Kollmar did most of the publicity. He had this radio program every morning and he used it to promote the ball. He interviewed me on his program. He called in other people on their morning show. That was the most effective publicity. Usually anyone running an affair similar to this ball advertises in the newspaper that tickets are for sale, but we had to run an ad in the *Sunday Times*, on the art page that tickets were sold out and not to bother us any more.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, that's terrific. They finally just became too expensive to hold any more?

STEWART KLONIS: That's right. And also some of our own membership objected to the balls on the grounds that they didn't think this was the type of publicity that was good for the League to have. It might discourage some parents from sending their children here.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Too wild?

STEWART KLONIS: Too wild. I wonder myself now what would happen with all these plays and things that are happening in the movies and the plays on Broadway and Off Broadway and the things that are printed now, what would happen now if we put on a ball. I don't think it would have the same impact and probably nobody would notice anything. Just one more.

PAUL CUMMINGS: At one time the League was involved with a summer school in Woodstock?

STEWART KLONIS: It still is. Of course this was part of the GI program. You must remember that at that time the veterans didn't have any income unless they were in school. So they wanted to continue through the summer. Also a lot of them felt that being in New York City all winter they'd like to get out in the country for the summer. So we were looking for a place in the country that we could put into operation immediately; (it would take a long

time to build anything). We were offered some property on Martha's Vineyard. It was surplus government property. We found that that was too isolated.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Too costly to get back and forth.

STEWART KLONIS: Not only that but where would they live? Housing accommodation there was extremely limited. Then we looked around on Long Island. We were hoping all the time to get something near the water. But we couldn't. Then it was brought to our attention that there were some buildings up at Woodstock which were built by the government for the National Youth Administration. You remember that before the war there was that group. These buildings were built of local stone by the youths as part of their training. They cut their own lumber, cut down the trees. This location is part of the watershed of Kingston, New York. Kingston permitted the federal government to use this land. This was one of Eleanor Roosevelt's pet projects. They got a local artist—Tom Penney—to design the buildings and supervise the building. They had craftsmen teaching them. One of the buildings was for woodworking. They had about 90 individuals up there. They were training some of them in woodworking, some in weaving, and others in producing wrought iron and also how to cut stone, you know, tombstones and cutting the lettering and so on. Those are the four things that were taught. When World War II came along that project was abandoned. The National Youth Administration was discontinued. This was declared surplus property. A man by the name of Godfrey who was in the navy working in the area of surplus property learned about this and bought it for salvage for very little. He intended to convert these buildings into a ... he had a license to produce Pepsi Cola and he intended to use these buildings for bottling Pepsi Cola. But the zoning laws of the town of Woodstock would not permit such a plant in this area. So Godfrey had to get rid of it. We learned that the property was for sale and we bought the buildings for \$15,000. There was a lot of work to be done to them to make them into studios. We had to put in large dormer windows and so for skylights. We had to install sanitation. We had to do a lot of fixing up. In the end it cost us about \$65,000 to fix up those buildings. We have conducted summer school there every summer for the three months of June, July and August. For the GI's we had to maintain a low tuition because they were required to take two classes and the total cost for eight-and-a-half months, including supplies, could not exceed \$500.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Wasn't there a special summer school allotment for that?

STEWART KLONIS: It was part of the same over-all operation. There was no allotment for it. In other words, we had our summer school here as we have it now. This summer we will probably get about 350 to 400 students in June. This is the way it's been in the past. As soon as the other schools close, in June, the high schools and colleges and so on, it will go up to about 600. We'll have about 600 students here for July and August. In Woodstock we'll have about 100 or maybe 120 students for July and August.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's pretty good. So you'll have—what?—half a dozen instructors up there during the summer then?

STEWART KLONIS: No. Actually the most we've had was six but that was too many. In other words, three morning classes and three afternoon classes. But now we've cut it down to about four. Some of the instructors that are more popular have two classes instead of one. And we have a policy of hiring only artists that live in Woodstock. Because, for what we pay, it wouldn't pay for an artist to contemplate to live ... Although we did that last year with Richard Mayhew. He lived about sixty miles away from Woodstock, so we allowed his transportation cost back and forth.

PAUL CUMMINGS: He has that great house some place.

STEWART KLONIS: Up in New City which is something like sixty miles from Woodstock. He was allowed the expense of going up there twice a week. He was rather pleased to go up there because he was in Woodstock some years before that, living there and actually his wife is a Woodstock girl.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How do the summer students at Woodstock compare to the ones in New York? Are they pretty much the same?

