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Pearson, Gene Oral History Interview

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FACULTY EMERITI INTERVIEWS
UNIVERSITY OF THE PACIFIC ARCHIVES



Gene Pearson (1971-2023)
Professor of Geosciences

September 22, 2023

By Doris Meyer

Transcription by Simon Hinmon, University of the Pacific,
Department of Special Collections, Library

Subjects: Early years in Geology Department, classes taught, and field trips; movement toward environmental issues; committee work (general education, search committee, etc.); role in Mentor Seminar, freshman counseling; research interests/field guides; participation in professional organizations.

University of the Pacific Emeriti Society Oral History Project

Gene Pearson interviewed by Doris Meyer September 22, 2023

Meyer: Shall we get started, Gene?

Pearson: Let's get started.

Meyer: Okay, Gene, this is a pleasure for me. We are in the library in a study room, and we have the zoom setup. I'm Doris Meyer. I'm going to have the pleasure of interviewing my friend Gene Pearson. Hi, Gene!

Pearson: Hi, Doris!

Meyer: Yes, we've known each other for quite a while. Gene, and everybody that reads this, we have a list of questions that the oral history group has put together. We can use those questions, we can go off on a tangent, or we can add questions to it. Gene has done an interesting thing in preparation he produced a resume that is amazing. And so, I decided that I would use the questions from the university. And, by the way, this is the Emeriti Society's project. I would use the questions from our already established...but I'm going to pop in every once in a while with the questions that are related to the resume, and they were interrelated, of course. Ok Gene shall we get started?

Pearson: Sure. Very good.

Meyer: I've always wondered. And the questions ask us about how you ended up at the University of the Pacific in Stockton, California? What year, perhaps.

Pearson: September of 1971.

Meyer: Okay, how did you get here?

Pearson: I was finishing up my doctoral degree and I knew that I wanted to be a college instructor. I had attended a relatively small Liberal Arts institution as an undergraduate, and I was looking for an institution that provided students with the kind of experience that I had had as an undergraduate student. I also wanted to stay in the western United States, so I drew a north-south line on the eastern boundary of Colorado, and then started looking for schools in the West. In 1971 there weren't a lot of national publications that published advertisements of openings and many openings were filled by faculty calling colleagues at other universities with graduate programs. I sent out a lot of letters with my CV and got very few responses. I did get a response from the University of the Pacific and was invited to come for an interview, and so I flew out to Pacific, and had very enjoyable conversations with departmental faculty and several students who were majoring in geology. I even got to interview with the Interim President Alastair McCrone in the President's Office. I didn't know that I was going to be interviewed by the university president. but it was okay, because Alastair Mccrone was a geologist, and I was a geologist. So that sort of worked out okay. And the second morning I had an interview with the Dean of the college.

Meyer: Who was that?

Pearson: Dr. William Binkley was the dean. I remember that he asked me to compare Pacific to my undergraduate institution . . .

Meyer: Which was?

Pearson: which was Pomona College in southern California. I responded that the student faculty interaction seemed very, very similar and that the only difference that I had observed was that the Pomona College geology department had a lot more expensive equipment than the department at Pacific. The Dean didn't take that kindly, and said something like, I am so tired about hearing about the Claremont colleges. and I don't want to hear any more. And so I left the campus sort of thinking, well, I guess I'm not going to be offered this position, but it turned out I was wrong and things worked out very well.

Meyer: Tell me at that time was Stan Volbrecht, chairperson of geology, or whatever.

Pearson: Stan Volbrecht was the chairperson of the department, and he was an amazing mentor I credit most, if not all, of my success at Pacific to Stan's guidance. He was just an amazing individual. The tough ex-marine at times, but with a heart of gold.

Meyer: That's right. so that was 1971, right? And so, at the beginning, what was that department called?

Pearson: It was called the Department of Geology and Geography.

Meyer: And Geography?

Pearson: We had one geographer, Roger Barnett.

Meyer: yes?

Pearson: And three geologists, Stan Volbrecht, Ed Johnson and myself.

Meyer: And it was located where?

Pearson: The Department was located in Quonset 2. But for some reason, my office was in Quonset 4. So, I got to walk from Quonset 4 to Quonset at 2 to teach classes. But what I remember most is the first semester I was on campus was my 8'clock in the morning class. The classroom was right next to Stan Volbrecht's office. I could hear his office door open and close, so I knew when he entered his office. I was sure, even though he denied it, that he could hear everything that went on in the classroom. For a first-time instructor, it was a bit unnerving to think that my department chair might be able to hear every word I said during class.

