Lynne Clendenin Oral History Interview, February 19, 2015

Title
"A Career in Public Broadcasting, from Corvallis to Portland"

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Location
Oregon Public Broadcasting, Portland, Oregon.

Summary
In the interview, Clendenin describes her family background and upbringing, with particular attention paid to her early interest in music and her pursuit of a music education in high school and college. From there she notes her relocating to Hawaii and Lake Tahoe, her eventual move to Oregon, and the roots of her involvement with Wildlife Safari in southern Oregon.

Clendenin next discusses her enrollment at Oregon State University as a Zoology student, her participation in university theatrical productions, and the beginnings of her association with Oregon Public Broadcasting. She likewise reflects on her experiences as a non-traditional student in the late 1980s, shares her memories of performing in the Mitchell Playhouse, and outlines her involvement with various multicultural groups on campus.

The remainder of the session focuses on Clendenin's career in radio and television. She speaks of her involvement with student media while an undergraduate, discusses the broadcast facilities then available at OSU, and recounts some of the early history of public broadcasting at Oregon State. She then charts her career advancement within OPB and shares her memories of OPB's move away from Corvallis in 2008. The interview concludes with a discussion of Clendenin's children and the advice that she would give to students of today.

Interviewee
Lynne Clendenin

Interviewer
Mike Dicianna

Website
http://scarc.library.oregonstate.edu/oh150/clendenin/

Transcript

Mike Dicianna: Well, today is Thursday, February 19th, 2015 and we are at the headquarters of Oregon Public Broadcasting in Portland Oregon, and I'm here to interview a member of the class of 1990, Lynne Clendenin. My name is Mike Dicianna, I am an oral historian for the OSU Special Collections and Archives Research Center. And basically what we kind of like to do is kind of have a short biographical sketch, like where were you born, early childhood experiences, family.

Lynne Clendenin: Oh my goodness, okay. Well, I was born in Los Angeles to two New Yorkers, so I was always told how Los Angeles wasn't as good as New York, and I thought well, if it's not as good as New York, what are we doing here? Why don't we just go to New York? And I never got that answer from my parents. I guess they liked LA enough. But I was raised by parents who had gotten married—I'm an interracial woman and my father is African American, my mother's family is from Germany. They fell in love in the forties, and they fell in love in New York and things got a little bit difficult and my mom said "you know, I'm just going to go as far away as I can from all of this," and she said she went until the ocean stopped her and that's when she ended up in LA, and then my father followed her and they got married, I came along and I was raised there. So, I was always known as West Coast Lynne, everybody else on the east coast. Much more casual lifestyle, I think, for me than on the east coast.

Some of my earliest memories, I guess, is my mom taking me to cultural events and learning about music and learning about dance, and the appreciation for it grew for me, and when there was an opportunity to play music, play an instrument, I jumped at it. And I remember walking; they had the instruments in this classroom open in their cases and I felt like I was walking among the stars. I just felt in awe. And I was younger than the average student that started playing, but I knew my mom loved violin, and so I thought wouldn't it be great if I could come home and say "I'm going to play the violin"? So, they measured my arm and they said "well, your arm is long enough for your early age." And so, I ended up playing violin for a number of years, which was a path that I started on at one point, with playing as a professional musician.

MD: Yeah, because I know that you were quite musical, and are you still?

LC: Well, I still have my violin; I pick it up, I say hello, but I'm so busy. And I never wanted to be one of those folks to say I put it down, because I spent so many years getting to a particular expertise, but my interests led me elsewhere. And so, I do speak to her and play the instrument, because it's a very intimate relationship I have with my instruments, so. But yeah.

MD: How about high school?

LC: High school, University High; Uni High in LA. It was during the years when there was a lot—where drugs were big and where there were a lot of strikes by teachers and there was a lot of disheaval, and so it felt more like they were trying to just take care and keep us safe every day, rather than feeling as though we were getting an excellent education. Now, I say that with also saying I got an excellent education. I was the head of the orchestra, I was the concert, like say concert mistress, a concert master of the orchestra, and the head of the class would always dig out these old pieces and say "okay, well this one's got a really good solo in it" and say "let's play that today," and he taught me to sight-read, which was really important in LA. And high school was...it was...it was fine.

