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FACULTY EMERITI INTERVIEWS
UNIVERSITY OF THE PACIFIC ARCHIVES



Piper, Pearl Webb (1940 –)
Secretary of Admissions, Administrative Assistant

March 16, 2009

By Doris Meyer

Transcribed by Kamile Jureviciute, University Archives

Subjects: Stockton College – COP relationships, Early 1940 campus environment, perceptions of administrators – Elliot Taylor, Robert Burns, Covell College, reactions to present day university.

UOP ARCHIVES FACULTY EMERITI INTERVIEWS

PIPER (PEARL), 1974-1996

MARCH 16, 2009

[TAPE 1, Side A]

[Begin Tape.]

MEYER: Good morning Pearl. We're supposed to say who we are, and we're supposed to say what we're doing here and we're supposed to say a little bit about the time and the place. Pearl today is Monday March 16 and we're in the library in a little study hall and you just finished signing all the papers and the date. We already got the date. I am Doris Meyer and who are you?

PIPER: And I am Pearl Piper, I have been here since as a freshman in 1940 until today. That tells my age though doesn't it? I've been here awhile.

MEYER: Did you come in as... what Year were you as a student was it 1940.

PIPER: Yeah I believe I have, want me to just tell this? okay

MEYER: Sure that's your early

PIPER: I became so taken with this university that I started to write my autobiography but I didn't finish it. But much has been written and said about the enchantment of the campus of the University of the Pacific. Its environs of greenery, rose bushes, trees have been created by people who loved and cared what they did. The same is true, can you shut me off after I complete...

MEYER: Sure

PIPER: The same is true of the buildings which were not just blueprints but drawn out and carried out with deep thought. Len Abbott and Ted Baun were two of the people I know engulfed in this process. The background they created for the students gave cause for feeling privileged. I know. I've been on campus a long time. In June 1940 I...

MEYER: Let's stop for just a second. You mentioned two names back there.

PIPER: Len Abbott was the architect.

MEYER: Okay Len Abbott was the architect. And how do you spell Len's last name, could you remember?

PIPER: And Ted Baun... A-B-B-O-T-T

MEYER: I remember him, his office was upstairs in the... What we now call the Financial Center, wasn't it?

PIPER: Yes I think so.

MEYER: And the other person?

PIPER: Ted Baun, of course, later on was Grace Burns' second husband, was the engineer, construction engineer. His company...

MEYER: Is that right?

PIPER: Yes, he was involved in any way that...

MEYER: So was his company... he wasn't then originally just one of the most important trustees or whatever.

PIPER: No, he was involved but I don't remember to what degree. When he was involved he had an engineering and construction company.

MEYER: Okay so it had something to do with maybe the early buildings.

PIPER: Right. Baun Hall (School of Engineering) is named after him. Prior to being called Baun Hall, it was the Library.

MEYER: Okay, Yeah that's great, that's real important. Ok go ahead and don't mind if I interrupt you....

PIPER: Oh please do. I think you might have to turn me off.

MEYER: Okay. Okay.

PIPER: In June 1940 I graduated from Stockton high school in a class of 441. Eager beavers all ready to conquer the world. My sights were on Stockton College which shared the campus of the College of the Pacific.

MEYER: Yeah let's stop there at that point. That's important. Repeat again about Stockton College.

PIPER: I'll tell you what how this was. There was a total of about 900 students that fall. Stockton College was funded by the Stockton Unified School District. That's no tuition. It covered the freshman and sophomore years. College of the Pacific, a private Methodist institution carried junior, senior, and graduate levels.

MEYER: Okay so let's think about that for just a moment again. So after you graduated from high school or anyone graduated from high school, they could come over and take their first 2 Years of junior college on this site.

PIPER: And enjoy the faculty of two colleges. Not just the junior college faculty but we enjoyed... they shared with the College of the Pacific.

MEYER: Okay and so the upper division coursework was handled under the title of College of the Pacific.

PIPER: Right. Dr. Knoles was the president and Robert E. Burns was the registrar.

MEYER: Okay let's hang on to their names because both of their names are very important. So Tully Knoles...

PIPER: Tully Knoles was the president of COP.

MEYER: Robert Burns.

PIPER: Burns was registrar of COP. Louie Windmiller was the registrar of Stockton College and Bawden, Arthur T. Bawden was the president of Stockton College.

MEYER: Can you spell Bawden?

PIPER: Bawden B-A-W-D-E-N

MEYER: D as in dog?

PIPER: Yeah

MEYER: Okay so go on with that again. You may need to repeat yourself just a minute to catch it up.

PIPER:.. Knoles Hall was known as the administration building which contained class and office rooms. Weber Hall was a science building. With the chemistry department was found along with biology, engineering, home economics, art and anatomy. The physical education classes were in the gymnasium.