Meyer: I think also over there was a recital hall, or at least, either before that time or a number of years before that, because my office was not too far from there, and I know that there were instrumentalists and choral groups. Do you recall that

Pearson: I think you're referring to the building that was south of Bannister Hall. Owen had the practice rooms for the Conservatory, and I remember that when I walked past Owen Hall that occasionally I would hear students practicing their instruments.

Meyer: yeah. One of the questions I ask is about folks that you remember that were so helpful. And you mentioned Stan Volbrecht, of course. Tell me about some other younger or older folk that helped you out in the beginning.

Pearson: In the early 1970s Pacific had a general education program called the I and I program, imagination and...

Meyer: Information.

Pearson: That's right I & I was Information and imagination. Courses were paired together based on the course themes, so students took both courses in the same semester. My great fortune in the second or third year that I was at Pacific was to teach an I & I course about energy resources paired with a course taught by Ray Sylvester, a business administration professor. I dealt with the types of energy resources and how coal, oil and natural gas were discovered and produced while Ray dealt with the business aspects of energy production. Even though we did not team teach, we both taught separately, but we worked very closely together, so there were lots of connections between the classes. We became very good friends and I got to continue that relationship with Ray Sylvester when I was appointed as assistant Dean of the College of the Pacific in the late 1970s. At that time Ray was the assistant or associate dean of the School of Business. We were both working to develop the most effective ways to help students who were facing classroom or other challenges.

Meyer: That was great! I'm glad you mentioned him. [He was a] great guy. Another one of the questions asked about your early time with regard to what you thought of Stockton, of course. Going to school at Pomona. You knew about Sacramento, you knew about Stockton, maybe. But what was your first impression of the of the beauty of the University, or the other parts of Stockton? Or didn't you care much one way or the other?

Pearson: I think I was somewhat overwhelmed with class and lab preparation, so I spent most of my time either on campus or in the apartment I had rented, and I really did not get to explore Stockton very much in the early years. Since that time, I've grown to really enjoy my experience in Stockton.

Meyer: Oh, that's great!

Pearson: It's a very diverse community. Stockton is both very economically diverse as well as culturally diverse which produces many benefits but also some challenges. I think, looking back, that Stockton, being only a short distance from Sacramento and the Bay Area sometimes doesn't get the credit it deserves.

Meyer: So later on, did you become more interested, or did you explore Stockton, or really not much?

Pearson: The geographer in the department was Roger Barnett and his doctoral dissertation at the University of California, Berkeley was on the historical development of Stockton. He provided me with lots of information about Stockton, but I think I was still so overwhelmed with class and lab preparation, trying to, to try to be a successful instructor, that I did not spend much time exploring. I did explore the surrounding area from a geological standpoint and some of my non-

campus time was spent working on potential locations that might be good stops on one day field trips away from Stockton.

Meyer: Let's go ahead and talk about the field trips. Tell me a little bit about the types of courses you taught, how that moved into the field trips, and just your experience, and the types of courses you move through.

Pearson: I taught lower division, general education geological courses, and then upper division courses for geology majors. Stan Volbrecht, the department chair, was very interested in having students experience geology outside the classroom, and so my courses would each have one day field trips. And that's something that continued throughout my time at Pacific. For a class of 25 to 30 general education students, I would offer the same field trip on a Saturday and Sunday and hope that the students would split themselves evenly, because it was nice to have a field trip of only 12 to 15 students. When I first got to Pacific, Stan Volbrecht was using buses, and he would take the entire class, but buses became a bit too expensive, so we began having students volunteer to drive their vehicles and we would carpool on field trips. One of my first field trip experiences was going on a field trip with Stan to see how he handled the field trips. I was sitting at the front of the bus which was parked in front of Burns Tower. I suddenly realized I was face to face with President McCaffery who had stepped inside of the front door of the bus. He looked at me and said: "where is your instructor taking you today?" I quietly explained that the instructor was taking us up into the Sierra foothills to observe the geology. He responded: "have a good trip" and stepped off the bus.

Meyer: And he thought you were in the class.