MD: Well, let's move into your first college experience in the middle 1970s. You attended Mount Saint Mary's College in Santa Monica. Now, where did you go in as a major and what influenced your decision to attend this institution?

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LC: Well actually, I was going—I went to Santa Monica College first, and after I got out of high school I travelled, because I really was in love with travel, and I wanted to do that before college. And then I thought I would learn early childhood development and go in that direction, so I went to Santa Monica College, took classes, and during that time I had an opportunity to perform in front of the LA Philharmonic string section, the violin section. It was a contest to see if they could find a talented individual that would play, actually, with the orchestra. And so, I performed for them and they gave me incredibly good notes, and one person said "you know, there's a Preparatory School of Music at Mount Saint

Mary's College that you might be interested in. You can still go to school elsewhere, but if you want to go to Preparatory School of Music, here you can refine some of the rough edges; you can really amplify on the good and increase your skills.

And so, I applied and I auditioned and I got in and I joined the Santa Monica Orchestra, and while I was with the Preparatory School of Music, they said "you know, you ought to just come over to Mount Saint Mary's and practice here and go to school here. And they had a very respectable music department, and I thought you know, maybe this is the way I should go. So, I went to Mount Saint Mary's, I learned piano, I got to play the harpsichord, which is just heaven, and really totally immersed myself there. It was lovely. It was a beautiful experience. They're up in the hills and I could just stay there and practice and study, along with a small group of other musicians who were very, very dedicated.

MD: Yeah. But you also mentioned that you had to withdraw, because of lack of funding.

LC: Yeah, I had a lack of funding, I couldn't get grants, I couldn't get loans; it was just dry. And so, I thought okay, well maybe that's it for me. I had previously, as part of Mount Saint Mary's, went over to Hawaii to study music in the schools there and to see how they taught their students. And so, when I ran out of funds I thought well, I'm just going to sell everything I've got and I'm going to move to Hawaii, because I had made friends there. And so, that's what I did.

MD: Oh, wow.

LC: Yeah.

MD: And so yeah, you speak of the time doing recitals and things like that, but what was living in Hawaii like?

LC: Oh, it was idyllic. The sunsets, the—you know, I lived right next to the ocean, and I know, it was lovely, it was lovely. And I fell in love in Hawaii, we had a sailboat so we could sail, it was really lovely. It was a nice lifestyle. It was in the seventies.

MD: Well, you mentioned that your attentions were drawn elsewhere to Oregon, and what experiences led you to going to Roseburg or Winston, Oregon, and getting involved with the Wildlife Safari?

LC: I know, well I have always loved animals; I was one of those children that wanted to open the largest pet store in the world, and when I went to the Lion Country Safari when I was fourteen, I knew that my first car would be zebra striped. You know, it was kind of funny that way. But I tucked that away as impractical. And we were looking for property in Hawaii and it was very expensive, and so some friends had just returned from Oregon and they said "well, you ought to go to Oregon, it's just like Hawaii," and we said "really?" because that's not how we think about Oregon, and they said "oh, it's so beautiful, you've got to go, and the land is so cheap you can get some really good land for a lot less than you can in Hawaii." In Hawaii there are a lot of stipulations, of course.

And so, we packed up our belongings and moved to Lake Tahoe, actually, where there was work, and came up to Oregon looking for property and found thirty acres in southern Oregon. And we stayed in Lake Tahoe for a number of years and then we moved up to the property, and twenty-five miles away was the Wildlife Safari. And so, I thought "oh, I've got say —I've got to go, I've got to just ask if they have a job opening." And so, I walked in and I said "I'd love to apply for a job here," and they said "well, what are your qualifications?" and I said "I love animals," and they said "we've got a stack over here, about six hundred people who love animals. You got to have more than that," and I said "but I don't, but I really love them." And they said "sorry, I mean you can put your application in, but..."

