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University of California, Santa Cruz

University Library

Allan J. Dyson:

Managing the UCSC Library, 1979-2003

Interviewed and Edited by Irene Reti

Santa Cruz, California

2006

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Introduction

Allan J. [Lan] Dyson was appointed University Librarian at UC Santa Cruz's University Library in August 1979, and retired in July 2003. This oral history, conducted as part of the Regional History Project's University History Series, is a singular contribution to the documentation of twenty-four years of history, not only of UCSC's University Library, but also of a period of extensive technological and cultural transformations in academic librarianship in the United States.¹

Born in 1942, Dyson grew up in Salem, New Hampshire, then a relatively rural area of New England. He was among the first students at his public high school to win a scholarship to an Ivy League school. At Harvard, he played a leadership role in the largest student-run social service organization, and received a military commission through the Reserve Officer Training Corps. After graduation, he was assigned as a U.S. Army second lieutenant to the nearby Watertown Arsenal. There he was appointed the chief administrative services officer, developing management skills that would serve him well in future positions in library administration.

Following his two years of active duty in the army, Dyson entered Simmons College library school in 1966. He was interested in pursuing library management as a career and therefore planned to work in public libraries, where more management positions existed at the time. But fate and opportunity led in other directions, and Dyson was offered the position of assistant to the director of libraries at Columbia University, where

¹In 1993 the Regional History Project published *Donald T. Clark: Early UCSC History and the Founding of the University Library*. Those readers who peruse both Dyson's and Clark's volumes can trace nearly all of the history of the University Library.—Editor.

he stayed for three years, working under three different directors, each with distinct management styles. There he also developed skills and experience in the emerging field of library instruction, and attended a pre-conference session on library instruction in the undergraduate library at the American Library Association's conference in Dallas in 1971. At that event he was recruited by the University of California at Berkeley for the position of head of their new Moffitt Undergraduate Library. Dyson held this position from September 1971 to July 1979, during a period of great political upheaval, as well as expansion of the library's collection and staff.

Dyson arrived as university librarian at UCSC in 1979, just as the University Library faced a series of formidable challenges. The first was coping with some volatile interpersonal conflicts among managers that had arisen in a period of turmoil during which the previous university librarian and two assistant university librarians had been removed from their positions. "The situation at UCSC was pretty ugly at that point," Dyson recalls. "I was actually told I should not take the job because the UCSC library was a 'snake pit.'" A second challenge was implementing the library's first automated circulation system, Computer Library Systems Incorporated [CLSI]. When Dyson arrived, little had been accomplished in planning to bring this soon-to-arrive system online.

A third problem afflicting the young library was the woefully inadequate nature of the building which housed its science collections. UCSC's Science Library at the time was a building that was originally meant to store the collections of the Lick Observatory, a "fortress" that lacked bathrooms and adequate office space for library staff, had almost

no windows, and only a dumb-waiter for an elevator. The basement of the building, originally intended to be a storage room, had been utilized for the expanding collections. The ceiling was so low that taller patrons were in danger of hitting their heads on the protruding fire sprinklers. Furthermore, the size of the collection had outstripped the space available in the Science Library, and many of the books and journals had been shifted to McHenry Library. This created a situation where irritated and sweaty library users hiked up and down a rather steep hill to secure their research materials. One of Dyson's most impressive accomplishments was leading the planning, design and implementation of a new, world-class Science Library, which opened in 1991. Dyson took an unusual, hands-on role in the design and planning of this project; he chaired the building committee and participated in almost all construction meetings. The prestigious architectural firm Esherick, Homsey, Dodge, and Davis (who also designed the world-famous Monterey Bay Aquarium) was selected to design the new library. The firm solicited input from faculty, library staff and students. The new Science Library is filled with light that filters through the coastal redwoods that surround the site. The building won the 1993 Gold Medal award from the American Institute of Architects/American Library Association, among other accolades. In 2001 it was renamed the Science and Engineering Library. Dyson's lively and detailed narration of the many considered steps that went into completing this remarkable building is one of the most fascinating contributions of this oral history.

Dyson also discusses the benefits and challenges of being the smallest library within the UC system. As a small research library UCSC also had "to make up, in terms of service, what we lacked in terms of resources," Dyson explains, and it is this service-oriented

approach which formed the heart of his management philosophy. The cultivation of a strong and expert library staff was a core element of this managerial approach, as was maintaining a relatively flat organizational chart, where staff had easy access to management. Dyson characterizes his management philosophy as one based in “effervescence theory,” in which a manager creates a climate where staff feel encouraged to share creative ideas which then “bubble up” to management. This model fostered the excellence of many of the dedicated professional and support staff who have contributed to the high quality of the University Library.

This narrative also provides a window into the general history of the UC Santa Cruz campus. Dyson served under several academic and executive vice chancellors, as well as four chancellors, and shares his recollections of each of those figures. He chaired the Campus Lands Management Advisory Committee for many years, and outlines some of the controversial land use issues the UCSC campus faced during this period of considerable growth.

Somewhat atypically for a university librarian, Dyson had served as systemwide president of the Librarians Association of the University of California before coming to UCSC . He discusses the evolution and complexities of that organization. This chapter of the interview is an insightful contribution to the history of librarianship within the University of California.

When Dyson attended a student-organized meeting protesting the marginal position of ethnic studies and students of color at UCSC in the late 1980s, he experienced an epiphany regarding the lack of multicultural representation on the library staff, and how

this impacted students at UCSC. From that point on he galvanized an effort to recruit and retain more librarians of color and to institute multicultural outreach programs in Reference and other units at the library. He reflects on this process in this narrative.

As Arthur Hamlin stated in *The University Library in the United States: Its Origins and Development*, “The blunt truth is that strong prejudice against women as administrators existed until the 1970s.”² Dyson’s decision early in his tenure not to accept an invitation to the all-male Bohemian Club speaks to his consciousness of these power imbalances. Dyson speaks candidly about the historical gender inequity within the library profession in terms of representation of women among top administrative positions, an inequity that began to shift only recently, during the period in which Dyson served as university librarian at UC Santa Cruz.

In an era of diminishing resources, the role of university librarian has evolved to encompass more and more external relations and fundraising. As the UCSC campus matured it acquired a substantial pool of older alumni donors, making this kind of fundraising possible. Dyson credits Library Development Director Margaret Gordon with building a now flourishing development program that boasts over sixty library subject endowments, as well as other highly successful fundraising endeavors. In addition, Katherine Beiers, who served as assistant university librarian for human resources during many years of Dyson’s tenure, was also a city councilwoman in Santa Cruz for many years, and after retiring, completed a term as mayor. She “introduced [Dyson] to the community and the important leaders in the community,” and greatly

²(Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981), p. 117.—Editor.

aided him in these aspects of his role. Finally, another chapter of the oral history is devoted to an in- depth discussion of the Friends of the UCSC Library organization, another essential component of community relations.

One of the most powerful advantages of oral history as a research methodology is its capacity to illuminate and amplify the subjective experience of historical events far beyond what can be gleaned from reading newspaper articles or official reports. In the section entitled “A Series of Challenging Events,” Dyson offers a candid and astute discussion of several difficult events that took place during his tenure. These include the “Stack O’ Wheats” prints protest by a UCSC feminist student activist that thrust UCSC’s library into a national debate on the censorship of library materials; the painful and media-distorted “Jazz photos” controversy, in which an individual accused the library of mishandling materials borrowed for an exhibit; the impact of the Loma Prieta Earthquake on the library; and finally the bankruptcy of the Faxon Company, a library serials vendor. As Dyson points out, “the quality of an organization isn’t only measured by how well it does its day-to-day routine bureaucratic activities. Another way you measure the quality of a staff . . . is how well does it deal with the unexpected? How well does it deal with a crisis?”

When Dyson retired in July 2003, the University Library faced some of the same challenges it did when he arrived in 1979. While UCSC’s student and faculty body has grown far more diverse, also reflected in the staff and programs of the University Library, significant work remains to be done in the area of racial and gender equity on campus. The problem of how to stretch limited financial resources remains consistent. As

Dyson points out, about every decade UC and the state of California are confronted with a budgetary crisis. New technological challenges have arisen due to the rapid proliferation of electronic article databases, online journals, and digital archives. Yet despite dramatic transformations in the methods of delivery of information to library users, “the underlying role of the library remains the acquisition, organization, and dissemination of recorded knowledge and information for students, faculty, and community users.”³ Even in this era of increasingly decentralized desktop delivery of digital information, we need intellectual public spaces like libraries. “Academic libraries are evolving to more actively support the social dimensions of information and learning. They are creating welcoming spaces, explicitly associated with tolerance and culture, for social interaction and intellectual discourse,” writes Carlton College librarian, Sam Demas.⁴

As this volume goes to press, I am listening to drilling and pounding below my office at McHenry Library. The University Library is beginning construction on a major expansion and renovation project which will affirm the dynamic role the library plays on campus as a collective intellectual space. There are several justifications for this project. Designed and built at the tail-end of the pre-electronic era, the current McHenry Library building lacks the state of the art wiring and flexibility essential for delivering electronic access in the 21st century. Climate control is also inadequate. There are significant issues

³Joanne R. Euster, “The Academic Library: Its Place and Role in the Institution,” in Gerald B. McCabe and Ruth J. Person, *Academic Libraries: Their Rationale and Role in American Higher Education* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1995.—Editor.

⁴“From the Ashes of Alexandria: What’s Happening in the College Library,” in *Library As Place: Rethinking Roles, Rethinking Space*, CLIR Publication No. 129, February 2005.—Editor.

regarding seismic safety. Finally, the expanding book and serial collections have far outstripped the carrying capacity of the building. All of these issues will be addressed in the upcoming renovation and expansion, which will result in a renovated McHenry Library building and that includes new integrated space called the McHenry Addition. The project is scheduled to be completed by 2010. Planning and fundraising for this venture dates back to the early 1990s, and was spearheaded by Lan Dyson during his tenure as university librarian. The McHenry Library of the future will stand as testament to Dyson's leadership, as well as the vision of many other library staff at UCSC who have participated in this extensive planning process.

When Dyson participated in these interviews in the winter of 2004-05, the library faced another difficulty: the campus had not yet completed the recruitment of a new university librarian. That obstacle was overcome, however, and in October 2005, University Librarian Virginia (Ginny) Steel began her tenure; she will steer the University Library through this era of continued rapid technological and institutional change and demographic growth.

I conducted ten hours of interviews with Dyson in the Science and Engineering Library between December 2004 and January 2005. Oral history interviews are co-creations of both the narrator and the interviewer. For the historical record, it is important to note that this interview was conducted by a longtime member of the library staff. As an editor/oral historian with the Regional History Project since 1989, I brought to this project a "library insider's" perspective on Dyson's tenure and this period of the library's history. I am also an alumnus of UCSC, and first began using the University

Library as an undergraduate in environmental studies in 1978, at a time when the library's catalog was published on microfiche, and well before the new Science and Engineering Library was built. Yet, I am not a librarian or a library assistant, and while the Regional History Project works closely with Special Collections and other archival units at the library, the inner workings of the library profession are still somewhat of a mystery to me. I hope that this location "on the margins" of the library has given me the perspective to ask Dyson some of the questions that those less familiar with academic libraries might be inclined to ask.

These tape-recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim, edited for continuity and clarity, and organized into chapters. I would like to acknowledge transcriber and student editor Lizzy Gray for her excellent work on this volume. The transcript was returned to Dyson for his editing. With his characteristic dedication and meticulousness, he went over the manuscript several times, line-by-line, and provided many written amendments and clarifications which have been incorporated into the manuscript. He also lent us the photographs included in the volume. Copies of this oral history are on deposit in the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley; in Special Collections and the stacks at McHenry Library at the University of California, Santa Cruz; and on the UCSC Library's website. The Project is supported administratively by Christine Bunting, head of Special Collections and Archives, and University Librarian Virginia Steel.

—*Irene Reti*
Director, Regional History Project
University Library, July 2006

Early Life

Reti: Lan, let's start with where were you born and where did you grow up?

Dyson: It never quite makes sense when I say where I was born, because I grew up in New Hampshire, but the nearest hospital was in Massachusetts. So while I was actually born in Lawrence, Massachusetts, we lived right on the border in what was then called Salem Depot, New Hampshire. It was a rural community, I would say four or five thousand people at most, spread over one of those New England townships. "Salem" actually consisted of Salem Depot, North Salem, and Salem Center, so that it covered a large amount of land area. The part I lived in was called Salem Depot, because that's where the train station was. My family had been there for many, many years. The land where my home was located, in fact, was the same spot where my father was born in the late 1890s. And although it wasn't so-called when I was growing up, it had originally been known as Dyson's Corners, back from the 19th century. My father, his brother, and one of his sisters all had homes next to each other in this area.

I went to public school, and through high school (Woodbury High School), in Salem. Woodbury was not a school that was particularly oriented towards academic performance, and fortunately my brother, my late brother who was about seven years older than I am, had been to Boston University, and then was at that point in Harvard Law School. So he encouraged me to apply to schools other than the University of New Hampshire, which is where Woodbury High tended to send the kids. Almost on a fluke, I applied to Harvard. According to a fairly rich fellow in the community who had sent

his son to prep schools, no one from Salem had ever graduated from the public school system and then gone on to an Ivy League school. And Salem was like three hundred years old, almost as old as Harvard. (laughter)

So I was offered a scholarship, a loan, a job cleaning dorm rooms, and various things like that, and I decided to try Harvard. Despite the fact that it was only thirty miles away, it was a total life change for me. I don't think I'd been to Boston more than four or five times in my life, even though it was only thirty miles away. There was no interstate or anything like that, that is there now. Now Salem, New Hampshire is a bedroom community for Boston.

Reti: Would you mind telling me what year you were born?

Dyson: I was born in 1942. I was born just a few months after Pearl Harbor. And I've often wondered, you know, if my folks had known World War II was going to start, I might not exist on this planet. (laughter) My mother was pregnant at the time of Pearl Harbor, with me. I have two sisters, or had two sisters (one is deceased), and my brother, whose ages stretched over an enormous amount of time. My oldest sister, still alive, is eighteen years older than I am. And then I had a sister fifteen years older, and my brother seven years older, and myself.

Probably the most critical event in my life during that period was the sudden death of my mother when I was just about to be twelve years old. She drowned. My oldest sister

really has been half older sister and half surrogate mother. My dad remarried, so I had a stepmother for most of my years. She just, a couple of years ago, passed away at the age of ninety-three. So she was around a long time.

The other interesting fact about my family is its longevity. My dad also was the youngest of four children, and on his eightieth birthday all his siblings came to celebrate his birthday with him. I'm now sixty-two, my sister is now eighty, and very hale and hearty. So barring driving off a cliff or something like that . . . if all goes well I have quite a few years to look forward to.

Harvard University

Harvard was wonderful. I'd never been someone who was academically oriented. I always did very well in my high school because they didn't challenge you at all.⁵ I never took a final exam in any course in anything. They didn't give them. So when I say Harvard was a totally different life . . . I had to almost start fresh.

To me, what was great about Harvard was the people. I roomed with people from around the country. I was friends with people from around the world. It was a totally wonderful experience that way. I'm still friends with some of those people. Fortunately for me, what interests me most in life is people, managing people, and serving people, and that kind of thing, more than the actual pursuit of learning. I had no interest in getting a Ph.D. or anything like that.

5. Dyson graduated as valedictorian of his class in 1960—Editor.

At Harvard, the most energy I put in was into a group called Phillips Brooks House, which is a social service organization run by Harvard undergraduates that places literally hundreds upon hundreds of Harvard students in volunteer situations, from teaching classes in prisons, to tutoring kids in public housing, and things like that. And oddly enough, although that did not do a great deal for my grades, it was better preparation for the rest of my life than almost anything else I could have done, because I was the Harvard vice president of the organization. There were two vice presidents, one at Radcliffe and one at Harvard. And having to deal with the complexities of an organization that had probably seven or eight hundred volunteers at that time (it's probably twice that size now) was good preparation for everything else I did in my life. That's been a theme for everything that's happened to me in life. In odd sorts of ways, the most seemingly unrelated aspect of something, like being in the army, turned out to be good preparation for management later on. I'll get into in that a little bit.

Going into the Army

I was in ROTC [the Reserve Officer Training Corps] because it helped pay the bills while I was at Harvard. The Vietnam War didn't exist for the U.S. when I got into ROTC. By the time I graduated from Harvard, being in ROTC was a little bit more scary because it was 1964 when I graduated. I went into the army, and luckily, I was assigned to my duty station I think five days *before* the Tonkin Gulf incident.⁶ Now, already having a duty

6. In August of 1964, United States President Lyndon B. Johnson claimed that North Vietnamese forces had fired on two American destroyers in the Gulf of Tonkin. Although there was a first attack, the second attack was later proved unfounded. Known today as the Gulf of Tonkin Incident, this led to the open involvement of the United States in the Vietnam War, with the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution—Editor.

station happened to be good news, because during the two years I was in the army they weren't pulling many people off their existing duty stations, as much as they were taking new people or assigning whole infantry units, and things like that. By the time I was out of the army, active duty in 1966, they were starting to pull people away from existing duty stations and starting to send them over. But I escaped, and I use that word advisedly, having to go to Vietnam, luckily. Although again, oddly enough, I got all of the benefits, because I served in the "Vietnam era," which makes me an affirmative action person, believe it or not. (laughter) So things like the Vietnam-era G.I. bill helped put me through library school.

Watertown Arsenal

What I did in the army was kind of fascinating, because I wound up assigned, of all places, about five minutes from Harvard Square. I asked for overseas, and they put me at Watertown Arsenal in Watertown, Massachusetts, which is a suburb of Boston. I was trained as a chemical corps officer, for no apparent sane reason, but that's the training I had. And when people say, "What does a chemical corps officer do?" I say, "Well, you know in those John Wayne movies where you see John Wayne crawling up the hillside with a gun to attack the enemy through a thick haze of smoke? The chemical corps are the guys out in front that generated the smoke screen."

Fortunately, after my nine weeks of chemical corps training, I never had anything to do with the chemical corps again because I got assigned to Watertown Arsenal, which had nothing to do with nerve gas or bad stuff. My job was purely an administrative position.

I was the chief administrative services officer. Watertown Arsenal had about twelve military and about 2500 civilians. It was largely engaged in materiel research, and by that I mean doing things like learning how to make better bulletproof vests and stuff like that, which wasn't a bad thing. A woman who had been there about thirty years, and who kind of was the chief administrative assistant and knew how everything worked, took me under her wing, and again, I had two years of excellent management training. It was a complex situation because the arsenal was phasing down. So people were either being offered jobs elsewhere, or laid off. The administrative types, like the head of telephone service, or the head of the printing plant or whatever, who reported directly to me, I never knew from week to week whether they were going to be leaving. Nor did they. Now, this created some unique human resource situations, and it also meant that on very short notice I had to learn [snaps his fingers] all of the basic aspects of something that I would know nothing about whatsoever, because I would have to go in and run, say, the cryptographic plant for two weeks, while they trained somebody else to replace the guy that had just been transferred to some other arsenal. And of course the whole atmosphere of people with families that were being dislocated or losing jobs and so on. Again, very good training for the University of California (laughter) later on, with its various budget crises and things like that.

While I was at the Watertown Arsenal two things happened that made me interested in library science. One was a now-embarrassing article in something like *Fortune*, or something similar . . . I think it was a more male-oriented—*Esquire*, I think it was. The article was called "Young Man: Be a Librarian."

Reti: (laughter)

Dyson: It simply was reflective of the fact that at that time, as now, the majority of people in librarianship were female. But at that point there was an active attempt to try to encourage more males to go into librarianship. Whatever. I'd managed to go all the way through Harvard without knowing that there was such a thing as the *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature*, without ever knowingly having been in contact with somebody who was a trained librarian. Harvard did not at that time—despite the fact they had an undergraduate library—they didn't have any librarians giving reference service or anything in it.

Reti: No library instruction?

Dyson: No library instruction. No nothing. And I can actually think back on courses where, had I had just the most basic kind of instruction on how to do research, I could have gotten whole grades better than I did. That kind of predisposed me as I started looking into librarianship to think a lot about how important this was. Because it directly related to things that I hadn't been able to do at Harvard, I didn't know how to do.

The other thing that happened was that because I was stationed so close to Harvard, fellows who were younger than I, that I'd been friends with, were still going there, and so I'd occasionally go over and see them and have lunch. And one fellow by the name of Bob Walsh told me . . . I asked him, "Well, what are you going to do when you

graduate?" and he said, "I'm going to the University of Chicago library school." I didn't even know there were library schools when I had that conversation with him. It turned out, I believe, his dad was a librarian. Bob actually went on to have a pretty nice career. He'd majored as an undergraduate in architecture, and then he got his library degree and additional architecture courses and he became a building consultant for libraries.

Simmons College Library School

So I thought, well, I will just go look into this a little bit more. So in full uniform, second lieutenant uniform, I strode into the Simmons College library school for an interview with the dean. Well, if you understand that this was at a time when they were looking for men to come into librarianship, walking in totally fit and trim in my lieutenant's uniform (laughter) and saying, "I'm interested . . ." You know, it worked out well. The dean there was great. He said, "To be a librarian you have to be interested in knowledge but not so much deeply interested in research." Because librarians' knowledge tends to have to be more like a foot deep and a mile wide, rather than vertically knowledgeable about something specific.

I had happened to have roomed at Harvard with two of the smartest guys on the face of the planet, literally. One went on to become the number one student at Harvard Law School, and the other one scored higher grades on his law aps [the Law School Admission Test—LSAT] than the first one did. They were just brighter than I was, and when you are around somebody that's really brighter than you are, you feel like a puppy. They were both government majors, which is what I was, and so they helped me

a lot to get through college. The idea of being in a profession that could help those guys was attractive to me.

Things worked out. Simmons offered me an assistantship, which meant that I went to school half-time and worked about four-fifths time for the Simmons College Library itself.

Reti: That's quite a workload.

Dyson: Right. But I was right on-site, so I never had any travel time to get to courses or anything. It actually worked out extremely well.

I had no interest whatsoever in going into academic libraries. My reasoning basically was that I knew I wanted eventually to get into management, and I always felt that, you know, it's the captain of the destroyer that goes on to become the captain of the battleship, not the assistant to the head of the battleship. I thought, I really want to be in a situation, however small, that I'm in charge of and I have some responsibility for. At that time public libraries were much more the place to be, because you could graduate from library school and probably be put in charge of a small branch in a small city someplace. I thought that would be better training for me than getting in through some other situation.

Columbia University Library

I was married to a woman whose family lived in the Greater New York area and we didn't particularly want to live near the family, for reasons I won't go into, and so we ruled out New York. So it was going to be public libraries, something in charge, and not in New York. Then the dean of students advised me to interview for a particular job, just to get the interview experience, and I did, and I was offered the job of assistant to the director of libraries at Columbia University, which I think broke all of the three rules that I had thought of. It wasn't a public library, it was an assistant to somebody, and it was in New York City. (laughter) But I figured sometimes in life you have to be flexible. This was clearly a fantastic opportunity. You were working right with one of the top librarians in the country.

Reti: Who was that?

Dyson: His name was Richard Logsdon. So I made the jump into academic libraries, having really not had a whole lot of training in academic libraries in library school, because I'd been more interested, as I say, in other aspects.

The Columbia experience was fascinating to me. I did not have a tremendous amount of responsibility, although there were administrative things, the library office kind of thing, that reported directly to me. What was most fascinating about it was that the guy that hired me retired after a year. There was then an interim director for a year, and then a new guy came in in the third year, and I left after the third year. So what that meant was

in a three-year period of time I saw three different director styles for one year each, which is about as close to an internship as you could possibly get. It was just fantastic. They were all very different guys. It was a tumultuous time in history. 1968 to 1971 was a tumultuous time . . .

Reti: Oh. At Columbia.⁷

Dyson: At Columbia University. You got it. It was great training for moving on to the undergraduate library at [UC] Berkeley because . . .

Reti: (laughter) I'll say.

Dyson: . . . 1970, you know, the Cambodian invasion and all that kind of stuff occurred while I was at Columbia. I used to have a collection of rocks that had come through windows of libraries that I worked in. (laughter) I think I finally disposed of them when I retired here, but you could see the little impression of dirt on the rock where it had come through. It was not a fun time to be in the management of anything, especially if you felt you were pretty much in sympathy with the people that were out there demonstrating. At the same time, you didn't particularly want them tearing down your library.

7. The Columbia University protests of spring 1968, just before Dyson started, were a landmark event in the anti-war movement. Columbia students seized Hamilton Hall and Low Library, and in the days that followed gained control of three more University buildings. The protesters demanded that the University halt gym construction inorningside Park, dissociate from military organizations, and provide general amnesty for all student protesters. Seven hundred twelve people were arrested and one hundred forty-eight reported injuries—Editor.

So I spent three very educative years at Columbia. And again, my lucky professional star shined on me. I mentioned earlier that I was interested in library instruction and things like that. I had an opportunity to be part of such a program that was just starting up at Columbia University. Library instruction was brand-new in academic libraries at that point. People had not been doing a lot of it. It was exciting. The whole theories and techniques of it were just developing at that time. I had team-taught one library instruction session; I had been fascinated by the kids' reaction to it. It worked out well. And then librarians were having one of their very first conferences, an American Library Association [ALA] conference on undergraduate libraries.⁸ The person who was going from Columbia, who was in charge of part of the program, wasn't able to give the presentation on the Columbia program. He actually had to take over running the whole conference, because the person who had been doing that was quite ill. And he said casually, "Well, you're going to the ALA conference anyway. Why don't you give this presentation?" So I did. I enjoyed it. And unbeknownst to me, there were two people in the audience . . . One was the university librarian for UC Berkeley and the other was the university librarian for the University of Maryland, both of whom were looking for someone to head their brand-new undergraduate libraries.

Reti: So they were over there recruiting, head-hunting.

Dyson: Yes, they were recruiting. I didn't know this. Suddenly I was in the position that I would wish on everyone once in their life—that is, being sought after by two different

8. American Library Association Annual Meeting, pre-conference on the role of undergraduate libraries, Dallas, Texas, June 1971.—Editor.

groups of people who are competing for you. So for about three months I just was on top of the world.

Reti: (laughter) Wow.

Moffitt Undergraduate Library, UC Berkeley

Dyson: They'd call up and offer a little bit more, and this kind of thing. Ultimately, although the Maryland situation offered quite a bit more money, the management situation at the top was not as clear. I felt they were making promises to me about future advancement that they could not possibly fulfill, or if they did, they were going to be violating all sorts of good processes, which would only create problems for me. So I decided to take the Berkeley job. Again, a major shift, from East Coast to West Coast. And after that, things really, really worked out well. The Moffitt Undergraduate Library was about nine months old.

Reti: So before that it had been combined with other libraries?

Dyson: There was a reserve book room in the main library. They had just literally built this separate Undergraduate Library. And as inevitably happens in the University [of California], they spent the first eight months getting the kinks out of the building because they didn't have quite enough money to finish it. The story I tell (which is only slightly apocryphal), was that my predecessor, Marc Gittelsohn, threw up his hands after about nine months and said, "I can't do this any more. The elevator is not working. The

air conditioning goes off on the hottest days.” He went down to UC San Diego, and I was hired, and what he didn’t know was he had just finished fixing all of the problems. (laughter) That last big one that had gone wrong—he fixed it, and then nothing went wrong. I mean, any more than would normally go wrong in an incredibly busy building.

So I walked in with all of the kinks out of the building, a very strong staff, a very, very multicultural staff. And I headed what I believe at that time was the busiest undergraduate library in the world. It was a real center for the campus. It was brand-new, and any brand-new library attracts a lot of usage. We were supposedly a duplicate library of about 200,000 volumes, a library that was created for undergraduates. But I quickly saw that while we might be a duplicate library, there was nothing that said that our “duplicate” book couldn’t arrive faster than the original one was going to get through processing in the main library.⁹ We’d send people off to Telegraph Avenue with book bags when new books came out, and grab them and get them. So we had more than just undergraduates coming to that library, and it was thought of as the hot spot for library service on campus.

It was an exciting time. And it was a scary time. California Hall, which was then where the chancellor worked, was fifty feet away from the Undergraduate Library. So demonstrations tended to spill over, at least to the extent that we would have to close the doors to the library. I remember one incident where the doors were locked—we had been ordered to lock them because some big demonstration was flowing around the

9. Moffitt Library was a somewhat unusual undergraduate library in that it had its own technical processing staff—Dyson.

chancellor's building. And someone came up and was so furious that the library was locked that he smashed the glass door, broke it with his briefcase or something. That was just . . . That was what life was like back then. It wasn't suddenly unusual. That's just the atmosphere that one lived in.

Reti: You are talking about the early 1970s, which was a time of great political upheaval.

Dyson: Oh, very much so. There was a great deal of ferment in those years. And it combined with a great deal of labor ferment on the campus. We had a student employee strike in sympathy with a campus employee strike. So there were pictures of me checking out reserve books and working sixteen-hour days, and all that kind of thing.

We built up a wonderful professional staff of six. We had a black librarian, a Hispanic librarian, males and females. We adopted a style of leadership which was then called participative management—which was quite revolutionary back then; now it seems totally normal—where we rotated who chaired management meetings among the librarians. We actually rotated who was the head of Public Services in the library and things like that. There was a lot of good feeling. It was one of those situations where I look back . . . It just happened to be the right mix of people. We had people just out of library school, like Ellen Meltzer, who now works for the UC Office of the President here. We had people like Linda Beaupré, who went on to become the head of the University of Cincinnati library. Vickie Hanawalt, now the head of the Reed College library.

Applying for the University Librarian Position at UC Santa Cruz

I've always been exceedingly lucky when applying for jobs. The search committee for this particular job [UL at UCSC], the outside university librarian who they had on the search committee was a former undergraduate librarian, Millicent "Penny" Abel. The undergraduate librarians around the country were a very, very close-knit group. There were only about forty university-based undergraduate libraries, and we had our own newsletter and conferences and stuff like that. When I heard—and Penny had gone on, she'd been at the University of Washington and she'd gone, I think, to UC San Diego as the director. When I heard that she would be the university librarian on the committee, I thought, that's interesting. (both laugh) And the other people on the committee seemed like people that my candidacy would resonate with.

The situation at UCSC was pretty ugly at that point. I was actually told I should not take the job because the UCSC library was a "snake pit." That's a direct quote. I was told that by someone in the Office of the President who was concerned for me. UCSC had gone through a situation where the university librarian had been forced to resign. The two most senior line associate university librarians were demoted to librarian and put in non-management positions, et cetera. My chief competition for the job was Bill McCoy, who was then the associate university librarian at UC Davis. I knew Bill quite well, because I had been president of the Librarians Association of the University of California [LAUC] during my time at the Moffitt Undergraduate Library, and he had been very active in it. And I thought, given the management turmoil down here, that because he was in charge of human resources at Davis, and had a lot of experience, he was probably

going to be not only strong competition, but he might be likely to get the job.

There was a wonderful night where he and I and two friends went out to dinner in San Francisco, while the recruitment was going on. And it truly was one of those situations where, despite the fact that we were competing, we remained the best of friends, and we still are.

Reti: That's remarkable.

Dyson: Yes. Neither one of us was running away from a job or was desperate. We both liked the situations we were in. We both knew whoever took the UCSC job was going to go through hell before they came out the other side, because they had to deal with a lot of very special issues down here. Bill's probably fifteen years older than I am—he is a very senior, highly respected person. It turned out that I had parked my car near the restaurant, and I forget how he'd gotten there, but he needed a ride back to his hotel or something like that. I'd driven up and he was staying overnight. He asked me, "Oh, could you give me a ride?" so I said, "Oh, sure." We got in the car, drove down to where his hotel was, and he said, "Oh, by the way . . ." Now, this is after three hours of being together. We chatted some more in the car about the Santa Cruz situation, and I was totally unprepared for what was coming. He looked at me and he said, "Oh, by the way, Lan, something I thought I should just mention to you. I'm withdrawing my application."

Reti: Oh my God. (laughter)

Dyson: (laughter) And I just, “Uh, what!?” Because I knew there was nobody else in the pool that could beat me, because I was a UC person; I’d handled all sorts of turmoil at Moffitt, built that up from scratch, et cetera. He had this twinkle in his eye. He knew even better than I what he was saying to me: “How’d you like to work at UCSC?”

Reti: Exactly.

Dyson: And the rest is history, as they say. He withdrew. I went through the interview process. I don’t know who the other people were. They did interview other people. And I got the job.

Reti: What was the interview like?

Dyson: (pauses) It . . . was very strange. I got an outline of my interview day. It was going to last one day. I looked at it, and I turned it over, and it was blank on the back, and it was a full day, and I was meeting with all these groups. I thought, there’s something very strange about this. I don’t meet with *anybody in the library*.

Reti: Oh wow.

Dyson: Can you imagine? (laughter) I mean, well, it’s nice that I’m going to meet with

the head of the [Academic Senate] Library Committee, but I would see that person one hour every three months. Even my direct boss, the academic vice chancellor, I probably only see for half an hour every two weeks.

Reti: Right.

Dyson: Who are the people I'm going to be spending forty hours a week with?

Reti: So there was no meeting with the staff?

Dyson: There was no meeting with the staff whatsoever. I called back, and said, "Uh, Houston, I think we have a problem here." (both laugh) They had planned on giving me a tour of the library, literally, a walk through the library, and I suppose I could, you know, wave to people as I was rushed by.

I said, "This isn't going to work. I'm going to be running an organization. I've got to know . . . I know you've got some issues down there, but I've got to meet with some people and they have to meet with me, or you're going to be putting me in a situation with two strikes against me. You're setting me up to fail. 'Who's this guy, that no one let us interview him?'" So they added a second—and I don't remember, it was a whole day or a half-day or something—to the first day, where I spent time with the staff. And I think there may have been some internal candidates, but given the history of the situation at UCSC, the campus was very much not interested in having one or another

faction become the victor in some battle by making an internal person the university librarian.

The two people who were jointly running the library at that time were great. There was Katherine Beiers, who was the assistant university librarian for personnel, and Wendell Simons, who was the assistant university librarian for everything else. And they were not line people, meaning they did not previously have the Public Services or Technical Services and all those staffs reporting up through them. They essentially were staff people. So they were able to stay on when the—I don't know what the right metaphor is—housecleaning, night of the long knives, whatever the heck, however bad you want to make it, when the university librarian and the two line AULs were removed from their positions. So I spent a lot of time with Katherine and Wendell. I had an interview with the staff. I don't remember what they asked me, but obviously I managed to get through that one okay. I met with a few other people, and ultimately was offered the job, and started in August of 1979. And then promptly left for three weeks on vacation (both laugh) which I had negotiated as part of my deal.

One of the things I had been doing while I was at Berkeley was that I had been accepted into the doctorate in library science program in the library school there, because of the fact that there was some movement within librarianship to require doctorates or second masters of people for administrative positions. So I was taking one or two courses a year. I think I completed three or four or something like that, one of which, fortunately, was from the Graduate School of Business, on organizational behavior, which was by far the

best course on anything that I ever took relating to how to manage libraries. It wasn't about how to manage libraries, but boy, was it great preparation for the situation down here.

Reti: In library school, when you went to Simmons, did they train you in management?

Dyson: Yes. Simmons is a wonderful school. I'm still associated with it in some ways, and I'll mention that later on, about getting kids from UCSC to go to Simmons. Simmons used kind of a watered-down, case-method approach to a lot of the instruction, where you were given a case, a situation, in effect, that was outlined for you, and then you had to write up what the various elements were that would affect the outcome. It was more an attempt to help you with a thinking process, than to figure out how to handle this unique little situation that they gave you. I had several case method courses at Simmons. Enjoyed it very, very much. It had a practical element to the learning, while you then had to bring in the theory that affected this particular situation. That suited the way my brain works. And the one thing it still does for me, lord knows a whole lot of years later, is it enables me to take a situation and think of it as a case study. That is, when something goes radically wrong, my brain just goes right back to Simmons and says, this is—you know, whether this is some awful thing like the people destroying materials in Special Collections, or whatever the heck it may be—my brain tends to lock into, okay, what are the elements of this? What are the various things, approaches? Who can I call in that can help me reach a decision on this? Who do I need to talk to? And it's thinking of those kinds of unique situations in the management case study program at Simmons that has

helped me.

Reti: That's fascinating.

Dyson: So that's one of those situations where it wasn't the content. It was the process that was the most important thing. Simmons was great. I enjoyed it. I've been friends with various deans over the years, and in fact just concluded an email exchange with the new dean at Simmons, who came from UCLA, of all places. So that's basically how I wound up here.

The Early Years at the University Library

Reti: Okay, so here you are. You've started working at UCSC. What's your first impression of the library?

Dyson: My first impression of the library was . . . Well, first of all, there were quite a few people that didn't like each other. This proved to be true. And I was (pause) surprised and somewhat dismayed to learn that I was not going to be able to use, for a while, the progressive management approaches that I had used at the Undergraduate Library. The reason for that is that if you're going to use things like participative management, there is required a basic willingness to govern by consensus. And by consensus I do not mean unanimity. I simply mean that there's enough trust among all of the players in the decision that they will feel a) that they've been heard and b) that even though they may not get their precise way this time, that it isn't indicative of all those other people being

bad persons, or things like that. That these are comrades. The ultimate goals of the library are understood and agreed upon, and that next time around you have just as likely a chance to have your opinion be the one that carries the day, even though it wasn't the one today. Well, it was pretty clear that people did not have that kind of trust or liking for one another in this situation, and that I was going to have to be a lot more directive in my initial couple of years than I had been used to being in the Undergraduate Library. Fortunately for me, I was bright enough to figure that out, but it didn't exactly make for a pleasant experience.

The first year I was helped a ton by Wendell Simons and Kathy Beiers, because they and I worked together to try to heal the place in a lot of ways, and they, of course, had been here many, many years. Wendell had a lot of experience on other UC campuses also. And so, for approaching a situation that was really new to me, I had two very good guides as to what the situation was.

