



Pat Reser Oral History Interview, April 24, 2015

Title

“The Labyrinthine Journey of an Influential Alumna”

Date

April 24, 2015

Location

Reser residence, Beaverton, Oregon.

Summary

In the interview, Reser discusses her family background and her upbringing in Canada, including her early interest in music and her ambition to become a teacher. Reser also notes her perceptions of the United States as a child and the adjustments that she and her family had to make when they moved to the U.S. during her teenage years. After describing her experiences at Portland's Cleveland High School, Reser then recounts the circumstances by which she enrolled at Portland State College and met her future husband, Al Reser, in an introductory English class.

In recalling this time period, Reser provides background on Al's life, his youthful drive to become a successful businessman, and the couple's decision to transfer to Oregon State College so that Al might have improved access to coursework and other resources in Food Technology. From there she reflects on her own undergraduate years in Corvallis, a busy period spent working to complete her degree in Elementary Education while also assisting her husband in his studies and preparing to give birth to the couple's first child. She likewise provides insight into Al's early experiments with a new sour cream-based dip line, work which began during his OSC years and later became a major commercial hit.

Reser next provides an overview of the years that followed her and Al's graduation from OSC. She comments on her professional work in education, her growing family, and her increasing interest in volunteer work. She describes her return to the Beaverton school district once her children were grown, and outlines her activities there as a teacher, administrator and specialist on learning disabilities.

Reser then shares a detailed and personal story of coming to terms with her husband's failing health and her own cancer diagnosis and treatment. In this, she emphasizes the ways in which the symbolic pilgrimage of labyrinths became an important part of her spiritual and emotional health. She likewise recounts her experiences walking the Camino de Santiago in Spain with family members, and her memories of learning that Al had passed away during her second journey on the Camino.

From there the session turns its attention to the evolution of the Reser family's connection with Oregon State University. Reser describes the steady development of the family's interest in OSU athletics, and their ultimate decision to make a major gift to the Athletic Department that led to the renaming of Parker Stadium to Reser Stadium. She also recounts her earliest involvement with the OSU capital campaign, including her enlistment as a co-chair of the campaign and the family's decision to make a lead gift to what would become the Linus Pauling Science Center. She likewise shares the story of the family's support for Austin Hall and her encounters with Ken and Joan Austin.

As the session nears its conclusion, Reser provides further insight into the forward development of the Campaign for OSU as it played out. She describes her work with fellow co-chairs Patrick Stone and Jim Rudd, and reveals that the campaign's

billion dollar goal was first put forth by Beth Ray, OSU's First Lady. She then shares her memories of the creation of OSU's Board of Trustees and her election as the board's chair. The interview closes with Reser's thoughts on the future direction of the university, including her enthusiasm for on-going developments in the College of Forestry, the College of Public Health and Human Sciences, and the College of Liberal Arts.

Interviewee

Pat Reser

Interviewer

Chris Petersen

Website

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

Transcript

Chris Petersen: Alright Pat, if you'd please introduce yourself with your name and today's date and our location?

Pat Reser: My name is Pat Reser and I am in my home in Beaverton and today's date is April 24th, 2015.

CP: Great, and thank you very much for having me. So, we will spend a lot of time talking about your long and important association with OSU but I want to begin at the beginning. You were born in Canada, is that correct?

PR: I was. I was born in Windsor, Ontario but my family moved back to Regina, Saskatchewan when I was nine months old, so all I claim is a birthplace with Ontario. And we lived there for almost eight years and then my dad said "no more Saskatchewan winters." And we had actually applied to immigrate to the United States with the intention of going to Florida. He was determined to get out of the cold. And it was post-World War II, my dad had a desired skill set, he was a sheet metal worker, and so things didn't move very quickly and he had a sister who lived in Vancouver, B.C. who said "no, jobs are plentiful, it's wonderful, come out here." So, Dad took the train to Vancouver, found a job, bought a house, called Mom and said "bring the kids." And then we got the okay to immigrate to the United States, but we went to Vancouver instead. And I, as I mentioned, I had family or aunts there and my mom's cousins lived there too, so it was a good move. And we lived there for almost eight years and then moved to Portland, and I've been in this area ever since.

CP: What was your parents' backgrounds? Are they native Canadians?

PR: My dad was actually born in what was Austria, Hungary at the time, but during wars the borders changed, names changed. But he had a French name, a Romanian language and they moved to Saskatchewan and his father was a landscaper person. He actually was the lead landscaper for the gardens in Regina, which it was the state—excuse me—the provincial capital. But my dad went to first grade, period. He was a hard worker, he was needed at home. But he made sure that his sisters, who followed him, had school, and helped two of his sisters go to college. So, that was, at some point in his life, that was a really important thing.

My mom was born in Avonlea, Saskatchewan and she went through the eighth grade and her family were farmers, so she was needed on the farm also. She could handle a team of horses very well and in fact I have a picture of her standing on the back, the hind end of a horse as she's holding the reins and moving on. So, that's kind of my parental involvement with language and school and their lives' experience at this early...

CP: What was your upbringing like, and I would gather Regina and Vancouver are very different places.

PR: They're very different, and I remember more it's like the clothing and what we could and couldn't do comfortably. We had to put layers of clothing on to go to school in Regina and recesses were very short because by the time you put all your layers on, went out and played, it was time to come back and take the layers off. So, that's one memory that's really strong in my mind. I have an October birthday so I was enrolled in kindergarten but in January they moved me into first grade. So I was always, from then on, one of the younger kids in the class, as I went through school. But, it all worked out.

CP: What were you interested in as a girl?

PR: I remember ice skating and loving the ice skating. In Regina my dad flooded the backyard, and so we had ice skates that we could skate. Of course it wasn't very smooth, there were no Zambonis to clear it off and it depended on how the ground was when it froze, how many lumps there were. But I have a fond memory and a photo of this memory too: my brother in the maple leaf—of course the maple leaves of Canada, very important hockey team—a maple leaf shirt, or sweater rather, and his skates on and my skates on and we're in the backyard.

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And then when we moved to Vancouver, skating was another thing that was really popular among folks at that time and I can still hear the skaters, will often envision this older couple. They were—now I would say a much younger couple, but mature adults skating as partners to a skater's waltz. That was such a sweet memory for me.

And then we went to the library a lot. I—we were not a family with a lot of discretionary means but there were some things that were really important and that was music, so I took piano lessons for six years as a young person. My sister and brother also took piano lessons but it was not something that was their thing. So, I remember going to the library a lot, I remember signing in choirs a lot. Those were all fond memories.

CP: And music's something that stuck with you for the remainder of your life, for sure.

PR: Yeah, yeah. I still play on occasion. I'm the family musician at Christmas when we all gather around the piano and sing Christmas carols. And in school it used to be part of the tradition during holiday time you did sing Christmas carols, but of course things have changed. And I keep thinking, you know, my grandkids don't know the words to Christmas carols, so if we can at least once a year sing them, there will be some kind of familiarity with the carols for Christmas.

CP: You mentioned you were young for your classes typically, what was school like for you growing up?

PR: It was good, I really liked it. As an educator I look back and I cringe at some of the things that went on, like I remember when I was in Canada, with every grading period we were reseated according to the rank in the classroom. And of course, if you were in the first row, that was great because that meant you were in the top whatever number. And I would always breathe a sigh of relief for myself but then fear and feel a pang of anguish for those who were seated at the back of the room. And I thought "if I'm ever a teacher, I will never do that."

But I had a favorite third and fourth grade teacher, she moved with the class to fourth grade, Miss McConnell, and I loved her. So, that was a real pivotal year in my life when education and the role that a teacher can play in someone's life can really be exponential. So, that was an important time for me. And then when I moved to Vancouver also there was this—the school I went to had been a K through 8 and because of burgeoning enrollment and a new high school, what had been the high school became the junior high. So, at seventh grade we went into the junior high and at tenth grade—ninth grade was a separate building—and then tenth, eleventh, twelfth were in the senior high building.

So, that was kind of a shift there, but I began to get active in school. I always loved to organize things and so I—we played school a lot in my home in Vancouver and with my allowance I would go to the Kresge store and buy things I could use as a teacher. And in Vancouver also the PNE, the Pacific Northwest Exhibition, was a big deal. It was kind of like a maximum county fair only it was really big. And of course I say that because I was a lot smaller, so it was that kind of relationship. But every time we went we were allowed to buy one fun thing. And so, my sister bought a baton because she was determined to learn how to swing that baton, and I don't remember what I bought. It was some kind of a musical instrument. But I organized the neighborhood kids in a parade and we had our acts, we had our order, I made fliers, took them to the houses, told them what time the parade will be by and so forth. So, from a very early age I was doing that kind of thing, and it was fun, I enjoyed doing that.

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CP: Did you have this idea that you might become a teacher pretty early on, as well?