STEWART KLONIS: They're pretty much the same. In both places the summer students are a much younger group than the winter group. A great many of them are teenagers. They're kids who are majoring in art in high schools and colleges. And there's enormous stress on drawing. They want drawing from the model. They just jam into the drawing classes, sixty in a class. We have about twelve classes during the summer and we have about 600 students. Some of the painting classes will have 25 or 30 or 40. But the drawing classes will be 60 and more.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Boy, that's just really lined up one after the other.

STEWART KLONIS: That's right. And they just love it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I wonder why they want that? Maybe they don't get enough drawing instruction in their

regular schools?

STEWART KLONIS: I guess they do like an opportunity of working from a model day after day. They show a great deal of progress in this short period of time. They really develop. They don't get any credits for it but they want to concentrate on drawing, which they don't get an opportunity to do anywhere else.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's interesting. You've mentioned before briefly that you have a number of Oriental students and it sounded to me as if there is an increasing number of students from around the world every year who come. Is that on the increase?

STEWART KLONIS: It seems to be. I think there are many reasons for it. You must remember that the City of New York is now thought of as the center of the art world, the most dynamic, the most important. Paris doesn't have that any longer, as it had in the past. And once they get here they want to go to a place where they can concentrate in this area. Of course some of them are registered in colleges and universities, too, but they're not the same people. Practically all of them have had previous training in their country. They're not beginners. And very, very often they're students that want to go into the most avant-garde classes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, you really get people that want to be painters or sculptors or printmakers rather than teachers here, don't you?

STEWART KLONIS: That's right.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You don't get people who come to study and then get teaching jobs?

STEWART KLONIS: No. But many teachers come in the summer as a sort of refresher course.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, really?

STEWART KLONIS: Yes. We have teachers that come here. That's one of the kind of people that come here during the summer. They may not come for the whole summer; they come for a month; some will come for the month of July, some will take August. It's a refresher. We in New York think that summer is a time to get away from the city. And a lot of people that have been out there in the country for eleven months think it's great to get to New York for a month.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What would you say are the most, oh, kind of interesting events or activities that characterize the 1960s here—the last ten years as opposed to other decades? How has it changed? How has the student body changed? The number of students?

STEWART KLONIS: Well, for the League the thing, the main changes that changed effectively, actually without going out seeking it, some foundations have become interested in us.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, really? In what way?

STEWART KLONIS: For instance, the Joe and Emily Lowe Foundation began to give us contributions annually for building up different kinds of activities here. Then the Ford Foundation, while making a survey of the arts came here—McNeil Lowry, a man I did not know of, made an appointment to come to talk to me. He came with another man from the Ford Foundation, Mr. D'Arms. They were making that survey for the Ford Foundation. They spent practically the whole day here and they became interested in the League and how we operated. Later I was called in on a number of conferences that Ford had of the various arts. Sometimes these were two-day conferences held in their offices. There would be people there representing music, writing, theatre, the visual arts. At several of these conferences I expressed my point of view along with others on what was needed in the art field. And practically unsolicited the Ford Foundation awarded us a grant for scholarships of \$140,000. The premise was that these were for talented individuals who do not have enough money. We're using that at the rate of about \$20,000 a year for scholarships. Subsequently I asked for, and received a challenge grant from the Ford Foundation. The purpose of this was to somewhat increase the salaries of our instructors without raising the tuition substantially. Ford gave us a challenge fund of a quarter of a million dollars. We matched that amount in less than two years by contributions. This is a very changed attitude in the operation of the League. There had been small amounts of money left by this or that fund that would provide scholarships, some every year, some every two years, and some even longer. In other words, the principal was invested and the income from that as it accumulated is used for a scholarship. But this grant from the Ford Foundation is a substantial thing. This instructors' endowment fund which was completed a year ago last December is invested now and the income from that we distribute at the end of every fiscal year. Our fiscal year is the end of May. Our instructors have been able to get a bonus of about 20 percent of their salary in a lump sum towards their summer's expenses.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's a marvelous way to have the summers start. Are there a great many scholarships

here?

