



## Bill Lunch Oral History Interviews, March 13, 2015

### Title

“Political Scientist and Political Commentator”

### Date

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### Location

Valley Library, Oregon State University.

### Summary

In interview 1, Lunch discusses his parents' backgrounds, including his father's experiences as a newspaper journalist and as a spy during World War II. He then describes the family's move to San Diego, his early education, and his first interests in politics, world affairs, and the news media.

From there Lunch recalls his undergraduate years at the University of California, Riverside, including his involvement with anti-poverty programs, his participation on the speech and debate teams, and his earliest work in radio. Lunch's decision to attend the University of California, Berkeley for graduate studies is the next topic of discussion, and in this Lunch notes his research on urban politics and political activists, his graduate mentors, and his meeting and marrying Caroline Kerl.

Lunch then describes the first chapters of his career in academia, noting his work with the public sector programs at the University of San Francisco, and his research on the nationalization of American politics while based at Sonoma State University.

The remainder of the session is devoted to Lunch's life and work in Oregon. He recalls his decision to move to OSU, his initial impressions of the town and university, the duties of his first position, and people who made an impact on him at that time. He also details the progression of his wife's career, first as an employee of Benton County and later as the university's legal counsel.

A major theme of the interview is the evolution of Lunch's parallel career as a political commentator. He describes the way in which he began this work, by volunteering to provide analysis of the 1988 presidential election. He then discusses the ways in which his commentary interests began to expand, at one point resulting in a year-long sabbatical leave devoted to covering Oregon politics from the state capitol in Salem. Lunch's sabbatical coincided with the implementation of Oregon's Ballot Measure 5 property tax-limitation initiative, and Lunch provides background on the impact that the measure made on OSU and on the state's system of education.

The session concludes with Lunch's memories of his years as chair of the Political Science department, and with his thoughts on the current direction of OSU, making special note of the university's budget model.

### Interviewee

Bill Lunch

**Interviewer**

Chris Petersen

**Website**

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

## Transcript

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

**Bill Lunch:** Good morning, this is Bill Lunch, it's March 13, 2015, we're on the OSU campus and I'm a former professor, extinguished, of political science here, who was on the faculty from 1984 to 2011, and I also have been for most of that time, not quite all of it, the political analyst for the public broadcast, which I continue to do.

**CP:** Okay, terrific. So, we will talk a lot about all of that, but we'll start at the beginning. Where were you born?

**BL:** I was born in Detroit, in Michigan.

**CP:** And what was your parents' backgrounds?

**BL:** My father was a journalist and writer and my mother did a variety of things. I suppose the easiest way to describe what she did a lot of her life was she a—when she was working, she was a seamstress.

**CP:** So, your father was a journalist, for whom did he write?

**BL:** He wrote, before World War II, for the *Washington Post* and then, right before the war, for the *Denver Post* and then he went into the Canadian Air Force, 1940, and you didn't have to be a rocket scientist to figure out that the world was headed for war. And so, he joined the Canadian Air Force in order to help fight the Nazis and so on. And then, after Pearl Harbor, he was in the Canadian Air Force for a little more than a year, and then after Pearl Harbor—he was not alone in this—all of the pilots and other people who had joined from the United States, who had joined the Canadian Forces, were transferred into the American Forces, and vice versa. There were some Canadians in the American Forces who went to the Canadian Forces. So, from basically 1942 on, he was in what was then called the Army Air Corps.

He ended up in Italy flying for a while, but he had an eye condition. I don't know exactly what it was, something went wrong with his eyes and he was, by that point he was a navigator on bombers, and because of the eye condition, they told him he either had to get an operation to fix it, which was very scary, an operation on your eyes is even now pretty scary but then it was really scary, or, he was a natural linguist, unlike me, and he had been in Italy for long enough he had picked up Italian very, very well, so the alternative that was offered to him was to become a spy. And so, he joined the OSS, which is the forerunner to the CIA, and went behind German lines to learn what the Italians were thinking and so on and passing himself off as an Italian of American extraction who had gone to Italy before the war. And this actually did happen, there were a fair number of people like that. And he got away with it. He got back, was able to file reports and so on, and after spies had been sent out three times, the American forces didn't send them anymore because they learned that after three times they almost always got caught and killed. And so, he would—but he was basically a spy during much of the war. Though whenever I would—he's now no longer with us, but whenever I would go through that story, he would say "please, please, I was an intelligence officer."

**CP:** That's a great story.

**BL:** Yeah, it was lots of fun.

**CP:** Were you raised in Detroit?

**BL:** No, the family, my family moved to California when I was six, so I have very faint memories of Michigan. And I grew up in San Diego.

**CP:** And was that for your father's work?

**BL:** Yes, in a way it was. He had been offered a job at one of the defense contractors out in San Diego which then evaporated, he ended up not doing that. But he did, for much of his career then, subsequently work for a succession of both defense contractors and, eventually, went back to work for the US Navy as a writer. He had a somewhat, something of a scientific background, and he also worked for the California Water Project, which is a great, big set of dams and

irrigation canals and things moving water from Northern California to Southern California. So, he worked on that for ten, fifteen years.

He had a bit of a scientific background and he was extremely talented with understanding language that the scientists would use, fairly technical stuff on one end, and being able to translate that in some sense into a language that more ordinary folks who don't know the scientific terminology could understand. And so, he wrote lots of reports, both at the defense contractors for the state of California and then eventually, at the end of his career, for the Navy, taking scientific and technical kinds of things and translating them, essentially into more ordinary language for people to read who don't have that background.

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**CP:** What was San Diego like for you growing up?

**BL:** Well, of course as a child you accept whatever's around you as normal. It was only much later, after I was an adult, that I realized two things about it. First of all: the weather in San Diego barely changes. It's always just about, I'm exaggerating, but it's very, very commonly 68-72 and the sun is shining. And it's not a place where there ought to be a lot of people, because it's a desert. There's very, very, very little rain there. But the unchanging, or at least very, very modestly changing weather was one of the things that was, when I moved to other places, I realized it had been pretty unusual.

The other aspect of my growing up; my family, when we got to San Diego, we ended up settling in a beach community right down by the ocean, within really a stone's throw of the ocean. And in that part of the world, because it was such valuable real estate, the houses were built cheek to jaw with each other. And in fact there were, between most of the houses, there weren't even streets. There were just pedestrian walkways. So, the population density in the neighborhood where I grew up, although this is not true of San Diego as a whole, was very high. And I realized only much later that I had grown up in a very urban kind of place, which is a bit strange because you don't think of San Diego that way when you think of it from the outside.

**CP:** Do you remember having an interest in world affairs as a child?

**BL:** Yes. My father said that I started asking him questions about politics when I was four years old. The explanation, I've had a variety of explanations for this, but the best one that I can think of or that I've heard is that the Martians dropped me off to spy, speaking of spies. So, I've just basically been interested in politics and what you'd call world affairs or current events ever since I can remember.

**CP:** Do you remember having a political figure who captivated you as a boy?

**BL:** Well, not exactly. I certainly found John Kennedy very interesting and stimulating and so on, but by that point I was into my teenage years, and so he was one of a number. He stands out a little bit because he does for a lot of people who were young at that time. So, to a degree Jack Kennedy, but really there were lots of others.

**CP:** How about media figures, be it print media or television?

**BL:** No, not so much. I certainly admired a variety of journalists from that period. Walter Cronkite was kind of the most famous, or best known, but even prior to him I had read some of the stuff that William Shirer had written about Germany, and I was a big fan of Teddy White. I really liked the *Making of the President* series. And so, there are a variety of journalistic figures who I admired in those years.