PR: Yeah. I moved into that quite early. Of course, during that time the thinking of the roles of women in the world was a little bit more narrow than it is today and you either went into nursing or as a stenographer, that was the language of the day, or you became an educator. Or with home economics, you could also move into some areas. So, the notion of being a scientist or an engineer or an astronaut or—that wasn't the consensus of thinking at the time. I frequently, when I either hear a speaker or read something, I think "gosh, in my next life I'm going to do thus and so," but I'm just, I have no regrets. I am thrilled with my life's experiences.

CP: So, it sounds like there was this ambition for your family to move to the US for a while, what was your sense of the United States, growing up in Canada?

PR: Well, I have to tell you that my friends in Canada used to say things like "make sure you don't sneeze in anybody's face or you're going to get sued." That was the general consensus, that people would sue you for things that were just human behaviors that may not have been the best, but there was that notion. And I look back now and I chuckle, but then you think about the last, or the winter Olympics that were held in B.C. and some of the commentator's comments were how polite and whatnot the Canadians are. Well, it really is true and so sometimes this desire to move ahead and that

entrepreneurial spirit and other kinds of things can look a little bit different in the eyes of a culture that tends to step back and say "go ahead, you first." It's not right or wrong, it's just different.

CP: So, the family made the move when you were a teenager, is that correct?

PR: Mhmm.

CP: Tell me about that transition for you and the adjustment that you had to make.

PR: Oh gosh. So, I—we moved to Portland and we found a home in the Cleveland attendance area and so—and we were renting at that time and then during that first year the owner decided to sell the house, so we had to find another location. And the next home we found was in the Franklin school district, but I'd made one transition so I simply didn't tell anybody that I had moved for a long time. And because things were—there weren't that many things that were being mailed to the house from the school, usually you got it and took it home. And so when—and then my family bought a house that was in the Franklin school district. So, my sister went to Franklin but I stayed in Cleveland, and by then I was a senior with a new address. They weren't going to make me change.

But it's interesting; I learned really quickly to start surveying the land before you step out. In Canada when you belong to various groups, whether it was the choir, the orchestral or instrumental group or a speech group or whatever, you had a pin. Every year you got a pin for that and it had the year and whatever symbol represented that group. And so, you would proudly wear your bank of pins. So, the first time in the fall it was cool enough to wear a sweater, I wore my bank of pins, and I kept getting these weird looks in school. I couldn't figure it out. You know, everything's done up, buttoned, what's going on? And I was in the restroom at some point in that day and one of the gals in there said "how many guys are you going with, anyhow?" I said "oh, I'm not going with anyone, why do you ask that?" "Well, you're wearing all these pins and if you're wearing a pin it means somebody gave it to and you're going with that person." Well, you can bet I took those pins off immediately and never wore them again.

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So, then I thought "okay, start observing before you start doing." So, that was an interesting experience, but I was—and then also the required courses weren't quite as stringent as they were in Canada. And foolishly, I took a study hall instead of other classes. I had met the two year language requirement, it wasn't a requirement but usually people took two years, I had met a couple of other requirements too and didn't think about going on. So, as I said, I took music, I was involved in the choir and we did a couple of performances and I loved that. That was my heart.

But I can tell you my chemistry teacher had the most profound impact on me. He—I was a good student, usually 3.5, 3.3, 3.5, somewhere in there, so I kind of qualify that as a good student, and the first thing in chemistry class he said "you have—if you're going to learn chemistry, you have to know the symbols. And I will give you a week to learn them and you will take a test. If you miss one, you will keep taking that test until you don't miss one." He said "you can't learn chemistry without knowing the symbols." And that was really important. I did have to take the test twice. Silver and gold, Au and Ag, got those two mixed up. But that was really an important thing, how if you want to participate in something, you have to understand some of the platform upon which it's built. So, that was a really important thing.

Our—the English teacher that I had, I can't remember her name but the way she helped us begin to critique our own work was something that I still do. And then the typing teacher, and the reason I mention her is she didn't go by test alone. My desk happened to be close to hers and she had her desk somewhat in the middle, on the side, and we were around her, and she would listen to people's typing, but the minute she set the timer for a typing test, I was all thumbs. I couldn't pass one typing test, but she could hear me typing and so I valued her ability to look at what a person could do in a non-testing situation. And I used to do a lot of typing for the school, thank you letters to parents or various and sundry things. So, I knew I was a good typist but I couldn't pass a test because I simply froze, and I thought "I'm sure there are other people who are in that same boat." And so, I always, as a teacher, made sure I looked as well at their daily work and not just the score that they got but actually how they got there and not just the test scores. I worked at balancing that. So, I think of those three as being fundamental to a lot of things that came out of my life as I moved on.

CP: So, Cleveland High made a big impact on you.

PR: It did, socially and I learned a whole lot there.

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CP: Was there always the expectation that you were going to go to college afterwards?

PR: That was my expectation. My brother didn't go on to school. I think in Vancouver, when you got to be—they didn't use the word "freshman, sophomore" it was "twelfth grade"—when you got to be going into the twelfth grade, you committed either pre-college course or not. And my brother was bright but he was kind of anti-authority and so if this was expected, "eh, I'm going to try that instead" kind of thing. And so, I know my parents were really disappointed that he couldn't go on to school. And in the system in Vancouver at the time, you could actually have a grade thirteen, which was like the freshman year of our college or a community college level or so forth. And I know they were disappointed but we didn't have conversations like "of course you're going to go to college," "well college has this value," you know, there was none of that.

But just probably intrinsically, I knew I was going to go to college. And I actually liked Kent State and I couldn't swing it financially. So, I did get a scholarship to Portland State and I got a job. And that's—and I never asked my parents to put me through school. I think if I had asked, they may have, they probably would have said yes. But I was never able to ask for me. I could advocate for others. So, I figured if I want to go to college, you figure out how you're going to do it, and I did.

CP: Did you start right on the education track at Portland State?

PR: Yeah. I did, yeah.

CP: Well, tell me a little bit about that, those years, there's an important person you met along the way, obviously. I'm interested in knowing about the Portland State experience.

PR: Oh, of course. Okay, so I'm seventeen when I enroll at Portland State. I turn eighteen shortly but nonetheless, I start off at seventeen. And I start in the traditional English 101, 2 and 3 and whatever else, but we had to take placement exams. And I couldn't understand it but I was placed in an English class that required an English lab where you would be taught grammar, sentence structure, paragraph development, etcetera, and etcetera. And I thought "was—were my high school English years all a sham? I would get A's and B+'s and things and here I am in Bonehead English?" Or whatever name you want in referring to it. And so, I have always had a very deep faith, so I kind of figured I was there for a reason and I didn't—I hadn't figured the reason out yet, but anyhow we had to write a paper just so our professor—I can remember his name, very few professors do I remember their names, that one I do, it was Professor Medvoy—and so, after we got our papers back, he said "what are you doing in this class?" I said "well, that's where I was placed." He said "you go down to the Registrar's Office and tell them that I said you need to be placed in a different class." Well, I'm seventeen; I'm not one to challenge authority. You know, it just wasn't me.

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So, Al was in that class, as was his friend Darrell, and Al had been in the service after high school and got out in November of the previous year. He enrolled in Portland State in January, our full winter term, had a really good advisor, a wise advisor, and that advisor had asked him "how many letters did you write home when you were in the army?" He said "well, I think I probably wrote one. I usually just called collect." He said "well, let me advise you not to start out in English class. Start out in some core classes that will excite you and really interest you and then next fall start your 101, 2 and 3 series. By then you will be reintroduced to printed word, you'll get, through reading, you'll get that sentence structure, blah, blah, blah, blah. And so, Al did. Well, he's in the same class and it doesn't take long for him and his friend Darrell to realize they're going to have a tough time in that class. So, they made a bet to see who could find, begin dating someone, as soon as possible, get them to write their papers and then, when the class is over, it could be sayonara or whatever.

So, as Al began to make the move in class, Professor Medvoy sees this and he asks me to stay after class one day and he said "how old are you?" and I said "seventeen, but I'm going to be eighteen in" what, a week or whatever, and he said "and what"—when you come out of the service you're obviously a couple years older than the rest of the entering freshmen,

and he said "well, sometimes the returning G.I.s take advantage of young students and I just wanted to kind of make you aware of that."

And so, long story short, that class never ended. It lasted fifty-two years. Or actually, fifty-four, because the two years in college and then the fifty-two years in marriage, but the interesting thing, five—was it five years? No, three or four years after we graduated from OSU, we were in Vancouver at Prospect Point in Stanley Park, because I had wanted Al to see where I spent a good number of years growing up, and Stanley Park is always a destination for visitors. So, we're at Prospect Point, which is a place where you've got the viewers, where you drop your quarter in and you can scan the horizon at the other side of the bay, and who should be there but Professor Medvoy? So, I went up to him and I told—reintroduced myself and I said "you may not remember me but I want you to know"—and I related a little bit of the story and I said "I also want to thank you for being the kind of professor who looked out for his students." And by then we had two children and so forth, but it was just one of those interesting like serendipitous experiences that I was able to link back with him.