STEWART KLONIS: Yes, now. Ford Foundation produces about 50. Then we have about 35 merit scholarships. These merit scholarships are not based on need. Any student that has been a cash-paying student for three months can enter the competition. The winner is freed from paying one year's tuition. That's what it amounts to. It doesn't matter what the student's financial position is. Usually five artists are invited to select the 35 or so students. And they don't work by majority. Each of the five is apportioned of the number that are in the awards to select his own. So it represents a cross section.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, I see. Each one picks their four or five or whatever?

STEWART KLONIS: That's right. In other words, so the selection of the people is also permitted on the basis of the various points of view that these artists have. Those are merit scholarships. For about ten or 15 of these the funds are provided from other funds' scholarships. But the others are memorial scholarships that the League has established in memory of any artist that has worked here for ten years or more. The scholarship is usually given for the number of years that the instructor has served. For instance, when DuMond died he had served here for 56 years so his scholarship will continue for 56 years. Bridgman was here for 41 years so his scholarship will continue for 41 years.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What kind of scholarships are they—tuition?

STEWART KLONIS: Tuition scholarships for a year. There are about 20 of them now.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So you've really got over a hundred scholarships?

STEWART KLONIS: Oh, more than that. Then there's a Board of Control scholarship for the person who is needy, who cannot fit into the category of the Ford Foundation requirements, he hasn't won a merit scholarship but still he's talented and wants to study. The Board of Control under the League's constitution is permitted to waive tuition for such a student for a period of time.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So the League goes as far as it can towards accommodating the student and giving him opportunities?

STEWART KLONIS: That's right. Then we have two traveling scholarships each year. At present these are \$3,500. The student is required to go abroad to develop his own work. He is not required to study though he may go to school if he wants to.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Or travel.

STEWART KLONIS: Or just paint. They usually travel and paint and visit museums. These usually start in September. They're abroad for a year. Then the following January an exhibition is held of the work they did on their program. The exhibition is held for two weeks in our gallery here.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's terrific. It gives them a challenge as well as a reward and everything else.

STEWART KLONIS: That's right.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Do you think that traveling scholarships like that are very good? Or do you think that a scholarship that puts you in an institution is a better kind?

STEWART KLONIS: No, I think the best grant to any artist is an outright grant to relieve him of his financial difficulties so that he can concentrate and develop his own work. You may find that some people waste it. But knowing artists and especially young artists I would say that the great majority will apply themselves very conscientiously and do a good job.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's very interesting. I was talking to Henry Geldzahler yesterday. He was with the National Arts giving all those grants and he said that the artists sometimes did incredible things with the grant but that out of the 190 grants he was involved in, in giving over the three years or whatever it was, he said that about 80 or 90 of those people are now beginning to show in the galleries. A rather extraordinary percentage when you think about it.

STEWART KLONIS: Well, they're conscientious. To me a person who is an artist takes his art seriously; otherwise he would not be an artist. It's so much easier to be anything else. A person can make a living and generally make life easier for himself in almost any other area than being an artist, especially if they apply themselves as conscientiously as they do to their own work.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right. That's true. Are there any areas or activities that you've been involved with, say, ...

well, let's see, you're a member of the Century Club and The Players. Do you have any personal outside activities like that?

STEWART KLONIS: No. In other words, the Century gives me an opportunity to meet people in one's own area mostly. I usually go to their monthly dinners. In other areas I know lawyers, judges, writers, and so on. But basically there I am associated with people that are in the arts or doing something related to the arts. I meet people from different foundations that are interested in the League. Some of the things that we've gotten in the past years originated at the Century Club. Some years back I met a man named Lay (L-a-y). I didn't know him but he was a former student at the League years ago. He was involved with the Allen Tucker Memorial Fund. We had a conversation and the following year, after meeting him, I received a check for two scholarships from the Memorial. When I looked into it I found that there were a number of League people serving on that board. Allen Tucker was an artist. He wrote a special article for our 50th anniversary back in 1925 and we still quote in our catalogue what he said about the League. After he died he left this amount of money—or actually his widow set up this fund in his name and the money is used for different purposes in the arts. Since then the number of scholarships from this fund has been increased to four, so each year the League has four scholarships with money provided by this Fund. McNeil Lowry, of the Ford Foundation, is a member of the Century Club so I get a chance to talk to him. Some of these meetings that had about the need for the instructors' endowment fund were held at the Century Club and included a luncheon. So it's an area where you have people who are in important positions and you can meet them on equal ground and under, I would say, ideal circumstances. Not necessarily that you ask each one to help but at least you have an opportunity to talk about what you're doing in your institution.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes. That's terrific. How about The Players?