**CP:** Was your family a political family?

**BL:** Not really. My dad was very interested in politics and he and I would always discuss it routinely. Now, he had a brother, an uncle of mine who was a lawyer and lobbyist in Washington D.C., called him Uncle Mick. Uncle Mick was involved in national politics within the orbit of the organization for which he worked, but I didn't quite perceive the degree to which Uncle Mick was a behind the scenes political player until I was much older. And we didn't see him that often. He was on the other side of the country from where I grew up.

**CP:** So, how did these interests manifest as you were growing up?

**BL:** Well I just, I had a lot of interest in what can be called current events and so we always had a subscription to either *Time* or *Newsweek*, sometimes both of them, and whenever it would come into the house I would immediately grab it and read it cover to cover. In those days, the news magazines *Time* and *Newsweek*, to a lesser degree *US News and World Report*, were major publications for those who wanted to keep up on developments. It's different now because of the web and availability of things electronically. It's just a very different set of circumstances. And in those days as well, my parents divorced when I was about ten, but to that point we would routinely sit down, and lots of families did this, at dinner and watch the evening news. It was six o'clock or six-thirty news, while we ate dinner. And then we would discuss what we were seeing.

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My mother wasn't nearly as interested as my father, but my dad and I had lots of conversations about the news over dinner, during the years from the point at which we'd moved to California until the divorce.

**CP:** What was school like for you?

**BL:** Well, I was pretty good at school. I went to the public schools in San Diego, which were quite good, and so I was a successful student, went to a public high school in the beach area where I grew up, and then when I graduated from high school, I went off to the University of California at Riverside.

**CP:** Did you have an idea of what you wanted to do by the time you were graduated from high school?

**BL:** Yeah, I knew that I was, I wasn't quite sure whether I would major in political science or history, but I was sure I was going to major in one of those fields. And then when I got to college I tried out both political science and history courses and fairly rapidly figured out that I was much better suited in political science, because it's more contemporary. And as far as occupation is concerned, I figured from the time I was about twelve that I was either going to become a professor or a lawyer, but I wasn't sure which. And when I got to the end of my undergraduate work, the difference was we were not a wealthy family at all. And I got offers of fellowships, support to become a graduate student, but to go to law school you have to pay for it yourself and we just didn't have the, I didn't have the financing to do that. So, it was fairly easy to pick going to do graduate work in political science.

**CP:** How was your experience at Riverside?

**BL:** It was very good. It was a very small campus at that time. It had been intended, when it was created, it started out as an agricultural experiment station on citrus crops. And that continues there, they still do that, though that's a minor part of what goes on at that campus now. But when I went there it had been opened in the mid to late fifties, I'm not positive the year, I think probably 1956 or '58, as a small campus within the University Of California system. The notion was that it would be something akin to a liberal arts college within the orbit of the larger University of California system, which in those days had nine campuses. And I was—that appealed to me. I applied to some traditional liberal arts colleges such as Swarthmore, and I may have applied to Carleton, I'm not sure.

In any event, but the difference was that the University of California system in those days, for students from within California it was very inexpensive. I think the total, the tuition was something like a hundred dollars a year or two hundred dollars a year. It was minimal. And I also, because I had been a good high school student, I won some scholarships that covered even that minimal tuition cost. But the University of California was just an excellent system and it was very inexpensive.

Riverside was maybe a hundred miles, maybe less than that from San Diego. So, it felt very comfortable to go there. And when I got to the Riverside campus, because it was so small, there were only about two thousand students at that time. Maybe twenty-five hundred, but only a couple thousand undergraduates. So, it was possible to become involved in the life of the campus very easily. And I almost immediately, upon getting there, I joined, there was an organization on campus call The Tutorial Project, which was focused on trying to help kids from less advantaged homes who were having difficulty in school, and tutoring them. And I joined that organization within the first week or something, very, very quickly. And I had had some organizational experience in high schools setting up discussion groups and things of

this nature, so I was asked to join, very quickly I was asked to join the sort of organizing or governing board of the tutorial project and got drawn into that.

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That then led, within a year there was an anti-poverty program that was organized or set up by the national government. There were a variety of aspects to that. One of them was to draw students who came from disadvantaged backgrounds but who had, from their academic records, these are in high school, the ability to go to college but because they were, their families were poor, and probably their parents didn't have college experience, the expectation was that they wouldn't go to college. And this was—the program that I became involved in was called Upward Bound, which still exists on some campuses, and the idea is to bring students in from high school who have the ability to go to college but probably don't have that as part of their vision of what they're going to do with themselves, and to offer them some tutoring and academic help but also, in a way, open up their horizons, to get them to think about going to college.

And so, the Upward Bound program at Riverside was established within a year of the time that I arrived, and I was immediately drawn into it to become a counselor to these students who would come in the summer. And so, I started doing that between my, let me think about this for a second, yeah, between my freshman and sophomore years I became a counselor in the Upward Bound program. And I did that throughout the time that I was in Riverside, thereafter.

Also at the same time, I had been involved in the speech and debate team in high school and had done pretty well. I had won some awards in California for—there's different types of speech and debate competitions and there's debate, which is reasonably well-known, but there are also, there's individual speeches and there's short speeches and there's giving talks on very quick notice. You'll be tossed a topic and asked to address it basically immediately. And on those, the latter kind of thing where you're given a topic and you're asked within three minutes to put together a brief set of remarks, I was quite good, and I didn't quite become state champion, but close. So, when I got to Riverside I joined the speech team there and had some success with that as well.

A buddy of mine who eventually became a lawyer won one of the tournaments in a way that was a big surprise, because at some of the schools like University of Southern California, they give scholarships for competitive speaking. I didn't know about that when I was applying to college, but anyway, and so there were a number of teams, the speech teams, at this particular tournament that I'm thinking of, and since my buddy and I, neither of us had that kind of advantage or background, we were not taken seriously. So, it was a big surprise when we won that tournament. So, I did competitive speaking on the speech team at UCR.

And there were budget cuts eventually. By my junior year the coordinator of the speech team, the money for that, for a regular sort of faculty position, had dried up. So, I was appointed as a speech coach when I was a junior in college and I did that for a couple of years, as well. So, I was a busy guy during my undergraduate years.

**CP:** Yeah, it's easy to see your roots as a commentator, as well, building.

**BL:** Yeah, that's right. And actually, there was a campus radio station at Riverside, and I had kind of halfway forgotten about this, and I did a little bit of radio work with the campus radio station, which I think is KUCR, but I'm not positive those are the call numbers. I think that's it.

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**CP:** Well, as a college student in the late sixties and somebody interested in national world affairs, what was it like for you observing sort of the tumult and the activism on campuses all over the country?

**BL:** Well, it was very important and serious, and Riverside was a much quieter campus than, say for example, Berkeley, which was sort of Ground Zero for the student protests against this and that and the other thing. And then, not for those kinds of reasons but for other reasons, I ended up going to Berkeley for graduate work. So, I certainly saw that, a very high level of student protest, very much up close to where I was and what I was doing as a—when I was in my early years of graduate work.

The student protests and things of that nature were important but even in those days, even in the late sixties, I recognized that they weren't going to change nearly as much as some of the people who were involved in them thought they were. So, I was—some of my friends, for example, went in 1968 to Chicago to go and protest against the war in Vietnam and I was asked to go and I said I didn't want to do that, because I could see it was going to be a very nasty set of confrontations, as indeed it developed.