CP: So, give us a sense of Al at this point in his life and the two of you are, I guess courting and falling in love, what was his—

PR: Well first of all, he—well I was working at Newberry's Monday and Friday night and all day Tuesday and I worked in a couple of different departments: shoes, fabric, because I sewed, so it was a natural thing, I could talk about fabric, and Tuesdays I was in the information booth where I provided information, sold money orders, made change for the various clerks around, lost and found, sold stamps, just the little potpourri of things that happened. And so, the first time when it began to get a little serious, he said "well, let me drive you to work." And it was a Friday night and so I accepted, I thought "oh please don't let him have a junker car," and I don't know why this was important to me, but he hadn't met my parents yet and I just, and he's older and you know, it's just one of those things. And here he had this '55 Pontiac, really nice car. So, that was an important thing. And at that moment, I should say, it was an important thing at that moment. So, he drove me to work and then picked me up and that became part of our ritual. Monday and Friday nights he would drive me to work and then Tuesday I just went to work because it was an all day and whatnot.

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So, we did what other young people did, we went to movies, we took little day trips when we could and we used to talk a lot about our futures. And Al had a very nomadic life. He went to six grade schools in four different states, didn't really learn to read until the fifth grade because he was always moving, and he used to like to say "well, they hadn't invented the vowels yet," you know, that's why he couldn't learn to read. And in reality, he probably was dyslexic.

And—but he had these ideas and so we would talk about what we wanted to do with our lives once we knew that we were in love, we wanted to spend the rest of our lives together, we kind of came up with four pillars that were going to be the supports of our lives. One was that I would continue school and graduate before we had children. Another was we would—that I would not work in the business. My passion was in education and I would go that route and he would do his thing, but in addition to that we also realistically said that's another income that won't be dependent upon the success of what he does, that we would raise our children in—with a faith, and that we would always give back to the communities in which we lived and worked. And you know, at any point, if you look back, that is pretty much, those were the values that we put in place at a very early point in time and built on them. And I'll come back to that when I talk about my cancer experience, because that was really important in adjusting the trajectory of my life. So, if I forget, you need to remind me.

CP: Okay.

PR: And when we, when Al knew that he wanted to do something with that family business, he knew he needed a food tech minor. Portland State didn't offer it, Oregon State did. That's what took us to Oregon State. But that ninety miles just seemed like it was far too great a distance. I didn't have a car, how would we get together, so we decided to get married. And he was on the G.I. bill and as a married student I would be worth twenty-five dollars a month. So, that was okay too.

So, I worked in the summer full time at Newberry's and we got married in June, ten days after grad—our last final. And then I started working at the plant and I basically was the office. I did the accounts payable, the receivables, did the bank, charted payroll, delivered product when I—when somebody was out of something and needed it quick, let the dog out,

his mom's dog, which was very demeaning to me at that time. After all, I had this education and here I have to drive to Hillsborough and let the dog out. But nonetheless you know, when you're young you have goofy reactions to some things.

But there were some things—I want to go back to the college years. Because Al's early education was very spotty and it wasn't continuous, it certainly, it was interrupted by movement but there were also times when he didn't enroll in school as soon as they moved to the new place. And so, written language was really a challenge. And one of the big investments we made as a young couple was to buy an electric typewriter, and I still value the little office store on Sixteenth and, is it Monroe? Or was at the time, that allowed us to pay over three months. So, we bought this electric typewriter and I would type his papers. And then I couldn't read his writing and he's already in bed and you know, how do I, I can't do this.

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So, we started changing the process. You dictate to me and I'm going to write it. Then I at least can read my own writing. Well in the process, I learned a lot about business and sometimes he'd say something and I'd say "that doesn't make sense to me, say it another way" or whatnot. So, in that whole dialog I learned a lot; we developed this business relationship where we would talk about ideas and whatnot and then divert from his paper and say "well, could that apply to the plant?" or "what about"—you know, so he would start looking at application with those principles.

And then also this was before the early day of fax machines. We were still on mimeograph and all of that kind of thing. He would go to the library every Saturday morning if he wasn't going back to Cornelius to work and pore through the trade magazines. And in the back of the trade magazines there was also a tear-out and you could send off for certain kinds of publications or articles or whatnot, free. And so, he was constantly bringing those in and reading them. So, he was immersing himself in trade magazines and equipment in packaging, in just food tech and all of that at a very early age.

And then he was in accounting. So, part of what they, some of these accounting classes required, that he analyze the audits that were printed and available in the library, and so I remember one time he really needed something or other, he was really needed at the plant at home, so I went and laboriously copied this spreadsheet of an annual report from whatever company was. I don't remember, I think it was Proctor & Gamble. So, I've always had a little bit of that immersion. So, when—I kind of forgot where I was before I took that detour.

So, after we graduated, I got a job in Forest Grove in a junior high. That was the language of the day. And he was working in Cornelius where the company was. His parents' marriage had kind of hit a tough spot and his dad moved to Seattle. And the fact that his dad had been in one house for ten years, it was the first time that ever happened, because he didn't want to be tied down, he wanted to be able to move, and the grass was usually greener on the other side of the fence. So, he moved to Seattle, wanted to set up a brokerage and Al's mom went with him. So, at that point in time it was a four-way partnership between Al's dad, Mom, Al and his older—and the oldest of the three girls, who all three girls were younger than he. But the youngest girl was ten years younger than Al and the second one was seven years younger. So, there was quite a gap, whereas Lois was quite a bit closer in age to him. So, we borrowed from my folks, Al's grandfather, Al's mom and bought his dad out.

So, when Al graduated, he became president of the company and he knew, he knew that the company as it was operating could not support multiple families year-round, so he immediately moved in to expanding the product line. While he was in college he had developed the dip line. He had a mentor, Mac McAllister from Borden's who had taken just a liking to this fledgling company that was always on a shoestring but had these ideas, and when Mac retired from Borden's, he was their controller, Al asked if he'd be willing to work for him for maybe three or five months, just to set up the books, and because Al was a major salesman, he was operations, he was—you can only do so much at a time and it's good to have someone that you know knows help.

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Well, I think Mac, that relationship lasted until Mac died. I think it was like fourteen, fifteen years. And so, he actively worked for us, coming in every day. And then, when he really did need to retire for health reasons, Al would go to his house once a week and they played pinochle and talked business. So, that was an incredible asset to Al and that also allowed him to do what he needed to do.

So, I mentioned my first job was in Forest Grove. Well, at the time Forest Grove was a rather parochial-thinking school district. I'm in junior high and I become pregnant, and I might become a negative influence on the young girls in the school. So, I was asked to retire—or resign my position, but they would keep me into January, so any accrued vacation and so forth could then be used in January. And so, I agreed to it. Those, you know, I wasn't about to take on a school district.

But I knew I couldn't go back there. So, I applied the next fall and Mike was born in April. And I applied in Hillsborough. They were a little bit more less parochial and, but nonetheless, the superintendent who did the interviewing said "well, I noticed you've had two children within twelve months," and I knew where he was going and all I could say, you know, I'm young and I'm not defensive but I want to defend myself and so I said "I'm not Catholic." That's the only thing I could come up with. And then the next question was "you live in Forest"—excuse me—"in Cornelius, but it's the tax payers of Hillsborough who are paying your salary." I said "well, I shop at the Piggly Wiggly that has a Hillsborough address and I shop at J.C. Penny's for my children, and that's in Hillsborough." So, that appeared to satisfy him.

So, I worked there until I was pregnant with Mark. Well, by then I had become a little more savvy and the policy in Hillsborough was that you could work up until one month prior to your due date. So I, my doctor, I kind of explained this and whatnot and he said "okay, when do you want to have this baby?" so I said "well, the end of the quarter is thus and such a date, let's make it five weeks after that." And so he said "okay, your baby's due on that date. If it comes early, it comes early." So, at least I was able to complete the quarter, give the kids the grades, because I had the body of information for the whole quarter, and then the new person was hired. And I worked until the quarter was over and it worked out just fine.

CP: Well, the words that come to mind when we, for me anyway, when you talk about Al, it sounds like he was extremely focused and driven, he had an idea of what he wanted to do and the way he really went for it. I'm interested in kind of your Oregon State experience as an undergrad. Obviously, you're helping him in a lot of different ways with his focus and his passion, but what were you doing for yourself, I guess, during that time period?

PR: Well, once I realized I was pregnant...

CP: This was your senior year?

PR: My senior year. I really clamped on, added on hours. So, I actually finished in three years, in two terms, which took a lot of work because I was still doing the other things. But I had a student teacher advisor, and I wish I could remember her name, just to give her credit, but I can't, and she was very significant to me at that point in time, in just mentoring and coaching me through that student teaching experience. But during that time, Al was only carrying seven hours because he was working, he was needed, and so I basically was the best student teacher that I could be and got ready to have a baby.

