



2-16-2023

Gene Bigler Oral History Interview

Gene Bigler
Raymond College

Lorenzo Spaccarelli
Holt-Atherton Special Collections, University of the Pacific

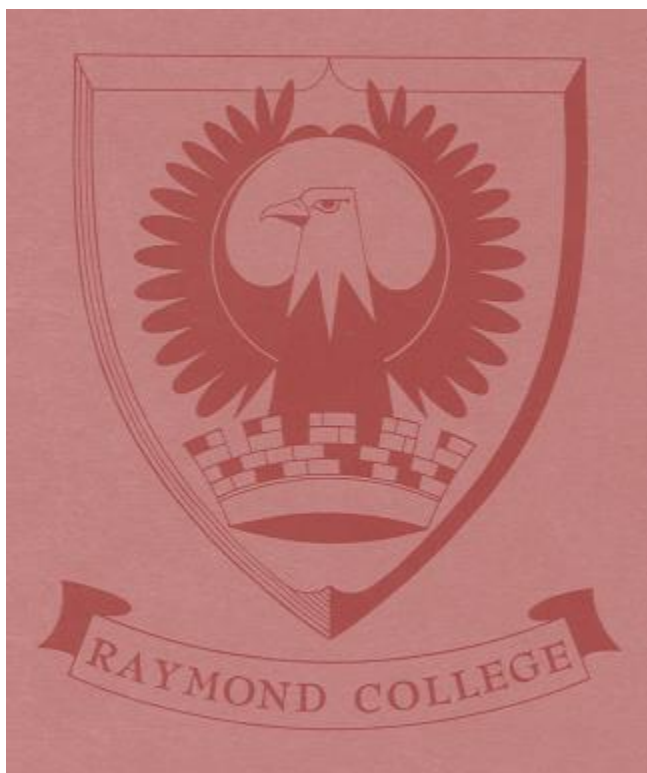
Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarlycommons.pacific.edu/raymond-college>

Recommended Citation

Bigler, Gene and Spaccarelli, Lorenzo, "Gene Bigler Oral History Interview" (2023). *Raymond College*. 74.
<https://scholarlycommons.pacific.edu/raymond-college/74>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Colleges and Schools at Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Raymond College by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact mgibney@pacific.edu.

RAYMOND COLLEGE PROJECT ORAL HISTORIES
UNIVERSITY OF THE PACIFIC ARCHIVES



Gene Bigler (1964-1967)
Raymond College Student

February 16, 2023

By Lorenzo Spaccarelli

Transcription by Lorenzo Spaccarelli University of the Pacific,
Department of Special Collections, Library

Gene Bigler Interview

Transcribed by: Lorenzo Spaccarelli

Lorenzo Spaccarelli: My name is Lorenzo Spaccarelli. I am the Raymond College Project Archivist, and today I'm sitting down with Dr. Gene Bigler to talk about Raymond College and his experience there. So yeah, for the record, are you able to introduce yourself?

Dr. Gene Bigler: I'm Gene Bigler, a graduate of the class of 1967 at Raymond College, the third class of Raymond College.

Spaccarelli: Okay, perfect. Thank you very much. It is February 16th, and we are conducting this interview in the Alumni House on Pacific's Stockton campus. So you already answered this question. You answered the years that you attended. You graduated in '67?

Bigler: Well, I started in '64, graduated in '67.

Spaccarelli: Perfect. And then, so what was behind your choice in attending Raymond?

Bigler: Originally, I was interested in Elbert Covell College. As I was finishing high school, I had won the Bank of America scholarship for a full tuition scholarship at any college in the state of California. And it was because of my work in Spanish in high school. And I was at that point, I was thinking about possibly pre-med as a career and there is, as a field for college. I hadn't decided, but I was leaning that way. And when I found out about Elbert Covell College, a Spanish speaking curriculum, and my interest was actually in becoming a bilingual physician. I had grown up, even though I'm obviously not Hispanic of origin, I grew up bilingual in the Bayou in San Bernardino, in my hometown in Southern California. And I was already bilingual and I knew the community. So I thought Pacific would really be an interesting opportunity. And I had also heard about Pacific through my activities in Key Club. I was a California, Nevada, Hawaii officer at Key Club. And the then Dean of Admissions at Pacific had been a governor of Kiwanis in the state of California and was very active. And somehow that had come to my attention. So I wrote to Dean Taylor and he invited me up and I arranged to spend the night on campus in the dorm with Covell College students and attend a class. And I was really, I enjoyed it. It was a great experience. I thought, wow, this would be great, except for there weren't any scientists on the faculty of Elbert Covell College. And given the structure of the majors that were available, I couldn't do pre-med in the college. So at best, I would have to be a College of the Pacific student living with the Covell students. But there were other things about the experience that I was thinking, well, maybe it'd be better for some of the other alternatives. So when I left the campus, I told Dean Taylor that I was thinking about, I was pleased with the visit, but I didn't think Pacific would work. And he said, well, I know you're interested in pre-med and you love the Spanish and the quad and the students in Covell College. If you went to Raymond College, you would have the potential of finishing your degree in three years. You could still live in the

community with the students in Covell College. Had you thought about that? I hadn't thought about Raymond College at all. So he offered me an opportunity to spend another night on campus. And I was fortunate that my dad was able to arrange for me to spend another night. So I attended, spent the night on campus and attended Raymond College classes. I was blown away by the experience with the Raymond College students. I was really impressed, especially with the political awareness of the students, as I was very, very involved in student politics and especially in the civil rights movement. So and they're actually, one of the fascinating things is that two of the students that I met were at that point actually planning to participate in national student politics and the bus rides and so forth. So I decided to come to Raymond College. And as soon as I got involved in Raymond College and by the end of my second semester, I'd completely forgotten about the idea of pre-med and was heading in other directions. But that was essentially the initial connection.

Spaccarelli: Just curious. So you say that Raymond was politically aware. Are you talking about politically aware in that they were interested in student politics as in like ASUOP or like national politics or both?

