



Emery Castle Oral History Interviews, October 15, 2015

Title

“From Corvallis to D.C. and Back”

Date

October 15, 2015

Location

Castle residence, Corvallis, Oregon.

Summary

Castle begins interview 3 with some final thoughts on the report issued by the Commission on University Goals and the impact that the report made at OSU. He then moves on to a description of his years as Dean of the Graduate School at Oregon State, his recollections of Robert MacVicar, and a research project that Castle conducted in Yaquina Bay.

A major topic of interview 3 is Castle's tenure as an executive at Resources for the Future. He describes his decision to leave OSU for the Washington, D.C.-based think tank, notes important colleagues at RFF, and recounts the work that he completed there, including his successes in shoring up RFF's financial well-being. He also reflects on the difficulties of influencing public policy at the federal level and shares his memories of social life during his decade in the nation's capitol.

Castle next recalls the circumstances that led to his return to OSU in 1986, his leadership of the University Graduate Faculty of Economics, and his disappointment over its decline and dissolution. He also recalls his involvement with a rethinking of Extension at OSU, his memories of John Byrne's presidency, and his sense of Paul Risser's and Ed Ray's years leading Oregon State. The session concludes with Castle's reflections on his love of roses, points of pride from his research work, and thoughts on the future of the Land Grant mission.

Interviewee

Emery Castle

Interviewer

Chris Petersen

Website

<http://scarc.library.oregonstate.edu/oh150/castle/>

Transcript

Chris Petersen: Okay. This is interview number three with Emery Castle, and today is October 15th, 2014. So you mentioned that you had a little bit more to talk about, concerning the Commission of University Goals.

Emery Castle: Yes. We decided that there was a limit as to how far we should go, in terms of reorganizing departments, and schools, and colleges, and that sort of thing, because we were just three people, and we only had, first, twelve months, and then eighteen months to do it. It was obvious that something needed to be done, as far as Oceanography was concerned. It was clear that the role it was playing in the university, the role it played nationally, was more than that of a department within another college. So that sort of cried out for some kind of solution.

But what we decided in the other—for other things of a comparable nature, was that we should look at structure, and be sure the structure's capable of dealing with those kinds of issues, and do whatever we needed to do with respect to structure, but not get into a lot of nitty-gritty organizational detail. And I believe we were honest in staying with that pretty well throughout the new work. We did create some new commissions and boards, and so on and so forth, to deal with those kinds of things, but we did not go a long way in terms of specific operational units.

CP: Do you think the reports fulfilled President Jensen's ambition for it?

EC: [Laughs] He never went into great detail with me, and I doubt with anybody else, as to just what he did expect from us. He did meet with us after we completed the report. He came to campus and sat down with the three of us, and was happy that he appointed the goals commission. What he had in mind, with respect to the actual content, I have no way of knowing. But he was happy with the result, and I do know that.

CP: Now, was Robert MacVicar around by then?

EC: Yes.

CP: Did he give any indication of his feelings about the report? How was it received by him?

EC: My impression that he would have been just as happy to be without it, but he had it, and he couldn't very well ignore it. And so Jensen said that he met with MacVicar, and MacVicar was not altogether happy about that, and he said, "I told him that he'd better pay attention to it, that any one of those three people on that commission was capable of doing the work of the job that he had, and he ought to pay attention to it!" [Laughs] But I had the impression that MacVicar found some things in it that he felt were useful, but I do not think he was very excited about the goals commission.

CP: Well, in 1972 you moved into upper administration once again, as the Dean of the Graduate School. I gather you probably had some opportunity to work with MacVicar a little bit more at that point. But tell me about how that came about.

EC: Well, the deanship opened up. My wife was having trouble. I have never—I don't know that I've ever articulated this to anybody, but she was having emotional problems, and as a department head's wife, she felt a responsibility to do a certain number of things. I tried to tell her that she didn't have to do those things. "Just forget them. You don't have to do those things." But she felt a responsibility, and she was feeling guilty for not following through [0:05:00], and of course, I was very uncomfortable with this. And then I did feel that there was important work to be done in the graduate school. The dean there, Henry Hansen, basically had a good organization, but it had not been very well administered for several years, and there were things that needed to be done there.

And so in this opportunity, I thought that was maybe a way of addressing my personal problems, as well as doing something useful. Now, John Byrne doesn't agree with that. He told me that he thought that was a big mistake. He just told me recently that he thought that was—in my case, that was a big mistake, when I decided to do that. I did not say anything to him about what I said to you, but I don't think he agreed with me. And MacVicar thought that dean of the graduate school was about as low as you could get. However, I'll tell you a story. The first morning that I was Dean of the Graduate School, the head of the Geology Department came walking in, and he was upset about something that had

occurred in the graduate school, and he wanted this—then his second-in-command in that department came marching in, and after a little bit, MacVicar came marching in.

The three of them had been upstairs talking about this issue, and then they decided to come down, one at a time, and talk to the new dean of the graduate school. And I had no idea what was going on. And so they said something about that they had discovered that there were some students in that department that were getting all three degrees at Oregon State University, and they had found a rule in there that said that was not the thing to do, and so there was a big controversy going on. I didn't know anything about this. And MacVicar came in and said that he thought that Oregon State was really behind the times if there were that kind of a rule in the book, and he wanted to get rid of it, and so on and so forth.