STEWART KLONIS: I joined The Players some time ago. I don't belong to The Players now. I quit. It's too much out of the way down on Gramercy Park. At the time I joined the president was William Plante, of the League. He is a very active member of that club so he persuaded me to join it. I stayed with it for a couple of years but I didn't keep it up.

PAUL CUMMINGS: There's only so much time with everything else.

STEWART KLONIS: That's right.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Are there any things that I haven't brought up here that you think we should talk about?

STEWART KLONIS: Well, a few recent things that happened: I had a phone call from McNeil Lowry of the Ford Foundation. He received a letter from John Torres a former student of the League about the need for the minority groups for a place where gifted individuals could work in the summertime. McNeil Lowry told me about receiving this letter. In the letter it was suggested that Mr. Candell, Director of the MacDowell Colony in New Hampshire. So Mr. Lowry asked me if I could meet the next day with him and John Torres (who is a black sculptor, a good, young talented man and who also was at MacDowell Colony a number of times. I should mention that Mr. Torres in his letter suggested Mr. Candell to organize and set up such a program. They could not do it at MacDowell Colony but the object was to have it in New Hampshire. So we met the following morning and worked out a plan. This was in April. The plan was to begin in July. We were to accommodate 90 students, select a staff—office staff, models, counselors, instructors and the whole shebang. We worked out the plan, but the question remained where is there a place open in the summer for two months. Candell then contacted a number of smaller colleges and so on throughout New Hampshire. For one reason or other none were acceptable. Finally we found one in Vermont—the Vermont Academy that was willing to go along with our plan. Then we had to negotiate and so on. We selected the students. Most of them were from high schools; the largest percentage of them came from the High School of Art & Design; some came from the High School of Music and Art, and some came from other schools. Besides that we had a dozen or so dropouts. But they were gifted dropouts. They brought their work here and we examined it. We got recommendations from the high schools of those that were in high school. Then we picked some from the Art Students League, especially those that already had experience of setting up and conducting a class. We needed those for monitors. We selected five black artists to teach.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Who was up there teaching?

STEWART KLONIS: There was Joe Delaney—I'll get you a booklet that has all this.

PAUL CUMMINGS: This was—what?—two years ago?

STEWART KLONIS: That was a year ago last summer. It turned out magnificently. People worked well. They fitted into this small community very nicely. They produced a wonderful show. The governor of Vermont came down and saw the work and provided an exhibition of the work that was done there, which was put up in the Capitol. Then we had an exhibition of the work down here. About a dozen of the students got scholarships

outside. About half of them were not in their final year of high school so had to go back to high school. But of the other half I think about ten got scholarships in art schools like, for instance, the Mellon Institute in Pittsburgh; I think three of our went there. Some got scholarships to other art schools. We took about twelve or fourteen of the scholarships here for the following year. A 17 year old girl got a \$4,000 sculpture prize to go abroad to work. But as it turned out the Ford Foundation still had a question about this program being too small; they felt this was not national enough in scope for the enormous number of people that could qualify for this. I think many of the Ford programs are thought of in terms of national scope. In fact, when we got our grant for scholarships there were 28 institutions throughout the country who also got grants. These included music conservatories, art schools, and so on. This program I've just described was too small in scope. Though I think they were pleased because the end result was very good.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But it was not continued?

STEWART KLONIS: It was an experiment tried for a year. There were some administrative difficulties. John Torres had a different concept completely and at first he was not very sympathetic to the program as it was set up. Later on he was made liaison officer between the Art Students League and the Vermont Academy. He was not very cooperative. He learned of a farm up in Vermont that was for sale that he wanted the Ford Foundation to buy and then to subsidize. The farm was owned by a man who was breeding race horses but he was giving this up and wanted to sell the farm. It consisted of about a 140 acres and had beautiful stables and a big house. Torres's idea was to get a dozen or two dozen young artists there as residents and invite younger people to work with them and try to work across the whole art field; in other words, there would be musicians, writers, and so on. His proposal was that the Ford Foundation would buy this farm and subsidize it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: A whole culture center.

STEWART KLONIS: Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's very complicated and expensive. That's pretty difficult.

STEWART KLONIS: Well, the Ford Foundation did not accept that proposal.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's interesting. What other things might we talk about? We've covered quite a bit here.