Bigler: All of the above. And not only community politics in the city of Stockton, the civil rights movement, national politics, but in fact, at that moment, or just about that time, a Raymond College student was elected president of the ASUOP. So the first Raymond student, Pete Windrum, was elected that spring and I think, I can't remember whether that was before or after, but I met Pete when I made that campus visit and a couple of other students that were very active. And that summer before my freshman year, three of our Raymond College students were in the Mississippi bus rides and had really incredible experiences. Because we're talking about the summer of 1964 and the very beginning of the civil rights movement. And Raymond College students were, continue to be involved. One of the last things I did as a student leader actually was helped organize the recall campaign against the mayor of Stockton in 1967. But Raymond students were very active in both campus politics and in the city and national politics.

Spaccarelli: Very interesting. And also, so you had this that first night, well, you had the night on campus with Covell and then you had the night on campus with Raymond. Did you get to take a Raymond class?

Bigler: Yeah. I actually, I think I attended three Raymond classes.

Spaccarelli: Oh, wow. What were your impressions?

Bigler: Oh, they were really positive because the Raymond classes were predominantly held in the dormitory, in the lounges in the dormitory. They were 15 students or less. Maybe I did, I attended, I also, I think I attended a biology lab and yeah, with John Tucker, with Dr. Tucker. And my impression, I was very impressed with both the students and the faculty. One of the things that actually, I'm not sure when I decided or when it stood out so much to me, but it was the quality of the women students in Raymond was one of the things that also really stood out in that era. And we're talking about just the, I think Betty Friedan wrote the *Feminine Mystique* in 1964, '65. That's the beginning of that, of the women's rights movement.

Spaccarelli: And just to clarify, so you're saying that there was a high percentage of women in the classrooms?

Bigler: No, well, it was a little, it was a little more than, I think it was like 55, 45 men, women.

Spaccarelli: Pretty close.

Bigler: It was pretty close. But there were more women in Raymond than there were in the College of the Pacific, for instance. And many more, there were very few in Covell College. But Covell College was probably two thirds male, a little more than that. In 1968, '69, after my Fulbright year, I returned and I was the admissions officer for the cluster colleges and I did all of them. The general admissions, of course, Dean Taylor still did the major recruiting in Latin America, but even that year in which I was in charge of admissions for Covell College, I think it was still about one third women and two thirds men. Although that changed dramatically in the next few years. And women's enrollment really jumped up across the campus.

Spaccarelli: So you're saying that not only was the ratio of men to women pretty equitable, but the academic excellence displayed by women.

Bigler: Especially, the academic excellence of the women was outstanding. In fact, I later on, I've long felt that I really became committed to the women's rights movement because of my classmates. And I had a couple of experiences that related to the difference between the women in Raymond and the women in the College of the Pacific. I was in the concert band and marching band and jazz workshop. And then the, what did we call, the pep band? Part of the time I was a student. And in my freshman year, we did a band tour that was great. And there were two women in the band that really impressed me, stood out. They were both attractive and smart, friendly. And they were like me, there were only five or six of us in band that weren't music majors. And these two women were both pre-med, French horn players. And they were, it was kind of, one of those kind of interesting coincidences. They were very close friends and they were both pre-med and they were in the top 10 or 15 students in the College of the Pacific class. But neither of them was admitted to medical school. They both ended up having to go to nursing school. It was an era in which the discrimination against women, their scores, their test scores and everything were great. Their grades were at the top of their class, but they were women. And they were treated that way. And the difference between them and the senior women in Raymond College was night and day. The senior women in Raymond College, they wouldn't have taken the nonsense that the Pacific girls got and the way they were condescended to. It just, it was, and they've gone on and had outstanding careers. I mean, I could, and one of them went on and is a chaired professor of women's studies at Long Beach State University, a PhD in sociology from the University of Wisconsin, an outstanding academic and Norma Jean was also very active in student leadership on campus and in the community. And there were a number of her classmates that were like that. Two of the three students that went on the Freedom Rides, the bus rides, the summer of '64, were also women that were really active. And that was one of, I think, one of the characteristics of the Raymond College women. And of course it later on led to, we had a rebellion against the campus rules for women in 1965, '66. And there were very strict

lockdown for the dormitories. In my freshman year, I think the women had to be in the dorms by nine o'clock. And there were clothing requirements and there were all kinds of things. And the Raymond women just rebelled tremendously against those kinds of rules. And by my senior year, we had done away with the women's lockdown rules entirely in Raymond, but they were on the rest of the campus.

Spaccarelli: Oh, they still existed on the rest of the campus?

Bigler: The rest of the campus didn't change, until when I left in '69, they still had different rules.

Spaccarelli: Interesting.

Bigler: Yeah. So, yeah. And it was actually something that became a problem on campus because there was jealousy and there were reactions against the Raymond women. In fact, one of the political issues that I had to deal with was in 1966, a bunch of our football players decided to do a panty raid on the Raymond women as they were, they weren't the acceptable women. And the Raymond women responded by getting the fire hoses as the guys were trying to jimmy their way up. And the women just washed them off the side of the wall. And it was...

Spaccarelli: Nice. That seems fair.

Bigler: You know, I'll never forget, Jack Leland wanted to kill one of my classmates and Jack Leland went on to be an NFL football player. He was a great, great football player and great guy. I almost, fortunately, Jack knew me because I was a social member of his fraternity. And so when he was about to beat one of my classmates to death, I intervened and stopped Jack.

Spaccarelli: Wow. But just, you know, pull it back to Raymond here. As you got started, that academic excellence that you saw, that was very apparent to you, both in terms of professors and in terms of your fellow students.

Bigler: Absolutely. Yeah. I mean, the difference with the faculty wasn't, that wasn't, I would say I never thought the Raymond faculty was better than the Pacific faculty. I think there were more of the Raymond faculty, though, that were interested in close student-faculty relations and in a style of teaching that was interactive and more student-centered and less a more traditional lecture-oriented...

Spaccarelli: Seminar, seminar style.

Bigler: Yeah. The seminar style in Raymond was, I mean, even mathematics was done that way. I mean, when you did you do math with 14 people, you do a lot more than just the mathematics. And so and that was and and our math, our two mathematicians in my time in Raymond were, were extremely active in the community, but they were outstanding in other ways, intellectually. And so, but among the Raymond students, the interest, the intellectual wisdom in the Raymond community was, was much more visible than it was in the College of the Pacific side. Of course, I never lived on the College of the Pacific, but

because of my involvement in student politics and activities, I had a very close friend and well, I had close friends in both fraternities and in dorms and sororities, there just was a kind of a different intellectual atmosphere.