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So, there wasn't a whole lot of social life going on during that time and I do remember some things; that when we got our check, we'd go to the movies. We usually went to the drive-in because then you could, even if you fell asleep, you could watch all of these B and C-rated movies. And we'd head to the grocery store first and buy whatever it was we could afford to buy. So, that was kind of a social thing. We went to some of the football games but Al was, you know, we enjoyed watching Tommy Prothro because he was just a different character. We went to a couple of the basketball games but I know we were focused on other things and we weren't into the college life.

I listened to my children's experiences at college and what they were doing and whatnot and I thought that was so far out of my realm, but I'm so glad that they're in that realm, because they talk so fondly about their association with their fraternity or their sorority. When I'm asked "what sorority were you involved with?" I just say the M-R-S, you know. I was a married student. So, and a mother, a pregnant married student. It was a different kind of experience there. I had one professor that I—or one class that I really enjoyed, it was choral conducting and it was going kind of back to that music piece again, and in that class we had to conduct the alma mater song at one event. That was part of the syllabus and I had good fortune in being assigned to the time when Margaret Mead was the speaker. And I had the illustrious privilege of escorting her to the bathroom before and after. And I was very impressed with her delivery and the content of what she had to say, and in a sense it planted some seeds in terms of other cultures, not western cultures, other cultures, indigenous

style cultures, and the respect that she showed them and how she documented their culture and so forth. And I had no idea at the time that that would emerge at some point in my life, and I'll get to that later. But, that was a little seedling that was planted really deep and it took a long time to germinate, but it did in its own way.

Other college experiences, you know, I had good professors, I went to class but I'm balancing a budget, I'm thinking about Al's future, there are a lot of things that are going on in my mind that don't allow all the social kinds of activities to become a part of. This was when 1984, the book, was written, and that had a profound influence on us. In fact, I read the whole book aloud to Al one weekend and it was like "whoa" and it was that whole notion of Big Brother. And we have so often kind of poo-pooed that notion and yet if you really look at Snowden, the cloud, the internet and whatnot, how farsighted that book really was. So anyhow, that's just an interesting little aside.

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We always had a really strong affinity to Oregon State and Corvallis. In fact, there were times when we would say "you know, this is such a neat town that when we ever retire, why don't we think about moving back here?" You've got sports, you've got culture, you can take classes if you want there, so the city of Corvallis had a fairly profound influence on us, because it was just a neat little town and interesting little things. We knew where the frozen meat locker was because our friend was a hunter and he provided us venison for two years, and I don't think I've had venison since. But we appreciated it. I mean, we couldn't afford the wine to marinate it and to break down some of the tissue, to make it have some enzymatic action happen before, but you know, you do what you do, or what you need to do.

And we had decided that we would live close to campus so we didn't have to drive a car, so that saves gas. And the apartment house we lived in, for five dollars a month you had your parking place. So, we thought that was good because street parking was hideous. So, that was good and that's why we stayed in the apartment house, where we could have had cheaper rent out but then how do you get back and forth, and the gas and you know, all of that. So, that seemed to make sense for us and that was a really neat little apartment. It was close and when the...

Al loved to cook, so we kind of shared the cooking responsibilities, and it was during finals week and because I was carrying nineteen hours there were a lot of finals and a lot of work that you had to do, or maybe it was dead week or whatnot, but I hadn't had time to wash dishes. They had kind of accumulated, so Al fixed dinner, and I had a late class, a six o'clock class, so I didn't get home until whatever, and I walk in and the table's set with a plate, a soup ladle and a meat fork. We laughed about that forever. It was just one of the—he did have an incredible sense of humor, and so because we're both working hard and whatnot, you need that instead of grouching about things. He would just do that kind of thing. So, I can still see that soup ladle on the table. It was funny.

CP: You mentioned Al developing the dip line in college, was that done in consultation with the food technology department at Oregon State, or was that more of an independent thing?

PR: Well, it started off independently because it happened in the summer, but then he began to think about shelf life and expanding it and other flavors and that kind of thing. So, when he went back to school in the fall, he made contact, and I can't tell you which professor, but he did, and probably someone in the dairy area, because it was sour cream. This was a new thing on the market, and when I say new, the dips up until that time had cream cheese bases and they were hard and you had to stir them up with something to make them more malleable. And about this time, Ruffles came out with Ridges, which helped, but Blue Bell Potato Chip came to him and said something, you know "are you interested in helping us develop a product line?" And that happened while his parents were gone on vacation during the summer, and that was a really good thing because I don't know that his parents would have developed the same kind of relationship. This was the son of who came, so Al and George were close in age and they could talk the same language and be excited about potential and that kind of thing.

So, Al's recipe was actually the first sour cream dip on the market in the US, probably Canada too, because they tend to follow. I don't know what was going on in Europe at the time. We hadn't started making European treks until quite a few years later. But it was the first and it did change the dip line. And so that, that's something that was really exciting.

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But he was a risk-taker, but it was a calculated risk-taking and he did his homework and he had this incredible memory and application. One of the food tech classes that he took involved taking trips. They'd get in the instructor's whatever vehicle it was and they'd take a trip to different food processing plants. Now, most of the plants, up until that time, were canned food plants, because that was the technology of the day. But during that time, Birds Eye had come out with a frozen vegetable and so then there were other kinds of technologies that were beginning to happen. But he went to a plant and saw a piece of equipment that cooked carrots, carrot slices, and then they were frozen. Or maybe they were diced. They were diced, excuse me, not sliced, yeah. And then they were frozen. But he remembered that piece of equipment.

So after we had graduated and after we had purchased the property on Allen Boulevard, Al was someone who could, if he was talking to the right person, could really get you excited about an idea. He was talking to this engineer who got really excited about application of the machine that Al had seen cooking carrots, to cooking macaroni. And so, he designed a piece of equipment based on Al's recollection and what Al wanted, and we came up with our macaroni cooker. And so, I think that's definitely one of the strengths that Al had, looking at one thing and being able to see application somewhere else, because you can't always invent a wheel. You can reinvent it or alter it somewhat, but he was really good at that and he ended up being a really good salesman. And his dad was an incredible salesman. He could convince you that you needed something and you would pay more just for the privilege of buying it from him. That was his dad's skill set. It didn't serve him well over the long run because it came back to bite him.

But one thing Al had, one value he had was his word was good and it didn't take long for that to become just common understanding. If you're dealing with Al and he says this, that's what he's going to deliver. And so that served him well, his creativity served him well. Sometimes it got him in trouble, and when I—no, I should rephrase that. It didn't really get him in trouble, but he was before his time. He had this idea: put veggies on a tray with dip and sell it ready to go. Great idea, but the film that allowed the veggies to breathe had not been developed yet and so the captured gases, and the vegetables give off gases, would change the color of the veggies and then when you open them there was this gas release. Well, now there's semipermeable film that allows the gases to escape but not the environment to enter. So, he was before his time in some areas, and then of course his enthusiasm to get product out backfired. But on the other hand, if you don't ever try something, how do you know what works? And so, from the whole perspective, it served him well because he was on the cutting edge of so many things and he created that culture of "the customer wants something, we're going to figure out how to make it work and get it to him in 48 hours," and that's not an easy thing to do.

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CP: Well, we've touched on this kind of a little bit throughout the interview so far, but I guess I'm interested in getting sort of your broad sense of the period of time that comes after college. I mean, the company grows a lot, you're teaching, you have five children, take me through kind of the changes in your family and your life over the course of this time.

PR: Well, when our third son was born I did take a fifteen year sabbatical, if you will, from work. But during that time, I went back to school at night and got my Masters in Special Ed. at Portland State. But there were a lot of changes. You know, I look back and I think in terms of how did things evolve? When you're the bosses' wife, you cannot be the wives' friend. There has to be that separation, and so I was his companion. I actually, after Al passed away, a person who had worked for us called me and said "I couldn't be here, I was out of state during the time, but I just want you to know this: when I used to take ideas to Al, he would more often than not say 'let me run this by Pat and I'll get back to you.'" I didn't know at the time, but he did bring a lot of things home. So, even though I wasn't actively going to work, we spent a lot of time thinking about ways to be more efficient, more accountable, more this, more that, how do we create a culture within the employees that made them want to come to work? So, we started annual picnics, we had Christmas parties, we had events at our home for people, picnics, barbecues, that kind of thing. So, I really believe—and then there were some times I said "no, you do that" and "no, you cannot do that." It didn't happen often but there were a couple of times that had he done what he was toying with, it would not have been a good thing at all. But those were so few and far between.

So, I guess he, I think I can say confidently he really looked to me for confirmation and thinking things through, encouraging him. It was hard, you know, when you're extremely nomadic and you go from feast to famine enough times, there are a lot of times when you don't have that background skillset that allows you to call on it to solve issues, whereas my life was so stable. We didn't own a car until we moved to Portland. We didn't have discretionary money but we had a really solid foundation in our family. And so, I think Al used that, was able to use that as he moved through.