MEYER: Right. Back on Weber Hall and Knoles Hall, did they serve as administrative offices for both the junior college and COP?

PIPER: Yes. Everything was integrated.

MEYER: Okay so like Bawden and Tully Knoles

PIPER: But the offices differed. In the administration building, the registrar office was on the east side of the building where admissions office was and the COP president's office was down the hall on the east side where...

MEYER: Student life used to be at that end.

PIPER: Yeah, that's right. And the registrar's office for COP is where it is now.

MEYER: Okay well the registrar's office is where it is now for COP.

PIPER: Uh-huh and that's where I...

MEYER: Okay, go ahead that's great, this is great.

PIPER: The street car was the mode of transportation.

MEYER: Really?

PIPER: For many students. I lived across town, East Main Street, and found the trip helpful because I could study en route on the streetcar and the line entered at Kensington and Stadium Drive, I think that's Brubeck drive now. But the streetcar ended right there. And the tennis courts were right there.

MEYER: Was that in the End Zone? Did that later become the End Zone?

PIPER: No, later called the End Zone. Later on the End Zone is where the computer area is and it's where...

MEYER: It was human resources.

PIPER: Thor Romer came and he was in charge of the creamery. Incidentally he had, where I lived on East Main Street, Thor Romer owned the creamery across the street from our house, and then he came on campus. I saw him all the time...

MEYER: Now spell his name again.

PIPER: Thor Romer T-H-O-R, he's from Denmark R-O-M-E-R

MEYER: I remember him very well. When I came in '56 he was still the proprietor. I guess it was of the End Zone and he was good... Did we get all these names straight? Was there someone else you just mentioned?

PIPER: Thor Romer, I mentioned the two presidents, registrar, the dean of men we only had the one dean of men for both colleges and the dean of women who was Beulah Watson.

MEYER: What's that name?

PIPER: Beulah B-E-U-L-A-H Watson

MEYER: Watson?

PIPER: Watson W-A-T-S-O-N and she was... we were at the same office.

MEYER: She was dean of women for both the junior college and COP?

PIPER: Right.

MEYER: Do you remember? Was there a dean of men?

PIPER: Well I worked for him James Corsen.

MEYER: Oh, ok Jim Corsen or James Corsen I remember him.

PIPER: In 42-47 I worked 5 Years. James Corsen was also COP and Stockton College coordinator. He coordinated when there was a problem of any sort. He would coordinate who was in charge of what so he was a coordinator guy.

MEYER: Is that right?

PIPER: Yeah, it was weird...

MEYER: I know James Corsen's name because he was an athlete.

PIPER: He was.

MEYER: He played football.

PIPER: The water fountain in the south end of Knoles Hall is dedicated to James Corsen and I've been after and after 'em to put a sign on there saying it was dedicated to him because when he was a student here he used carry ice. They used to put ice in those the fountains and the end of the building so you can get cold water.

MEYER: Oh that is a memory that's really worth remembering.

PIPER: But there is something else on there. But that was dedicated to him definitely and I'm so proud of that.

MEYER: So James Corsen must have come at one time as a student or something.

PIPER: Yes he was a student here. I'm trying to think he was a football player.

MEYER: Yes he was, he was a football player.

PIPER: Oh, he was a huge man. One time I told him I had a problem with my typewriter. He pulled himself up, he stood over, he says, "that's your problem."

MEYER: He was coordinator, remember?

PIPER: I used to babysit for him too.

MEYER: Okay go ahead where are we?

PIPER: Well I'm about toward the end of my...

MEYER: Okay

PIPER: Our first day of the fall of 1940 we were met by student guides in the administration building. Guides G-U-I-D-E-S in the administration building who made sure we had no unanswered questions. My advisor's office was located on the third floor. She was Katherine Seagraves.

MEYER: She was your counselor?

PIPER: And she was my counselor and counseled all of the business majors.

MEYER: All of the business majors and her name was Katherine Seagraves.

PIPER: Seagraves S-E-A-G-R-A-V-E-S

MEYER: And was she Catherine with a C?

PIPER: I have her spelled with a K; I think it was a K.

MEYER: Okay but anyway

PIPER: I fell in love with her immediately. She made me feel like I was entering a world of knowledge and fun. Everything was fun. I had classes in typing on the third floor. Business classes were conducted on the third floor of the administration building. Mathematics and accounting were all on the second floor. And my instructors in accounting were Ivan Ritter who was the head of the Finance Office and Norm Wenger.

MEYER: Like Ritter Hall now. What was his first name?

PIPER: Ivan. And he was the head of the finance office and his assistant, who did most of the teaching, was Norm Wenger W-E-N-G-E-R.