So, I was, in terms of the organized student protest, I was always an outsider to that. I recognized that the protesters were addressing very important national issues and I was very sympathetic to what they were trying to do, but I also knew that the main course of American politics was not likely to be terribly responsive to that, and I think that was mostly right. I was probably wrong around some accounts, but mostly I was right about that.

**CP:** Well, you mentioned Berkeley, you went there for your graduate studies, what was the decision there?

**BL:** Well, when I was getting towards the end of my undergraduate work, I had done well as a student of political science at Riverside, so I applied to a number of prominent graduate programs and got accepted at Berkeley, Stanford and Michigan. Michigan and Stanford offered me support for a year and then a teaching assistantship, but Berkeley—it was Michigan and Stanford right, okay—but Berkeley offered me a Ford Foundation Fellowship, which was a five-year sort of full ride scholarship. By current standards it wasn't a lot of money, basically I got free tuition and I think twenty-four hundred dollars a year. So, it wasn't huge bucks by any manner of means, but it meant that I could just study political science and not have to worry about anything else.

Now, as it turned out once I got to Berkeley, my first year I did simply study and nothing else, but by the second year I was drawn in and asked to become a teaching assistant on top of the other things that I was doing anyway, and I enjoyed that, I was happy to do that. But, it really boiled down to me, between in terms of making a choice between Berkeley and Stanford, I had been involved in the student government at Riverside, among other crimes and misdemeanors, and so because of that, the student government officers from the various campuses in the University of California system in those days, I don't know if this still goes on, had periodic meetings. And so they'd get together say, for example, at UCLS and all of the different campuses, different folks would come from other campuses to UCLA, or they might have meetings at Berkeley, they might have meetings at Riverside whenever, so I had been to all of the campuses in the University of California system, I think with the exception of Santa Cruz. I don't think I ever went for meetings there but I'd been to all the other campuses in the UC system for meetings and at one of them, one of those meetings, I met a guy who was a grad student at Berkeley, who was very engaging and friendly. I got along with him—and he was a political science grad student—very well.

And so when I was making the decision about whether to go to Stanford or Berkeley for graduate work, I went to both Stanford and to Berkeley to do kind of campus tours, and when I got to Berkeley, the fellow who I had met, whose name was Jeff took me around and introduced me to people, and it was just very clear that if I went to Berkeley I would immediately have friends and connections. It'd be a very sort of seamless transition. And they had also made me the most attractive fellowship offer. So, I thought well this is, you know, sort of God is telling me "you're supposed to go to Berkeley."

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**CP:** Well, so you received a five-year grant and I assume the presumption was to work on a Ph.D. from the beginning?

**BL:** That's right. The idea was you worked on a Ph.D. And the system in those days, I think it's the same now, was that incoming graduate students at Berkeley worked for a year and at the end of that year, the department would make an evaluation of whether—at that point you get a master's degree, but at that state the department would make an evaluation of whether you should go on for a Ph.D. or not. And it was a juncture, because a number of the people who—there was a class of maybe thirty incoming grad students when I went to the Berkeley department, and out of those a number of them decided, even though they were offered the chance to go on for a Ph.D., they decided to go do something else, go to law school, go to work, a number of people I knew, and I could have done this myself, went into political consulting, working with candidates doing campaign work, polling. I could have, I've done some public opinion stuff, I could have done polling.

So, there were a number of people who I went to grad school with initially who decided not to go on for the Ph.D., do something else. The chap I mentioned who he and I were debate partners in college and won this one tournament that we weren't expected to win, he went to be a graduate student in political science, but went to Harvard. And the same thing, they had at the end of the first year, folks there got a master's and then were either asked to continue or not. He was asked to go on but he had, by that point, decided that he'd rather be a lawyer. And so, he quit political science and went to law school, which I think was a good choice for him. Anyway, but I continued on and eventually did get a Ph.D. in political science at Berkeley.

**CP:** Tell me about your research during this time.

**BL:** Well, when I got to Berkeley, the chap I've mentioned to you, whose name was Jeff, a guy named Jeff Pressman, was working at that time at a research organization on the Berkeley campus that grew out of political science called The Oakland Project, which concerned urban politics, basically. And so Jeff encouraged me, in fact, when I did the little tour of Berkeley, he took me to the Oakland Project and introduced me to the director and other people there and I was immediately swept into that.

So I, during my first couple of years at Berkeley, I was focused on urban politics. And in fact I wrote a fair, not really—basically a master's thesis, sixty, seventy page length overview of the history of politics in Oakland, which is still on file, I understand, at the Bancroft library. But anyway, it's not great literature, I assure you. But I could have turned that initial work on Oakland's political history into a dissertation, but I didn't want to be focused on urban politics particularly and I recognized that if I did that then that would—that's the subfield of political science in which I would end up working, and I didn't want to do that.

So instead, I shifted to focus on activists, political activists, such as the type who volunteer for campaigns and work for political parties and things of that nature, because I was interested in why people do that. It's pretty unusual. Only, in a typical period of time, two, three, four percent of Americans are actively involved in politics. I mean that they're actually doing things. They're working for the parties, they're working for a candidate, maybe on here in the western states they might be working on an initiative or referendum campaign, something like that. And I was always interested to try and understand why people did those things. So, that was what I—I did a survey and then I did quite a number of interviews with people who were activists, both on the Republican and Democratic sides, and that was the focus of my dissertation.

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**CP:** Was that the Social Indicators Project, or was that something else?

**BL:** No, the Social Indicators was,—so I knew one of the directors of the Social Indicators Project and I actually did a little tiny bit of work on that. Not much, but I know what you're talking about. This was separate, this was my own undertaking. I got some support for it from institutional research funds at Berkeley and also from, there's a research institute in New York that provided me with a year's worth of support. So, I got some research support for what I was doing but the Social Indicators Project was a separate operation.

**CP:** Did you have a mentor?

**BL:** Yes, my doctoral advisor was Aaron Wildavsky who was best known—he's no longer with us—but Aaron was best known for his work on the budget process, and he was a public policy guy. And so, he was the founding dean of the School of Public Policy at Berkeley, which is still there. And once Aaron became Director, or Dean rather, I guess, of the school of public policy, I actually went and took quite a number of courses. I took—he had a year-long seminar on budgeting and budget in politics, which I took, for example.

And there were others there who—there's a guy named Arnold Meltsner who had done some very good work on, again, back to urban politics, and I did some stuff with him. A guy named Alan Sindler who had previously been, I think, at LSU and written sort of the best-known, best study of the Huey Long period in Louisiana politics. And Alan had done some things on higher education politics and I worked with him, did a course and then some other things. And there's a guy named Jack Schuster there who was basically sort of an instructor level, he was just a little bit ahead of me. Jack eventually became a quite well-known figure in writing about higher education politics in the United States. And he went

down, he ended up at the Claremont Colleges in Southern California. So, there were a number of people at the public policy school who I worked with and knew and maintained relationships with over a long period of time.