Spaccarelli: So, speaking of intellectualism, you compared Raymond to the College, but also you were involved in Covell, was the intellectualism... I mean, it was Covell, of course, it was also, you know, selective in a lot of ways, and it was a good school, but was it, was the intellectual environment just different?

Bigler: Yes, And it was, it was different because you had in Covell, you had among the students that came from Latin America and in the, in the early years, in my first two years on the campus, we probably had almost twice as many students from Latin America as North American students. The intention had always been to have an equal number or about an equal number. But there were actually more Latin American students and among the Latin American students, there was a fairly substantial number that came from relatively privileged backgrounds. And they were, that there were kind of two sides. There were the privileged spoiled kids and then the privileged achievers in that. And among those from more humble backgrounds, there was greater dedication to the intellectual side of things, but also being away, being in a different society. A big part of the, the experience for the Covell students was a cultural adaptation and the fun and games and social life was more important to many. So there was a mixture. And of course, we select our friends partly based on our interests. So for instance, my, my closest friends from, from Covell College were outstanding students and they were with me and Blue Key and in other campus organizations. And they gone on to have outstanding careers. And I'm still in close touch with many of them. Actually, I probably had more contact with, because I spent more than 20 years of my professional life in Latin America, I've had more contact with my Covell classmates than I have with my Raymond classmates since I graduated. I mean, I just got a message from Fernando Zumbado, who was a three times cabinet member in Costa Rica, was the ambassador of the United Nations in Costa Rica, was the, was the director general of the United Nations Development Program for Latin America. I mean, an outstanding economist. We're talking about another reunion organization in there, Covell. I think we're going to try and get all the cluster colleges together next time.

Spaccarelli: Sounds good. So then within Raymond, were there memorable events that stood out to you during your time? High tables?

Bigler: The high tables were spectacular. They were, I liked high table more than many of my classmates. And I didn't mind putting on that, that first year we wore blazers and a coat and tie to dinners the first year. Gradually the rules for high tables changed and became more casual. And that I thought that the formality actually raised the level of discourse because there was a tendency, if everything became too casual, for the conversation to drift to the mundane. And there were so many things to follow up from our discussions and to take advantage of our faculty. And that was something that I always thought was great to be able to have, develop an informal relationship with the faculty and having lunch with them every day was part of that. And so, and those of us who well, actually, I think all my classmates develop close relationships with professors. But some of us were more academic in our relationships than others. But it was and of course, I was really lucky again, because of my activities across the campus. I

developed relationships with a number of Pacific faculty members and had lifelong relationships with them.

Spaccarelli: So when you have these high tables, were there formal discussions afterwards?

Bigler: Well, the high table was always a formal presentation, followed by a question and answer period of time. And sometimes the discussion would continue afterwards.

Spaccarelli: Just sort of organically.

Bigler: Yeah. But, for the most part, we would continue the discussion if there were still questions or debate after a presentation, we might continue for 45 minutes after the lecture. And the lectures were scheduled to be, I think, 30 minutes or 30 or 40 minutes. I've forgotten the details now. But often would go longer, depend a little bit on the presentations, but we had some really outstanding speakers. And the interactions were great. For instance, one of the speakers was what was called the working man's philosopher, who wrote a couple of books of political philosophy and his name is on the tip of my tongue, I'm getting too old. (Eric Hoffer, visited in '67?) And we had, he not only did the high table program, but he spent some time on campus. And that happened with several of the high table lectures during the course of the year. And then of course, there were a variety of contents in the high table program. I was never as interested in the programs in the arts and humanities side of things as I was in sciences and social sciences. But some of those programs, piano concerts, we had a great pianist that I recall, he just, the passion of the concert was just beautiful. So that varied, but the high tables during my experience, during my three years, were extremely vibrant. But I noticed that they were less impactful when I returned in '68, '69, in the staff position. I attended a few of the high tables. I did an awful lot of traveling because of my admissions work. So I didn't attend many, but it seemed to me as though they had lost some of the cachet, that the student attendance didn't seem as good. And because they never took attendance, especially after Berndt Kolker became the provost, he was loath to enforce anything like discipline on students. It was, you find an interest in a reason for it, or you don't do it.

Spaccarelli: That's, uh, a philosophy.

Bigler: Well, and it's also, the whole idea is you're adults, so you make the choice. And so, and it worked better because there was a time in which one, we did have some student controversy in the beginning because our original dean of students, who I loved, Ed Peckham and stayed in close touch with, was a bit of a disciplinarian. He had a tendency that way. He had been an outstanding history professor at the College of the Pacific, and then became, he continued to teach a few courses, but mainly was the dean of students. Ed was responsible for enforcing those residency rules. And for some of my classmates, he went too far. So he left after our, he left and then spent 25 years as the dean of students at Cal State Northridge. He was very successful as the dean of students there, but he was a bit controversial. And of course, if he tried to enforce the rules the way Dean Betz did in the College of the Pacific, there would have been a real protest in Raymond, but that was, again, that was just not the way it was in the cluster colleges.

Spaccarelli: So Provost Warren Martin, right, he was the provost during most of your time there. And he did-

Bigler: Well, the first year and almost two years, and then he left in the second year. And Larry Jackson was interim provost and then Berndt Kolker in my senior year. And so-

Spaccarelli: And was Warren Martin, was he more strict about attendance for the high tables?

Bigler: He expected it, but he expected Peckham to enforce it. He wouldn't have given that impression. He was above the fray. And he was much more charismatic than Dean Peckham. And so that, again, but in fact, I was given to understand that, and even Dick said that to me once, he was Warren Brian Martin, but he was called Dick Martin. He once said to me that Dean Peckham didn't do anything that I didn't agree with.

Spaccarelli: So they were pretty (much) on the same table.

Bigler: Very much. And that changed, of course, after Peckham left. Larry Jackson was also a very different leader than, you know, Larry went on to become the first provost of Callison College and was actually that freshman year, again, I got to know well because of his involvement in campus politics. He was the Dean of the Chapel. And he had a big connection to Latin America. He had been the director of an international school in Chile and had this deep Methodist higher education background and was a very soft spoken leader. And Berndt was a different kind of, had a different kind of charisma. His, Berndt, was jovial in character, but he had this piercing intellect and strong sense of direction that was very attractive to a lot of students. And so he had a strong student following and an endorsement of what he was doing. And so it was the cluster college- Raymond had good leadership, good leadership.