MEYER: Norman?

PIPER: W-E-N-G-E-R. Yeah I guess it was Norman but we just called him Norm.

MEYER: And what was... he did a lot of the teaching for Ritter.

PIPER: Yeah he did.

MEYER: Was he an assistant?

PIPER: He was an assistant but he ran that office.

MEYER: You mean the finance office.

PIPER: Finance office. It was good. And then George Warren White was my mathematics teacher.

MEYER: Okay. Repeat his name again.

PIPER: George Warren White. That gate when you come on the campus in the back is dedicated to him, the entrance to the campus when you're coming off of Pershing.

MEYER: Oh, is that right?

PIPER: Yeah. It's dedicated, there's a gate it's dedicated to George Warren White.

MEYER: And what was his title?

PIPER: Math teacher.

MEYER: Oh a math teacher.

PIPER: Uh-huh and his wife was an artist I have some of her, I have two of her paintings. Well-known artist. And Malcolm Eiselen history, a teacher.

MEYER: He was a history teacher, I remember Malcolm Eiselen.

PIPER: And in English was Catherine spelled with a C. Catherine Van Gundy G-U-N-D-Y.

MEYER: Spell that again so they get that straight.

PIPER: G-U-N-D-Y.

MEYER: And she taught English. Okay. I've never heard of her. Was she new before?

PIPER: I can't remember my other teachers.

MEYER: Do you know approximately how many business majors there were at that time? If a Katherine what's-her-name had all of them? Katherine Seagraves had them all. Do you guess there were...

PIPER: No, I guess, I wouldn't... We were a strong group; there was a lot of us. I would guess maybe 50.

MEYER: Is that right?

PIPER: Over 50. It was a very popular... Because we wanted to go off and make money.

MEYER: Right. You know it was after the Depression.

PIPER: Yes if after the Depression and...

MEYER: Before World War I and World War II.

PIPER: Year before because...

MEYER: Oh no! World War I was 1915.

PIPER: Maybe around 30s. And when I was a student most of us were... I was their first work experience student. Because I was placed in the Registrar's Office at 30 cents an hour and when it came payday, they couldn't pay me so they asked me, they would take that money and put aside for me to use toward tuition when I transfer to COP, when I was a junior. And I said sure, I mean I had no alternative, but anyway I worked for the registrar and I worked for the department. I worked for a wonderful man in the Department of Engineering Herbert Welch.

MEYER: Herbert Welch

PIPER: W-E-L-C-H

MEYER: And do you suppose that it was what was called then ..

PIPER: And he worked with George Eby E-B-Y. They were the two.

MEYER: And they were like the department chairpersons.

PIPER: Yeah.

MEYER: In engineering.

PIPER: In engineering. I think Herbert Welch was. They wrote books. In fact I was... they took a picture of me for one of the books but I never got the book. Anyway, the war came along. We were... The army signal corps, a group from Nevada, I've forgotten what town in Nevada.. They were sent over here to the department of engineering for engineering courses and they were of course all men. They loved horses and one day I don't know how they got the okay but they went over to Dr. Knoles home and got one of his, I think I told you this, and got one of his horses, and they wanted me to see it, and I

was upstairs on the second floor and they brought the horse up to say hi to me. They also crowned me queen of the signal corps.

MEYER: Queen of signal corps.

PIPER: Sweetheart, sweetheart, sweetheart of the signal corps.

PIPER: Because we became very close, all friends. So the signal corps was there the summer of '42. And then on comes the V-12 Program with commander Rokes R-O-K-E-S.

MEYER: Yeah how does he spell his name again?

PIPER: R-O-K-E-S

MEYER: R-O-K-E-S Rokes

PIPER: Uh-huh.

MEYER: And he was sort of...

PIPER: Command... He was called the commander.

MEYER: of the V-12.

PIPER: the V-12 Program and his office was next to the registrar's office in the administration building and...

MEYER: Those men lived over there in the quonset huts. That's the story.

PIPER: Quonset huts they were for the men to live. The men lived in the Quonset huts and

MEYER: So what Year do you think we're talking about now?

PIPER: September '42 well they were there about 3 Years and...

MEYER: Yeah because it was all during the war, World War II at that time.

PIPER: I know because I left the Dean of Men to go to work for the registrar in July of '47 cause James Corsen went to Modesto. And I worked with Jerome Light; he was in charge of guidance for Stockton College. L-I-G-H-T I have a petition to the President of Stockton College dated November 1944 asking to appoint me Assistant Dean Of Men. It's signed by 15 faculty members.

MEYER: Repeat that again.

PIPER: Jerome, J-E-R-O-M-E Light...

MEYER: L...

PIPER: And...