And I sat there and I thought, "Now, we got to decide who's dean of the graduate school. We got to decide that right now." And so I picked up the graduate catalog, and I couldn't find that damn rule. I thumbed through it, and I thumbed through it, and I couldn't find it. But anyway, I told—said something like the following. I said that I happened to think that that was a good rule, but I would take it before the graduate council at the very next meeting, and that I would—okay, I said I would not let any mistakes that had been made in the application of that rule impinge upon or damage any student that was here. We established that we would set the rule aside and take care of the students. But I'd take it before the graduate council. And I said, "My recommendation is that we keep the rule, and that's what I'll tell the graduate council, but we'll do whatever they decide." MacVicar snorted, and got up and stomped out of the room, and he never bothered me again. [Laughs] And I decided that we weren't going to make a rough decision there simply because of my ignorance, and he never bothered me again.

CP: Mm. I've heard he had a bit of a temper.

EC: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. He did. But I had a temper, too, that morning. I mean, I was furious. I mean, to pull that kind of a trick on a new person that couldn't possibly have had a chance to get on top of that problem, and none of them told me that they had been upstairs discussing it. That's something I learned weeks later, that they had all three talked about this, and they had talked out a decision. [0:10:00] But I threw all of that out the window and started over, and then no one challenged me.

CP: Well, on a broader level, I'm wondering what your assessment is of—

EC: I'm sorry.

CP: On a broader level, I'm wondering what your assessment of MacVicar's presidency is. I'm sort of been asking this about all the presidents you came into contact with.

EC: Well, I do not think he was a strong president. I do not think you can point to any significant, really significant, academic thing on this campus that he could take responsibility for. I just don't think there was any. But he was—I didn't really have a lot to do with him, so he kind of avoided me, and I avoided him, so I didn't have much of anything personal at that time. But I think he just kept things in place, and was a very meticulous administrator of what was in place. But, I mean, the president coming down to the graduate school and trying to meddle in the interpretation of a rule? That's pretty picayune stuff. And the president ought not to be doing that. They've got more important things to do.

CP: Yeah.

EC: Well, I'm critical.

CP: He has a reputation of having been a micromanager.

EC: Oh, yeah, yeah. He had been dean of the graduate school once upon a time, through Oklahoma, and he didn't respect the office at all. He thought there was not anything very important to be done in that office. But anyway, that's my opinion.

CP: During the 1970s, you were also able to do some research in Yaquina Bay, on water quality.

EC: Mm-hm.

CP: Can you tell me about that?

EC: Yeah. Chuck Warren, in Fisheries and Wildlife, was the one that called that to my attention, and he recommended that we do a study there, to see if the resources of the bay should be protected and preserved, or whether it shouldn't be exploited, and go in the direction of utilization of the bay. They had a big employment problem at that time on the bay. There were a lot of unemployed. The timber industry was declining, and they just couldn't provide employment for all of the people that they had in that area. And so he recommended that we take this on. I think that that was probably the second study of the economics of water pollution control that was financed by the federal government. I think it was the second study. I've been told that, at least.

And so it was a little different kind of a problem than had been investigated before. I recruited Herb Stockinger out of the University of Illinois, brand-new PhD, to come out and sort of be in second-in-command, because I had other things going on at that time, as the department head. And so we did some fairly detailed study of what kind of economic activity stemmed from that bay, and the different uses that were made of it. We looked at the mill, and all the upstream—

CP: Toledo?

EC: Toledo, yeah. We looked at the mill there, and the employment structure, and so on and so forth, and then we applied the newer techniques of analysis to that [0:15:03], and that was our—that was our study. It won a research award, both from the American Agricultural Economics Association and the Western Agricultural Economics Association. Stockinger was a very good person to head that up, and we had several people working on it. We involved the Department of Civil Engineering in it, as well as Fisheries and Wildlife, and Ag Econ, and those were the three major departments involved.

What we discovered was that—I'm speaking now from memory; I'll have to wander a little bit—they had decided that they would take that effluent, they would treat it at the mill site, and then they would take the rest of it over above the surface, and transport it all the way to the ocean, and dump it into the ocean. And the alternative to that was to have some upstream treatment of that effluent. And so we analyzed those alternatives. Some of them had been—well, most of them had already been implemented, and this was a second look. However, if we had found something different, I think there would have been some pressure to do something a little different than they did. But the optimal solution turned out to be—and the one that was economically optimal, and the one that the local people chose—was to insist on a certain level of water quality, but also to permit some uses of the bay that were not what all of the environmentalists would have liked. And this brought about some modification in the underlying literature dealing with that subject. And when I went to RFF, some people were familiar with our study, and it had passed pretty rigorous reviews by that time.

But I've wandered here a little bit, but that's what led to the study, and I don't want to leave the impression that we had a lot of impact on the state program that might the final decisions. I don't know whether we did or not. But coming in as we did, I think we found that what the community had decided, and the state government had decided, was not a bad solution. And I think we learned a lot in the process, as well.