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So, I went home and I spoke to friends about it and this one person said "you ought to volunteer." And so, I went back and I spoke to someone in the clinic and they said "you know how to muck out stuff, you know how to wear boots, and we can give you a broom," and I learned quickly that that was a way of seeing whether a person really wanted to work with animals or not. And so, I just, it's like "are you kidding? Give me that broom and I'll get the boots." And so, I cleaned cages and I loved it. I loved it. It's not for everybody. But I then graduated to diets for some of the animals, some of the monkeys and so forth. And they were teaching zoology classes there, and so I took a series of zoology classes and I did just about whatever I could do.

The Wildlife Safari was number two in the world for breeding the cheetah, and that is pretty significant, because cheetahs don't breed very easily. And so, the idea that here this little place in Winston, Oregon was number two in the world, second to a park in East Africa, it was pretty amazing. And there was a lot of pride in that and that's what lifted this park internationally. And so, I spent a lot of time with the cheetahs and a lot of time with the vet and got to learn a lot about a lot of animals. And we had tower guards there, people who would sit and watch as cars would go through, make sure that the animals weren't following or whatever, and I went to—whenever I would relieve the tower guards, I would write my experiences there at the safari, and I once read the experiences at a safari party and the head of marketing loved it and she said "you've got to work for me."

That was Laurie Marker. She's now Dr. Laurie Marker; she's head of the Cheetah Conservation Fund and she lives in Namibia. She is probably the number one spokesperson for the cheetah, and she's in Namibia because she's teaching the ranchers how to live with the cheetahs, because cheetahs are basically a timid animal. They can actually find a way to live with them without having to shoot them, and therefore the population is a little bit more protected. And she comes to the states every year to speak.

And anyway, she and I spoke and she wooed me over to her department at the safari, and before I knew it I was working with the animals in front of the public, and I got to talk about the animals. I lectured to classes all over the state. I was on television, I was on radio, I did the whole thing, and it was great because my love of the animals grew to a knowledge of the animals, both intimately firsthand and also through much study and talking to other professionals and others who are involved with animals, and then I could pass on what some of the messages that we felt were important to pass on, so that we could live side-by-side with the animals.

MD: Oh, that's wonderful. Now, you were a spokesperson for Wildlife Safari, but you ended up deciding to go back to college.

LC: Yes. Well, the safari, being a nonprofit organization, they were paying me as much as they could, and I was about thirty or so and I was thinking you know, right now I have to live with others, another family, I have a room, I'm not able to take care of myself in the way that I think I should, and perhaps it would be best for me to go back to school, finish my schooling and then go out into the world and say "I have both the degree and I have the experience; let's do something together."

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And so, OSU was the place where folks from the Safari would go if they were interested in animals, if you wanted to be a vet or want to do zoology. So, I looked into OSU. In fact, I looked into several colleges, but OSU looked like the one that was the best college to go to. And so, I went up to OSU and I thought okay, now I'm a shy person. It took a lot for me to be in front of people talking, you know, hundreds if not thousands of people, talking about animals. That's not what I like to do. But it was time; I loved it and I thought in order to stay not out in front and not be so shy, not go back into my shell, so to speak, I should take theater. I should do things that are going to keep me out there in front of people.

So, I did, and worked alongside Charlotte Headrick and other folks in the Theater department, got to star in several plays and had a wonderful time. At the same time, I was researching and seeing what reserves were doing across the nation, as far as how they were working to communicate about animals to the public, and they were all saying "you've got to learn video, because we're going into the multimedia environment." And so I thought okay, I'm going to learn video. So, I started getting involved with that. And as I was getting involved with that, I thought you know, I don't have to go into zoology really, I could go into media and I could produce and I could reach far more people that way. And so, I thought maybe I should change my course. And so, I thought well, I love listening to public radio. Public radio really allows that time to really unfold and produce; public television does as well, maybe I should explore that.

At the time, I did not even know OPB existed on campus. And then I had a friend from theater and I had OPB on and I'm driving and I hear the news and I hear his voice, and I'm thinking what? He lives in Corvallis; OPB, isn't it in Portland? And so, I asked him; he said "no, it's right here on the campus," and he said "in fact, they have a job opening for someone for a classical music host." And I thought oh, well that's just right up my alley, and he said "you ought to apply" and so I did, and I was horrible. It was a horrible—and so I thought well, they'll never accept me. If they're a really decent

organization they would see that I'm not the right fit. And they didn't hire me, and I thought well, that's good, this is what I thought; they shouldn't hire me, I'm not ready.