I remember one incident that sums up my first five months here. We were having a regular meeting of all the department heads, and we were sitting around the conference table in Room 325. All the seats were full; other people were sitting around the edges. We were talking, I think, about: one of the things I found when I got here, just as a tangent, and this plays into what I'm describing, was that I had been told that sometime in the next year [1980], the library was probably going to be getting its first automated system, the circulation system, which was then called CLSI—Computer Library Systems Incorporated, but everybody called it CLSI. So when I got here, and I got back from my

vacation, it was September or early October, and I said, "When, next year, is that supposed to come in?" I actually asked this of the CLSI rep. And they said, "Oh, you know, January 1." (both laugh) Holy expletive! I mean, we had done no preparation, no systems analysis. We had no team to put the thing in place and this was supposed to be arriving in the door in ninety days!

Reti: Mercy. (laughter)

Dyson: So it became apparent that in these management meetings we needed to start talking about how we were going to run this thing, and who we were going to put in charge of it, and what were all the things we needed to do to get ready for it. You can't put an automated system in if you don't know what your paper system is. I mean, you have to analyze—what do we want to automate, and what do we want to throw out and not do anymore? I knew what I didn't know. I didn't know everything we needed to know, but I sure as heck knew what we didn't know. So we're sitting around this table, and I'm looking over to the right side of the table, talking to someone, saying, "Well, maybe we could do this and do that" and then, totally out of left field, a department head, who was sitting over there [to the left] somewhere starts screaming expletives at me. At the top of her lungs.

Reti: Good grief.

Dyson: Yeah. Precisely.

Reti: It was a professional environment.

Dyson: Yeah, I know. I later learned that they sometimes had students who were studying complain that the people in management meetings screamed at each other so loudly that the students quite a distance away from the meeting room couldn't study!
(laughter)

So I personally went into shock. I mean, this was just as if the person had taken out a knife and thrown it at me and just missed my head. I mean, it was like . . . (sudden intake of breath). Fortunately, evidently for me, when I go into shock, I don't show any emotion at all. I mean, I'm just sitting like this (stone-faced look) and I finished the meeting and brought it to a conclusion in ten minutes and crawled back to my office and sat down and started shaking, and thinking, what have I gotten myself into? What was that about? It wasn't even a conversation that person was involved in. It was just that evidently some comment somebody had made had set this person off and they went bonkers. So I called Katherine Beiers into my office, and I said, "Uh, help." (both laugh) "What was that about?" and she kind of hung her head and said, "Well, she used to do that all the time with the previous university librarian, but we were hoping she wouldn't do that anymore now that you are here."

There then unfolded a series of events, which again, I was breaking new trails for me. Essentially, I had to inform that person that being a department head, as opposed to being a non-supervisory librarian in the library, being a department head required you

to be able to engage in the civil discussion of issues in ways that did not destroy one's relationships within the library. And that while she certainly had a right to remain in the library as a librarian, if she was to remain as a department head, she was going to have to find a different way of communicating with her peers at meetings. (laughter) I think I probably packed more euphemisms into that memo than any other memo in the history of my life. And again, I'd only been there, probably, for four or five months at this point. I mean, this was just, "Oh my God!" I started remembering the warnings that I'd gotten from others.

Well, about a month later, she decided to leave. She eventually took another job someplace else. I guess she saw that this was somebody that she was not going to be able to push around as much as she had the previous administration. Plus, she had lost some of her champions in the turnover of the administration that had just gone. There then began a kind of "lucky stars" change in the library over the next eighteen months, and this was not anything that I directed. It just happened in terms of retirements. Then one person got ill and had to resign—I mean, a cancer kind of thing, a really tragic story. Other people took jobs elsewhere. The practical result was within the first eighteen months, six of the nine senior management people in the library, I got to hire. They were my people. Some of them were inside the library, like Larry Millsap was already there, but he wasn't a department head. Other people we brought in from the outside, like Bob White, as an example. And it created an atmosphere, where for the majority of my managers, I had been in charge as long as they had been a department head, and so their loyalty was to whatever I was trying to do, not to the old regime. Now, a lot of the old

regime was still around. Even two of the people who had previously had senior administrative positions in the library were still there. So it wasn't an easy time. But gradually, over time, I was able to change the atmosphere so that we could become a much more progressive organization. Which ultimately evolved into a management approach that I think wouldn't have been foreign to those folks back at the Moffitt Undergraduate Library, in terms of rotating who chairs the Section Heads Council here (as it was called before the Library Management Group), things like that.

I'm fond of saying you have to have understandable boxes in a clear organization chart, but then you spend all your time breaking down the walls of the boxes, that that's what the management does. The University [of California] and this old quasi-civil service system we live with requires that you have a very clear organization chart. But, for example, libraries have to have Technical Services people talking to the head of Circulation in the Science Library. When I got here I was informed (and I had no reason to think it not true, given succeeding events), the Technical Services people and the Public Services people were not allowed to talk to each other. They literally weren't. I don't mean that euphemistically. I mean *they were not allowed to talk to each other*. All communication had to go up the chain of command, over, and then back down again. That was breaking down because of the removal of some of the people that had instituted those policies. But I just say it as indicative of the type of organization. It was really very, very foreign to the kind of person I am, to my professional experience. I, to this day, don't understand it. And I quickly discovered that it wasn't worthwhile trying to understand it. I mean, what was the point of it?

Reti: Right. You intended to do something different.

Dyson: What I had to do was just do something very different. So, that happened. In terms of the automated system, the day I talked to the company representative and they said that they were expecting the boxes of computers, et cetera, to arrive in three months, I walked into Katherine Beiers' office, and I said, "Who's the brightest librarian on the staff? Who's the person that if the chips were down, and you had to give a job—I mean this is going to be an all-consuming job, who?" I said, "I'm not talking about experience. Just tell me who." And she said, "Well, you know, if you describe it that way, that person would be Margaret Gordon." Margaret had just come back to work. She had just had a baby, I think, had been working part time. So subsequently I called Margaret in my office and I said, "Guess what? You're about to have a life challenge."

Reti: I had no idea that she'd ever done that.

Dyson: I put her in charge of that project. She doesn't think of herself as a techie. At that point certainly, though she is more so now. She'd never really had any management responsibility whatsoever, but her thinking is brilliant. She can analyze problems very, very, well, and that's what I was looking for. Because what we had was the classic case study. A large organization wants to automate, and has done nothing to prepare. (laughter) So we gave her a team of people. Terry Ferl, who then was the principal cataloger, worked very closely with her. Terry was a super technical person, and comfortable with automation, because this library had a history of automation, never

having had a card catalog and that kind of thing.

Reti: Yes, we were real pioneers in that area.

Dyson: Yes, exactly. So in terms of the actual working frontline staff, they were very comfortable with automation in a way that almost no other library in the country was at that point. So we put together a team, and by gosh, we did it. Within six months or so, we had a functioning automated circulation system, and Margaret Gordon had her first experience as a manager. I would not be surprised that even to this day when you remind Margaret of that, you will see a faint shiver run down her spine (both laugh) because I can only imagine how awful that must have been for her. She and I worked very, very well together, and she was in a lot of ways fearless about going around and asking questions and trying to figure out what to do, and it worked out very well.

That sums up the first year or two of my being here. It was really (sighs) organizational development, of bringing on board my team, as it were, of trying to what I call “encapsulate” those people on the staff who were particularly disruptive, by having them surrounded with people who simply didn’t want to play those games. So instead of being leaders of disaffected groups, they were kind of isolated nags who would bring their issues up at a meeting and people would be polite to them, and then move on. I was kind of making it up as I went along. I mean, this was a situation that, quite literally, people had not known how to handle, either on the campus, at the Office of the President, or in the library. So it took a lot longer to do that than I expected and it really

did pretty much dominate the first years of my time here.

Early Impressions of the UC Santa Cruz Campus

Reti: What were your early impressions of the campus itself?

Dyson: The campus was great. I'd been at Berkeley, and I had visited Santa Cruz once or twice as president of LAUC [Librarians Association of the University of California]. The campus itself, in an odd way, had just gone through almost identically the same terrible situation that the library had gone through, in that they had had a chancellor who, although a nice enough fellow, had not been able to break through the tension surrounding the, "Who's in charge here? Is it the colleges, or is it the academic departments?" that was tearing the campus apart.¹⁰

We had a new chancellor, Robert Sinsheimer, and a brand-new academic vice chancellor, John Marcum, who was technically the person that hired me, but he had been on the job for about thirty days at the point that I came on the job. So it really was more, I think, the chancellor and the search committee, who probably would have had a great deal of weight in hiring me.

10. Mark N. Christensen served as the second chancellor of UCSC from July 1974 to October 1976, when he resigned after seven of the eight college provosts accused him of ineffective administration of the campus—Editor.

The College Libraries and the Liaison Librarians

I was quickly brought into the question about the role of the colleges from the library perspective, because there was only one memorandum sitting on my desk when I arrived here on August 1st, 1979. It was from John Marcum, the academic vice chancellor, and it said, "I know you have many other things on your plate," (little did he know) "but one of the things that has been a continuing issue is, what is the role of the college libraries vis à vis the University Library?" He asked that I look into that situation and make a recommendation to him on what that relationship ought to be. I took probably six to nine months, all of which time I was, as I could, working on [gathering information] before I actually gave him his report back. It gave me a wonderful opportunity to go out and interview all of the provosts, to see all the college libraries, to meet some faculty that were interested in that issue. So ultimately, what happened was I said, "You do not want the University Library running the college libraries, because if you do, we will have to treat them all equally, and they're not treated equally now." There are some colleges that barely have anything resembling a college library. There are others that actually, at that point, had a professional librarian working in the college library. I said, "For us to take it over, we're immediately going to get requests that, well, they all should have similar amounts of funding and collections and staffing and all that. That isn't what the college libraries are all about. The college libraries have evolved as the colleges have wanted them to evolve. So some of them, like Cowell, have quite extensive libraries. Others really have hardly any—they're not much more than a quiet place for students to study at night."

What we did develop was a program called the liaison librarians. We assigned a librarian to each of the colleges, and they would work with the provost in either helping that college develop the library in the way that the college wanted to, or vice versa, if there were issues in the college regarding the University Library, or library instruction or anything like that, the liaison librarian would act as a kind of a sherpa, to introduce people, take them around. For example, some of the college libraries were doing reserves, because there were courses taught in the colleges.

Reti: Right.

Dyson: How do you set up a reserve system? Well, the liaison librarian might be a reference librarian and know nothing about how to set up a reserve system, but they certainly could introduce them to the head of Reserves and have that person go up and show them a basic system of how to do it. So what I had to do was come up with something that certainly made the University Library sound friendly, but did not dump seven or eight college library responsibilities—responsibilities meaning responsibility for funding and staffing and all that kind of stuff—onto the University Library. It seemed to me that would just be replicating the tension between the colleges and the campus departments because the college provosts weren't going to want to give up authority over these things to me. The liaison program worked out well. And it still kind of happens now, although the college libraries, I don't think are as important anymore as they were back twenty years ago, say. But until I left at least, we still had people that would go out and check out the college libraries. We'd get together as a group once a

quarter, liaison librarians, just kind of talk about stuff. It was another eyes-and-ears way to learn what was going on on the campus. You'd learn about new programs that were starting up and all sorts of things that way. So it worked out okay.

Public Relations

One of the things that I wasn't really prepared for when I came here, and it was an element of being a university librarian that I just didn't know existed, was the whole part of acting as the public face for the library. The university librarian in a medium-size college town has a kind of aura about them. You're addressing groups, or you're meeting with public officials. That was new to me and I was fully unprepared for it, I admit. Neither of my previous two jobs, either at Columbia, or as head of the Undergraduate Library, really had anything to do with the community at large, that is, the off-campus community. In that, probably by far the most important thing that happened in teaching me to make the connections with politicians like Gary Patton, and Henry Mello, and with other kinds of groups, and a lot of movers and shakers, mayors and things like that, was [the role of] Katherine Beiers. She and I understood, that is we talked about it openly, that this was a role that she could play for me that there was no way . . . I mean, I couldn't just walk into some meeting and pretend I was friends with important people that I didn't know. She really guided me socially. She was involved in politics then, and eventually went on to become mayor of Santa Cruz, of course, but was not that heavily involved, obviously, at that time. She worked very, very hard to introduce me to the community in a way that I could not have done on my own, and I will be eternally grateful for that because it made my job a lot easier. There was a lot that would have

directed my attention solely to the campus and the library, as I've outlined already, and it would have been very easy to get totally wrapped up in that.

Reti: Oh sure.

Dyson: It was kind of emotionally all-consuming. And she just saw to it that I . . . she didn't let that happen. And Wendell Simons could do a lot in terms of the University-wide stuff, because he had lots of connections with people at other UCs, having worked at other UCs, like Santa Barbara, I think. So between the two of them, they really did give me a great introduction to the aspects of university librarianship that I had no training in prior to coming here. That was important to me, and this is why I really liked them. And it's not anything the staff would ever see. It was outside the campus, outside the library kind of stuff. I felt a great deal of gratitude for their being wise enough to understand that for me to succeed here those were important elements—the greater University of California connections, and the greater Santa Cruz community connections.

Unfortunately, the Friends of the Library group had been involved in the situation that resulted in the retirement of the previous university librarian. So that was not a nice breath of fresh air either, because that battle was still being fought on several levels among the Friends here. There was a particularly strong person who had been a champion of the previous university librarian, who obviously felt kind of bitter that that person was no longer here. It was important to have somebody help steer me through the shoals of all that because I didn't know the people, so even if I'd set out to, I wouldn't

know who was important and who wasn't, and what the particular interests of people were and things like that.

UCSC as an Undergraduate-Oriented Institution

Reti: So you were coming from an undergraduate library. What was it like to come to a university library?

Dyson: Well, in a funny way, if you're going to go from an undergraduate library to a university library, UCSC was the place to go. First of all, I'd spent eight years in the University of California, so I knew some of the players. Second of all, UCSC was at that point even more of an undergraduate institution than it is now. It's still like, eighty-five to ninety percent undergraduate. But back then, I think I would have to say (and I may be wrong on this), but of the new UC campuses, it was one of the very few that grew with no graduate component to it, or grew from some kind of a research situation. By that I mean, San Diego had Scripps. Riverside was in agricultural research. They were UC entities before they became UC campuses, if you know what I mean?

Reti: I think you're accurate in saying that.

Dyson: Yes. But Santa Cruz, really, the idea was to grow it as an undergraduate institution, and then to have the graduate component come on later. Now, they did bring some researchers on. And administratively they added Lick Observatory, an hour-and-a-half away on Mt. Hamilton. They brought in Kenneth Thimann and people like that. But

basically it was an undergraduate organization, with a slowly growing layer of graduate education on the top, a relatively few number of Ph.D. programs for a university, and so on.

What that meant was that a lot of the issues that the library staff was dealing with, like library instruction, were things that I was totally comfortable with. I felt that my particular training—plus the fact that I could always toss in the fact that I'd spent three years at Columbia prior to that—I felt that it made as much sense, in other words, for someone with my background to come here as university librarian as it did for, say, an associate director at Berkeley to come here. Because, in a way, it almost would have been more foreign to them to come down to UCSC. But for me it was building on stuff that I'd already done, and then learning new things beyond that. So it worked out okay. And evidently the campus, obviously, was comfortable with that.

I think the campus also felt it was good to have somebody here that was from UC Berkeley, because Berkeley was more dominant at that point in the north, as UCLA was in the south. UC Davis hadn't grown as large. UC San Francisco was specialized [the medical campus], and still is, and so on. So Santa Cruz, in a lot of ways, did look to Berkeley as its research resource, and the fact that I was completely familiar with it, both in terms of the staff there and the resources there, I think was a plus here. It proved to be, and I think worked out well.

I had looked into the possibility of running a college library, and in fact had been a

finalist for the job of the Wellesley College Librarian. I went for a finalist interview, and (pause) it is the only time in my life when I can truly say that I had an experience where I knew just a teensy little bit what it must be like to be a woman or a minority in this society. Because I was the only male, and it was pretty clear after I got there that they had no intention of hiring a male librarian for the Wellesley College Library, and that I was there as the kind of token person that they couldn't find any reason to exclude. (laughter) But that soured me a little bit on the college experience, and so when UCSC opened up, it seemed to be a better situation for me.

It was interesting because a lot of the issues around UCSC at that time were undergraduate issues—the colleges, the departments and that kind of stuff—so that aspect of the transition actually was easier than I thought it was going to be. It was the other stuff, like the community relations, that was more of a surprise to me.

One of the things I didn't have to worry about at that point, and we'll get into later, is fundraising, because we didn't do any. And that, at some places, would have been an element of the job of university librarian.

Reti: Like at a small, private liberal arts college?

Dyson: Yeah, at a college. I mean, if you go to Wellesley, you darn well better be prepared to raise money.

Reti: Yes.

Dyson: Or, if you go to UCLA, you darn well better be prepared to raise money. But that simply wasn't an element of anything that UCSC was doing at the time. So I got to grow into that later on.

The Need for a New Science Library Building at UCSC

The other issue that was on the table . . . There was the kind of pleasant and manageable issue of the college libraries. There was the unpleasant, but ultimately do-able issue of organizational development. And the third issue that was here was the whole issue of the Science Library. Clearly the then-Science Library which used to be in that little building over there, with, I think fifty seats in it, and no elevators, so if you were disabled, you couldn't get up to the stacks . . .

Reti: I should say for the tape that this interview is happening in the Science and Engineering Library.¹¹

Dyson: Yes. About half of the books from the library were shelved down in McHenry at that point, on the fourth floor. There clearly was not enough space for students. Librarians really almost didn't have desks. I created a controversy by telling librarians they could get these kind of miniature little desks and take out a few shelves in the

11. The new Science Library opened in 1991. It was renamed the Science and Engineering Library in 2001—Editor.

stacks, and wedge the desks in. Some faculty didn't like that, because I was reducing the shelving. But I did point out that these were academics, and somehow having to stand all day was not too pleasant. But anyway. It was an issue. There had been various reports written on it. "What are we going to do about the problem?"

Reti: How did the Science Library end up being in this hot, cramped place with no bathroom, if I remember correctly?

Dyson: Yeah. I didn't even mention it didn't have bathrooms. What happened was an interesting story. It was originally designed to house the collections of the Lick Observatory. Lick was the major research unit that was assigned to the UC Santa Cruz campus when it was created. It was sort of like Scripps and UCSD. Lick was assigned to UCSC, as Scripps was to [UC] San Diego. And so it was going to house just that collection. In fact, there was an underground corridor that actually went from what was then, in Nat. Sci. II (so called), the Lick offices, over into the library. At the same time, however, while that was being designed, they were also hiring other scientists, such as Kenneth Thimann, and others, who were not astronomers. And as you might imagine, when these others learned that there was to be a Science Library that contained only astronomy books, they got quite upset. Then there was a kind of, I think, rapid redesign of the building, which had been originally only going to be two stories, two rather spacious stories, and they put mezzanines between the first and second floor, and between the second floor and the ceiling, because they were going to house science collections, not just astronomy collections. Well, at the point you did that, you couldn't

have every library user wandering into the Lick Observatory offices through the bottom of the library, so they had to shut that door. Now, I'm sure the idea was that things like restrooms would be handled in Nat. Sci. II . . .

Reti: Oh, okay.

Dyson: But when it became a science library, and that became a fire door, because they couldn't just have people disappearing over there, they then created an awful situation. The library essentially was full at the time it opened, and badly designed as a library. The only way to move books around was through a dumb-waiter, and you couldn't move people around in the dumb-waiter, although one wonders if the occasional small student assistant didn't, on a late night, play around on it.

There's a funny story about that elevator I just have to tell. The dumb-waiter was broken and we asked Physical Plant to come out and fix it. Supposedly they came out, and they checked it out, and it seemed to be working okay, so they went back. Then I'd get a call from the Science Library saying, "They still haven't come to fix the dumb-waiter." And they'd come out again, and we'd get a report back, "Yeah, we went to the library, and the elevator seems to be working okay now, so it's okay." We finally figured out that Physical Plant did not know that there was a dumb-waiter in the Science Library. They always thought it was the McHenry elevator. So we'd call to them to fix the Science Library. They'd think we were just saying it wrong. They'd come out, check out the McHenry Library elevator and then go back. (laughter) I mean, that's how ramshackle

this thing was.

Anyway, we then started plans. It was one of the bad budget cycles that occurs every ten years or so—and so the original idea was to try to raise a couple of million dollars and build an addition onto that library. The idea was a bad one, because if you know the building, it has almost no windows. It looks like a Tibetan fortress or something.

Reti: I remember it well because I was a student here at the time.

Dyson: Yeah, and to add onto it without destroying it, you had to create a funny little corridor that was going to come out of this end of it, and build another piece of library. Essentially you were going to wind up with two buildings with a corridor in between, which was frighteningly close to the idea that they'd built the thing with originally. (laughter) Didn't allow for a lot of expansion. But we actually got so far as to have, not architectural, but conceptual plans drawn up. We tried to do a little bit of fundraising. We got a gift from the Cowell Foundation for a couple hundred thousand dollars. We got another gift from the Honeywell Foundation for, I think, twenty-five or thirty thousand, and we were that far along.

And then, the miracle happened. There was a new president of the University of California, whose name was David Gardner, who was quite tall. And as part of his new presidency, he was going around to visit all of the campuses. Now, I have to say I did not witness this, and it may be apocryphal, but it's such a good story, and subsequent events

so make it sound like it's probably true, that I think it's true. They showed him around the campus, and they showed him particularly areas they felt needed capital construction. You know, projects that were needed. One of the ones they took him through was the Science Library. And they took him, for dramatic effect, down into what was called the dungeon annex, which was the area under the stairs, with ceilings that were probably not much more than six feet high, and with sprinklers hanging down from those ceilings, with little wire cages around them. Now, that was an awful place. It had originally been only going to be used for storage, but there were so many science books now as the campus was growing, there were so many books they needed on site, that they actually were using this for part of the current collection, not just storage. Supposedly what happened was that David Gardner walked through there and they took him to the dungeon annex, and he imprinted one of these sprinklers on his forehead. He then went downtown, as I understand it, addressed the Chamber of Commerce, or something like that, as part of this visit to the community, and sort of pounded the podium and said that a science research facility was fundamental to any UC campus and he would be damned if it was going to have to be paid for out of private funds. This was something that really, the state had to pick up the cost for, and that it shouldn't be something that's an add-on. I mean, scientists need a good science library, and by gosh, Santa Cruz should be able to go to the state to ask for the money for this. That, of course, resonated well with the chancellor, who was Bob Sinsheimer, a world-renowned scientist.

Reti: Oh yes.

Dyson: What ultimately happened, over the course of many, many years, was that Sinsheimer remained steadfast in that being a priority. It might have been at one point stated as *the* number one priority, or *a* top priority, depending on which audience you were talking to. And ultimately the state funded the new Science, now Science and Engineering Library. But that's how it happened.

Reti: It's a great story.

Dyson: I never checked David Gardner's forehead to see if he does have an imprint there. But that is the story about how he came to be a firm believer in the need for Santa Cruz to have a library that could accommodate six-foot people.

Reti: Well, it seems so symbolic, because there was this denial that Santa Cruz was even oriented toward the sciences, but then you have people like Thimann and Francis Clauser coming and hiring these top . . . ¹²

Dyson: And Sinsheimer is world-renowned, from Cal Tech, coming in as the chancellor.

Denial had to be pretty heavy at that point to not think of science as a substantial

12. Kenneth Thimann came to UCSC in 1965 as chair of biology and became founding provost of Crown College at the invitation of UCSC Chancellor Dean McHenry. McHenry asked Thimann to build the science faculty at UCSC. Prior to coming to UCSC, Thimann was an internationally renowned plant physiologist and held the Higgins Chair in Biology at Harvard University. He was the first UCSC faculty member to become a member of the National Academy of Sciences. During his tenure here, his illustrious reputation and intellectual distinction enabled him to attract top-notch scientists to the fledgling campus. Francis Clauser was a renowned physicist brought by Dean McHenry as vice chancellor for science and engineering to found an engineering school at UCSC. When UC systemwide voted against the engineering school, Clauser left to become dean of engineering at the California Institute of Technology. Clauser's dream was not realized until 1997. Together Kenneth Thimann and Francis Clauser recruited many top faculty in the sciences and helped build UC Santa Cruz's excellent reputation the sciences—Editor.

component of Santa Cruz. And as Santa Cruz reached its adolescence, it was the program it could sell its maturity on, if you understand. Because things like the Lick Observatory had existed and were world-renowned. And the kind of attention that Santa Cruz wanted, as being something other than kind of a flaky, late sixties, early seventies time-warp place, required that you be able to, as they say, “point with pride” at programs such as the science program here. Both in, I think at that point I would have to say, primarily biology and astronomy/physics as being the premier programs, although certainly others such as environmental studies, chemistry, things like that have grown to equal prominence.

Reti: Earth sciences.

Dyson: Earth sciences, exactly, over the years, just by taking advantage of the location, bringing in top-notch people.

I’m not sure this thought is going to work itself in anyplace else. Santa Cruz is kind of a funny place. It has managed to maintain something that as a former undergraduate librarian I appreciate. And that is, it’s managed to bring in teachers and researchers who are one and the same people. And my feeling is in academia . . . I’ve been associated in one way or another with three of the largest and most prestigious academic institutions in the United States: Harvard, Columbia and Berkeley. And I experienced almost a quarter century of working at Santa Cruz as a lot of fun, because you have to get people here with social skills and interest in undergraduates and interest in research, and

interest in talking about what they're doing to groups of people, in understandable ways. This isn't necessarily true at some of the large research universities around the country.

The University of California Libraries Plan for Development

Reti: Let's start today by talking about the Salmon report of 1977, and its implications for the library.

Dyson: The *University of California Libraries: Plan for Development 1978-1988*, was developed and written by a fellow whom I grew to be very close friends with over the years, Steve Salmon.¹³ And it's [also] called the Salmon plan in part because, somewhat as a joke on himself, he published it with a salmon-colored cover.

Reti: I noticed that. (both laugh) It's kind of funny.

Dyson: Steve had a great sense of humor, and I think he was poking fun at himself in that one.

The reason the Salmon plan was so important for the UCSC Library's development was that in some ways it had a very substantial impact on our ability to grow, and in some ways it impeded us in our growth. But in all ways, it had a very fundamental impact on

13. Steve Salmon's position at the time was Executive Director of University-wide Library Planning—Dyson.

what the UCSC Library was going to be.

I was involved a little bit in the development of the Salmon report as a department head at UC Berkeley, because I was still there when it came out. Also, I was president of LAUC in 1977. Being president of the systemwide librarians association put me on the UC Library Council.¹⁴ And that group, of course, had some involvement with the development of the Salmon report. So I was a little more involved in it prior to being the UL at UCSC than your average bear would be. The reason for the Salmon plan was that the University actually was told by the State of California that it wasn't going to provide a lot more money for the University of California libraries until it felt that there was a coordinated plan as to how they were going to be developed. The state was interested in both reducing the amount of duplication of materials on the campuses in the libraries, and also in reducing the amount of construction costs, because expanding libraries on expensive campus real estate, with all the aesthetic concerns and things like that, tended to be high-capital cost kind of operations, and it was felt that there should be a better way to do it.

Some of the most important elements of the Salmon report [plan], as it eventually evolved and was published, were storage facilities in the north and south, where lesser-used materials could be stored in compact ways.

14. The UC Library Council was the senior systemwide planning and coordinating committee for the university libraries, advisory to the UC president's office. Membership varied over the years, but usually included the nine university librarians, the chair of the Academic Senate Committee on Library, the executive director of universitywide planning, the senior vice president of the university, and the president of LAUC.—Dyson.

Reti: So we didn't have an NRLF [Northern Regional Library Facility] before that?

Dyson: Berkeley had something called the ICLF-N.¹⁵ It was an old Ford plant up in Richmond, California. The fact it was a Ford plant meant that there were generations of some kind of oil that had leaked into the concrete. It was not an environmentally sound place at all. I don't know if UCLA had a similar kind of thing, but the Berkeley campus libraries had flat-out run out of space, and therefore were storing, on almost a one-in, one-out basis, material in this plant.

So that was one element of the Salmon plan, a systemwide, book-friendly storage facility, or facilities. The second was the development of more coordinated collection development among all of the nine UC campus libraries. Thirdly, a basis for allocating the collections budgets to the various campuses, and I'll get into that, because that had a very direct impact on Santa Cruz. Fourthly, the development of a coordinated, complex, computerized catalog for the University of California so that people on each campus could figure out what was available elsewhere. Some lesser elements which didn't directly grow out of the Salmon plan, that is, they might have been in place already, were jitney systems that coordinated travel back and forth among the campuses and moved library materials back and forth among the campuses. Obviously at that point there was not any simple electronic means to transmit, digitally, the material. The material had to be physically moved. So those are some of the elements, and it all kind of makes sense, if you understand. It was a genuine attempt to think of what were the impediments to

15. The Intercampus Library Facility-North—Editor.

coordination and cooperation among the UC campus libraries—knowing what was there, moving the material back and forth, not duplicating it, not building up large collections on a campus that were little used, et cetera, et cetera. It all made a lot of sense.

Some of the things, I think, were controversial on some campuses, and not on others. For example, the regional storage facilities (and for our purposes, the one that affected us obviously the most was the one in northern California), were interestingly not a controversial subject on this campus. It was an extremely controversial subject on other campuses. For example, the new regional storage facility was also in Richmond, California. The faculty at Davis hated this concept. They saw that any material that was moved out of Davis was going to be stored, as they called it, “on the Berkeley campus,” although the facility was actually ten or fifteen miles away from Berkeley. It wasn’t terribly much more convenient for somebody at Berkeley. But Davis saw this as Berkeley kind of stealing their materials.

Reti: Oh, I see.

Dyson: On the other hand, at Santa Cruz, I can only sum up the attitude by a quote from a member of the Senate Library Committee many, many years ago, who was absolutely perplexed by the apoplexy of the UC Davis faculty members on Senate Library Committees. He said to me, half in jest, “I just don’t know why people get upset about the concept of a storage facility. We’ve always had a storage facility. It’s called the UC Berkeley library.” (both laugh)

Reti: Right.

Dyson: And by that, he was simply recognizing the fact that we'd always had the jitney, that faculty recognized that in specialized areas they might have to go up to Berkeley, or at least get a whole bunch of stuff on interlibrary loan. The other kind of lucky thing was that at the time that the storage facility was completed, the first unit of it—and now there are three units that have been built over the years—at the time that it was first completed, some of the campuses, because of more materials than shelving on those campuses, committed to moving fairly substantial numbers of volumes into the facility at the time that it opened. For Berkeley, most of this material came from their existing Berkeley storage facility, this place that was environmentally awful and, I mean, the material had to be cleaned before it could be brought in.

Reti: Oil.

Dyson: Yeah, I mean, oil and grit and dirt and just awfulness. For a place like Davis, it meant shipping a couple of hundred thousand volumes off their campus to this place that wasn't nearby, and they were quite upset about that. For us, it just so happened that we had the space at that point. With the fairly recent completion of Unit Two of McHenry Library, there was still space on this campus, and so Santa Cruz had no initial storage commitment of x thousands of volumes that had to be moved, in effect, on the day that the storage facility became open for business.¹⁶ So there wasn't the kind of

16. Unit Two of McHenry Library was completed in 1976—Editor.

dramatic impact that it had on some of the other campuses.

Another element of the plan for development was the formulaic allocation of dollars by the state to the campuses for building their collections. The shorthand or nickname for this, the jargon term for this, was the “Voigt-Susskind formula,” largely developed by Mel Voigt, who was the university librarian at UC San Diego. And Charles Susskind—he was an administrator at the Office of the President.¹⁷ This formula allocated a number of volumes for the growth of the collections over time, and those volumes then were translated into dollars—that is, how much does an average book cost right now? After a kind of a baseline allocation, the allocation got built up through allocations for additional Ph.D. programs, and graduate schools, and things like that. Well, you can quickly see that while the initial allocation helped Santa Cruz (that is, our baseline, I think, was higher than we had been able to afford in the past), we then did not get a whole lot of extra additional volumes allocated because Santa Cruz didn’t have many Ph.D. programs. You had to have a certain number of graduate programs in order to get the baseline allocation. In other words, you had to have three Ph.D. programs in social sciences and x number in the physical sciences, and so on. Santa Cruz just scraped under the wire by kind of calling the History of Consciousness [Department] the Ph.D. program in philosophy, and things like that. People didn’t want, obviously, Santa Cruz to get hurt, they knew it was a growing campus—so they figured out a way to kind of finagle that we got this baseline. But beyond that, Santa Cruz really didn’t get any extra

17. This formula was developed in 1973 when Charles Susskind chaired the Ad Hoc Committee on Library Acquisitions Policy—*The University of California Libraries: A Plan for Development, 1978-1988*, Office of the Executive Director of Universitywide Library Planning, July 1977.—Editor.

allocation.

While it started out okay, as the campus grew over time the concept was that the Voigt-Susskind formula would get re-cranked, as it was called, as campuses grew. And therefore a campus that grew over the years like Santa Cruz, they would at periodic points go back and take a look: "Oh, you've got new extra Ph.D. programs in this area or that area or the other area," and the allocations would grow over time.¹⁸ Only one problem. The Voigt-Susskind formula was never, ever re-cranked after its initial allocation. Never.

Reti: Not since 1978.

Dyson: Yeah, exactly. So Santa Cruz had, in essence, to try to live with the allocation as it was granted at that time. So in the short run, that formula helped Santa Cruz; in the long run, it was quite devastating for us.

The Melvyl system obviously was a major advantage to Santa Cruz. It provided a more coherent automated catalog than had ever been able to be developed on the campus. Although the data for our collection had always been computer-readable, it had turned out that that computer data then was used to produce book catalogs or microfiche catalogs, not an online catalog. So Melvyl actually grew to the point where Melvyl, for

18. Another element of the formula was based on the number of undergraduates at a given campus, which over time would have increased the number of volumes allocated to a growing campus like Santa Cruz.—Dyson.

many, many years, was our primary catalog because we weren't paying for its development, the Office of the President was. There's no way that this library could have afforded, at that point, to have developed its own online catalog. So we benefited.

And then of course the other, perhaps obvious thing is the more that faculty knew about what was available on other UC campuses, the better off UCSC faculty were, because the likelihood was that of the vast universe of materials within the UC libraries, only a very small percentage was going to be here at UCSC. And we could start drawing, not only on the UC Berkeley campus, but on Davis and even on the southern university interlibrary loan departments to get those materials.

And then finally, a somewhat more amorphous thing, but one that certainly benefited UCSC, was simply the recognition that it was called . . . that the stock phrase was, "One university, one library." One university, one library, when you're the smallest kid on the block, is a very, very attractive concept, because it's something that we could use, and in fact, the campus administration used in recruiting faculty for this campus, in the sense that, "Well, yes, we only have x hundreds of thousands of volumes here on this campus, but of course you know, 'UC is one university with one library.' We have a jitney that runs up there. We can get materials on interlibrary loan. We have coordinated collection development,'" et cetera, et cetera. And that coordinated collection development was carried on at the systemwide level, in the sense that the collection development officers allocated jointly-held funds, systemwide funds, and used that money to buy collections that then would be actually housed on one campus, but were thought of as a kind of a

University-wide holding, as opposed to a holding of one campus.

All of this gets a little strange when you realize that when you write the check for a book the check says "UC Regents," it doesn't say UC Santa Cruz, or UC Berkeley. So one of my jobs as the smallest kid on the block was to remind people that it wasn't their money they were spending when they bought a book at Davis; it was the regents' money they were spending. And while the political reality was of course that the material was "theirs," and was thought of as "theirs" by the Davis faculty, in a legal sense it wasn't. And that actually made all of this work, in a funny kind of way, if you understand what I mean.

Reti: Yes.

Dyson: That it really was all ours, and it's why UC, in its cooperation, in its storage facilities and so on, worked better than comparable kinds of activities elsewhere, where the libraries of, let's say, the Boston area, or in the University of Illinois area or something like that, would get together to coordinate. They were dealing with separate legal entities.

Reti: Right, because at UC we're talking about a multi-campus system.

Dyson: We're talking about a multi-campus system which, because of its constitutional autonomy, and the way it's set up legally and all that, really is one entity. That was

always a useful grounding foundation to remind us as we thought about all this—we weren't giving up as much as somebody from, say, Harvard, who put their books into a storage facility, and then had some completely different university, Amherst or something, drawing on those materials. There you had to kind of manufacture the legal relationship that enabled that to happen, and that wasn't always an easy thing to do. Whereas at the University of California, the legal relationship existed as the foundation of the University to begin with. So all of that stuff started. The plan for development was just getting underway at the point that I came here. I came in 1979, and it had come out in 1977. I'm stressing this because that's the reality that I dealt with as I came here.

Why don't we back up a little bit. The reality of collection building, therefore (although I certainly couldn't know that the Voigt-Susskind formula was never going to get re-cracked), was that one did not expect that there were going to be tens of thousands of additional dollars for acquiring a growing number of books annually somehow dropped on us from the state.¹⁹ And if I remember correctly, the first few years of the 1980s tended to be a bad economic time. It's tended to be the first few years of the 1980s, 1990s, and the 2000s that have seen recessions. It's about a ten-year cycle. So we weren't expecting a whole lot of extra money at that point. That downturn in the economy is what impacted our ability to expand the Science Library too, at that same time in the early eighties when I first was working on that.

19. The Voigt-Susskind formula resulted in additional funds to cope with inflation in the price of library materials, but it did not generate funds for increasing the number of volumes acquired—Dyson.

Start-up Funds

So as the campus grew we had to try to find other ways of developing collection money, and it was obvious that we were going to have to rely an awful lot on campus funds, non-library funds, more than we were going to get increasing amounts of money from the state through the University. There are several different ways that we did this. Perhaps the one that was most successful for a growing campus was the concept of start-up funds. The campus got an allocation for each new faculty member that came here. I'm not sure what pot that systemwide allocation comes from. We were able to get an agreement with the campus that we would get x thousands of dollars for each increase in faculty on the campus. And it generally ran somewhere between three thousand and seven thousand dollars per faculty member.

Reti: So this was something new.

Dyson: This was something new. And it wasn't something largely done on any of the other campuses either. You can make a very logical case for it. You've got someone coming in. It's a brand-new history professor; they're interested in colonial history. We don't have anybody that's been a colonial history specialist. Obviously we're going to have to spend, six, seven thousand dollars on materials to build up the collection of fundamental research materials that they and their students, and in some cases, Ph.D students, are going to be using. That system worked well enough that what happened to it was something that I always have tried to do as a manager, and that is, we bureaucratized it. So that it wasn't the senior people at the dean level that were worrying

about this; it was the administrative assistants and the business assistants and the offices, and Planning and Budget on campus that were keeping track of whether that new faculty member had arrived already, or whether or not they were off for a year doing research before they actually showed up. It was that kind of detail, working out the details, that became more important. Which was heaven if you're getting an allocation, because that's where you want it to be. You don't want people looking at the policy. You just want to get the process done.