Pearson: Yes, he thought I was one of the students. After the Department stopped chartering buses students were asked to use their own cars on field trips. Then around 2000 the department began to use rental vehicles, minivans or suburbans and we would hire some of the senior geology majors to drive the rental vehicles.

Meyer: Did that work out?

Pearson: Yes, it works very well.

Meyer: Are you? Oh, no, I was going to say whether you were still going on field trips, but you probably did up until you retired or not?

Pearson: Up until last spring was, my last field trips were during the Spring Semester of 2023.

Meyer: Where did you go? Usually?

Pearson: For the lower division, general education, geology courses, I would take a one-day field trip to Columbia in the Sierra foothills. We would make several stops along the side of the road and students would get a chance to tell me what the rocks told them about the history of the area. They were getting a chance to apply what they had studied in class and laboratory assignments to real world locations. At each stop we would record the location and elevation using GPS devices as well as nearby landmarks, like near Rock Creek. We would then study the rock outcrop and look at samples of the rocks that I broke up using a rock hammer. I would then ask the students what type of rock they were looking at and how it may have formed. Usually, 2 or

more students would respond and almost always their responses were correct. I can't think of any time when no one was willing to respond. Field experiences were a way of reinforcing what they had learned in class and lab and let them know that the rocks we saw in lab really do exist in the real world.

Meyer: Related to the field trips, I know I'm jumping ahead, and I shouldn't. But anyway, do you yourself have sort of a specialty in the whole big educational field of geology and, or are you just sort of a generalist and everything related to that?

Pearson: In a small department you have a specialty, but you very rapidly become more of a generalist, because in a department of 3 geologists, you can't cover all the specialties. So, I was the fossil person and the sedimentary rocks person. Sedimentary rocks form on the bottom of lakes, rivers, and oceans, where the fossils are buried. But getting back to the field trips, for the upper division courses, for the major courses there would usually be both one day and multiple day trips.

Meyer: What Kind?

Pearson: Multiple days, so several days. So, for one class, there was a four-day trip. The first day and night was spent in Yosemite Valley.

Meyer: Oh,

Pearson: Then the second day we would drive over Tioga Pass and spend the next two days exploring geological features of the northern part of Owens Valley. We spent the nights at a campground near Bishop. The fourth day we drove over Sonora Pass to get back to Stockton.

Meyer: Did you also go to the coast on trips?

Pearson: Yes, I would take some upper division classes on two and three-day trips to the coast. We would drive out to areas just south of San Francisco, spend one or two nights in a state park campground in the hills just east of the coastline. During the days we would study the sand on the beaches and dunes and study the rocks exposed in the cliffs. We would observe the processes that occur on a beach, and sometimes we'd even dig into the sand, so we could see the layering that was forming within the beach. On class evaluations some students reported that that they enjoyed the field trips and that they were one of the class highlights. I will admit, however, that as I aged, I found that getting a good night's sleep in a sleeping bag was more of a challenge.

Meyer: Oh, boy! But this has been so interesting because I've always enjoyed knowing more and more about your field. At what point did the environmental issues become important either from fossil use or where? Alright? Or am I using a question that is, doesn't make sense.

Pearson: If my recollection is correct interest in environmental issues started to accelerate in the early 1970s. The Environmental Protection Agency, the EPA, was established. There was a lot of interest in addressing water pollution in rivers and lakes, air pollution in urban areas and restoration of the environments in areas that had been mined for resources. Some of the Federal laws included laws requiring mining companies to restore the land after the mining operation had ceased. I don't remember much discussion of climate change at that point, even

though it was known. On the Pacific campus, the students who took the lead in addressing sustainability issues and advocating for campus recycling and other sustainable approaches. They became very active in the late 1990s, and early 2000s, and they have continued to advocate for environmental awareness on the campus . . . and today most of the campus parking lots are covered by solar panels.

Meyer: you know, when I interviewed Bill Topp and he was in mathematics. And then computer science became a big deal. He told me exactly the same thing that it was the students that were just chomping at the bit to get moving, and to learn more and more and more. And so here you're telling me the same thing. That's great, and that's interesting that our students have that sense of mission, or whatever we want to call it. Gosh! How do you feel like we're doing right here now? Am I answering? Am I asking appropriate questions?

Pearson: Yes, you are.

Meyer: Okay.

Pearson: I think we're doing well.