MEYER: Spell his name again Light

PIPER: Light L-I-G-H-T

MEYER: Oh like just like light.

PIPER: And...

MEYER: Let me stop you for a minute here. I have a recollection of about 1946 that there was the separation between the community college which we call the junior college and COP. Can you recollect when that division occurred?

PIPER: What Year? It wasn't '46.

MEYER: It wasn't?

PIPER: No because I worked for a... went to the registrar's office oh wait a minute, no. Guidance! I have worked with Jerome Light and Lorraine Knoles.

MEYER: It's around '46 I think.

PIPER: '47 Yeah...

MEYER: Because people and the faculty at that time had to decide whether they were going to be junior college professors or instructors or whether they were going to be, continue to be here at the COP. And that was a very difficult sticky situation because people had to decide who was going to be their new employer and some people taught in both I think for awhile. But the reason I know about this Pearl is because of the physical education department and at that division made it a difficult time there. Do you remember exactly what that happened?

PIPER: No I probably could look it up.

MEYER: Never mind. But that was an important thing. That division there was a very important thing.

PIPER: I know. Now going back the dean of men until '47. Oh, I want to mention, when I worked for the dean of men, Amos Alonzo Stagg lived across the street. I want to mention two things.

MEYER: Go ahead.

PIPER: Going back to the dean of men.

MEYER: And as I said I was there for 5 years working for him. Amos Alonzo Stagg used to come in the office and we had a prayer at least once a week for my husband who was fighting in the Battle of the Bulge with Patton and we all had to stop work. He was so sweet and I used to go to his home. We started what we called Tiger Tracks. It was a newsletter for the men in the service and Dr. Knoles or Mr. Corsen would make an introduction to this newsletter and then we would... Our students who were in the service would write to us and we would circulate their letters in this newsletter and so we... Well I've forgotten how many we had but that was in '44. How many we did but it was quite a thick newsletter. That was fun.

MEYER: That was sent to your students then?

PIPER: It was sent to students. We sent them news what was going on on campus and they would send us letter saying what they were doing, where they were, and we would share them. That was my job. Getting that out. But that was fun. Oh and another thing. That street... What's that street that goes off the... you walk down and the door... There was a street that goes across Pacific Ave – Knoles Way.

MEYER: Yes

PIPER: Anyway, Knoles Way went up to the door of the Administration Building in those days

MEYER: Up to the door of?

PIPER: The Administration Building. And one of my jobs, Mr. Corsen told me, was to make sure there was no smooching going on in the cars parked along that street and also to check and look around make sure there were no girls in bathing suits going to the swimming pool. I did that for 2 weeks until I couldn't do it anymore. Knocking on windows saying "Hey cut that out." So he did it. He didn't want people acting up in their cars. Due to my training I was appointed President of the Decency League in 1961. Okay so I think the separation must have been 47 because I worked for Dr. Knoles. Jess Rudkin was here then too.

MEYER: Well who was that?

PIPER: Jess Rudkin

MEYER: That last name is familiar... What was his...

PIPER: He was...

MEYER: He was what?

PIPER: He came in... In 49 he was... He was with the Public Relations office but he was an assistant to the President.

MEYER: Oh okay.

PIPER: He wasn't a vice president but he was an assistant

MEYER: Stocky man.

PIPER: Yeah.

MEYER: Oh yes, okay!

PIPER: When we moved into our new house in '50. Jess Rudkin, the whole administrative staff of the administration building came to our house and we had a party. Dr. Burns played a card game which he cheated at. And Miss Deering helped him.

MEYER: Okay, hang on just a second. You just now mentioned Ellen Deering's name. Are you going to tell me more about her now? Or should we take it back to our questions.

PIPER: Well, yeah.

MEYER: Maybe we should try to wander back.

PIPER: Well she did extensive descriptions of the Administration Building. She became Registrar after she was associate registrar when I started working there in '40 and Dr. Burns was Registrar, when he became President and she became Registrar.

MEYER: She became Registrar when Robert Burns became President?

PIPER: Right.

MEYER: Okay. Then did you at that point... with whom were you working?

PIPER: I mentioned that the department of engineering then I went to the Dean of Men in '42.

MEYER: Right.

PIPER: Dr. Knoles was president in 42. I have a description of the administration building when it was first open. So if anybody wants...

MEYER: I know you showed me that paper you're looking at. Would you just summarize what's on this little piece.

PIPER: But it is several, so many pages. This was made on the request of the chairman of the student tour guide group and this article was written by Ellen Deering, Registrar Emeritus, University of the Pacific February 22nd 1976.

MEYER: Oh well then she recalled what that building was like at that time.

PIPER: Yeah

MEYER: Oh. What do you know?