Reti: Yes.

Enrollment Increases and FTE Allocations

Dyson: So I would say we, in round numbers each year, it wouldn't be unusual for us to get about an additional one hundred thousand dollars every year for that on top of our state allocation. Another thing we did that didn't relate to the collections, but I don't think there's another simple place to stick it into this narrative, was we got an agreement that for each increased student on campus, we would get .008 FTE.²⁰

Reti: (laughter) How did you come up with that number?

Dyson: That's a very good question, and I think it preceded me, because I don't know where the number came from. But it probably has to do with what percentage of campus academic resources the library's budget is, or something like that. Now, .008 does not

20. FTE stands for "full-time equivalent," the cost of a full-time employee—Editor.

sound like a lot, but what that means is in some of the big years, for example, there were a few years when we were growing that there would be increases of as many as a thousand students. Well, that meant that money for eight FTE, unassigned, for the library to use however it wanted, was allocated to the library.

Reti: You're talking about librarian positions?

Dyson: We're talking all library staff. However we wanted to allocate it. Well, just to show you how that worked, here's just one example of how critical that was. When the University of California builds a building, it doesn't allocate any FTE to staff it. Now, we went in the Science Library from a building with fifty seats in it to one that had eight hundred seats. Just shelving materials, bringing all the materials from McHenry, science materials, combining it with the existing collection in the Science Library, I mean, it just takes people longer to walk from one end of the building than the other. Plus, we had new service points, such as the Cowell Room.²¹ The reference desk was a lot bigger. We obviously were going to need more staff.

What we did is in the few years after the building was conceived and the construction was starting we hoarded some of the FTE that we got because of the increase in number of students. All of this was done very openly with the staff, the department heads. We hoarded some of that FTE, used the money, because the money was actually allocated—whether you hired the person or not, the budget line was there. We used the money for

21. A centralized area for computer access.—Editor.

one-time projects that would benefit the whole library. For example we bought our first automated acquisition system, the Innovacq system, out of money that was allocated for this increase in FTE. But it was a one-time expenditure to buy the system. The FTE money, of course, was coming in every year. Then when the Science Library opened we converted that money back into actual FTE and we allocated—I think it was something like five additional people, FTE, full-time equivalent staff positions to the Science Library—in addition to the staff that already worked there. And I have to say, if you're going to have a state job, being in a place where increased size results in increased allocations enables you to manage like a champ. Because there were so many different things that you can solve by letting little things wither on the vine over here, while you allocate the new money to this critical new priority, rather than having to go through some horrible budget thing where there are clear winners and losers, and it turns into this big political fight where political values are tested, and priorities and this and that. Not that those aren't good things for organizations. They are. But it takes a hell of a lot of time to do it. And because with good management we actually could almost always come up with a way to fund a good idea in the library without having to lop off something else, somebody else's turf in order to do it, it made my management job a heck of a lot easier for the whole time I was here.

Reti: So this continued through the nineties and to present day . . .

Dyson: This continued through various iterations. It stopped as a .008 allocation but it was still understood that the library needed additional funds. I mean, it's so logical. The

campus grows—you got more people checking out books, you got more books to shelve, you got more reference questions, you got more journals to check in. It was so ingrained in the campus that even when they did away with the budgetary formulas we were always able to go in and say, “Gee, there’s this many more students . . .”

The Jitney to UC Berkeley

In terms of moving people, the jitney was always a lot more symbolic than real. You could go to Berkeley and study. Whenever they did some statistical analysis as to who was riding the jitney, it always seemed to show that going to Berkeley to meet your girlfriend for the weekend (laughter) was the more likely reason. There’d be one faculty member, and nineteen very happy-looking undergraduates (both laugh) that didn’t look like they were going up to spend a long depressing weekend in the Berkeley stacks. That ultimately led to the demise of the jitney. But it was there for a long time. Of course, for us what was most important about the jitney was not the people. It was the fact that it carried the materials back and forth. And something nice happened that was I think only at Santa Cruz, and that was we happened to be blessed with jitney drivers who were also very bright guys who could shag books out of the stacks during their layover up there. So they actually did double duty. Most of the campus jitneys, I think, had teamster drivers who drove and then they sat around for a few hours and then they drove back again. They weren’t people who ran around in the libraries and in the branch libraries. For our guys, it was a fun job. They liked it. It sure made for a lot less boring layover time up in Berkeley. And it worked out very well. It was just very fortuitous that that happened. And just about the time that that system broke down, and because of a

systemwide delivery contract we were able to get books from other campuses as fast as we could get them from Berkeley, was just about the time when the longtime drivers decided to move on and go on to other things. One of the drivers, Mike Weaver, I believe, was actually married to a library assistant in the library. It was just a nice, comfortable arrangement that worked out extremely well for us. We also had somebody that was on the Santa Cruz library payroll, who lived and worked, had a tiny little bit of space in the Berkeley stacks, and he did nothing but get books from the Berkeley stacks and get them ready for shipment down to Santa Cruz. It was an employee that I found, somewhat to my horror, about ten years after I'd been here, had never even visited the Santa Cruz campus in his life. (laughter)

Reti: Oh my gosh.

Dyson: But that really showed, again, when you wanted to impress people that you were serious about using other campus's collections, you can say, "Well, I've got an employee that sits up there and does nothing but get your books for you, all day. That's all they do. We will get this book to you and we can get it to you overnight." Berkeley kind of acted as the hub of the jitney center, and the materials, for example, initially would come back from the storage facility, go to Berkeley. All the campus jitneys from Davis and Santa Cruz and San Francisco would meet at the Berkeley campus.

Reti: I remember seeing them all lined up there.

Dyson: Yes. And they'd kind of get sorted out and then they'd head off back to their home campuses.

Service-Oriented Philosophy

So, all in all, and in a variety of ways, we managed to cope. And clearly, being part of a larger system, and developing an atmosphere within the UCSC Library that we could only survive if we were able to spend other people's money (laughter) to our benefit. Let me give you an example, one I mentioned already, of that particular philosophy that I had, and which was widely stated within the library . . . the whole Melvyl system. We couldn't have afforded a high-end library automated system like Melvyl in a million years. There wasn't any way that Santa Cruz could do it. So we were always strong supporters of the Division of Library Automation up at the Office of the President, because they were doing our work on their dollars.

So any time that we could take advantage of other people's collections, that we could take advantage of other people's automated systems . . . We were obviously very strong supporters of this intercampus collection building system, where UC systemwide administration took, I think it was three percent, off the top of the systemwide collection budget. They allocated it into a central committee of the collection development officers, who bought large items that would then, at least before the days of the electronic materials, actually be physically placed on other campuses. Why wouldn't we be strong supporters of that? We never would've been able to afford those items with our budget, and yet these were things that we were kind of one-ninth owners of, you know? Hey,

that was a ninth more than we were ever going to be able to get otherwise.

One of my philosophies was that we had to be players in anything that was a systemwide activity. In part, that was political. That is, if you're the smallest kid on the block, you raise your hand and jump up and down a whole lot more, so that you get noticed. In part, it was just the practical reality that because of the smaller allocations that we got, we had to rely on other people's collections, dollars, whatever it might be. And as I liked to remind people both in and out of the library, faculty at Santa Cruz were expected to do the same caliber of research that faculty at Berkeley did, even though your average history professor didn't have the resources in this library that a Berkeley faculty member could call on. So we had to make up, in terms of service, what we lacked in terms of resources. That fundamental philosophy pervaded my entire time here at UCSC—we may be the smallest, but we're the best. It was something that the faculty appreciated. I said it over enough that they kind of believed it. You'd hear statements about how good we were coming out of senate library committees that were embarrassingly wrong on occasion (laughter) but heck, you didn't really want to correct them.

This service approach led to certain internal policy decisions: for example, about the primacy of the Interlibrary Loan office. I used to say to people that I was the only library director in the United States where faculty would rush up to me to tell me how wonderful interlibrary loan service was here. Almost all other library directors, when faculty rushed up to them about interlibrary loan, it was to complain about how long it

was taking, or this, or that, or the other. There simply wasn't that attitude that "we live off the largesse of everyone else" on those campuses, and that was true. I mean, there were points where, because of the *crisis du jour*, Interlibrary Loan would be incredibly short on staffing, where we had—back in the old paper, ILL processing days—we had reference librarians working behind the scenes to move stuff through. Because everybody in this library, I like to believe, understood the importance of maintaining the idea that—we're the smallest, but we'll get it to you faster than anybody else. That has held through from the earliest days that I was here, up to the kind of electronic services that the library is providing now, of getting stuff on interlibrary loan by having it posted on another campus's website and sending a secure URL to somebody that wants to read the material, and then they can download it—things like that. I mean, all of that kind of stuff. It isn't that other campuses aren't doing it; it's just we always tried to be the first. We always tried to unroll something: delivering materials physically on campus, the Slug Express service. Things like that. If you didn't make up in service for what you lacked in the collection, then we became very second-rate.

But faculty, I have to believe, on the basis of their experience, believed that our service was best. And with that, you're ninety percent home. We took every advantage to create stories that would spread around the faculty grapevine. For example, somebody would request something that would happen to be in the regional storage facility. And on a number of occasions, not every time, but maybe three, four, five times over the years someone from Interlibrary Loan would come up to me and say, "I read in the minutes that you're going to be up at a Northern Regional Library Board meeting. I've got this

request. This guy's really hot to get this, do you think you could bring it back with you in your car?"

Reti: Really? (laughter) My goodness.

Dyson: They would get the request at four o'clock, maybe, on a Tuesday. They'd bring it up before I left. I'd go up the next morning to the meeting. I'd bring the darn thing back. I'd be home maybe at two o'clock in the afternoon. They'd be calling the person on the phone, saying, "Well, when are you going to come and pick up that book that you ordered?"

Reti: "It's been sitting here." (both laugh)

Dyson: "It's been sitting . . ." Yeah, I know. "Whaddya do, drive all night?!" You did those things just enough. And of course people appreciated it and they were delighted. I had a very well-known faculty member on campus who was on sabbatical up at a university in Canada, who was trying to find some book or other that should have been in that large research library up there and it wasn't. He had happened to note by logging into the Melvyl catalog that the book was at UCSC, and in an email to me he wondered if there was any way that he could possibly . . . Well, you better believe that thing was overnight-expressed up to him so he had it on his desk the next day, before I even responded to his email. (both laugh)

Reti: Wow.

Dyson: And those kinds of things . . . You don't have to do it very often. You don't have to develop a whole "department of doing things fast," just do it once every few months, and have a good level of service the rest of the time, and boy, your reputation just builds fantastically.

Academic Senate Library Committees

I noticed that one of the things we wanted to talk about a little bit today was the senate library committees over the years. I don't have a lot to say about them, which is very good. (both laugh) I think that probably at some places, university librarians at other campuses, or institutions, might have a whole lot to say about their senate library committees. I've run across a few where the university librarian didn't even get to sit with the senate library committee when it met. But that fortunately was not true here, and I was blessed, without a single exception, of twenty-four years of people whose attitude on the senate library committee was, "We know you're doing a great job. Tell us how we can help you."

Reti: How fantastic, Lan.

Dyson: That was just absolutely incredible. That is not a reflection of me. That is a reflection of the daily interaction that they had with the library. They came in thinking, "This is a good thing. We're not going to mess it up." I don't mean to say that they didn't

have their own little hobby horses that they wanted to ride, about this or that or the other, but they usually, inevitably turned out to be one-incident, not only one-issue, but oftentimes one-incident kinds of things that just needed to be cleared up—how material got put on reserve, or whether something was taking too long to get processed, little things that you could easily fix. But overall, in times of crisis, which usually meant budgetary crisis, they were very, very ready to say, “Let us draft something, and you go over it and tell us if it is what you want us to say, and we’ll fire off a letter to the chair of the senate and the chancellor and see if we can move this for you.” Things like the expansion of McHenry Library. I mean, absolutely one hundred percent behind it, doing absolutely everything they could to move it along, to keep it in the face of other faculty members. They were just great.

One of the nicest things was that before I got here, there had been established a tradition that the chair and vice-chair of the UCSC Librarians Association [LAUC] sit as ex-officio non-voting members of the senate library committees. Now, they always tended to show up, and not all the senate members tended to show up, as faculty tend to do on committee meetings, so there were usually three of us there from the library, and usually not many more than that (both laugh) from the faculty. And one of those wonderful little coincidences that happened over the years was, an amazing number of times, the person who happened to be the LAUC representative on the committee, one of the two that given year, was precisely the person that I needed in the room when these one-instance or one-issue matters came up from the faculty. There’d be something you hadn’t heard of for five years on the committee, and then the one year when somebody gets all heated

up about how fast it takes to process books after you buy them, that was the year that the principal cataloger was the chair of LAUC and sat in there. I'd be sitting there, and I didn't have a clue what the process was, and she'd smile gently at me and say, "Well, why don't you let me answer that, Lan?" And she'd give this brilliant explanation of how this worked, and that worked, and offer to take them through on a tour, and this and that, and would inevitably turn it into something that was just wonderful. And that just happened. The years the questions came up about library instruction, by gosh, we'd have the library instruction coordinator as chair of LAUC that year. And it just happened if reference came up, or any number of things, questions would come up about the Science Library, and guess who'd be sitting on the committee. (laughter) And it was just—you know, I always thought it was the gods smiling on me, because I would have looked like an idiot several times . . .

Reti: (laughter)

Dyson: . . . when they asked detailed questions, which they, the faculty member, would inevitably have some direct, close experience with whatever process or issue they were talking about, and because I was hearing about this for the first time, I didn't have a clue as to what the right answer was. But almost every single time there was another librarian in the room that could answer it. And again, that just helps. It helps build up the reputation of the place. Those faculty members went away, and maybe there were two others that had the same issue, and they would say, "Yeah, well, I raised that in the library committee, and gosh, they were right on top of it. They told me they'd already

changed their policy, and I asked them if it would be possible to do this and that, and they said, yeah, they would just go right ahead and do it." Once that reputation gets built up, then it helps create an atmosphere that enables you to succeed as a manager. And as I say, I think maybe seventy-five to ninety percent of that attitude is based not on what I say, but on what the experience of the individual researcher, faculty member, or student, for that matter, is when they walk in the door. I often say that the kid who's behind the circulation desk at ten o'clock on a Sunday night can do more to enhance or destroy your reputation . . .

Reti: Sure!

Dyson: . . . than I can sitting up in my office from eight to five, Monday through Friday. Because people aren't interacting with me. They're interacting with the reference librarians, or the Interlibrary Loan people, or the circulation desk students' ability to get the stuff back on the shelves again. Over the years there were some empirical tests that showed that we weren't all blather about this. Terry Ferl and Margaret Gordon, back when she was head of Reference, did a study on how likely it was, when somebody walked in the front door of the library, and they were looking for a particular book, how likely were they to find it where it was supposed to be, available for checkout. And in general, if I'm remembering the results correctly, and I'm not far off if it's not precisely correct, you were about twenty percent more likely to receive a satisfactory solution of your need in this library than you were in the average academic library.

Reti: That's excellent.

Dyson: If it was that fifty percent of the time in the average academic library you could find it out, it was sixty percent of the time here. And it was an interesting study, because they actually had the people write this stuff down. And one of the things they discovered (and this was a published study in the library literature)²² is that one of the reasons that people—not the majority reason, you know, obviously people could have it checked out, or it could be at the bindery or any number of things, it could be on a book truck waiting to be shelved—but one of the reasons that was most fixable, which no one had ever thought of, and I think in a million years you'd never think of it, is the reason that people didn't find what they were looking for, can you guess? *They wrote the call number down wrong.*

Reti: Oh, yeah. (laughter) Sure.

Dyson: They literally wrote the call number down wrong. They transposed a number or a letter, went to the shelf of the wrong call numbers, it wasn't there. The researchers would then take the slip that the person had filled out and they would re-check it in the catalog to see whether or not they could find it. That actually is a very useful piece of information because it means that reference librarians and so on can make sure that people write call numbers down right if they're getting help at the reference desk, or

22. Terry Ellen Ferl and Margaret G. Robinson, "Book Availability at the University of California, Santa Cruz," *College & Research Libraries* 47 (Sept. 1986): 501–8.—Editor.

they could emphasize that in the library instruction sessions and things like that. But anyway, it was gratifying to see over the years that there was an atmosphere surrounding the library that we were a successful, can-do organization.

Another little anecdote, which I only heard, but I heard it from the person that was there, so it's not far off, is that some aspect of automation services was being discussed on the campus (I think this was a senate committee or administrative committee, it must have been), and at some point, in frustration, somebody far outside the library, it was like in the campus computer services department or something, sort of pounded the table and said, "Why the hell don't we just turn it over to the library, because then we know it'll get done right."

Reti: (laughter) That's nice.

Dyson: (laughter) And when I heard that story, that made my week, let me tell you. But that was, I think, the atmosphere that surrounded the place. And it made it work well. There's something I once heard of in sociology called the pratfall effect. And that is, if you show a film of somebody tripping over a crack in the sidewalk, and you give different descriptions of that person ahead of time to people who are watching that film, their reaction to the person tripping over the sidewalk is totally different. And it runs something like this: If you say that this person is this really great guy, and they're kind, you know, they pat little children on the head and puppies love them and all that . . .

Reti: (laughter)

Dyson: . . . and they're just this magnificent person, if you saw a film of them tripping over a crack in the sidewalk, the reaction of the people watching the film is: "Oh, isn't that amazing. Here's a man of the people, this wonderful person, and he behaves just like the rest of us. Isn't that great, that he could trip over that crack in the sidewalk just like he wasn't the magnificent person that he is."

Reti: (laughter)

Dyson: Now, you can probably guess what's coming up next. If you say, "This guy's a real jerk, and he's always bumbling around," I won't go into all the detail, but it's, "There he goes again."

Reti: (laughter) Right, right.

Dyson: (laughter) You know, "Sure enough, Joe, he's always the one that would trip over the crack in the sidewalk." Well, in a way, that was a lesson I learned early. So you do have to work hard on the reputation. Because then when the dumb things do occur, and you are aware as much as I of occurrences over the years of bad things happening, the attitude of the campus administration, or the faculty, or whoever it may be is, "Gee, isn't it so sad that such a wonderful organization should have this bad thing happen." Rather than, "Oh, those guys are always screwing up and here's just another example of it."

That's why I always felt it was important for us to look for those little places where we could demonstrate our excellence, and if need be, trumpet it.

Interactions with Academic and Executive Vice Chancellors

Okay, let me see what else you have [on the question outline]. I would just have to say that in general, almost all of the academic vice chancellors (that grew under Michael Tanner's time to become executive vice chancellors), were at worst neutral to the library, and at best extremely supportive of the library. The first AVC, John Marcum, came in at the time that I did, and he set the tone for it over the years. But people like John Simpson, Michael Tanner, the ones that lasted for a long time in particular, I always felt that I could talk with them on a slightly different level than some of the others who reported to them because they quickly discovered that a large portion of their job involved management. AVCs came from the faculty ranks, and certainly weren't trained as managers. And I won't use the word *confidant*, because that implies that I knew stuff that others didn't, but oftentimes when I went in for my meetings about library issues, we'd wind up talking about general management stuff on the campus and they'd want to get my take on things. That established a camaraderie with them that I don't think was necessarily true in terms of the average administrator on the campus. They saw me as a good manager, so they tried to go out and do things that would help the library. It did not mean that over the years there weren't things that didn't go our way. They made tough decisions and they said, "I know you're not going to be happy with this." One that comes to mind was moving Media Services out from under the library and putting it into this whole new big kind of computer services and instructional services department.

That was something I argued against. I didn't win. But the fact is they were always up front with me as to what their reasons were and all that, and I can't say that I ever felt the kind of stab-in-the-back things that happened—that you hear about, at least, happening—on other campuses. I think we were blessed with a pretty solid bunch of academic/executive vice chancellors over the years. There were one or two that didn't make it, and I won't go into the names, but it quickly became apparent to the rest of the campus that they weren't going to make it either, and they were moved on to other pastures. And they weren't particularly bad for the library, they just were equally incompetent to everybody, let's leave it that way.

Relationships with the other University Librarians at UC

Reti: How about your relationship with other university librarians?

Dyson: Well that's an interesting one, and I've already mentioned to you that we always saw it as to our enormous advantage to work with the Office of the President whenever we could. Either as a result of that, or more likely simply because of perspective, the campuses that didn't get along that well with the Office of the President tended to line up on being campuses that weren't that friendly to UCSC, at the top level. Which is simply a euphemistic way of saying that I and the university librarian at Berkeley didn't get along very well. (both laugh) I had actually worked for him before I came here, and I'm talking about Joe Rosenthal.

Perhaps one can sum it up by saying that Berkeley's nickname is "Cal," not Berkeley, to

the outside world, and so the practical result was they always kind of resented a lot of this coordination stuff. They always saw themselves as the givers, and not those that were advantaged by cooperation. They always wanted to cooperate with places like Stanford more than they would want to cooperate with places like Santa Cruz. All of which was completely understandable, and fortunately, having spent eight years at Berkeley, and having developed relationships with the people at Berkeley, we could usually get done what we wanted to have done, by simply not raising it to the level of a policy question, whether it was borrowing materials or coordinating jitney schedules or who the heck knows what it might be. The university librarian at Berkeley, he and I just didn't hit it off. It was just as much a personality conflict as anything else. I don't mean that we didn't talk to each other at meetings or anything like that, but there were other UC librarians . . .

Let me back up just a little bit. One of the things that Santa Cruz suffered from because of its size, is that Santa Cruz is the only general campus of the University of California that is not a member of the Association of Research Libraries. The Association of Research Libraries is an organization of mostly academic libraries—there are a few like the Smithsonian and Library of Congress and things like that, that are in it too—and it's mostly American, and, I don't know, probably eight or so Canadian libraries. But clearly the largest group of libraries within ARL, now probably a hundred and ten or so, is American academic libraries. There are Canadian, and there are non-academic, but by far the large majority, the biggest group is American academic libraries. And a lot of the stuff that goes on in librarianship, in terms of the leadership of academic libraries, goes

on within the Association of Research Libraries. It's a powerful, well-run organization. It's one that's frequently called on to testify before Congress and things like that. And, as one would expect, when UC people went off to ARL meetings, they would get together for dinner. It'd be UC librarians, and they wouldn't have seen each other for a while, and they'd reach conclusions, and maybe even talk about policies, and then would come back, and announce that such things had been agreed upon by the UC libraries. At which point, the head of the UCSF library and the head of the UC Santa Cruz library would raise their hands and say, "Oh no, you didn't. Because we weren't there."
(laughter)

Reti: Now, why aren't we members?

Dyson: We're not members because we're not big enough. And one of the goals that I tried to establish for the library in the last couple of years as they went through the exercise of the campus plan that EVC John Simpson had everybody do, was to set a goal for the campus that we would become an ARL library within about ten years. We simply have to build up the collection at a faster rate. We'll have the space to do it when the McHenry Addition is completed. It was hard for me to argue for faster growth when you didn't have any space to put the books. But we now have the McHenry Addition being built. This is a little bit of a tangent, but one of the strategies I used in order to try to get the campus to commit to striving for ARL membership, which obviously would have the library develop at a faster rate than it had in the past, was to build on the fact that Chancellor MRC Greenwood wanted this campus to become a member of the American

Association of Universities, AAU. And I happened to find out that the AAU looked askance at membership applications where the libraries weren't members of ARL. So I could say, "Guess what? Remember I've been saying it would be nice to be members of ARL? Well, this is a *sine qua non* for being a member in AAU." At which point MRC Greenwood then became a very strong supporter of the concept of the library becoming a member of ARL.

Anyway, my point was that we were always the small kid on the block, and there were other university librarians at UC campuses that, when issues came up, would kind of look out for us. And over the years, I would have to say, places like UC San Diego and UCLA, interestingly, would oftentimes remind people that Santa Cruz, and/or San Francisco hadn't been included in this discussion, or that some policy might work great at the big campuses but might cause an undue hardship at the smaller ones.

Reti: It's interesting that UCLA would do that.

Dyson: It was just as much a matter of personality as anything else. Now, of course, she [the UCLA university librarian] had the Riversides and Santa Barbaras to be concerned with, but they were ARL members, so theoretically they could fend for themselves. It just was nice to know that those kinds of things would happen, and oftentimes decisions would be made in a way that tried to look out for the interests of the smaller campuses too, even if we weren't present at the table at any given time.

In general, I felt that (long pause) I always felt a little bit junior at the library council, or the ULs meetings, simply because we weren't ARL members. We weren't taking part in discussions of nationwide preservation projects or some things like that that ARL might be part of. And so I tried to carve out for myself an area where the other ULs could feel like I was a kind of an expert for them. It clearly wasn't going to be in collections or things that were great national issues that were going to be largely dealt with by an organization that I wasn't even a member of. I would point out, for example, ARL is exclusive enough that I couldn't even go and sit in the back of their meetings, I mean, as a non-member. They simply don't allow that to happen. Well, you can see why, because then it would be two hundred people that want to go sit in the back of their meetings. But we tried unsuccessfully a couple of times to see if that could happen.

One other thing that did happen was that the longtime leader of the Association of Research Libraries, Duane Webster, happens to be a buddy of mine, and a real good personal friend. We worked together at Columbia University when I was at my first job. He was there as a consultant for ARL, interestingly. It was one of his first jobs, and we grew to be good friends, and we still maintain contact and see each other and visit each other's homes and things like that. That has been one way that I've kept up on what's going on in ARL, because he's just kind of looked out for me, and he'll pass the word on. Oh, it might be, "Did you know so-and-so was leaving that job, are you interested?" (laughter) or things like that. But over the years it's also helped me get answers to questions about ARL stuff, whether it's documents they've produced, or new committees they're setting up, and . . . he's even gone so far as, occasionally he'll go to a

meeting at an American Library Association conference and I'll tag along with him, just because he thinks there's something I might be interested in. So the two of us will show up, and nobody has the guts to tell him that he can't do that. You know, committee meetings and things like that. It's been a lot of fun.

That was one way of compensating, and as you can see from my previous discussion about how UCSC compensated in the area of collections, it seems like compensating has been the major element of my professional life. (both laugh) Well, one of the areas that I did carve out within the University Librarians Group or its predecessor, the Library Council, was the whole area of human relations. I served on the first management team that negotiated the first collective bargaining contract for the librarians within UC. I made a point to keep up on matters or issues of librarians' status, or even things like status of university librarians, I mean, our positions get moved around in strange places just like everybody else's do at other categories. I was on the management bargaining team for several years from the start. Those kinds of issues I've always felt I tried to keep up on. There're only so many hours in a day, and if other ULs are involved in ARL committees and projects and stuff like that, I could do that within UC and try to keep my fellow ULs aware of it. I don't mean to pretend that I'm the only person that was interested in that stuff—obviously not. If I occasionally felt less than equal about the major issues of the day, ARL level issues, I felt more than equal when it came to human resources issues, bargaining, compensation issues, status issues, those kinds of things. The other way I think I was able to get into that is there was always a slight assumption that I understood the issues facing the average librarian within UC because I was one

that had come up through the ranks. I'm probably the only one that was just a department head and then went straight on to become the university librarian at another UC.

Reti: So the other ones would . . .

Dyson: Well, they oftentimes would come in from elsewhere. They would at least have been an associate university librarian within UC.

Reti: Oh, I see what you're saying.

Dyson: Now, that has happened. But none of them was just a department head, or a former president of the Librarians Association, things like that.

Reti: That is unusual.

Dyson: And as a total package, I tended to look more like a "man of the people" than some of the others. I mean, Joe Rosenthal, for example, at Berkeley, had been the associate university librarian, I think he'd been the head cataloger, et cetera. But he just wasn't somebody that'd ever been particularly interested in things like the Librarians Association or anything like that. And so in that whole area I tended to look out for LAUC, speak up for them in meetings. The whole area of human resources was something that I tried to add my bit to. This wasn't something that came up at every

meeting, but then again, national preservation or collection development programs didn't come up at every meeting either. But I always felt that I was there, and more to the point, I guess I would volunteer to be the person to take on some role that might come up with regards to something like that.

Over the years, I think, especially in the later years, I'd say the last, oh, maybe eight or so years of my term here, the University Librarians Group was just fun. It was a great bunch of people. They were really competent. There weren't a whole lot of slackers, and it tended to get better. Initially the meetings were not so much fun; there were a lot of turf wars and that kind of stuff. Over the years, as resources got more difficult to acquire, organizations can go in two directions at that point. You can fragment and everybody's out for their own, or you can pull together. And this particular group of people simply pulled together. It was kind of interesting, because UC has always maintained the fiction it's one university, whether it's "one library, one university" or whatever. They try to coordinate admissions, and schedules and financial aid programs, you name it, transferability of programs, and faculty able to move around and teach at other campuses. I think that how the libraries worked in the general area of cooperation is best summed up by a comment that then-vice president Richard West made to the university librarians in a meeting about, probably, ten years ago or so. We were complaining about our inability to make something happen within the libraries, some kind of coordinated interlibrary loan program. We were all using different circulation systems, so we couldn't get in to see whether the book was checked out or not, and therefore available for ILL, and we were moaning about this. I looked over and I saw him grinning. He was

at the meeting with us because he was the vice president for computer stuff, in systemwide administration. I said, "Richard, why are you laughing?" And he said, "You know, I just have to remind you guys that when any of us go to any other meetings that attempt to coordinate anything within the University of California, it's the UC libraries that we use as the example of the one group that has its act together." (both laugh) "So don't get too upset with your inability to work this darn issue out, because compared to everybody else in the UC system, you coordinate and cooperate more than practically any of the other horizontal level of activities within UC."

Reti: Do you think that's because of personality, or is that because it's libraries versus other kinds of services?

Dyson: I don't think it's personality, although I suppose if you actively had people that didn't want that to happen it would have thrown up roadblocks. It's because, first of all, libraries are one of the relatively few professions where you only succeed through cooperation as a library entity. That is, you can be the world's greatest cataloger, but if reference librarians aren't directing people to use the right materials, well, you're just the world's . . . Hey, that may be the best cataloged book in the world, but . . . You can be the best reference librarian in the world, but if the head of Circulation hasn't got the Circulation department organized well enough to get the books on the shelves, when you work with that kid and say, "This is the material that you need," they go, and they can't find any of it. You can go right down the line. Libraries have to work well together internally in order for librarians to succeed. So there's a natural kind of cooperation—

which is different from faculty members. I mean, why would the physicist here want the physicist at UCLA to discover it before he does, you know? Yes, they talk and they cooperate, but ultimately it's a campus kind of thing. A student that decides not to go to Santa Cruz and goes to Santa Barbara instead isn't thought of as a triumph for the UC system that they kept them within UC. (laughter) You know? It's sort of, "Damn it, we wanted that one."

Reti: (laughter) It's so true.

Dyson: That kind of thing. "How can we make ourselves more attractive?" Whereas libraries, we come to the table having to cooperate in order to exist as professionals. I happen to think that that creates a mindset of cooperation when we get together in a room with other UC campuses.

Reti: That's interesting.

Dyson: As I say, it could be throttled. It just so happens that it isn't, within UC, and UC has succeeded in creating a support structure for the libraries that encourages cooperation, whether it's having something like the Melvyl system created, or cooperative storage facilities. Those are all things that other administrative entities across the campuses look at and view . . . While we may be grumbling about, "Oh, it took so long to get that book from the regional storage facility," they're saying, "My God, they got together and built a regional storage facility! Can you believe it?" (laughter) Or

a patron walks into the library and the staff say, "Oh yeah, we'll get that from UC San Diego. It should be here tomorrow afternoon." And the patron's thinking, they couldn't even find out who the right person was to talk to in admissions on some issue in San Diego in twenty-four hours. So I think that's worked. I think that it at least is an atmosphere in which success is possible, let's put it that way.

Reti: Interesting. Shall we talk about LAUC?

Librarians Association of the University of California [LAUC]

Dyson: Yes. The Librarians Association of the University of California was created as an alternative [organization] for librarians to the Academic Senate. And so some of the structure of it is similar: campus divisions of a larger group, and if you go into the senate you see the same kind of terminology. UC fortunately has enough librarians that it can have an organization of librarians. If you were at a campus the size of Berkeley, someplace else, all you'd have was a campus the size of Berkeley, so you'd have eighty librarians. Whereas here you have hundreds, because it's all of UC. So you can have committees; you can have peer review. You can do those kind of things that work when you have enough critical mass of librarians within the entire UC system. And so that's why LAUC hasn't been easily transferable as a concept to other places.

LAUC was eventually recognized as an official entity of the University of California, which meant, of course, that it couldn't be a bargaining agent, because it couldn't be an official administrative entity and also be, by definition, something that wasn't, that is, an

adversarial organization. Then came what kind of recognition we would have. It was decided that the LAUC president should serve on the UC Library Council, which consisted back then of the university librarians, the chair of the senate library committee, some Office of the President people, and so on. I was vice president in the seventies at the time that LAUC joined the Library Council, and I was the first president of LAUC to serve a full one-year term that way. My predecessor came on sort of during the year. I always felt that the LAUC presence was a useful reminder that the heady decisions that the ULs might make had to be translated into actual practice at the professional level, and to have someone there that could remind us of that was quite useful. LAUC is essentially an advisory organization. It's different from the Academic Senate in that it does not have any constitutional/university administrative authority, which the Academic Senate does have. The Academic Senate is responsible for the content of the curriculum. The senate itself is responsible.

Reti: Right. Because that's shared governance?²³

Dyson: Shared governance and so on. LAUC doesn't have any comparable mandated responsibility. LAUC is ultimately advisory in everything it does, whether it's writing a report, or reviewing librarians for advancement or appointment to the UC system, or

23. "The University of California's tradition of shared-governance [establishes] that faculty should share in the responsibility for guiding the operation and management of the university, while preserving the authority of the university's governing board, the Regents, to ultimately set policy. As with so many other aspects of the university's operation, the concept of shared governance has evolved over time, often in reaction to significant internal and external challenges, and revolving around the development of the Academic Senate."—John Aubrey Douglass in "Shared Governance at the University of California: An Historical Review," Research and Occasional Paper Series CSHE. —Editor.

whatever it may be. But nevertheless, I think it's helped in a lot of ways, as I think I mentioned. Later, it gave me a systemwide perspective that I found very useful when I became university librarian, because I'd been president only two or three years prior to my assuming this job, and therefore many of the players were the same, people like Steve Salmon and others, plus the ULs, so that was one of the things that made this transition easier.

LAUC's life became a lot more complicated when the librarians voted to have collective bargaining representation, because there's a whole body of labor law that says what administrative units can do and what they can't do vis à vis a collective bargaining organization. So there's always been a little bit of an uneasy tension between what LAUC does and what the union, the American Federation of Teachers [AFT], does. But it's worked out. The major problem for LAUC, really, is the lack of continuity. You're vice president, then you're president, and you're past president. But really the only one that is a major activity there is the presidency, and you're only that for one year. So it's awfully hard to try to get all-campus agreement on some policy. If you start on September one when a term might begin, and you then try to get all the campuses to agree and by the end of your term twelve months later have it all in place and done, it's really hard to do. When I assumed the presidency of LAUC, I believe the president of the University of California was David Saxon. And there was some reception, probably for the Library Council, that as the incoming LAUC vice president I was invited to go to. David Saxon came up to me, and with a twinkle in his eye he said something that baffled me then, but quickly became un baffling. He said, (puts on deep, official voice) "Young

man, you'll discover that nine is a very large number." (both laugh) And of course, he was referring to the nine campuses of the University of California.

Reti: Right.

Dyson: I have to say that it was perfect. It was absolutely true. You could always cut it different ways. There was the big campus perspective and the little campus perspective and the Santa Barbara perspective, and then there was the northern perspective and the southern perspective and the Santa Barbara perspective. (laughter) It was kind of a running joke among a whole succession of LAUC presidents that you could always count on Santa Barbara to think of some element of some issue that was terribly important to them but no one else. At best, it wasn't important, and at worst, you couldn't figure out what they were talking about, or why this has anything to do with it. I don't know, it must be something in the water down there. I'm sure it's changed now, but that was true not just for me; that was true for many, many years. There was always the joke about the Santa Barbara perspective.

I got a lot out of it. I enjoyed it. My role in LAUC is probably written up in the history of LAUC, and I won't go through it all here, since it didn't directly affect my UCSC tenure. But it always meant that when I saw LAUC presidents heading into areas where I felt that they were going to quickly run into some conflict with the reality of the university librarians, I would have a quiet phone call and say, "You've got to think of some other way of putting this."

The LAUC president has a systemwide view, and the UC systemwide assistant vice president for libraries has a systemwide view.²⁴ Oftentimes, LAUC would have members on committees that the assistant vice president would be working with. And the LAUC president, being forced to think from a systemwide perspective—I mean, they wouldn't dare ever to bring something forward that seemed to benefit solely their own campus—and the assistant vice president would be thinking the same way. Whereas the fact that the ULs had a turf to defend, which their faculty demanded that they defend, meant there was kind of a quiet understanding between the LAUC president and the systemwide assistant vice president. That meant that when things came up informally, you know, occasionally there would be a disparaging remark, "Oh, we'd have to run this by LAUC." "Why can't we just do it?" "Well, you know, you need to consult." I tended to be the one of the, "I think we need to consult on this." And interestingly the assistant vice president would often be the person that would back me up, so that I wasn't the only person saying, "Yeah, this is important that we do that. We want to bring the front-line librarians in on this one, because ultimately they're going to be the ones that either make or break this." I think that has helped LAUC over the years—having quiet, behind-the-scenes supporters of the concept of the Librarians Association, whether it was on my part or other people's part, helped the organization to succeed as much as it has.

The Design and Construction of the Science and Engineering Library

Reti: Today we're going to begin by talking about the design and construction of the new

24. Marion Taylor, Alan Ritch, and Deborah Murphy from UCSC all served as LAUC presidents while Dyson was University Librarian—Editor.

Science and Engineering Library, which is actually not so new anymore.

Dyson: Right. It still looks new, which is kind of nice.

Reti: That's true.