Meyer: I think we're doing well. let's see. we're down here sort of where it talks about curriculum and programs you mentioned a bit ago about an I and I class. Also, about that same time, we were very interested in General Ed and you became interested in general Ed, either of your own volition, or were encouraged. Tell me about Mentor Pacific or whatever you were involved with in the general Ed. program.

Pearson: In the 1980s I was on the General Education Committee, and at that point we were looking at a more distributive general education program that included courses from different curricular areas. And so, we spent a lot of time developing breadth requirements that require a certain number of courses in different areas such as understanding individual behavior, understanding societies, understanding global issues, scientific issues as well as communication skills both written and oral. And then in the early 90s, with the leadership of College of the Pacific Dean Bob Benedetti two entry level freshman seminars, the Mentor Seminar Program as part of the Freshman year experience. The first semester Seminar was titled What Is a good Society? The second semester was a little bit more topical, but there were common readers, and I believe I had a little bit of input into, the some of the planning sessions for the mentor program which then morphed, in the early 2000s, into the Pacific Seminar program, and then, more recently, Core One and Core Two Seminars.

Meyer: Is that what they call it?

Pearson: it was very enjoyable being on General Education committees with faculty members from across the College and across the campus because the GE program was an all-university program, not just for College of the Pacific students.

Meyer: So, did you enjoy that relationship with that students in those general Ed classes. Some of them maybe, couldn't care less about geology.

Pearson: I only taught Mentor Seminar II which was a topical course. The topic I chose to focus on was sustainability and not geology. That provided a little bit more connection to all of the students,

because sustainability issues include many different disciplines. But even in my geology, general education courses, our California location ties into geological phenomena. Many students have experienced earthquakes or have experienced our wonderful shoreline with waves and beaches, and all of these are processes that have an impact and have had an impact through time. And so, there are ways to connect even, even the business major or the psychology major to what's going on in the world around them.

Meyer: I loved being part of the General Ed. and being part of Doug Smith's counseling program. And how were you involved with that as well?

Pearson: One of my first connections to the student life aspect of the University was the Freshman Advising Program that Doug Smith and Peggy Rosson directed. I really liked the concept of having a student, a junior or senior level student, paired with me as the faculty advisor, working with the same group of students throughout their freshman year. That way if a freshman has a problem that they might not want to talk about with a faculty member, they could contact their student advisor for advice. In some situations, the student advisor would then contact me, and we could discuss how we could best help. Sometimes if I heard a freshman was having difficulties, I would ask the student advisor to reach out, because if I reached out, they might think, oh, I'm being called to the counselor's office like high school. I was very disappointed when I heard that the Student-Faculty advising team approach had been dropped from the Freshman year experience at Pacific.

Meyer: Me, too. As a young person at that time, I loved that freshman advisee program, and I felt the same, and not kind of a responsibility, but an opportunity to work when the freshmen, when he didn't decide, or she didn't decide really what they wanted to do. I liked that opportunity, Anything else about curriculum, or anything more about programs or, or shall we move ahead?

Pearson: Well, one of the joys of being a faculty member at Pacific is the relationships you have with students. Relationships that can extend past graduation. the future, One of the ways we tried in the in the Geology and Geography department was compiling alumni newsletters and mailing then to all the departmental alumni every three to five years. We have even conducted a few alumni field trips for alumni living in northern California. Those activities have kept me in contact with many former students. Just a week ago I got a text message from one of our 1973 graduates who was cleaning out their office and wondered if some of their geology books would be useful to our current students. The package of books just arrived today. It is heartening to know that they still think fondly of their time at Pacific and their Pacific education even if their career path did not involve geology. One alumnus with a geology major was a dentist. He would let us know about the geological features he saw on his vacations to many state and national parks. Another alumnus became the head Geophysicist with ExxonMobil and I had the privilege of attending his retirement celebration in Houston. Two of our alumni who met in one of my classes got married. Several years ago, they purchased a second home, in Hawaii. Sadly, their Hawaiian home was destroyed in the Maui fires this year It has also been enjoyable "watching" the children of alumni grow up by monitoring their Facebook posts.

Meyer: No, and obviously the biggest compliment, we as teachers can get is a little pat on the back once in a while and have somebody just come out of the woodwork, said they remember this or that in your class, and you always wonder what they did to remember.

Pearson: Yes, we had another alum who a few years ago established an endowed scholarship named after three of his geology professors to support current students majoring in our department. I'm sure that happens at many universities, but it was a very generous donation.