Spaccarelli: Well, I mean, this goes right into my next question. Were there, were there controversies during your time at Raymond between the cluster colleges and the university, between administrators?

Bigler: Oh, sure, there were a lot of controversies. One of the big controversies was over the difference in the teaching load of the Raymond faculty and the College of Pacific faculty. And it was a major source of controversy and resentment among much of the College of the Pacific faculty and not just the COP faculty. But at that period of time, the professional schools were small and had less sway on campus. So they really didn't have much weight. It was really the College of the Pacific and the cluster colleges, except in the matters that were strictly within the purview of the professional schools. Now, Dean Jansen in the School of Education was a real campus power and a great educator and highly respected because he'd been a lifelong classmate of President Burns. So that was a different matter, but the School of Education's size and its location on campus were such that it didn't have the same weight.

Spaccarelli: The college was dominant.

Bigler: Yeah. And of course, also in terms of size. It was like 60 percent of the campus was the College of the Pacific. So the controversy over faculty loads, essentially the issue was that the Raymond system was three terms. And so the terms were longer, actually, our school year, the first five or six years until the (camp), the major curriculum reform in 1970, the Raymond term, we started the third week of August and we went to the third week of June, whereas the College of the Pacific started like the second week of September and ended like the first, the last week of May. So it was a shorter year. It was two semesters and the structure that it- just the teaching load was different. And as the interaction with the students, I mean, during my first year, we still, we had four faculty members living in our dormitories. And they were available to us all the time. And one of those faculty members, George Bloom's wife just passed away and I maintained close contact with George throughout my life because of him being there, even though I only took one class from George, but we became lifelong friends. And another one of the faculty members that year, Henry Sutherland, who was a Spanish professor, only was in Raymond only one year. But again, I was a lifelong friend of professors even after they left Pacific. So that was, you know, that intense relationship we had with the faculty. We had, for instance, in the intramural program, in basketball, our intramural team, we had two intramural teams at Raymond, and we had faculty and students playing together. And we won two years. We won the campus championship two years. And I, for instance, I rotated at center on that basketball team with Professor Neil Lark, a great physicist.

Spaccarelli: I've seen some photos in the archives of Neil Lark.

Bigler: A lot. Well, Neil was a professor for 40 years, I guess, or close to that. And you know, you don't get very many Lawrence Livermore scholars that also play on the intramural basketball team with, and when you play intramural basketball against the Phi Sigs and the Phi Tahs and so forth, I mean, they're pretty rough basketball games. But our outstanding stars, I mean, Gene Wise was a great basketball player and Jerry Gaff and so forth. But we had good student ballplayers too.

Spaccarelli: So what was the, what was, sorry, to clarify, so Raymond had the three terms. And the College had two. And so how many-

Bigler: And calculating the student load and amount of hours of contact, the contact out of classes is hard to balance the difference in faculty load. And so there was the Raymond faculty had a slightly lower formal load, but they had all these out of class...

Spaccarelli: They lived in the dorms.

Bigler: Yeah, exactly. And in terms of the amount of student contact, I mean, as well as I knew many faculty members, even the faculty members that were most involved with students in the College of the Pacific like, you know, was very close to the political science faculty and the history faculty. And none of them, as active as they were, was involved nearly as much as the Raymond faculty with the students. Just weren't.

Spaccarelli: Yeah. No, fundamental difference.

Bigler: So there were other controversies. The, you know, that for years and years along the street that goes up that now divides where the cluster college area is from the rest of the campus, there was a line of eucalyptus trees. And it was called the eucalyptus curtain. If you haven't heard that term.

Spaccarelli: Yeah. I've heard that term.

Bigler: And it was a kind of a campus dividing line, the idea that there was something different over there. Now it turns out that if you took all the students that were living in the quadrangle dormitories, probably two thirds of them were at non cluster college students. But there was this idea in part because many of the students that were non cluster college students but that lived in those dorms tended to identify with the students. And so and it was there was there was a competitive relationship in some areas, like, for instance, in band frolic. I don't know if you know, but band frolic was a really big thing in that era. And it was very competitive.

Spaccarelli: It's like a, like a talent show sort of thing.

Bigler: Yeah. Essentially, living groups would put on a skit. And it was called band frolic because it has to be put to music. And it was sponsored by the, the band. And so the idea was that you would really do something. And, and Raymond, we won band frolic three years in a row when I was a student. And the, each year the programs were just incredibly creative and fun. And, but there were a number of living units that really did great programs. And so there was a competitive spirit. And there were a few other areas in which that showed up. But others, one of the reasons why I got so much involved, I was heavily involved in besides band which I was with College of the Pacific students, but I also took classes in Covell College and COP. And I was heavily involved in student politics from my freshman year, and activities like the model United Nations program. And there are other activities I'm forgetting, oh, lots of other campus activities. So those of us that were more involved in those, then there was a lot of interrelationship. The model UN program was, you know, two thirds, three quarters of the students were from the College of the Pacific. But for a couple of years, the leadership was on the part of the Raymond College students. For instance, my classmate, first one of those first year women that impressed me so much, Patricia Kushless, went on and did a PhD at Syracuse in international relations and was, like me, a career Foreign Service Officer as well. And that was, again, part of the and there were a lot of us that did things in speech, although it was tough. I had originally planned to be in speech and debate, but our, our curricular demands in Raymond were just too great. Yeah, I just, I couldn't. I couldn't do that and the other things too. That was one of those things that I had to give up. I had been in speech in high school and yeah.

Spaccarelli: Yeah, I understand completely. There's always those limits. Yeah, you always wish you could do more. So to follow up, one other thing you said that I wanted to ask about. So you said that, you know, even the most involved College faculty weren't as involved as the Raymond faculty. And I wanted to ask, to the extent that it was clear to you, how much of that was the faculty in the College, not wanting to be

more engaged with students and how much of that was the student body in the College, not engaging with their faculty?

Bigler: No, it was, it was more the students. Because the faculty were open to it. And some were more fully engaged. It wasn't, there weren't, well, there were a couple of faculty members that were a little bit more stuffed shirts and a little more distant, but sometimes with reason. I mean, there were some outstanding professors, but it was more that it was the students that were less inclined to approach the faculty and to really be engaged with them. That was, at least that was my impression. And so that's one of the reasons why I became in some ways, even though I wasn't taking classes from them, I became close to several COP professors that I never took a class from.