PIPER: So the lower floor office have gone through many changes over the years but the little structural change until that drastic structural changes ended year '69 and '70. So they became drastic then... The classes were...

MEYER: Well, you said you had classes in the business when you first went to the business school

PIPER: On the third floor. I don't remember that.

MEYER: Oh that's okay. But you had business classes up there as well. Can we stop for a minute?

PIPER: Yeah.

[End Tape]

UOP ARCHIVES FACULTY EMERITI INTERVIEWS

PIPER (PEARL), 1974-1996

MARCH 16, 2009

[TAPE 1, Side B]

[Begin Tape.]

MEYER: Okay Pearl we're starting a second tape and I hope we're doing this right because what we're talking about right here now is really important part of the University and that was as you became involved with the admissions office you became very closely tied in with Elliott Taylor and everyone. The name Elliott Taylor is so important that we'd love to hear you talk a little bit about your relationship with Elliott and his relationship to the University of the Pacific. So what can you tell us about that?

PIPER: Ok well. I worked with... Admissions was not full time at first when Elliot Taylor came on board. It was involved with financial aids, tours and placement and Roland C. Fox and Elliott Taylor worked so that the offices were combined. They had office space problems too and so from September '49 to August of '52 we overlapped.

Then in '52 it was full time that I worked with admissions and Elliott Taylor was one of the most thoughtful considerate people I've ever... well I shouldn't say ever.. about my life, there is so many here at Pacific, but he was wonderful and he and his wife Burta had such an interesting marriage. In fact after... when he was in Albania did so much work for the Albanians and taught over there and she was too. But when she came home he would write to her all the time and his letters, you could just see what... visualize what he was talking about and when she died..... later I passed those letters on to the archives here at the library they were so wonderful. Mr. Taylor had a deep interest with Spanish speaking students. I spoke Spanish fluently and he spent some time in South America and he brought one student back before we brought Elbert Covell college on campus. And she stayed in his home in fact for a while. She learned; she didn't speak English when she came. But anyway these students... he brought them from South America, we had them work in the office and in so doing they were able to learn English faster than some of their classes and I had them in my home too quite a bit. In fact they babysat for me. This first student, Jessyler Pereira (White – married a U.S. man server years later) came from Brazil. She later on finished her degree here at Pacific. Got a teaching credential and taught out at Lincoln Elementary School. There on Pacific Avenue and Lincoln.

MEYER: Uh-huh.

PIPER: And my son just fell in love with her and he would... when he was in kindergarten he would go to her I think she was teaching first grade. He would go outside her doors so he could see her, hear her voice.

MEYER: Oh geez... Pearl this... The relationship of Elliott Taylor and his interest in Latin America was the beginning of the Covell College Program and then did Robert Burns and Elliott Taylor think about that and then include that as one of the Cluster Colleges. Do you remember how that?

PIPER: It was the start of the Cluster College program.

MEYER: How that connection was? I think that's included we have quite a bit of stuff.

PIPER: You must have that maybe on record. Now Arthur J. Cullen I've forgotten where he came from but he was the head of Covell.

MEYER: Yes Cullen. He was one of the first Provosts that we had

PIPER: C-U-L-L-E-N and he was... I think he died shortly after the college...

MEYER: So... But then Elliott Taylor spoke Spanish.

PIPER: He spoke Span... and I think he spoke several languages because when he was in Albania, I don't remember the other languages that he spoke but then...

MEYER: He was obviously one of the in relation to this question about important people that you admired at the university certainly Elliott Taylor would have been one of the top people

PIPER: He was one of Terman's brain children. He was a genius. He would have contact every ten years, every five or ten years. They would send him a questionnaire to find out his progress in life. He was a brain!

MEYER: See I don't know that group at all. Is that right?

PIPER: Yeah, he was a genius. Yeah he was brilliant, but he never showed it.

MEYER: No he was very humble.

PIPER: I mean he showed it, he was intelligent.

MEYER: Yeah

PIPER: He was just... I don't know what his IQ was. Was out of sight...

MEYER: Right

PIPER: I only knew it because I opened the mail. Then I said one day when this T-E-R-M-A-N thing came. I said what's this all about?

MEYER: What was your title in the admissions office at that time?

PIPER: I was a secretary.

MEYER: Did you work with Elliott and how many other people were there more or less in the admissions office at that time. A large group?

PIPER: No, we were very very small. We worked closely with Ellen Deering of course, and then Dr. Burns was in our office all the time because we were the ones counting how many applications do you have today? But I had to know. I had to say I wrote up... I insisted upon writing up the application... we wrote them up in those days. Because when the persons would come to the office I wanted to know all about them and who they were when they sat across from me. I sat at the desk and they sat waiting to see Elliott Taylor. Because for their interviews...

