



## Clara Pratt Oral History Interview, August 4, 2015

### **Title**

“Bridging Eras and Disciplines at a Changing University”

### **Date**

August 4, 2015

### **Location**

Pratt residence, Bend, Oregon.

### **Summary**

In the interview, Pratt discusses her upbringing as an adopted child, the development of her interest in gerontology, the roots of her association with OSU, and the leadership role that the state of Oregon assumed in the 1970s by developing long-term care programs for its elderly citizens. She then details the growth of the Gerontology program at OSU during her years as its director, including the program's collaboration with other campus units to develop coursework, its efforts to engender interest in gerontology among the undergraduate population, the constant push to find new sources of funding, and colleagues who were important to the forward development of the program. Pratt also reflects on the approaches that she has taken to teaching over time.

From there, Pratt shares her memories of her tenure as OSU's last Dean of Home Economics. She describes the funding crisis that led to the merger of Home Economics with the College of Education, and the difficult series of decisions that she had to make in addressing the college's chronic budget woes. She likewise details the unwinding of the merged College of Home Economics and Education, the creation of a new College of Health and Human Sciences, and the many players with whom she worked in propelling these significant institutional changes.

Pratt next discusses the health problems that led to her departure from OSU and the difficulties that she has encountered since leaving full-time work. She likewise shares her perspective on the characteristics of an effective administrator, the current state of OSU's College of Public Health and Human Sciences, and her memories of the last graduating class in Home Economics at OSU.

As the session nears its conclusion, Pratt discusses her involvement in the early conversations surrounding the branch campus that would ultimately become OSU-Cascades. The interview ends with an overview of Pratt's participation in the Healthy Start program and Pratt's expression of gratitude for her career experiences at OSU.

### **Interviewee**

Clara Pratt

### **Interviewer**

Janice Dilg

### **Website**

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

## Transcript

**Clara Pratt:** My name is Clara Pratt, I was at OSU for over forty years and I still teach at OSU-Cascades, Professor Emeritus in Human Development and Family Studies. And during my time there I helped start the Gerontology Program, worked with the College of Home Economics for years as faculty and was a dean for a couple of years. Then we merged into the College of Health and Human Sciences, which has evolved into Public Health and Human Sciences. So, that's who I am.

**Janice Dilg:** Thank you. And I'm Janice Dilg, oral historian for the OSU Sesquicentennial Oral History Project, today is August 4th, 2015, we're in the lovely backyard of Clara's home in Bend, Oregon. And I want to go back and start to fill in a lot of those pieces that you mentioned, particularly I think it's always useful to people to just hear a little bit about your personal background, where you came from, kind of how you got started in life.

**CP:** How I got started in life. Well, I grew up in a family, my dad sold war surplus after World War II. I was born in 1948, and when I was three days old, my parents adopted me. So, I don't know my first family. My parents adopted me and then a month later they adopted my brother, who was also two days old, so I grew up as a twin, even though he's always been a foot shorter than me and has blond hair and blue eyes. Everybody thought we were twins.

And we were actually what we'd recognize now as poor. We always lived in trailers and school was the big escape for me. You know, a twenty-four foot trailer, eight by twenty floors with four people. My parents worked—when my dad wasn't selling war surplus they had a little café in Boise. So, I learned to talk to people and socialize a lot with people, customers that came in.

My dad was both a good influence and a bad influence, but one of the good things—

I mean he was a little bit crazy and a little paranoid and he could be pretty mean; my mom was just a saint—but my dad told me one time "nobody's better than you, and you're not better than anybody," and I have always remembered that. So, I grew up and I really believed—they always talked about education, getting education, so I worked really hard in school. I was a really good student and I got a scholarship to Gonzaga University and went there and loved it. I did really well at Gonzaga and then decided I didn't know what I wanted to do when I graduated. I had worked with delinquent girls as a part-time job, basically in a lockup for delinquents, and was a combination counselor and prison guard, and when I wasn't sure what to do, my major professor at Gonzaga said "you should look at the University of Oregon, Human Development, you'd enjoy that."

So, I went there and got involved in studying early childhood and juvenile delinquency, and that was about the time when the Administration on Aging, the Federal Administration on Aging, was just starting to try to develop people who were interested in gerontology. So, they had these Administration on Aging, what do they call—fellowships, and they'd pay you to go to school, and that sounded like a really good deal for me. So, I changed to gerontology and the rest is kind of, as they say, history. I got involved in gerontology and—

**JD:** Can you give a definition of gerontology, since some people might not know what that is?

**CP:** It's the study of aging. And it's not gynecology, which is a common mistake. It's the study of human aging. So, it's a multidisciplinary field, so we studied biology and sociology and psychology. I was mostly in the psychology part of it; how do people learn, how do they adapt and what is coping with aging, which is what I'm doing right now. I find it really useful, actually, to have that academic background. So, that's how I got involved in gerontology. And then when I graduated, it was in 1974, I was offered several jobs, most of them on the east coast, and I thought "I really don't want to go to Washington D.C." and I really didn't want to go to upstate New York. And I'm a western girl at heart, because I grew up in Idaho. So, they had an opening in the Gerontology Specialist position at OSU and at the Extension Service. So, I applied for that and got it, and I had to go to a library and look up what the Extension Service was, because I had no idea. So, I became the first Gerontology Specialist for the Extension Service.

**JD:** And what did that involve?

**CP:** Oh, that involved going around the state doing presentations to community groups, primarily on aging. And of course it was hysterical, because I was like twenty-five and they'd have a pre-retirement program in The Dalles and I'd show up and everybody in the room would be seventy-five and eighty. I remember this one presentation in Port Orford, this woman sat right in the front, she was blind in one eye and she kept rolling her head so she could look at me, rolling her head so he could look at me. And at the end, I said - it was on pre-retirement, the woman must have been in her late eighties - and I said "so, anybody have any questions?" And she put her hand up and she said "well, two things; one, I just want to say as an eighty-some year old that I feel about as useful as tits on a pig." I loved that. And she said "and the second thing is I want to know what the hell you know about getting old, you're only twenty-six, you are"— she literally called me a "whippersnapper." And I said "I'm sorry, you're right, but if all I have to do to be an expert is get older, I'm sure I will eventually." And she laughed, and so we got to be buddies after that.

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She even bought me a cup of coffee. It was great. That was in Port Orford, and things like that. Then I got more involved in doing stuff with the state Agency on Aging. At the time, we were just developing in Oregon the whole long-term care system outside of nursing homes. So, Oregon had gotten what's called a FIG grant, which is really a federal intergovernmental agency waiver. It's a waiver to use Medicare money and Medicaid money that was earmarked for long-term care institutions, to use that money to develop a community-based care system instead. So, rather than give you a thousand dollars to put somebody in a nursing home, we'll give you the same thousand dollars to keep somebody out of a nursing home. And that's how we developed the foster care system in this state. Oregon is a great state to get old in.

**JD:** And so, who were you working with, or how was that happening?

**CP:** That was happening primarily through the universities, Oregon State. At that time, by that time, I was the director of the Gerontology Program at Oregon State, and we worked with the Extension Service as well. And the U of O and PSU, PSU was a big player in that. And we just worked on the evaluation of those kinds of programs and assessments, because the goal was to keep people who—not to take relatively healthy people and keep them in the community but really take people who were eligible for long-term nursing home care and see if we could develop a system outside of the institutions.

**JD:** And do you have, other than the funding, do you have any sense of what sparked people in Oregon to take the lead and take an interest in this new area?

**CP:** I think part of it was at the time the governor was Tom McCall, who is a really—I cried when he died—he is a great guy. He was really forward-looking, and he was also getting older himself. He had a really funky knee on him and it kept going out on him and he said "I don't want to be in a nursing home," so he was always pushing, like the Bottle Bill, all that stuff was happening in Oregon. It was just "let's be more forward-looking," and he did it. I think part of it's the Oregon character, too. I mean, we've got the public beaches because some governor a hundred and some years ago said that the beaches are all public highways, so you can't build—you don't own down the ocean. And that's not like that in Washington or California. So, that's why we have such great access.