Meyer: Who were the three?

Pearson: The three were Curt Kramer, Stan Volbrecht, and me.

Meyer: Have you been able to follow up the recipients of that award?

Pearson: I do not know the details of the scholarship activity, but I think at this point that students have receive monies from that scholarship.

Meyer: Oh, that's great. Okay, let's move ahead with some of the questions here now, actually, on a question number eight, we're talking about relationship with students, and that's exactly what we're, what we're talking about. Now, I'm going to deviate from these questions for a minute to go to your resume. This has always been, and we claim it as a student success type university. and the amount of research that we're required to do. I've never done very much. You have a list of research projects with whom you co-sponsored or were involved. How much of your time did you feel was important for that sort of thing? Or were you comfortable with not doing much? What was your feeling about that?

Pearson: Geologists do a great deal of research on the outcrop. In my early years at Pacific, much of my research was getting more familiar with the geology and geological history of central and northern California. My colleague, Curt Kramer and I researched and wrote a number of field guides for use during class field trips or for conference field trips with other geologists and the general public. Making geology relevant to a broader audience was one of the goals and also presented challenges. The field guides were valuable documents but not the peer-reviewed articles that are usually part of faculty evaluations. Although Quonset 2 did have some rock saws and microscopes, it lacked many of the types of scientific equipment that I had used as a graduate student. It wasn't until the early 2000s, when the department moved to its current location on the south Campus, that X-ray analysis equipment became available. So, even though I have published research articles, by today's standards, I probably would not have been promoted. Over the years I probably exceeded the norms for university service, but did less formal research and publication than might be expected today.

Meyer: But, the service that you provided to the University, and that leads me to the next question which is related to this resume, this fantastic list that you shared. Also I want to ask about your relationship to teachers of geology, and your relationship with educators in geology. There is a number of associations, or whatever with whom you have worked. Tell me a little bit about your relationship with those outside professional groups.

Pearson: I am a member of an organization called the National Association of Geoscience Teachers.

Meyer: Oh, that's it.

Pearson: Stan Volbrecht encouraged me to become a member and I became active in the Far Western Section of the National Association of Geoscience Teachers (NAGT) which was made up of geosciences teachers in California, Nevada, and Hawaii. The Section held two field conferences

every year, mostly in various parts of California. The field conferences were very valuable experiences. I had the opportunity to interact with both community college and university professors from throughout California, as well as be introduced to the geologic features in different parts of California. One of the field conferences was held near Bishop on the east side of Sierra, an area which became the central focus of one of the four-day field trips for an upper division geology class I taught. In the 1990s I became very good friends with Greg Wheeler, a faculty member at CSU Sacramento. He encouraged me to get involved with the governance of the national organization and not just the Far Western Section. I served as an officer in the Far Western Section, and in 2006 I was elected and then re-elected as the NAGT Secretary-Treasurer. After my second term as Secretary-Treasurer, I was appointed to be the NAGT Historian, which didn't have a term of office. I am still the Historian, and that's enjoyable because we meet once or twice a year, and I get to interact with Geoscience teachers who are very deeply interested in pedagogy, and we discuss the best techniques to improve student learning and student interest in the subject matter. My activities in NAGT helped me become a better instructor, and provided me the opportunity to provide service beyond the university.

Meyer: Do most of the universities in the area still call their departments “geology” Or is it environmental, this or that? Or where is geography? And what's the trend in that now?

Pearson: Well, when I came to the University in 1971, I joined the Department of Geology and Geography. When Professor Barnett retired, we became the Department of Geoscience. Our name changed again, and now we are the Department of Geological and Environmental Sciences. As things changed the Department has had various names over the years. Things have changed and now there's a greater emphasis on the environment and less on the resource exploration and recovery. One of the main employers of geologists in the 1970s was the oil and mineral industry, Earth resources. Now there's a greater shift towards Geo technical engineering, environmental engineering, and geologists are still there doing some of the analysis . . . but it's less so for resource exploration and recovery, and more so for site analysis. Site analysis makes sure that new buildings are built in areas that will support them and also areas that are not threatened by geological risks by not building on or near fault lines like the original football stadium at UC Berkeley which was directly above the Hayward Fault.

Meyer: What about geography? Has that move more with history or something else?

Pearson: There are still geography departments at some universities, but maybe not as many as there once were. Many physical geographers are climate scientists.