**CP:** Did you meet Caroline at Berkeley?

**BL:** Yes, I did. Now how did you know about her?

**CP:** I've done my homework.

**BL:** [Laughs] Where did you find this out?

**CP:** Oh, I just pieced two and two together.

**BL:** I see, okay. Yes, Caroline, I was a cradle-robber. Caroline was an undergraduate at Berkeley when I was a grad student. And what happened was when I got to Berkeley, I needed a place to live, of course, and International House, in those days, I don't know if this is still a pattern or not, but they invited, of course, students from a variety of countries around the world who were studying at Berkeley, and that had been going on since the thirties, to live there. It's a dorm of sorts. But also, a little less than half of the student population at I-House was made up of Americans. And so, I moved there along with a buddy of mine who, at that time, was studying biochemistry or something like that. I'm not sure that's right. Something like biochemistry. He eventually went to med school and ended up, he's now, the chap I'm thinking of, is a professor of medicine at Duke.

But in any event, so the two of us, my friend, and this is a guy I knew from Riverside days, we moved to I-House and while the I-House has dorms too, it has meals in common, and so go to dinner and you might sit with this one or that one. I met Caroline as a result of one of those chance meetings over a dinner table at Berkeley. And you know, one thing led to another and we got married in 1971. So, we have been married now for, coming up, we're not quite, but almost forty-four years.

**CP:** Yeah, so you were married well before you graduated.

[0:35:15]

**BL:** Oh yeah, yeah. I was a grad, I was in more or less the middle of my graduate studies. Caroline had not yet finished her undergraduate work. I went to her undergraduate graduation, in fact. And then, as you may know if you've already done your research, thereafter, immediately thereafter, she went to law school at Hastings, just across the Bay. So, she and I moved to San Francisco because it was much more convenient for her, going to law school, and I commuted, as the saying in those days, backwards. It was the bulk of the commute in those days—this isn't true any longer in the Bay area—but in those days, the bulk of the commute was from communities in the East Bay and the South Bay and, to some extent, the North Bay we're in, into San Francisco in the morning and then back out to East Bay and so on in the afternoon.

Well, I was living in San Francisco, so it was easy for me to drive to Berkeley in the morning and equally easy for me to drive back into San Francisco in the afternoon, because most of the traffic was going the opposite way. You couldn't do that, well you could, but it would be a lot more challenging now than it was in those days because the pattern of movement of population or people moving, working different jobs, is much more dispersed now in the Bay area than it was then.

**CP:** Do I understand that your first academic post after Berkeley was at UC Davis?

**BL:** Yes, that's right. I got my Ph.D. in 1976 and I had met, in the course of some political work I had done, I had done some sort of activism myself—how did you learn all of this? I mean this is, well I guess you probably have looked at the vita that I had.

**CP:** Yeah.

**BL:** Okay, alright. Anyway yeah, I, in the course of doing some political work, which doesn't show up in the vita, I don't think, I had met one of the faculty from the Davis campus in the University of California system and they had an opening for a year position, one of their regular faculty was on leave to go someplace, I don't know quite where it was, and they needed somebody to fill in and to teach American politics and related kinds of things, and that's right up my alley. It was easy for me to do. So, I commuted for a year from Santa Rosa, which is by this point, my wife had gotten a job as a lawyer in Santa Rosa for Sonoma County. So, I commuted from Santa Rosa to Davis, which is, if you look at a map, it's a distance.

**CP:** Yeah.

**BL:** But I worked as an instructor, I guess I was a lecturer, at Davis for a year.

**CP:** Yeah. And then a year later you got a position at USF?

**BL:** Right, then I went to San Francisco for four years, I guess it was. Three or four years. I'm trying to think of how long that was. I guess it was four years I was at USF, that's right.

**CP:** When you were there, you were the director of public sector programs?

**BL:** No, I don't think that's right.

**CP:** There's a degree program for working bureaucrats, is—

**BL:** Right, I worked in that, I wasn't director of it. Okay yes, I see. I worked on that program because, with the background I had, having worked with Wildavsky on things like budgeting and other specific topics that are related to what's called public administration, that then ties into the kinds of educational programs which exist for, typically, people who work in public agencies. Very common pattern that you get somebody who has a degree in whatever, they get a job working for a large public agency and then they discover that in order to advance, do more interesting things in their jobs, they need more education. And there's a bit of credentials in this because in public agencies, very commonly, if you have a master's degree you can do jobs that you can't do without it. And so, at the time that we're talking about, USF had a program for working folks, very, very wide, and it wasn't exclusively this, but very commonly they were people who had that career pattern that I just described. And so, it was very helpful for them if they could get a master's degree in public administration, which is what that program offered.

[0:40:13]

**CP:** And did you spend a little time at Sonoma State after that?

**BL:** Yes. Then I got a grant from the research organization I mentioned to you a moment ago that's from New York, to work on a book I had—it's kind of a funny sequence, but Aaron had the idea that somebody should write a book about changes in American politics over the period we're talking now, about the, this would have been late seventies, early eighties. And there had been, by that point, some fairly major transformations in the way in which our political system proceeded.

For example, there were major changes; this is one example out of many, in the way in which the congressional committees were structured in the mid-seventies. And those were parallel to changes in the White House staff that had gone on starting as early as the late sixties. But the White House staff operation grew enormously during this period of time, from the late sixties through to the late seventies, and became much more important to the governance of the country. And meanwhile, the courts had expanded what they would allow in terms of cases that would come to them that had political implications. The courts have always been politically important in the United States but the range of types of cases that they would accept expanded very substantially during this period I'm talking about.

So, there you have Congress, the presidency, the courts, the three main governing institutions, all of them had changed in significant ways during the period roughly from the mid-sixties to the mid-seventies. And so, Aaron had the idea that somebody should write a book about this and he asked me if I was interested, because I'd always had an interest in the intersection between history and politics, back to the, basically, master's thesis more or less, that I wrote about the history

of politics in Oakland. And so, I got started on that and then left USF, got this outside grant from the foundation in New York to work on this manuscript, which eventually became the book that I published with the University of California Press called *The Nationalization of American Politics*.

**CP:** Alright, well let's get into OSU now. 1984 you arrived at Oregon State, how did this happen?

**BL:** Well, after I had...I'm trying to think what the sequence was. I was still working on what would become *The Nationalization of American Politics* but I was getting to the end of it and I got a position at the Survey Research Center back at Berkeley. They were doing some—there's different kinds of public opinion surveys that are done and some of them are what are called elite surveys, where you're not interviewing the public at large, or surveying the public at large, but rather a subset. In this instance, the project that I was hired to do involved doing surveys of scientists on some scientific controversies. And so I went to the Survey Research Center at Berkeley for I don't remember how long, about six months maybe, something like that, to work on that. But while I was there, a job opened up here at Oregon State. I applied and eventually was asked to come here.

So, I came up here to Corvallis and I brought the project on doing these surveys with scientists with me and I concluded it while I was here. I hired, actually, in those first two or three years I was here at Corvallis, at Oregon State, I hired a number of undergraduates, because in those days we didn't have any grad students. I hired a number of undergraduates as research assistants to help me with that project. So, that was what—well that's how I got started here in some sense.

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**CP:** What were your impressions of the university and of the town at that time?

**BL:** Well, Oregon State is of course the land grant school for Oregon. I had taught a year, I really enjoyed the year I had spent at Davis, I thought it was a very, very nice campus and the people I met there were uniformly very kind. It wasn't nearly as sort of hard-edged as Berkeley. Berkeley's an absolute world-class university but day by day, people have got sharp elbows there and it's, it can be an unpleasant place to work because so many people are convinced that they're God's gift to fill in the blank, whatever it is. I didn't find nearly that level of self-importance, or sometimes verging on arrogance, that I ran into at Berkeley and Davis.