And that whole process—I'm sort of jumping around here, but as an undergraduate I was a major in Psychology and Political Science. So, I've always been interested in how the politics of human development, how social institutions and government institutions influence human development, as opposed to thinking of it as my development, as a psychological perspective, but what's the environment around me creating. Not just the immediate environment, but the whole political environment. And I think Oregon was really forward-looking in a lot of ways there. For years, and I think it's still true, although I haven't looked at the data recently, we actually have more old people in community, living in the community in the state, in the country. We might be third now, I don't know. But people used to look at Oregon, I'd go to national meetings and people'd say "how do you guys do that? How come your nursing home growth has stopped and you still have growing numbers of old people?" It's because we made policy decisions to make that happen. So, then we started the Gerontology Program at OSU, and we had a little bit of funding from the feds for that. But—

**JD:** And this was?

**CP:** That was back in the early seventies, '74, '77, '76.

**JD:** Right. And talk a little in more detail, if you would, about what went into starting a department.

**CP:** Oh, it's not actually a department, it's a program.

**JD:** A program, excuse me.

[0:10:12]

**CP:** So, we deliberately didn't start a department. We wanted to have it spread out across the university, because as I said, I think gerontology is, by its nature, multidisciplinary. So, you need to understand human aging is not something that happens just psychologically or socially; it happens social, psychological, biological. So, we used that federal grant that we had, because actually, the program was actually started by a guy named Rich, and his last name escapes me, and Vicki Schmall, who's retired from OSU too, and the two of them actually began the Gerontology program. And it was founded in the College of Home Economics. But we always involved other colleges and other disciplines.

And when I came, there were like three or four gerontology courses and there was this fledgling Gerontology Conference that was every spring, and we worked to use that federal money to get other departments to start gerontology courses. So, we had money to go into the Zoology Department for a course on Biology Of Aging, we had money going to Anthropology to start an Anthropology and Aging course, which has evolved, I don't know if it's still there, but Age, Sex and—or Age, Gender and something. Religious Studies had a Death and Dying class. So, we just put a little bit of seed money out there to hire somebody to develop a course and to get it going.

And that turned out to be a really smart strategy, because a lot of—then when the feds started cutting money, a lot of the big gerontology programs around the country collapsed, because it was all federal money. And we had basically co-opted faculty into thinking that this was a great thing to teach, and so they started teaching them as electives. And we created a gerontology certificate where you'd have to take eight classes or six classes and do a field study in aging. We had students from Healthcare Administration, Public Health, Nutrition, Pharmacy, I did a lot of research with Pharmacy faculty, and we built assignments and that was cool. We—I have to brag—we did it right, because we just infiltrated all the other departments, as opposed to creating a little edifice over here by itself, which is easy to cut.

**JD:** And as you're building this, and you said there were only four courses, and I think at some point there were like twenty courses across the campus, and I'm going back to you being a twenty-six year old going out and talking to aging people about—how did you create interest in these twenty-something college students, that this was perhaps a field that they—

**CP:** Oh, that it was something that they—tell them they'd get jobs. It was, you know, there's nothing like—even back in the seventies people were actually worried about working. I mean, they were concerned; they were past just wanting to go to school for the sake of getting a degree. But a lot of them were very career oriented. You know; what am I going to do with this degree? And the field of gerontology was exploding. It was when people—there was a lot of federal money coming out to the states and the states were starting to figure out they needed to do something about human service programs for older people, as opposed to just education in schools, early childhood education, which is another love of mine, so in childhood. So, it wasn't that hard. Plus, I suppose this is part of it, we had some—the other thing we did with the federal money is we started what we called trainee shifts, so we'd actually select students to give them a small stipend to go to school and to become a gerontology trainee. And what that meant is they were studying the Gerontology Program, but they were always majors in something else. If they were a major in Nutrition, they were taking Gerontology courses, so they'd have a sort of a specialty within Nutrition. Same thing was true in Pharmacy.

So, it just was really, it was the sort of the underground, infiltrate—and we had a course, we started the Gerontology Program with one of the programs that was central in starting Healthcare Administration, which is a big degree now, at OSU, and that was actually started between the College of Business and Home Economics and Health. And a guy named John Ellis, who was the director of that program, was really interested in the Home Ec piece of it; making sure that the gerontology content, which was housed—the Program of Gerontology was housed in the College of Home Ec. He was really interested in making sure that Healthcare Administration included long-term care, because he could see that was the direction that we were going as a nation.

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And so, we worked on that and made the Perspectives on Aging course, which is a fundamental course in Gerontology, which I taught; a required course. And I'd start any one of those, I'd have a class of sixty or seventy students and twenty of them would be from Healthcare Administration, all sitting in the back, bored out of their minds because it wasn't business and it wasn't, you know, economics. It wasn't health. And I'd say "okay, here's"—first thing, I'd have them write a paragraph on "why are you here," and all the Healthcare Administration students would say "because it's required." And I'd say "okay, now write a second paragraph about why you think it's required. Why should you be in a class on aging if you're a Healthcare Administration student?" And I'd get a lot of one-sentence paragraphs that said things like "because it's required, you dummy. You've asked the same thing twice." And then the next class I'd come in—I'd read them all through and figure out what they were saying and I'd come back and I'd say "my goal at the end of this is all of you, the Healthcare Administration students, will understand why gerontology is relevant to healthcare administration."

And they loved it. I mean, by the end of the term, they'd get it. They'd write another paragraph, they'd say "well, if I go to the clinic or the hospital, who am I seeing? I'm seeing all these grey hairs and all these frail old people and healthy old people, but they're clearly the consumers of healthcare." So you know, just co-op people. And you also have to make the courses—the courses were good. I mean, not just my course, but the courses in general were really useful, and people enjoyed that. A lot of courses are pretty dry for students; they don't always get why this is important when they're nineteen or twenty, and so we worked really hard to make sure that the courses in Gerontology were not just the content and the theory and research but also why is this important, why do we care, why should we care about studying people's biological aging, how is that going to influence their health?

So, I think that—and that's just part of who I am. It's like that whole—I can't stand thought for thought's sake. When I retired, one of my favorite quotes is "talk doesn't cook rice," and my department gave me chopsticks with "talk doesn't cook rice" embedded on all of them, because I really believe that. One of the things I loved about OSU, and about the College of Home Ec, was that we were very applied, and we weren't embarrassed about being "let's improve the human condition," as opposed to "let's just understand for the sake of understanding something." Not to put people who are in that field down, but I just, I always want to know so what, why do we care if people's reaction time increases or decreases, why are we studying that? Paired associate learning kinds of stuff in psychology bored the hell out of me because I always want to know how do you—what difference does it make? How does it make a difference in how you teach people, how you get people to change their behavior? So, it's just part of who I was, or who I am, I guess, still. I haven't changed much in that regard. So anyway, it was a great time.

**JD:** And as you were talking about providing seed money and working with faculty from other departments, sometimes that inter and intra departmental—

**CP:** Oh, it can be a nightmare.

**JD:** And so, what do you think was the key to developing those positive relationships and keeping them going and expanding them?

**CP:** Right. Well, I think money was certainly part of it. It got people involved, it got people initially engaged. You'd buy them out of teaching some other course and kind of get them engaged in a content area that's, for some of them, they didn't know much about. So, we'd send them to conferences and they could learn something about how Sociology of Aging was being taught or what the issues were nationally. So, that was part of it. But I think giving people as many rewards as you can. And of course the coin of the realm, as always in higher ed, especially in major universities, is publications. Are you publishing, and what are you publishing?

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And so, that was a bit of a challenge sometimes, because I actually, at one point, had a department chair when I went out for tenure who didn't like my vita because it had too much—too many pharmacy articles in it, because I'd worked a lot with Bill Simonson. And for me, that was the whole issue of multidisciplinary, is that you have to learn to respect the journals in other departments of the other fields, and respect the faculty and not try to be that there's only one sort of

sacred way of doing things. So I don't know, I mean it's hard to guess why people stayed involved, but I think part of it was just that it was exciting, it was fun, we were developing something; it was a little bit thinking outside the box.