Dyson: Yeah, a lot of the energy of the University Library and the people on campus outside the library that were concerned about the library was directed towards coping strategies with the existing [old] Science Library. You know, that's kind of sad. There were big arguments as to what's the criteria that you should use to decide which volumes are going to be transferred out of the existing Science Library down to be shelved on the fourth floor of McHenry library.

Reti: Oh, I remember that.

Dyson: Is it how much it's used, or should you do runs of periodicals . . . When you come here and you see that all this energy's being put into that, you just say, what a waste that we've got to do that. Faculty members get involved and they don't want their volumes down there. Remember that this was before there was easy online access to the stuff. I mean, just finding out exactly where it was was hard enough. It involved a lot of walking around, and oftentimes people would start a search and have some footnotes referenced and want to check them out, only to discover that the back volumes, the articles referred to in the footnotes, were down in McHenry, and they'd have to tramp

down there, or . . .

Reti: Yes. I remember that well. It was very frustrating.

Dyson: Yeah. Exactly. And it was just, you see all that energy, and all that discomfort, and you know some people are going to be unhappy no matter what solution you have.

And the staff wasn't particularly cared for in the sense that circumstances made it hard for them to give good service. They didn't have desks in quiet places where they could work, and that kind of thing. The head of the Science Library had just stepped down before I came, George Keller. And so I was able to hire a new science librarian, Carolyn Miller. We looked for, and got, a real seasoned professional. She'd run science libraries in the Midwest for a long time, and I felt that we needed to bring somebody in that knew the best ways to do stuff. That this wasn't a building project . . . it was making the best out of a bad situation. I think she was fine that way. She did a good job in regularizing the practices and making the best kind of behind-the-scenes organization and that kind of thing, for what ultimately always was a bad situation no matter how efficiently you ran it. There, of course, was talk about how we were going to expand the Science Library, and it was clear we had to do something, because ultimately you were going to need the space in McHenry Library for McHenry volumes. I mean, it wasn't only that, "Oh gee, the poor Science Library has this problem." The Science Library ripple effect was pretty major on the whole University Library because of the need to deal with all these tens of thousands of volumes that had to be pulled out and stored elsewhere.

The original planning was for an expansion that would be privately funded. And that was because it was during an economic downturn in the early eighties, and there weren't a lot of capital projects being built. So we went out and did a search for an architect, and after interviewing several firms, we chose Esherick, Homsey, Dodge and Davis, EHDD, as it will be referred to from now on. The principal who was in charge of the project was Chuck Davis. We'd just started doing fundraising, and I think we had probably . . . I'm a little unsure of the timing, the sequence of events here, but as memory serves me we had started fundraising for this expansion of the Science Library and we were able to get two foundations to commit money to it. One was the Cowell Foundation, which gave something in the range of two hundred thousand dollars, and then the Honeywell Foundation, which had a division of their corporation here in Santa Cruz, gave twenty-five thousand. I've already covered the circumstances that led to our deciding that we could get state money for this. We talked about that [in a previous session of this oral history]. In a sense, that was a bad thing and a good thing. It was bad because then you had to go into the state capital planning process, which is a multi-year process, and you're competing with other projects on this campus, and then in turn competing with other projects on other campuses, for your priority. So in that sense it slowed things down, or at least took them much more out of our control. On the other hand, the project that was conceived with private funding was not going to be workable. The existing old building is fortress-like, with tiny little slits for windows and these massive structural walls, and there were only one or two places where you could cut into that building to add something on. So effectively what you were going to do was wind up with two buildings, a new one and an old one with a corridor in between them. There

wasn't any way to simply tear down one whole side of that building, because if you had the building would have collapsed. And so what we were going to wind up with was a much better project, but one that was going to take, as we thought, a few years to get through the state process.

Well. (both laugh) It did take a few years, and it took a lot of fighting to get the whole budgetary side working. Fortunately, at that time we had a chancellor who was a scientist (Robert Sinsheimer), and he was convinced that this was a critically important project for the future of science on the campus. And as I am fond of saying, libraries are everybody's second favorite thing. People always have their own first priority, but the second priority is the library. Well, in good times that works very well, because no matter what we wanted to do in the library, I could usually generate broad-based support for it, so long as people's other needs were taken care of first. In tough times, it's a lot harder, because quite frankly, the dean of natural sciences carries more weight on a campus than, say, the university librarian. So if it gets down to: are you going to build this new science building or are you going to build a science library, and the dean thinks, "Let's see, what am I going to say at the next faculty meeting?" They're going to want to hear that the new lab is the top priority.

So what happened was that the chancellor, once (in good times) he got everybody to agree that the new Science Library was to be a top priority, he kept it there. Even when other projects came along, obviously good things, he kept it clear to people, "No. We've decided this is going to be a top, in some cases *the* top priority for the campus and we're

not going to back away from that, because then we look like fools." If you say, "Oh, that was our first priority last year, but this year we have other first priorities," the funding agency says, "Well that's good. If we wait another year they'll have different ones next year." So he understood the importance of once having made that commitment to stick with it. And he supported us through thick and thin to see that it happened.

There was a kind of a quiet period between the initial, very early 1980s conceptual thinking about adding on to the old building, and then the commitment that it was going to go via the state, and then we recommitted to a totally new, separate building. But it was decided that since the early thinking had been with EHDD that we would stick with them. We had been pleased with what had gone on early on. But the early stuff was just kind of drawings. The landscape things with . . .

Reti: Very conceptual kind of stuff?

Dyson: Yeah. Where you have, it's sort of pastels, and you could put the building over here, or maybe you'd put it over there, just to give you a sense as to what it was. There was not a great deal of thinking, and I don't believe there was even a faculty committee or anything that was involved in it at that point. It was more to be able to roll something out on a table and show to the people that you're asking for money, more than you were actually designing the library itself.

So that planning faded quickly now that we were going to do something totally

different, and it was going to be a new building. The choice of EHDD proved to be incredibly fortuitous. At that time, they were just coming into, I would say, almost world-renown, because of some of the projects that they were doing, such as the Monterey Bay Aquarium.

Reti: Oh!

Dyson: And you could see how that would bring a great deal of attention to them. Also, the top principal, Joe Esherick, at some point during our association with EHDD, was awarded the Gold Medal of the American Institute of Architects. It's the top honorary designation, sort of like the Congressional Medal of Honor for architects. Frank Lloyd Wright and people like that have gotten it over the years. So EHDD was a good company to be with. They were growing; they were well thought of. Another thing about them was that they were the architects of the new central library at UCSF. And they finished that project, I think it was a couple years or so before our Science Library got going. They learned a lot from that project. Part of the problem with the UCSF project was that so much of the UCSF library was privately funded, and there had to be quite a bit of kowtowing to—you know, if you give five million dollars towards the library or something, you get your space the way you want it. Also, because some very high-profile donors were involved in it, the chancellor's office at UCSF was very into it. And there were designs that, from a librarian and library service point of view, you probably wouldn't have designed that way, the way you would for good service, but you needed to highlight a particular room or service because somebody had given a lot of money to

it. But it was an extremely educative process for EHDD. And it was a highly praised library. It's a beautiful library. EHDD had also worked with the University of California on the original Northern Regional Library Facility, the storage facility, which didn't so much impact on how they were going to design this, but it made them very, very aware, as in the UCSF project, of the whole bureaucratic process, approval processes. I mean, you have to go through the regents to get approval for building design for something like the Science Library. EHDD were old hands at this by this time.

Reti: I can see where that would be an advantage.

Dyson: Yeah. A major advantage. And finally, they were located in San Francisco, which may seem like a long ways away from Santa Cruz. It isn't. I mean, it's not uncommon to have a New York firm or something design a major West Coast academic building. And what they'll then do is usually contract with a more local firm in partnership. I've never liked that idea. I don't have any direct experience with it, but I have lots of colleagues that have had experience with it; there's a certain amount of finger pointing when things go wrong, as to whose responsibility is it, and how do you get approval for a design change, and which firm is it. And the entourage flies in from New York once every three months or something, and sort of overturns the apple cart of where you've been going. So the fact that we were dealing only with EHDD, that they were very familiar with UC, they were very familiar with this campus from work that they'd done, et cetera, et cetera . . . it all proved to be a fortuitous choice in a lot of ways.

The other aspect of EHDD, which evidently in the architectural world at that time was unusual, was that they were a client-centered firm. Now, you'd say, "Duh!" But at least at that time, that was trumpeted as unusual about this firm. Usually, as I understand it, architects prided themselves on the design aspects of the building from an aesthetic or artistic point of view. I remember looking at a PBS program on the new Chicago Public Library. It was a marvelously educative TV program about the various designs, and they had this international competition and all that. And one of the designs I saw looked spectacular from a library point of view, I mean, boy, what incredible service you could give. Well, that design didn't win it, and the dismissive comment of the commentator was (derisive voice) "Well, this was the design that the librarians all liked. Ha ha ha ha ha!" I was kind of horrified.

Reti: It's bizarre. They're the users.

Dyson: Yeah, and they're going to be living with it ninety hours a week, folks, you know? The architects aren't going to come and check out books anymore. They're going to go back to wherever it is, New York or Paris or wherever they're coming from. (both laugh) The design they wound up with looked kind of like an armory. It was supposedly harkening back to the olden days, very inflexible brick, and if I remember correctly the little children have to, like, tramp up these grand marble staircases to the second floor to get to the children's room. I mean, it was from a library design point of view, just bad, but it looked spectacular from, you know, a harking back to the early days of Chicago point of view.

Reti: (laughs)

Dyson: So the fact that we had a firm that . . . I mean, I didn't know this. I was a neophyte on building buildings. But the fact that we had a firm that built, in effect, from the inside out, that found out what it was that was going to make the building work, and then put their aesthetic imprint on that, was unusual at the time. And when EHDD won awards, I would read that this was the way they approached their work, as if this was some kind of weird, new thing that these crazies in their tie-dyes out in California were doing. (both laugh) And to me, it's like, well, isn't that the most basic thing in the world, that ultimately you judge a building on how well it serves its purpose over the years?

Reti: I'm surprised. That's strange.

Dyson: Yeah, I know. But you keep hearing about buildings that don't work very well once you move into them, and I think that's probably the reason. And I have heard of projects, even within UC, from my colleagues, where they say, "Yeah, well, we keep arguing with the architect about this and that and the other, and they give perfunctory agreement, but then go back and design it the way they want to design it. It's been hard."

All of this came together in the first meeting with EHDD, with the library staff and building committee. And I fully expected from what I'd read about architects that we were going to see the entourage of the senior architect, which in this case was Chuck

Davis, and his assistants to the senior, and then the assistant architects, and the assistants to the assistant architects, and this troupe was going to come in and sort of tell us what it was that we wanted. Well, we had a two or three-hour meeting scheduled. And the door opened, and in walked Chuck Davis . . .

Reti: Just him.

Dyson: . . . with a large pad of paper. And it proceeded to be one of the most interesting and exciting meetings I've ever been in in my career. Because he had already worked on the UCSF building, he had a lot of interesting questions. Mainly, he would—he would say things that seemed kind of weird, like, “How do you want people to feel when they walk in the building?” “What sense do you want them to have as they're walking up to the building?” We'd never even thought about questions like that. That's not a question you ask about the old Science Library. Over there it's like, “Where's the door?” (both laugh)

Reti: Right.

Dyson: “Is there any way into this thing?”

Reti: “Should I bring an oxygen mask with me to go in?”

Dyson: Yeah, exactly. (both laugh) And amazingly, some of those very early impressions

that he got out of us, for example: “Well,” we said, “It sure would be great . . . “ We explained to him that people are kind of fearful of going to libraries, especially when they’re undergraduates, unlike at UCSF. I mean, at UCSC are kids that may have come from small towns in California. They’ve never used a really big library in their life, and even kids from cities tend to have been to small branch libraries, not the main library in San Francisco or LA or something like that. So we said, “It would be nice if they felt like they knew what was going on in the library before they even got in. And they knew how to get around inside it.” Well, when you walk up to this library, you can see where the stairwell is, up and down the outside of the building.

Reti: It literally makes the process transparent.

Dyson: Yeah. When you walk in, you don’t know it consciously, but you already know where you’re going to go if you want to go to another level of the building.

Reti: That’s interesting.

Dyson: That’s not an accident. There are just countless little things about the building that they incorporated into the design that makes it work for the user much better than a lot of libraries do. The fact that you always have to have the circulation desk closest to the exit, because once people check out books, you don’t want them wandering around. You want them to go out the door. (laughs) That’s what you want when you have people leaving. But when people come in, you don’t want them going to the circulation desk to

ask reference questions.

Reti: Right, that's always tricky.

Dyson: So how do you design a building that gets the people coming in to go to the right place to ask questions, but handles the circulation duties as the closest service point to the door? Well, you walk into this library, and dead in front of you is the reference desk with a sign that says "Information." People walk in and they know where to go, unlike in McHenry, where when you walk in the most obvious place to ask a question is at the circulation desk, because it's right there to your left, and you can't even quite see that the reference desk is over there—even though while I was here we actually moved that reference desk forward several feet to get it more into the line of traffic.

Same thing with the atrium. Chuck designed the building so that when you walk into this wonderful grand space, you pause. It's a beautiful space that you're in, with those marvelous lights that I'll tell you a story about, giant light fixtures overhead and everything. And where you stop is exactly at the intersection of what he called "the two streets," the two service streets of the library. You've got the circulation desk, and the reserves, and the copy room and things like that, restrooms, down one way to the right of you. And you've got the reference desk, you've got the data access area, the Current Periodicals Room straight ahead of you.

Again, that's an architectural design. You're supposed to walk in there and stop and

pause and get your bearings. When you start to figure out where you want to go, you discover it's in either of two directions, equally easy for you to get to. When you go up the stairs (or down the stairs), you don't end up at the end of the stack ranges, you wind up in the middle of the stack ranges. So you never have to walk the whole length of the building to get to whatever books that you want to get to. You only have to walk half the way, because they're staggered and you come in off the main stairwell or elevator right there. The elevator was designed to go in the stairwell, so that when people are there they only have one flight of stairs to get to where they're going. If you put the elevator right near the front, a lot of people will just automatically walk to the elevator. But since you have to go into the stairwell to get the elevator, most people don't take the elevator. Most people just use the stairs.

Reti: Yeah, it's unusual.

Dyson: Again, all of those things were . . . I could go on for days. All of those things were things that were thought through, that he helped us with, as ways to accomplish little things that we wanted to accomplish in this building.

Reti: That's fascinating.

Dyson: And Chuck just . . . Not all of it, obviously, came out in that first three-hour meeting. I don't mean to imply that. But he sat there; he asked questions; he took copious notes, got us thinking about issues. And we walked out of there very excited because we

thought, this is going to be a special kind of place.

And there was heavy involvement on the part of the staff. We tried to get the library assistants, the clerical staff, involved in designing their own work areas, down to “What shape do you want the drawers in the Circulation Desk to be?” That’s all stuff you can do, if you take the time to do it. It takes a lot of time, but it works a heck of a lot better if you take the time to do that. All sorts of things like that.

Budget, of course, was an issue. We went through what’s called the “value engineering process,” and supposedly the one we went through was a real model. In the value engineering process you bring together all of the principals. It’s probably thirty-five or forty people: the construction people, and the experts on acoustics, and the air-handling people, the faculty that are involved in it on the building committee, the librarians, the architectural staff. And you go through a structured exercise as to how you could save money, save value in the project.

Reti: All those people are in one room at once?

Dyson: Yes. And sometimes you’ll have breakout groups. For example, in doing the soils analysis for this building . . . This campus has many areas where there are underground caverns. Limestone . . .

Reti: Yes. Limestone karst topography.

Dyson: Yeah, you got it. You probably know more about that than I do. But it's a difficult situation, because you can drill down and go to nice, good, solid stuff, and if you go five feet farther over, the drill goes down and it all of a sudden—phwoomp!—falls down about ten feet because it's hit a cavern of some kind. When they did the drilling on this particular site one day I got this kind of panicked call. They thought they'd discovered an earthquake fault running right through the middle of the site.

Reti: Oh, no.

Dyson: It confused people, and there was a lot of discussion about all that for a while. It didn't make sense because it wasn't running in the same . . . The fault, had it been one, wasn't running in the same direction as the known earthquake fault lines around the Santa Cruz area. Ultimately, after a great deal of angst, what they figured out it was, was something more like an old limestone cavern, a tunnel water had gone through, that had fallen in tens of thousands of years ago and then gradually filled in over the millennia with other material. Well, what they thought originally was they were getting rubble from an earthquake shift, but it was rubble that had come in from the top. I don't fully understand it; all I know is it wasn't as bad as we originally were told it was going to be. But that presented some problems because they couldn't put the footings for the building down into that kind of material. And so at the value engineering everybody agreed this was the spot for the library, but how were you going to design, structurally, a building that was going to handle this particular problem? One of the groups came up with a solution that was essentially you'd build two buildings, one on one side, one on

the other, and have kind of this corridor in between.

Reti: Oh, so there's less of a load on it.

Dyson: This was not a well-received design by the librarians, as you can imagine. It would harken back to our old designs where, you know . . . (laughs)

Reti: Yeah, right.

Dyson: But working through the value engineering, they figured out a way with angled columns bridging this gap. The building itself would have complete integrity as one building, but the way that they designed the footings and things like that was going to take care of this.

Well, obviously, there were a hundred and one problems and issues, air conditioning, sound, and all that kind of thing, that get handled in value engineering. One of the ways this building actually came out looking as—luxurious is too strong a word, but really, I don't know what you'd say, the wood siding on the main floors, and the copper cladding and things like that—was that we got a fully justified budget, and then we engineered the hell out of the building, and figured out ways to do joint things with the Natural Sciences III building, the Sinsheimer building, power plant kind of things that could be shared by the two buildings, save some money that way. And then we put that money that we saved into making it a better building inside.

Reti: So wait, I'm a little confused about the two buildings problem. Did that end up happening or not?

Dyson: With the earthquake thing? No. As I understand it, when they put the pillars down into the ground underneath the building, they bridged the caved-in cavern by putting the pillars in at angles, or something like that. I believe that's what happened. But in any case, the building itself is one building. You wouldn't even know that it was that way.

Reti: I see. Thank you.

Dyson: But that was the kind of thing . . . When you get everybody together, if you just let the structural people design the building, the solution to that problem, you would have wound up with an unworkable building.

One of the people that helped us a lot on the design of the Science Library was Nancy McAdams, who was the best library architectural consultant in the United States, by far. Whenever you went to anybody and said, "Give me the top three names," they'd say, "Well, there's Nancy, and then there's everybody else." She had both an architectural degree and a library science degree . . .

Reti: Oh. The perfect combination.

Dyson: . . . and she worked for us, and it was great, because she could talk the language of the architects. They respected her. In fact, they would go out and try to hire her afterwards on other projects, I found out. So it was great having that kind of knowledgeable . . . See, she was nearing the end of her career. I think this was one of the last few projects that she did. And she was just spectacularly good in making this a building that worked.

The other way that the library wound up looking so nice from an aesthetic design point of view is . . . I mentioned earlier that we had gotten twenty-five thousand dollars, which, with interest, had grown to about thirty thousand, from the Honeywell Foundation. And the state money that you get for a building does not really provide for an interior designer to help design it. So I had this idea. What if we use this thirty thousand dollars to hire an interior designer? Now, unbeknownst to me, interior designers do more than just the aesthetic part. They do all the ordering of the furniture and all this kind of stuff too. I kept saying, "Well, we don't need that. That clearly is already paid for. I mean, somebody in this university process has to buy the furniture, and pay the invoices and all that. We don't need an outside person. All we want is the person's aesthetic sense. What if we hired somebody that just brought that to us?" And we did that. The architect had somebody in mind. Her name was Massi Moini and she was up in San Francisco. She'd worked with EHDD in the past, and she came in. And a lot of the things about the colors, the design of the lights, those spectacular beautiful fixtures, the giant fixtures in the foyer . . .

Reti: The ones that are pinecone-shaped?

Dyson: Yeah. Well, I'll tell you what they really are in a moment. The nice light fixtures, the color scheme, all of that was a result of having somebody with a great design sense.

Reti: It's beautiful.

Dyson: It worked out exceptionally well. I don't think she'd ever done a project like that, where she didn't have to worry about the details. All she had to do was the aesthetics.

Reti: The fun part.

Dyson: Yeah, the fun part. Well, I have to say, she would get involved, because if the materials she wanted weren't readily available she'd say, "Well, I won't charge you, but I'll go make a few phone calls," and she'd find some place on the East Coast or something. Those cube tables with the black granite tops that are sort of unusual all around?

Reti: Yeah.

Dyson: She found a little cabinet maker in San Francisco that made them one by one. Those are not commercial.

Reti: Oh, my goodness.

Dyson: And he did it for a price that was about the same as—you know, kept him busy for lord knows how many weeks, months—and for the same price you’d get some sort of ugly plastic thing out of a catalog. Things like that that we got from her knowledge of the interior design trade, which was wonderful.

The big lights were kind of funny because we had pictures of them, and jokingly we started calling them the artichoke lights, as you can see . . . (both laugh)

Reti: I can see that they look like artichokes, too.

Dyson: Yeah, they look kind of like an upside-down artichoke. They were made in Scandinavia, and they arrived in these giant boxes which were filled on the outside with Scandinavian writing. I can’t remember if it was Danish, or Swedish, or whatever. And the only word you could recognize in this was something like *artichokken*. (both laugh) So they called them the artichoke lights, too. And of course, now we can say (deep, pompous voice) “Well, of course it’s a reflection of the agricultural history of this area that we blah blah blah . . .”

Reti: Yeah, right.

Dyson: Dumb luck. It was absolutely an accident.

Reti: That's pretty funny.

Dyson: Similarly, what we call the lighthouse beacons that are at the front of the sidewalks of the building: That was thought to be an image of the lighthouse of knowledge in a library. I think there're four or six of them at the sidewalks leading into the building. If you look carefully on the metal label on them, it says, "FAA Approved." They're actually airport lights, (laughs) not lighthouse lights, even though they look like they're the . . .

Reti: I'll have to look at them on my way out.

Dyson: . . . the lights, what do they call them, fresnel, or something like that, the lights that they have at lighthouses. But again, (laughs) you can make up the good stories afterwards and pretend that you intended that all along.

The other thing I have to say, finishing up talking about the design of it is, this whole plaza area in front of what was then the Science Library was not there before this building was built. In fact, the whole concept of this brick area walkway surrounded by Thimann, Sinsheimer, Natural Sciences II, the new Interdisciplinary Sciences, now the new Physics Building, et cetera, et cetera, with the Science Library in the middle—that concept didn't exist. There was some money that was left over from some planning for Science Hill and we were able to grab it. Chuck had a sense of trying to create a "sense of place" here. Just as an example as to how unlikely, how little that was part of the concept

here, they were at that time building the Sinsheimer building, and there was no access from the Sinsheimer building onto this plaza. That large winding walkway that goes from the plaza into Sinsheimer did not exist. We had to yell and scream to get them to add that to the building. And it was already, like, almost ready to start construction at the point that we did that. But Chuck had a vision of creating a sense of place, which is now, I think, one of the more popular places on the campus. In the spring and in the fall people are out here all the time and it's a very, very busy area.

Reti: It ties everything together.

Dyson: Exactly. And that all was created as part of this Science Library project. None of that was in place at that time.

Reti: I didn't realize that.

Dyson: None of it was in place at the time. And that was all built as part of this.

One thing I should mention is my role in all this. Somewhat unusually in university-library-land, I decided to chair the building committee for this, as university librarian. That's something that's usually delegated. Oftentimes it's a faculty member, or somebody else in the library or something. But I felt that this was a signature project for the University Library, and we had to do this right. We were coming from so far down at the bottom of the totem pole with the old Science Library that I felt that I wanted to be

heavily involved in this one. And so I was. I think that added to the efficiency of decision making within the library. If we had to go and get some small amounts of extra money here and there, I wasn't passing on information second or third-hand. I chaired every building committee meeting. I went to almost every single one of the construction meetings. I felt that that gave a sense of importance to everybody that was involved in it, the fact that I was taking my time, as the director of the library, to be involved in a branch library project. There were a few things that I know that I did that helped the project. I was horrified to discover that they were going to spend thirty thousand dollars landscaping all around the building. You know, lawns, and all this kind of stuff. And it's like, well, you're trying to design a building that's going to, when you're done, look like it was lowered into place by a helicopter in the middle of a redwood forest. You don't want lawns all around it. So that's another example of a way that we saved money in the design of the building that we were able to put into finishes and things like that inside the building later on that made it, I think, a more beautiful building.

There are innumerable stories of things that were worked out. But overall, I just have to quote one of the junior architects. He said, "You know, this was a blessed project." Every time something went wrong, something better came as a result of it. All of the aspects of it just went well. I remember somebody telling me that they would hire day laborers to come in and clean the site about once a week, because stuff would blow in or the construction workers would throw a Big Mac wrapper on the ground, or something like that. He walked by, and this day laborer who'd been working here every once in a while, was talking about the design of the building and how beautiful it was . . .

Reti: Oh, that's so neat.

Dyson: . . . and it sounded like he was one of the architects, and he [the person telling the story] said, "I'd never seen one of these guys ever be interested at all in this." People were just excited to be part of the project. And you say, "Well, gee, aren't all buildings that way?" Well, the fact is, they aren't. Most building projects aren't. Whether it's the new, what is it, the new engineering building that they built ten years ago, where they discovered that there was a giant limestone cavern underneath and they had to spend nine hundred thousand dollars pumping something like grout down into the ground, and . . . I'm having a hard time remembering which one it was. But it certainly caused major snafus, budget overruns. The new Physical Sciences building that's been 99.8 percent finished, and unfortunately still is only . . . You know all the troubles they had.²⁵ You go to most building projects, and they have problems. I mean, there's something that comes along. This one just didn't. We all liked each other: the junior architect, the senior architects, the construction people. I think they were gratified with the amount of attention that they got, that this was clearly an important project. Overall, it was a blessed project, and things just didn't go wrong with it.

In terms of the actual design of the Science Library, there's not a heck of a lot that I would think we would have done differently. There are some things, like I notice they're still having problems with the roof leaking.

25. In August 2004, the contractor for the Physical Sciences Building sent a letter to the University terminating its contract. The University notified the contractor's bonding company, requesting that it take all steps necessary to see that the project was completed. The bonding agent took over the contract and awarded it to Devcon, which is completing the construction as of this printing—
Editor.

Reti: Yeah, something's going on with the roof, right?

Dyson: Yeah. But that's not a design problem, that's more of an execution problem. And that wasn't anything that showed up right away. But in terms of the design: "This was located here, and boy, wasn't that a dumb idea, we should have put it someplace else." Every one of the places where I occasionally over the years have heard staff say, "Gee, I wish," I will remember back, that, yeah, that was one of the alternatives that we considered, and we rejected it for these reasons. And if, in fact, we'd gone with the way you wanted it, I can tell you the seven things we came up with that would have been wrong that would have been problems you would be complaining about now: "Gee, I wish we'd done it the other way."

The building has worked very well. It's stood up well. Occasionally I'll meet an undergraduate, a son or daughter of a friend or something, and they always say, "Oh, that beautiful Science Library." It's fourteen years old now. It was finished in 1991. I feel real good about it. It was a project that could have gone wrong, and it could have gone wrong for things that had absolutely nothing to do with me. I mean, it could have been a bad architectural firm, or the contractor could have gone bankrupt.

Reti: Anything can happen, right.

Dyson: I mean, there're things that are absolutely, totally out of your control.

One of the reasons it did work well is that we stole every good idea that we could find from other libraries. All of us that were involved in it took as our mission to find if there was a good idea that you saw in a library someplace else, whether that was the fact that we use carpet tiles that can be replaced if they get too gross without having to re-carpet the whole library, or the design of the current periodical shelves, which was an idea that was stolen from the Cabot Science Library at Harvard, or the design of how the Reference Desk is when you walk in, which was stolen from the Bechtel Engineering Library at Berkeley.

You know, every place we went . . . My wife and I were on vacation in Utah and we walked into, I think it was the BYU library [Brigham Young University Library]. And we had been having this problem about how are we going to handle people going out through the security system? Because the only experience we had was the narrow one down at McHenry. And BYU had, well, they have what we have [at the Science and Engineering Library], that people come in through the security system as well as going out through the security system, and that immediately opens it up so that there's easy flow of traffic, and nobody had quite conceived of that. Why don't we just put the security system right across the whole front and have everybody walk through it no matter what direction they're going? Then you don't have people bumping into each other, or backing up trying to get out of the library. Again, stolen from another library, that particular approach. We incorporated those things, and the architects did a fabulous job, and you're sitting in the result today.

Reti: And what was the award the Science Library got?

Dyson: Oh, we won quite a few, actually. There were ones that you sort of wouldn't know had them, like the National Concrete Association, or something like that, but the most prestigious one that it won was the combination award that's given by the American Library Association and the American Institute of Architects, and they probably give six or seven each year. I know the year we won it, we were the only stand-alone new academic library in the country that got the award. It was very highly thought of. The library was on the cover of *American Libraries*, our flagship journal in librarianship, and things like that. Actually, it wasn't a picture of the library. It was a picture somebody lying on their back took, a shot straight up the stairwell where it goes up like this, with the lights underneath it. I thought, gee, I thought they were going to put our library on the cover. Hmm, but that looks familiar . . .

Reti: (laughter)

Dyson: "Interior scene from . . ." Yeah, so it worked, still works, I think. The test now will be how it is able increasingly to deal with the change in format of science and engineering material.

Reti: You're talking about digitalization?

Dyson: From paper to electronic. The current librarians here have some wonderful ideas

as to how they're going to handle that. Such as, as paper journals increasingly disappear, perhaps turning the Current Periodicals room into a cyber-café kind of thing. They've been thinking about these things. In the meantime, there's the issue of how much of the McHenry activities can this building swallow while McHenry's being gutted for their project, to keep library services going? And that's a whole different issue. But someday they'll be beyond that. So that's pretty much the story of the Science Library, now, as you know, called the Science and Engineering Library after we started an engineering school.

Reti: Yeah, that change was in 2001.

Dyson: Yes. We have a dean of engineering who loves this building and loves the library, and is fond of libraries, and we're important to him. So he's come up with several ways that the library can interrelate, such as the Honored Faculty, Honored Books program. That was a modification of an idea that he had, and he loves that. It's something the chancellor shows up at every year. One day the dean approached me and he said, "You know, it's called the Science Library, but it's got all the engineering books in it." I quickly had the light bulb go on over my head, because there are a lot of places that have separate engineering libraries. I thought, I want the engineering school to identify with *this* building. I don't want them starting off on their own and kind of siphoning . . . From our perspective having a central Science Library is fairly unusual. If you look at Berkeley, you know, with their multitude of different little branches . . . Here we're able to provide centralized professional service. It's open many, many hours of the week, what is it, ninety-five or a hundred hours a week? Centralization enables you to give a much

higher level of professional service. There's always a desire on everybody's part, especially during the eighties before electronic services took over, of having their little collection of books right next to their office.

Reti: Right.

Dyson: It would seem like during my tenure about once a year some faculty member or group would come to me with a brilliant idea. You know, "Why don't we have a graduate economics library? We could start it here. We've got this spare room. You can move the economic books up there, and then we'd have them right there." Uh, not so great for the poor undergraduate who has to run all over campus and try to . . . Or for the library, that then has to staff it, et cetera, et cetera. Yeah, an art library, philosophy library, graduate economics library, separate engineering library—over the years, all of these have been proposed. And fortunately the campus administration has seen that those are incredibly expensive ways to go, and have stuck with the concept of the two major libraries on this campus. And that's served our purpose, and oddly enough, now that things are electronic and are kind of beamed out from a central location, it isn't much of an issue anymore. And that's been useful too, because you can afford, when you have all of those resources together, to hire top-notch library specialists in things like engineering, that then can help the engineers build the collections in those areas. So it's worked out well.

Interestingly, this campus wanted to have . . . The concept was having a central library

that was going to be the place, and then have all these little college libraries. When we went to build the Science Library, there was one fellow up in Sacramento that had been there about twenty years, Jerry Beavers, who was a legislative analyst, and they come down and visit whenever there's a major project and ask you all of these questions, trying to figure out how they can get out of paying the money to build a new building. The first question I had when I was on stage here on campus with this group and the governor's Department of Finance people and legislative analysts was, "I thought you were only going to have one library on this campus. So what do you need a Science Library for?" It's like, oh my God. These guys have long memories. You know, that was, like, fifteen years before. (laughter)

Reti: That's right.

Dyson: Fortunately we had all of our arguments lined up as to how the nature of science information is different from a library for literature, or social sciences, or history or philosophy; that the nature of the collection is different, the nature of the services is different. I'd been primed. I didn't believe I was going to get that question, but boy, I sure did. And it got funded, and here we are.²⁶

26. The original plans for the UCSC Library were for one centralized library which would include the science collection. See the oral history: Randall Jarrell, editor, *Donald Clark: Early UCSC History and the Founding of the University Library* (Regional History Project, University Library, UC Santa Cruz, 1993, pp. 73-75. <http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/clark.html> for discussion of this concept.—Editor.

Chairing the Campus Lands Management Advisory Committee

Reti: That's great. Would this be a good time to talk about the Land Use Planning Committee, since we've just been talking about planning and land use?

Dyson: Yeah, sure, let's fill that in. It's funny how things tie together. Because I was involved in land use planning, I knew a whole bunch of the campus people on the business and physical plant side, and that then had an impact on building the Science Library.

Reti: I would imagine so.

Dyson: Yeah, whether it was the architects . . . I mean, I chaired the search committee that hired the campus architect, that kind of thing. (laughter) Because I was involved in that whole area—and of course that person, who is still here, was a major player. Before he had that job, he was the campus principal architect on [designing] this project, the Science Library project.

Reti: Who is that?

Dyson: Frank Zwart.

Reti: Oh, of course, yes.

Dyson: Then he got promoted and another person [David Tanza] took over this job. But Frank was fully aware of it, because he'd been involved in the early planning for the Science Library, and so he still felt it was kind of his baby. And when we ran into problems, funding or priority or whatever, it was always nice . . . But the reason that I knew all that was because of a kind of an odd coincidence of my somehow getting involved in campus land use planning.

I originally got involved in it because they needed a neutral party to mediate some of the land use wars. The committee name changed so many times—Campus Land Use Policy, Campus Land Management, and all sorts of variations of them over the years—but for about eleven or twelve years, starting probably a year or so after I got here, I chaired the principal Campus Lands Management Advisory Committee on this campus. It was a long time. Obviously it was an administrative committee, because they could feel they could keep reappointing me as chair. We dealt with everything from . . . Oh gee, I can only just give you a sense of the range of it—from what kind of chemical herbicides they could use on the playing fields, to the ground squirrel problem, to whether or not there should be timber harvesting on the campus, to the location that at one point Chancellor Sinsheimer proposed for a kind of a resource and development park on campus—and I got involved, being the chair of that group. The biggest project, the one I feel that I had a hand in that's most enduring, is the Campus Natural Reserve, the planning for which came through that committee. All of those kinds of things. The policy for mountain bikes on campus. I mean, just everything that had to do with land use.

Because this is a two-thousand acre campus that kind of looks like a state park, the use of the land is a very, very important issue, and a hot-button issue for a lot of faculty, students, and community people. Administration certainly, too. So I was involved in all that, and I saw my role essentially as a shepherd. I tried . . . I really don't remember an issue that I felt I personally was going to go to the mat on. But there were a lot of issues where you had to bring in the competing parties and try to work out some kind of a solution: if the Farm and Garden wanted to plant an experimental plot in an area that on the land maps supposedly was going to be used for some other purpose; whether the Arboretum was allowed to expand into this or that area . . . Very often, land use issues involve people that feel incredibly intensely about their issue, and don't have much of a vision of the larger issues involved. So I did a lot of kind of mediating, getting people to talk to one another, and that kind of thing, and obviously I did it either sufficiently well, or sufficiently inoffensively, that they kept me doing it for over a decade.

Reti: (laughter)

Dyson: The item that I think I was most behind-the-scenes involved in was the creation of the environmental reserve on the campus.²⁷ There was a wonderful plan that was put forward by a professor by the name of Ken Norris, and some of his folks, and some of the environmental studies faculty, but Ken, I think, was probably the primary person,

27. The UCSC Campus Natural Reserve land was set aside to preserve several natural ecological communities on the campus for teaching, field research, and natural history interpretation. These lands are a living library and laboratory, and are part of the statewide University of California Natural Reserve System, a "network of protected natural areas throughout California that supports university-level teaching, research, and public service." See <http://nrs.ucop.edu/> for more details.—Editor.

Jim Pepper was another one—nationally known names in the whole environmental studies area—and they had the idea of setting aside about four hundred acres on this campus that were sensitive acres to begin with, as a kind of a natural reserve that would be useful, not from a kind of state park point of view, but rather would be useful for a whole variety of classes on the campus to study environmental processes as they occurred.

Now, one of the things that I think the people from outside don't understand is that this campus uses its environment in ways that probably very few university campuses do. For example, most campuses deal with precipitation runoff through pipes and all that kind of stuff. This campus uses all of the natural underground tunnels through the limestone to do that. So if you're building a building and you discover you've got to fill in that cavern, you've got to figure out what's going into that cavern and what's coming out the other end, because there may be forty-five inches of rain coming down the mountains going through that cavern and coming out someplace else farther down, two miles downstream.

Reti: So you have to map all of that hydrology.

Dyson: Yes. So there's a lot of sensitivity around this that isn't simply a back-to-the-earth, Santa Cruz movement. There're a lot of practical ways in which you do need to know what's going on. A seep zone, where water is seeping down into the earth, isn't just an unusual environmental phenomenon; it may be the way that a building a quarter

of a mile downhill from there is protected from having water flooding into it in heavy rains.

Reti: Fascinating.

Dyson: So the issues that were involved are important to this campus, and I think the campus administration understands that. But it's oftentimes hard to explain to outside people why there's this much concern about it. And the environmental reserve issue was one where I, essentially, had to kind of quietly convince the chancellor and the vice chancellor for business that this was an okay thing, that this was not going to do bad stuff to the campus by constraining future decisions in terms of siting and things like that. And the environmental reserve that resulted does protect the kinds of land areas that would have to be protected anyway: the gulches that are too steep to build on the sides of and you don't want to build in the middle of because you're going to discover a wall of water coming down at you some time. Those seep zones that I mentioned, other kinds of places that have rare plants and things like that, which nowadays you're going to have to protect anyway.