So, one of the reasons I was attracted to come to Oregon State was that I figured that if it was similar in terms of the ambiance in the way in which people interacted with each other as Davis had been, that I'd find it to be an amenable place. And that indeed turned out to be the case. People were very, really very kind to us when we got here. And I felt as if it was a pretty easy transition into the political science department here which then, well, Poli Sci Department, in a way, doesn't exist anymore. It's been folded into a larger School of Public Policy, which was not a transition I was happy to see. But it was a small department, I think there were only nine members when I arrived, and so I was happy to join those folks and they were pretty easy to get along with.

I was asked to teach courses on American political institutions. So, one of the main reasons I was hired was that there had been a course on the books here for quite some time about Congress and state legislatures, which hadn't been taught for a number of years because nobody in the department at that particular time had the background to do it. So, one of the first things I was asked to do was teach the course on Congress and the state legislatures, which I was happy, it was easy for me to do, it was material I knew well and so it was pretty straightforward for me to do that. And I also taught courses at various times on the presidency and on American politics of the standard bread and butter course for political science departments across the United States, is on American politics. In fact in many states, this isn't true here in Oregon, but in many states there's a formal requirement that a student must, in order to get an undergraduate degree, take a course on American politics in government. And that was true in California, for example. So, it was an American politics course I had taught more times than I could possibly count by the time I got to OSU, and I taught it many, many times here.

**CP:** It sounds like teaching is something that came very naturally to you.

**BL:** Yeah, I mean it was a course that I cared about the material, and I knew it, I think, pretty well and was able to reasonably well communicate it to my students.

**CP:** Were there any people that made a big impact on you or helped you get settled in, either in the department or on campus just in general?

**BL:** Well when I, it's a long story but to make a long story short, when I'd been back at Riverside, I was in student government, as I mentioned, and one of the other folks who was doing that sort of thing was a guy named Bruce Shepard, who was at the end of his years there when he was a senior, he was the president of the Residence Hall Association, which means he was—it was the student government representative for the students who lived in dorms, which Bruce did the whole four years that he was in Riverside. And so I knew him not tremendously well, but somewhat, from that. And then Bruce went on to get a Ph.D. at Riverside itself. He stayed there and got his Ph.D. from the political science department at Riverside. Anyway, he and I knew each other slightly, not terribly well, but a little bit.

And so, when I applied for the job at OSU, I later learned that Bruce said "this is a guy we should bring in to interview." So, Bruce had, I think, a fair amount to do with my getting the job here, at least in terms of getting me to come as an interviewee or as a potential candidate for the job at the beginning. He and I overlapped a little bit. He's no longer here, he went off to become an administrator at Eastern Oregon, what now is called Eastern Oregon University, though it's obviously a small college, and then from there he went somewhere else and I don't remember where somewhere else is, and ended up as president of the Green Bay campus in the University of Wisconsin system. So, Bruce and I go back a long way. I can't say I know him personally terribly well, a little bit, but he was one of those involved in bringing me here, in a way.

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Among the people in the department who I met at that time, a guy named Russell Maddox who was the department chair, there were a variety—when I arrived here, I realized there were a number of older guys, by which I mean people probably slightly younger than I am now, who were in the department, and I recognized that they were going to be retiring, and so there were opportunities to move up in the sense that there would be positions transitioning over the next few years. And that was indeed what happened.

**CP:** Was Caroline hired by the university at this time?

**BL:** Not directly. What happened was she, obviously she and I came and by that time we had two children, so we brought our kids and moved to Corvallis. And she had a background in law, having worked for Sonoma County in California. So, she had to take the bar exam again because, as you know, lawyers are credentialed on a state-by-state basis. So, the first nine months or whatever it was that we were here, she was studying for and taking the Oregon bar, which she passed, and then she got a job with Benton County, doing work similar to that which she had done with Sonoma County in California. But she found it not very challenging, because Benton County is a small country, it's only got, at that time I think there might have been sixty thousand, possibly seventy thousand, probably not that many. Well, when we left California, Sonoma County had a population of three or four hundred thousand, something like that. So, it's a much bigger county and there was much more going on for the lawyers to work on.

So, she found the job for Benton County less than challenging. At about that time, OSU had an attorney, a "legal counsel" was the title, but a guy who had not passed the bar. And so, which is a pretty basic credential for an attorney. And so, he was given a sabbatical to go and study for the bar in a serious way. This was around the time that John Byrne became president of the institution. Yeah, I think that's right. And so, that chap did that and he was going to be gone for six months for this sabbatical to try and pass the bar. Does this sound familiar? I mean, are you seeing things in this that you've got in your records already?

**CP:** No.

**BL:** Okay, anyhow, so Caroline had met some people who worked here at OSU and knew her background. And one of those folks called her and said "there's going to be this opening but it's only for six months, to become the legal counsel for OSU, and I'd like you to apply." Well, she was bored with the job that she had, so she jumped at the chance, and she and I talked about it: "well, it may just be a six month job and at the end of that time, if things don't work out, we may have to go back to California," because she was, she really didn't want to continue with the job with Benton County and

she was going to leave that behind, anyway. So, she took the temporary, the interim job as the legal counsel, and she's an extremely well-organized, I mean frighteningly so sometimes, person. I look like a complete doofus compared to her.

And so, the chap who had gone off on sabbatical to try and pass the bar apparently was a very friendly, engaging person but not terribly well-organized. And so, Caroline started doing what she understood the job entailed, which is people would call her or send her emails or what have you with questions about "is this within the legal framework of what we're supposed to do?" or "how do we respond to this problem or that problem?" whatever it is, and her rule was she always got back to people within one day of the time that they had contacted her. Not necessarily with a full answer; she would sometimes say "this is a complicated question, I can't fully answer it now but I'll have an answer to you within a week," or whatever it was. Well, just getting back to folks was a revelation for them, because the guy who had been there before frequently just hadn't responded to the folks.

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So she, as the saying goes, she had a good act to follow. And people at OSU were just thrilled with what a good lawyer she is, and at that time was. And so, the six months went by, the guy who had gone on sabbatical did take the bar again and failed it again. And so, the offer to him had been take a sabbatical, take the bar, if you pass the bar you could come back to the position that you had, but he failed the bar. So at that point, essentially the position was open. And as I remember, I'm not positive this is right, the central administration didn't even do a search. They just said "you're it" to Caroline, and so she became the legal counsel, what was then called legal counsel. Later the name was changed and it's now called the general counsel, but that was after some additional attorneys had been hired.

For most of the time that Caroline worked for OSU, she was it. There was her and she had a secretary, but there were no other attorneys. That changed after she had been doing the job for probably more than ten years, probably twelve years or maybe even more. She was the only attorney. Eventually the workload got to be so onerous that the central administration agreed that she should be able to hire an assistant. And that's turned out to be Meg Reeves, who is just now retiring as general counsel. At the point when Meg was brought on, the decision was made to change the title from legal advisor or legal counsel, I'm not sure which one it was, to general counsel. And so, Caroline became the general counsel starting in, oh golly, I'm going to say something like the late nineties, but I can't remember the exact date.

**CP:** Well, something that sort of distinguishes you from most other academics is your engagement as a commentator and becoming sort of a public figure in your own right. You had done some of this, it sounds like, at Riverside maybe. You certainly did some in San Francisco.