And so, a year later they approached me and they said "we have another job opening and we'd like you to apply." And I was not finished with school yet and I thought oh, I don't know, should I apply or not? And after wrestling I thought okay, I'm going to apply. And this was for an announcer position, and so I did and I got in, and so I was an announcer and I hosted Weekend Edition and I—yep, and Richard Weinman who was the head of the Broadcast Media Department, he also was the Morning Edition host at that time. And so, I knew him very well and after about, I don't know, six months to a year that I was at OPB, they wanted to start a new program called The Noon Report with Richard Weinman as the host. And so, I thought well, I should ask if they need someone just to do whatever, and they said "well actually, we're looking for a producer." And I thought well heck, I'm not the person. They said "no, we'd love for you to be the producer." And so, I [makes swishing sounds], I rolled up my sleeves and I did the work and I worked along Dick and I created a daily, hour-long show called The Noon Report.

MD: Now, you went back to school later in life after having some time in the working world. You were considered to be what is now called a non-traditional student.

LC: Yeah.

MD: Like myself. Back then they didn't have that tag yet, but what was being in college with all those—like with all those kids? And what was being in theater like with all those kids?

[0:20:02]

LC: Yeah, well that's a good question. I was, I think, the most enthusiastic person in the class, whatever class it was, right? I know, yeah those life experiences, and you come back and you have this value placed on learning that is pretty high, and this respect for those who are going to impart their knowledge on you, and I was, I tell you, I still have my notes, because I took such meticulous notes, I was so happy to be there. It had been eleven years since I had left school and it took a lot of work to get there again. I know it's not easy to go back and you're already established out in the world, and to disrupt that, it's just not easy. And so, it was—I thought everybody would be as enthusiastic as I was, like we're all really happy to be here at this university and to learn, but I really was the most enthusiastic. In fact, I raised my hand a little bit too much in one class and the professor said "I think I'd like to hear from some others," and I thought "oh, geez." I mean it just—and I just thought I just wish I could place that enthusiasm, my enthusiasm, in the young. And I thought we all have this unfolding of how we go through life and we all take it in the way that we do, but—and they too will find their nuggets. But I loved it.

And in theater, I didn't feel any age difference in theater. There were just people interested in doing the best we could. We represented all ages in the plays we did, and so I think the thing that was interesting in theater was that I was one of two people that were of color, and so there was one male and myself. And so, whenever there was a part that required a person of color, we would get the role. And it meant that I got a lot of roles and it meant that I got colorful roles, too.

MD: Tituba in *The Crucible*.

LC: Right, in *The Crucible*, right. And so, it was, theater was fun. It was hard, it was a lot of work, it was an absorbing—it demanded a lot and demanded focused attention. I was in Hair as well and we learned, you know, we had—I was one of the principles and we learned, I think it was a dance a day and a song a day, and I'm thinking I don't know if I can keep all of this. But after a while, you're exercising that muscle and you're getting it down [snaps fingers] and you're thinking by golly, I'm standing up to this, and my voice is standing up to this, which is really incredible.

MD: What year did you do *Hair*?

LC: I think it was '88 or '87. '88, maybe.

MD: Well you were—one of the things that I find interesting; you were involved in theater in the era of the end of the Mitchell Playhouse.

LC: Yes.

MD: The Mitchell Playhouse was the community theater from about the mid-fifties. It was originally the women's gymnasium, built around the turn of the twentieth century, and then now it's the Valley Gymnastics Center, but when you were there it was towards the—it was on its last legs.

LC: Yeah.

MD: Any stories about that old place?