Reti: Right, under the California Environmental Quality Act [CEQA].

Dyson: Yeah, exactly. So it got through. It got a lot of publicity. I was rather startled. Around the time that it was approved I turned on CNN, of all things, and there's this segment about the new environmental reserve at the University of California, Santa

Cruz.

Reti: My goodness.

Dyson: I said, “Holy mackerel!” Well, it turned out some of the professors involved had good connections with . . .

Reti: Oh, Ken Norris, sure.²⁸

Dyson: Yeah, I’m sure. But nevertheless, whether we had good connections or not, it was something that was considered to be unusual and important enough that a national news network would actually do a fifteen-minute, or ten-minute—it was a long story—on this thing. So it was fun to be involved. And that was largely the kind of issue that I would help with.

I’ve always been involved in the campus administration, beyond, I think, a lot of ways that normally a university librarian would be. And that always helps. I mean, if you’re solving some problem with red-legged frogs over here, the campus is more inclined to solve your problem about needing a little extra money for the Science Library. (laughter) I mean, even if it’s just not so much a *quid pro quo*, but just a knowledge of who you are, and respect, and that kind of thing . . .

28. See Randall Jarrell, editor, *Kenneth S. Norris: Naturalist, Cetologist, Conservationist, 1924-1988* (Regional History Project, University Library, UCSC, 1999). <http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/norris.html>. Due to Ken Norris’s efforts, the statewide UC Natural Reserve System was established in 1965 under President Clark Kerr. The UCSC campus reserve became part of this system.—Editor.

Reti: Right, sure.

Dyson: . . . and people thinking that if you're making the argument, it's probably a decent argument. So it was one of those things where I'd wake up and we'd be dealing with some thorny issue, and I'd go back to my office and say, why the heck did I ever get involved, of all things, in campus land management? I mean, what is this? They didn't teach this course in library school, let me tell you.

Reti: (laughter) Right.

Dyson: But it paid off in a lot of quiet ways, both in terms of ways that I could see: "No, they didn't put that dumb building right there," or, "The road doesn't run right through the middle of the meadow." It's more the absence of bad things, than . . . That's why I always harken back to the environmental reserve, because that's one thing that actually did happen that was a good thing. A lot of the things that we worked on in those land management committees were avoiding bad things. But it was great, and it gave me a perspective on the campus that was broader than the library. It involved me with people such as the vice chancellor for business, Wendell Brase, who was an incredibly powerful person, more so than the academic vice chancellor. The first, I'd say probably close to ten years I was here, the academic vice chancellor, as it was called then, was not a powerful figure on campus, and had almost no budget control. And it wasn't until the creation of the position of executive vice chancellor that that changed. Oddly, what that meant was that the business and budget vice chancellor was key to your life. And I got all involved

with him, because of all this land use policy, just stuff like that. I worked much more with him than I did with my boss, the academic vice chancellor.

So there were always benefits for being involved in the campus activities beyond the silo that you are responsible for, and that was one of the primary ways that I got involved. And because I was so involved they would call on me to take on related things such as the search committee for the campus architect and things like that. It made the job a lot more interesting, and I think it's what kept me here all this time. A lot of what goes on in the library, essentially is the same thing, year after year. You know, funding for the budget, and this and that and the other. It's really, how much more there is to the job—whether it's professional activities you're involved in or campus activities you're involved in—that makes you feel that you're not fighting the same battle over and over again every year . . .

Reti: I see.

Dyson: . . . that there's personal growth going on, and you're a valued part of the campus community. It helps take some of the weight of responsibility and accountability off you because you're involved in these other activities where you know you're not going to live or die as to whether or not the red-legged frog does in fact find a happy home in a bog or not. But there are a number of ways over the years that I've been called on to do things, mostly behind the scenes like that, most of which only the people immediately around me knew I was involved with.

One other example: there were a number of very substantial issues regarding the administration of the Cowell Health Center, probably ten years ago now, and a team was brought in from . . . two senior people from other UC campuses—there were some people from this campus—and I was asked to chair that. It was a very, very sensitive issue. In that particular case I was working with the vice chancellor for student affairs. But to me that's the best way that a university librarian can be effective. That is, you're always kind of out of the main academic stream, you know, everybody's second favorite thing, getting back to that. You're not doing teaching. You're not research. You're an academic support kind of unit. But if you can be seen as a thoughtful, neutral, effective person—and that ought to reflect the image of the library on the campus too, in my view, in a university library, especially on a research campus—then over the years that benefits the library when it's budget time, or you need positions filled, or anything like that. So I never walked away from any of those kinds of issues. For me it was simply a way of paying the dues, that if you think of yourself as a campus administrator, occasionally you're going to have to do things that are outside your assigned role as university librarian. There were a number of things like that that I did over the years. That one was one of the touchiest ones. The Cowell Health Center one was a real fratricidal kind of situation. It was not an easy one to deal with. Again, I had a great team. The two people—I think one was from Davis, one from Santa Barbara, medical center type people—were fabulous. It was an area I knew nothing about. I mean, to me, the health center was nothing more than a) a place that had a conference room I occasionally met in, and b) where I went once a year to get a flu shot. And so the whole idea of how complex it is trying to manage the health service for ten or fifteen thousand students . . .

It's amazing, dealing with some pretty hairy issues sometimes.

Oh, one thing I was going to mention. I said that land use management does get you involved in other things. So because I was there, I wound up on such things as the Long Range Development Plan Implementation Advisory Committee, which is the committee that implemented the plan after it was written, the 1987 plan. Those kinds of things. And what it did is . . . Yeah, there's always a certain amount of looking out for the back of the library, literally and figuratively. If they want to build a road in the back of the library (both laugh) you can say, "Oh God, you can't do that. It's going to be so noisy," or, you know, whatever. That also keeps you noticed enough so that when you have a big issue it's not, "Who's this guy?"

Multicultural Outreach

Reti: Let's move on to talking about multicultural outreach.

Dyson: Oh, that's an exciting one. That was as close to an epiphany as I ever had. The library had probably the best-intentioned white people of any library anywhere. I would stack our intentions up against anybody's intentions. And we did all the right things in terms of what we thought were the right things, in terms of recruitment and . . . (pause) I noticed that the only minority librarian who was here when I got here was retiring. And you have a sense as to who it is that's using the library. Even if you're not walking down the McHenry Library spiral staircase noticing it, you get this kind of subconscious impression. One day, there had been one of the usual outbreaks of concern with regards

to minority studies on the campus. I can't remember whether this was a request to set up a department of ethnic studies, or something like that that does happen every once in a while in the life of almost every university. This one was concerning a lot of people, and there was to be a meeting in Classroom Unit 2 where kids were going to meet with the campus administration and ask questions. This wasn't anything that was terribly awful, but it was something of considerable concern on the campus. It wasn't like riots were being threatened, but loud noises were being made. So I thought, oh, I should go to that.

I walked in the door, and I looked around. This classroom, one of the largest lecture halls on campus, was packed, people standing. And it was ninety-eight percent minority kids. And I, five seconds after I walked in, I got it. The important thing happened in the first five seconds—because I said, *I've never seen any of these kids in my library. I've never seen any of them.* If you had asked me, I wouldn't even have believed that there were this many minority kids on this campus. Of course, there are thousands, but I'd never seen any of those kids in the library. And that shook me.

Reti: Wow.

Dyson: And fortunately, there was another librarian—Marion Taylor, the head of Collection Planning went, and possibly one other librarian had been at the meeting—because one of the issues was, “Gee, there aren't any . . . ” under this long list of grievances, like number 27B was, “There aren't any books on ethnic studies in the library.” Well, we knew that wasn't true. It's just ethnic studies not being a traditional

discipline with traditional Library of Congress call numbers, the books are scattered around . . .

Reti: It's the [Library of Congress designated] subject headings, right.

Dyson: . . . and you have to know how to do your research. You have to start through the Reference Desk. Okay. (sighs) Seeing all those kids shook me. It really . . . as I say, this light bulb went off. This flashbulb went off in my face. I came back. We were, at that point, in the middle of recruiting for a librarian, our first librarian that had a business studies background. There was a lot of community interest and there were more and more courses and departments on campus that were edging near applied economics and things like that, and the professional staff was saying, "Especially on the weekends, we get all these questions, and we don't have an expert to refer them to." So I came back, and I said "Unh uh. There's something really wrong here. I mean, it may be nice that we want to hire a business librarian that can help out on the weekends when we have all these other people from off the campus coming, but we've got this enormous constituency that is *our* constituency, that isn't being served." And there were other key people like Marion, who kind of had had the same reaction too, and so it wasn't just me trying to convince people about some weird thing that had happened to me.

In a very short period of time we decided that we had to create an atmosphere in the library that was more welcoming to these folks, that we had to educate ourselves and reach out, and that the best way to do that was to hire somebody that was going to come

in and shake us up. So we did this rethinking. We aborted the recruitment for the business librarian, which was getting close to the final stages. This wasn't something that was in theory. We'd already received the applications. We created the position of Multicultural Outreach Librarian. Interestingly, some of our business finalists were people that could continue in the pool. They were minority applicants. And while we didn't think that we had to have a minority person, we understood that one of the issues was that minority kids walked into the library and saw only Caucasian Euro-Americans behind the help desks. They never saw that this library was anything—that somehow, we cared about whatever issues they were dealing with. I'm reminded of the fact that when I was at Moffitt Library at Berkeley before I came here, we had somebody on the staff who was probably at that time one of the national experts on the literature of women's studies. *He*, however, (laughter) recognized that when an issue came up, and he was the person that came out to the Reference Desk to help somebody, that the message was ambivalent at best, and he would often spend a lot of his time behind the scenes coaching other people to present it, because he would see the crestfallen look on the person when he walked out. "We've got this great expert," and it turned out the expert on women's studies was a white male. So, in a sense, that's how we felt, I felt, about this. This, plus the fact that we had finally become aware that after all of these years of trying, after all of these years of advertising in all the right places, of getting applicants, et cetera, we had a grand total of zero minority librarians.

Reti: And why do you think that was?

Dyson: It's hard to say. But certainly, once you put all this stuff together, that a) we didn't have any minority librarians, b) the minority kids on campus weren't coming into the library to use it, there was this moment where you said, "I think we have a problem here. We can spend two years trying to figure out what the dynamics of all this is . . ." I do remember that minority librarians at that time, especially ones that were interested in outreach, tended to be kind of apple-cart-upsetters. And you know, I remember we'd interview minority people, and I'd kind of get the message they wouldn't really fit in. The problem was, on the one hand that was true, but the fact it was true was the problem also, if you understand what I'm saying?

Reti: Yeah, absolutely.

Dyson: Yeah. And I can think of, and I won't go into details or people here, but I can think of specific comments like that, to me: "Gee, you know, that person wouldn't fit into this place," and it's like, "Yeah, that's right . . ." And fortunately, the combination of not having any minority librarians and having this activity on campus where clearly the kids didn't understand how to use the library, really came crashing home.

We then set up an amazing search, one that was in fact written up in *American Libraries* in an article that I did after it was all over.²⁹ We said, we can't take six months to a year, which is our normal time to hire somebody, because one of the things that was

29. A.J. Dyson, "Reaching Out for Outreach: a University Library Develops a New Position to Serve the School's Multicultural Students [Multicultural Services Librarian]." *American Libraries* v. 20 (November 1989) p. 952-4.—Editor.

happening with our minority candidates, now that I think about it, in answer to your question, was they always tended to drop out by the time we got to the finals. Because it takes so long. But this time I looked at key time frame elements, like, well, we would have to have a committee meeting here to decide who the finalists were. We plotted them all out, and we told everybody, "Don't schedule a day of vacation for this time six weeks from now, because six weeks from now you're going to be sitting in that room at 10 a.m." And we did a whole lot of searching for candidates—there were not very many multicultural outreach librarians in the United States at that point. This was something that was unusual.

Reti: You are talking about the late 1980s?

Dyson: Yeah. Late eighties. Exactly. And we decided that what we needed was the outreach aspects of this more than we needed academic reference skills. That is, we were asking somebody to bring a certain skill set to us, and if they were a good reference librarian, we could teach them how to be a good academic reference librarian. But we couldn't teach somebody that didn't have outreach skills how to do outreach, because if we knew how to do minority outreach, we wouldn't be in the fix that we were in in the first place.

A lot of good thinking and a lot of good discussion went on in the staff about this. To say that we were the problem, probably, in part . . . I was very, very proud of the staff. We roared through the recruitment. We did an incredible amount of word-of-mouth.

Advertised in a few places we hadn't advertised before, but in general, the word got out that we were serious this time. Whenever time impediments came up—I remember one time the reference desk was seriously depleted because of illness, and the key reference librarian that was on the search committee was in. But they were the only person to be on the desk, and so the assistant university librarian for personnel went down and covered the reference desk for two hours so that that person could come up and be in the search committee, because it was more important that she be there, and that kind of thing. We just did that. We went through, and in a sense, there was a direct payoff. The day we made the offer to the woman who got the job, and this moving very, very quickly, doing things in parallel, rather than serially, like they usually do searches: "We'll get all this phase done, then we'll look at all the applications after they're all in," like you couldn't have been looking at them all along, you know? That kind of thing.

Reti: Yes.

Dyson: The day that we made the offer to her, she received an offer from someplace else. If we'd been a week later we wouldn't have gotten her.

Reti: Oh my gosh.

Dyson: We hired somebody who was actually a public library outreach person, I think at the San Francisco Public Library, by the name of Vivian Sykes. She came in, and before long, let me tell you, you saw a whole new clientele coming in, specifically asking for her

help. Because she would go out and do “cookies and milk” sessions with minority groups, and things in the colleges. She did a lot of outreach. And in a way, everything that we learned about that, from that particular period has affected us ever since. Now I would guess that probably twenty, twenty-five percent of the professional population is minority—Asian, Hispanic, black, and so on. It was a real turning point in the life of this library, making it into a library that served all the students on campus. It’s frightening now to think back. I was here for like nine or ten years with all the best intentions in the world, having run a library that had a substantial minority professional population in it—the Moffitt library—and at the end of that period of time here, I had zero minority librarians. I mean, it’s just bizarre that that could have happened. It wasn’t because we didn’t think about it. It’s just that everything that we did, we just didn’t do it right. Including losing all the best candidates, and then the ones that weren’t the best, obviously, would not stack up against the best Caucasian candidates. But when we started rethinking, not just minority outreach, but outreach itself, we started building an outreach component into almost all of our jobs, and that attracted a lot of minority applicants also, even for jobs that weren’t multicultural outreach librarian, because they tended to see the greater problems that minority kids had in using the library, and they tended to be interested in outreach. So if you had a job, even if it was in, I don’t know, the Science Library or something, but it had an outreach component to it, it was a more attractive job to a minority candidate.

Reti: Oh, I see.

Dyson: So it was getting this wheel that had been turning backwards, finally getting the momentum going in the other direction. It also showed us that we could have excellent people come in who didn't have traditional academic library backgrounds. We've had a variety of librarians that have come to us from: oh, let's see—the latest round of hires that we did, I think we had somebody that came right out of library school, had been a postman for many years; we had somebody else that worked at the Watsonville Public Library . . . We started looking for the underlying qualities of a good, inquisitive, helpful person—with library skills—but which we could train after six months to be the particular person that we needed, rather than thinking we were going to find a person who's going to step in on day one and be exactly what you wanted. That rarely happens. And you never find that person anyway, unless they worked here already. (both laugh)

That's really the story of that, and I think that's continued. One of the disappointments that I had, small disappointments, in Santa Cruz not being a member of the Association of Research Libraries is, I felt that the solution to a lack of minority candidates in the profession was recruiting minority candidates to library schools, and then as a result of them graduating, being available to academic libraries to hire. I've always felt that that was solvable. I would have loved to have sunk my teeth into that if we'd been part of ARL, on the simple theory that I go look at the student assistants that we have working here in the library, and you have this wonderful rainbow coalition of kids, many of whom have very good experience. Every kid that applies to a graduate library school has been at an undergraduate institution with an academic library, and a substantial number of them worked there. There's this great pool of undergraduate minority kids

working in academic libraries. If the librarians just focused on getting some of those minority kids into library schools, you've solved your problem. Everything else takes care of itself.

Reti: A mentoring program.

Dyson: Yeah, exactly. And we, actually, we've sent a number of minority kids from UCSC to library schools. But we're not a member of ARL, and so I never was able to get more broadly involved in that. There've been a few things that have been done within UC. Santa Barbara, I think, created some internships and things like that. But it always seemed like it's a solvable problem, and the great chastening lesson I learned was you can't fault the people involved, because that's exactly the situation I was in in 1988, 1987, right in there, when we had all the best intentions in the world, and advertised in all the right places, and just never, ever seemed to find any good finalists.

Reti: Right.

Dyson: You know, all the good ones always seemed to have dropped out by the time we ground to a halt, eleven months later, from our search. (laughs) So anyway, that's the story of that.

The Librarians Association of the University of California

Reti: We're going to begin today, this is our fourth interview, talking about LAUC, and

Lan's involvement with LAUC.

Dyson: Okay. The Librarians Association of the University of California is an interesting concept, and it's an official unit of the University, although it took some time before it got that official recognition.

Reti: I didn't realize that.

Dyson: LAUC actually has University of California letterhead, et cetera. And it was sort of halfway between . . . no, more than halfway, it edges towards being the librarians' equivalent of the faculty senate. The senate, however, has certain mandated responsibilities that it is responsible for, the classes, and things like that. Those are the senate's responsibilities. When students go to a chancellor and say, "We think there should be an ethnic studies course," and the chancellor says, "Gee, you have to go to the senate for that," he or she isn't just blowing smoke. That is literally true. It's the senate that decides which courses are going to be taught. And of course, there is no comparable responsibility for LAUC .

LAUC is purely an advisory body. It advises at the campus level, both the university librarian and the chancellor, and it advises at the systemwide level, to the president of the University of California. Nevertheless, in a community that is used to shared governance (and that's what the faculty-administration relationship is called), where all of the people in charge of the university come from a shared governance background as

faculty, they often find it easier to understand what the role of LAUC is than some of the university librarians seem to. It always was amusing to me that when you got up to the higher levels of the university administration, they seemed to feel that LAUC was a perfectly normal thing that they understood, whereas a university librarian, especially one coming in from the outside that hadn't experienced something like that, always was trying to say, "Well, is it a collective bargaining group?" or "Is it this, or is it that?" or "I can ignore them," or "Oh, they just are interested in this or that small area," or "It's a personnel thing." And oddly enough, in part because of my background ultimately as having been a statewide president of [LAUC], which kind of inclined me to understand LAUC better than some of the other ULs, I often found that my partners in getting some issues resolved, whatever it may be, regarding the status of LAUC, would be, for example, the assistant vice president for library plans and policies in systemwide, who always thought, "Well, of course we're going to actively consult with LAUC." That was the culture that he would be in, in the Office of the President. LAUC just seemed like a normal thing to be involved in. I was voted first as vice president-president-elect (I think that was in 1976), and then president in 1977. The reason it's a little confusing is we switched from a calendar year to an academic year, right, I think, the term after me, and I always have trouble remembering which was the one that I was under. I think I was under the calendar year, and then the person that followed me had a shorter term of eight months because they voted her successor in to start in September.

I've already mentioned the "Nine is a very large number" quote. During my term as LAUC president we dealt with many of the same issues that are dealt with now: what's

the status of librarians? A lot of the stuff that was done in the background were things that other people never found out about, sort of like that land use policy committee I was talking about. You know, it was the crises averted that you measured your success by?

Reti: Right.

Dyson: I remember there was one senior vice president of the university that decided that librarians perhaps ought to be of two kinds: the ones that had technical jobs and they were sort of non-academic academics, and the others that had public service quasi-teaching roles, and they could be real librarians, and oh my gosh. (both laugh) I did not want my term associated with the bifurcation of the librarians. So I had to pull the troops together, and a few senior people that he knew and respected, and sort of get him to scuttle even proposing that to anybody. But those are the kinds of things that went on.

I was the first person to serve a full term on the UC Library Council as LAUC president. My predecessor, under whom I was the vice president-president elect, got LAUC that recognition during her term as president. And the question was, does one sit at the table? Do you serve on committees? What's your relationship with other members of Library Council? And things like that. It certainly was wonderfully educative about the various campuses. I think I probably visited almost all of the campuses during my term, for one reason or another, either because there was a Library Council meeting there, or I went down and visited as LAUC president, or the LAUC statewide assemblies were on that campus, or something like that. I got to know the University of California during

that term a lot better than I ever would have had I not had that responsibility. And of course it also helped my own career, to be blunt, because I got to be known by the other university librarians, and I think that made it somewhat easy for someone who had “only” been head of an undergraduate library in the UC system to take over as university librarian, because I was a pretty known quantity. I had worked with these people for a year on the Library Council, the other ULs, and I’m sure that the UCSC campus and the other senior people probably checked around about me, and one would have to assume with other university librarians. A university librarian served on the search committee for the job here. So it helped out a lot that way too.

LAUC always had a role in terms of the hiring and advancement (advancement meaning within a rank, and then promotion from one rank to another) of librarians, through the LAUC committees, personnel committees (CAPA I think is the most common one, which corresponds to CAP, a Committee of the Faculty Senate), and so on.³⁰ And so there always was an issue as to how much LAUC was a kind of quasi . . . analogous to collective bargaining.

Reti: Right. I used to think that that’s what it was when I first came here.

Dyson: Yeah, exactly. The university has always had ambivalent feelings about librarians, in terms of what their status was. Technically, the term that is used is that librarians as a group are non-senate academics. Inevitably, the University would put out

30. CAPA is LAUC’s Committee on Appointment, Promotion and Advancement.—Editor.

some policy, some wage guidelines or cost-of-living increase statement, or something like that, and they would talk about, "This is what's going to happen for faculty, and this is what's going to happen for staff." And of course, among the non-senate academics, of whom librarians were not the only group, but which were probably the most unified group, in the sense that there was a solid group within an organization on each of the campuses, in addition to having LAUC as a spokesgroup in effect, everybody was always scratching their head. "Well, where do we fit? Are they going to classify us with the faculty? Are they going to classify us with the support staff?" Usually up to a certain point the University would say, "Oh yeah, right. We have to decide that," and they would give librarians the same cost-of-living increases and things that faculty would get, because it was simpler to group them in with another one, rather than setting up a whole 'nother category, a relatively small one, of non-senate academics.

Librarians and Collective Bargaining

I think what happened was that there was a time when the University appeared particularly ambivalent, or there may not have been any cost-of-living increases available or something. In any case, there had always been a nascent collective bargaining organization. The American Federation of Teachers had been interested in working with librarians, and finally they got the ability to do so, when HEERA, the Higher Education Employer-Employee Relations Act, passed. HEERA had specific definitions and prohibitions with regards to the role that faculty could have in collective bargaining, but it didn't mention librarians. So one legally, correctly, assumed that librarians could become members of unions and be represented in ways that faculty

could not. There was a group that solicited signatures enough to get a vote on the issue as to whether librarians should be represented, and I think almost to everyone's surprise . . . and it wasn't a one or two vote margin but it was a relatively close vote in the grand scheme. Usually when these things happen it's like, four-to-one in favor the union, or four-to-one against it. This one was pretty darn close. The librarians voted to be represented by a collective bargaining agent, the American Federation of Teachers, and it's subdivided, I think it's the University Federation of Librarians subgroup or something like that. But everybody woke up the next morning—you only need a one vote majority to pass—and everybody kind of woke up a little stunned. Because they had thought that people were content enough with LAUC as giving a voice on policy and hiring and that kind of thing for librarians, that people would probably reject the whole concept of collective bargaining because it involves paying dues, and all that kind of thing too.

Reti: Well, I would also think in terms of status . . .

Dyson: Exactly.

Reti: AFT represents the lecturers, right?

Dyson: Right, exactly.

Reti: So does this union representation locate librarians, in some people's minds, among

the lecturers, who have less status in the University of California? Is this a stigma?

Dyson: Well, yeah, but there were some campuses, particularly Berkeley, that had a strong labor history. And you could come out of Berkeley with a strong majority of people voting in favor of collective bargaining. So that if there was a kind of a more ambivalent vote on other campuses, even a small vote against it, there were sufficient votes in Berkeley to carry the day.

Reti: I see.

Dyson: I'm sure there were some, I would have to guess . . . Quite frankly, I'm sure there were some campuses that didn't have a majority in favor, but since it was a systemwide vote, all of the campuses' votes were totalled together.

Reti: And approximately when are we talking about?

Dyson: I would say the mid-eighties. And we can pin that down precisely.³¹

Well, I wouldn't exactly call it a Pandora's box that was opened, but it sure was a very large suitcase of questions that suddenly came popping up. What's the relationship of LAUC to the union? Can LAUC continue to exist if librarians are now represented by a

31. The University of California and the UFL formally issued a Memorandum of Understanding on August 30, 1984.—Judith K. Horn and Jefferson Selth, "LAUC: The First 25 Years, A History of the Librarians Association of the University of California, 1967-1992." <http://www.ucop.edu/lauc/history/25yrs.html>.—Editor.

collective bargaining agent? And interestingly, the people that were involved in wanting the collective bargaining representative did not want LAUC to disappear. Oftentimes these were many of the same people. They were smart enough to recognize that if you set up what is by most legal definitions an adversarial relationship—that is between a union and the employer, which is governed by decades of labor law—you are going to lose your ability to involve yourself in the policy planning, because then the union would in effect would be acting as an agent of management. And all of these laws were set up for people that worked in steel mills and the like. The case law wasn't designed for a situation like this. And quite beyond that, as far as I know, in the entire United States, this was the only academic union that consisted solely of librarians.

Reti: Really.

Dyson: Now, there were librarians that were represented in other institutions, but that was because they were included in the union that represented a larger group of people. That is, they might be in a staff group, or they might be included as they are, I think, at California State University, in a faculty group where the faculty are able to be represented. So not only were there issues that had to be worked out in terms of the relationship between LAUC and the AFT representing the librarians, but there wasn't very much precedent to look at elsewhere. Because when you think about it, the University of California was one of the very few places that could have an entity, that is the librarians, that would be large enough as a group to constitute an effective bargaining situation.

Reti: That makes sense.

Dyson: So in a sense that had been true for LAUC also. That is, if you're a very small group at a college or something, it's hard to set up a situation where you are overseeing the recommendations that go forward, in terms of advancement and promotion and things like that, because it's too ingrown. Whereas here, on those policies, there're a sufficient number of librarians in the totality of the University of California that you could do that.

Well, anyway, all of that left a lot of people scratching their heads, and after a sufficient amount of time went by it became time to actually develop a collective bargaining agreement between the University and the librarians. I was privileged to serve as one of the members of the management bargaining team. We knew we were breaking new ground. We knew that this was something that no one really had tried to do before. We knew we had a unique situation because of the Librarians Association's existence, and trying to work that out. I served on the bargaining team a couple of times. Eventually what happened was that the University representatives tended to be the assistant university librarians for human resources, such as Kate McGirr, here at UCSC. But the first time around, there was a university librarian or two on it. I think there was a vice chancellor for academic affairs from UCSF. It was, in a sense, a more heavyweight kind of group, because we knew that the precedents that were going to be set in this first bargaining agreement were going to be ones that governed for many, many years.

It was an interesting experience. I have to say that practically every day you pick up a newspaper, and if you read the newspaper from one end to the other, you will find somewhere in it a reference to something that has to do with a union, or collective bargaining, or a strike. It might be here or it might be in another country; it might be something that's going on in Santa Cruz. But you read that, and I hadn't realized how little I understood of what that meant. You know, what's going on behind the scenes? What're the negotiations like? What is it like to be in the room when that's happening? So this was a real learning experience for me. It involved being a quick study in a whole area that I absolutely knew almost nothing about before, and which nobody really had prepared themselves for, because nobody thought that the union was going to win the vote authorizing the representation. It was a very intense experience. It developed a great deal of camaraderie. There were sessions that started at eight in the morning and didn't end 'til two the next morning.

Reti: (whistles)

Dyson: And like most things, it's sort of like a swim meet: it's characterized by many, many hours of boredom interspersed with a few minutes of very intense activity. (both laugh)

Reti: Have to stay awake, right.

Dyson: I've learned about swim meets through my daughter, and I have to say that

that's the closest analogy I can find to collective bargaining. I mean, there were times when you're sitting around playing *Trivial Pursuit*, waiting for the other side to develop a response to some proposal you've made. And if you're still in session, it may take them four hours to develop that response, and you have really not much to do during that period of time, because yours is on the table and you can't change it or anything like that. The first management team was led by a crusty labor relations expert who clearly had background in places other—in addition to academia . . .

Reti: (laughs)

Dyson: . . . who used, let's say, who used strong emotion, in part, as a negotiating technique. He was in the University of California labor relations office, and he'd blow up and bang the table and all this kind of thing, and we'd be sitting there, us little librarian types, (both laugh) we were sitting there thinking, oh my gosh. And then the union would storm out, and then his demeanor would totally change. He'd say, "Well, okay, now let's get back down to business," and you'd realize this was just something he was doing. And one had the sense that the professionals who were on the other side, and I don't mean the librarians who were on the bargaining team, but their AFT counterparts, understood all this.

Reti: It was just part of the process.

Dyson: So it was a very quick learning experience. There were moments that were just

wonderful—I look back at them and I still grin—of the camaraderie that occurred. Let me give you one example. One of those periods of time, and this happened to be in the middle of the night, it was, I think, two or three a.m., where we had a proposal on the table, and the union—we had thought that we were going to reach agreement, and so we all wanted to hang around. The next day was like July Fourth or something like this. So we all wanted to get home, and we put our best breakthrough offer on the table and we were waiting for them to come back, and people were literally lying on the floor, asleep.

Reti: Yeah, I bet.

Dyson: Others of us were playing *Trivial Pursuit*, just waiting for the . . .

Reti: You must have had a lot of coffee.

Dyson: Yeah, lots of coffee and tea, and all that. And I remember one moment during the *Trivial Pursuit* thing, and the way we were playing it was we were just kind of reading the cards to whoever was awake, and then people would chime in. We assumed that the people who were lying on the floor were totally zonked out. And there was one moment where the question was, “What are the first three words in the Bible?” Somebody read that, and this voice came from one of the people that we had thought was sound asleep in a corner of the room, (deep voice) “Attention K-Mart shoppers!” (both laugh) I bet we laughed for fifteen minutes. The timing was just perfect.

You developed a bond, a team sense. And that particular night, the amazing thing was, the union came back and rejected the offer. It was utterly unexpected. If we'd known they were going to do that, well, we would have ended at midnight, you know, and gone home. But we thought we were going to wrap it up. So we had to go back for more. I'm sure they had perfectly good reasons for rejecting it, but we had thought that this was going to be the breakthrough. But there were many, many, funny, sad, angry moments in it.

It was a wonderful, educating experience for me, both intellectually—what's all this labor stuff about, from a legal, case law point of view, and trying to interpret the Higher Education Act and all that. And then the camaraderie of being with a bunch of people from the other campuses and trying to reach agreement. That crusty old labor negotiator, when he gave us our first introduction the very first day before we were in session, as to what bargaining is like, he described it as two team leaders or groups of people standing on hills of sand shouting back and forth at each other, while behind each one of them there were their respective organizations with fire hoses aimed at their own hills of sand. What he meant was, you'd think you have a thorough understanding of what the University position would be, for example, you'd negotiate some tentative language, and the people on your side in your organization at the highest levels would change their minds, turn their fire hose on your hill of sand, and you'd start to fall down. That absolutely was true, that it oftentimes was as hard . . . Because of course the University people, or, and I'm sure it happened on the labor side too, that they would go back to their constituency, or to AFT, because AFT knew that they were setting precedents as to

what might happen in other bargaining times and places, and you'd go back to discover that they wouldn't agree to something that you had stayed up all night trying to get agreement for. Because the people at the highest levels would only learn about what was going on at intervals. In other words you'd negotiate, negotiate, and you'd come back, and they wouldn't have heard anything about what was going on for a week, or two weeks.

Reti: Right, because they don't know what's going on in that room.

Dyson: And so you'd be going down following what you considered to be some logical path, given some parameters you'd been given by a committee of academic vice chancellors or something like that, as to what the relationship could be, and they would say, "No, no, no, we don't agree with that. We didn't realize that that was the implication of what we told you to do. So now you have to go back and undo what you've done."

Reti: Oh.

Dyson: And that's a lot harder than trying to get it in the first place. But eventually we worked it out. One of the hardest things was to decide what to include in the agreement. Some things, such as LAUC's role, seemed important. But if you mention it, and say, "We, through this agreement, give responsibility to this other agency to handle all this." Well, the implication of that is that in your next agreement you can say, "Well, we don't give responsibility to that agency anymore." In fact, that's what has happened. And in

particular this had to do with, what's the relationship between the collective bargaining agreement and the *Academic Personnel Manual*? Because it's the *Academic Personnel Manual* that grants LAUC the responsibility for being consulted when people are to be hired, advanced, or promoted. Many years later, that is, now, change has actually happened: for the most part, the *Academic Personnel Manual* no longer governs for those that are represented by the union. That is, those parts of the *Academic Personnel Manual* that need to apply to represented librarians are now incorporated into the collective bargaining agreement. Since there are probably a quarter of the librarians that are declared to be part of management, department heads and so on, that are still governed by the *Academic Personnel Manual*, inevitably over time there's going to be a shift in how those two groups are handled. Now they've tried to incorporate the language of the *APM* into the bargaining agreement, but I absolutely would guarantee my next pension check, if you will, that over time there's going to be a few things where the *APM* will get out of step on something. Then they'll kind of fix it in the collective bargaining agreement, but the language will be different, and then there'll gradually be a bifurcation of that over time. So far, now, it's not a problem. At that time we did it as an addendum to the agreement. I think it was called "tier two," or something like that, I think, was the phrase that was used, and it simply referred to those issues as being governed by the *APM*, as written in the *APM*, not as something that was incorporated into the language, into the actual collective bargaining agreement.

One of the oddities of the collective bargaining activities, and one of the things I think was the most astonishing to me, was who's represented by the union and who isn't. That

was negotiated on a case-by-case, campus-by-campus basis. And at some of the campuses, such as Berkeley, the administration tried to get as many of the people declared as managers as they possibly could, which would've meant that they would not be represented. Others of the campuses, such as UCLA, equally large, took exactly the opposite approach, and only tried to include their senior department heads as people who were part of management, and included almost identical positions in the union that Berkeley had excluded to be out of representation. I see you look puzzled, and I have to say, yeah! (both laugh) You're right to be puzzled, but that's the way it was.

The union had some questions about some of the people here at UCSC, and I had to negotiate—because then, wearing a different hat as university librarian, I had to go into the negotiation as to who was going to be in the bargaining unit, which librarians would be in the bargaining unit and which would not be, at UCSC. We eventually simply agreed that if you're what we called section head here, that is, head of Reference or the Science Library or Access Services, or whatever it might have been, that you were out of the union. There was a clear reason for that, because those folks who sat in what was then called the Section Heads Council, the predecessor to the Library Management Group, took part in all of the discussions of, "Gee, what should our management bargaining strategy be on this one?" They clearly could not be in the union. The reason there was some question is that there was, I think, at least one, there may have been more than one, but at least one section head that did not have librarians reporting to them, like in Acquisitions.

Reti: I was thinking about Access, too.

Dyson: Yeah. Access ultimately did, because now the head of ILL is a librarian. But I don't think that person was at the time. But those people within the library were treated as fully equal to the other department heads. In fact, we were surprised when that issue was raised, because we never thought that the head of Acquisitions was different than the head of the Science Library, or something like that. I mean, we treated them equally within the Section Heads Council . . . They were equally likely to be chairing that group or whatever.

Reti: They were still doing management library-wide.

Dyson: They were totally doing management library-wide, involved in policy-making, personnel actions, et cetera, et cetera. So fortunately we were able to carry the day. I think we probably had one of the most logical divisions between represented and non-represented librarians here at this campus because of the particular way that we had divided up the library. So that has not ever been a big problem for us. I am lucky that we had that organization in place because this, I think, tends to be a continuing issue. Occasionally it's been an issue here. For example, there's an assistant to the university librarian who, among other things, is responsible for development. She and I have very, very sensitive discussions about soliciting donations, that kind of thing. At one point we thought, well, it's not appropriate for her to be in the collective bargaining situation, but we weren't able to change the rules. That was a position that hadn't existed at the time

that the bargaining unit was set up. So, as it turns out, that person remains in the bargaining unit. So there are issues, but I think how hard it must be when you're trying to reorganize, say, at Berkeley, when you've got positions that are in the unit, but those are going to take on more management responsibilities . . . or vice versa. Fortunately that's simply not something we've ever had to deal with here.

I guess one of the things I've learned is it's hard for me to argue that people shouldn't be represented in the way that they themselves want to be represented. It's sort of like calling somebody by a nickname that they detest.

Reti: (laughs)

Dyson: I mean, you know, (laughs) you're really doing it for power reasons. You're not doing it because you like that person. So I guess I can't pass any judgments as to whether it was smart to go the route of collective bargaining for those librarians that ultimately wound up represented. I think that it certainly changed the relationship of librarians to the University, and yet practically all employee groups of one sort or another now are represented, and while there have been changes in who represents them, I don't remember that there's any group that's decided they don't want to be represented anymore. So it would have been harder and harder for a non-faculty group, regardless of whether they're academics or not, to exist in the University without some form of labor relations representation.

LAUC has continued to exist. It continues to be involved in what you might call the professional standards area for librarians—who gets hired and what their performance has to be in order to be advanced or promoted—that kind of thing. They do get involved in other issues. They are represented on many of the most important working committees systemwide, et cetera. There was a question as to what exactly the role of LAUC was before collective bargaining; there was a question of what exactly is the role of LAUC *after* collective bargaining. So in the grand scheme of things, I can't really say that things are worse or better, and I think that having collective bargaining certainly has provided another arena whereby librarians can press the cause for better working conditions, salaries, et cetera. Did it make life more complicated to be a university librarian? Absolutely.

Reti: I'm sure.