Spaccarelli: Because you went and approached them.

Bigler: Because I approached them and they were open and we started a program called the Student Faculty Council and worked with professors from across the campus in that. And so, yeah, it was there. And of course, in music, it was, that was really different. In the conservatory, the faculty in the conservatory were engaged with their students in a different way. And those that like me that were not a music major, they tolerated us. For me, it was because I was interested. I wasn't a good musician, that some of the non-music majors were actually talented. And so I was, I felt like I was a sore thumb. I was in comparison with the talents of my classmates in the conservatory. It just embarrassed me sometimes. But it was, I love music. And so it was and it was fun.

Spaccarelli: So another question. Oh, how did it work for you taking both college classes and Raymond classes with the different calendars?

Bigler: You just had to watch out for it. I didn't, never found it a problem. The one thing that would become a little bit of a problem would be getting to the classes because of the time difference. And so sometimes running across the campus to get over to Anderson or to get over to the (hob?) to take a class or even to get to a band rehearsal would take some extra time. And so I tried to organize things at times when I was going to use the library and get that close to times when I would be on across the campus. I also had, I worked in the, in the student and in the food program. The, what do you call...

Spaccarelli: The food pantry?

Bigler: Yeah. No, the, the dining halls all through my student, started as a freshman - actually my duty the first two terms of my freshman year was washing the pots and pans for the, heavy pots and pans. Pearl diving, they called it, for the breakfast and lunch. I sometimes did dinners as well. But I, we had a limit. I could get six hours a day. And I needed it for, financially. So and then I became a student manager and ended up as the manager of student- all student campus employees my senior year. So I was very heavily involved in those programs. You've heard of Paul Fairbrook?

Spaccarelli: No.

Bigler: You haven't heard of Paul Fairbrook?

Spaccarelli: I don't think so.

Bigler: One of our greatest Pacificans. I mean, Paul's a wonderful guy. He ran the food service for many years. But he came with such an outstanding background. He actually was one of the, the secret, in the military group that was used for counter-Nazi activities in the Second World War and very distinguished military record. They made TV documentaries about the group that he was a member of. But he did a lot of other things. He was the head of a couple of international congresses and things. But Paul came to the campus to head up the food, the campus food service in 1965, the end of '65 or the beginning of '66. And I had just become a senior student manager. And it was, he was great because he organized medieval meals and we had these great food fights and things like that. But we also had a catering service and we did some outside catering. We did some outstanding outside catering. But that's another subject...

Spaccarelli: But that's, that's, that's great. That's great. Of course, we've already sort of touched on this, but your thoughts on the educational style of the Raymond teaching philosophy? I mean, it, did it work well for you?

Bigler: Yeah, it worked great for me. I love the, the approach, the faculty's encouragement of our independent responsibility. And it was that way. Sometimes there was an adjustment period, like I mentioned this Professor Henry Sutherland when he first came to teach an advanced Spanish class to freshmen, because all of us that were in that Spanish class and in the Raymond curriculum, we were required to take three semesters of a foreign language. And in Spanish, since you had a lot of people that had gone through four or five years of high school Spanish, then you had this really advanced Spanish group. And when Henry came and joined the faculty, he was dubious that we could handle the level of Spanish that the provost, that Martin told him that was the class was supposed to be. That is essentially do Spanish literature in Spanish. And so when we started off, there was this, there was this tension. But what was fascinating and was also kind of interesting about Henry was a chain smoker. And we would sit around there in the basement dormitory and there's this halo of smoke. And we met at eight o'clock in the morning. And for almost two hours, this session. And, but a few weeks into the class, Henry saw that we actually were performing. And so he kept pushing us. And he kept, and he was at the time finishing his dissertation, which he was writing at the University of Pittsburgh. And he was doing a really innovative thing, an interpretation of the Quixote that had been developed by a great Spanish scholar named Joaquin Casaldueiro. And Henry was involved in this. And so he decided in the second semester, was it second or third? (How time flies.) At any rate, we spent a whole semester. No, it was the second semester. We spent the second semester studying just the Quixote in the original Spanish, which is medieval Spanish because it was written in the 16th century. And it was a slog for even very good students. But it was an incredible intellectual experience. And it was an example of how he adjusted and he kept pushing us to continue advancing. And so even though none of us had, I mean, I wanted a career in which I would use Spanish, but none of us had the intention of, well, there was a time in which I was

thinking about doing comparative literature as a major. And so then I would have continued to do things in Spanish, but never being a Spanish teacher, that wasn't, you know. But the level was really, was quite good. And most of my classmates responded well to it, even though they had much less than- I probably was the most intense and most interested in the Spanish. Although there were, I mean, we just had some really outstanding classmates. I don't know if you've heard about Peter Morales, but Peter went on to do an all but PhD in American history and was a professor for a time, but his most outstanding achievement was being president of the Unitarian Church of America.

Spaccarelli: Oh, wow. Yes.

Bigler: For 10 years. And has a lot of other outstanding accomplishments, was also a Fulbright professor. Also was a newspaper editor for many years. And Peter had grown up partly bilingual in San Antonio. And so we had a mix of people with a lot of Spanish background.

Spaccarelli: So you should meet our new Dean, Dean Skinner. Have you met her yet?

Bigler: No, I haven't.

Spaccarelli: The new Dean of the College.

Bigler: Is that her field?

Spaccarelli: She's in Spanish literature.

Bigler: Oh, really?

Spaccarelli: Yeah. 18th century Spanish literature.

Bigler: Oh, that's interesting.

Spaccarelli: No, sorry, 19th. Sorry, my apologies. 19th.

Bigler: And Spain or Latin America?

Spaccarelli: Latin America more.

Bigler: Aha. Well, that's fascinating.

Spaccarelli: Yeah. Sometimes you should meet her.

Bigler: Yeah. And Skinner, is her name?

Spaccarelli: Yeah, Lee Skinner.

Bigler: At Lee?

Spaccarelli: No, Lee. L-E-E.

Bigler: Oh. And it's a woman or a man?

Spaccarelli: Woman. It's a woman.

Bigler: Oh, I hope she's more dedicated to the liberal arts than the recent deans of the college.