Meyer: Right! Funny how that goes with society interest, climate change. That's the big deal now, is it?

Pearson: Climate change is definitely happening, it is what we're living with today. Climate change has happened in the past and been very disruptive for life forms. The difference now, is that the change is happening much more rapidly than past, pre-human climate change events.

Meyer: That's right. That's Right One of the questions here, talks about, and coming back to the University of Pacific again You have been here a long time, and one of the questions alludes to your a perception of things when you first came, and how the university has moved along in an evolutionary way. How maybe its students have changed. We're talking now how curriculum

or definitions of departments has changed. Can you think of other things that have either surprised you or made you more proud of the university, less proud of the University? Just something historical as you look back.

Pearson: It's been an interesting 50 years, and one of the things that that I've enjoyed the most is interacting with Pacific students. Their hairstyles, clothing and tattoos have changed, but throughout the years I have found that Pacific students have always been highly motivated students, devoted to getting the most out of their education and willing to explore new ideas and concepts. I have also really enjoyed my interactions with faculty and staff from across the campus. I have become friends with faculty and staff from across the College of the Pacific, the School of Pharmacy, the Eberhardt School of Business, the Conservatory, Benerd School of Education and the School of Engineering and Computer Science. The faculty and staff at Pacific have always been highly student-centered and wonderful colleagues. And when I was involved with the Academic Council, I got to develop a relationship with Provost Gilbertson and President De Rosa. It was very interesting to get a chance to look at the University through their eyes and see the University from the perspective of an administrator. That was an enjoyable experience and I started to get a greater sense of what some of the challenges were on the administrative side of the University. Over the years fundraising has become increasingly important as well as increasing retention and the graduation rate of students. In the last fifteen years there has been greater emphasis on health care programs. The School of Pharmacy and the School of Dentistry have brought recognition to Pacific and now the School of Health Sciences is greatly increasing the number of health care related programs. Pacific has also faced some major challenges during my fifty years. In the late 1970s the Cluster Colleges: Raymond College, Elbert Covelle College, and Callison College were closed and then in the mid-1990s the football program was suspended.

Meyer: Wait, can you say that again, I missed that.

Pearson: For many years Pacific had an NCAA Division I football program. Making what, I suspect, was a very difficult decision for many of the Regents, football was suspended after the 1995 season. Hence, Pacific has not lost a football game since 1995. A Committee of Regents, alumni and faculty revisited the decision in 1999 and the Regents voted to continue the suspension. I think in retrospect it was the right decision. The cost of maintaining a Division I football program was significant, and it was increasingly difficult for mid-sized universities to be competitive. Over the years there have been some major changes in various areas of the campus. The Quonset Buildings were removed, the DeRosa Center and other new classroom/lab buildings and residential facilities were built, but for classical brick and ivy, pitch roof architectural style has been maintained. The groundskeepers have always kept the campus looking beautiful with the changing seasons. I'm optimistic that with President Callahan's leadership, that Pacific's future is bright. And I don't know if that answered your question.

Meyer: Yes you have, because evolution you know, has to do with historical changes. But anyway, a little off the subject. You have been involved with faculty governance indirectly, directly, you're involved now, even as a retiree --working on the faculty handbook. Sometimes people are complaining about time involved in committees. Give us a kind of an overall impression of the

role of faculty governance? Is it? Is it important to a university? Is it important to the faculty people involved? Well, what's your impression of that role that we have.

Pearson: I think involving faculty and staff in university governance is very important. It is very important and not only universities. If an employee feels that they have a stake in the future of their organization, they will likely be more engaged. If they sense that they can make a difference, faculty, and staff will likely speak up if they observe something that would improve the student experience. I think that is a win for everybody. During my time at Pacific, there's mostly been a positive relationship between the administration and faculty, and the faculty is allowed to provide input on almost all curricular issues, and most of the other issues impacting students has been very important in Pacific's success. I think that it leads to a sense that we're part of a single community wanting the university to succeed. I think that's one of Pacific's strengths. We may not always agree, and the process might take longer than just top-down decision making, but the give and take provides multiple perspectives, which I think usually, if not always, makes the final decision better and easier to implement.

Meyer: Related to that question is, you've been on a number of search committees, and that's unusual, I think. For a faculty person, you have that kind of esteem. You have that kind of respect to have been chosen. Can you tell us a little bit about your role, and whether you felt like you've contributed in search committees? And a little bit about that whole thing.