Dyson: Absolutely. And in fact, I forget how many different kinds of personnel manuals there are now—if you think of all the collective bargaining unit memorandums of understanding as being a form of personnel manual. Because they do govern things such as what discipline is like and all, the things that in the really olden days before HEERA passed and allowed people to be represented by unions in the University of California, were in personnel manuals. Now, I bet there're probably six or seven "personnel manuals" that Kate McGirr, AUL for Human Resources, has to be concerned with. When you think of all of the different . . . I mean, just for the librarians you have two. If you count the AULs as a separate personnel manual, you have three. Then you get to all the

different unions that represent different types of employees on campus. And since libraries cut a very broad spectrum of activity (we have people that drive trucks and things like that), you may have most of your support staff in one union, but then you'll have a couple of job titles, like driver or something, where you might only have one person in the library that is a member of that particular campus-wide collective bargaining unit. Then you have the senior, supervisory support-staff people that aren't part of a union, so they have their own UC personnel manual. It really is six or seven different personnel manuals that are governing the employees just of what is, in the grand scheme of things, a relatively small academic library. It's a much, much more complicated world once that's started. But I think it's tended to increase the need for management as an important talent of people who are hired as university librarians. Whereas before you could hire people who were bookmen, and I use the word 'men' advisedly, or people who were interested in this or that aspect of it, now it's awfully hard to be a university librarian just about anywhere, but as I know in the University of California, without being interested in these issues, because they're going to hit you. You darn well might as well like them. It's sort of a little bit like fundraising. When I started it was maybe one percent of my job, and by the time I finished it was probably twenty-five or thirty percent of my job.

Reti: We'll be talking about that a lot more later in this oral history.

Dyson: Yes. I think probably those are the two biggest areas in which the job changed during the whole near quarter century. The whole element of labor relations, and the

whole element of fundraising are the most different.

Librarian Recruitments

I think that covers pretty much those two things, LAUC and collective bargaining. Let me talk a little bit about the next item on our outline, which is librarian recruitments. My attitude towards hiring a librarian is one that I have stated very clearly, and I think I've used the same language over and over again, so it's kind of part of the culture here, and that is: When you hire a librarian, say you need a reference librarian (or a head of Interlibrary Loan, or a collection planner, or a science librarian, or whatever it may be), you are not hiring a reference librarian. You are hiring a librarian whose first job is to work in the reference section. So you're looking for a much more well-rounded person that is going to be an asset to the organization in ways in the future that you can't even imagine right now. Well, my particular theory was if these new people are any good, in six months to a year you can train them to do whatever . . . Even if they're lacking in the specific knowledge that you need, you never hire somebody who's going to walk right in the door and be absolutely ready to do this one narrow little job. When you hire a librarian, you are hiring somebody, who, when they get career status (which is the librarian's equivalent of faculty tenure), they have career status in the entire University of California, not just at UCSC. You are in effect hiring somebody who has the potential to have a lifetime job in the University of California. And you better be looking beyond, "Gee, I need somebody that can work fifteen hours a week at the McHenry reference desk." Because they probably, in a thirty or thirty-five year career are not going to solely work fifteen to twenty hours a week at the McHenry reference desk. They're going to be

doing a whole bunch of things. That's a philosophy that served us enormously well over the years, and led to our looking for people who were going to be leaders, had an enormous amount of potential.

If you look at the department heads (they're called section heads here), when I retired, the head of the Science and Engineering Library took that position after having been a bibliographer in the Collection Planning department. The head of Access Services was hired as the multicultural librarian in the Reference section. The head of Collection Planning had been a part of the Media Services department. The head of Technical Services was not hired even into an administrative position. He was hired as the principal cataloger. The head of Reference Services (Cheryl Gomez) did in fact stay within reference, but was hired as a reference librarian, not as a manager.

You can go right through the library and see instance after instance, not only where people moved up within their particular department, but in fact I think at one point the majority of them actually went from being a non-administrator in one department to being an administrator in another department, a totally different one. And the people that I've named are some of the best administrators that I ever hired. I mean, you look at somebody like, oh, Head of Collection Planning and Special Collections, Christine Bunting, or somebody like that, or Catherine Soehner, the head of the Science and Engineering Library. They did not come here with the idea that they were going to run a major, critical department in the library. But they clearly had the talent to do that. And with the right kind of support and mentoring, they could move on and take on bigger

challenges.

So that's what we always looked for when we hired librarians. And we always had a small enough group of librarians that people had to do a variety of things. It was probably in the range of from twenty-three to twenty-five, to thirty to thirty-five, the number of librarians that at any given time we had here during the whole time I was here. These people had to do a variety of things. You couldn't run a full-fledged academic research library supporting a University of California campus and only do one little narrow job. You were going to get called on to chair committees. You were going to get called on . . . I told you the story of Margaret Gordon, who was pretty close to a beginning reference librarian right after I got here. Within months of when I got here, she wound up running the installation of the first automated circulation system. I set the tone very early on that that was what my expectation was. We had section heads that because of vacancies took over temporary running of departments all over the place too. Larry Millsap, of Technical Services, actually ran the Reference department for a while. I think the head of Access Services wound up running Media Services for a while, temporarily. All those kinds of things. So we really did try to build that kind of thinking into how we hired people.

I look back at the hires, and there're only two or three folks that I say we just guessed wrong on. At one point we hired a head of Reference who was highly thought of. I mean, it was just universal agreement that this was the best person in the pool. And somehow or other we overlooked that they thought of Santa Cruz as a laid-back, take-it-easy,

don't-do-very-much place. In fact, that was the opposite of the library here. The dedication of the professional and support staff here is incredible. I am forever sending off people to serve on some committee and then getting word back from a university librarian or something at another campus: "Boy, that was a real hotshot. Boy, whoa, never even heard of that person. They were fabulous." Over and over again I'd hear that about different people on our staff, and you just get to conclude that they must be comparing it to something, and presumably it's their own staff! (both laugh) But this person just really didn't work out. There were, I think, one or two other circumstances. That one I'm mentioning I feel directly responsible for, because the person reported directly to me. But there are one or two others, lower down in the ranks, professional staff that didn't work out. I have to say that it's a measure of the worth of this organization that in each of those cases those folks did not stay. They were not given career status. And that's an incredibly painful thing to do here. When you go down that road you heave a deep sigh because you know that it's going to be a very unpleasant task. But the organization always came out stronger as a result of it. There was not a lot of backbiting or fratricidal fighting over those issues. In general those folks found themselves kind of isolated. The push to decide that they were not measuring up to the standards of UCSC and the University of California was as much from their peers, who felt that those folks were not carrying their weight, as it was from some kind of top-down statement from the university librarian's office.

In general, that's what we've looked for. I've already mentioned how we took a kind of non-traditional, at least in terms of academic libraries, a non-traditional person into the

multicultural services position. But you know, just a whole bunch of different people. We had the reputation of not hiring Santa Cruz people into professional positions. By Santa Cruz people, I mean people, for example, that might have been on the support staff here and gone off and gotten a library degree. My response to that always was that we are mandated to do a national search. That's what the University requires for an academic. The chances that the very, very best person for a particular position is going to happen to be sitting four chairs away from the position is kind of small. I mean, just statistically, you know, there's a lot of librarians out there, and it would be unusual, although not impossible, for people to just happen to be here, that were the best candidate. I think over time we've proven that that isn't a rule. And in fact, there are a number of people who we've hired. I go back to one person I just mentioned, Margaret Gordon, who was actually a library assistant on the staff when she got her degree and was hired back.

Reti: Oh, I didn't realize that.

Dyson: So it was urban legend that that never ever happened. And more and more, sometimes we found talent nearby, on a couple of occasions right here within the library, of people that had so proven their worth that they were ultimately hired into an academic position. But I think I succeeded . . . One of the things you get to do if you're in a place for a very long time, is to say the same thing over and over again . . .

Reti: (laughter)

Dyson: . . . and I woke up one day to discover that just about practically every librarian in the organization had either been put in their current position by me or had been hired by me, so they heard the same story. There were a few that were still around that were hired before me, but most of them had been promoted while I was here. So people heard what was expected, and there was, I think, a real consistency on what it was that people were expected to do in order to get promoted and things like that. There may have been many issues, but inconsistency was not one of them, and I think that helped new professionals here especially, because they heard the same language from everybody as to what it took to get career status and be promoted.

Managing Middle Managers

Reti: I have a question about your management philosophy. When there was a conflict between middle managers, what approach would you take?

Dyson: (sighs) One of the things I had to learn early on, and I'm sure this is true of most organizations, it doesn't have particularly to do with libraries or academic libraries, is to not let people turn their conflict problems over to higher management. Oftentimes, once people learn that the culture of the organization is not to let you do that, then a lot of those problems go away because people try to work out the solutions themselves, because they know what's going to happen. But I do remember on more than one occasion where I would hear a complaint about the behavior of someone with equal responsibility within the library, and this complaint would be stated at some length, and then the person would turn to me, and you had the distinct feeling that they had now

unburdened themselves, and now it was my problem, for me to solve. And of course my response always was, "Well, you sound like you have a real problem here, so how are you going to resolve this?" And there was always this kind of crestfallen look on their face. (both laugh) "Oh gee, I'm not going to be able to perch that monkey up on his shoulder," and a few times I actually went so far as to charging the two folks that might have some disagreement on some issue, and having them both come in, and saying that they were responsible now for sitting down and working out some kind of compromise agreement on how that issue was going to be handled. And I would evaluate them on the basis of their ability to work together, to reach the conclusion that was satisfactory. If they were having the issue, they needed to set out to at least find the way to resolve it. I mentioned early on that librarianship is a little bit unusual as a profession in that in an academic library everybody has to work together in order for the organization to succeed. No one outside the library, whether a faculty member, or the administration, or a student, is going to accept, "Oh, those books aren't on the shelf when you need them because the person in charge of cataloging is incompetent." They don't say, "Oh, oh well. Of course! Then I'll think of some other topic for my paper. So sorry to hear that." (both laugh) Or, "Gee, you know, the bibliographer's really uninterested in that subject area. It's too trendy, so we don't buy books in that area."

Reti: (laughs)

Dyson: Or whatever the thing is. I mean, either the library "works," or it doesn't work, and they don't have . . . For heaven's sakes, they think that it's all librarians standing

behind the circulation desk. I mean, they don't know the difference between . . . A librarian is somebody that works in a library!

Reti: That's right. I get called a librarian and I'm an oral historian.

Dyson: Yeah, exactly. Well, student assistants get called librarians. "Oh yeah, my roommate's a librarian. She works over at McHenry Library." That kind of thing. So you have to work together. And part of that set of attitudes and abilities that I talked about when we hired librarians was a real sense that this is somebody that could work well with others. That's actually even written into one of the criteria for advancement in the library. And I always thought that's more true than trite. For a library to work, you have to be able to cooperate. Plus, the other element of the organization, which is that this is an extremely flat organization chart, meant that it was relatively easy for people to resolve issues. Now, I don't know if we've talked about the whole concept of the flat organizational chart.

Reti: No, I was just going to ask you about that. That's important.

A Flat Organizational Chart

Dyson: I fortuitously inherited a situation where in the past . . . I know I've mentioned some of the conflict that existed here, but the organization chart up until a little time before I arrived here in 1979, was that there was a university librarian, then there were two assistant university librarians, one for Technical Services and one for Public

Services, and then departments that reported to those AULs, and then some sub-units that reported to those departments. I came from an organization at Berkeley where it was quite possible, for example, for someone to be a reference librarian in the Public Health Library, who reported to the head of Reference in the Public Health Library, who reported to the head of the Public Health Library, who reported to the head of the Biological Sciences Libraries, who reported to the associate university librarian for Public Services, who reported to the university librarian. Now, you count the levels of bureaucracy in an organization like that, and you're probably five people removed from the person at the top of the organization. That isn't how I ran the Undergraduate Library.

And fortunately when I got here, one of the very large silver linings of the controversies that had occurred before I came was that they had eliminated the two line AUL positions, so that the department heads, section heads as they're called here, reported directly to the university librarian. Since there were only, I think at that time, six of them (because we didn't have Media Services), that was not a large span of reporting relationships for me. It was fairly similar to that at the Undergraduate Library. So I had no desire whatsoever to recreate those associate university librarian positions. What that meant was that there was no librarian on the staff here that was more than one level of bureaucracy away from the university librarian. Because every librarian reported to a department head, and every department head reported directly to me. Well, you kind of feel involved in the organization when your boss reports to the chief executive, in effect. And there would be many times when the section head would be on vacation, or out sick, or on leave or something, where one of the librarians under them would then be

representing that department in meetings of the Section Heads Council, or whatever it might be. So there was quite a bit of interaction between the librarians and the administration. We all kind of know each other. And to me, any organization works best the flatter it is. Obviously there are some limitations. You can't have thirty people reporting to you, effectively. But to the extent that you can keep it flat, you do it that way. I always felt that that helped this organization enormously and I was very lucky to inherit it, because if I had inherited an organization with two strong, effective line AULs, what was I going to do, fire them? I mean, you know, what would be the basis of doing that?

Reti: (laughter)

Dyson: But I was very pleased that I happened to luck into that. And I was very strong in trying to keep it that way. I think that the reason that lasted as the library grew over the years was because it was already in place. For example, there was a point where I had seven section heads, two AULs, and an assistant to the university librarian, all reporting directly to me. If you were starting out from scratch to develop an organization, you probably wouldn't have ten people reporting directly to the university librarian. And these are all librarians. It means I'm writing ten academic reviews and all that kind of stuff. It's a fairly heavy personnel workload just to be meeting with ten different people on a regular basis every week. A large chunk of your time goes into the normal, everyday bureaucratic activities of making the place run. But because that organization was already in place before . . . I think [at the beginning of Dyson's tenure]

there were only six sections; there was no assistant to the university librarian and so on, so there were probably only seven or eight people reporting directly to me. As the organization grew, we were able—because everybody was comfortable with that organization—it was able to stretch and continue that same kind of flat organization chart. I assume you know what I mean by a flat organization chart. It means that there aren't a whole lot of levels in the chart. It goes down, and then there's eight or nine boxes at the next level, and then more boxes at the next level, and that's essentially your organization chart. I really feel that that fit my particular personality best. It fit having to involve the department heads in the overall running of the library, because they were the first natural group, next level down, along with the assistant university librarians, to consult on issues of the day.

You look at an organization that is constructed relatively differently. Within UC there are libraries at campuses not much bigger than Santa Cruz, where you might have four or five AULs and a director of personnel, so that the group that we think of here as the Section Heads Council would be almost the same in number but it would all be senior management, and the department heads would not be included in those activities. You might have an AUL for Collections, an AUL for Technical Services, an AUL for Public Services, a Science and Technology AUL, and then your staff AULs, like Human Resources, and Operations or business matters. So you'd have this whole group of people, all of whom are senior. I always felt I knew much more what was going on in my library, and also, it made it very hard for department heads not to cooperate with one another, because they had to wear two hats. They were responsible for their department,

but they were also responsible for setting the policies and procedures for the entire library.

Middle management is the hardest job in the world, and I was glad I spent the time that I did at Berkeley, because it helped me understand it. You've got people who want you to push their agenda that are in your department at the same time that your boss is saying, "Oh let's take the overview." But I have to say, time and time and time again, especially during budget crises and things like that, people would flat-out say, in the management group they'd say, "You know, my people really want me to argue for this position, but we've only got the money for one, and clearly yours is a much more critical vacancy than mine, so I'm just going to have to . . . I think we should just go ahead and hire that one, and put us in line for the next one if some extra money is available." People just had to do that. If you don't take that approach, you're turning all the decisions over to the university librarian. If everybody just walks in and argues their own arguments, then who makes the decision? I do. But if you're willing to say, "Well, if you give me next priority, I'll give you this priority, I think that's the order," and there's general agreement among the group that that's the order that things ought to be done in, I mean, essentially, I'm just running the meeting. (laughter) I'm kind of the mediator of this front-line understanding of what's needed. I always felt there was an enormous benefit from running the organization this way. It's one of the reasons that the standards of service and expectations of one another were so high within this library that I rarely had to give very many, what I call pull-up-your-socks lectures . . .

Reti: (laughter)

Dyson: . . . to people, because the pressure from their peers to perform well was much greater than any kind of quasi-parental pressure that a senior executive pushes down on the organization. It's much more effective to have it from a peer group.

Media Services

Reti: Should we move on to Media Services?

Dyson: Okay. Media Services was an interesting situation. Like seemingly many elements of the campus when I arrived, Media Services was one of the things that had been largely dismantled. When I got here, Media Services was instructional support, the people that got the movie projectors out into the classrooms, and then the repair of equipment and things like that. It reported to the head of the bookstore.

Reti: Hmm.

Dyson: Now, yes, you should look a little perplexed.

Reti: (laughter)

Dyson: And the reason was, there had been for some reason (and I do not know, nor did I ever wish to know why there had been) a kind of dismantling of a larger operation on

campus. Now, understand that the head of the bookstore (and having that position in charge was odd enough) reported to the vice chancellor for student affairs. Well, the one thing this instructional support organization wasn't, was a student affairs-oriented kind of . . . I mean, they weren't worried about admissions and scholarships and all that kind of stuff. Essentially it was largely an instructional and faculty support group. Trying very hard to do a good job, I might add, but obviously not being in the right circles, boxes, in order to interact on a regular basis with the people that were their primary customers, in terms of administration or funding or anything like that.

There are universities and colleges where what was usually then called "nonprint media" reported to the library. One of the things that the library always does for units like this is to provide a regular, solid, respected, institutional home for the unit. And that often is what is most needed for the organization. UCSC is blessed with a good staff. If you can organize them so that you can give them the resources and the institutional support, and by that I mean hiring people and making sure that the paychecks are delivered on time and that kind of thing, if you can go to bat for their real budget needs and the like, then they can perform extremely well. So for nonprint media, in those institutions where it reported through the university librarian at other universities around the country, the general reputation when I checked was that these tended to be highly effective organizations, because they had the institutional support. They weren't out there reporting to the, well, in our case, head of the bookstore, who clearly had other things on his mind than this issue.

I have to say that one of those lucky little fortuitous things that happened throughout my entire professional life, was that my wife [Susan Cooper] started her career as a nonprint media librarian. So I could ask her questions about, "Does this really make sense?" And she'd say, "Well, you need to check into the situation at the University of Texas," or something. She had had a job as a nonprint editor for a major academic library review journal where she had to know what was going on all over the country. And so she was able to . . . She didn't say it was a good idea or a bad idea. I'd say, "Gee, I don't know how this issue should be resolved," and she'd say, "I think Maryland had that issue. Why don't you call up so-and-so and find out what happened there?" So that gave me a sort of watching-my-back kind of knowledge that I could use to find out things. Even if I knew nothing about it, I knew how to find out about it with some assurance.

So the library was approached by the campus to take over this operation, and I tried to run away from it just slowly enough so that they could catch me, which is always a good management technique, because if people think you don't want to do it, then they'll offer things like funding and budget (both laugh) to kind of entice you into the situation. What we offered, which was something that we had kind of wanted to do anyway, was we would hire, we would put up the one FTE for a librarian to run the organization, if they supplied all of the other budget stuff. I didn't want the other stuff to come out of the library budget. They had to do all that, but we would put up the FTE, because I wanted a librarian running it.

So eventually it worked out. We created a Media Services department that tried to

integrate Media Services as much into the life of the library as we possibly could. Now what that meant was that ultimately, our already existing Slides Library became a part of Media Services, and there was an excellent librarian running that, so that the head of Media Services was not going to be the only librarian operating in that department. And then we already had what was then called the Language Lab. That became part of it. And we took over these other units that provided the instructional support.

I had a direct way of finding out what the Media Services department was thought of because when I evaluated the librarian who was the head of Media Services (our first one was Jan Dickens), I would solicit letters from faculty as to what their experience was in dealing with this unit. So I had a real sense . . . Oftentimes for example, I would go to someone who might be an assistant dean or something like that, and get a response of what they were hearing from their faculty about Media Services, and the responses I would get would be that this department over the years had gone from being (I remember one very specific quote), “gone from being the laughing stock of the campus to one of the strongest support units.”

Reti: That’s pretty dramatic.

Dyson: Those are the kinds of things that you take indirect pride in. I wasn’t certainly doing any of this stuff, and I wasn’t directing the people, but I felt that by integrating them into the University Library administrative support structure, by giving good guidance to the person that was in charge of it, by helping them deal with some long

simmering personnel issues (and there was a lot of turnover), by the time that Jan Dickens left to take another job, we had created a very, very strong department on the campus. So strong, in fact, that shortly after we hired her replacement there was a major reshuffling of what was called, I think, information technology on the campus that involved the Computer Center and all that kind of thing, and Media Services became part of a new campus department.

Reti: All of this is taking place during a period of rapid change in terms of more and more digital media.

Dyson: Exactly. We built an organization that was very, very competent in that area. And it's the little ways, sometimes, that really good people show their worth. This is just one incident of countless numbers, but one of the ways that this department got very involved was with the building of new buildings on campus. Classrooms required the integration of classroom projection equipment, and PCs that were part of the instructor's podium, and all the complex stuff that was going on. I remember one time one of the people we'd hired, actually I think we hired them from the University of Maryland or something like that, from back East anyway, a very, very good technical person in Media Services, was at a conference down in Los Angeles and sat down at a luncheon next to somebody. They read his badge and they said, "Oh! University of California, Santa Cruz. Why, I'm about to get the contract to install all the instructional media into that new classroom building you're building up there."

Reti: My! (both laugh)

Dyson: (exaggerated voice) “Oh, really.” said our person. And he came back, and sure enough, the contractor who was building the building had a contract to let some outside subcontractor come in and do all this stuff which of course was going to be totally incompatible with all the other things on campus that we had. If you didn’t have a good person who went to conferences and picked up on what was going on, there was a multi-hundreds-and-hundreds-of-thousands-of-dollars disaster waiting to happen, that kind of thing. In the old days, people wouldn’t have even thought of going to a conference. I mean, when it was the head of the bookstore, the thinking was, “Well, they’re the little guys that push the media carts around to the classroom when you need them.” Once you get up to a certain level where the people are involved, you start to discover the benefits. One of the things that Media Services did, this excellent crew, is they started standardizing every podium, the equipment, the media package. They’d have a Media Package One, or a Media Package Two, which would be [Package] One plus some additional, or Media Package Three, which was the high end, and they’d use the same kind of controls and the same kind of equipment in every classroom, which meant that when an instructor was trained on how to use the equipment in a given classroom, they pretty much could go to their next class that they were going to teach and find the same kind of controls, the same . . . They even worked out that the face plate, the overriding thing, looked exactly the same. That’s why it was so critical not to let that guy down in LA come up and install his equipment, which suddenly was going to result in this one classroom building that was totally inconsistent with everything else on the campus. But

that was just one of the little ways that turned the faculty around from an organization that really seemed to be almost dysfunctional, to one that was highly respected and would increasingly get hired as consultants on other projects too, elsewhere.

When the time came to say goodbye, because they were creating this new kind of czar of information technology on the campus and they needed to bring some units together, the only really well-functioning unit that they could find that they could fit into this new organization, that the person could then kind of rely on having, was Media Services. Because there had been some budgetary scandals in the Computer Center, for example. They had run up, I think, a four million dollar deficit by hiring career people on temporary money and then the temporary money ran out. Just a terrible situation. I was told by the executive vice chancellor that they were considering moving Media Services into this large new department. I argued against it. I said, "I don't think it serves the campus interests (in the sense of the instructional program), because I think when you take a really good unit and mix them up with some units that have been having problems, you don't usually wind up where the end result is that everybody comes up to the high standards. There's usually a kind of a balancing, averaging, because you have to draw off resources to solve those problems over there." I lost that argument, and it was not a totally bad thing. There was always a sense a little bit within the library that Media Services wasn't really like the rest of us. Some parts of it clearly were, the Slides Library and things like that, now called the Visual Resource Collection, I think, and they stayed as part of the library.

So there weren't a lot of tears cried throughout the library when Media Services left, and it wasn't anything to do with the people. They were great. It's just that it seemed to distract a little bit from some of the core issues of the library. But I felt a small measure of pride that when they were creating this new department they felt it was important to include Media Services.

Reti: How long was Media Services located within the University Library?

Dyson: Media Services started in the late eighties and ran 'til about, probably 2002, within the library.

I remember we talked a little bit about the library school education I had in terms of case studies, thinking about things as case studies— Media Services was an interesting one. Because it clearly, in terms of the campus, its primary activities were not library activities. We put Slides in there for some perfectly logical reasons, but I don't really think that the Department of Art History, for example, thought of Slides as being part of Media Services. They thought of it as being the library, and they didn't care how we managed it. And of course when Media Services left, they didn't take Slides. That came back as part of the library, along with the Language Lab. In other words, the library public service aspects of that department stayed with the library when the rest of it went off to this new department three years ago. But it was an interesting case study as to whether or not good management was more important than institutional affinity, or something like that, if you see what I'm saying. That is, if you had a well-functioning

core department like the library, and it had just enough sufficient hooks to be able to work with this other activity, did that ultimately tend to benefit that organization, or to create problems because they couldn't be fully integrated because their mission was different? Ultimately I concluded that management trumped affinity. You could make that work, and turn it into something that could then be passed on to other places on the campus.

I should add that "the library as incubator" was a theme that was stated within library culture as a role that we played on this campus. Media Services is one example of that. There're a bunch of places where we did stuff and did it well and then passed it on. Sometimes it was just programmatic. But everything from the jitney service to, oh, the first web pages for the campus, and the Center for Teaching Excellence, things like that were places where we would develop it. All along we understood that we were doing it because a) we had some talent to do it, and b) nobody else was taking responsibility for it. But we always made it clear that we had no core "empire" interest in retaining it within the University Library. So when time came, and it became sufficiently institutionalized, and more clearly the responsibility of some other unit like Public Information, in terms of the campus web pages, we simply passed it on, "Fine, here it is. It looks good. Take 'er away." I could always justify the Media Services situation that way. I was most concerned when this kind of transfer of responsibility happens, that the same level of quality of service continue. But either you believe it's ready, it's pass-on-able, or it isn't, and you don't get to control it once it's passed on. But in many ways I think we have provided those kinds of initial organization, or reorganization, or

reinvigorating an organization within the library, and then it's moved on someplace else. I was always pleased that that was a role that people saw that the library could play. I think we did it in a number of different areas, as I mentioned.

Automated Catalog Systems

Reti: Should we move on to talk about Innovacq?

Dyson: Okay. Before we get to Innovacq, let me give some background. This library essentially never had a traditional card catalog. I used to say it never had a card catalog, and I was informed that when it opened, the original collection, which was kind of the new colleges collection that was like an identical collection that went to new campuses—here, San Diego, and Irvine, I think, or something like that anyway, essentially a best books collection started it—and those things came with catalog cards. But of course as the collection grew, if you didn't add to them, then it didn't serve as a functioning catalog for very long.

The library here always, from its start, conceived of itself as having an automated catalog. It had an automated catalog back in the days when nobody had any intelligent reason to try to do that, because the technology wasn't that far along. And the computerized catalog in the early days consisted of those wide, eight-and-a-half-by-fourteen sheets of computer paper with holes down the sides, that were bound, and you looked through them. But it was produced off of a computer.

Reti: That's pretty amazing for 1965, 1966. I mean, that's remarkable.

Dyson: Yeah, exactly. And that's just about where it was. There were a couple of organizations, libraries around the United States that could see the benefits of manipulating large amounts of information, which libraries do all the time, in these new computer machines.

The next product from the database was a book catalog, which consisted I think, of something like twenty-eight to thirty volumes, and then supplements.

Reti: I remember that.

Dyson: And again, (laughter) since you can't write between the lines of a book catalog when you add a new book, the day that it's printed (and it tends to be printed by some off-campus organization someplace), by the time it arrives to you, it's (both speaking together) already out of date. Because you've been acquiring books in those three weeks or month between when you sent that data off to when these bound volumes come back. The one advantage over a card catalog was you could scatter these sets of volumes around the library. But of course, the disadvantage . . . with a card catalog, you pull out the rod and you stick a card in, in its right place, and push the rod back in, and your catalog effectively is up to date. Now, that may be inflexible or labor-intensive, or you only have cards in one place and all that kind of thing, but it is somewhat more updateable than a book catalog. So you had to remind people. Then of course if you had

a supplement, the supplement was out of date. And it was also getting to be tremendously expensive.

The next product of the computer database was a microfiche catalog, which had many of the same disadvantages and advantages of the book catalog, in that you could put multiple copies of it all over the place, but it was out of date and had to have supplements. And of course, books being bound, the pages tended not to get out of order, because they were bound in a book, whereas the microfiche, if somebody left it on the table, or stuck the sheet behind another one, you had to go hunting for that particular set of microfiche pages. Plus you had all the wondrous expenses involved with buying microfiche readers, repairing microfiche readers, and having people replace the bulbs in the microfiche readers.

Reti: My undergraduate years are coming back to me vividly, Lan. All of these formats are things I used from 1978 to 1982, when I was an undergraduate here. (laughter)

Dyson: Yeah. Well, ultimately, there turned out much later to be one enormous advantage. Because when the Division of Library Automation, as it was called then, started the Melvyl catalog, and started to put in the records from the various campuses to form this University-wide catalog (and that all harkens back to the plan for development that we talked about earlier), the University Library at Santa Cruz had a database of its collection. Now, would that it were as simple as sending a tape up then, but of course the formats were not exactly right and all this. There was a great deal of

massaging that had to go on to make this all work, but it was all refining an existing product, an existing database, as opposed to those UC libraries that had to do an enormous amount of work of putting their card catalogs into machine-readable form. Berkeley literally had calligraphic catalog cards, ones that were written in fine hand by people from the nineteenth century. They were beautifully written, as you can imagine, but it would be kind of hard to translate that into a computer without doing quite a bit of work.

So we were able, in a reasonably short period of time, to get our records into the Melvyl catalog. That made it possible for us to use Melvyl as our computerized catalog.³² And Melvyl was much more powerful and flexible, and from our point of view, cheap, since we were using, in effect, other people's money to create our catalog, than UCSC would ever have been able to afford on its own. That was one of the great lucky things that occurred.

I am sure that when the folks started the so-called computerized catalog at UCSC, the last thing in their mind was that they would be able to dump all our records into some systemwide catalog, but to me, that probably was the greatest benefit that came from that early exercise. There were some side benefits. For example, there was a staff here that was completely comfortable with the needs of having records in a database. There was a database unit in this library probably before there were at most other libraries.

32. Although Melvyl was a systemwide catalog, search results could be restricted to one campus. The terminals at the UCSC libraries were configured to show UCSC holdings as the default.—Dyson.

And so when it came time to automate some of our other functions, the first one was the circulation system, but then we started working on the behind-the-scenes stuff. And the first technical services database was called Innovacq, produced by Innovative Interfaces, which was an automated acquisition system. There wasn't any kicking and screaming in terms of people who were uncomfortable with machines, who were uncomfortable with databases. We had a whole library in which everybody was affected by that, and had been, frankly, from the very earliest days of the library, probably before it opened. And so that made that work pretty darn well.

We were able to fund Innovacq, as I mentioned, by holding some FTE aside that we knew we'd need a couple years later to staff the new Science Library. We were able to get the system in place, and it worked out very well. And we had a programmer who was able to link together, with chewing gum and baling wire, as they say, the various systems—the cataloging system we use (OCLC), and the Innovacq system that came from a different company, and our own database. This was not easy, not easy at all. And that's why that person was so key to the library, because almost all of the interrelationships with the various systems—dumping records from the acquisitions system into binding, something that's acquired and you bind it, and all this . . . This was not easy. Essentially, all of the systems we had were stand-alone systems. We had the CLSI circulation system; we had the Innovacq acquisition system; we had our own system for producing the catalog over the years, and so on.

Ultimately we went with a centralized system that controls all those functions, the

Innopac one also produced by Innovative Interfaces, which now does circulation and acquisitions and cataloging, binding and all that kind of stuff under one company, and obviously solved a lot of problems for us. We didn't start the other way because we thought we were better. We initially did it the other way just because there wasn't really any library-wide system that we felt was better than what we had for many of the years that I was here. And then when finally those unified systems did come along, we were more than ready to chuck all our individual ones and use a single comprehensive system.

I'm very grateful for the early years, the work that they did, even though I think that there had to have been a lot of people tearing their hair out when they tried to produce those early computer catalogs, especially when you say you had a computerized catalog and its product was a book. (both laugh) People would look at you like, "Geez, that's kind of Middle Ages, isn't it? Do you chain them to the . . ." And then we went to microfiche, and we still weren't reading it on a computer screen. It still wasn't interactive with the user. But ultimately it paid off big time in our ability to move seamlessly . . . Well, not seamlessly, I should not say—strike that word! Our ability to move our collection's data to the Melvyl system. For that I will forever be grateful.

The California Digital Library

Reti: Today we're going to begin by talking about the California Digital Library.

Dyson: The California Digital Library was in a sense a construct to enable the University

to develop additional resources for the university libraries. It was a concept of the University of California, not of UCSC. The Salmon plan, which had guided the development of the university libraries, became older and older, and I'm purposely not saying more out-of-date, because so much of what is in it, whether it's a shared catalog, or regional storage facilities, still pertains to what we're doing. Still, it was clear that you couldn't use a 1977 plan to develop libraries that were moving into a new millennium. A concept evolved that the only way that we were going to get additional money for the university libraries systemwide was to . . . First of all, I should explain: the reason the money was needed was because a library's electronic access to materials is expensive, and often certainly not a lot cheaper, in terms of materials costs, than paper.

Reti: That's contrary to what some people might think.

Dyson: Yeah, exactly. Oftentimes, the way publishers would do it is they would give you a lot more access to a given, say, scientific publisher's publications, maybe two or three or four hundred or more titles. You'd only have a few paper ones to start with, and they'd say, "We'll give you electronic access to all of them for only twenty percent more dollars than what you're paying right now." Well, on the one hand that's an enormous bargain, because you maybe could go, from our point of view, from UCSC's point of view, from having access to a few dozen, to three hundred. At the same time, twenty percent more money is twenty percent more. Where do you get the twenty percent? That's just one type of issue that we frequently dealt with. Publishers were not in the business of trying to find ways to reduce their income. That has not historically been a

successful business model. (laughter) So they offered what they could produce cheaply, which greatly expanded the access that the users had, but usually at an increased cost. Ultimately, over time, the idea was for the systemwide Office of Library Plans and Policies and the university librarians to come up with a concept that was at the same time explanatory and exciting, so that people could understand some of those issues, and at the same time be willing to see why it was better to have access to three hundred journals than fifty, and how you could expand this, say, to the benefit of the larger California community, rather than just the University. And the result of that would be a willingness on the part of the state to pay for these additional costs. I am summarizing an enormous amount of history, political intrigue . . .

Reti: (laughter)

Dyson: . . . meetings, development, Eureka! moments, et cetera, retreats, into four or five sentences there. But that's essentially, I think, an overview of why it came about. One of the ways one could have gone was to simply spend all the energy to develop a new library plan for development. In other words, the Salmon plan, version two. But first of all, that's an enormous undertaking, because the Salmon plan, in its time in a somewhat simpler library world, took years to develop, and libraries are changing and evolving so quickly now that you can't afford to set out on a journey that's going to take years to accomplish, because by the time you finish your plan, you're going to have to start a new one already, because it's going to be out of date. So it was felt that it was better to target specific areas that the libraries needed help with.

Reti: Now, what period are we talking about, the early 1990s?

Dyson: Mid-to-late 1990s. An earlier version of this concept of targeting something in need was a special request, and resulting state funding, for preservation of library materials. That is, there were a lot of stories nationally about the disintegration of library materials and things like that. And the libraries through the university were able to make the case that there needed to be special preservation funds set out, that the preservation of rare materials was not going to be funded out of the same budget that's used for binding journals or something like that. There needed to be more than that. And while obviously there's no direct link between that and the California Digital Library, I think the budgetary success helped us understand that if you made a special case for a unique project, you were more likely to get the funding than if you went back and tried to construct some mammoth concept of the libraries of the twenty-first century.

Through a series of evolutions the California Digital Library was born, and its concept was that it would set up and maintain the kind of infrastructure that was necessary to distribute electronic access out to all of the university libraries. And it also would negotiate the initial contracts with publishers (and often these contracts are in the multi-millions of dollars) using the power of a ten-research-library system to get the best deals you could on the contracts.³³ Electronic access is not a simple concept to deal with, because you are in effect renting the information rather than buying it. If you buy ten years of a journal in paper, and then your program changes or something like that, or the

33. The number of UC campuses has increased from nine to ten with the addition of UC Merced.

journal changes, you still have the ten years on your shelves and you own it. With electronic access, it is not always clear, in fact it's often quite unclear, that you will have access to the electronic journals that you paid for, for a ten-year period, if you cease then subscribing to it. Because you don't own that information.

Reti: So you don't get the back issues.

Dyson: You're not getting paper issues. You're simply getting electronic access to a publisher's database, in effect. That's why, as I say, if that's the way a publisher wanted to deal with the world, it would be very hard for a UC Santa Cruz alone to try to change the standard contract that was written with the publisher. Indeed it probably would be hard for us even were we able to implement some methodology whereby we continued to have access to this stuff even though the publisher had gone out of business. UCSC wouldn't have the equipment or staff to handle it. Whereas the University of California could say, "Okay, we want to have the rights to this data, and we want to keep this data in a central location. In effect, we're buying this information, not merely renting it." Or, "Should you stop publishing this, we have rights to have access to the back files in perpetuity. We'll put it on our machines."

But it's a complex issue. This is not my strength. I am not a person who ever felt at ease at any library technology meeting that I ever walked into, I can say quite frankly. And one of the reasons that I did succeed was that I had some absolutely excellent people on the staff here, such as Larry Millsap, the head of Bibliographic Records, Bob White, the

AUL for Planning and Technology, and so on. They appreciated what I could do as a manager in other areas, and made sure that they explained in terms that I could grasp, what the issues would be on some particular technological issue, and I would go suitably armed and educated off to those meetings.

That was the basic concept of the California Digital Library—to use the power of the University system to develop resources and contract for resources that we couldn't afford individually. In a certain sense, the way we approached it at UCSC was much the same way we approached Melvyl, and that was, the California Digital Library vastly expanded the resources that researchers at UCSC could have available to them beyond what this library would ever be able to afford.