CP: Well, something you've alluded to several times over the course of our conversations came about in 1976, a major shift for you. You left OSU and took a position as Vice President at Resources for the Future, a public policy institute in Washington, D.C. How did all of this come about?

EC: [Laughs] Well, as I mentioned to you, RFF came into existence in 1952. That was the year I got my PhD, so we sort of grew up together. And I knew all of those people as they were appointed. They came sort of into the fraternity. I worked closely with John Krutilla, and in 1959—yeah, 1969, 1969, the year before Earth Day, we organized a summer session on resource and environmental economics here, and brought in John Krutilla [0:20:00], from RFF, and Jed Baker, from the University of Illinois, and Morris Kelso, from the University of Arizona. Together with our people here, we constituted a faculty, and we had graduate students coming from all over the United States. We may have even had some international students. I'm not sure of that right at the moment, but that was quite an event, and we drew upon our literature in doing that.

And Krutilla went back to RFF. I had known Krutilla for a long time, but when we decided to do the summer session, I just called him immediately and asked him if he'd come out and help us do it, and he was anxious to do it. So he went back to RFF, and he had a lot of good things to say about what was going on at Oregon State. And he had some statistics

on the literature citation, and some of the things pointed to our work here. But as I say, I got to know those people pretty well, just as one on one. RFF was brought into existence, as I say, in 1952. It originally stemmed from work that—oh, the head of CBS, Pauly, did, as Harry Truman appointed him to be head of the commission after World War II, to study whether our resources were adequate to support vigorous economic growth for a long period of time.

And then when Eisenhower became President, he took that over sort of lock, stock and barrel, and there was a recommendation made in the report. The report that was submitted in government was "Resources for Freedom." That was the title of the report. But when the report was submitted, the Ford Foundation had been in existence for quite some time, but they had not been very active, and it was sort of coincidental that they decided that they would use their very substantial resources, and become much more active in making grants. And so that came into existence just about the time that this report, "Resources for Freedom," was submitted to Eisenhower, the new President.

And then at that point, there were 30 academics that got together and went to the Ford Foundation, and said that they should pick up on a recommendation that was made in the report, "Resources for Freedom," an established organization, non-governmental, that would be devoid of political influence, that would study—would be prepared to study and advance advice on the adequacy of natural resources in the United States. And that's where—so they were going to use "Resources for Freedom" as the title of the new organization, but they found that someone else had taken that name for some purpose, and they couldn't use it. So that's why Resources for the Future came into existence. And Daniel Pauly, who was the head of CBS, he was very active in all of this.

And it turned out that of those three academics that went to the Ford Foundation to argue for this, I knew two of them quite well. Both of them were pictures that you saw in here. Gilbert White was one, and Ted Schulz was the other. [0:25:00] But, well, I have to continue this. By the time 1975—by 1975, this had been in existence 25 years, and the Ford Foundation was becoming dissatisfied with their performance. So the RFF president resigned, and they were without a president, and Marion Clawson, who's one of the other pictures there—he was the Acting President. And so they then hired Charles—I guess I was on the list become president, or one of the candidates not to become president, one of the candidates for president. I guess. I've been told this two or three times. [Laughs] I guess I was.

But anyway, the person they hired was Charles Edge, who was retiring as President of the University of California. And then the staff that knew me really got on the bandwagon, hoping to become vice president. I didn't know anything about this. I knew this was going on, but I didn't know that I was being considered. And I don't know what I would have done if they had come to me and asked me to let my name be considered, but they didn't. They just went ahead. And so I then just got a telephone call from Clawson, and asked if I would go back and be interviewed for vice president. I did it primarily because of Charles Edge. Here was a name that I'd known all my professional career, and highly distinguished in every respect. I talked to my wife about it, and told her that I thought there'd be very few social demands on her, and she said, "Well, what about the Ford Foundation? Can they be counted upon?" [Laughs] That's all she said. But that was it ended up. Well, I went back and was interviewed by Charles Edge. The staff, they knew me, and they didn't have any questions, but Edge asked me a lot of questions. And so when he offered me the job I turned him down, and then he tried again, and I capitulated. That's how it happened.

CP: What was it like working with him?

EC: One of the most interesting things that ever happened to me was two or three years with Charlie Edge. He was altogether different than I had imagined that he would be. He was very quiet, and very reserved. I went back for two weeks in December, and came back here and did some things, then went back. But I knew I was going to be his Vice President, but then I went back full-time was sometime in January. But during that period, I had learned that the staff was very critical of Edge. They didn't like to work for him, and so on. And so when I went back, one of the first things I did was to say to him, I said, "Charlie, I think you should talk to the staff, and visit with them." I felt comfortable that I was going to be able to work with him. I didn't have a problem on that score.

But I thought it would be unfortunate if I moved in there, and somehow he would become shelved or something. And I said, "I think you really ought to talk to the staff, and have some direct interaction with them." He looked at me, and said, "I come to work every day. I talk to you; you talk to them. What's the problem?" And that's the way it worked. That's the way it worked. I dealt with the staff. I'd go in and talk to him, yeah [0:30:00], lay things out to him. He would always give

me an answer, but it was my job, then, to see that it got done. And he was a marvelous writer—much better writer than I am, just much better. Not a terribly original mind, and that's what surprised me.