Pearson: Search committees are sometimes challenging, but they are an important part of shared governance. Over the years, I have served on committees searching for faculty and administrative deans as well as searches seeking Student Life, Enrollment Management, and Athletics administrators. I learned a lot about how other universities operate by talking with candidates. I also was asked to chair several search committees. There was a time when I began wondering why Phil Gilbertson and Don DeRosa kept calling me up. One of the goals of the chair include ensuring that candidates feel comfortable and get timely information about the search process. Another goal is facilitating the interaction of the members of the committee. A chair should make sure that a search runs smoothly and maintain the timely flow of information to all parties. It has been very enjoyable, working with faculty, staff, and administrators from across the university as well as students. Almost every committee has one or more student members. I recently talked to one of the ASUOP senators this last year, and they're hoping to increase the number of students on committees so that there'd be two students on some search committees and several other governance committees.

Meyer: Yeah. Why do you think they chose you, or asked you? What did they think that you particularly had to contribute?

Pearson: I often wondered why I was asked to chair searches. I would like to think that maybe they thought I was a good facilitator.

Meyer: That's interesting. That's an interesting answer.

Pearson: That I had some skills as a facilitator or conductor . . . to draw everybody together, get them to work cooperatively, provide everyone the opportunity to contribute, and accomplish tasks at hand.

Pearson: After one of the Dean search committees that I was on, the committee continued to have gatherings for several years after the search was completed. We would get together once a year for an informal “reunion” which was a little bit unusual for search committees.

Meyer: I think that was a compliment that they enjoyed each other's relationship and wanted to carry on the committee.

Pearson: I mean, they really did. They seemed to enjoy working together, which was really impressive to watch.

Meyer: One thing you've alluded to. that I've always felt is the Emeriti Society gives me an opportunity to be with colleagues with whom I never would have had any relationship at all, and so these committees provide that to us. But because and of course, the smaller the committee. The more intimate you become. But yeah. We're getting close to the end of our interview. There's always an open, ended question at the end. Kind of what have we not covered that you would have liked me to have asked? Is there something that you thought to yourself? Gee! I hope she asked me that, or is there something that you thought? Gosh! I hope she doesn't ask me that. Anything else along that line?

Pearson: No, but I guess I'd like to go back to your earlier question about my thoughts on Stockton. The longer I lived in Stockton, the more I explored, the more I got to appreciate the many experiences that it has to offer residents. There really is a lot going on. Since my marriage to Marija Anna in the late 1970s we have lived near Victory Park and the Haggin Museum. I've enjoyed many walks around Victory Park. For many years our dog Quinn would walk me around the park every morning. Occasionally, Quinn and I would cross paths with Susan Eggman, who always was a local city council woman, and then was elected to the California Assembly. More recently I have started attending the Concerts in the Park during the summer and evening attending events at the Haggin. My wife and I have also very much enjoyed all the many small, family-owned restaurants offering so many different types of food. I think Pacific should be commended for the Community Involvement Program [CIP] which was established in 1969 or 1970. The CIP provides scholarships for local first-generation students, which provides educational opportunities for local residents. Pacific also provides opportunities for Stockton residents to attend cultural events, speakers, as well as athletic events. Pacific has a wonderful Conservatory that provides concerts available to the community. I think one of the nicest things about Pacific's relationship with the community is that there are no walls around the campus. It is enjoyable to see dogs being walked, and families and young children playing. I think the Pacific has been very effective in breaking down, what some might call, the town and gown approach.

Meyer: Ivory tower stuff

Pearson: Right, The ivory tower stuff.

Meyer: Well, I've enjoyed this. I think what this interview has provided is a look at you personally. Your own personality. It certainly has contributed to why, you have chosen to work a good part of your career at a small university, and I, personally have enjoyed just asking the questions of you because I respected you personally all these years. Thank you so much. Thank you so much. Now, the worst part is you have to edit it.

Pearson: Finally, I want to thank you, Doris, because I can remember we first met in the late 1970s. That was when somebody that's very close to me also interacted with you regularly. Marija Anna, my spouse of many years, worked as an administrative assistant in the Physical Education and Athletic Department Office . . . which was your home for many, many years.

Meyer: I remember those years very well.

Pearson: Thank you again very much for all you have done for Pacific students and faculty colleagues.

Meyer: Thank you.