It had a certain leveling factor in this sense: Oftentimes there would be a systemwide contract, as I described, that would open up practically the entire publication base of an enormous publishing conglomerate—which is what they are. What would the practical impact of that contract be? As one example, let's say a given publisher, one of the largest ones, might have seven or eight hundred publications in science, technology, medicine, social sciences, and maybe even some in humanities. Berkeley could afford to subscribe to three hundred of those eight hundred, and we could afford to subscribe to fifty of those eight hundred. Well, you can imagine who derived the most benefit when all of the publishing base opened up. We were suddenly able to give access to those journals to UCSC faculty and researchers and students that we never would have been able to afford before. Interestingly, one could argue that, well, you bought the ones that were

most relevant to your academic programs anyway, so what's the use of having a bunch of journals in veterinary medicine or something like that, in addition to the ones you've got? But oddly enough, Santa Cruz, by its nature, is an extremely interdisciplinary campus. It has made its name that way. I think that we probably made more use of journals on the periphery of subjects that were taught here than would normally be made use of at some of the other, or most of the other, campuses. And I think there are some numbers that actually bear that out, that is, that the range of journals that UCSC faculty use from a given publisher is broader than would simply be explained by the fact that they now had access, because our collection was comparatively small.

So we were thrilled. The question then, of course, becomes—if you remember what I said about what the California Digital Library would be willing to pay for—it did not include paying for the continuing subscriptions. So we had to figure out ways that money would be available to make sure we were going to be able to continue these wonderful resources that were now not only being made available to our faculty, but were seen as critically important, and obviously had to stay, now that they had had access to them.

Reti: Are you saying that once the initial deals were made, then some of those . . .

Dyson: Right. There would be an initial contract for maybe two years, and then you have to renew the contract. Well, the California Digital Library didn't have a budget for ongoing content. It simply had the money to negotiate the contracts, set up the

infrastructure, and oftentimes pay for the first installment. After that, the same budget that buys the books had to pay for the renewal of contractual access to electronic publications. And that put a real strain on the collections budget, as you can imagine.

Reti: I see.

Dyson: Our general rule . . . it was kind of interesting, because there were two campuses, Riverside and Santa Cruz, that had the same problem as a result of that, and we took opposite approaches. Riverside simply tried as much as they could to opt out. That is, they said they couldn't afford to do this, and they didn't want to tantalize people in the first place, and all that. We took the opposite approach. My edict always was, "We're going to be players. We'll find ways to fund it. We derive so much incremental benefit by being as full a partner in the California Digital Library as we can, that it's critical to us to be a full player, and our faculty deserve it, and ultimately will expect it of us." There were ways that we found to do that. For example, we were the first campus to announce that we were going to cancel the paper versions of journals that we were getting the electronic version of. And that's a relatively easy thing to argue one-on-one with faculty members. That is, "Well, no, we're not going to pay for both a paper copy and an electronic copy of this expensive journal in physics, and then not be able to buy ten journals in the arts because we have two copies of the physics journal." Most of the contracts were written in a way that tried to help the campuses do that. For example, they would give a certain amount of credit . . . Remember, I said it was kind of an add-on cost. However much you were paying for your paper, well, then you pay that plus a

certain percentage and you get all the electronic access too. UC Systemwide would negotiate in the initial contracts that you could get a certain dollar credit if you no longer were getting the paper version. Obviously, the add-on costs for publishing a paper journal are considerably more for the publisher than the add-on costs for having one more access to an electronic database. I mean, every once in a while they might have to upgrade the server or something like that, but the publishing costs for a large paper journal, you have to buy the paper and you have to bind it and you have to mail it and all that, so the incremental costs for a publisher were bigger. They certainly understood the economics of it very well. And therefore, they couldn't really say, "Well, no, you can cancel the paper journal but we're not going to save any money." They were saving money by not having to print it. And they were still making the money in terms of the electronic access to the same data.

The Library Collections Budget

So that was one of the techniques that we used. Another was that we did sell the campus on the idea that the library's benefit to the primary academic mission of the campus was so great that even in the worst of budget times the campus tried to support the library collections budget. They did this in a variety of ways, and I see we're segueing into budget issues.

Reti: That's okay.

Dyson: Sometimes the best the campus could do at times of severe budget cutbacks

would be to say, "Everybody has to cut their budgets five percent, but we're taking the library collections budget off the table. That will not be cut, and only that portion of the library budget that is not the collections budget will have to pay the five percent." Things like that. Since the campus often had some dollar savings target amount that they had to reach, what that meant was some tiny zero-point-something percent was being absorbed by everybody else, including the library non-collections budget, in order to keep the collections budget going. Sometimes that was the best we could do, but still it was better than what was going on in a lot of places, including, in some cases, other campuses of the University of California.

Other times we were able to negotiate specific dollar allocations from the campus through one-time money, which then the wonderful group of bibliographers that we had here would spread out over a three or four-year period, on the assumption that at the end of that period of time we'd be through the economic bad times that the state was going through and we'd find additional ways to continue. It's hard to buy subscriptions on one-time money. It's kind of an oxymoron. But we always did that. Other times we used the concept of the start-up funds, that anytime they hired an additional faculty member on the campus the library was allocated five or six or seven thousand dollars to buy materials that were particularly of interest to that faculty member, and we'd work with the faculty member over a several-year period to see that that happens.

Reti: Was that new under your tenure?

Dyson: Yeah, allocating the start-up funds was a new idea. It certainly wasn't a common practice in UC. I was going to say I think we're the only ones that got that. There may possibly have been some libraries on other campuses that got that money, but I don't think so. And we were able to get that institutionalized so it just happened. We didn't have to go begging for it every year. Eventually I think it was something like five thousand dollars for most of the academic divisions and something like seven thousand if they were in the humanities, that number range. And that, on average, on a growing campus, would generate, I would say, probably in the neighborhood of a hundred to a hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars additional money each year for the collections. Sometimes a little less if they were in a hiring freeze, sometimes more, if the campus was expanding, like the engineering school was being developed or things like that.

So, being shielded from cuts, being given special one-time money, sometimes getting dollar increases in years when nobody else was getting a dollar increase, things like the start-up funds, and in the last decade or so the spendable money that was raised for the subject endowments, et cetera, et cetera—we just tried every trick in the book to be able, as I say, to be a full player, and provide the widest possible access to library materials that we could.

Budgetary Challenges

It was pretty well understood, I think, by just about all the librarians at UCSC that as we had the smallest collection, we had to provide the best service—that's how you

compensated. If you've got a collection that's twice as big as ours, but it's ill-kept and poorly chosen and the service isn't that great, then compared to that you can make up a lot by having a superb interlibrary loan service, or good technical services so there's never any backlog in cataloging . . . things like that. You can make up an awful lot of ground. And the reputation of the library helps you, because faculty who sit on committees where budgets are given out fight for you, because they want to give . . . People often don't understand that people want to give money to successful organizations. They don't want to give money to organizations that are not successful. It's one of the things you have to do when you're fundraising. You can't go out and tell everybody how poor you are, and how you don't have any money, and how it's awful, and you wring your hands, because they say, "Well, that doesn't sound very imaginative." But when we could point to some of these programs that we were doing and then say, "And then your additional help would do this or that," I think it was very persuasive.

So that summarizes, I think, our whole approach to the budget over time. I always felt that there was probably enough available money around the edges, even in the worst times, for a campus this size, and a university library this size, to make it. It just was a question of being creative in how we approached it, how we used the money. We would, as all good managers do, squirrel money away in good times, and then draw those funds down during bad times. We would have sources of funding that would come in, and odd little pockets that you . . . And whenever we got money that was possible to hold over from one year to another, we would always spend money that had to be spent by June

30th first. I have to say that I think I'm . . . I know from what people have told me, I'm known for being kind of a master of the budget and always being on top of it.

Reti: Well, several people told me that when I was talking to them before interviewing you.

Dyson: Right. In large part, that resulted from having senior people around me that were even more masters of the budget than I was, such as Bob White, the AUL. I want to spend just a moment talking about Bob, because he was one of those people that made me look good, and fortunately I've spent a career surrounded by such people. Bob and I have some kind of genetic ability to look at sheets of numbers and understand them. Once he and I had a conversation about some budget report or other, and when we were done with it, we looked at each other and we started laughing because we figured that the conversation had to be utterly incomprehensible to anybody except us.

Reti: (laughter)

Dyson: I can look at a sheet of numbers and percentages and stuff like that, and my mind immediately says, "That number can't be right, because this percentage over here is too high for that number over there to be so low," or something like that. I read numbers that way. And Bob has the same thing. So we don't spend a lot of time with one another pointing stuff out. I'll say, "There's an error, column three on this," and he'll look at it and say, "Oh, yeah." (both laugh) I don't even have to tell him what it is. He can look

down and see it the same way. It made it easy for us to work with the budget. For all the ways that I didn't feel comfortable with technology, I did feel comfortable with the budget. And so we were always able to figure out ways to make it work. That's the broader issue here.

Over time I came to realize something that wasn't stated that much when I got here, and that is that bad budget times run through California every ten years, like clockwork. And just to prove this, I went back, in the early 2000s, when we were having our bad budget times and the worst state crisis ever and all this, all phrases that I think I had heard several times before in preceding decades, and I went back and I got the meeting minutes out of the Library Management Group for exactly ten years before, and then ten years before that, so it was the beginning of the eighties and the beginning of the nineties. I discovered that I could have lifted the budget paragraph out of each one, changed a few words around and have it absolutely apply to the next, you know, (deep, doleful voice) "Dyson reported bad news on the budget front. We are going to have to cut . . ." and you put whatever the percentage *du jour* was (both laugh) in that decade. Committees would be formed, public hand-wringing would be done in front of the senate library committee, et cetera, et cetera, and it's like, so, you get through that, and then you come out the other side, and then you continue to build. I always thought that the way to handle those kinds of troughs is to have enough left over from the peaks of your budget years to be able to bulldoze into the troughs and fill them up so that there's a kind of a wave that's going on, but it's not the sharp peaks and valleys of, "Gosh, let's rush out and buy a bunch of new journals this year that the faculty desperately want,"

and then three years later you're going back to them and asking them which ones they want to cancel. I mean, that just doesn't seem like a great way to do it. Now, we certainly had our share of major cancellation projects and things like that, that all of the University of California campuses' libraries went through, and I don't mean to imply that somehow we sailed through. We didn't. And because we saved money from our peaks, we probably never got as high as we might have at some point. But nevertheless, I like to think that over time we built a kind of confidence in the faculty that the library could handle it; that when we went to them and said, "Gee, we need you to come up with a bunch of journals that we can cancel," they didn't attack us on the floor of the Academic Senate, they didn't form committees that would oversee and find out what was wrong with the library. You know, they'd kind of salute and grumble and get to work on it. And if we were in a period of time where we had to tell faculty, "Yes, we know you'd like that new journal, but you have to suggest which one for an equal dollar amount we're going to cancel in order to get that one," they got it. There was enough credibility built up with the library that it was able to enlist the faculty as partners, whether that was in getting more money or in cancellation projects or whatever, without too much of the negative political infighting that had to go on to make that happen. They assumed that if we said it, it was probably true, in terms of the budget.

Reti: Now, you had a commitment to no layoffs, I understand.

Dyson: Yes, I did. It was a practical commitment, in a sense, but it also is one that I'm proud of, and I think certainly gave a continuing level of support on the part of the staff

through hard times also. One of the most expensive things that anybody can do is to hire and train a new person. I would add parenthetically, that one of the most expensive things you can do, quite literally, is to lay off or fire somebody, too, especially the firing part. You inevitably have settlements, and you spend a lot of your time in hearings and meetings and committees and all that kind of thing. But layoffs are equally difficult in many ways. I always felt that if the primary value of this library is not so much in its collections, but in its service and access, and we've done our job and built a staff that understands that, that is technically exceptionally well-trained in whatever—whether it's Interlibrary Loan or Reference, or up here in the Science and Engineering Library, it was the height of stupidity to think of the staff as the primary means of saving money when it was time to handle a budget cut. I must admit, the first time I said that there would be no layoffs I then went and had butterflies in my stomach back in my office, because I thought, "Can you get through this?" But what happens is that once the staff understands that that's your goal, people will do heroic things to fill in for any vacancies that occur, that you then are using the savings from to manage your budget cut. I felt that laying somebody off, and then two years later hiring a new person, and all the . . . I mean, the hiring process is so convoluted, and so expensive, and so time-consuming, and then the training process, and you go all through this. It's just stupid. If you have a good organization, if there's any possible way that you can survive and keep your people going, over time that pays off much more than laying people off to solve your problem.

So what did we do? One of the things that I always said was that on those few occasions

when the collection budget was cut at the same time that everything else was cut, then the collections budget had to pay its fair share. The library was pretty lean, and we couldn't afford to cover within the rest of the library budget money that was being cut out of the collections budget. I said that loudly and frequently over twenty-five years, to the extent that the campus agreed with it. They never . . . On some campuses, for example, the library would take a big cut, and then the campus would say, "The cut is going to apply to your entire budget, but you can't cut anything from your collections budget." Well, the practical result of that was that the rest of the budget took an enormous hit because they had to make up for all the dollars that weren't being cut out of the collections budget. Berkeley went through an enormous reduction of its staff over time, because they would receive edicts like that down from the campus administration, with apparently no way to get them overturned. We never faced that kind of stuff. So, as far as I know, we never laid anybody off because of a budget contingency. I think there was once or twice when programs got completely phased out, that we didn't have them anymore, that we found other places for people to go, but I'm only having one come to mind in twenty-five years, and it had nothing to do with budget—it was programmatic.

So that principle, I think, also developed the kind of staff loyalty that helps an organization endure through rough times, whether those are rough budget times or other kinds of times. So I'm proud I did it, although I have to say, with most of the things I do, it had a very practical reason. I knew in the long run the organization was going to be a lot better off if we didn't go through horrendous cycles of laying people off, and then spending the money to hire new staff and train them. I'm glad it worked . . . I think

a lot of other organizations could do that if they really put their mind to it.

Library Fundraising and Development

Reti: Thank you. Let's move on to how the position of UL changed in terms of a greater emphasis on fundraising.

Dyson: Yes. We did almost no broad fundraising for the library up until the beginning of the 1990s. We did some very selective fundraising, and just a little bit of it, for the Science Library, back when we thought it was going to be built as an addition to the existing Science Library. I wasn't involved in that fundraising, hardly at all. It was done out of University Relations. They did not turn soliciting organizations like the Cowell Foundation over to bright-eyed, bushy-tailed young university librarians. (both laugh) They kept them pretty much under wrap, although they did try to raise funds for us. But I'm just saying, I don't think of myself as having been very personally involved in that fundraising at all.

There was, as the campus matured, an increasing interest in the whole area of fundraising, and we gradually developed a stepped version of how we approached donors. The very first two funds that we thought of were something that I euphemistically called the Priority Fund, and then, I don't remember what its original name was, but there was one that was for Special Collections. Special Collections is a natural one, I think. Most university libraries try to, over time, develop a fund that can buy rare materials, and things like that, archives. But the Priority Fund, in effect, was a

university librarian discretionary fund, because the fine print said it would be used on whatever the highest priority was for the library at the time. But it had a nice name to it, a nice ring to it. We started out in very small doses. At that time, the campus hadn't done a lot of fundraising either, in terms of general endowment-building fundraising. I don't mean fundraising in terms of getting grants for faculty, and that kind of different stuff.

Reti: Well, the campus was coming of age, and finally had a substantial donor pool of people with professional careers.

Dyson: Right, exactly. They finally had some alumni that were old enough to go out and earn something, and put it in their savings account. We did not have a library fundraising person, but we were assigned somebody from University Relations in the initial stages, who worked with us.

So we started out small. We tried to link up with what now is called the Telephone Outreach Program within University Relations, and we essentially, over time, developed a concept whereby the first level of solicitation would be via the Telephone Outreach Program, at first for the Priority Fund, and later for something that we called the Buy-a-Book program. The Buy-a-Book program has a pretty simple concept. It's that somebody gives us some money, an alumnus or Friend of the Library, or whatever, and they would in return, designate a broad subject area that they were interested in. We would buy a book which we selected (they didn't select the individual title), and we would notify them and put a bookplate in that thanked them for having given money. This proved to

be reasonably popular. We started out, we were thrilled to be starting a program, and the first time we raised, I don't know, six hundred dollars or something like that.

Then we were able to get a challenge grant from the Heller Charitable and Educational Fund Foundation. Dean McHenry helped us get that money. And they were willing to match money that came in. So using that as an impetus, and sending out letters and making more phone calls, we went up an order of magnitude, to like, I don't know, six or seven thousand dollars. I think their grant was five thousand. So we went from four or five hundred, to ten or eleven thousand with their matching grant. This was over a period of maybe five years. Donors became continuing donors.

One of the things that I did early on was that anybody that gave us five hundred dollars or more, I personally called and thanked them. I asked them why they gave the money, and said, "You're not being asked for any more, but I want to hear what motivated you, so I can use it to motivate other people." And usually maybe three or four out of five people were willing to chat about that, once they found out you weren't asking them for more money, and they were actually talking to the head librarian, my gosh. And inevitably what people would say went along these lines: first of all, they often lived off-campus at some point, so the college wasn't the focus of their life that it was during their first few years. Oftentimes when they came to the campus, they came to the library. That's where they'd meet their friends.

Reti: So you're talking about students now?

Dyson: Alumni talking about their life as students. For them, the library was a very important element of their life, not just intellectually, but almost geographically in the center of the campus. Despite all of our talk about the number of kids that live in colleges, we need to remember that the majority of kids don't live in colleges; they live off-campus. Another thing they would say, in terms of giving the money, is that they felt that by giving money to the library, they were helping the greatest number of people on the campus, because the books then became a resource for everybody. While a scholarship was great, it went just to one person, whereas the book could be read by anybody in a class or anybody that wanted to read it, so they were developing a community resource, rather than just something that would help one person. So as we learned that's often what motivated people to give, then we would play that up, and the scripts that the telephone outreach kids would use (they were all undergraduates that made these calls) would build on that idea.

The early years we put the money that we got from the Telephone Outreach Program into the Priority Fund. Then, as that built up and we started getting other endowments, we created this Buy-a-Book program, and used that as spendable money in a given year. As the money donated increased over the years, if you took in from the Telephone Outreach Program, say, thirty thousand dollars, that's the amount of income you would get annually from a six-hundred-thousand-dollar endowment. Because you would never get more than five percent or so of spendable return from an endowment. If you took in fifty thousand, it's like a million-dollar endowment. So being able to have that money generated every year and spent every year was an enormous assistance to the

library.

As we developed people who were giving over time, and oftentimes would give a little more each year, we developed the concept of what we called the Library Subject Endowment. The Library Subject Endowment was a ten-thousand-dollar-minimum endowment that could be paid for over a five year period.³⁴ At only two thousand dollars a year, it's like a hundred and sixty seven dollars a month, or something like that. So it's not a ton of money, with, of course, all the tax breaks on it, and people were able to create an endowment for a subject that they were particularly enamored of. The interest from the money that they gave would then be used to buy in that area by the subject bibliographer. If someone was giving now, like, five hundred dollars a year to the Telephone Outreach Program, some alumna, or alumnus, we would approach them and say, "You know, for not too much more money, you could be creating a perpetual endowment that honors whatever you wish to honor, or whomever you wish to honor."

Gradually over time, we built up those subject endowments. Every one of them has a special story. It's fascinating. When we were at twenty-five or thirty endowments (I think we have probably now somewhere between sixty and seventy; it's growing, and all of this in a ten-year period) we did a list of how these endowments started, and it was fascinating. Every one of them was this incredible story. I mean, completely wonderful stories. For example, two library staff members regularly went to the opera in San Francisco, and they discovered they always had the same little old lady who was their

34. Endowments establish a fund managed by the Regents that earns interest income in perpetuity. See <http://library.ucsc.edu/development/subendow.html> for more information.—Editor.

usher. And it turned out that she was from Pacifica—she had no family—and she took buses in from Pacifica to the opera house every time. And it so happened that their season ticket was the same night that she ushered. They said, “Well, that’s silly. We’re driving back to Santa Cruz. We’ll pick you up and drop you off,” and they got to be friends, and then kind of out of the blue, she created a one hundred thousand dollar endowment in a bequest, in honor of these people that were helping her, in the subject areas that they were interested in.

Reti: Oh my gosh.

Dyson: I have to tell you, every story is almost like that. It can almost bring tears to your eyes. They’re wonderful stories . . . Jayne Ann Krentz, who is one of the top five romance writers in the United States, under a variety of pseudonyms—the most familiar one is Amanda Quick—and she’s had like twenty-seven straight novels on the *New York Times* bestseller list. Well, she went to library school; she was a UCSC grad; she’s a fascinating person; she is intellectually interested in the concept of the romance novel, aside from just writing them. After starting with giving money in the Telephone Outreach Program, she created an endowment to which she contributes a four-figure number every single year, called the Castle Humanities Endowment (Castle was her maiden name), and so she’s giving in perpetuity, and it’s growing in perpetuity, and so that has now become a very nice . . .³⁵

35. Krentz has also joined UCSC’s 21st Century Club, which recognizes: “Donors who have generously made provisions for the campus through a bequest or other planned gift.”—Margaret Gordon (personal communication)—Editor.

One of the things we discovered was that once you have a named endowment, people usually aren't content to just leave it sitting there at ten thousand dollars. They'll try to give some money each year to it. We've had situations where elderly aunts were so thrilled their nieces or nephews set up this endowment at UC Santa Cruz that they've left portions of their estates to these endowments. Things like that. I haven't lately seen what the amount is, but my guess is we're in the millions of dollars in terms of the endowments, which generates, oh, probably a hundred thousand dollars or so in spendable money each year. This has become an exciting program. It's also a great deal of publicity for the library, because they're nice stories. We now not only just have a paper bookplate, but we have what we call an electronic bookplate, because each item that is bought by funds from an endowment receives a note in its electronic cataloging which is tagged in a way that you can call it up under that endowment name or donor's name. You can go in and call that up [in the library's catalog], and easily find the list of all the materials that have been purchased. We've actually seen people come in with their families to show their families, "Oh look, these are the books that Dad gave." So, again, it was like the way I approached all the budget things: The money's there. You've got to just figure out ways to make people feel good about giving it to you, whether that's the campus administration (laughter) or a donor, and make your case, tell why you're a successful organization, you'll be even more successful if these people help you. I'm really pleased.

We started out having a liaison to the donor operation at University Relations in the name of Margaret Gordon, who is the former head of Reference here. She was the

assistant to the university librarian, after serving almost a decade as head of Reference, and took on some new responsibilities, and she was absolutely convinced when I first talked to her . . . If you'll remember, she's the same person that was absolutely convinced she would never be able to oversee the installation of, in 1980, the automated system in circulation. The check-out system. Well, she was convinced that she had not a fundraising bone in her body.

Reti: (laughter)

Dyson: I kid you not, I cannot successfully recreate on my face, the look of terror that appeared on hers (both laugh) when I suggested that this was something that I thought she would be very good at. She's an outstanding writer. She can write up proposals brilliantly. She's incredibly gracious, and just . . . she has manners that are so natural to her, and so impeccable that they don't even look like they're manners. Well, of course you would gracefully write somebody a hand-written thank-you, that's what one does, doesn't one?

Reti: Right. And very charming.

Dyson: Yeah. All of that. Initially, I said, "Well, you don't have to approach people for money. You have to set it up so that I approach people for money, or the head of University Relations approaches people for money, but there's an enormous amount of background work, research, et cetera, et cetera, that has to go on." Okay, so she acted as

the liaison. We then went through a period where the development officer assigned out of University Relations was not as successful as we would have preferred. And Margaret discovered that she was doing an awful lot of the work that normally would have been done by the people down in University Relations. So she got a lot of kind of accidental training in how to do all this, without even setting out to do it. She was just backfilling for somebody that wasn't doing as creative or thorough a job as was needed to be done. That person then left, and I got taken out—it's another one of those cases of running just slowly enough so that the people can catch you . . .

Reti: (laughter)

Dyson: . . . and think that they have to offer all these perks . . . All I got out of this one was a nice lunch at the Crow's Nest restaurant.

Reti: (laughter)

Dyson: And anyway, the head and the chief development officer from University Relations came to me with a proposal in which they said that they wondered if some unique relationship could be worked out with the library whereby Margaret would be the library development officer. She would have, in effect, all the access to the confidential databases; she would take part in meetings down there, et cetera, except that she would retain her status as an academic and would continue to report to me in terms of reviews and stuff like that, and we would continue to pay her salary. Well,

Margaret wasn't just a development officer. She has continued to this day to work at the reference desk. She did collection development in some subject areas. So she has kept her hand in "regular library work." But at the same time she took on these responsibilities. That was spectacularly successful. Margaret quickly overcame her fear of it, having been indoctrinated kind of behind the scenes with what it's like to be a development officer when she filled in for this person that wasn't doing their full job. And so she knew all the hard parts. She became really involved, I'd say, at the national level, in terms of library fundraising. She was one of the organizers of something called ALADN, [the Academic Library Advancement and Development Network]. It is an organization of library development officers in mid-size academic libraries. Historically, just parenthetically, the largest university libraries in the country, about thirty of them, have a group that focuses on development. But they are extremely turf-protective and won't let other people join them in their deliberations. So Margaret had ripe territory in setting up this other group. They now have annual conferences. I went to one. It was absolutely wonderful.

Reti: So this is of smaller academic libraries?

Dyson: It was. Except "smaller" was defined pretty broadly because of the exclusiveness of the larger group . . . I mean, thirty. That's only one third the size of the Association of Research Libraries. So there were a lot of people out there who were excited about this. Plus, with all this new creative energy they would set up conferences and workshops and things like that. She got involved in that. Also, there tends to be a lot of turnover in fundraising, and Margaret was a constant here at University Relations because she had

an academic title in the library. She wasn't being hired and fired based on did she raise this much or that much or whatever, or got a better offer someplace else. She was in here for the long term. She became a very, very relied-upon development officer, to the point, for example, that if they needed to brief the chancellor on some fundraising element, they oftentimes would have her and another development officer go with the head of Campus Development or something, to help out and explain what was going on. She turned out to be a superb library development officer. And that is what has built up, over time, the success of the program here. It's again one of those things where I've looked good because the right person was making sure that I did.

There are so many areas in the library, whether it's Technical Services, or Computing, or Development, or personnel activities . . . I take pride, obviously, in seeing that the right people got into those positions. But I certainly don't have any idea that they educated me to their level of knowledge, (laughter) because that would have been a thankless task for them. But in this particular case, it was a great match, to the point now that Margaret does her own fundraising. She goes out and solicits endowments and things like that.

And over time, you build relationships in ways that unexpectedly bring money into the library. There was one case where a woman who had no heirs (I think) here in Santa Cruz, left kind of the remainder of her estate to be divided up among ten or twelve institutions, and at the time that the will was written, I'm sure that the remainder was going to be, you know, like, a thousand dollars to each, or something. Well, she owned a house on the Westside of Santa Cruz in a very nice location, which became enormously

valuable, and one of the organizations that she left the remainder to was UCSC. Not the UCSC library, to UCSC. But she also left her collection of books to UCSC, and we were able to make the case successfully to the campus development office that clearly this woman had thought of the library. I think there was another allocation of materials to the Bancroft Library at Berkeley. But in terms of UCSC, there was money coming, clearly she was interested in libraries, she gave to several different library organizations, and we were able to convince the campus administration that—and this was, you know, a hundred and fifty thousand dollars or something like that, which is a lot to us—that clearly, this was a person who would have been thrilled had that money been directed to the library. And so it was, because Margaret had the relationships down in University Relations to say, “Look, this would be the best thing. This is how we’re going to use it. We’re going to set this up.” I think that money actually was designated as the initial funding for the McHenry Addition. And it literally . . . I mean, nobody had ever met this person . . . it just plopped into our lap. But if you don’t have a good program, if you don’t have a development officer that’s trusted, that works closely with these others, that can make . . . University Relations has to put the money somewhere. I mean, they’re not going to use it. And they’ve got to figure out what is the intent of this donor. “UCSC,” what does that mean?

Reti: Right. People don’t think about that when they do their will.

Dyson: Yeah, exactly. And well, because she had left books to us and other places, and specifically mentioned the books on this campus, [Gordon] was able to make the case. As

I say, practically every donation we get has a special story associated with it. But I feel that we have now built a good base program for wherever we want to go. We have the Telephone Outreach Program, and Buy-a-Book that identifies donors that have a special affinity towards giving to the library. As people give more and more to that, they are in effect self-identifying as to their willingness to consider a larger donation such as a subject endowment. And in some cases people like that are willing to be considered in terms of bequests, or for . . . I'm sure, people will be approached for larger donations for the McHenry building project and that kind of thing. And that's how an almost classic donor program works. A very broad-based thing at the bottom, and a kind of a pyramid of donors, in terms of their ability to give.

I think that's about all I have to say about development at this point.

The McHenry Library Building Addition

Reti: Well, I think that's a good place to segue into the McHenry Addition. You were talking about this initial money that came in unexpectedly.

Dyson: Exactly. Well, the McHenry Addition is a very, very long story. I know almost exactly when planning for the McHenry Addition started, because Bob White and I walked back to his office after we had the wonderful grand opening ceremony for the Science Library, and I said to Bob, "Well, fella, you've got six months. And six months from now," I think it was like May 21st, 1991 . . .

Reti: (laughter) Have a good summer vacation.

Dyson: Yeah. "Have a good summer vacation and enjoy that foliage in the fall, because then we're going to start working on what we have to do to start planning the expansion of McHenry Library."

For some years I had been alerting the campus to the need to include the McHenry project in the campus capital plan. And even before that 1991 period, I think this goes probably back to 1988 or 1989, I was saying that I could project the rate we were adding books to the collection here and what we were sending up to the Northern Regional Library Facility, the storage facility, and see that at one point bursting noises would start to occur inside the library. (both laugh)

So, we started that. And everything actually went quite well. The planning got going and we had the same consultant working with us that had happened in the Science Library. We hired BOORA Architects from Portland after a selection process. We wrote a detailed program.

And then in about 1993 it stopped. It stopped for a variety of reasons. One was the state budget. In the early nineties it was going through its cyclical "doom shall befall-us from now and forevermore" kind of cycles. But the larger problem was that there were a few people in the university systemwide administration, the vice president for budget in particular, who were of the opinion that all libraries were about to be electronic and

therefore you wouldn't need library buildings anymore. And we were not helped by statements that were coming out of the new California State University, Monterey Bay campus, statements which I always found wonderfully oxymoronic, emphasis on the moronic part . . .

Reti: (laughter)

Dyson: . . . that they weren't going to need a library at CSUMB because everything would be electronic, and besides, anything they needed, they'd borrow from other libraries that already existed.

Reti: Like *us!*

Dyson: Yeah. Exactly. In fact an article actually appeared in the *Monterey Herald* quoting their public relations officer on contracts that had been written with UCSC to borrow library materials, which was a great shock to us because we'd never talked to them, I mean, not even had what could be a misconstrued conversation. We had no conversation whatsoever. There was a lot of "techno-babble" that was going on at that time. There are vast amounts of materials that are not available online, and so far nobody has found a good substitute for a reference librarian in guiding people, even if you wind up doing your research on the internet.

Reti: Right.

Dyson: So there were a lot of things wrong with it. But if you are in a position, whether it's at CSUMB [California State University, Monterey Bay] or the University of California administration, looking for ways not to spend money on a long list of capital projects that you can't afford to fund all of, then that's as good an excuse as any not to do it. And this put the UCSC campus in a real quandary. The campus was expanding rapidly. Obviously, we were having a problem. McHenry Library was designed in the mid-sixties. The original, so-called "Unit One," the first part of it, was completed about 1967. And the second unit was completed ten years later, but it was identical in planning to the first unit. That is, there was no attempt to change what people thought of in the early 1960s as what a library should look like, when they built Unit Two in the 1970s.

Reti: Right, because there hadn't been significant changes.

Dyson: Right. Well, if you remember when all the electronic stuff started, it was about three years after the initial Division of Library Automation had been set up. They finished the library here, and the library plan for development was, I think, one year later—1977, with its call for a systemwide electronic database of all the holdings, all this kind of stuff. It just missed. But essentially, the point is we have, right now, a main library that was designed forty years ago, and clearly no longer worked, even in the early nineties, as a modern, what libraries euphemistically call mixed-format information environment—that is, paper, electronic, microfilm, special archives, et cetera. This was not a library that was designed to make it easy to have rooms of electronic access in it, and things like that.

Reti: Are you referring to the wiring issues?

Dyson: Wiring, design . . . It's not a flexible building in a lot of ways. If you go into the stacks you'll notice that there are concrete columns every so often. The stack ranges aren't up to code in terms of how wide the aisles are, but you can't redesign it without losing a substantial amount of space, because the stacks are interspersed among concrete columns. So if you tried to make aisles three inches wider, you'd have to skip a whole aisle every once in a while because there'd be a concrete column right where people were going to walk down the aisle. There're just a lot of things about it. Another example: there's no climate control.

Reti: Yes, a huge problem.

Dyson: The building acts as a chimney. The bottom floors are quite chilly, and especially in a substantial portion of the year, through the sunny season in Santa Cruz, things get very hot up on the fourth floor—which is our biggest stack floor. In a building that was designed in the late eighties, namely the Science and Engineering Library, the concept of preservation of materials was such that by then we didn't have that much trouble convincing people that this needed to be a climate-controlled building. The initial design was only ten years after the other building was completed, but clearly, when you look at the Science Library, and you say, "Gee, there wasn't that much [time] difference," you know, we're not talking a hundred years here . . .

Reti: (laughter)

Dyson: . . . that one was completed in 1976; this was completed in 1991. There's an entirely different feel as to what a library is when you walk in the Science Library doors, in how the materials are protected, what the lighting is like, what the acoustics are like, what access there is to electronic information, all of those things, how you handle current journals, I mean, everything in the world, literally, is different. The Science Library is clearly an early modern library building, and McHenry, clearly, is one of the last of the more traditional library buildings, even though they're only fifteen years apart.

Reti: We've experienced this incredible transitional period.

Dyson: Yeah, exactly. The primary guiding principle for this building [the Science and Engineering Library] was flexibility. Whenever we had a choice as to should we do it this way or that way: should we disperse access to electronic information around the building, or should we concentrate it in one place? And oftentimes we'd say, "We don't know what it's going to look like ten years from now, so what can we do that will make it possible for our successors not to hate us?"

Reti: (laughter) Right.

Dyson: So what do you do? We came down on structurally including the electronic access in one area, but look around this room [a conference room on the third floor]. If

you wanted to, if that isn't the way that the future lies, there is the channeling and the outlets and the information access scattered throughout the building, so that you could redesign this building, in effect, in the interior, and create a different way of approaching ...

Reti: We already have that with people bringing their laptops and plugging them in, or using wireless.

Dyson: And that isn't what we were thinking of at all then. We weren't thinking in terms of laptops. We were thinking in terms of little computer rooms in other places. But because we were able, we built the flexibility in. Clearly, that's not what happened in McHenry. I mean McHenry is McHenry. It's a wonderful building. It's set in the redwoods. It's gorgeous. But there's not a lot of flexibility inside as to how you could redesign the building.

So it became apparent we needed to develop a different strategy in terms of funding. We weren't getting anywhere through who I've always maintained is the most powerful person in the University of California, Larry Hirschman, the vice president for budget, because he felt that it was not appropriate to spend a lot of money on university library buildings. We really were unlucky in that way, in that many of the University of California campuses had either built new main libraries, or radically renovated their existing main libraries: San Francisco, Davis, Riverside, San Diego, and so on. Our emphasis had been, because our situation was so bad, on the Science Library. It sort of

came in that same period, but then when it came time to, okay, now we need to move to update our main library, the time was past, in terms of the easy argument, if you will.

I had a very hard time persuading our chancellor, MRC Greenwood, that this was an argument that she simply had to fight through. She was relatively new as a chancellor, and we were sitting here with this project that now was defunct, in effect. Without very, very, very strong support of the chancellor's office on this campus, it wasn't going to go through. I had to try to find some concept as to what, how . . . She approached libraries as a scientist. There are some chancellors, the senior campus administrators, who think of the library as a laboratory for the historians, for literature, for philosophy, in addition to its . . . but their concept of the library is grounded in the idea that it needs to be there, if you will.

Reti: Right.

Dyson: A scientist approaches a library as a source of data, and if you can get that data on your lab computer, even if the library's sending it out to you, then what do you need to go there for, you know?

Reti: So in some ways you became the victim of your own success with the California Digital Library.

Dyson: Exactly. Well put. Now, we knew that there's . . . For as long as I live and as long

as you live, materials of great interest to libraries are going to be published in paper. For example, archives, or documents from emerging countries, and things like this. Plus, there needs to be a central gathering place, an intellectual gathering place for people on a very decentralized campus like this, in the same way that the Science Library and this whole Science Hill became for the scientists on the campus.

Reti: A public space.

Dyson: A place where . . . All these stories I would hear over the years: “Well, I lived off-campus and the best place to meet somebody was at the library.”

Reti: That’s what I was thinking.

Dyson: That wasn’t going to go away. You know, what, are you not going to meet people anymore? There’s a kind of a social imperative among youthful young adults to gather in groups, and hopefully it’s not all at parties.

Reti: And it’s intellectual, right? It’s an intellectual space.

Dyson: Exactly. So its nature changes. You probably want to build a little bit of Borders [bookstore] into it, with a coffee shop. I had seen some places around the country that had done that, and these places were beehives of activity. The library was the central place. And these are thoroughly modern libraries. You walk in them and you say, “Oh

wow. I have seen the future, and this is it." There's one at Northeastern University which is spectacular that way. They have a big coffee shop that's built into it, with outlets everywhere, and it's just jammed with people with laptops and everything. You go into the electronic access areas and the workstations are filled. That kind of stuff. Lots of questions going on at the reference desk. And I'm sure the book part of circulation has probably stayed the same. This is a relatively new library. But it stayed the same not because the same number of books per person are being checked out. It's probably fewer. But so many more people are using the library, that even if you have twice as many people that are checking out only fifty percent as many books, you wind up with the same size of circulation as you had before.

I had to try to catch Chancellor Greenwood's imagination. I was coming back from a conference in Philadelphia on a plane, and I said, "I've got to come up with a concept." So I sat down, and I thought of all of the phrases that might catch one's ear, like Media, Electronic Access, and Technology, and all that kind of stuff, and I tried to create an acronym. (both laugh) The first one I came up with was MEAT, M-E-A-T. (more laughter) But somehow, that had some unfortunate overtones of, you know, the relationships of the students with one another and things.