LC: I loved that old place. When you're in theater and you spend a lot of hours there, you might be sitting on the floor, you might be, you know, for my role in Hair I was hugging a wall and I got to know the wall really well. And you just feel as though it's, I don't know, it's arms wrapped around you as you're learning and experiencing and unfolding as an actor. And so, I loved it. I loved its smell; it had the smell of I guess old wood. And I loved the shop that they would build everything, and smell the sawdust and the old wood and it just had—it was large enough but yet small enough to be intimate. And it was sad, it was a sad day when it closed. It was like any old building, so it leaked its heat through its windowsills. And so, one year when it was really, really cold one winter, there were these bushes outside of Mitchell and the heat came, escaped and hit the bushes and the cold air made this winter icicle. It was just magical. And here I am sitting out there looking at this and looking at Mitchell Theater and thinking this is an idyllic moment. This is a wonderful moment. I know that we're leaking heat [laughs], but this is a treasure. And it was sad for me to see that that would end.

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MD: Now, you're involvement with the theater probably had a big part in your later days and being involved with KOAC and OPB. Do you think that theater served you well, even with all the work?

LC: Yes. Everybody that I worked with at KOAC was in theater at one point, and so we all knew how to use our voices, and using your voice in the theater and projecting is quite different than using your voice for a mic, but using your voice to be understood is critical, and so it helped me there. It helped me with my confidence, speaking to a lot of people at one time about anything, because it's completely different when you stand in front of a room full of people; you see them and you're confronted with them and that's your reality. When you're standing in front of a mic, you don't see anyone, but you know they are there. You know they're there, and so your auditorium is all over wherever you can be heard, the station's signal can be heard.

So theater, you feel as though you're stepping up on the stage when you open up the mic. And so, having that feeling really helped me connect with my audience, I think. And I learned a lot from folks that had listened to me over the time that I was an announcer, and they loved listening to my voice at night, that it was a soothing voice, that it was a voice—a friendly voice that they felt they knew me, and that just felt like such a complement. So, I guess in those ways, theater helped.

MD: Well, one of your classmates, Roosevelt Credit, who also graduated in 1990, he spoke during our interview of being an African American at OSU during this period. Any—do you have reflections, were you involved with the Lonnie B. Harris Black Cultural Center at all?

LC: I wasn't involved with the cultural center. I was involved with the President's Commission on the Status of Women, and that was the status of the faculty, staff, students. And while a part of that, I wanted to ensure that we spoke up on behalf of the other; of students of color. And so, I formed a taskforce, Multicultural Affairs Taskforce, and we had a Navajo in the group as well. And we were able to talk about issues, we spoke with issues with others in the organization, we looked at a lot of issues and were able to discuss them university-wide, so to speak, at a time when the university was awakening to the fact that we really have to enlighten our faculty on issues of discrimination and so forth. I'd like to say that I had a part in lifting the experience of African Americans and people of color, women of color, lifting their place at OSU; I'm not entirely certain, but I do know I left a seed, and a seed is pretty good.

So, one of the things I found from the taskforce is that folks felt pretty isolated in that they couldn't speak out and that there wasn't anyone really that wanted to listen. And so, I created a space where people could talk openly and be heard.

And so, we each then walked out into whatever our position was at OSU with the understanding of the other. So, I guess that would be my seed, in part.

[0:30:02]

MD: Well, we spoke a little bit about KBVR and KOAC and OPB, let's delve into this a little bit more. You're best known for your involvement with student media. What was your overall function throughout your time; how did it grow with—well, with the radio station there mostly, I understand, and then as it moved into your job at the OPB, break it up a little bit.

LC: Well, you know studying Broadcast Media I was interested in getting involved in radio there, so I was able to—I threw my hat in for being a jazz announcer, or host, and so within a very short period of time I was the jazz director at KBVR and really immersed myself in that world, which was helpful to me; got involved with television, hosted a television series that we had. I wasn't the best host. I wanted to be behind the camera, but they wanted me in front of the camera and I said "yeah, just don't know; I am not the best host." But I learned a little bit while I was doing that, and I learned that sound and audio was really my principle interest; that you could communicate just about anything in the world and beyond. You know, the imagination, with sound only, was just fascinating to me.

And so, that's one of the things that I love about my profession today, is that we—that's what we deal with when we talk about radio alone. Now we're branching out; we're now in video, we're now, you know, but when you're talking specifically radio, you're talking about sound, and when I talk with the announcers I talk about sound, language, like body language, and there's one thing about—you can read something, but reading words you miss all of those elements that really speak from one individual to another. So, it's that changing those words into something that you own yourself and then speaking them to others and having that other pick up the meaning, the intent of what you're trying to say. I love that, I love that.