If we had a tough problem, very often I would scratch out something or would take some—lay out the issues, or something like that, and he'd take what I did, and just write something that was just absolutely superb. I could not do that. I could not do that. But he just had to—one time—he never evaluated my work during the time we were there, but one time I did something for him; I don't know what it was. I think I surprised him with it, and he uttered, "You're as good an associate as I've ever had." That's the only time he ever evaluated my work.

CP: Hm. What were some of the topics that you were wrestling with as Vice President?

EC: Well, the future of the organization was very much in the air. It wasn't clear it was going to survive.

CP: Because of the funding issues?

EC: Yeah. Ford Foundation had not made up its mind what it was going to do. So we tried to raise money. We had a Rockefeller on our board. We had Anderson, from Arco, the oil company, on the board. Let's see. We had the third person—a very rich person on the board. I forget who the third person was, but anyway, there were three. And they were willing to help, but nothing that would be enough to keep us afloat. And Edge and the Vice President at Ford, named Marshall Robinson, got together, and went to the Brookings Foundation, and asked if Brookings would be interested in taking us over. And their negotiation was underway, and they'd gone down the road quite a ways, I guess.

Ford Foundation was supporting this, and we had a board meeting in Canada someplace, I guess. And the morning of that board meeting, Edge told Gilbert White, who was Chairman of our board, that he and Marshall Robinson was trying to sell RFF to Brookings Institution. It's the first that Gilbert White found out, or knew about it. And I hadn't known about it. He was Chairman of the Board, and I was Vice President, and we didn't know about this. And it was presented to the board, and you can imagine what the—I mean, there were just people all over the place [laughs], mad about this. And I was on—the staff came to me, and I didn't know anything about it, and that put me on the spot, really on the spot. I didn't want to anything disloyal to Edge, but on the other hand, he hadn't told me anything.

So I had to take a position on that, and I said that I was opposed to the merger, and I hoped it didn't occur. But that was about all I could say, because we didn't have much of a plan at that point. But what happened was that Gilbert White, Chairman of our board, went to the Mellon Foundation—well, I'll need to establish one more thing. The Ford Foundation was going to put \$7 million into the merger. They had agreed to do that. So Gilbert White went to the Mellon Foundation, and asked what they would do if we were to become independent, on our own, and they offered \$2.5 million to keep us independent. [0:35:00]

And now I come to one of the more serious things that I've done in my life. Gilbert White came through Washington, DC, on the way abroad—he did a lot of international work—and asked to talk to me. And of course I showed up, and he said—told me about—that he had the \$2.5 million grant, and that my job now was to go to a meeting that was going to be held at Estes Park, Colorado, and the president of the Ford Foundation was going to be there. And I was to go and ask the president of the Ford Foundation what he would do if we would take the \$2.5 million, then raised the remainder of the \$7 million over a long period. Well, no, we asked him if he'd just give us the \$7 million if we were to become independent.

And I said, "Gilbert," I said, "I have never met the president of the Ford Foundation." And I said, "You want me to go there, and in front of Edge and Marshall Robinson, and they're trying to put this merger—you want me to go over the head of my president and present this to him?" I said, "Is that what you want me to do?" And he said—and I shall never forget—he said, "Emery, if you're going to be president of RFF, you'd better start acting like it." So I did. And the president of the Ford Foundation—you would know the name. He was JFK's international affairs advisor, and he served under Lyndon Johnson. He was provost at Harvard—well, I just can't tell you his name, but anyway, he was a well-known person.

And he sat there, and I made a little presentation before we went to dinner. We went to his cabin, and I laid this out, and there Charlie Edge sat, looking like a thundercloud, and the vice president of the Ford Foundation was looking like another thundercloud, and here I was, talking to the president of the Ford Foundation, trying to sell him on something. And he sat there and listened to all of what I had to say, and then he said—he said, "Where is Gilbert White going to get

\$2.5 million?" And I said, "I don't know." I had guessed it, in my own mind. I was pretty sure, but I didn't—Gilbert hadn't told me, but I'd figured it out. But I told him, I said, "I don't know," but I said, "If Gilbert says he has \$2.5 million, he has \$2.5 million." And he said, "Well, that's probably true."

So then what he said was, "I will give you \$7 million if you can do this by the first of October," and that was 90 days into the future, so we were supposed to raise \$7 million. And I said, "Well, we have \$2.5 million." And he said, "Well." But I said, "We can't do it in three months." I said, "That's just impossible to do in three months." I said, "We'd like to have a year." And so he was going out as president of the Ford Foundation, and there was a person coming in, but he wasn't coming in for approximately a year. And so right there in that room, that night [0:40:00], what he'd said was he would give us until September the 30th of the following year. So if we could do it in a little over a year, if we could raise \$7 million, they would match that \$7 million, and they'd give us the \$7 million, but they'd match it with another \$7 million.