And my dean, Betty Hawthorne, was really supportive. She was one of the people—I don't know if we have a Healthcare Administration Program now at OSU. In fact, John Ellis said that to me. He said "she's the only dean that actually gets what we're trying to do and why." And he was complaining about the other deans, whose names I don't even remember at this point, but that they were much more sort of narrowly focused on their discipline. It was easy to—it was this, it was Business or it was Health, and he was trying to bridge the two. And Betty was always saying "well, there's a—you know, you've got human beings here"—I mean, she was a classic Home Economics. Human development occurs in a context; immediate environment, so it made perfect sense to her to think about having home ec be a leader in creating this interdisciplinary field. She did the same thing with gerontology.

She was really a great. She was a pain sometimes, but she was—I can remember losing my keys one time, and I went down to the dean's office to get the key, permission to get another key, and her secretary at the time was a woman named Emma Raymond. And she—I asked Emma, I said "I need another key slip," and she said "another key slip," and she said, "What happened?" She said, "I lost my keys,"—I said, "I lost my keys," and she said, "Oh, God, don't tell the dean." And about three weeks later I saw the dean walking down the hall just fidgeting, just fidgeting, looking around, fidgeting, talking to herself. I said, "Betty, what's going on?" She said, "Lost my keys." And I said, "whatever you do, don't tell Emma." Because Emma was so mad that I'd lost my keys. She never did forgive me. She died not forgiving me for losing those keys. I still don't know where they are. They disappeared.

But it was just a really—it was a great experience. Those early years were really fun. Of course, I was building my family then, was—had my first daughter, and she was still an infant, and I had a son five years later. And so, it was a challenge. I mean, there was a lot going on. And in the middle of all that I developed gestational diabetes, and then I developed type I diabetes. And so, I was trying to learn to manage my disease, manage my family and build this career, and it was a cha—it was a strain. It was hard. But it was worth it I guess. I guess. Here I am.

**JD:** You've come out the other end.

**CP:** Yeah, exactly.

**JD:** As you talk about money I'm assuming that means you became skilled at grant writing.

**CP:** I was a good grant writer. And partly, part of being a good grant writer is understanding what the funder wants. And I used to teach a class on gerontology and I would tell students that over and over and over again. I teach workshops on gerontology. I said, "I don't care what term you want to use. Read those guidelines until you can recite them in your sleep. Pick out the key words that they're using and use those words." So, the words back in the '70s were "independence" and, what were the other ones... "self-sufficiency" started getting big in the late eight—in late '70s and early '80s. So, frame whatever you want to do in terms of—in those terms. That's where the funder wants to go. So, we just talked about creating programs and departments in colleges. Not colleges, but courses and experiences that enable students to get jobs, which became really big in the '80s, to get careers that helped people stay self-sufficient and live in the community. That whole idea of the continuum of care, all those words were things that somebody, university folks someplace, communicate to the feds; the feds start putting it into grants, and you had to speak their language. It's a communication thing.

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So, that's one thing I learned from my dad is that you would talk to somebody, you want to use the language that they're using as opposed to stick with what you think's important. And so, I think I was pretty successful in doing it. And I also had great colleagues. I always feel embarrassed saying "I," because it wasn't one person. Vicki was critical early on, and then she had some health problems. She was the—

**JD:** What was her full name?

**CP:** Vicki Schmall. She is still doing work in gerontology. She's a great one. She was the gerontology—she helped Rich whoever, whatever his last name is. It's totally blank. I can describe his kids, I can describe how he looks, I can describe

his hobbies, but can I tell you his last name? No. She helped. She was a graduate student. She helped work with him to start their initial Gerontology Program, which was this, a couple of classes in human development, and I think a course in nutrition, and then the Gerontology Conference which has since evolved. And in the second annual conference they actually invited me to come be the keynote speaker, because I—I'm digressing here.

I started at OSU as the Gerontology Specialist and went around the country, the other states, and did these Gerontology programs. And that's how I got connected with people in the state, and the state Agency on Aging, that kind of stuff. Then eventually I went to the University of Wash—I figured I was, I wanted—my husband was just finishing school in healthcare, in Health Physics and Radiation and Safety. And so, he was finishing his bachelor's degree and we went to—we met at OSU. We went to look for a job; there weren't any jobs for him in Corvallis. So, we moved to Seattle so he could work for Todd Shipyards as a radiation person up there. And I went to work with the University of Washington and the Institute on Aging, which was primarily social work and medicine.

So I did that for a couple of years and then I got, I had some health problems. I had—not related to diabetes even, but I had a cancer scare, and we were driving down the highway one day and I said "I really don't want to live in Seattle anymore." So, we started looking for other places to be, and it happened that they were looking for a director for the Gerontology Program down here in Corvallis. And I said, "Well, you want to go back to Corvallis?" He said, "Sure." So, we moved back to Corvallis. And I actually gave the keynote speech at the second annual Gerontology Conference, and there were like a hundred people there. It was—I had a great time. It just felt like home. I decided I wanted to move from—back to a smaller university. The University of Washington was great [dog barking]. It was a great research institution.

King, be quiet, that bird is not going to hurt you. [Dog growling. Clara growling playfully].

I was tired of being a little fish in a big pond. No matter what you did at the University of Washington, the big shots got all the credit for it. They talked about the Institute on Aging like Carl Eisdorfe was running it. Carl was never there. I mean, it was like "okay, can we get a little credit here for the worker bees?" And I was attracted to OSU because it was a much more manageable size. And so, I came back here to Corvallis and was determined not to administer the Gerontology Program the way I had seen it at University of Washington, which was there are a few big shots and there are a lot of peons and the big shots are in charge. They get all the glory, all the credit, all the money, they're on every publication whether they had a damn thing to do with it or not. And it just didn't feel right to me. It didn't feel fair. I've got a real thing about fairness.

And so, at OSU I said okay, let's do this differently. Let's get people as involved as we can, give away as much as we can. At one time, somebody described it to me as the minimax: give away as much as you can and get back as much as you can, but don't invest too much. I didn't buy anybody's whole time, because then they're not committed. I mean, they're committed by the dollar but not by anything else. Not by their own passion or commitment, interest. So I don't know, I sort of rambled there, but that's—it's just a style. It's a really—it's a style. I like people, I don't mind problem-solving, but...

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**JD:** And do you think part of the difference, in addition to size, is the fact that OSU is a land grant college?

**CP:** That might be part of it, although if—being in social work at the College of Medicine at the University of Washington, they both have clear profe—they're professional schools, not—you know, I think that's one the biggest differences I see, is the professional schools versus the more straight academic program. So, they have a mission as well; to improve the human condition, to reach out and change environments and change communities, change the [dog barking], improve systems. So, I think it's a combination of professional school orientation, which is more about developing people who have the skills to make a difference in the world, as opposed to just being intellectually engaged. I mean, it's not like I'm putting that down, I'm not, but I just really like the applied part. And of course, OSU then has the additional advantage of being a land grant institution. So, that's how Extension and all those things make a difference. So, the philosophy is consistent with my philosophy.

**JD:** And you've talked a little about teaching, and I guess maybe mid-career you received a couple of awards; the Elizabeth P. Ritchie and the Outstanding Faculty Award for Teaching. Talk a little about what teaching meant and what it was that you liked about teaching. Clearly someone has to like something in order to be good at it.

**CP:** Right. Well, I like talking, I've always been good at talking, that's one of the things I got from my dad, is that you never meet a stranger. And it was always important to me to do a good job. So, I always put a lot of effort into that. It's just really engaging. It's challenging. When you teach, you have to really think about not just what you know but how can you communicate that to somebody else, how can you use examples or help people grasp the concepts. So, I was always working on that. And then I had the advantage of working with people who had this similar sort of orientation. Vicki Schmall is just a genius at educational methods, and she developed the aging simulation way before other places were starting to say "gee, maybe teaching isn't just about giving facts and figures and teaching intellectual things, but what's it really feel like to have arthritis and not be able to move your hands, or to be blind, or whatever."