MEYER: So the students who are considering coming to the University would be met in your office and were you then the person who...

PIPER: I was the one. We had... the only help we had... Well we had a steno, Verna, which she lived across the street but...Avey, Verna Avey, and she was a steno. I got so I

didn't have to do stenographic work. I did more administrative work than stenographic. And she did all that. We had student help.

MEYER: I remember you when I first came I remember you as the person in admissions who managed the store as it were. I remember other people like Elliott going out and doing some of the visitations, but I remember you as being the manager of the office as it were

PIPER: Right. I was involved in many of the affairs that. Well I knew about like when everyone went to visit the president I would know what it was about because I usually would type up the agenda what he wants to talk about.

MEYER: Right.

PIPER: So he involved me in everything and which I didn't insist upon but he wanted me. Because he was gone so much.

MEYER: That's right.

PIPER: And then, of course, Mr. Medford came along and assisted as a... He was another man with whom I was very much impressed. Very laid back. Both of them, they were a wonderful combination.

MEYER: Now speak about Les Medford came in approximately when, do you know about when?

PIPER: I have been... He was on campus before that but I have him on, he became admissions full time in '74.

MEYER: Okay there is an interview of Leslie Medford in the archives and so those dates would be clear there, but did Les Medford then follow Elliott Taylor, was he the successor? Or was there someone else in between?

PIPER: No no, we did have this... my memories are very dim on this I have down from '72 to '74. Hans Wagner.

MEYER: Okay I remember Hans Wagner.

PIPER: Yeah he was there for 2 years I guess filling in until Mr. Medford started. Mr Medford was working still with the registrar's office but then with Admissions... but you have that in your interview.

MEYER: Yes and I... that's very important that... I don't think Hans Wagner's name has been mentioned. In fact I haven't thought of him in years so Les Medford

PIPER: I should know... I remember he lived out north here, I remember going to his home but he was only there a short while.

MEYER: The Les Medford's interview would have that I think that's for sure and so backing up just a little bit we're now sort of talking about the early 70s are we? What about that time in the 60s when we had students here, and we had the academic freedom issues we had the things in Berkeley that were going on, we had the civil rights issues going on. Do you have any recollection of those times of conflict and what was going on?

PIPER: You know I just wonder if it's my way of thinking. I think maybe it's my age and I've forgotten but I think maybe it's because I thought so much of the university and the people here that I have excluded any dissention from my mind. I just don't remember anything negative and that's not normal

MEYER: But it's a compliment to you Pearl and to the University, and there has been lots of folks who have talked about that period of time and almost all of them said there Robert Burns seemed to squelch by being open. He squelched a lot of the conflicts that could have occurred and so the students weren't rebellious, that type of thing you're... your mind might not be...

PIPER: And I worked with Dr. Burns, I went to board meetings, regent meetings of the board but I don't remember, and I've been to the academic council meetings, I don't remember that...

MEYER: That's perfectly understandable, don't worry about it at all. In saying what you've been saying about how good people felt toward each other at least in the admissions office, was there a comfortable feeling among like the registrar's office and the dean of women's office and how did you feel about all of that? Was there jealousy was there antagonism or was it?

PIPER: None whatsoever.

MEYER: Is that right?

PIPER: None whatsoever, and of course, with Ellen Deering though she was very demanding of her workers like for instance when I was working there as a freshman and I typed transcripts. We typed them in those days and she would hold them up to the light to make sure we didn't make any typing errors and erased them. She wanted no erasures. But outside of work she had a lot of parties at her home, maybe I mentioned this before was the first place I was ever offered sherry wine. We always had a good time at her house. We were always very respectful of the office too but I don't remember any of us being spiteful because "that old witch got after us something" you know, it was nothing like that at all. And of course, Dr. Burns was in there a lot too, that helped.

MEYER: He set a tone, he set a tone of openness or...

PIPER: Yes... yes.

MEYER: What was going on in student life?

PIPER: And you know who did too Stanley Mc... The president of all the...

MEYER: Stanley McCaffrey.

PIPER: McCaffrey. He reminded me a lot of Dr. Burns too, of course nobody could replace Dr. Burns, but he was that way too and he was always visiting in our office and always checking to be sure to see how things are going and I would go to his office and he stop work just to talk to me... when I left here on '86 he gave me the order, he presented me with the Order of Pacific and...

MEYER: The Order of Pacific is the highest honor that anyone can get here at the university and you mentioned to me earlier, Pearl, about the plaque that hangs somewhere or did hang somewhere with your name on there. Where is that?

PIPER: On the right side of the wall as you go in Knoles Hall. On the right side... It used to be there with the other names...

MEYER: You received that award in 1986?

PIPER: Yeah, and I have it posted in my living room.

