

**Lewis W. Webb's recollections  
about the beginning of the Oceanography program in the 1960s**

Sweeney: Turning to another matter entirely, in 1963 you mentioned the possibility of a master's degree in oceanography — marine biology, and you discussed it with Governor Harrison. I was wondering if you could give me the details on the origins of the Old Dominion interests in oceanography and marine biology?

*Webb: This goes back for some time. Naturally this university being surrounded by water, in fact, the last day or two the water has been coming down overhead and the water underground, little lakes and valleys around us, we're quite aware of water. Trying to find some avenue for our concentration as an urban university to serve our needs, from the beginning I've felt that the university had to identify itself with water, with the rivers, with the bay and with the ocean. And I've encouraged the sports to move in that direction as well with the sailing team, and I hope someday they'll find enough money to inaugurate a rowing team. This has got to be our strong suit and for the development of the oceanography—marine biology program, when Dr. Zaneveld came through this area on his way to New York, he'd been working in the Dutch Islands off of the Caribbean, I'm not sure of the name of it right now. He was finishing his tour there and was coming up to New York, and he stopped here and talked to me about the Bay. He had no intentions of staying at that time, and I convinced him that if he wanted to study the ocean and the Bay that this was the meeting of the north clime and the southern clime right here and that he could find things that were found only in northern waters and things found only in southern waters, and it was open water that had never frozen over or very rarely frozen over so that year—around work could be done in oceanography. The Bay was so large it had so little study. The fact that the cities in the area were becoming larger and causing more in the way of pollution and that it was a wide—open area for study. He agreed and didn't go any further. So I signed him up to take over the work for developing program of marine biology. At that time it was put under the Department of Biology because we weren't large enough to have individual schools. This matter then I did discuss with the president of William and Mary and Dr. Hargis of the Virginia Institute of Marine Science and finally with Governor Harrison because it was obvious that we had to identify with the water and that was the beginning of our doctor's degree in oceanography and marine biology. (pg. 3)*

Full interview at:

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