And so, there was a lot of that kind of real, applied methodologies stuff that was a challenge. It is a challenge to help nineteen and twenty year-olds understand that—to understand aging. I still deal with that, because over here in Bend at the Cascades we have older students, but they're not that much older. I mean, they're twenty-five and thirty or thirty-five. But helping them understand what they're seeing in their parents and in their grandparents and to have a better sense of how to respond, or how you can respond and be helpful, or not helpful. With things, sometimes it's important to say what not to do.

When I teach my—I have one class I teach over here and one of the subjects is Death and Dying. Actually, we actually write—I have them write as an assignment a letter of condolence, and I've had students tell me they thought it was, at the time, they thought it was a stupid exercise. I can't tell you how many people have told me how useful that is. How do you write a note of condolence? Especially for people that are used to this, you know, there's: "sorry your mom died," or worse yet they don't even say that. What really is—what's consoling to people? And there is research on that, so trying to translate that into how can you use that information so it becomes relevant to their life, wherever they are, whether they're twenty-seven or sixty-seven. So, I love teaching. I still love teaching. That's why I still teach.

**JD:** And there's always kind of the technological component in both university life as a professor as well as a student, as well as just kind of changing culture and educational methodology. Can you talk a little about sort of what teaching was like when you started and how that changed during your years in the classroom?

[0:35:14]

**CP:** Oh yeah, when I started it was all blackboards, and then we got really advanced; we went to overhead projectors and, what are those little plastic pieces?

**JD:** The transparencies?

**CP:** Transparencies, oh God, yes. Transparencies. Then we went to PowerPoint. PowerPoint's fun because you can play with it. Most people don't know how to use it, because they don't ever study it. If I have—I have this weird thing, if I'm going to do something, I want to be good at it, so I actually read about it and learn from other people's experiences as opposed to feel like you have to reinvent it yourself. So, that was kind of fun. Probably the biggest technical challenge for me was learning to type. I flunked typing twice in high school. Literally the only F's I ever got. I even got better grades in German than I got in typing. Flunked typing twice. So, when I was first married and I was writing articles and chapters and whatever, all the stuff that's on my vita now, my husband did all my typing, because I couldn't type. And I wrote all these early grants, I would write longhand and hire a secretary to type them out, and I'd cut and paste and move sections around, literally cut and paste—

**JD:** That's where I came from.

**CP:** That's where it came from. And then when I took a sabbatical after six years at OSU and bought myself an IBM PCjr, I learned to type on the damn thing by playing this little game where you shoot asteroids out of the sky. Because I just think typing is the biggest waste of time. But now it's keyboard skills. So, I'm still not a good typist, but I rely on my computer to catch all my errors and when I type something, half the words are misspelled. Not because I can't spell; it's

because I'm not a good typist. But I've learned to run spellcheck and grammar check and all those kinds of things to catch those stupid errors that I'd make.

When the university moved from WordPerfect to Word, oh my god, that was a horrible—that was a nightmare. I finally had to have them take WordPerfect off my computer, because I was addicted. I knew all the commands, I knew what to do with that, and all the sudden we're using this different system, and I would not make that transition till it literally was not on my computer anymore. And I used to have a department chair stand over behind me. His name is Dave Andrews, he's a dean now at Ohio State. He'd stand behind me and he'd laugh, because I'd be typing and he'd stand over behind me and say "god, you're pathetic." And it was true, I was pathetic. But spellcheck's a grand thing, although it can be—you still have to pay attention.

**JD:** Yes.

**CP:** Sherm Bloomer, who's a friend of mine at—was a dean at Science, told me one time that he didn't like spellcheck because it always changed his name from Sherm to sperm. So, you still have to pay attention to what you're doing.

**JD:** Absolutely.

**CP:** Anyways, so it was, technologically, it was a challenge sometimes. That transition, especially being in a College of Home Economics, because we were the least funded of all the colleges, us and Liberal Arts, and we were sort of down on the list of who needs new computers and who needs new wiring and all that. So, we worked—when I was appointed dean, that was just a point where we had to rewire the whole building and there was this big controversy about should we just go to Wi-Fi or should we rewire the building. And Wi-Fi seemed like it was a million years away at that point. Only the College of Engineering even knew what Wi-Fi meant, so we rewired Home Economics, and it was a real challenge. And it wasn't just me, it was like—at that point we still had those administrators getting the other faculty to make those transitions.

And we watched secretaries disappear and we went from having secretaries for every three or four faculty to having one secretary for twelve or fifteen or twenty—I don't know what it is now, but basically no secretaries is what it comes down to, because they got replaced by our doing our own typing.

**JD:** So, that's perhaps a good segue way into when you became dean of Home Ec and kind of what that was all about and what transpired during your tenure as dean.

[0:40:10]

**CP:** Well, I was not a home economist from the beginning, I was—my degree is in Human Development from a College of Education and Liberal Arts at U of O. So, I was sort of an outlier from the very beginning. And I'd never had a Home Ec course in my life, but I found that the philosophy of Home Economics really fit with who I was. This whole idea of paying attention to the immediate environment, and in the larger social environment and how it influences individual behavior, it was fascinating to me. So, I really became appreciative of Home Economics. But basically I was doing the Gerontology Program and I was happy there. We—it was under, I can't remember, read me my—when did I become dean? Whatever year that was.

**JD:** Right around 2000.

**CP:** Right, around 2000. You can tell I'm not a historian. That was one of the times, because there's several of them, when the universities were going under these big crises, financial crisis, and we had—the College of Home Ec had been merged with the College of Education, which was never a happy marriage. I mean, it just, they were different philosophies, different attitudes towards what we were supposed to be doing, and lots of competition between the two sets of faculty. And the dean at the time, Kinsey Green, had really worked her butt off to try to make that marriage work. And Education was, I never have understood all the things that were going on, but we put a lot of money into—we were trying to share the wealth, and so we talked dividing money into Home Ec and Education, and it felt like we were losing resources to Education.

And the whole university was just losing resources. Looking back on it I realize that it wasn't anybody's fault, it was just the way it was, that there just wasn't enough money to go around, so things were getting cut and collapsed and combined, without much, in my view, real thought about is this a good marriage or not. "Let's just put them together because they're about the same size," and, you know, "put them together." But it didn't work. And it just got worse and worse and finally our college wound up, I know what we were, two or three million dollars in the hole and we were, I think—now this is complete, not off the record, but this is my view, I have no evidence of this, just my opinion is that we were about to be the next college on the front page of the *GT* that said "college collapses from being too far in the hole." And so, the administration finally, my understanding is they asked Kinsey to leave, or she left. I don't know how that marriage dissolved, but she left and Tim White, who was the provost at the time, asked me if I'd take over. And I had really mixed feelings about that, but I could see that we were in a hole and that we weren't going to get out unless somebody stepped up to the plate to do something about it.

So, somewhat reluctantly, because I had a good life, I mean I had kids, I just adopted two kids from China, so it wasn't like I was sitting around on my thumbs doing nothing, I said yeah. And we had, really that first year was really tough, because I spent a lot of time cutting programs and cutting classes, and I remember calling one faculty member who had been there for forever, she was tenured and she was a really nice woman, really hard worker, but I called her because there were no people in her program. But it was sort of seen as an essential part of Home Economics. Kinsey was very proud of being the only College of Home Economics west of the Mississippi, and I kept thinking to myself well, there's a reason for that. And maybe that was a lack of my not being a home economist by training. I didn't have that same sense of loyalty to the discipline. I liked the philosophy and the approach, but the name was just irrelevant to me.

[0:44:57]

So, I remember calling this one faculty person and saying "we need to talk," and she said "I've been waiting for this call for ten years." I mean she—people know when things aren't going well. So, we tried, we shifted some faculty around, we made some reductions and then—so we got stronger ourselves. And the alums of Home Ec are just phenomenal. Those alums are just wonderful. I could list them, I mean they're people who literally saved that college. They are so generous and so committed to Home Economics, and again, the philosophy of Home Ec, more than the name. I mean, some of the alums who are in their eighties said "change the damn name, if that's what's hurting you. Become College of Human Ecology, that's what they've done at Cornell, I mean just—or something." Something different. But it didn't make sense to change for the sake of changing.