And so Gilbert had \$2.5 million. John Krutilla, one of the RFF people, had done some piece of research, and he had pleased a woman that was on the General Motors Foundation, or General Motors, Ford. She'd been very pleased with this piece of research that he had done, so she was willing to promise \$1.5 million. And then I wrote something for the MacArthur Foundation, and I got the first \$1 million grant from the MacArthur Foundation. They didn't know me when—and they called and said they wanted to come to RFF on inspection. And what it turned out was that they didn't want to inspect RFF; they wanted to see what I looked like. And they came back and talked for a couple of hours with me, and they left. And on the 30th of September of the following year, they said that they were going to give us \$1 million. So that made our seven.

Well, we raised money like crazy for that year, and we saved our money best we could, and anything that we could possibly squeeze out, we put that into the \$7 million pot. And that \$1 million I got from the MacArthur Foundation put us over the top, but we didn't get it until September the 30th [laughs] of the year. So that was—you asked, but that was how I happened to become in the RFF. Then I was automatically the president, because Edge had said that he was leaving as soon as this was over. And he was hurt deeply that I did what I did, but he forgave me before he left, and we left on good, very good terms. I went out to see him before he died, and so I have very mixed feelings about Charlie Edge.

CP: Well, you had established the foundation on much firmer financial footing. What happened after that? What was the remainder of your agenda, or your time as President of RFF?

EC: Well, there was a lot of work that had to be done just to assimilate that money and set up the organization, and one of the things I did there—when we were struggling to raise that \$7 million, the staff was getting very concerned, and I just took the bull by the horns on that one, and I appointed two people from the staff, and I called them in and I told them that we had money enough to promise a certain number of people a job for eight years, and that would see them through to retirement. And that was our core. So I said that that makes three of us, and I said the way I'd like to proceed is the three of us, and then two more people, and then five of us will decide on two or three more until we get to that number, which I think was sixteen, or seventeen, something like that. And then I said, "We'll make a public announcement that this is our staff," and I said the rest of the staff will help in any way we can get another job, or if they could raise their own money, they could stay.

And morale just improved overnight, just overnight, because it removed all of the uncertainty. Many of these people that we didn't cover were very young people [0:45:00], but they were delighted to be able to rush out and try to get money, because they didn't want to leave. They wanted to stay. But they didn't seem to resent the fact—and this was the senior staff—that we had incrementally chosen. And there were no surprises there. There were one or two people who got left out, which was a surprise, but people that were retained—there were no surprises there. And I was a hero at that point, because the uncertainty had been eliminated, and they were just really happy with that. So I think of all the things I've done administratively, that was one of the better moments I've ever had.

CP: You, in our last session, talked about some frustration, or lack of success, engaging in public policy in the state of Oregon. Was your experience in Washington, DC, any different?

EC: [Laughs] Washington, DC, is a different ballgame—altogether different ballgame. Nobody knows who is predominant on a given thing. I mean, just so many forces that come together to create a final decision, that no one knows who should get what. Nobody. We had respect, and I think we were able to retain that respect. I told the staff right at the

beginning that the worst thing we could do would be to make some compromises, and get the reputation that we were selling out. I said, "We can't do that. We've got to be stricter than we have been, and more careful." And they accepted that. They didn't after I left. They made some big mistakes. But while I was there, I don't think we ever did anything that was at least that questionable. Let's see. I've lost track of your question.

CP: Just the public policy process.

EC: Oh, policy process. Well, we continued to take on difficult questions, and we didn't shy away from them, but we did just be very, very careful not to sell out to anybody, or create the impression that we might be interested.

CP: What was life like for you and your wife in Washington, DC?

EC: We moved into a house in a suburban neighborhood in McLean. We knew our neighbors well. And I have said that you picked that community up, and put them in Corvallis, and get rid of the southern accents, you would be right at home. Our lifestyle was pretty much the same. Twice a year, we'd have board meetings, and we had very rich people on the board, very important people, and so on. And everything was first-class, A-number-one, but that was over with, and the rest of the time we just were middle-aged people—or middle-class people that were struggling to pay the mortgage.

CP: I think you mentioned to me, possibly off-camera, that John Byrne was in DC at the same time, and you would get together from time to time?

EC: Yeah. Yeah, his tenures, my tenures, coincided almost exactly. But my wife and I, we didn't do much entertaining, but we discovered that we could buy dinner for people at the Kennedy Center, and then take them to some entertainment there, and that was our—and that was pretty much the social entertaining that we did. And John was really—had to work with that.

CP: Yeah. Well, you were there for ten years, and you came back to OSU. What was the decision-making process there, 1986?

EC: Well, Carl Stoltenberg played a big role in that. I appointed Carl to the RFF board when we had [0:50:02]—we initiated a forestry program while I was at RFF, and so we needed a dean of agriculture—or forestry, on our board. And it turned out that pretty much the deans themselves, deans of forestry themselves, all ended up recommending Carl, and so I appointed him, and he was a member of the board. And he decided that he wanted to solve the economics problem at Oregon State, and wanted me to come back.