**BL:** Yes, a little there as well, that's right.

**CP:** But it took off in Oregon.

**BL:** Yeah. What happened there is in—I had been on the faculty here at OSU for a few years and in that time I had met Dick Weinman who, at that time, was in the speech faculty and was also the morning host for *Morning Edition* on OPB. And Dick and I had been on a committee, a faculty committee together. And I admired him, I thought he was extremely good. And he was this—he's still around, but little guy, very, very slight and pretty short, but he has the voice of God. I mean, Dick's voice is just terrific on radio. Anyhow, and he was very good at his job.

So, in 1988—it's complicated to explain—at that time, there were a number of states that, in the run-up to the presidential election, of course the first steps have to be nomination of major party candidates, and a number of states at that time used caucuses, which are these meetings of party activists, active party activists, the people about whom I wrote my dissertation. They will meet—now this is still the system that's used in Washington state, just immediately to the north of us, Iowa does caucuses and so kind of famously their Iowa caucuses are one of the kick-off events for the presidential nominating circus. And so, in 1988, among the states that held caucuses was Michigan, sort of big industrial state with a large population. Well, caucuses, most people in the United States, most voters do not think of themselves as being involved in a political system. And so, if you offer them the opportunity to go to a party meeting, it's a little bit like making an offer for them to go to the dentist and have a root canal. It's not something that most people want to do at all.

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So, the population, or the number of people, number of folks who, even though they're perfectly open meetings, nonetheless, the number of folks who will go to a party caucus, whether it's for the Democrats or the Republicans, it wouldn't matter if it was the Greenback Party, is always very, very small and highly unrepresentative of the population at large. So, the Democratic meetings tend to draw people who are on the left in our politics, and the Republican Party meetings, people on the right. And they're just not representative of the kinds of folks who vote in general elections at all.

Michigan did this in '88 and the Michigan caucus selected with this tiny, unrepresentative sample, voted in favor of Pat Robertson, who was a religious right candidate, and in national polling was not doing very well at all, and on the Democratic side, Jesse Jackson, another minister, won the Democratic caucuses. Well, the national networks, the television networks and the radio networks were caught completely flat-footed. They had no idea what was going on. And I remember seeing a TV news report from that period in which the reporter who was on the scene in Detroit or Grand Rapids or one of the cities in Michigan was asked "what happened in Michigan?, because all of our national polling shows Robertson with five percent, seven percent, whatever, ten percent support among Republicans, and Jackson maybe a little more, ten or fifteen percent support among Democrats, but neither of them doing well in polling at all." And so, the anchor of the show that I was watching asked the reporter on the scene "why did this happen?" Well, the reporter was completely flummoxed, had no idea, and so he said "well, maybe people lied to the pollsters."

You know, it's just a function—it's elementary, this is Political Science 101 stuff. If you boil down those who are making a decision to a very limited subset, which is highly atypical of the larger universe, of course they're going to make different decisions. Well, I just thought this was ridiculous and absurd and easily fixed, so I contacted Dick Weinman and I said "you know, this is silly, we can do a heck of a lot better," not to say that NPR was doing as badly, they weren't, but everybody, including NPR, was having difficulty with understanding the caucus states that year.

So, I offered to come on and do, essentially volunteer political analysis for OPB, focused primarily on the presidential election, about which I knew a fair amount. I had written a chapter in the book I descried earlier on changes which had occurred in the presidential selection process, which were substantial starting in, depending how you count, 1968 or 1972. Anyway, so Dick said "sounds like a good idea to me but I'm not in charge. You should contact our news director." And so I did and that guy, who has since gone on to work for NPR, said "good," you know, "when can you start?"

So, I started doing political analysis in the context of the 1988 presidential election, and after the nominations were secured, so this is now summer of '88, the powers that be at OPB said "you know, NPR does a lot of national political analysis. It's pretty good, but we don't have anybody who does regional stuff. We're interested also in the northwest. Would you be willing to shift your focus and start doing analysis of what's going on here in Oregon, also in Washington?" because we have a fairly large number of listeners in Washington, to some extent maybe a little California, a little bit of Idaho, but mostly Oregon and Washington. And so I said "yes," and so then I started doing that. That was, by then it was late '88 when this occurred, something like that.

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And so, I did that for a couple of years and then I got a sabbatical at OSU, and so in the winter, starting the winter of 1991, I was going on sabbatical and I talked with people at OPB, they asked me to go to Salem, and basically I became a political reporter in the state legislature, covering the 1991 legislator session, which was a real education for me. I had to really learn, because I was doing three broadcasts a day. I was doing one for the morning show; I'd do a shot, a quick thing at—we at that time got a noon news program and I'd do something for that, and then something, we had an afternoon show, which no longer exists. The structure of the shows on OPB has changed, but I was doing three radio reports a day, which turned out to be a huge job. I hadn't realized how difficult it would be. But anyway, but I did the best I could. I adapted.

And it turned out that OPB had not had a capitol reporter in Salem for quite some years. There had been a chap who had done it earlier but he had retired and in the interim they hadn't had anybody there. And the OPB listeners are really a pretty sophisticated crowd, and so they had missed that, as it turned out, so they were very glad to have me do what I did. So, when the legislator session ended, I was—basically the amount of analysis of Oregon and Washington politics that I was asked to do sort of increased. It was ratcheted up a little bit after wrapping up the '91 legislator session.

And that's essentially, although there have been some changes in when I go on and the particular circumstances, but basically ever since the '91 legislator session, I've been doing the same kinds of things for OPB, at different time slots and so on. And of course, around elections we have lots of activity going on, and things that folks are interested in, the extent to which I either do analyses or reports or what have you, increases.

**CP:** Was the '91 session the one in which the state was coming to terms with Ballot Measure 5?

**BL:** Yes, Measure 5 had passed, you're right. Measure 5 had passed in November of 1990, and in fact we, as we do this, Dave Frohnmayer, who was the Republican candidate for that year, has just died this week. He had been Attorney General and was widely thought, going into the 1990 general election, to be the favorite. But, he alienated figures within the Republican Party on the religious right. There was an organization in those days called the Oregon Citizens Alliance, which has faded from view since that time, but they were at the time very influential and they were very upset with Frohnmayer because he was not willing, among other things, to support a ballot measure that they had to essentially deny legal rights to gay and lesbian people. And he also took a different position than they wanted on legal abortion.

So, when Frohnmayer refused to go along with them, and there's also a bit of campaign finance here, he had—Frohnmayer, because he was thought to be the front runner, and he was, and he was a Republican, which doesn't hurt any circumstances, had amassed an enormous campaign treasury. And the people in the OCA in those days were doing this on a shoestring. They essentially asked him for a bribe, is what it amounts to. They wanted financing for their organization from his large campaign treasury. He perceived it as a request for a bribe and refused and left the meeting. Well, they were alienated by that, they were angry at him, not surprisingly, so they decided they'd run a candidate of their own. They got a guy named Al Mobley, who was a retired public employee, actually, from the federal government, who just looked, I mean white hair and tremendously handsome, so in terms of appearance he looked as a governor should look, until he opened his mouth.

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But anyway, so the OCA, at that time, represented—and they had a variety of manifestations, it wasn't just this one, probably something like twelve, maybe as much as fifteen percent of this total state electorate. This was kind of their high point, in a way. So, they couldn't win elections on their own, but they could divide the Republican Party, and they did that. They ran this guy Mobley, split the Republican vote, and the consequence was that Barbara Roberts got elected governor with only about forty percent of the vote that year. If Frohnmayer had been able to avoid the split with the religious conservatives, he almost certainly would have been elected Governor. But that didn't happen.