But one of the—I just feel like that was a real success for that, and that was a place where it was a good fit for me, because I'm a problem solver and I'll listen to people bitch and try to hear what they're saying, as opposed to just respond. So, the process I used was I went to every department and I said "okay, I'm the new dean. Things are going to change, because they've got to change. We don't have an alternative. Things have got to be different. We can't do things the old way, we can't save everything and survive." It was time to make some shake-ups here. But I also know that everybody has their gunnysack of stuff that's happened in the last ten years that they're unhappy about. Everybody, literally everybody felt like they were getting the short end of the stick. I don't know how it's possible to have a group of people and everybody thinks they're losing. I mean, it was just like there were no winners. Nobody felt like a winner.

And so, I said "okay, so we're going to have this faculty meeting and we have two and a half hours and we're going to bitch. We're just, whatever your complaint, we're going to complain, we're going to write them all down, we're going to talk about every one of them, to at least get them out." What are the big complaints? "We don't get enough money, we're not respected, we don't have the research facilities we need," and so especially all the things you want to blame on the dean. So, we did that and I said "but this is the only time we're doing this, because once we get all this out, then we're moving on." So, I did that, it actually, it sounds silly but it actually really worked. People got a chance to really vent their frustrations: "nobody listens to us, we're not respected," you know, all this stuff, and then we'd take the three most critical ones and say "how can we make—what can the dean do to keep that from happening again?" Because there was just, it just was crazy. And that really worked well.

And the—I remember I had a sign on my door at the time that said "let's put the fun back in dysfunctional." I mean, you got to have a sense of humor about some of this stuff. And that was right next to the sign that said "body by chocolate." So, we just, we made some changes, people got—some people retired, some people got fired, some people moved into new positions and we started really working on our strengths, where our strengths were and what we could do to make

ourselves stronger as a college, and we dug ourselves out of that two million dollar hole. It took about a year and a half. But one of the—I remember sort of a sad thing for me was the last—I was the dean of the last graduating class of Home Ec, and that was really—again, I'm not affiliated with Home Ec except professionally. I'm not like trained from the cradle to grave kind of stuff. But Home Ec was always a great place for women.

So, when you think back to what life was like in the nineteen hundreds and the twentieth century, women were going to be teachers or social workers or home economists, those were your three choices. And the great thing about Home Ec was you had all these biochemists and biologists, nutritionists and they were all women who wanted to excel in their field, who were really incredibly bright; Margie Woodburn and some of those faculty were just incredible. But they were—it was a place where women could be respected and be professionals, as opposed to you're just here to get your MRS. And so, we had the last graduating class of Home Ec, because right after that we merged with Health.

[0:50:21]

And that was another great transition, because Health was where we should have gone in the first place, as opposed to Education, because we had more professions that were aligned with Health. The only thing we have with Education was Home Economics education, which is a very small subset of Home Ec. And so, Tim White again said "I want you to work on putting these colleges together, the Health and Home Ec." So, his—I became co-dean with Jeff McCubbin. We used to laugh about being co-deans, we'd say we need codeine to do this. But we have really different styles, because I'm real personable and at the individual kind of level and I tend to think kind of big and expansive and I tend to be real direct. And Jeff is much more cautious, worried about how we're going to make this balance, the whole budget balance, how will this work, and let's not ruffle a lot of feathers. So, we were a great team. I mean, it was really just perfect.

So, we got together, we had these ideas about how we could really make the synergy of the two colleges work, and so it was a much more—it was more like marriage counseling before you get married, as opposed to marriage divorce counseling after you're married. So, we really worked to get in the faculty input. I spent months with faculty writing the emails. I sort of became the person that faculty can complain to. And so, I'd get all these emails and say "so, what do you guys think about this?" And I'd get all these emails from people, and I actually responded. And not necessarily long responses, but just something to say "I got it, I heard you and we'll put that over here on the agenda."

And I remember having one faculty meeting where we got people from both disciplines, the two colleges; there were several disciplines, but the two colleges together, and used a process that was similar to what we'd done with the departments and Home Ec. It was "what's your greatest hope and what's your greatest fear in this merger?" Because I'll tell you, there were so many stereotypes, it was just amazing. I mean, one of the fears that one of the Home Ec people said is "they're going to expect us to bake cookies and bring them to every damn meeting," which is an irritation when you're the woman in the group. And I had some alums tell me "you guys merged with Health and all those Exercise Science guys? You're going to get—those jocks will run right over you." So, there was the—sometimes it was just at that level of fear. And then there was "we're going to lose our funding, we're going to lose our building, we're going to"—all this.

So, we put all of this stuff on the board, and we said "okay, let's go through"—and again, we did the prioritizing thing. People got to say—we were literally down to counting the stickers: what are the five biggest hopes, what are the five biggest fears? Which really helped you prioritize where people are coming from, where the faculty—because the faculty's the college. The dean's not the college. Some deans don't know that, but it's the faculty. If the faculty don't want to do it, it ain't going to happen. If it doesn't reward them, it's not going to happen.

So, Jeff and I sat there and then we really worked on it. We took those lists of five biggest problems, five biggest fears and five biggest dreams and said "okay, what if we commit to making sure that these five don't happen and these five do happen?" So, that became kind of the criteria under which we made decisions by: who do you merge and who do you put together, what do you keep and what buildings do you have and how do you divide this stuff up? So, that was really a good—that was a really good process. And it worked really well.

I am not—I think it was good when Tammy came in, Tammy Bray is the dean now, because she wasn't affiliated with either college. And I would have loved to stay dean, but my health stuff started. I had a stroke and all this nonsense. And I was just ready to—I needed to move on, and Jeff needed to move on, because we were too affiliated with history, and we

needed somebody like Tammy to come in and say "well, let's do this differently." And Tammy has been an amazing dean. I think she's done a great job.

[0:55:08]

So, what other, there was something else I was missing, just ran through my mind and ran away again. But it was just really exciting to—oh I know what it was. The other thing that we did when I was the dean, I can't remember all the timelines, but I don't know whether it was when I was a dean or when I was a co-dean, but because I was on the council, with the President's Council, I used to go to all these meetings with all the other presidents—all the deans, rather—and the university budget was a disaster. I mean, because it wasn't just our college, it was the university as a whole. We had way more things going on than we could support, and there just wasn't enough money coming from the state.

We hadn't quite made that transition to being externally funded. We were with research, but in terms of private donations, the Foundation was just really, really getting going, and the whole issue of development. And faculty were pissed, unions were pissed, everybody was unhappy. And so, they asked Sherm and I—that's how Sherm Bloomer and I got to be friends—Tim White asked Sherm and I to chair a committee, look at the university funding, see how we could change that; how we could improve it. And being subversive, I said "I don't want to present anything to the faculty until we know. I want to present the big idea and get agreement on the big ideas before we present all the details.

So, we did that. We actually—Sherm is a genius. He and I worked together to come up with this formula that reallocated based on not just history, because that's how they were doing it; if you were a college at the end of the line for funding, the smallest amount of money and you got a ten percent increase, you got a ten percent increase from a small amount. And so, there were some colleges that were getting much larger increases or decreases than others and it wasn't necessarily based on student credit hours and the amount of grants that were coming in. It was just historical. [Interview interrupted]

And that worked, I thought, really well. Not everybody was happy, because it meant some people were not going to get the kinds of increases they were used to getting, and some departments and colleges were going to get more. It tended to be the ones that were producing more student credit hours, were going to get more money. And I think that's, I understand that since I left Corvallis has evolved further, and that was really a breakthrough. I think it helped with the recognition of the different colleges, of who was really—I mean not everything is equal. Engineering's always going to have more money coming in and Science is going to have more money coming in from federal grants than Home Economics or Liberal Arts, but that doesn't mean that they're not making a major contribution to the institution. So, really trying to be more equitable.