And I was thinking of getting away from RFF because my wife's health was just—just, it was just impossible to live very long in those circumstances. She was—I was traveling so much, and I'd come home, and she was lonesome, and so on, and I just had to do something. And Carl suggested that maybe I'd like to come back, and head up a Graduate Faculty of Economics—it wasn't named that—but see if I could bring together the economists on campus, and develop a program, an integrated program. So I agreed to do it on a half-time basis. Actually, it was a quarter-time basis, but I was paid half-time. I was supposed to do some research or something, in addition.

The biggest disappointment of my career, biggest professional disappointment of my career. I created the Graduate Faculty of Economics, and they made some appointments in that department, and the objective was—their objective became how to get rid of this program. It was after I—when I was chairman, it worked. But then when I left, and they began to appoint different chairs, it became more and more bureaucratic: put everything in writing, and mandate precisely what Economics are going to do, and what Ag Economics are going to do. And finally they had a chair, they appointed him. This would be hard for you to believe, maybe. It's not something that the oral history should emphasize a great deal. It doesn't make Oregon State look very good, but what they did was to appoint a person to be chair of that group, that interdepartmental group—it's troubling in various ways—who had never had a day's administrative experience.

When I was chair, I set it up so that every year, at least every year, three times a year, those deans would meet with the chair of the Graduate Faculty of Economics, and review progress. Three times a year. And I said that if we fail to do this, I'm going to resign. They never met once with this person who had had no administrative—and not once did they meet with the person who had no administrative experience. And there was a conflict between Economics and Ag Economics. I told him, I said [phone rings]. He went around and talked to him independently, but he had the agreement. They then

met without him—not with him, but without him—and did not give him what he had asked for, and he resigned. And the whole thing left. Biggest disappointment of my life. That could have really had a major impact on this university if we could have kept that together for any length of time. [0:55:02] A major impact on this university.

CP: What do you think explains the resistance to the program? Just lack of interest?

EC: Well, when the deans—when he resigned, the deans, with the exception of Lars—the deans wanted to undo what they had done. But he would not talk to them. And no one else of any stature would take it on, so it collapsed for lack of leadership. There were two people in Economics, both of whom had wives who were professors in Economics, so they had four votes, full professor level. They dominated the Economics Department, and they didn't want the Graduate Faculty of Economics. They wanted to get rid of it, and they succeeded. We had a provost who—no one could get anything from him, as to what he really wanted to do, and we had a president who really thought that Ag Economics didn't amount to much, based on his work at Ohio State, and he refused to take any strong position. It just collapsed. Biggest disappointment, professional disappointment, of my life. Biggest one.

I worked all my life to do something about this. Really. The day I came here, to try to do something about it. And I thought I had. I mean, I came back. Lyle Kaufman was dean of the graduate school. It wasn't called the Graduate Faculty of Economics when I came. I suggested that name. We set everything up to make it work, and it was working, but these four people in Economics wrecked it. And we didn't have anybody in administration strong enough to do anything about it. When I came back, Stoltenberg was Dean of Forestry, Lud Eisgruber was Dean of Agriculture, and Bill Wilkins was in liberal arts—all economists. And when it collapsed, there was no economist as dean. But I told Ed Ray that I could not think—with the exception of Oregon State, I could not think of a land grant university in the United States that amounted to anything as a land grant university without a strong economics program. I said, "I can't think of one." I said, "I don't see how you could do what you want to do at Oregon State with Economics in shambles."

I mean, you look at the number of economics majors, it's picayune now. It's just been going down rapidly. And the people in Ag Econ have become like economists, and they have recruited some pretty good people in applied economics, but they're beginning to hurt, because they don't have any power at the theoretical level, as much as they need. I shouldn't say they don't have any, because they do, in applied economics, but they don't have any at the general economics level. So that's my disappointment.

CP: What was it like for you, as a resource economist, to return to Oregon and see the state transforming its own economy from historically resource-based to something else? It was happening pretty quickly at that point.

EC: Yep. Well, that's why you need a good economics department, to understand those kinds of things [1:00:00], and to help the university stay with it, and be on the forefront. We don't have the capacity even to talk about that question. These applied economists that are my close friends, with one or two exceptions, are not general economists. They're applied economics. It's a narrow field. The person who occupies the chair that carried my name, JunJie Liu, is the best economist on campus, but we don't have very many like that.

CP: I want to ask you about the report that you wrote for John Byrne in 1993. It was titled "On the University's Third Mission: Extended Education." This is something he requested that you do. Is that correct?

EC: Yes.

CP: And this was about the future of Extension at OSU? Tell me about that.

EC: [Laughs] I'll tell you the most significant thing about that. I don't know how many committees I worked on, making recommendations to some administrator someplace. That's the only one I ever worked on that I made my recommendations, and gave them to John Byrne on a Friday night. He took them home, worked on them over the weekend, came back on Monday morning, and my recommendation became his decisions, and he announced them on Monday. Why, gosh, how about that! That was just remarkable! And I've never known that to happen. But he bought it, hook, line and sinker.

CP: And what were those recommendations?

EC: Hm?

CP: What were some of those recommendations?