STEWART KLONIS: I don't know. I think we might talk about the effective teachers: in other words, who were the great teachers in the League. There are certain individuals who had a great reputation as teachers. I've already mentioned Hans Hofmann as one who throughout the United States and perhaps abroad also was considered a great teacher. The end result does not justify this reputation. Something of the same thing happened to Robert Henri. He was considered one of the most inspiring teachers that ever taught. Yet it's very hard to find anyone who became well known that was a student of Henri. Hopper was one of his students. Again the same thing happens in his case: many people are mentioned in connection with his teaching. But they are actually younger artists who were affected by his teaching but did not actually study with him. People like Bellows, John Sloan, even the whole Ash Can School. But they were more or less associates of his, not really students.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Who were the great teachers at the League?

STEWART KLONIS: The great teachers here can be enumerated very easily: Kenneth Hayes Miller had a great influence. Many, many very important artists studied with him. DuMond was a very important teacher; a great many important artists studied with him. For example: Speicher; Norman Rockwell, the illustrator; Georgia O'Keefe; John Marin. These were DuMond students. And there's a whole bunch of DuMond students that are not as well known. The same thing is true of George Bridgman. Of course, a lot of his students became illustrators and so on, but many, many artists originally studied drawing with Bridgman. Somehow these men got people to think for themselves; they were much more philosophers than they were painters. They'd talk about art, about life; they'd get their students to become dedicated. These are the kind of things that a real teacher becomes. Harry Sternberg had a lot of well-known students. And Reggie Marsh had good people. Kantor is an excellent teacher. Vytlačil is a very good teacher. These are the kind of things that are important. If you look up the records of who studied with them, you'll find that the development comes out of the background of these individuals. Vytlačil also is the kind of person who is much more a philosopher than a painter. In their teaching they talk about life, about the individual, about different things. They give the individual the feeling that it's important to become an artist. That does not exist with the student when he first comes here. I would say that the bulk of them think in terms of how they can get into the commercial field and make some money as quickly as possible. But these instructors change these students; they change their thinking. They make them into disciples, dedicated to the fine arts.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What about some of the more contemporary teachers who are still active here?

STEWART KLONIS: Well, as I've said, Vytlačil and Kantor are active. Just this past year we've got a new, very young instructor, Bruce Dorfman. He's attracting large classes. And Peter Golfinopoulos teaches here and is attracting a large number. He was offered the chairmanship of the Art Department at Columbia. He turned that down. He said he couldn't take it any longer. He's willing to teach here. The salary at Columbia was rather good but that was not the thing. He wants to teach at the League because he still wants to have the contact with the new talent and the kind of people that he attracts to himself. So he wants to teach. Though he doesn't have to because his work is selling well now. A great many of our teachers don't have to teach. This is not a means of making a livelihood. If that were so, they would starve.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But they don't have many, many teaching hours a week, do they?

STEWART KLONIS: No. Well, they teach a morning class, say, two mornings a week; or an afternoon class two afternoons a week. That's seven hours a week. If they teach an evening class it's six hours. Some of them have two classes. Brackman doesn't have to teach. He charges \$15,000 for a portrait now. But he wants to come here. He loves it. Somehow these people need disciples.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, the younger students and the new ideas and the whole mentality of it.

STEWART KLONIS: Somehow it's important for them to have this constant contact even to some extent explaining to themselves what they are thinking and doing. This helps them to clarify their own ideas. And yet some of them can't and in a short period of time they're out. They usually quit. Or they don't have enough students and they don't want to continue. Like George L. K. Morris came here to teach some years back. He's a very able person, a person that has a long background of being more or less with the avant-garde point of view. He couldn't attract any people. After a short period of time he himself said, "That's enough." So he quit. And it didn't work with some other people.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How many students are there here now?

STEWART KLONIS: About 1800.

PAUL CUMMINGS: And how many instructors?

STEWART KLONIS: 59.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's quite a student body to re-register every month.

STEWART KLONIS: They register every month. And the turnover is terrific. Over a period of a year over 2500 new people come in here. Many of them are here for three or four years. So you can see that the turnover is churning all the time. They come in. They eliminate themselves. We're often asked, "How do you keep the incompetent ones out of here?" I say, "We don't have to—they drop out very fast because when they see what's going on around them in their own classes and they can't carry anything else except what they can accomplish with their palette or their carving materials or whatever—that's the only thing they can carry out of here and if it's not going they're not going to continue paying and staying here."

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right. Okay. Are you happy with that?

STEWART KLONIS: Well—

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