I think that was a place, too, when—I framed it, when I talked to the Faculty Senate, in a way that people could understand better. We had a big faculty forum when lots of the unions had just taken a major hit. A lot of people were getting laid off and making big cuts and the President, Paul Risser, God bless him, had tried to frame that as "we'll be stronger for this, we'll be stronger for this," which is, in my view, a typical kind of male approach. We're stronger for cutting off your left foot, right? Yeah, tell me that again. So, I framed it differently. And we were looking at these two guys who were standing in the back row, they're a couple of the union folk and the unclassified who, without them, we couldn't have that university. They're as critical as any professor. Maybe in a different way, but you got to have them. And I remember I was looking at these two guys and they were just back there like with their arms folded [makes angry face] as he was going on about "well, we're cutting this and that, we're cutting this and that, we're cutting janitorial service and we're cutting all this stuff that the classified faculty do, classified staff do," and they were just furious. And I said "you know,"—he said "but we'll be better off for it. We're going to be stronger in the end."

[1:00:17]

And so, I was the next person to talk and I said "you know, I don't see it like that. I see it as you've got two cars, one you use every day, one that you use occasionally when you take the whole family out; you need both cars. Are you really stronger by getting rid of one of them? You can't run without all the stuff we've got. You might have to change how we do it, but"—I don't remember exactly what I said, but it was much more articulate than I'm being right now. But the idea was we're not stronger for cutting. We're losing something. We might as well admit we're losing something. But you got to do—you've got to do it. It's like surgery. If you've got to take off your little finger to save your hand, well what do you do? I suppose being diabetic makes me think like that. I mean you know, because diabetics die little inches at a time, and

so you kind of get to the point where you realize you've got to cut some things in order to keep the rest alive. Not that I've had any amputations, but I think it's a good image for me.

So that, to me, was one of the high points of my time at OSU, was really making that transition from, first it was starting the Gerontology Program and keeping it going, not really starting it, but keeping it going and expanding it, and then it was the whole thing with Home Economics, keeping that discipline alive, whatever name you give it; Home Economics, Human Sciences, I don't care what we call it. And then the budget stuff was really good. Those were major accomplishments for me.

I remember when I retired that it was funny, because I used to be a pain in the butt in the President Council meeting, because I'd say what I thought. I mean, it's like what? These guys were always constantly positioning themselves. Nobody wants to say the wrong thing in front of the provost or the president. I figured I was a short-timer, I knew I wasn't going to be there forever, so I'd say what I thought. Like you know, "well how come it's so much more important to have engineering than Home Ec? Is it because we're all women over here and they're mostly men?" And one of the other deans, when I retired, said "Clara, who's going to tell the truth now? Who's going to say what's really going on?" I said "I don't know, you guys are on your own."

But it's not that I was the only truth-teller, but I'm not afraid of being wrong, and I'm not afraid of saying what I think. So, probably another good example of that is one of our lead administrators one day in one of those meetings said the most outrageously sexist comment, I couldn't even believe it. All the other women, there were like four women in the room; Kay Schaffer from Liberal Arts and myself and a couple of others, I don't remember who they were, we were all sitting there and he said, he was talking about interviewing a new dean and he said "oh, well his wife isn't going to be hard to find a place for. She just stays home." And I thought what the, I mean—and every one of the women in that room went [makes shocked expression]. It's like hello, can we just be a little more sensitive to the fact that maybe she's got a life, and we don't have to put down the fact that she stays home and keeps this other guy going and probably does all the entertainment and all this stuff, the two-person career.

So, I called him on it. Not publically, not there, but I got him alone a couple days later and I said "I want to talk to you," and he said "what?" And I said—he didn't want to talk, he wanted—because he was a busy man, and I said "you know, you have aspirations for greater things, you want to be a provost and a president, you can see it in you, where you want to go. You need to watch what you say." And he had no idea. But I'll tell you, that totally changed our relationship. After that he actually listened to what I said, because it was like nobody had the nerve to call this guy on anything, because he was a hotshot, so that was my dad's saying about "nobody's better than you and you're not better than anybody" came back to me. And he has since gone on and done really well academically in his career, which is great, because he is a great person, except that he just had a couple of blind spots. Somebody needed to have the nerve to say "that was a mistake."

[1:05:11]

**JD:** Education on several levels.

**CP:** Yeah, there you go. That's right. So, that was, that was my time at OSU. It was really hard to leave. I really loved to be—I hated leaving. I loved OSU.

**JD:** I believe I read somewhere that you've just openly said "I love to work."

**CP:** I do. I do love work. In fact, I just, I have a hard time not working. When I first retired, I really had a hard time [voice breaking]. Sorry.

**JD:** Do you want me to stop?

**CP:** It's okay. Tears are part of life. I walked around for months thinking I was missing something. It was like part of me was gone. So, then I volunteer a lot here. It's not the same as—actually, when I first retired we moved to Hawaii for a year, and that was a very deliberate decision, because I was reading the newspaper every morning, I was getting so angry that things were going on and what—they were going directions that I liked or didn't like, and when I didn't like it I'd get all upset and say—but there was nothing I could do about it, because you go from being powerful to being old news. And I said "I need out of here."

So, we moved to Hawaii for a year, lived in Kona, had a great year, finished a couple of graduate students and that kind of stuff, but really didn't have to work as hard as I was working. Because these jobs are massive, they're not forty-hour a week jobs, they're not fifty or sixty-hour a week jobs. They're full-time, literally. You think about it at night, you know. My kids were sick of my never being around. I don't know if my husband missed me all that much [laughs] but it was really—retiring was really hard. Moving over here is great, because I love the climate so much better. So, I've been here I think what, four or five years, and I'm still trying to figure out what I'm doing here. I mean, I volunteer at my kids' school and all that, do a lot of work with homeless families and the homeless shelter. I've tried the Humane Society, and just kind of experimenting a little bit, what's going on.

But I like being intellectually involved too, and that's one thing I miss about being full-time at the university. I don't miss all the faculty meetings. I don't miss the committee on committees, that kind of way of getting stuff done, because I'm much more action. Let's do it. If we're going to do it, let's do it. If we're not, let's not talk about it. Just either change or let it go. And so, it's been a little hard to find a place that I feel I'm making enough of a difference. I love having more time for my family and my grandkids. My oldest daughter, her kids have had lots and lots of health problems, so it's been really convenient to have more free time to deal with some of their crises. But I still feel like I don't make the difference that I want to make in the world.

**JD:** There's still time to figure that out.

**CP:** That's right.

**JD:** I do want to talk, or ask you to please talk a little bit more about, you know, there's certainly people who are professors and they're professors their entire lives and never have an interest or make a transition to doing more administrative work, and maybe there's skill overlap, but could you talk a little about how you decided—I mean you talked a little about deciding that you would become dean in Home Ec and then kind of continuing down that path, but what are kind of the rewards, and figuring out that new approach?

**CP:** Right. Being an administrator, I don't think everybody's cut out to be an administrator, because you have to get past your own discipline, for one thing, and a lot of people are so good at their discipline they really think it's the only one in the world. And you're trained to—you're an advocate for it. You sort of have this—part of being an administrator, for me, was coming to appreciate the broader university. There's a great quote from Einstein that I really love. He talks about when you know very little about a subject, the circumference of your ignorance is very small, but when you know a great deal about a subject, the circumference of your ignorance is very large. And the more you learn, the more you know of what you don't know, and the more you come to appreciate. Even Fisheries, a bunch of fish, but when you start actually talking to faculty and administrators in Fisheries, you learn stuff that never crossed your mind. So, it's an intellectual stimulation. I really loved that.

[1:10:30]

And it's an opportunity to exercise fairness, to exercise equity, to actually think about what makes an institution or an organism work, as opposed to "I'm the liver, therefore I'm the most important." You know, universities are great for helping you understand the complexity of life, and if you don't have that kind of intellectual appreciation, I think—this is not to put anybody down, but I think some really great faculty really don't think past their own thoughts. They don't think past their own discipline. That's really where their passion is, is investigating and understanding this small piece of life, whether it's poetry or physics or whatever it is. It's like this really narrow focus. And that's just not who I am. I think an administrator, a good administrator, in my view, has that broader perspective, has a broader appreciation. I never said "let's cut art, because I don't like art, or I'm not an artist." So, you have to be willing to be a parent, in many ways, to guide and make suggestions, to be honest without being cruel.