Spaccarelli: We don't need to get into that. But I just wanted to mention.

Bigler: Yeah. Thank you so much. Keeping me from, yeah. Alumni politics.

Spaccarelli: I'm happy to have that discussion after this. So, yeah. Other individuals at Raymond that were particularly memorable to you. Faculty members, other students. Also, one note. If there's people who you, like alumni who you think I should reach out to and also do interviews with, please. I would love...

Bigler: Yeah, uh, I should probably give you a list of names.

Spaccarelli: Yeah, you can send it to me after. One thing that would be great is people also who were in Ray-Cal, because we haven't done any interviews yet with Ray-Cal students.

Bigler: Unfortunately, that was way after my time.

Spaccarelli: Yeah. If you know anyone who was closer, I know you did admissions, though, so I thought maybe you might know.

Bigler: Ray-Cal started afterwards.

Spaccarelli: After you were done?

Bigler: Yeah. I only did admissions for one year. And I didn't get to know many of those students because I simply did admissions. And I didn't have, in my role in the admissions office, the opportunity to develop the relationships that Les Medford and Dean Taylor had with students in that period of time, which was actually one of the things, again, that attracted me to work with them was we had a dean of admissions and an associate dean of admissions who were outstanding in terms of their interest and contact with students after they were admitted to the university. And they'd maintain relationships with students and knew them and followed them. And that's one of the reasons why Dean Taylor recruited me to come after I graduated to come back and spend a year. Actually, originally, I was intending on spending

two years, but I got this great fellowship offer for Johns Hopkins. And so I decided to. Also, there were changes going on at Pacific that I didn't like. And part of it was the change in Raymond College. The new dean of students I didn't get along with at all. And he didn't like my job. And he wanted to handle the recruitment for Raymond completely separate from our office. There was hostility. There was this feeling in some of the Raymond community that the admissions office didn't and some other parts of the university didn't treat the Raymond community fairly. And I think it was completely mistaken, but there was that feeling. And so again, those were the reasons why, I, when I got this great opportunity for my PhD program, I decided it was better to leave than...

Spaccarelli: Yeah, that's fair.

Bigler: Yeah, but they- and of course, the student personnel leadership across the campus was Dean Betz, the dean of students was really great and accessible and great. Dean Williams was the dean of men. And Dean Davis, I was a little less crazy about, but she was a more traditional dean of women. But in terms of characters, Raymond had just a number of tremendous faculty members that really stood out to us and developed relationships with us in different ways. Mike Wagner was, I'm sure you've heard about Mike, was a tremendously charismatic professor of economics. Tremendously charismatic. That, to this day, I participated in the book club and one of the reasons why, the guy, one of the co-founders was really heavily influenced by Mike and we called him Mike, by the way. He insisted that we call him Mike. And it was, but he was really serious. We had, there was a freshman class that we had, that was the first term of freshman year. The course was called Introduction to the Modern World. And it was-

Spaccarelli: Sounds like a nice, small course.

Bigler: Yeah, it was. Well, I'll tell you, I think we had eight books that we had to read that were all required. And that was after we were given a reading list of five or six books to read over the summer before we started. And we were really expected to read them. And in our freshman year, the faculty led our, we had, had three hour long lectures a week and then two class discussions a week with a faculty member. It was the way it worked that first year. And Mike was the overall coordinator, but all of the faculty lectured in the course when it came to a subject that was, it was designed so that we would get a piece of their intellect along the way. And that would introduce us to science issues or humanities issues or whatever. It was, the focus of it was essentially modern intellectual controversies. But Mike had such a charismatic personality. He was a small man. And he had a lisp, but he overcame it by his personality. He was very dynamic and demanded your attention - in one of the, so the whole freshman class was together. So we were about 90, in the lecture part of the session. And I'll never forget, maybe the second week of class or so, one of our classmates, who was sitting maybe in the second or third row in the front, was nodding off to sleep. And Mike was sitting on the podium or on the table next to the podium. And he reached down and took his shoe off and plunked our classmate in the head, who then sprawled on the ground. And we all understood that we needed to pay attention. So but normally, Mike didn't need to do that because just the force of his personality was such. And Tom, forever after that moment, paid attention. So did the rest of us. And Mike was very controversial. He was an outspoken atheist. And so challenged conventional belief. But we had, as a lecturer, some real deists that lectured

in the same course. So there were these alternative perspectives. And besides the fact that Warren Bryant Martin was actually an ordained minister. So besides being an educator, among the faculty and another one that really stood out to us was named Gene Wise. Actually R Eugene Wise. And I don't know if anyone's mentioned him to you. But he was a professor of American Studies, American history. And he had really already had some outstanding achievements. And while he, let's see, I think in '65, a major article that he published that contradicted Arthur Schlesinger Jr.'s thesis on the age of Jackson was published by one of the major journals in American history. And so Gene had this level of respect of his academic prowess. And he went on in 1969 to become the chairman of the American Studies program at Case Western Reserve. And so he was and he published a great book on American history that was in part developed from his seminars that he did in Raymond College. Gene was also the best player on our student-faculty basketball team. So there were a lot of ways in which we interacted with him. He was my faculty advisor. Even though I was never intended to do American history or American studies, that wasn't part of the advisory system. I don't even remember how the advisors were assigned. Maybe we chose them. I don't think so. But at any rate, he was my advisor. And we became very close friends. I had a number of times I visited his home and his wife. And I became great friends. And we stayed friends after he left Pacific. So we had an outstanding professor of psychology named Jerry Gaff, who also played basketball with us. But he taught a course that was one of the required courses on the non-Western world, which was one of the required courses in our freshman year. And one of the great things about Jerry was he was extremely good at kind of mentoring the way in which we interacted with one another in our very interactive seminars and courses. And I still remember a couple of conversations that we had in which he made suggestions to me about how I could be, participate better and more productively in our seminars that stayed with me for my whole life. There are actually a number of others I could point out that did things in different ways. Some that were less appreciated. Jerry Briscoe was a professor of American history and political science, who was a specialist actually in foreign policy. And I got close to him because of the interest in international relations and had a very strong personal relationship with him. But Jerry was a more formal, more traditional style of a professor. And so was less appreciated by many of my classmates than I, for instance. But he had a great influence on me and my choice of graduate program. And again, I maintained close relationships afterwards. So with my classmates, again, there were many personalities that stood out. And I will send you some names. I mentioned Pete Morales. Dave Wellenbrock, has anybody mentioned that name to you yet?