Raising the kids, there were lots of conversations about your responsibility. You know, once they were old enough to work, of course it was younger than you would elsewhere, but it was a family owned business, therefore you could. We talked about "any mistake you make is going to be magnified and you're going to have to work twice as hard to get recognition, and that's just the way it is, so you kind of have to get used to that. There will be opportunities down the road that you wouldn't have expected but boy, there are going to be responsibilities." So, there was always that balance of opportunity and responsibility, and "but that's not fair!" I said "you're right, it's not fair, but that's the way it is." So you know, there was that kind of thing.

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And I, in terms of my role, I kind of divided my life up into family, community and church, and so I was a room mother, I was responsible for the various—we didn't have auctions at that time but we had carnivals, so carnivals and arranging that kind of thing, going back in charge of it and arranging those kind of things. I was a den mother, I was a Girl Scout Brownie leader, I taught Sunday school, I served just in a variety of ways. And then I began, as the kids needed less of me in school, I went out further into the community.

And so one day, it was in the '80's, I read this little article in the paper that Beaverton, the city of Beaverton, was looking for people to serve on the Beaverton Arts Commission, and I thought "I wonder what the role of art is in a city. I think I better go to that meeting so I can find out." Well, I've been involved with the Arts Commission and now the Arts and Culture Foundation since then and we are really getting close to an arts and culture performance center in Beaverton. So yeah, so I keep doing that.

CP: And you went back into the classroom at some point too?

PR: I did, I did. After, I just felt the need, it was time for me to go back. I had become as efficient as one could be with five kids and a household and a spouse, so I went back to school at night and got my Masters in Special Ed and then I actually, my first job was at Beaverton High School. I did my student teaching there. And the reason I went there is that the principle from another high school that I knew well and where my kids, all of the kids went there, was transferred to Beaverton High School and I thought "well, at least I know him." Plus, Mark said "Mom, you're not coming to my school." I mean, there comes an age when, you know, "I love you, I'll come home to you but do not come to my school."

So, I went back to—I did my student teaching at Beaverton High School and one day I asked him if we could just have a meeting. I said "talk to me about a comprehensive high school. I know a lot about elementary because of all my volunteer work; middle school, I've done lots of volunteer there, but talk to me about high schools." And out of that conversation came a job, because he said "I've got some money," and Beaverton, even at that time, had a fairly high percentage of second language students, and we were in competency, the competency area. So, you had to pass competencies in order to graduate. So, he said "I need"—during the course of our conversation, he asked me what my favorite subject was to teach and I said "math. I like the order of math, I like how you can take math into your personal life, into your business life, into whatever." And so he said "I have some money, I have some kids who aren't going to meet their competencies in math but they deserve to graduate, because they're putting in the time and they're bright kids. Would you take the job?"

Well, as it happened, I was chair of the budget committee for Beaverton School District and Beaverton, the budget, by state mandate, the budget committee could not include paid staff. They were there as advisers and so forth, resources, but they could not be on it. And we were getting close to the end and to have a new Chair and all of that, so the district and the principle came up with an agreement: I would be through with that mid-term, mid-winter term, and I would start then. But I went in as a volunteer to a couple of classes, because I hadn't had a classroom experience at the high school level other than in the resource room, which is very different, very much more interactive, looser, a different ratio and so forth.

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And so, the promise to me was "we won't put any truancy kids or behavioral issue kids in your class. You'll have two classes and a prep period, and here's your budget to buy materials." So, I'd heard about this incredible math teacher in the Clackamas school district. He was the head of the math department and I went out to see him and I had a conversation with him. He opened his files, he really coached me and was an incredible mentor on what high school kids need, and his opened his file to me. So, I took—then I went to Beaverton and said "I need a test that has an A version and a B version

that will allow me to look at where the kids are, and not only through percentiles based on age and grade." And so I, they worked with me to find one, so the first, you know, we just did this test. I had to know what do you know, what do you not know. And then I built packets for them and it was one-on-one. But the wise mentoring from Clackamas was kids are social in high school, you have, you know—his recommendation was, because I explained what I was charged with doing, and he said "no more than two weeks one-on-one, then put them in groups again and go back and forth." And so, that's how I developed that curriculum.

And when I gave the B version of the test, we actually had three months of instruction, because there were holidays and the testing time itself and all of this. So, there was a three month period of instruction. The smallest growth was nine months. The highest growth was two years, five months. And most of it was near a year and a half, in there. So, I was really pleased with that and I thought "wow, this is really great." And then the high school teachers said, because I asked "well, what about next year?" and he said "I'll be honest with you, I have to hire a track coach; coaches either teach history or they teach math, and so I can't offer you a job until I get this track coach." And as it happened, he taught math. But out of that came the Hills program, High Intensity Learning. And so, at least I had a voice in the start of that.

And so, the principle talked to others, junior high and, excuse me, middle school at that time and high school, but nobody needed a part-time math teacher, and so I had—with the Special Ed Masters you could go K through 12. And so, I said "well, I'd be willing to look at elementary." Well, I had an interview right away and I was hired. So, I worked in an elementary school. The first year it was just a one-year placement because that LD teacher was, had been elected the BEA President, and you're guaranteed your position and location back.

But my principle had been tapped to open a new school, and through his secretary he said "I want you to apply for that position" and I said "yeah, but I'm such a newbie." He said "Pat, read my lips: apply for that position." "Okay." So, I was hired as the LD teacher in that school and I was there for five years and then I was tapped to go into the district office and worked as the Learning Disabilities Program Specialist and then became part of the administrative team there for nine years. So, it was good. It was a total of twenty years that I worked in education. And I learned a lot.

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And then I, I had this sense I needed to retire. I was certainly early. I did, I rattled around the house and I thought "I have got to do something," so I did my self-analysis: where are you the happiest, what gives you the most joy, etcetera, etcetera? When you're in the classroom learning something new. So, I applied to Marylhurst to enter their MAIS program. It's a Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies. And I was particularly drawn to their spiritual traditions and ethics. But I had to write a paper to demonstrate that I could write. It had to have footnotes, etcetera, etcetera. I had to have three letters of recommendation, non-family, and I had to take the Miller Analogies Test. So, all of that worked out and I was accepted into that program.

And so, I had my first meeting with my counselor, and I know I'm not planning to go back into the workforce. I'm just not. But she asked me what my goals were and I said "I want to be ready." "Ready for what?" I said "I'm not sure what life is going to bring me but I want to be ready." And as it happened, it wasn't—so I took classes there, I could take those, more of them in the afternoon, and I didn't, you know, I came at the classes slowly and I took a couple of night classes because they were only offered at night, and Al's health began to fray at the edges and I had signed up for this one class, I even bought the books and put my name in them. I was determined to take that class. I bought new books, I didn't even buy used books. But I knew I was not going to take that class because the syllabus included six...a certain number of hours of community service beyond what you currently do, and in addition to some other things that I thought "I know I can't do that," because Al was now in bed for a year.

And I went to the first class, got the syllabus, this teacher had us all sign our names and phone number, contact information, email and so forth, and then I called her and told her "I am so sorry, I really can't take your class," and I just kind of explained it to her. Well, the next week she explained to the class. I got this beautiful card, all kinds of kind and charitable comments, and included in that was a copy of the names, email addresses, phone numbers and so forth. And during the course of my classes, in two different classes, this one gal and I who had started at the same time and we were kind of parallel, and she talked about a labyrinth and how the labyrinth was going to be her future service. And I, you know, I didn't know much about it but I was fascinated by the passion with which she described what she was—how she

was going to engage the labyrinth in her life. And so, I called her up and said, I couldn't remember her whole name but as I scanned through I thought "oh that's who it is."

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So, I called her up and asked her if she would be willing to meet me for a coffee and just talk to me about labyrinths. And so, she said to me "you know, as part of my service that was required," she's doing a labyrinth workshop at Marylhurst on this particular day. And she said "I just want to invite you to come." And so, I went to Al, it was a Sunday afternoon, I'd be gone for three hours, and I said "I really want to go with this. I'll call one of the kids and have them come over and just be with you." And he said "no, if—I'll be fine. If you can do this, this and this and whatnot, I'll be fine." So, I went there and it, her labyrinth was a forty-foot square canvas of the floor of their, I've forgotten the meeting hall name, but it was a lovely setting. And when I walked in there, I immediately started crying and so I said, "Eunie, I've got to go and collect myself." So I did, came back, and so I explained to her that "I have to leave right after," because they were going to have some reflection and dialog afterwards, and I said "I can't stay for that but I want you to know why I can't stay, and once we start, I need to be among the first to walk through it, because I have to get home, I can't be gone that long." So she said "that's no problem."