MEYER: 1986 were you then still employed or did you retire so called...

PIPER: I retired because my husband was going to move up to Arnold, to our home up in Arnold, and he wasn't supposed to go up the mountains because of his heart, but he was going to move, and I could just stay here and work at UOP.

MEYER: But you thought better of that.

PIPER: Oh, may I go back to Dr. Taylor?

MEYER: Yes.

PIPER: Elliot Taylor developed his liver problem I think he died when he was sick and as I said I was over there constantly at his home and they were to have him on a stretcher and he was taken being taken to the ambulance and he held his hand up to me and he says "Pearl please take care of Burta for me," his wife because she did not know how to balance their checkbook and she had no knowledge on how to handle money and she was a little devil. She was highly intelligent herself but she liked fun. In fact in 1990 she wanted me to go to Europe with her and we had a marvelous 2 weeks. Very interesting, very marvelous 2 weeks over in Hungary and Yugoslavia and while we were in Hungary we recruited Gabor Pfisztner was his name, Hungarian student. He was related to John

Lorenz who used to be the head of the finance center, not the manager, but the assistant to the manager... But anyway he came and he stayed ... well he stayed at my house and then she, Burta, paid for his tuition and he completed... he didn't finish his degree but he completed his work here.

MEYER: Wow. So your relationship...

PIPER: He spoke English very well...

MEYER: Yeah your relationship with Burta and Elliot go back a long time and in very personal way that's for sure...

PIPER: And when she was dying so they had no family of their own. Their family were these students that came here to UOP that he brought from Europe or South America and when she was dying I was there and she would ask about different ones but yeah they were very wonderful...

MEYER: Oh wonderful, gosh!... Let's see how we're doing pretty well here. One question talks about the growth of the university talking all the way back from its combination with Stockton college and then the College of the Pacific and then moving into the University of the Pacific and we moved into a time where we had the international program with Covell College and Raymond but as you see this progress moving across what's your feeling? Has the university lost anything? Does it seem to you that it's gained as it's progressed? We moved into the affiliation with the dental school; we moved into an affiliation with the Law school in Sacramento and so a lot of changes have occurred since the early part of this tape when we were talking about 1940 and yet you've been a part of it as volunteer or something for a long, long time. What's your feeling about this progress?

PIPER: I think the advancement has been phenomenal. I think the growth where it's gone is great except for the parking... The admissions office has here in this economy has more applications than they can consider. They're just doing great, and I think another sign that we have progressed so far is that I am a member of the Silver Tiger Club where you're 25 years or more, and you see names, like next month there's going to be another initiation of people, like Monique Pioli she came to work for admissions office when she was just a student in school but they love it. People love working here, the relationship is wonderful... So far as salaries are concerned, I saved all my salary letters I couldn't believe that's what I made but that was... Even with the low salaries it's been great... I don't know what it is now... No, the progress has been wonderful and I'm glad that they're keeping a lid on how many they can take in and not overdo because there is just so much you can do and still keep quality, and the quality's here...

MEYER: That's wonderful. I think really what you're saying is that as the university has moved and enlarged in many it's tried to keep its sense of caring and helping each other and there was something there that it's very difficult to verbalize... there is a sense of family

PIPER: For instance when I was doing some part-time work. I was helping with commencements once in awhile when the person in charge the very first time, Pat, I forgot her last name, was secretary to the Vice President and she was in charge of the commencement and I took care of commencements but President Atchley. Atchley, when he came I thought oh he's different, he was the first president I didn't feel that I could be close to, and I did feel like I could talk to Dr. De Rosa and all the others, McCaffrey, Burns, Knoles. I really loved doing it, I love organizing and telling people what to do. But after it was over and everything went fine I received an invitation from the President's office, and they had a dinner just in honor for me and Dr. President Atchley actually toasted me for the good work that I did in helping with the commencement exercises. So he was the only one that I felt I wasn't too sure about. I changed my mind after that, I decided. Okay I'll go smell the roses you planted out there.

MEYER: Oh Pearl, those are memories that are unbelievable. Now I think we're gonna have to stop here for a minute to change the tape so don't go away.

[End Tape]

UOP ARCHIVES FACULTY EMERITI INTERVIEWS

PIPER (PEARL), 1974-1996

MARCH 16, 2009

[TAPE 2, Side A]

[Begin Tape.]

MEYER: Oh Pearl, we've had a wonderful morning so far and there are just a couple more questions that seem like we should spend some time on and one of the questions is related to this issue about the role that the university has played in the community and the contributions, the attitudes of the community to the university, and you were going to say something about some of the students that you recall and things that they have done that recall to you how important the university perhaps has been to them. So in relation to the community and the university, can you say something that seems important to you to recollect?