Spaccarelli: No.

Bigler: Dave is the guy who does our book club. He's a former associate district attorney for San Joaquin County. Has spent his whole career here. And I'll get some other names to you.

Spaccarelli: Perfect. That's very, very helpful. I think we already touched on this a little bit. I mean, actually, I think we're good there. So yeah, then how important was, how did the Raymond High table contribute to the discussion of civil rights, feminism, community activism that was so prevalent in Raymond?

Bigler: Well, it's just they aided in calling our attention to the subject. So it was topical. Sometimes it was the actual program that might interest in us in the activity. But in fact, I think it was just the fact that we

sought relevance and we were concerned with- the kind of motto, buzzword of the college for Warren Bryant Martin was College of Consequence. And it was this idea that we had to be consequential with society, consequential with one another, consequence in several respects. And I think that was part of it. But I can't say there was any one high table program that led me to specific activism. At least I can't remember any. Actually, we had some chapel programs that had a little more impact on me than when Larry Meredith was the dean of the chapel. And we did some crazy chapel programs. Have you heard about Larry Meredith?

Spaccarelli: That name sounds vaguely familiar.

Bigler: He's an emeritus professor who's very well known in the community. But Larry, before he became one of the original Callison College faculty, was the dean of the chapel. He was brought in with the intention of him becoming a Callison professor. But he had been a pastor and Methodist minister. And just like Larry Jackson, who was the first provost for Callison College. And Larry was a tremendous avant garde thinker. And so he had done his doctorate in divinity at Harvard and was with Gene Rice, who was one of the Raymond College faculty. And the two of them had known Timothy Leary. Have you ever heard the name Timothy Leary? Timothy Leary was a very controversial Harvard professor who was responsible for what was called the gospel of LSD. Tune in, turn on, drop out was the famous phrase that Leary. And so between Gene Rice from Raymond and Larry Meredith, they arranged for Timothy Leary to come and do a chapel service on the gospel of LSD.

Spaccarelli: That would be controversial.

Bigler: Yeah, it was. And that was the kind of thing that President Burns was all for and really supported. I mean, we never actually got Martin Luther King to be able to come to campus. Because three times that he was invited and arranged to come, he got arrested or something else happened that prevented him from being able to come.

Spaccarelli: That's a pretty good excuse.

Bigler: But that was President Burns was at the forefront. And that was before Martin Luther King was actually considered the national civil rights leader. I mean, the first invitation to him was in 1962. And he was already on the second invitation when I came in '64. And then we tried one more time in '65. And so that's something about the personalities. But yeah, what other questions? Do you have more?

Spaccarelli: Let me just check real quick.

Bigler: It's late...

Spaccarelli: Yeah, I'm happy to keep going. We can also meet another time.

Bigler: Well, I could take another half hour.

Spaccarelli: OK, let me, I just want to check my own schedule really quick to make sure I don't have anything that I'm forgetting about because 90% of the time, I have something that I am forgetting about.

Bigler: I'm answering all the time.

Spaccarelli: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Bigler: And I didn't grow up with phones.

Spaccarelli: OK, I have something at 5:30. I'm OK for now.

Bigler: OK, well, you can take care of it.

Spaccarelli: No, no, yeah, yeah. It's right nearby. Actually, it's Zoom, so I'll be fine. OK, has Raymond College met your expectations as an institution, as an education? Why or why not? Has that changed over time?

Bigler: Absolutely.

Spaccarelli: Just yes.

Bigler: Met my expectation, yeah. That's it. Yeah, no question about it.

Spaccarelli: Okay, well...

Bigler: I was very pleased with having chosen to come to Pacific. And that's, of course, one of the reasons why I love being an admissions officer for the university and have been an active alum my whole life. So there were times in which it was a little difficult because I was too far away.

Spaccarelli: Yeah. And then what contributions do you feel that Raymond made to the local communities?

Bigler: Actually, this is something really important to me. We did an awful lot in the community. And actually, one of the things that disappoints me about Pacific is that it does less. And it has done less since I returned to join the faculty in 2005. I've been very disappointed in that respect. There's one of the things that, to me, I understood as part of the Pacific tradition was that Pacific had come to Stockton to bring higher education to the Central Valley of California. And not just the Central Valley, even in the Bakersfield to Sacramento. But in that era, it was from the Tehachapi Mountains to Central Oregon, the only private institution of higher education in that whole region. And the college and Tully Knoles tradition that was the mentor for Robert Burns was Pacific being part of and contributing to that place. Because it hadn't been in San Jose and Santa Clara. Partly because Pacific got overshadowed by the other institutions that grew up around. So and that and the activities and the way we interacted with the community, whether it was the football program or other sports or community activities, the South

Stockton Project, which we raised, when I was the president of the Student Senate, we raised an extra almost \$50,000 for community service activities in 1966, '67.

Spaccarelli: Wow.

Bigler: And we were really heavily involved in the community. And there were no administrators that worked with us. And it was all us. I mean, when I ran a community garden program here in Stockton, we had a bunch of Pacific students. And then they started a garden on campus. And the students no longer participated in the community garden in the community. And to me, that's just the betrayal of Pacific tradition. But they got a big gift for it. And to me, that so that involvement, I mentioned it. I don't know. But I mentioned that in 1967, we recalled the mayor. And we were heavily involved as students in that program. We worked, I met Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta is still my friend. And we were heavily involved. And we organized. We got students involved in the effort to break the original strikes of the farm workers. We get students to go down and get on the bus and then refused when they would pick up the workers in Skid Row and get on the buses. And they'd always stop along the way for a pee stop because you had a bunch of winos and drunks and others. And so they'd always stop along the way so they wouldn't pee or vomit on the bus. And when they'd stop for that break before they got to the work sites, then we'd get off the buses and refuse to get back on. Sometimes we had a, couple of times we had fistfights. But we organized the students from Delta to work with us. The Pacific students organized the Delta students. And we worked with the Delta students. And of course, in my student days, Delta was right next door. And we actually did, for instance, when we hosted the Model United Nations, we actually did it partly on the Delta campus. And so being part of the community, to me, was really important. And I think one of the things that I think was in the Pacific tradition that I loved about the university was the sense of continuity from Burns and company and several of his other faculty members who were Pacificans. Lifelong, they had been students at Pacific. They'd come back and had been in faculty positions. Dean Jansen, Dean Jacoby, President Burns himself, Elliot Taylor. That was-

Spaccarelli: Judith Chambers.