And so, she went through the introduction and so forth and I started through and—a labyrinth is an interesting experience. A labyrinth differs from a maze in that it's unicursal. There are no dead ends and no cul-de-sacs. There's one way in and there's one way out and the whole notion of a labyrinth is that it's a pilgrimage. Whether it's something that you need to let go of, whether it's something that you are problem-solving, looking for an answer, whether it's thanksgiving, gratitude, whatever, it's a very personal kind of thing. And so, as I was walking through, I remember feeling—oh, I have to backtrack. When you get to the center, some people sit on the floor, some people kneel, some people stand, some people—there are any number, it's a very personal kind of thing, but on your way out you give deference to the person coming in. So, as you are passing by another, you step to the side and the person who's going in has the right of way, if you will. And people are paced so you're not in a solid line. As you move forward, the person, like Eunie would wait till the first person got to a certain point before she would invite the next person to come in. And on my way in, I...I'm really not burdened but I'm thinking "how in the world can I do this? How can I care for Al for the period of time that it's going to take?" and so forth. And I can still hear the voice: "you're not alone."

And when I got to the center, there was such a feeling of gratitude and joy. I stood there with my arms up and I thought "yes, I can do this," and on my way out, I wanted to skip out, but of course I didn't because people were coming in. So, as soon as I got home, I thanked Eunie, came home, I said "Al, I know what I have to do." And we had purchased adjacent property and I wanted to put in a meditation garden, but I didn't know, I mean I didn't have a vision in my mind. I came home and said "I know what I'm going to do with that. I'm going to put a labyrinth in that space." And I searched books and got on the internet, and Bob Westlund, from Oregon State, had said something to me about the Da Vinci Days at Oregon State and something about a labyrinth. So, I called him up and said "who was it, who does that labyrinth and whatnot?" was in conversation with him, and out of that came the labyrinth that's now in my yard and it's listed on the World Wide Web of labyrinths and I have people who come, I have groups that come, sometimes I take them through, sometimes there's a group leader who takes them through.

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But nonetheless, that labyrinth got me through his year in bed. And then, not realizing it, two years later I'm diagnosed with cancer, and that, I spent a lot of time, fortunately it was in the summer, in the labyrinth. And I mentioned going back to those pillars; during my cancer experience I noticed a lot of war language: "we're going to kill it," "survivor," it just, I thought "I don't like that language. I'm going to be a 'thrivor,' I'm going to spend as much time in that labyrinth and get to know myself as well as I can. I'm going to rethink the values"—I mean this was kind of my journey, if you will.

And so, I began to look at those four pillars, and the one that I looked at most seriously was giving back to the community in which I lived. And I thought, I began to think about "what is my community? Is it just the people that I interact with?" If I go in my closet, I have shoes from Italy. I have clothes from, that are put together in Asia. I have this from here, I have that from—what is my community? And I didn't know how that was going to play out but I really began to think about that. And my mantra was "God, you can't be through with me yet, we've got a lot of work to do."

So, after, in '09, that spring I was visiting my daughter who lives in Mexico and we were talking about goals that we'd had in life and I was sharing some goals that I had put aside. One of my goals was to learn how to fly a plane, and because I was so fascinated with flight and loved teaching in the aerospace unit when I was in Hillsborough, because I was on the third floor, I could see the airplanes taking off above the tree line from the airport out there and I loved that notion. But I got to the point where, you know, if that is the only thing you do, so you become a really safe pilot, that's one thing, but no, that's not going to happen.

So, I put that aside, and there were a few others, and so I mentioned to her I was really, really curious about the Camino in Spain. And so she said "well, what's the Camino?" and I told her what I knew about it. So, this was in spring, in fall, my birthday's in October, in the fall for my birthday she sends, from Amazon, a book, Shirley MacLaine's book that describes her experience on the Camino, and inside is a card that says "I will be your companion on a Camino walk." I thought "oh my word, how is that going to really happen?"

So, I showed Al the book but didn't say anything about the card. We'll, she surprised us in November, came home for Thanksgiving, and so by now Al spends a lot of time in bed and so she crawls in bed with him and says "hey Papa, what do you think about the present I sent?" She calls me Trish, she started that in high school and it just stuck; "what do you think about the present I got for Trish?" He said "well, Mom showed me the book." She says "well, what about the card?" and so he said "what card?" so, she tells him. So, he's quiet for a minute, he says "do you have a sales receipt for that?" she says "no, why?" he said "well, can't you take it back?" That's his sense of humor. So, because she had asked me if I told him about that, I said "no, you know, I don't know how to tell him that because it's going to be an issue."

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But once she said that to him, and they teased back and forth, then we began to problem solve; okay, how do we make that happen? And so, we have a friend who was willing to go with him to Florida, because he and I had gone to Florida for an extended period of time, go to the same resort, rent a condo for a month and I'll come, you know, when I'm back I'll come there, then we'll come home and so forth.

So, between the labyrinth and the Camino, which you know, there were times, because we had different paces, we'd start out together and then we'd go with our own pace and say "I'll meet you at the first tavern in the next town." There were times when I was on the road totally by myself, not another human being on this stretch of road, maybe a farmer in a field, and totally alone with your thoughts and your sense of safety. I was never threatened. I mean, I never felt threatened. And so, you do a lot of thinking and that, on the heels, I mean it was a few years later, but on the heels of some of the thinking that I did while I was in the labyrinth, you really begin to delve into what does compassion mean? What does it mean in this setting? How might it look different in this setting? In this setting, what does forgiveness mean, what does commitment mean? So, I highly recommend it. It's not for everybody but it's a very enriching experience. And then at night Mindy and I would hash over our thoughts and thinking. And I was keeping a journal at that time. I'm not a journalist but I did keep a journal during that time.

And so the next year, once we got back, Mindy said "I think we ought to go again next year. So, as we planned it, Mike and Deb said "we want to go with you." Mike is my second son. And by now Mindy's pregnant and so Chente says "well, I'm going to go with you and take care of." And so, there are the five of us who go on this second trip and we start in a different city, so it made it thirty, forty miles longer than the first one. There was some really interesting little moments on that trip.

Mike learned that his knees are not there for him to do a lot of hiking and he was in a, going through this—and there's a lot of stone in Spain, a lot of stone that just rises to the top and you are walking on hard surfaces. Plus, the cobblestone, of course there's stone available, you make cobblestone roads. And so, we're going into Ponferrada and it's a fairly steep road down and so Mike is traversing so it's not such a heavy, and I'm coming up behind him and I said "Mike, why don't you use my stick?" He says "oh sure, that really makes me feel good, Mom. Here I am, X many years younger and I'm using my 70+ year old mother's stick, thanks." I said "look, just try it. No one else is around, who's going to see? And then when we get down, if it made a difference, go to one of the shops along the way and buy a couple of trekking poles." And so, he agreed to use it on the way down. I said "I'll just wait for you on the way down, you can give it and nobody will know."

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And so, if you walk the Camino, you have a passport and then you have your passport stamped along the way and even where you stay, even where you eat and so forth, and if you have a stamped passport, you are eligible for medical services that are free and all you pay is for whatever happens. So, there was a hospital in Ponferrada and "no, no." I said "Mike, Chente speaks Spanish, he'll go with you and you don't have to worry. So, they went. He got a shot, he got some ointment, she said "no more walking for three days." "Oh good, here I am on the Camino." "You can take a cab from one town to the next, give your knees a rest." And so, it cost him four euros, I think it was, and then he bought trekking poles.

So, it's, it was really fun. At one point when we had made a rather taxing stretch, we're sitting there in the sun, Mike's got his knees bandaged, Deb has lost a toenail, Mindy has an Achilles issue, so Chente and I are showing we have nothing, no bandages, no nothing. So, it was fun. And it was a real bonding kind of experience. I mean, you don't see your mother in those roles. And we walked up into one, we stayed at one place and it had been snowing and sleet and ice and it was a tough, it was a tough walk. And so, we get to the inn where we're staying and then we meet for dinner. "Okay, an hour and we'll be in wherever for dinner." And so we get there and Mike has glasses of wine. He said "first thing I want to do is raise a toast to my mother. There is no other person in my life who has shown so much determination to get where she wanted to go without complaining." I said "I'll drink to that!" So you know, often your kids don't see you in those kinds of situations. And just to have that recognition from him for that little slice, that was really special.

And then, of course, we get to Santiago and are heading back to Barcelona and when we land in Barcelona, we're at the baggage carousel and Mike comes to me and says "Mom, Mark sent me a message to 'call me as soon as you get this,' but," he said, "it's one o'clock in the morning," and I said "well, he wouldn't have said that if he didn't mean it." And I presumed that it was a business issue. And then pretty soon he shouts "Mom, Dad died." And that's when we found out.

But, it was a time when I think, at least for me personally, I was well prepared for what was coming up, because of all of the reflection that I had done on the Camino, and I had had the best conversation with Al. We laughed about all the injuries and the elder person having none, we laughed about just a variety of things and he kept saying "okay, now when are you getting back?" because I was going to Florida, and I said "Al, my itinerary is stapled to your e-ticket, it's right there." I told him again. "Okay, now when are you coming back?" He asked me that two or three times. And I think he just needed to let go, knowing I was okay. He kept saying "and your body's okay? Nothing hurts?" and "you didn't damage any?" I said "Al, you'd be so proud of me, you would just give me a medal for this." And so I, you know, he was ready to go and he needed to know I was okay. And I was.