PIPER: Yes... We have contributed so much not to just the community of course but to the whole United States. When I was a freshman Bob Monagan was student body president and his wife was Gladys Benerd's life saver over there, thank goodness, because I was taking a course, in those days swimming was required and I was afraid of water so Gladys Benerd told me she helped me after class and said you're gonna get in that nine feet of water I said no I'm not, Yes you are. And she made me jump in and of course I went to the bottom and Bob Monagan's wife - Iola?... Anyways she came down and pulled me up, saved my life.

MEYER: No kidding

PIPER: But I didn't pass swimming I didn't get my degree. But he was very personable and I forgot what class I was in, some class with him too. Can't think... And then Dave Gerber, now head of Columbia Picture Studios, he was in the Admissions Office a lot and his biology class he had to raise some red eyed flies...

MEYER: Some what?

PIPER: Red eyed flies and he couldn't leave them alone for some dumb reason but he kept bringing the jars of them into my office and putting them by me he says you take good care of them while I go do something and I took care of his red-eyed flies. And of course then he was filming short movies around campus around Stockton and he didn't have any trouble finding script girls... script, not strip... but he was so personable, he just adored Ellen Deering and she adored him too. And so we kept in touch, and he offered me a job, but I was married and had a little boy and I wasn't able to accept, but I would have loved to because he was awfully nice person.

MEYER: You talked about the gal that came to school here and then from Latin America even...

PIPER: Oh Yeah

MEYER: You talked about her...

PIPER: I still keep in touch with some of the Covell College students. One is Hernando Salazar from Chili who went to Covell, but he wanted to become a millionaire... The agreement was that the Covell students were to go back to their country. He refused and in so doing he became belligerent ,but he acquainted himself with one of our students who was very affluent and it ended up with his leaving here and going on to UCLA or somewhere... Anyway he's a doctor now in Arizona. We communicate every now and then. Another one of our Covell students returned to South American, became head of a publishing company, and is a millionaire.

PIPER: The impact is unbelievable. There so many I kept track of via correspondence. Mostly I kept track of the girls that were here, and Teresa Avila, she's teaching in Texas.

MEYER: So you think... When you think about the community, or you can't really think about Stockton and University of the Pacific you think about its students, the products of the university and how they've gone back and some of them not gone back and have become wonderful contributors to society in large. That's wonderful Pearl that you are thinking of that. There a lot of people that have been critical of the university and have thought of us as being elitist over here and...

PIPER: The expense, the cost is coming here. I know it's tremendous. But think about what the community has given to for instance for students in South America. They all had scholarships. Full scholarships and that meant living expenses, meals. I know poor Hernan Salazar, the one I mentioned that wanted to become a millionaire. He had to go to

the dentist, I met him over on Stadium Drive to take him to the dentist. I drove around the block I didn't recognize him. He had on a suit with a shirt and tie all dressed up and I drove up to him I said Hernan is that you? And he's Yes. And he said that going to the dentist was a big deal. I paid for it. It was very minimal. And I took him and he was very prim and proper and...

MEYER: In a suit to the dentist...

PIPER: To go to the dentist. And I don't know what it was like down... But this other one that I mentioned that became a millionaire and went back to Buenos Aires. He came from a home with no floors. He came from a home with dirt and chickens running in and out. He was so poor. So then can you imagine?

MEYER: Yeah that's, Les Medford, we're going to join him for lunch in a few minutes so...

PIPER: I'm done.

MEYER: Pearl, you've been just wonderful. I've enjoyed our conversation with you. The final question probably is the thing about the university in the future. Sometimes we can't project the future but we can kind of guess what the future is going to be and I think perhaps your feeling is about the future of the university is very positive. Can you think of anything that...

PIPER: Well I want to say if they maintain... if the university maintains the quality of president that I have experienced ever since I've been here, there will be no fallback it'll be... couldn't be anything but going ahead and doing what is right in a right way, so I see great things because they have done so much especially up to now.

MEYER: Pearl thanks a million on this day of Monday March 16 we did it, and your contribution to the archives by our little tape has been just wonderful. Let's hope we did a good job.

PIPER: I want to interrupt you. I want to say that you have influenced me greatly on the way I feel too about the university. Working as volunteers on the Pacific Emeriti Society has been a real pleasure.

MEYER: Emeriti society.

PIPER: Where I've been a volunteer well since 1989 so we've...

MEYER: We've known each other a long time.

PIPER: Long time.

MEYER: Thanks for those compliments. In closing Pearl and thanking you because you complimented me and said you wouldn't do this if I wasn't going to be the interviewer. You wouldn't feel comfortable maybe. But anyway... Thanks again, it's been great let's hope we did a good job.

[End Tape]

End of Interview