MD: Now, the station itself, now where were the studios for the radio during your era? Was it still over in Covell?

LC: They were in Covell Hall for most of the time that KOAC was in Corvallis, and the university was so wonderful to us. I mean, they allowed us the space. We were connected to the university at one point in our history, and then we were part of the state until '93, and then we separated. But yeah, we had studios in the engineering building at Covell Hall, so you'd hear students walking by. And we had a—our studio we called the fishbowl, because it really had windows all around it, which studios shouldn't have. And they would take in all sorts of sounds. We would tell the janitor at night "you can't vacuum," because you'd hear it, or there was a person—I can't remember the name of the building now—two buildings over on top of the roof, fixing something on the roof and he had a little radio and he was listening to music and it was coming all the way across, went through the windows to our mic; you could hear it here in Portland. And so, we had to—I had to walk over there and say "can you tell your worker that he's got to turn it off" or whatever, his radio. I go back to the studio and I look over there and I can see this man just scratching his head and looking over and trying to find where that mic could be that's picking up his radio.

But yeah, it was a space that housed reporters over many, many years. Women, when women weren't in this business, we had—television started there. We had a black room for our television studios, television station, we had—we were on the air for just a few short hours every day. And we had bands come in and they went out to the fair and student plays and all the like. When I got there, we were on the air twelve hours a day, and then we would sign off. And the bell tower, they constructed a bell tower outside of the library, and when that was constructed I loved it, because I loved bells, but you would hear that too in the background when their mics were on. And I just thought it was just so charming, it's lovely. And we were the station for all of OPB. We went all over the state from those studios in Covell Hall.

[0:35:56]

MD: Yeah, which the history of KOAC goes back ninety years, the twenties, and so being part of that legacy is—you must have had a feeling for where it began and where it eventually evolved up here to this facility. I mean, you're part of that legacy.

LC: Yeah.

MD: Was it quite state of the art, or were you kind of on a shoestring?

LC: In Corvallis we were on, I'd say we were state of the art at one time, and then as time went on we would use the old equipment mixed in with the new equipment, because equipment changes over time. We had several engineers and the engineers were incredible people, they could do anything. And when we were analog, we were state of the art. Once we went to digital, we were state of the art for digital, but the building wasn't state of the art for taking care of it. We needed to be in a place that was air conditioned and that was pretty well closed-off from the outside, so that dust wouldn't get in and so forth. And because we weren't air conditioned and we were in the corner and we were in the top of the top floor, the sun would beat all day, and in the summertime it would get up into the nineties for us, and in the equipment room well above a hundred. And we had fans everywhere, we had to open up the window in order to have the exhaust ventilate, and we had dust come in. It was just really not the best situation. We were trying to make it work; we looked into air conditioning and the sober reality came that it would be too expensive to put air conditioning in; that we realized that perhaps it wasn't wise for us to stay any longer. And that was a sad day.

MD: Now, there was a TV station in Gill Coliseum, which the remnants of that are still there.

LC: Yeah.

MD: So, you had two different locations on campus; was that later when they—when did that TV studio go in there?

LC: That was before me, so I don't know. They were gone by the time I started, by a number of years. So, I can't tell you about that part, the history. But we also have a transmitter site located on Highway 20, and a lot of folks would think well, that's where we would have—we originated our broadcasts, but no, that's just where the towers are located and the transmitter.

MD: Well, so you were involved as a student and being employed by OPB, but just you were a graduating member of the class of 1990, I mean your journey through college culminated at that point. So, as a member of that class, what are some of your reflections, basically, of your time at OSU, and some of your major accomplishments academically? But, as a fellow non-traditional student, was your graduation walking extra special?

[0:39:36]

LC: I always wanted to walk; I didn't get to walk. I didn't walk, I didn't walk. I graduated—I can't remember why I didn't walk, but there was a reason. So, I have to say I would love to walk, I would love to walk but I didn't get that experience, unfortunately. So, I remember thinking well, where is the nugget of that moment of recognition that I have graduated from Oregon State University? And I thought that will be when I hold my diploma in my hand, and still when I think about it, I still have those feelings of "I have accomplished this," are tremendous because I started college so much younger, and as an older student to finally have that degree was like I did this and I did this for myself, I brought myself here, this is what I've created, this is what I've done with the help of all of these incredible people. I felt so pleased, so proud. I still do.