CP: Well that's a beautiful story Pat, thank you for telling that...I'd like to talk about OSU a little bit.

PR: [Laughs] We did take a diversion.

CP: A little bit.

[1:40:14]

PR: And you're, you can do any editing you want. I give you that permission.

CP: No, no, not at all. So, I guess what I'd kind of like to start with, a question about continuing connection with OSU during this time period that we were talking about, you know, the company's growing, the family's growing, you're working, is there much connection there during this time?

PR: It probably took about five years until we could afford tickets, to be honest with you, and then in five years we became re-engaged and we got into the tailgate notion, and there weren't a whole lot of tailgates at the time, but we had a station wagon and I mean, the card table went in there, the chandeliers, the candles, the whatnot and we'd have a tailgate. And increasingly, we became more involved with Oregon State, but it was through Athletics. And then, when the Valley Center was built, the—there was the kitchen. So, we helped build the kitchen and I said it was a natural. Yeah, food processor, feed them, yes. And then the Austin Family Business Program. That was a real—Pat Frishkoff is a very compelling person and she had a really good story and it made so much sense, and so it just seemed like a natural thing to support her position and scholarships. So, those were the two entry points of our experience.

And then, oh what's his name, I'm terrible with names. It will come to me, but when Paul Risser was still there, helped me out. Mike—

CP: The athletic director? Mitch Barnhart?

PR: Thank you. I was in the M, I got close. Mitch Barnhart was there and Bob Westlund was working with him and Bobby de was his finance person and so forth. They came to us with the notion of supporting the expansion of the stadium. And that was a really tough decision. Not so much for the monetary piece, because we'd worked it out where it could happen, but that notion of having your name a facility, how will that change us? Because we'd always been kind of private people. I mean, we were involved with the company, took a lot of energy, five kids take a lot of energy and time and just your community, your immediate community work. We were not very public people and we had been approached with the alumni center and offered the opportunity to name the ballroom, and Al and I said "you know, we're not ballroom people. That's a misfit. It needs to be something for the students, not Al and I."

So, we had a lot of conversation back and forth and once we finally figured out how we could make that happen financially, we started talking to the kids about it. And there was a lot of concern, you know, what's that going to look like? Are we putting ourselves out there in a way that we're not going to feel comfortable doing it? And so, we really went through a lot of discussion and finally agreed. And one of the offerings was to put our name emblazoned on the field and we said "no, that's Oregon State, it needs to be on the side somewhere, not emblazoned in the middle."

And so, we finally came to grips with that and as it happened, it was a really good decision. I mean from a marketing standpoint it was a really good decision. We'd get comments from brokers and customers on the east coast when they were watching a game: "oh, I saw your whatnot, I saw how you're supporting Oregon State" and so forth. So, it took a while but we began to be comfortable with it. And there were lots of conversations with our grandkids who were in school that, you know, "you have to live up to that." And there were times when there was some Dutch uncle conversations to the parents and then the parents to the grandkids. So, I think that will be an ongoing thing, and I've got three there this year. One will be leaving and another one arriving next year. So, that's an ongoing conversation.

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But it—at one of the football games, Mike Goodwin and Ed Ray, they always stopped in the boxes, but it was, I could tell by their faces there was something different. It wasn't just "hi, how are you, how are things going?" It wasn't to check in, it was "Pat, could I talk to you for a minute?" So, we went over, away from the crowd, and that's when they asked if I would be willing to serve on—it wasn't named yet, the campaign, steering committee, it was some kind of development committee. And I said "wow, yeah I'd be honored to do that." And so, just relief, "yeah, she said okay." And so I thought "wow, what does this mean?" He said "well, we'll talk about it later, what it means, and we'll get the information to you in terms of what our expectations are and so forth." And then Joyce Furman was on, so I thought alright, that's at least two women, and then sadly her tenure was short. And then when I was asked to serve as one of the co-chairs, I thought "wow, I, this is really an honor." And Pat Stone, Jim Rudd.

But as it happened, all three of our styles are very different and each one of us brought out different conversations when we were chairing the meeting. And I was really, our last formal meeting, all three of us were really pleased with some of the comments that were made by the rest of the committee, how much they appreciated having the three of us as co-chairs, because we brought out different things in conversation and so forth. So, that really felt good. I really liked that.

And then, I have to go back, our first meeting that we had and Sherm Bloomer, I'll remember his name in a minute, I know it as well as I know my own, but anyhow, they brought this mock-up of what became Linus Pauling Science Center. And they were trying to explain what that had, what potential was there and how it could be used and so forth. And they were using ten dollar words, multisyllabic words, peer words. And I knew it was vitally important, and it became vitally important to me personally because of the cancer research that was going to go on there. But finally I said "you have to be able to talk to us in an elevator speech." Joe Beckman. And because Joe, later on we would laugh about it, he said "I didn't even know what an elevator speech was," and so "you know, if you're going to the tenth floor, what can you tell me that will engage me and want me to continue our conversation? And what application? Research for research sake is fine in an academic world but if I'm thinking of investing, I want to know where the application is, so you've got to fit that in and it's got to be words that I can relate to as a non-science person. And so, they honed that skill but we often laugh about that first meeting and how awkward it was as they were trying to explain to us what that potential was for what became the LPI.

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So, when I got home—and also, it was a thirty million dollar price tag and that's coming out of the shoe for brand new folks in this committee and I'm thinking "how in the world are we going to raise thirty million dollars to get that?" And so I came home and I said "Al, I don't know how this is ever going to shake out, but we have to be involved in some way. We just have to, because of what could come out of that." And so, there was no way we could do the thirty million, not and still, with the stadium. And so, it was such a relief when the Valley Foundation came forward. And so I, as soon as I got that, I said "we can do this." And so, we made that commitment. We tended to be bricks and mortar people. People come and go but I was really, we were both really more into bricks and motor, so that was really good.

And when that building was dedicated, it was so fun to be part of that dedication and I talked about, well first of all you walk into that auditorium and you look at the periodic table and it's a lot bigger than when I had to memorize those symbols in high school, and it's like "wow, how many are there anyhow?" and it was just a hoot. And so, we talked about, I was really also impressed with the art installation and I could really envision, especially with that light installation, someone going up or down the stairs inside and having that Eureka moment; "I got it!" you know?

And so then I moved into my fantasy, and just because when you're speaking you don't want it always to be serious and I like to have a little bit of humor involved in anything I say, so I talked about my fantasy that in the year 2038, I would be seated in front of a cake that had one hundred candles on it, that I would be able to blow them all out in four breaths, that I would know what all the fuss was about and that they would all be invited." And so I said "scientists, you have a lot of work to do so I can live my fantasy." And so, it's just fun to have that sense of engagement with something. And then I was asked to serve on Balz Frei's advisory team and to know the direction and be part of the voice that came up with the strategic plan for them. And it's just, it's just been exciting, all along the way.

CP: Well, the Pauling Science Center is certainly one of the signature buildings of the campaign for OSU, but another one more recently finished is Austin Hall, which you were also involved with.

PR: Yeah. That was an automatic. Al always used to say "I learned how to think at Oregon State." Well, he knew how to think, all they did was give him some principles that helped him, and strategies, and he had such a high respect for Dr. Goddard, who was, I think he was the dean of the school at some point. And he, I remember one accounting test; so he came home early. You know, we had a two hour block for a test and he came home like in an hour. I said "what's going on? I thought that you weren't going to be home until after" whatever that two hour framework was. And he said "I don't know, we were given the problem, I came up with a solution in twenty minutes, I kept going back, I didn't—there was, it didn't make sense to change it, so I handed it in and Dr. Goddard said 'are you sure you want to hand this in?'" and he said "yeah, I keep going over it," so he said "well, let me see it" and he looked at it and it wasn't what Goddard was looking for but it was an equally appropriate solution. And so, there was that mutual respect that he had.

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And then Al also, during tax time, tax students set up whatever they set up, tables and whatnot, so faculty members could come and bring their taxes and get some advice on whatever it was that they needed. So, that was, he felt very honored to be part of that. And you know, what can you say about Dean Kleinsorge and what she's done? In the face of "put some rigor in your bill, in your program, don't come to me because you've got asbestos hanging, we've got asbestos hanging many places, show me that you've got a cohort of folks who are so fired up they're willing to support this building and donate the money, and then it can be part of the campaign." And she did it.

CP: Did you come to know Ken and Joan Austin?

PR: Yes, I did.

CP: We interviewed him about a month ago for this project, as well.

PR: Oh did you? Yeah. No, he's quite a character. In a sense, he and Al have a lot of parallels, because they both had trouble with the standard way of learning, or the expected way to learn, and yet they were both geniuses in their own right. And Joan was there to help Ken get through school, I was there to give Al that leg-up when he needed it and yet their thinking and their capabilities were there, they just needed just a little bit of support. So, it was kind of exciting to see that.