EC: Well, basically what it was, we took the Extension people and integrated them into the academic departments, into the academic programs. I knew that Extension needed a new lease on life. I knew that there were lots of people very disappointed, and primarily technical people out there—farmers, ranchers, forestry people, that were concerned that the Extension portion of OSU had lost contact with—had bad science, that they were not on the cutting edge. And I thought that they were needed, that those industries needed a contact with the university, but they needed competent people, really needed competent people. So my basic recommendation was that they be integrated somehow into the academic programs. And indeed, the entire university could accept a mission to reach out, away from the campus, and do things in society. It didn't have to be in agriculture, forestry, something else. And I was walking across campus right after the report came out, and oh, the head of our music department—

CP: Marlan Carlson?

EC: Yeah. He stopped me, and he said, "You're Emery, aren't you?" And I said, "Yes." He said, "I have your report right next to my telephone." He said, "That's what we do all the time, what you've been writing about." He was delighted with it! He said, "That is great." He said, "That's what we should do." He said, "Reach out and do things with people." And he said, "We love to take our people all over the state of Oregon, and do concerts and things." He said that if we had the resources, that's what we'd like to do, and he said, "That'd be good for us." So that was part of it [1:05:00], not just considered about agriculture, but that's where the money is—the money comes, to do work in agriculture, and forestry, and fisheries, and so forth, and we haven't been able to transfer that into the other departments. But the recommendations were that this become a university responsibility, university-wide responsibility, and that was the thesis behind the report.

CP: Well, John Byrne is somebody you know well, have known well for a long time. His presidency occurred during a difficult time in the state's history. Ballot Measure 5 sort of defined a lot of what he had to do. What are your recollections of that time period of John's presidency?

EC: Well, yes, we'd just gone through one budget reduction after another, just one after another. And indeed, he had had one of the big accounting firms come in and study the university, and make recommendations to him. And that's why he called me over and he said, "We've got this—we've reorganized the university, but we've got this one part and we don't have a place for it. That's Extension, and I'd like to have you help me with that part." And that's when I wrote the report. But it was far more than he had anticipated when he asked me to do this. But then he took it home, and over the weekend he implemented it. I've never known any university president to do that. That was an act of courage beyond any I've ever known a university president to do, ever. It was really, really remarkable!

And I think the basic idea was—I haven't backed away from it at all, in terms of principle. The practicalities of it are difficult, to make it work, and work right. I think some things have been accomplished, but I just can't give John enough credit, because just given his background on all, given how that caught his imagination, and he saw the logic of it—it's something that you just don't see in administration very much. That's what I had in mind. An administration need not be dull if you think of it in that way, the way of doing something. An administration can become exciting.

CP: Yeah, John did a lot to try to modernize the university. You mentioned he had enacted some of the recommendations of the Goals Commission. That report had been submitted about fifteen years before he took office.

EC: Yeah. Oh, yeah. He was a great supporter of the Goals Commission.

CP: Yeah.

EC: He called me on the phone. I remember telephone conversations with him, when I was on the Goals Commission and we were wrestling with some of these things, and he was department head. I remember his calling me several times. We were good friends, and we had worked together previously. We were on the original committee that made OSU a Sea Grant university, and that's when we first became appointed, and came to know one another.

CP: Well, you retired in 1993. Is that correct?

EC: Mm-hm.

CP: But your connection to the university didn't ebb, necessarily. You were requested by Paul Risser to work on a rural studies program. Is that right?

EC: Yeah. I was, that's right. [Laughs] I didn't do much with it. I was tired by that time. And I didn't have any resources to work with, and about all I did was to hand it off to Bruce Weber.

CP: What is your sense of the Risser presidency?

EC: Well, I'm not a good one to ask, because I don't feel I knew—I don't feel I know enough about his presidency. I liked him. I worked with him a little bit. I loved talking to him [1:10:00], because he was an imaginative cuss, and he was just a delight to be around. I liked his wife even more than I liked him. She was wonderful. I helped bring the Academy for Lifelong Learning into existence. Did you know that?

CP: I did not know. She was part of that, as well, Les Risser.

EC: Yeah, I was the first president of ALL, and she was part of the original group that brought that about, and she and I really had it going. We really liked one another. She was first-rate. And he was, too. I liked him. But I can't evaluate his presidency. I'm just not in a position to know. Some of the things I heard about that were—I heard some things alleged, but I don't feel confident that they were right, and so I don't think I should say. But I think things happened during his presidency, and she was wonderful to work with. She didn't worry about any credit, or being front and center on anything.

She was part of the group that really prepared the way for ALL, and she pulled some strings to get us into the Alumni Center at the time that we really needed help. And then I said to my board, I said, "I think that it'd be good if we had Les Risser on our board." "Oh, she wouldn't serve." I said, "Well, has anybody asked her?" "No, no, but she's doing other things." I said, "Does anyone object if I ask her?" "Well, no," but there was definitely not much enthusiasm. And I called her and told her that I'd really like to have her on our board. She said, "No, no, no, I don't think that'd be appropriate." And I said, "Why wouldn't it be appropriate?" But anyway, I had a long discussion with her. Finally, she agreed to do it, and she came to our board meeting, made a lot of difference in the board. They behaved themselves a lot better when she was there. [Laughs] She was wonderful. I just loved her.