So I don't know, I think a lot of it is a personality thing, and then I also think that it's, for me, I read a lot. I mean I didn't become—you don't become an administrator overnight. You actually have to read and think and see if you can apply some of those ideas. One of the best books I ever read for administrative perspective was called *Getting to Yes*, which is a decision-making book. I don't remember who wrote it, but it's a great book. Unlike my colleague Alexis Walker who could cite anything, she always knew everybody's name and dates, but *Getting to Yes* is a great book. It really talks about how you try to identify the core that's a shared goal, as opposed to your positions. That was really useful to me.

So I don't know, it just—I felt like I grew into it from starting out administering grants. Grant administration's a great exercise. For one thing, it is very—you have clear objectives, you have this twenty pages of pages that tell you exactly what you're trying to do. Not necessarily what you're going to do, but what you're trying to get to, what's your objective, what's your goal out there. And that's not always true in real life. So, you have to constantly be thinking "what am I trying to accomplish here? Are we trying to keep the College of Home Ec alive, are we trying to keep the discipline alive, are we trying to keep all the faculty alive? What are we trying to actually accomplish? I think that's how a university—that's what I think the best part of a university is, appreciating that it is a whole organism and they all have some value, even if I personally don't think that understanding a particular chicken disease is important. That is important to somebody. And that doesn't make it wrong because I don't get it.

It's like my question to you: oral history, you know, I got to tell you, I love talking, I've loved telling stories and I love history, I love narratives and storytelling, but it's never been something I've wanted to study for the sake of studying. That doesn't mean you're wrong or I'm right, it just means that we're part of a whole that makes the whole university, as opposed to my discipline is *the* discipline, even if it's the one with the most money or the most students. So I really—I'm rambling now.

**JD:** Not at all.

**CP:** I think Tammy and the college are doing great, in part because there's a real sense of respect for the diversity within the discipline of Human Sciences and Public Health. So, one's not in charge and the others are all lesser. We're all contributing to this goal of public health, public wellness, human wellbeing, and looking at that from a community perspective, as opposed to just the individual. So, understanding that what we eat is related to not just the decisions we're making but to what's in the grocery store and how it got there and what's a community offer.

[1:15:34]

**JD:** Earlier when you were talking about being dean of Home Ec and that merger and just what was going to happen to Home Ec as a separate college, you started to talk about the commencement of the last Home Ec class and then kind of moved off, but it sounded like there was perhaps a story there.

**CP:** Oh, it was just a really important time. I mean, I think that it was a really critical discipline for so many women, and it was one of the places where women could excel and be respected. It was like a women's college in the university. And I think the fact that we were the last graduating class doesn't make that good or bad, but just it was kind of a recognition. I was really aware that we were leaving a tradition behind, that it maybe was time to leave it. But it was sort of sad.

**JD:** Was there any special mention made, or any—

**CP:** I said something when we were handing out the degrees. OSU does that great thing where they actually give each student their degree and I remember saying—we weren't allowed as the deans to give big speeches, but Hal Salwasser, who was in Forestry, and I both had a chance to say a couple of words just before we started, and as we're saying "I'm (who you are)" and I just said "I want to recognize that this is the last graduating class in the College of Home Economics," because it was really important to acknowledge that that college is a huge part, has been since its beginning, a huge part of OSU. It wasn't just some little thing over here, it was a massive contributor, in my view, to the vibrancy of the university. And that sounds like something an administrator would say, but to its history, not just the individuals who were there, but really having a place where women could excel. And not just women, but that was really important. A place that acknowledged what women were interested in; kids, food, clothing, housing design, people, gerontology, is important. So, we're not just a technical college. So yeah, to me it was really—it deserved some recognition that this was the last class, that had produced some really outstanding professionals and people over the last hundred years, or whatever amount of time it was. Even though I was never a home economist, I have great affection.

**JD:** Sure. You could recognize the significance.

**CP:** Right.

**JD:** You were also part of the campus when all the discussions started about the branch campus that's now OSU-Cascades. Talk about your recollections of that discussion and where that led.

**CP:** Well, I think it was—I was the dean at the time, in Home Ec, so we were part of putting together the proposal and what would be, what kind of disciplines would be here and how that would work. I think there was a lot, as I recall, there was a lot of reticence on the part of the existing faculty in Corvallis. There was a lot of fear that it's going to drain off more resources, because you kept seeing people say things like "well yeah, remember what happened when we had Vet Med." Vet Medicine was going to be this whole individual funding stream and all that, but it didn't work out that way. So, let's just say if we spread out, how are we going to make sure that we can afford to keep that thing going? But it made sense to me, because this is a critical part of the university, a critical part of the state, rather, and there are a lot of people here and a lot of people that can't drop everything and come to Corvallis or take online classes. It doesn't fit for everybody.

[1:20:11]

My daughter, who's nineteen, is getting ready to go to OSU, and she's a great online class person, she does really well with online classes, but my other daughter, who's fourteen, hates online classes. So, not everybody's going to be able to drop their life and move to Corvallis for four years or whatever it is. So, it made sense to me to tie up with a community college and have the option to get a bachelor's degree and maybe some graduate degrees here. And I think that's worked out. That idea has worked out. It took some—there were some stumbling blocks the first few years with what's actually going to count, what doesn't count and how did faculty get supported and how did it not get supported. Can we really expect the same thing from a faculty person over here at a department of three with seven or eight adjuncts teaching individual classes as we expect from somebody in Corvallis with twelve faculty colleagues? It's just, it's such a different environment.

But I think it's working out better. I mean, there's the hiccups with what counts, what doesn't count, how are we going to do advising and those kinds of problems they need to solve. I think right now I'm not as enthused about the four-year school as some people are. I think the four-year school here makes great sense, but if it were up to me I wouldn't do the first and second year. I wouldn't be hiring faculty to teach 100 and 200 level classes at OSU. I'd stay with the community college and put those resources into further expanding and developing the upper division majors and the graduate program.

But I'm not part of that, so I don't really know why all those decisions are made. I'm like a citizen, you know? I look around, I think we could use a lot more courses at the upper division level in all the majors we have at Bend. And my daughter, who has been going to OSU-Cascades, why does she want to take Sociology 101 at OSU and pay fifteen hundred to two thousand dollars to take it versus take it at COCC, same size class, maybe even smaller classes, for six hundred? You've got students drowning in debt when they get out of here, and it doesn't, I still don't quite get it. I think all the controversy over where the campus is located is actually, in my view, a red herring. I think it's missing the bigger point of do even—and not that we don't need a campus, we need a campus, but are we making a mistake by putting resources into something somebody else can already do? Maybe not as well as we do; I'm sure that the university could teach Speech 101 better than community college can. I mean, that's sarcasm. But you know, on the other hand I know universities can teach graduate classes and upper division classes better.

So, it's just a, I don't know what's going on politically, I actually have not tried to get involved and engaged in that, because it's a time-sink. God so loved the world he sent his only son, and not a committee, to save it. I'll tell you, I'm not big on committees. And just going, especially when you have no power, I mean I go in as this professor emeritus, retiree kind-of; who cares, you know? It's not like I'm going to be there in twenty years. Nobody really cares about your opinion, as in my view. You're old news, so keep your opinion to yourself. I don't write letters to the editor, I don't campaign on things I don't know enough about, and I appreciate that everything I just said, I don't know enough to really say.

I don't have—it's my opinion, it's not based in lots of study of what led to this, why were those decisions made. Why are we picking a place where—I don't care how they fight about this building, it is an old dump and it is going to make traffic horrible, and there's no place to park now, so what are you going to do? Those are legitimate concerns. It feels like OSU's dug its heels in and the community's dug its heels in. Nobody's really talking to each other about what's going on. And it seems like a time waste to me. I'm almost like just, if we're not going to change, don't talk about it. If there's really not an open, a willingness to say let's listen to the other side and hear their perspective, why are we wasting our breath? Either just do it or just don't do it. And clearly they're going to just do it. They're going to build that.