CP: What was it like for you to be in the room from the beginning of this campaign? I mean, it's transformed the university, it was extended twice and was originally set at, I think, six hundred and fifty million; it finished well over a billion. I mean, it was a tremendous, outstanding success. Must have been exhilarating.

PR: Well, and that exhilaration came in steps, because when we were first at six twenty-five and then eight-fifty, but it was "six hundred twenty-five million? The M word?" and "how in the world are we going to do that?" And it's...historically Oregon State has been a very humble, almost cripplingly humble university, not having a true sense of who they were and what they were doing. And in a sense, that really served us well. But there was pushback, even from the term "land grant university," because those who had heard the slurs about "ag college" and the various other agricultural references were afraid that was going to be a throwback to that era. And I remember feeling really strongly about changing the image of the word "land grant." And so—as did Pat Stone and Jim Rudd and many others. We started showing how fortunate we were to be a land grant university. We were given this land, we were given this mandate, we know who we are, we're not trying to figure it out. We know we're here to serve the people of Oregon, have a positive influence on the economics of Oregon, we know what we're about.

And so, we began to change that thinking and making it more comfortable language to be included. And as we became more aware of these points of pride, if you will, it's like "wow, we really have some incredible things going." And then when we knew we were going to meet that first goal, there was a lot of discussion about "do we celebrate? Do we say 'wow, we met our goal, and in less time than we gave ourselves' or whatnot or do we go on?" And there were those who felt strongly "we ought to celebrate and let it go" and then there were others who said "but look where we are, look at the pipeline of interest. If we stop now, are we capping that pipeline?" And so we said "okay, let's take it up to eight-fifty." And then we get to the same situation but now the question is not "should we or should we not," let's go confidently into that future and say "one billion."

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And the interesting thing, almost from day one, not quite day one but probably year two, Beth Ray says "you need to be thinking about a capital B." And "yeah, right." That gives us all goosebumps and causes us to lose hair, but no, she was right. She was right. And it was so exciting. I had the opportunity to be talking to someone who teaches at one of the UC, one of the California Universities in Southern California out of Santa Barbara, whatever that is, and I don't remember quite how we got into this conversation, because it was a social event, and I mentioned something about our goal and how we, as we met it. She said "how in the world did you do that? We've got people freaking out over two-hundred-fifty million." So, that made me feel good.

And when you think of the number of households that have been involved and the number of states and countries that are represented in that donor base, it is incredible. It's like people are recognizing the values that are held. And you know, it's easy to have a string of values listed on a board or on your website or somewhere, but when you are acting out those values and you have specific places you could point to, that demonstrate those values, there's a credibility and an authenticity that you can't manufacture. It's just there naturally.

And I think one of the things that I'm very often reminded about is our sense of collaboration. Now, if you're on the inside, I imagine in any big institute there's the pushes and the shoves and the elbow rubbing and whatnot and you might see a much more narrow, or have a much more narrow view of the whole. But when you're on the outside looking in and you hear about other things, the fact that the Foundation and the university are collaborators going forward, I thought that was the norm. It's not.

I was talking to Debbie Colbert yesterday, she's the assigned secretary for the Board of Trustees for the university. She just returned from an AGB conference that was focused more on trustee boards as opposed to foundation boards, and she said "I can't believe the horror stories. They ask me 'how do you get your board engaged where everybody's contributing?'" She said "we don't have any problem like that." So, there's a certain kind of culture that permeates our university, our supporters, our foundation, our board, where we don't have personal agendas, we have one goal and that's to advance the university, it's strategic plan, to provide for the students and make the teaching experience as best as it can be, and for our students to be ready to take on the problems of the world. And that's pretty exciting. That's really exciting.

CP: Yeah. Well, I want to ask you about the Board of Trustees, it's for our last big topic, and get a sense of, I guess the story behind, from your perspective, how you became involved and how that group works together.

[2:05:00]

PR: Wow. I think how I became involved, I was asked if I would allow President Ray to advance my name to the governor's office, along with others, as people he would like to see serving on that board. And it's—the governor then makes a recommendation to the legislature and the legislature acts on that recommendation. So, I think, I really can't answer for Ed how my name got on there, but I have a passion for that university and I think I've demonstrated that over time. I have historical information, institutional information, because of my involvement with the Foundation and the capital campaign and the kids, grandkids that have—four of my children graduated from Oregon State, three of their spouses did, the ones who went to college did, I've got three grandkids who have graduated, three there now and one accepted for next year, and it's not like they can't look elsewhere. It's they've come to love that university as we do and see what it can offer. And that makes me very happy.

When our kids were going to school, Michael actually went to a different university. He didn't end up graduating because he said "Mom, this university life is just not for me" and I said "well Mike, you got to be who you are." And so, because at the time we really believed Oregon State was too big a university for him, he would do better in a smaller. And even with the girls, we encouraged them to look around and find the university that you believe will meet what you want. And of course we were delighted. They probably felt perceived pressure, but at no time did we say that, that they have to go to Oregon State. And the grandkids seemed to be really proud now, to kind of follow in the legacy of Oregon State. But again, I've said to them all along the way, "you've got to figure out what, which of the world's problems you want to take a stab at and go where you can get the best education to help you do that." So, so far they're choosing Oregon State. I mean, I think they're very wise choices.

So, I think Ed has seen my leadership capabilities and my passion for the university, and so I was really very honored when he asked me if I would allow my name to be advanced. And then he called me and asked if I would consider serving as the chair and I said "well, I understood that the board was going to elect the chair." He said "yes, but we have to start somewhere and nobody knows you like I know you." So, I agreed to do that. And I, you know, the learning curve is steep and there certainly is an anxiety—and that may not be a good word. There is a level of stress because I want to do the best job. I mean, we're the inaugural board, we are setting the bar, we've got to get it right.

And one of the things—I shared those sentiments with the board at our first meeting and one of the things I said to them, also, was "we have to give ourselves permission to make a mistake. We might come out initially feeling very strongly about X, but after a year into it we might feel we need to be Y, and so we have to give ourselves permission to make those adjustments as we move along. And we want to get it right, because I'm thinking about Ed's successor and down the road. We have to get it right.

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And in an atmosphere where fewer states are going this route, in fact there are states that are changing and going back to a centralized state system, we have to demonstrate that it can be done and it can be done well. So, yeah.

CP: Well, I guess that sort of segues into the last thing I want to ask you about and that's just, this project is oriented towards OSU's one hundredth and fiftieth birthday, which is coming up in a couple of years from now.

PR: Oh yes, the sesquicentennial.

CP: This has been a season of change for the university, and growth, for sure. Where do you see OSU heading as it looks towards it's one hundred and fiftieth a few years down the road and beyond?

PR: Oh wow. Well, I think some of our transitional projects are focuses on marine science center, marine science studies and the forestry change. Increasingly, I'm seeing reference to the laminated panels. It's happening, we have the top forestry school in the country, and there are those who equate it as the top in the world. That being said, what do we do and where do we go from here? We can't just rest on our laurel, because the world is changing constantly. And knowing that the population is increasing, our forests are very important to us worldwide, and specifically to Oregon. If we can

have a reforestation process and a sustainable practice put back into place, and with the new products and the research, wow. To have a building constructed in ten days instead of ten months, that's quite an environmental impact.

Now, there will be those who argue "but what about all the workers that would have been working for them?" There will be other kinds of jobs, so that, there are still going to be a need for all of the interior, but it will be more sustainable. I didn't realize that every time you put a shovel in the ground, you are releasing what you don't want to release into the environment, and just the role of concrete. And I've been in—I work with Medical Teams International, so I've been in Guatemala four times and Uganda twice and Cambodia and Myanmar and I see the need for housing and housing that's sustainable and that will support the population increases as they're coming, because they are. Our forestry center's going to be pivotal to that.

I see the potential of our public health accreditation and how it can—Tammy Bray's got some really incredible ideas. We had the network with our extension around the state. We had the incubator for a different way of thinking about health and delivering health services. There's some incredible things that could happen. I think about our—the collaboration that's going to go on with the marine studies, with eleven colleges being involved, that's incredible. And the opportunities, I think about our CLA program and you know, public policy is under CLA. And I think about water, water rights, agriculture, the drones moving on into peaceful time, which is wonderful. It's kind of like that Swords to Ploughshares metaphor, and the role they can play, and now we have our program in robots, our robotic program. We've got so many things that will become tools or actually address what the world's issues are, that we could well be the land grant university of the 21st Century. And we've got water, we have rivers, we have the mountains, we have agriculture, we have forests, all the attributes are within our state boundary. It's kind of like "let's have at it." Yeah, I get excited.

CP: Me too. Well Pat, I can't thank you enough. This has been a terrific pleasure for me and I really appreciate you being so generous with your time and your memories. This has been very enriching and it's a great contribution to our project, so thank you very much.

PR: You're most welcome.

[2:15:48]