However, along with those developments on the candidate that I just described, the voters passed on it's sixth, let me think about this for a second...on the sixth try, activists against property taxes had qualified, they've done this many times before and always failed, a measure to dramatically reduce property taxes in the state, Measure 5, as it was called at that time. And it finally passed, and so it caused a dramatic reconfiguration of the state budget, back to budget politics.

Basically the state, if schools were going to be kept, K through 12 schools, were to be kept open, the state would have to take up the bulk of the responsibility for funding them, so that before the passage of the property tax limit in, well effectively starting in the '91 budget cycle, a typical school district would get two-thirds, seventy percent or something, maybe even three quarters of their budget from the local property tax revenue. And maybe thirty percent, maybe a little less than that, twenty-five, something like that, from the state. The state was providing the support for K through 12 schools, but the difference was that after the passage of the property tax limit that was phased in over a number of years, by five years out of that, so 1996, the proportions had reversed. State was providing two-thirds, maybe seventy percent of the typical school districts budget and the local property tax only maybe thirty percent, they just flipped.

And so, the transition from essentially local support for schools to state support was wrenching and very difficult. The state had not been exactly swimming in money before, and so very difficult choices had to be made. Among them, the beginning of very substantial increases in tuition for higher educational students. Here at OSU, tuition went from about sixteen hundred dollars a year for in-state student, undergraduate, in say 1989 to '91, that budget cycle, and by the time that the transition I'm describing was fully phased in, my recollection is the tuition was up to something like forty-five hundred. It had almost tripled. I'm not positive of those numbers, but that's roughly what happened. So, higher education became much, much more expensive for a typical in-state student, much more inaccessible, really, for students

whose families of modest means during this transition. But the reason that it happened was that the state had to take responsibility from basically income tax funding for the bulk of the funding of K through 12 schools. That's probably more than you wanted to hear on that subject, but—

**CP:** Well, I'm interested in, I mean it must have been a very unique moment for you because OSU was going through basically almost a crisis at this point.

**BL:** That's right, it was.

**CP:** Having to slash its budget substantially.

**BL:** Yep, that's right.

**CP:** So, this is your home institution, you're also in Salem reporting three times a day from the state capitol, so you're in the middle of the whole thing.

**BL:** Yeah, I was. And of course we didn't know how all this was going to work out. At the time, President Byrne, President John Byrne here at OSU, said basically "we're going to shrink, because our budget's getting smaller, but we will continue to do the things we do best." And so a number of departments were eliminated. Among them, I had mentioned Dick Weinman, who I met early on when I was here. Dick had a program on broadcast media that was within the speech department. And that was eliminated. There was a journalism degree available here, that was eliminated. There were a number of majors and even departments that were just completely wiped off the map. They ceased to exist as a result of the budget cuts that came in the aftermath of the property tax limitation.

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So, it was a very, very painful and traumatic period of time. It wasn't entirely unique to Oregon. Other states, California had a property tax limit that had been enacted by the voters through an initiative in 1978. In fact, that was the first year in which a property tax limitation measure appeared on the Oregon ballot, but it failed that year. Nearly, but it did fail. And then the sponsors brought it back in every two years just about; 1978, 1980, 1982, 1984, 1986. Then, after the '86 election, which again the measure failed, nearly, the guy that had been the main sponsor, who was a retired plumber who hated the public schools, died, and his organization fell to internal dissension and divisions and squabbling. And so, two factions within that organization tried to put forward a property tax proposal, or limitation proposals, for the '88 ballot and neither of them gained enough signatures to qualify for the ballot. After that, between '88 and '90, one of the two factions, which was in favor of a more phased-in approach to property tax limitation, was the one that prevailed.

And that was the one led by Don McIntire and Frank Eisenzimmer, there are a number of figures associated with that, and they then circulated petitions and qualified what would become Measure 5 in 1990. And one of the reasons it prevailed was that it wasn't quite as draconian as the initial proposal for 1978 and the later years on through '86 had been. The budget cuts were there for the public schools but they were phased in over five years rather than being immediate. And so that was one of the things that allowed, I think, some voters who might have felt pressured by their property tax bills but were reluctant to completely destroy the public schools to vote for it.

The sponsors of the property tax limitation measure despised the public schools. They were pretty public about this. They would be asked—the guy who was the plumber, who's the originator, the chief petitioner, as it's called in the law, for the initiative, was asked on TV or radio interview, the interviewer said "now, if your measure passes, there are a lot of public schools in Oregon that'll have to close" and he said "good! It's a good thing, public schools are terrible," etcetera. Well, most voters didn't have that view, and so by the time Measure 5 appeared on the ballot, the sponsors such as McIntire and Eisenzimmer were much more circumspect. They said "oh, we're not trying to destroy the public schools. In fact, we've included a provision to protect them," which was bologna, but anyhow, the point of this is, for higher ed, including OSU, and the U of O was in the same boat, PSU, all of the state institutions were, the passage of the property tax limitation measure, though it was focused on K through 12, had very dramatic and very damaging effects.

**CP:** Yeah. Well we've got about ten or fifteen minutes till you have to head out to your next appointment. One thing I want to make sure we touch on is—we'll fast forward a little bit here—you were chair of the Political Science Department

for eight years, from 2003 to 2011, I'm interested in knowing about sort of reflections on that time and some sense of how the department changed over the time that you were in it.

**BL:** Well, I was, I had joined the department in '84, so I had been there for quite a while and in, as I said, a number of the fellows who—there were no women at the time when I came to OSU, but that, we started hiring women later. Anyway, but a number of the fellows who had been faculty in the Political Science Department at the time when I arrived did indeed retire, and so we hired additional people, and as that happened, the chairmanship of the department changed.

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Anyway, I don't remember the exact year, but think about this for a minute, probably around 1991, '92, somewhere in there, one of the relatively younger faculty, a guy my age, got elected as chairman. And I think he did pretty well initially, but over time we hired a number of women for a variety of positions in the department, including Sarah Henderson, who has served effectively as department chair, although the position isn't called that anymore, after I left. But the guy I'm talking about who became chairman in '91, '92, I can't remember exactly when but that's the ballpark, alienated the women in particular and, I think, was rather high-handed. He just would do things without consulting people. That was the major problem that other faculty had with him.

And so, there was kind of a revolt against him and in the early part of the decade that starts in 2000, he decided that, probably wisely, that he would leave and go up to the Bend campus, because at that time OSU was opening the, as a branch, the Bend campus, which is now more independent than it used to be. And they were, the folks who were putting that together were looking for faculty, because they were having a rough time putting a faculty together. So, he volunteered to go up to Bend and I think got a salary increase or whatever, but there were incentives to do that, whatever they were. So, at that point then there was another election for chair in the department and my colleagues made a serious mistake and elected me.

And so, but the main reason that I was elected was, and this would have been true, it was one of my colleagues who ran as well, and he would have done the same thing, basically I had to reassure people that we would govern our department collegially, meaning that we would consult with each other. Whoever was chair was not going to make kind of decisions on his or her own. So, we had lots of department meetings, which are normally quite dreadful, but what they really—and I will always make sure that when we head a department meeting we would have lunch together, or we'd have, if it was later in the afternoon, we'd have kind of a reception and have some munchies and things of that nature to loosen people up a little bit.