CP: You referenced earlier Ed Ray being—that the impact of his years, obviously, have evidenced here at OSU. Do you want to talk a little bit more about the Ray years—a fellow economist? Also an economist, Ed Ray?

EC: Yeah, yeah. Well, I have mixed feelings, and I don't really know enough to fully evaluate his program. I'm disappointed that he just stood by and watched Economics deteriorate in front of his very eyes, and the last time I talked to him about it, he said, "I'm not going to argue with you, anything you said, but I'm going to lay this in front of the provost." And I knew then that nothing's going to happen. And the provost never called me; he never said anything to me about it, and so on. So that's essentially it—nothing. Certainly in terms of fundraising, he's without peer. We don't have any president that's ever done what he's done in that regard. And that's not peanuts. And I think he's brought some pretty good academic people to campus. His non-academic administrative appointments have not bowled me over. [1:15:00]

And so I can't really say very much in that regard, because I just don't see the evidence there that they're outstanding, but I think he has made some pretty good appointments otherwise. The one or two things where I've been involved, and they were very minor, but he has called me over twice, after he's made a decision, and sort of explained it to me; never asked me what I thought of it or anything, and I didn't tell him. I just sat there. And after a while, the conversation sort of petered out, and I left, and that was it. Strange. Strange way. Someone at Ohio State, before he came, had told him something about me, and he came here knowing my name, and always saying something really complimentary about what he'd heard, but I can't say that I've had any impact. So I can't say much.

CP: On a completely different topic, tell me about your love affair with roses.

EC: [Laughs] Well, it has been a love affair. Did you read the appendix to my book?

CP: I'm aware of it.

EC: There is an appendix there on roses, and that pretty much tells the story. Curtis Mumford, who was an ag economist, got me started on roses, and I knew I needed a hobby. I knew I needed something other than economics. And so I went along with his recommendations, and got involved in the local rose society, and did the show roses, and had pretty good luck with that. Then I've been involved in the Avery Park Rose Garden down here, and I've used some of my meager money to improve that rose garden there. I dedicated one of the structures down there to my parents, and the money I—they needed some money that I couldn't raise for them. I tried to raise money, and I did raise quite a lot of money for that rose garden, but I couldn't get anyone to buy on that structure. It's a beautiful structure. And so I did it myself, and dedicated it to my parents. It's been a great hobby, and I'm glad that I have done it, but I'm pretty well finished with it now. The outdoor work is such that I'm not able to do it, so it's something that I've enjoyed, but it's pretty much over and done with.

CP: Yeah. Well, a couple of sort of concluding questions for you. The first one that I have is, as you reflect on your scholarly career, what are some things that you're proud of from the academic side?

EC: Say that again.

CP: As a scholar, some of your points of pride from the work that you've done?

EC: Well, I guess the main things that I have done was the Salmon Steelhead study, and the Yaquina Bay study. Those are two fairly significant things that had an impact on the profession. I wrote an article, journal article [1:20:01], and I can't remember the exact date of it—in which I sort of laid out the new production economics—I mean, the new resource economics area. And I think that had quite an impact on the profession. It's never won any awards, but I think it was widely read.

And they had a symposium here in my honor, and one of the people, young people, at RFF, who was young at the time it came out, that article came out—he presented that at the symposium, and indicated that what I had set forth there was a fundamental rethinking of one of the central theorems of resource economics. And he said that the profession chose not to go in that direction, but he said that if it had, this is what the results would have been. And I took that as probably the best, the greatest, compliment I've ever had on my work, because I don't consider myself to be a great theorist. I consider myself to be a pretty good theorist. And to be written about in that context by this person, who would be regarded as one of the half-dozen best in the field—I took that as a great compliment.

CP: Sure.

EC: But it's not—as I say, it's not a something everybody would quote. No, I think I am a good theorist, but I'm not a powerful theorist.

CP: Well, the last thing I want to ask you about is the Land Grant mission, that you've spent most of your career enmeshed in it, your education, and the places that you've worked. Where do you see it now? Where do you see it heading into the future?

EC: Well, your question, I guess, was phrased in such a way that you want a prediction from me. I think it's going to disappear, except for lip service.

CP: You're not the first person who's said that to me.

EC: I'm still writing, and making recommendations for them. There were three of us that were asked to write a piece for the American Agricultural Economics—it's now Applied Economics—Association, about their future, and I was the one that had to draft the final section on what it was going to do, what it might do. And I laid out some missions for the land grant system that I thought that it could do. I think that the land grant system, or an institution within the land grant system, could develop a program around three major health issues. One would be economic health. One would be environmental health—natural environment, that is. And the third would be human health. This could constitute a program for—it could take the energy and the imagination of an entire campus, and I think that there would be a need in society for doing that, and they could do some very unique things if they would concentrate on those three issues. That's my answer.

CP: [Laughs] All right. Well, Emery, I want to thank you very much for this. This has been a real pleasure for me, and a very valuable contribution to our project, and I really appreciate your time, and your recollections.

EC: I'm honored that you would ask me. [Laughs]

CP: Thank you very much.

EC: You're welcome. [1:24:52]