MD: I relate to that.

LC: Yeah.

MD: I'm a little unsure about the original history of Oregon Public Broadcasting. Now, was it always, did it begin at OAC—OSC at the time, probably?

LC: Yeah, yeah. The reason for KOAC is Oregon Agricultural College in the twenties, and so I have been told that there were a few students and a professor that were interested in this newfangled thing called a radio, and it was what, about nine years old or something then. And they started a club, that's what I've been told. And they—I've also been told that they would—well anyway, that from their interests, they started a little station, and they would serve the community with the crop reports and such, and it just grew from there. And the thought that it grew from just a few individuals, that makes entirely—that makes perfect sense to me, that it grew from a few people who were interested at OSU makes perfect sense, and that it now covers the state and into southwest Washington and you can hear it worldwide. We hear from people all over the world, but that in Oregon alone we have like a million, five-hundred-thousand people plus listening and viewing us is just incredible to me.

We've raised generations of people, and we hear from them all of the time, and I just am so pleased to be a part of that lineage. I'm so pleased to be a part of those who came before me at OSU and who went to that station and worked and kept it going continuously. That's not something that was typical for public radio stations. They struggled a lot, and so for us to turn on the signal in the twenties and keep it going, and now it's 2015, to keep it going is phenomenal. There are very few stations that can say they've done that. I remember going into the attic at OSU in Covell Hall where we had a lot of boxes and photographs and memos and things, and there were a couple that really stood out. One was when we were in trouble financially. Someone was threatening to remove funds. Farmers wrote in beautiful cursive throughout the community; "this is such a value, you cannot let it close, you must keep it going." And I think with their energy and the energies of the professionals that served it and with the energies of the campus, it continued.

Another moment was in 1941 when we have the telegrams from that time when stations were directed what to do, because most stations were directed to stand down. Only a few were kept going. Another, which is something that just—because of what I do, was a memo from the station manager to the announcers. I think it was in the thirties, who he said "I just want you all to know there is a club, a student club that is—they listen to you every night and watch for pronunciation errors and grammatical errors, and we come back together and we report on them, so be on your best always," and I found that and I copied that and I sent it to everybody and I said "you see this still, we are still in the same place; be on your best always. Our public expects the best from us."

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And saying that, while you're at an educational institution, it really just puts that extra stamp on that. It's like "we are, we are the caregivers of the language and we are the ones that others—that we are raising the young and they are indeed listening to us through their lives. So, let's take that responsibility seriously.

MD: Yeah, so you had a career on campus from 1988 through the time the station left in 2008, so twenty years of—and that was strictly Oregon Public Broadcasting.

LC: Yes.

MD: And eventually you were vice president in charge of programming.

LC: I'm now—yes, I moved from one position to another, and then I've moved to—I moved to program director, and then when I moved up to Portland I became vice president of radio programming, and then now I'm vice president of programming for radio and television. So, I like to tell people that if you don't like something, I'm the one responsible for it. Ultimately, I'm the one responsible for it. But I'm also the one responsible for knowing who our listeners and viewers are, to make certain that we're serving them in the best possible way. I also am a representative across the nation for public radio nationally. I'm on the public radio program directors board. I've been on the board for about eight years now and have welcomed public radio directors from all over the nation to Oregon to see what we're all about. We happen to be one of the top stations, top performing nations, nationally, in the nation. In fact, yeah, we're often number one. We get numbers of listeners and listening that others don't see typically.

MD: Wow. That's wonderful.

LC: Yeah. And so, I look at that and I say that we have to look at our responsibility again. We have a certain trust that we have established, and when I think about the generations that we have served, it is now our responsibility, we are now holding that baton and it is up to us to keep that trust, and it's up to us to explore our world and to lift the world and say "see this? Did you know about that?" and to also be there during the times of hard news and difficult news. It's amazing, like times like 9/11, everybody tuned to us. They wanted to know. And I thought okay, this is telling me when I need to know, I the listener, need to know what is happening in my world and how it's going to affect me, I feel that where I can go is OPB, a place I can trust where they will tell me what's right—I mean what's real. And I just, that's just a tremendous place to be.