But basically the main task I had the first year or so that I was chair was to reassure people that we were going to govern ourselves collegially, which is the way these things are supposed to work, and that kind of decisions made unilaterally without consultation would not continue to occur. And that was easy, I was able to do that quite easily. And so, and then after that, being department chair involves just a hundred and one small decisions, virtually every other day, none of which are very important except to the person that you're dealing with.

So, it's—so I think if you talk to other people who've been department chairs, they will tell you the same thing, which is that there's a—I always had an open door policy. I'd literally have my door open and any faculty member, or any student for that member, could come in and say "I've got this problem, here's what I'm worried about, how can we deal with this?" And so, I think when I was department chair, I don't think I ever had more than a half an hour without somebody coming in the door and saying "Bill, we've got this problem," and I'd go "okay," you know, "we'll try and figure out what to do about it," and call higher authorities at the college or sometimes we'd need to call a department meeting to deal with these things, usually not. That wasn't normally necessary. But, it's putting out little fires before they become forest fires. That's really what the job entails an awful lot of the time.

[1:25:09]

So, it's not really terribly dramatic or the kind of thing of which interesting stories can be made. Although, I have to say there have been some novelists who have done a pretty good job. I'm trying to remember, there's a book which I read which used—oh well, of course probably in a way the best of these is by Jane Smiley who wrote a book called *Moo*, and basically it was based on her experience on the faculty at Iowa State, which is where she was for quite a while. And it

was a whole—and of course Iowa State's a land grant institution, as is OSU, and so many of the sort of fictionalized but probably based on real events and real people things that Smiley wrote about in *Moo* are very familiar, like aspects of the agriculture school, for example. So, it's a very amusing book and I remember, of course because Caroline by that time was the General Counsel, she and I both read *Moo* and both of us laughed out loud at various aspects of it. And there have been some others as well that I've read, that I've enjoyed, based on that kind of experience. But, day by day, if you did a report on what the department chair does, it would be as boring as dishwater.

**CP:** Yeah. Well, in just the few minutes that we have left to us, the last question I want to ask you is one we're asking just about everybody, and that's what you make of OSU right now, it's gone through so many changes, where do you see it poised, heading towards the future?

**BL:** Well, in many respects, Oregon State is, as it has been, a very powerful, important research university, particularly in what I called the applied sciences, in oceanography, in forestry, in fishing and wildlife, in—and I, over time, I got to be adjunct, because I taught courses on environmental politics, among other things, and so I ended up as adjunct faculty, which means I was a useless appendage, in Forestry and in Oceanography and a variety of different places. So, I got to know folks across the campus. And if you look at the national rankings in those kinds of fields, Oregon State is a very prominent institution, and appropriately so. That was true before all the budget cuts that we have discussed and it's true now.

What has changed is that the internal composition of the OSU budget now reflects, to a degree that was there before but not as true, not as much, the very heavy reliance on external research funding that we have here, so that we're now in a position in which, as I recall, at the point when I retired, and I'm not sure this is still true, but I think it's still true, the external research funding for this institution outweighed the state funding for basically undergraduate education, primarily, by a factor of more than two to one. It may have even been three to one. I can't remember the exact numbers but it's in that ballpark.

So, one of things that was discussed during the period that I talked about earlier between 1991 and '96, the state legislature seriously considered closing one of the major campuses. The major campuses are PSU, OSU and University of Oregon. And there was discussion about simply closing one of them altogether. Now, that was never politically very realistic, because all three of those institutions have political constituencies of considerable strength, and of the three, I think the one that actually probably came the closest to that was the U of O, because Dave Frohnmayer, who's just died, was there by that time and they were thinking seriously about raising their tuition to a level that would allow them to essentially operate as a private institution. Ultimately they didn't do that, but it was a possibility.

Well, during the time when there was discussion about closing OSU as a public institution, I pointed out to my students that if that were to happen, the consequence on campus would not be that OSU would close, rather undergraduates would pretty much disappear from the campus. There would still be grad students, because the grad students are funded through research funds primarily. Certainly it feels like for Forestry and Oceanography, that's evidently possible. The Forest Service, NOAA fund a very, very substantial fraction of our graduate education in those colleges.

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The undergrads would disappear from campus but the grad students would still be here, pretty much. Not every one of them, but most of them would be. And the research enterprise would continue, because it's the bulk of what goes on on this campus. What has happened instead, we've overcome the really most difficult days, in terms of higher education funding, from the time that I'm talking about now. And instead, what has happened is we've raised the level of tuition, including for instate undergraduate students, to a level that they are financing a very substantial fraction, more than half of the institutional budget.

And so the state, meaning state government in Salem, still does provide a significant degree of support for all of the state institutions; OSU, PSU, U of O and what the folks who do this kind of stuff call "littles," places like Western Oregon and Eastern Oregon and Southern Oregon and so on. But, it's been—the level of state support at all of the institutions in the state system of higher education has gone way, way down. And the students, or their families, are paying a much, much higher fraction of the weight and bearing much more of the weight of the cost of the institutions.

As for OSU itself—I'm going to have to go here pretty quick—but I perceive that it still has the strengths that it has had in some of those fields that I've already mentioned. I also think that it's getting to be a stronger institution more generally speaking. The central administration has been trying and has probably had some success with the academic reorganization, which abolished departments in a number of places, including my own department. The purpose of that was primarily to increase the degree of control or leverage that the central administration could have over the departments. I am not in a position, because I retired a few years ago after that happened, I'm not in a position to assess how that has worked or not worked, whether it's been successful or not. But that was certainly internally one of the key goals.

The other thing that's gone on with OSU, again back to the budget issues, the way I oftentimes think about these things, perhaps because of my rather twisted training, but in addition to a much heavier reliance on undergraduate tuition than was the case when I arrived here, there's a much heavier reliance on institutional funding from institutions like NOAA, NSF, NIH, the major federal funding sources. But the other thing that's been going on is a very substantial increase in the attempts to raise money privately through the OSU Foundation, which has been pretty successful.

The problem with that is that donors will very commonly—people who are wealthy enough to make major gifts, such as Mrs. Valley, who financed a very substantial fraction of the library expansion and renovation back a few years ago, oftentimes they're willing to give money for building buildings or, as in the case of the library, a substantial expansion and renovation, but very rarely are major donors willing to provide money for ongoing operations and maintenance. And so, the institution has, as all—this is not atypical, this has happened across the country, across one academic institution after another, there's a heavy reliance on external donors, there's a heavy reliance on institutional research funding, there's great difficulty in sustaining what the institution was established to do, and was for many, many years, so that if you think about Linus Pauling, which is probably the most famous graduates of the institution ever, he used to come back to campus. I actually went to a faculty tea with him at one point, quite a memorable experience, but if you think about the institution that Linus Pauling came to in 1918, and I guess it's not a surprise it's almost a century ago, it's very, a very different institution now, much bigger, many, many, many more students. There are multiple orders of magnitude more students now than then. But a far, far less, much diminished focus on undergraduate education.

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And perhaps that's as it should be. I think I have mixed feelings about that because I understand why it's gone on from the point of view of the societies as a whole, but at the same time, it also means that the land grant institution, which historically, not just in the state but in really all the states around the country, land grant institutions are the four year colleges, or four-year institutions, to which students from families of modest means have sent their sons and daughters on their way to ambitions that are beyond what the family initially might have had. That role as an educational institution that can have really transformational effects on the lives of students has been not entirely eliminated, that's not true, but it's been very much reduced by the changes that are occurring institutionally in the last twenty-five to thirty years, or the period of time when I was on this campus, pretty much.

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