Bigler: Yeah, Judy, absolutely. My life, almost life-long friend. I've known Judy since she came back to join us. And that was a tremendous part of the Pacific tradition. And I think actually moving away from that and bringing in everybody from outside, not just, I certainly, we recruit excellent faculty members. But keeping a core that's part of the living tradition of the university seems to me really important. I was a professor for five years at a small Methodist college in Arkansas. It's an outstanding Methodist school called Hendricks College. It has a national leadership that's been recognized as one of the best small colleges in America. And one of the things about the Hendricks tradition is they've always had a core group that have been undergraduates there. And they are cultivated. And they come back. And so there's always that handful of people. But Pacific got away from that.

Spaccarelli: Yeah, Pacific has lost that.

Bigler: Yeah.

Spaccarelli: OK, and then, of course, the question of Raymond's connection with the community. To what extent do you think of yourself as a Ray- Did students think of themselves, you and students generally, think of themselves as just Raymond students or Pacific students?

Bigler: No, I think actually the majority of my classmates in Raymond saw themselves as Raymond students. That's why I suggest you ask the question. I really think that a majority did think that. But Raymond students still develop strong connections to Stockton. Although I have the impression that in later years, it was less than during my time. And I don't know why that was the case. There was, I think, less political activism. Of course, it was the sign of the times by that time. The war protest and the protest against Reagan's policies in higher education, because he was governor of California by that time. The political change probably had a great deal to do with it. But my impression was that after the early '60s or mid '60s, there was less involvement in the Stockton community.

Spaccarelli: That's fair. And yeah, and the relationship between Raymond and the university, Raymond students and the university.

Bigler: Yeah, I think Raymond students, they generally felt betrayed when the college was closed.

Spaccarelli: Yeah, that makes sense.

Bigler: I would say that two thirds of my classmates, maybe even more than that. One of the things that was hard to do when we organized the 50th anniversary celebration was we had some students that didn't want to come back to campus because they felt the university had turned its back on the cluster colleges. And I didn't ever feel that that was the case. Although I certainly didn't like a lot of the policies and decisions that were made. And I'm rather critical of them. But especially the term, the concept that President Burns hated was vocationalism. And I think vocationalism overtook the university despite the tremendous effort that in the Burns era and earlier we had tried to make to keep it out. That is, we still had professional schools. But the core of the professional schools was still the liberal arts. And I was part of the debate with the regents over the merger with McGeorge. And the whole idea of the merger with McGeorge was to keep liberal arts in legal education. And we were going to bring McGeorge programs to Stockton. And we were going to teach law in Stockton. And that was part of the whole concept and the rationale for it. And it's-

Spaccarelli: That didn't happen.

Bigler: No. Burns' successor, McCaffrey, was to me, was a trigger to that thing. He was this Bay Area guy who thought of, you know. His big thing was the College of Business and Public Administration. Have you ever looked at this? I'm sorry. But I dated the editor of the Naranhado when we were seniors. And this was my goodbye.

Spaccarelli: That's fun.

Bigler: Isn't that great? But there were a lot of other moments there. Swags, we had a great national basketball player. So I was the outstanding senior man. And almost all the people on that page, Ken is- I just talked to him on the phone two hours ago. So still friends.

Spaccarelli: Wow, great. Perfect. Relationship with the rest of the university. How has your education at Raymond influenced your- has it influenced your career and life choices?

Bigler: Oh, yeah, it's drama- I mean, I decided to go into international relations because of Pacific and Raymond. And I won a Fulbright right out of Pacific. And actually, I was in my class of Fulbright scholars, the National Fulbright Scholars, which was 42 people. There were only five that were not either Ivy League or top 20 university graduates. And that kind of thrust me into a different community. And at Johns Hopkins, I was an outstanding student. And the habits I had as a student, and I was one of the- at the end of my first year in the masters-PhD program, I was one of the six students who was chosen to be in what was called the Acheson seminar. Dean Acheson, the former Secretary of State, the father of the whole post-war global organization, the father of the global organization in the post-war world, did a seminar with us. And I was one of the six students. And my habits as a student, they helped me dramatically. And so actually, one of the impacts is the course I took with Jerry Gaff. One of the reasons why I decided to go to Johns Hopkins was because of a book we used. And I read this great book by Bob Osgood, Bob Osgood's famous *Ideals and Self-Interests in US Foreign Relations*. And that was one of the reasons why I chose to go to Johns Hopkins for my PhD. And then I got there. And three times, I signed up for a class by Dr. Osgood. And all three times, I dropped the class because I'd read his books, and his books were the class. And that was the background from Raymond. It was, you read the book before, and then you go a step beyond. And Dr. Osgood, even though he was a great scholar in international relations, that's not the way he taught. And I wasn't going to waste my time in the seminars in which I'd already read the books. So there are a lot of other ways in which it's influenced me, the orientation toward Latin America. As I say, I spent 20 some years abroad, and 19 of those years in Latin America. I have an adopted son from Peru. And I married, my wife and I were married in Ecuador. And we continue to have those connections. I write, in fact, I write for a bilingual magazine every month. I still do. That's part of the bilingual tradition I got from Pacific. And part of that remain in that bilingual community. So there are a lot of ways in which it's influenced my life and my profession.

Spaccarelli: Yeah, wow, interesting. OK. And then I know we're running low on time here, but was there anything else that you were wanting to discuss in this interview that we didn't really get to?

Bigler: I think given what I've already written and we've conversed, if there are other things that you're interested in raising, I'd be happy to follow up.

Spaccarelli: Yeah, of course. Of course.

Bigler: If something arises and you're interested.

Spaccarelli: I'm sure. Yeah.

Bigler: I'd be happy to. I believe strongly in oral history projects.

Spaccarelli: Yeah, no, what I'll do is I'll take this recording, I'll transcribe it, and then the goal is to make it available for general accessibility.

Bigler: Yeah.

Spaccarelli: So yeah. OK, if that's everything, I thank you very much for your time. And I will end the recording here.