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Where are they going to build it? They're going to hire faculty to teach lower division classes and that's what they're going to do. And maybe I should have been paying attention sooner and complained sooner, but it's too late now. So, I'll do whatever I can to make it successful. But is it how I would have done it? Probably not. But they know stuff I don't know. Becky Johnson and the president and all the faculty that are there that are working their butts off, now full time, they know stuff I don't know. I do think that we'd be better off as a university, as in educationally and in terms of research, as well, having more faculty at the upper division level and not worry so much about doing lower division stuff. But like I said, I'm retired.

**JD:** You've talked a lot about gerontology and how all these issues don't just happen in a vacuum or don't just happen in some narrow little focus, and I know there was at least one activity that you were involved in, around Healthy Start?

**CP:** Oh, yeah.

**JD:** That I would love for you to talk about a bit.

**CP:** One thing I didn't mention, because I still am more of a gerontologist than anything else, but at some point there was a Barbara Knudson, who is an alum, a wonderful lady, gave the college a really nice endowment, created an endowed chair in Family Policy, and we as a college searched and searched for somebody to take that position, but you're looking for a senior faculty person with lots of national exposure and interest in a fairly narrow area. And it's not—Family Policy's not narrow, but the field is always a subset of a broader field, like Early Childhood and then there'd be a Policy person, or Gerontology and a Policy person. So, it's not like a big pool. You're looking for somebody that can fill that position, and we interviewed, I don't know, over a couple years, the last couple years Kinsey was there, probably three or four people that we thought would be good, but none of them wanted to move. I mean, Corvallis is a great place but these are all—you're recruiting at the top of the field, you're not recruiting a first year or second year or even an associate professor who wants to make a career. So, it was very hard to get people to, first of all, consider moving to Corvallis, to leaving wherever they were with their house and their kids and their dogs and their mother-in-law, and we actually had at least two faculty who were really good candidates say "I just can't move because I'm taking care of my parents. I can't leave my parents and I can't drag them across the country to come be in Corvallis."

So, we didn't fill the position. Then one day Kinsey called me and she said Clara, why haven't you applied for this position? And I was shocked. I said "you know Kinsey, I guess it's because I've never thought of my name and "endowed chair" in the same sentence. I mean, it just had never crossed my mind. And so, she asked me if I'd do it and I said yes, so I applied and they hired me. I guess I convinced people that I could do it, and it was great for me, because it was a way to change from just gerontology to kind of another whole way of thinking, build on my relationships with state agencies. And Kinsey, God bless her, really wanted to make sure that it was a degree—that it was a field, or that it was a program, rather, that was making a difference in people's lives. So, it was being politically active and informing public policy, as opposed to just doing some more research and publishing something. And that fit well with where I was.

[1:30:15]

So, I started out doing stuff in gerontology and aging and then there was a—it was back in the early, let's see, it's been twenty, they just had their twentieth, so it's about twenty years ago, the legislature put a bunch of money into early childhood education, and one of the programs they started was based on a model from the Prevent Child Abuse in America and the University of Hawaii. It was called Healthy Start. And the idea was to—it's early intervention. Or really more than—not early—but real prevention; taking families who are first-time parents who had a number of risk factors for being—for poor outcomes, either child abuse or lack of school readiness. And these are all factors that are not hard to figure out what they are. Somebody who's very low-income, who has no social network, who was abused themselves, who has a drug and alcohol problem, who is married or partnered with a person who's got a drug or alcohol problem, people who were themselves foster kids, who really don't have good models for how to be a parent, and to take those people before they get into trouble, before they hit their kid the first time, to say "okay, you're at high risk," like you're identifying somebody who's high risk for cancer and saying "what can we do to help you lower your risk?"

And that's what Healthy Start is really about. And so, it involves a proven model, an empirically-sound model of early intervention, or in-home intervention—in-home intervention with families on a one-to-one basis with home visitors, and going in and—it's a complicated kind of model, but we started it, the state started it in five communities, five counties, and that was twenty-five years ago. And they wanted to evaluate it, so they put out a call for proposals to evaluate that program. And Aphra Katzev, another great colleague of mine, and I wrote the proposal to evaluate Healthy Start, and that's how we got involved with it. So, we developed, designed the first evaluation of it and implemented it. And it was a really powerful, successful program. We involved a lot of—we worked extensively with the programs themselves about what would be a useful evaluation. Not just let's collect a bunch of data nobody's even going to look at. And then we worked really hard to take that information and create a way of reporting it to the legislature that they could hear.

So, we didn't get them huge piles of data; we gave them bullet points that we could—and every bullet point, we could back it up. So, we got to do some testimony with the legislature and that kind of stuff. And it was a great—it's still operating. It's now in every county and it's—I became the, after doing the evaluation for a few years, I got more involved in the—I got involved as an evaluator on the statewide advisory committee, and I eventually became the chair of that. And it was really great because it was early childhood, it was totally different than gerontology, except that it's not different, because you're still talking about how that immediate environment influences an individual's life. So, we were able to demonstrate that it did reduce child abuse rates, it increased school readiness rates, and it was just really useful.

Then, when I retired they spun that evaluation off to a private firm in Portland that's still doing it. And I really believe that the reason that program still operates is because that evaluation demonstrated its success. So, we went in the last couple of rounds of the legislature, every year you go through this, you know, are you going to get refunded or not funded, how much are you going to get cut, and they've survived fairly well. Not as well as I might want to see, but you know, there's always transitions. But they've done pretty well in terms of keeping going. And the name even has evolved from Healthy Start to Healthy Families of Oregon, which is good.

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So it's, I mean that was a great time. That whole time doing family policy was great for me, because it was a way to change from gerontology, per se, to something that was very—another very multidisciplinary, engaged a lot of faculty, engaged a lot of students and make a difference, without having to—I didn't have to sell my house and move and all that.

**JD:** And did I understand correctly that the professor that it was named for was an alum of—

**CP:** Barbara Knudson was an alum of Home Economics from I think 1937 or something, and she is an amazing woman. She's real down to Earth. And you always know when you're done talking to her, because she always has this plastic rain cap, one of those plastic rain caps, you pull it really tight and it folds up.

**JD:** I know exactly what you're talking...

**CP:** And when she's done talking to you she takes, I mean when the conversation's over with her, she takes it out, she starts yanking on it, getting her folds all together, and you know it's really over when she opens it up and puts it on her head, ties it on. And she—but she is really generous, and lives in a very modest home in Salem. And I don't know if she's even still alive, but—

**JD:** I'm not sure.

**CP:** She made a big difference in that college.

**JD:** So, I've been asking you a lot of questions, but I may not have touched on something that you want to make sure gets captured in your record that will be in the archives, so I want to offer you the opportunity at this point.

**CP:** Well, I just want to say if I forgot anybody, I'm sorry. I mean, because I've known a lot of great people that are, half of whom I can describe in great detail; again, I don't always remember their last names, but age-associated memory loss, what the hell are you going to do. You know, it's not that important that—Extension was a great program. I don't know if I said enough about Extension. I think Extension's really a huge asset to the state and to the university. And it was, it's what got me started at OSU. It's where I started to appreciate a place like OSU, because I was coming out of a small liberal arts

college at Gonzaga and then the U of O, and then we just thought of OSU as the cow college, and so I had a steep learning curve when I first got to OSU. Good thing I decided I liked it, because I didn't mind learning it. I met some great people and great faculty and individuals and administrators. I think overall OSU was really good to me. So, I miss it.

**JD:** Fair enough. Well, and perhaps that's where we should end.

**CP:** I think so.

**JD:** Thanks so much, Clara.

**CP:** You're welcome. Although I love retirement too, it's not bad. I mean, I'm not complaining about retirement, I'm just saying I don't feel like I've quite found my spot yet [voice breaking].

**JD:** Well, you seem to be pretty good at figuring those things out.

**CP:** I'm going to keep working at it. Keep on keeping on. You know, old Tina Turner wasn't wrong about that.

**JD:** Thanks so much for your recollections.

**CP:** You're welcome. Thank you.

[1:39:00]