MD: Well, as the station on campus aged and finally, finally they made the decision for it to leave in 2008, I understand there was some consternation about it, and we want to keep it here; you were probably definitely involved with all this controversy. Was it a turbulent time, moving?

LC: Well, I wouldn't say turbulent as much as it was difficult because we had had such a long time on campus. And I mean campus was our family there, and we, OPB has a building in Portland that was built in 1988, and so we were able to broadcast from Corvallis or from Portland at any given moment. We could just throw the stations over to one or the other, and that one could originate.

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So, at the time that the decision was made, it was hard because of the heart, but practically speaking, as far as being one that is using our funds in the best possible way, it made sense to say it was time to move, but it was hard. It was really hard. And so, what we did was we surfaced all of everything; the history of OPB, everything we could that we had there, and we went through the attic, we got photos out, we got equipment out, we spread it out, we invited people to come through KOAC and see it, or see it for a last time, and I got to meet some of the generations of folks that I hadn't met, and some that I had. We got to come together and we got to say "look what we've done, look what we are doing, look where we are moving now." And OSU was a major, major, major part in making this be the—they were a tremendous partner in what we call OPB today. And they still are a tremendous partner to us and we still are located down there; our transmitter site's down there, we have engineers located down there. But it was hard.

MD: It was time and it was hard, yeah. That's kind of the impression I've gotten from some of the people who I've talked to about that move. It was like we didn't want it to go, but you just couldn't upgrade enough.

LC: Yeah, we would have been throwing money out, and that doesn't make any sense at all. We...we're not like that [laughs].

MD: Yeah. So, you end up resettling here in Portland—what were your experiences there as a change from Corvallis to be here in Portland?

LC: Well, I loved Corvallis, I still do. Corvallis is a wonderful community and it was hard to say goodbye, and we, you know, I married into a family, a man with three children, and at the time we couldn't move to Portland at the time that KOAC closed, because we had one child that was still going to high school. And so, we decided okay, we'll commute. So, my first few years working in Portland was commuting back and forth, and that was—I'm not a commuter. I got to listen to a lot of radio [laughs], but I'm just not a commuter. So, moving up to Portland was like okay, I'm now planted here. This is my home now, I get to explore Portland. And now I get to see how, on a day-to-day basis, how this city is experiencing what had begun with these few people in Corvallis, and everywhere you go you mention OPB and people know about it. Everybody, wherever you go, and they light up; "OPB." And I think yes, this is what it's all about, and it doesn't matter where you go in the state, you'll find people that love this. And this is, this is—and I saw this humbly—this is a treasure, a living treasure, and its seed began at OSU.

MD: Well, we always like to get a little bit of family; what happened after college. I mean, we've really covered that, but how about your family? I mean where are you at now, where are your kids, that type of thing?

LC: Well, the kids are now—proud parent of three twenty-somethings, and one is in Mississippi in the Mississippi Delta, teaching. She's doing incredible work, just incredible work. What a heart. And another is here doing dental work. She loves working in the dental profession. And then the third is graduating from Barnard this May. So, the youngest is now going to be launched out into the world, and I'm so proud of them all.

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MD: Well, we really appreciate you being willing to share your Beaver stories with the OH 150 project. Are there any final thoughts or reflections that you would like to leave with the Beaver Nation?

LC: Oh my goodness. I guess there are, there...this is such a big question. I don't know if I can adequately answer it. There is so much richness at OSU, and it's because of the people. And if you step onto the soil of OSU and you were a part of it, if you were a student of OSU, then you're a part of that richness. You are added to that. And I say embrace it fully, experience it completely and it will give back one hundred-fold.

MD: Well Lynne, on behalf of Oregon State University Special Collections and Archives Research Center, we want to thank you for your story, your life story, and you are truly one of our Beaver legends.

LC: Oh, thank you.

MD: Thank you very much.

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