Reti: Too many vegans here anyway. (laughter)

Dyson: Yeah, yeah. Exactly. You know, EATM . . . and so finally I came up with TEAM. I believe it was Technology, Electronic Access, and Media. And so it became the TEAM

Center. What I tried to sell was that the Addition would become the centerpiece for this TEAM Center, Technology, Electronic Access, and Media—meaning nonprint media. I floated this idea by, and the TEAM Center then became at least an idea that the chancellor was comfortable with. That was significant. But at the same time, that didn't solve the problem. The money was unlikely to come through the University of California capital plan unless there was some turnaround on the part of the vice president for budget up there. Well, one of the things that we did was we decided to create a broad front of persuasion for this idea.

Margaret Gordon, with the assistance of University Relations, put together a group of technologically savvy people from the Silicon Valley area called the Dream Team, who were one way or another associated with UCSC, who met with us and talked about the TEAM Center concept and what might happen, and what might be involved in it. Quite aside from this, I had meetings in two or three of the most spectacularly beautiful houses in places like Los Altos Hills, because these tended to be well-off people. These were people that MRC was very interested in, because their donor potential was rather enormous, and in fact, some of these people have gone on to give money to the library and, equally generously, to other areas of the campus. So these were people she wanted to listen to. It wasn't that she had to; she wanted to listen to them. We also were able to get some press in Silicon Valley publications. One in particular was a story in something called *Silicon Valley Business Ink*, which was a high-gloss, but newspaper-size publication that was an insider's . . . I'm sure business executives and everybody over there read it. They ran a story on the TEAM Center concept and transforming the academic library. I

had enough connections up in the University of California headquarters that I could, quite literally, see to it that copies of any articles like that were placed in the inbox of appropriate, very, very senior people up there.

Reti: (laughter)

Dyson: We're talking about presidential, vice presidential level. What I was trying to do was create an atmosphere where people could rethink what their previous kind of negative ideas had been about a modern library and the need for it. Or at best, it's like they think they've come up with the idea—but only rarely in the life of a manager does that happen. It does happen, and nothing is better than having some funding agency announce . . . It's sort of like the time when David Gardner hit his head down here, and announced that by God, a modern Science Library was critical for research in the University of California and he was going to see to it that the state funded it. You want to hear things like that. But in any case, another person who was swung over to the idea was Meredith Michaels, vice chancellor for planning and budget here on this campus. She had worked with Vice President Hirschman for years before she came, and she knew the political ins and outs of the University of California. She often drafted the budget letters, language that would go up from this campus in proposing capital projects, budgetary increases and things like that.

And the final straw, I think, was at a meeting put together by the chancellor's office, and I guess I can't use "the straw that broke the camel's back," in the sense that this was a

good thing. This was a camel whose back needed to be broken (both laugh) but there was a meeting on campus down at the Seymour Discovery Center of about ninety people from every area of the campus that had something significant to say about the future direction of this campus. They were chairs of senior faculty committees. They were deans and assistant deans. There were a few of the student leaders. This would have been about four years ago, and it was an attempt to do a kind of retreat about future directions for the campus. One of the things that they had done was they had each of the deans talk about growth in their areas. Well, university librarian . . . The position is kind of an odd one in that at some universities in the United States the title is not university librarian, it's dean of libraries. The library is an academic division, albeit not a primary teaching division. And so oftentimes when all deans are doing something, the university librarian gets called on to do it too. In this particular case, whoever was running the meeting decided that I should also give a presentation. I don't remember what time of year it was, but it was sometime in winter, spring. The deans, fortunately, went first. And they gave these kind of—charts of increased number of faculty, increases in professors, and this program will grow thirteen point three percent, and you know, people were kind of nodding off. I went last, and I thought, this is it. It's the best speech I've ever given. I stood up and I said, "On July 1, 2001, the University of California at Santa Cruz will no longer have a research library."

Reti: (laughter) That woke everybody up.

Dyson: Oh, (makes sound effect for people coming to attention) BOIIING! I said, "The

reason for that is, at that point, for every book we bring in, we will be sending one out. So we will essentially become an instructional collection. We will only be able to keep the materials on hand that are needed for people to teach their courses.”

Reti: So just for clarity here, you’re talking about the need to send materials to NRLF for storage.

Dyson: Right. Exactly. Or withdraw them. *Or withdraw them!* I said, “We won’t grow anymore.” And then I went on and gave statistics comparing the size of this library’s on-campus collection to the size of the largest California State University collections. Well. (laughter) That was the speech that did it. It made some people very angry because of the comparison to CSU. They did not want to hear that. It made other people very excited. I had people who I don’t even particularly get along with very well on this campus come up to me afterwards and say, “Wow. We’re on board with you for this.”

Anyway, within about a year, in the next capital planning letter from the campus to the University of California president’s office—I got a copy of the letter, and I almost fell off my seat, because I had never seen stronger language used by the chancellor in a communication with the Office of the President on any subject whatsoever. She flat-out said, “We will not be able to hire University of California-level faculty unless we are able to expand the University Library.” That’s a very strong statement for a chancellor to make about their academic program. And it went on like that. I’m pretty sure that the language itself was written by Meredith Michaels, the new assistant chancellor for

budget at that time, and she knew what language had to be used in order to overcome the logjam at the presidential level. And it worked. It got into the capital plan. It started moving rapidly forward. In fact, it even skipped a year, which scared the hell out of us, because all of a sudden we were planning faster than expected.

Let me explain the UC capital plan. The University of California uses a moving five-year capital plan. In other words, this year you're planning for 2006 through 2010, and then next fall you'll be planning 2007 to 2011. So the idea is you might be in the fifth year; you might be scheduled to start your project's funding in 2010 of this year's future plan, but the following year, you're supposed to still be in 2010, so you're a year closer. For several years we always wound up being in the fifth year of the five-year plan. In other words, we rolled right on backwards with the plan for about four or five years. One year we actually fell out and had to get put back in the plan again. These decisions were made by the Office of the President, not this campus. The campus was always trying to push it forward, and showing, you know, okay, we were five years out last year, so this year presumably we'll be four years out and next year we'll only be three years out. No, we were five years out again. Not a lot of progress there. But anyway, all of a sudden we started moving forward, the chancellor having used language that she clearly could not, under any circumstance, back down from. You don't say, "I can't hire University of California professors" and then say, "Oh. Well, that was last year. This year we're having no trouble hiring them." (both laugh) She simply put all of her credibility on the line. So, the rest is history, as they say, and we finally started moving it along.

I had thought, back in the 1990s, if you play it out, just at about when I would be retiring, we would have completed the project, and my last great act would be to cut the ribbon and to go off into the hills, literally as well as figuratively.

Reti: (laughter)

Dyson: As it turned out, the six or seven-year delay that we had endured before it started moving forward meant that the last thing that I got to see on the project was the passage of the bond act in March of 2003, the Education Bond Act, which included in it funding for the first phase of the McHenry Addition.

Reti: So let me just understand here. The capital funds that you were talking about that this vice president needed to agree to . . .

Dyson: Let me go through it. What happens is first of all you have to develop, in various committees on the campus, a proposal for a capital project. And there are guidelines as to what constitutes a capital project, over so many dollars and this kind of thing. All of that then ultimately gets approved or disapproved, and if approved, integrated into a campus proposal to the University of California, which then in turn integrates all of its now ten campus priorities into a capital plan that moves forward to the governor's office. And the governor's office . . . There's byplay going on here, and there may be some things that fall out at any level, even at the highest level. If the vice president doesn't feel that he can persuade the governor's office that something should be moving

forward, then something stays in the fifth year. See what I'm saying?

Reti: I see. So that's why we were stuck.

Dyson: Okay. Even after that is all approved, you still don't have funding. What has to happen next is a higher education or an education bond act has to be passed by the citizens. Then, after that happens, comes authorizing the selling of the bonds that create the funds that then start to flow down, to fund the projects that were authorized, back down to the campus again.

Reti: So buildings are usually funded through bonds.

Dyson: Almost always, unless there is some kind of private funding, and even then . . . I'm not familiar with any major academic building on this campus that was completely funded by non-state sources. There may have been a few. I think maybe the Seymour Discovery Center. But then again, that's quasi-academic. Yeah, there's research stuff that goes on there, but essentially it's a visitor center. I think the Center for Adaptive Optics was built by a U.S. government grant, but that was one small building for a specific purpose. Certainly no general academic buildings like the physics building, the new building . . . What sometimes happens would be that UC administration would say, "Well, you say it takes thirty-five million dollars to build this building. We're going to give you thirty. That's all we have. So you can either scale down your project by five million dollars, or you can go out and raise five million dollars, in which case you can

build the building that you say you need.” It’s that kind of thing. But almost all of the major permanent campus buildings, academic buildings, are funded primarily through state bond issues. It’s a multi-year process. It’s an incredibly slow process. And at any level, if you don’t have a chancellor committed, if you don’t have a vice president committed, if you have the governor’s department of financing saying, “Sorry, you can only build three buildings this year,” or even if the citizens don’t pass the proposition, the bond issue, any number of those things can scuttle you, and cause you to have to pause and rethink, and not so much start over, but regroup and push forward again. Essentially that’s what we went through on this one. When I say, quite literally, the bond issue was the last thing that happened, the reason I say that is that I ended my tenure here on June 30, 2003, and the bond issue money started flowing on July 1, 2003.

Reti: (laughter)

Dyson: A few weeks after I left they had the first meeting with the architects about the building, after the funding was actually achieved from the state. Some pre-planning had certainly gone on, but that was funded by the University on the promise that money would come from the bonds. It’s a funny situation, because you have to develop the plans in order to convince people to allocate the money, but you don’t get the money to allocate for the plans so that you can convince the people. So there’s a lot of maneuvering around and using one-time funds and uncommitted funds so that the planning can go on, so you can develop the plans that then ultimately convince people all the way up that lengthy chain I described to get you the money. And that’s the

planning that was going on here for the McHenry Addition.

There's one other element, incidentally, that I should mention, which helped a lot, and which came out of left field, and that was . . . There are, periodically, in the University of California, evaluations of buildings in terms of their seismic safety. And, as a stroke of luck, assuming we don't have an earthquake tomorrow—

Reti: Yeah, right. (laughter)

Dyson: As a stroke of luck, a careful examination of the McHenry building (which, of course, did ride out the Loma Prieta earthquake pretty well) showed that current codes would require a very different way of connecting the roof to the building. And that if the earthquake [waves] came from the right direction you could have some serious problems with the roof.

Reti: I won't want to go back to work after this.

Dyson: Yeah, well, I know. Watch, you'll be walking and a redwood tree will fall on you, so you know, life is full of those kinds of things. But in this case, that really did provide the impetus for providing the money for the renovation of the existing building. And at one point, unbeknownst to the campus, Vice President Hirschman put in the five-year plan money that was solely sufficient to renovate the existing building, but not to add anything to it. The problem with that is earthquake renovations would take up more

space inside a building because you put in new columns in the building so: a) you would have absolutely no place to put the existing million volumes while you were doing this, and b) you wouldn't have space for them when you were done because you'd have less space inside. The campus did get a little upset about that one. I was in John Simpson's office when he got that news, and his face turned very red and he muttered that he would take care of that.

There've been so many twists and turns in this project. I'm giving you one fiftieth of all of the ups and downs and sideways that this project went through. But it's now about half-funded. And the reason that it's half-funded is that the project is so big that it's going to take about, I think, six years to complete it. You can't stretch bond issue money over six years. It has to be spent faster than that. So actually, we have the money to do a substantial portion of the project, I think the Addition. But another bond issue has to pass before they can finish the renovation of the existing building. So it's not home yet. And there will be lots of compromises and things like that that have to be made along the way. But I do feel that I've given my successor the best shot at making it happen. And if they can just get that darn person here. Now it's 2005. I gave my notice in 2002, remember? (both laugh) If they get that person here, because of all the slowness of moving forward with it, that person will still have a good chance to leave an imprint on this. I was determined either I would build the building or I would leave before the construction started. I did not want to leave in the middle of it. That is a very nasty job to turn over to somebody that's coming in. You know, "Hi. This is your office, and that's a jackhammer just outside your office, and it's about to start getting used." That's not fun.

So I'm still hoping they get somebody on board within about six months, so that they can still feel that it's their building when they're done with it.³⁶

The Friends of the UCSC Library

Reti: This is our sixth interview. We're going to start today by talking about the Friends of the Library.

Dyson: The definition of the role of Friends groups is always somewhat problematic, and varies rather widely among libraries, especially the ones I'm most familiar with, academic libraries. Friends groups that work with public libraries have a little more clearly defined role, because there isn't in essence any competition with that group. There's probably a board of directors or something like that, or a governing authority, but every institution has some form of governing authority, or person, or something. In an academic library situation, however, there are additional interest groups such as the faculty senate committee, and University Relations (the fundraising people), and things like this. So I was always amused, because sometimes within the same, oh, six to twelve-month period of time, I'd get phone calls or have conversations with colleagues. The first conversation would be, "Gee, I understand you have a Friends group. Could you tell me how we could start one?" and in the next conversation somebody would say, "Gee, you've had a lot of experience with Friends groups. We want to get rid of ours. Can you tell me how to do that?" (both laugh) I always had to chuckle, because the circumstances varied so much from situation to situation that it was hard obviously to give any kind of

36. Virginia Steel became University Librarian on October 1, 2005.—Editor.

blanket commentary on whether Friends groups are good things or bad things, and obviously my colleagues throughout the country had varying opinions on them.

Friends groups generally have several possible roles. One of them is to give community input to the library, if the Friends group is largely made up of people no longer directly associated with the campus, or community members, people like that. Another role can, of course, be fundraising. And a third role is what I call "friendraising," rather than fundraising. That is, they act as a kind of visible presence for the University Library, a face to the community, because the people that are on it oftentimes are well-known in the community and it's always a darn good idea to have good public relations with the community that you're in.

Historically, the Friends group here was started very early on. It started fairly shortly after Founding University Librarian Donald Clark came. There was a great deal of interest on the part of the new campus administration in reaching out to the community, because there was no alumni base or anything like that. It was a brand-new university. I think the founding chancellor, Dean McHenry, who was very close to the first university librarian, probably encouraged this as yet another element by which they could reach out to the community.

When I came on the scene, the Friends group was a little bit difficult in its role because it had been a strong supporter of the university librarian who had left, my immediate predecessor, the second university librarian, David Heron. And there was a great deal of

turmoil on the campus; there was a great deal of turmoil in the library. At that time a chancellor had been eased out; the university librarian was being eased out. Those are naturally polarizing kinds of events. And so I, who had had no experience whatsoever with the Friends group, any kind of Friends group before I came here, wasn't quite sure what to do. There was kind of just a holding action while we got through a period of time, the healing process, after I came in.

I always felt that one had to educate folks constantly as to what was possible and what was inappropriate in terms of the Friends of the UCSC Library's relationship both to the library and to the campus. Just a couple of examples: There was at least one occasion where a faculty member wanted to set up a small library in his field, which was something like economics, and he directly approached the president of the Friends group about getting Friends money to help start this. That's something that shouldn't happen. Obviously, the University Library is going to be the primary player in deciding whether or not another library should be started on campus. And since Friends money is dedicated to furthering the University Library as an institution, you certainly don't want money diverted away for some other purpose. That's one example. On other occasions, members of the board might be particularly attracted to some particular unit of the library—the Maps Library, or the Slides (Visual Resources now) Library, et cetera—and approach a staff member in one of those units, Special Collections is another one, about doing this or that, or buying this particular item, or something like that. And again, those are all sensitive issues. You may have made some policy decision to prioritize this or that or the other, and you certainly don't want somebody coming in from the outside and

doing their own thing in those areas. I just give those as examples. Those are real examples that have happened. They didn't dominate the role of the Friends, but one always has to be sensitive to political issues that might come up in dealing with the Friends.

Now, this Friends group, the UCSC Library Friends group, was an interesting one because it was the primary vehicle by which people got borrowing privileges who were not associated with UCSC *per se*. That is, if you were a member of the Friends group—I think over the years the membership fee ran from about fifteen, after some increases up to about thirty-five dollars, I think it was, when I left—you got free borrowing privileges, the same kind of borrowing privileges that an undergraduate would have. And so, especially during the era before electronic access was available to large numbers of people, this was quite an attractive offer, because for thirty-five dollars, they could have access to what ultimately was a million-volume collection of books. The money that came in from those memberships then was used by the Friends group to further the interests of the University Library, usually in terms of buying book material that was suggested by the bibliographers, medium-expensive things, five hundred dollars or a thousand dollars or two thousand dollars, that kind of range, that the bibliographers couldn't afford out of their allocations from state funds. Usually the budget of the Friends, the total income from either memberships or other activities that they engaged in would be roughly in the twenty to thirty thousand dollar range. That usually was the amount. And after they got through with their various activities, running the Book Collection Contest for undergraduates (and for high school students later on), and things

like that, they'd usually have something like fifteen thousand dollars that they could actually put towards buying materials for the library. I should point out that they were a "liberal" Friends group in that they weren't only interested in old books. Whenever there was a breakthrough technology, they liked to be the first people to give it to us. They gave us, I think, the first TV monitor that we used in library instruction. They bought one of our very first laser discs. Things like that. And that was always kind of fun, that this was a group that thought beyond just what Special Collections librarians called "old browns," because of the color of their leather bindings.

Reti: (laughs)

Dyson: So on the one hand, the Friends group always had a fairly constant source of income because of the memberships. But on the other hand, we also didn't want the Friends group, as time went on, involved terribly much in fundraising. Because we always felt in the library, particularly Margaret Gordon and I, that the fundraising was best done through the professionals in the University Relations office, rather than trying to educate a constantly changing group of, in essence, citizen volunteers who happened at any time to be on the Friends governing board.

So we came to view the Friends group in largely the third type of role I mentioned or activity that Friends groups can do, and that is friendraising. How did that manifest itself? Well, on occasion, for example, when there were critical propositions on the statewide ballot, the Friends would send out a letter, never taking a particular . . . You

had to word this carefully. They would never take a particular stance on an issue, but they were allowed to point out how a particular bond issue might affect the University Library, of which they were the Friends. If, for example, this bond issue was going to be the one that would provide the funding for the Science Library, they would point that out. And they would always say, "We hope you will vote." They didn't say, "We hope you vote yes." I think people, if you're sending it out to a Friends group, (laughs) you're kind of alerting them. That's just one example.

The Book Collection Contest for UCSC students got a lot of publicity for the library on campus, and then it was expanded through some generous donations of former board members so that there's a form of the Book Collection Contest in the high schools now also. The annual Dickens event in early December is always very popular, and that's done in conjunction with the academic program called the Dickens Project on campus.

It doesn't mean that the Friends didn't raise some money, and in fact, their twenty-fifth anniversary happened to coincide with the acquisition of our millionth volume and with the opening of the new Science Library, so we pulled all that together, and they raised some money and set up their own Friends endowment, the interest of which they use to buy a particularly special item that they try to get some publicity about in the paper each year, things like that.

Once that role was defined most clearly, and it took a while for us to figure it out in our own heads and then to sell it to the Friends board, I think that the role of the Friends

became clear to everybody, and it took some of the pressure off for us to try to think of them as fundraisers or anything like that. They do provide us a steady source of income through the memberships, and some incidental monies. If a person dies, for example, that's a former board member, oftentimes people will give money in their name, and items will be purchased in their memory, things like that. Those are important elements sometimes, but overall, if you think of it as a friendraising group rather than as the primary fundraising organ, it takes a lot of pressure off of everybody. It also allows you to put people on the board of the Friends who aren't particularly wealthy but might be well-known in the community. Many boards have stated very clearly in their membership guidelines—on boards of educational institutions or nonprofits or whatever—that you're expected to be a substantial donor, and so that eliminates, obviously, a number of people who are hard workers and good organizers and things like that, but who don't have particularly large amounts of money to give away.

So it took a while for us in the library to figure this all out and get it straight. I think we're pretty much on track. There's still a lot of effort that has to be involved in the care and feeding of any board, and if it hasn't been a particularly active one, or if one or another things have gone wrong like the examples I mentioned, we sometimes would sit around and scratch our heads, and say, "Gee, you know, what price would we pay if we didn't have our Friends group?" But since we have to have a mechanism whereby community people can use the library anyway, and we would have to figure out ways to get publicity for the library and all that, every time, at least during my tenure that we considered that question, we came up with the conclusion that having a Friends group

was, on balance, a very positive thing, especially the kind of relatively low-key way that we define it.

Reti: So when you say that you would have had to find a mechanism for the community to use the library, that's because we're a public university?

Dyson: Exactly. There are state-mandated fees. Theoretically, someone could come to the library and buy a library card that would allow them to use the library, but the fees are substantially higher than anyone would have (certainly in its early and middle days) ever wanted to pay to use a collection this size. Now, those fees are systemwide fees and they might make sense if you were using the Berkeley or the UCLA library, but there weren't going to be anywhere near a thousand people that were going to pay those higher fees, in the fifty to a hundred dollar range, to use the UCSC library. Those same fee guidelines that were agreed to between the state and the University of California also allowed that you could give library privileges to members of certain support groups. So that was the way that we got into the situation that we had. We felt that was a much better way to handle it. It solved the access problem and the Friends and the community outreach problem, and publicity-and-that-kind-of-thing problem at the same time. It made the library accessible to the community for a much lower price than they would have had to pay had they had to pay a state-mandated fee. I'd also point out that the state-mandated fees, I think, go to the state, whereas the money that the Friends raise, obviously, in one way or another, either because they spend it on publicity or events or in buying materials that are recommended by the bibliographers, those dollars come back

to support the library, and it always seems, since the library staff are the ones that are providing the support when somebody checks out a book or asks a reference question, it seemed like that made the most sense.

I sometimes wondered whether there was more we could have done with the Friends, but then I'd talk to some colleague across the country that had a somewhat out-of-control Friends group, that for whatever local tradition, had more authority to advise and consent to activities of that university library, and wanted the library to do things that the library clearly didn't want to do anymore. And this library staff at UCSC in turn very much appreciates the kinds of gifts that the Friends give, and we'll run courses on how to search the internet and things like that, and make them available to the community, to the Friends of the Library. All in all, I think we've struck a pretty good balance of the amount of effort that's needed to support a Friends group, and the return we get from the Friends, in terms of their support of the library.

A Series of Challenging Events

Reti: Great. Okay, would you like to move on to—giant leap here, but—the *Stack O' Wheats* incident?

Dyson: Right. This section is one I know didn't appear in our original outline. But as I thought back over the time I'd been here, there were five or six significant events that occurred in the course of the library, sometimes getting a great deal of publicity, sometimes just an event that caused a great deal of emotion and concern within the

library. Somehow they're unique, almost by definition. That is, they're things that suddenly come out of the blue, hit you unexpectedly, and are a real challenge to any organization.

Let me say in advance that I've often thought that the quality of an organization isn't only measured by how well it does its day-to-day routine bureaucratic activities. Another way you measure the quality of a staff, or something like that, is: How well does it deal with the unexpected? How well does it deal with a crisis? How long does it take to get the organization back on track? Does the organization essentially come together and support one another, the people in the organization, the staff? Those people that are outside the organization, do they rally to its support? Or, does it [the organization] tend to be self-destructive? Does it tend to fly apart? I think you can tell a lot about the quality of the staff, the management, and the support and feeling of the folks that are served by that organization, by what happens in these kinds of events. And as I looked at this list, I thought, oh gee, I didn't say this one and I didn't say that one, but I think the ones that we're going to talk about cover the range of significant unexpected events that happen in the life of anyone with a long tenure in an organization.

The Stack O' Wheats Controversy

The first one was a real test for me, because it happened fairly shortly after I got here. My memory of it is that it was certainly within twelve months of when I first arrived. There was at that time a great deal of concern about violence against women—rightly so—and

there were various events and organizations that were dealing with this issue. At the moment I'm forgetting exactly how the particular people involved in this incident became energized by it, but the significant event was that a community leader, a rather sophisticated activist in the community who went under two different names, asked for and received permission to look at some material that was in our Special Collections department. This material was a group of postcard-size representations of some larger photographic work done by an avant-garde photographer, I believe, in New York City. I think it was called *The Incredible Case of the Stack O' Wheats Murders*. And essentially it was a nude woman who had chocolate syrup poured on her that looked like blood, and in each of these photos there was a plate with a stack of pancakes off to one side. Odd bit of art. As I remember, we had actually purchased the material for a class in avant-garde photography. It isn't anything that we would particularly have gone out and purchased on our own. But we felt it was a purchase that was useful for the purpose that the instructor was doing.

We obviously understood the sensitivity of the material, because even though this was not original material—these, as I say, were postcard-size representations of larger photographs—we kept them in a vault inside the very restrictive access, already, of the Special Collections department. I think that most likely the activist found out about this through somebody who had probably seen the material in the class. In any case, she came in and told the Special Collections folks that she was doing a paper, or research, on violence against women in the arts, and could she use this material? I believe she came in several times and looked at the material, and I think that the Special Collections staff

helped her find other materials or possible research leads and things like that. Everything appeared to be on the up-and-up, until one day when she came in and asked to see the material, she had a male friend or colleague in tow that the Special Collections people didn't know. And then she proceeded to do a bit of theater with it—I think that word is probably her term—where she produced a dish and I believe tore up the collection, destroyed the collection, and may well, I believe, have poured chocolate syrup over it, all the time having this friend, who turned out to be a local Santa Cruz photographer, photographing this event.

The Special Collections people obviously were not thrilled at this; in fact they were horrified and somewhat scared because they had thought that they were helping this person do a legitimate research piece and it turned out that it had been her intent, I think pretty much all along, to set this up. The senior support staff person immediately called the police and called me. I came over, and, although I didn't know it at the time, I made what in effect was a citizen's arrest, because I told them they couldn't leave until the police came. And that's what a citizen's arrest is, you detain people until the authorities can come. The policeman that arrived was one of those great UC Santa Cruz policemen who all are very bright, very sensitive—I've always been impressed in all the years I've been here by the quality of the police on the campus here. And you know, the person that I found most offensive was the photographer, who I think was a freelancer, but I think he had done some journalism work, and I think he should have known better than to take part in something that was, in essence, the destruction of library material. And I think the high point, of which there were not many, in this whole event, was the photographer

seemed . . . The woman was taking the event seriously, that is, she knew what she was doing. She was trying to get some publicity for the concept of the way women are treated in society. The photographer seemed to think it was a great lark. He just thought this was funny, and he was making acerbic comments and that kind of thing, and I'll never forget the moment that the policeman informed the woman that she was being charged with a misdemeanor for destruction of property or something like that. And then he turned to the photographer and said that he, of course, would be charged with a felony, because conspiracy to commit a misdemeanor was a felony. And to watch the photographer's face fall was (both laugh) almost worth the entire succession of events that occurred after that. Now, he never was prosecuted by the District Attorney, but for that particular moment in time—I'll remember that as clear as day. That was kind of nice. And that brought him down to a level of seriousness that the rest of us were feeling.

Then unfolded the most amazing dialog that reached, really, across the country. It was astonishing. It had all sorts of elements in it: the whole question of violence against women in society, of violence against women depicted in the arts, whether libraries should be allowed to purchase materials that were reprehensible, the whole issue of censorship and what that all means . . . The Santa Cruz reaction generally, that is, the street reaction, if you will, was to think that the library was reprehensible to have this material. There actually were threats against the library by some of the militant groups that were in existence at that time, to the point that we had to take some security precautions in case people came in and started trashing the library or something. That was a real fear. Within the library I received a lot of support. And I received a lot of

support particularly from the senior women in the library, who completely felt that it was impossible for the library to submit to outside agencies to determine what was appropriate for the library to collect or not. There were demands from student groups on campus to oversee library collection policies.

There was this wonderful explanation of collection policies that I think came out of something like the New York public libraries: that libraries collect the warts of society as well as the shining moments. And of course, we do. When one comes to a research library, what's in it is not just what's popular or appropriate, but in a research library, one would expect to find, oh, I don't know, *Mein Kampf* by Adolf Hitler somewhere in the library. It didn't mean that the libraries endorsed the philosophy therein. The whole point of a research library is to have the materials available that people can then use, perhaps to write something that's totally in opposition to what the material is.

Now, the interesting thing was that the woman who destroyed the material fully understood that. That was one of the strange elements of this whole baffling series of events that occurred—the threats, the demands, there was even a campus forum where this was discussed. She had actually been the editor of, I believe, what she told me was a high school newspaper in Texas before she came to the Santa Cruz area (could have been a college paper), which had been censored, and she felt quite strongly—she had done this as a piece of theater, and was prepared to take the consequences; she did not mean it as an attack on the library for having the material. And she was kind of flabbergasted that that's what the groups here in Santa Cruz chose as their issue. “Oh, that terrible

library: why did it have that material?" So there was a kind of an odd alliance between her and the library, because that wasn't her goal at all. She didn't think that it was bad that the library had it. She was destroying it as theater, not because she thought that libraries shouldn't collect such material.

Reti: That's fascinating.

Dyson: And the punchline to this story proves it, and I'll hold the punchline, obviously, until the end.

Reti: (laughs)

Dyson: I mentioned the senior women in the library. There was a meeting of them with me, and they said, "Look Lan, there's no way that you want to be the public face of the library for this issue. As a male, you're going to lose. No matter what happens, the mere fact that you're the one that's stating what ought to be going on here is going to make it not work." So, for example, Marion Taylor, the head of Collection Planning, volunteered to be the person who would sit on the campus forum about library collection policies and so on. This controversy is one of those events that gets picked up, written about, and gets in the media wave. There was actually a five-page—count 'em—story in the *Los Angeles Times*. It was the first article in *American Libraries*, the flagship journal of the American Library Association, and so on.³⁷ It received a lot of coverage because of all the

37. See Susan Spaeth Cherry, "Chocolate Sauce on 'Tasteless' Photos Raises Intellectual Freedom Questions." *American Libraries* 11 (July-August 1980): 407(3).—Editor.

issues that it touched on, the nerves that it touched at the time.

One of the interesting little annoying sidelights of all this was that, I think with the exception of the *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, all of the local publications, whether they were activist publications, or the *Good Times*, or things like that, I think possibly even campus publications, covered this as if it were an exhibit that the library had up on its walls. I don't know who had that idea, but if you're going to use this as something to attack the library with, it makes a lot more sense if you're going to take that point of view, that is, that the library's insensitive, if this was an exhibit that was put up on the walls of the library, not something that somebody had to go to a Special Collections department, make a special request for, presumably already knowing what was in the material, and that the material was kept in an incredibly large, heavy, locked vault (both laugh) so that it absolutely could never be stumbled upon by anyone who might be offended.

Reti: Yeah.

Dyson: But that's the way it was covered. I read these articles and I'd think, where did people get the idea that we'd be so stupid as to do a display of this?

Things did kind of spiral around and it was a good media learning thing for me. We received very strong support from the campus chancellor, Chancellor Sinsheimer, in stating unequivocally that the library clearly had a role to collect materials that were not popular with everyone that might come across them, and he was very supportive of that.

Oh, I should mention that we had, as one inevitably has in these kinds of events, the occurrence of what I call “faculty behaving badly,” and that is, there were faculty members that came out and attacked the library and said how bad this was, and one could not help think, you know, one would think that you would rather defend the library, especially since we had purchased this material in support of a course. Should that issue come up with a course you were teaching, I rather think you’d be on the other side of the fence. There’s a larger issue here. One of the things, by the way, that had been demanded of the library occurred when we said it had been purchased for a course—and I actually believe that the instructor that requested it was no longer at UCSC—it had been like some kind of a special course or something—it sounds like it might have been taught by sort of an adjunct instructor, given its title—people had then demanded to know who that person was, and it was clear why they wanted to know, and we refused to give out the name. We said, “We take full responsibility for the acquisition of library materials. We take full responsibility for this material. We believe it can be defended as to why we have it, but we do not wish anyone else to be attacked because we have this material in our collection.”

The punchline I promised you involves an occurrence I was not present at, but I’m almost positive that it’s true. The person that destroyed the material, actually, I believe, received an award from her college for social activism or something like that, at commencement. And at commencement time, and I don’t know whether it was actually at the event, she, out of her own money, presented a new copy of this material to the chancellor. And the stuff, as far as I know, still exists in our Special Collections

department.

I clearly resented the Pandora's box that she had opened, but she was pretty consistent. She and I talked maybe three or four times on the phone, because we felt like we were holding the lid on a serious situation. She, in other words, could have incited people to do some very awful things, and she would not do that. The activist groups in Santa Cruz were somewhat perplexed by her attitude because they wanted . . . they had turned this into an attack on the library's collection policies, and she was horrified by that, and I always felt that she was true to her principles.

She had to drive like a hundred and thirty miles to get replacement copies, I'd heard. There was no copy of it available from any rare book dealer or anything like that anywhere in the vicinity. She had gone on some long drive someplace to get this material so that she could present it back to the library. That may well have always been her intent, but it surely made it clear to me that she understood what she was doing. It was a kind of street theater thing; it wasn't an attack on the library, and she felt it was perfectly appropriate that the material should be there. As I say, this perplexed many of her supporters, who were supporting her for reasons quite different from the reasons that she had created the original incident.

Eventually it died out. It was one of those things that ended as students left in the late spring, and no more was made of it in the fall. However, I have to say, it dominated our life for about three months. There was not a heck of a lot else going on in terms of one's

work energy. I mean, obviously a lot of things, the daily business of the library continued, but one's creative energy was more going to, "How am I going to handle this? What should I say to that group that wants to interview me?" and that kind of thing. So, that was a wake-up call. As my staff has often heard me say, "Gee, they didn't teach us about this in library school."

Reti: (laughs)

Dyson: Oddly enough, that's one case where it isn't true, because the library school I went to in Simmons College did teach a course on censorship, in which you actually did take a look at materials, including some raunchy photographs, that were subjects of censorship, and so you did have some sense of some of the issues involved. I felt library school, as much as anything, prepared me for this incident, more so than some of the other ones that one faced. But it was an interesting commentary on the times, as well as many of the great issues involved in what libraries can collect, and what their responsibility is to their community.

Personal Tragedies for Library Staff

Reti: Okay. Now, you mentioned there were several tragedies that marked the staff here.

Dyson: Yeah. There've been two times, actually, in the history of this library where . . . It doesn't mean that people didn't get injured, or pass away, or whatever, over the entire course of events, or have bad things happen. But there were two periods of time in the

history of this library where there was a sequence of events that was emotionally overwhelming for the staff.

It was in the early 1980s when two events occurred that were very, very tragic and disheartening. One, the founding science librarian, Len Smith, and his wife were killed in a car accident in the Central Valley on their way to Yosemite, I believe.³⁸ This was a real shock. Len was a wonderful, wonderful person, much beloved. He was one of the people that tied the two libraries together, as he was then the science bibliographer. He had moved from being head of the Science Library to being the collection builder in the sciences. And there hadn't been anything like his death in the history of the library at that point. It involved setting up, I think, for the first time in the history of the library, memorial events, ways to memorialize Len. (For example, there's a bench just down from the Science and Engineering Library in his memory, with a little grove of two or three of the flowering cherries that he loved so much.) It was crushing. It was a rough story. He had a reasonably young child and so on, and it took the wind out of everybody's sails.

And then fairly shortly after that, that is, I think it was a matter of months, a young woman who worked in the library was murdered by, I believe it was her ex-boyfriend or husband.³⁹

38. Len Smith and his wife, Mary were killed in an automobile accident on August 7, 1983. The library's newsletter, the *Broadside* (Issue 810, August 11, 1983), contains a two-page article on Len Smith—Editor.

39. Sheryll Graff was the library staff member murdered by her husband, Kelly Graff in 1984. As this oral history was going to press Kelly Graff was denied parole for the first-degree murder of his wife.

Reti: God.

Dyson: And it had almost the same effect all over again. Of course, both of these were widely covered in the newspapers, and all that kind of thing, so there were constant reminders. And it was . . . One of those events you can handle; when there's two of them, you start to thinking, you know, what's next?

Reti: Right.

Dyson: And again, that one was a real morale killer for a period of time. It was an awful time in the period of the library. It obviously brought everybody together, but I remember Don Clark, the founding librarian, and I, presiding over the Len Smith memorial service in a grove of redwoods here. It was a very, very tough time for the library when Len Smith and his wife were killed.

About twenty years later, the library went through a spasm that was quite similar, in a series of events that occurred all within about a twelve-month period. First of all, the assistant university librarian, Bob White, was quite ill—he needed to undergo some relatively dangerous heart surgery, and the heart problem was causing him health problems that kept him from being healthy enough to have the heart surgery, and so we had to kind of live with that. (Ultimately, fortunately for him and us, he was able to survive that.) Shortly after that started, [Tom Ortiz], the head of Operations of the library, who reported directly to Bob, just died suddenly in his sleep. Then, the sister of

one of the most senior of our department heads in the library was murdered on the East Coast; it was so gruesome that it was covered for weeks by the *Baltimore Sun* and the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times*. I mean, this was something that was just . . . It was just a horrible event in terms of the occurrence, tracking down the killers, and then the subsequent trials and everything. Oh, let's see, what else happened? Another department head had a serious bicycle accident that put her in the hospital, or away from the library, for a couple of weeks. It was just . . . And there's more. I mean, there were like six, if I remember correctly, events, and I'm not recalling all of them, but it was one a month. In a sense it brings reality back to what's important in life and all that. But one wishes one could at least just get away with one thing like that.

Reti: I know.

Dyson: It just seemed like *what next?* I mean, we just could not believe the sequence . . . you know, it seemed like either a tragedy, or scary event, or uncertainty, occurring over and over again. Again, the library pulled together and people took over jobs that they'd never done before, and took over responsibilities, and supported one another. Memorial services. It's . . . It really does feel like a big family when those kinds of things occur, but that was a tough time, certainly, in the history of the library.

Another kind of thing (both laugh) . . .

Reti: Doing all the hard stuff at once here.

The Loma Prieta Earthquake

Dyson: Yeah, we are. Well, the next one was amazing, and I'm talking about the Loma Prieta earthquake. The earthquake occurred on October 17, 1989 at about seven minutes after five, or something like that?⁴⁰ It was an event that . . . It was amazing in the wide range of emotions that occurred as a result of it. I have to say there were some things that happened that were almost funny. The fact that I happened to be standing in a doorway when the earthquake happened, (both laugh) so I've always been able to tell people that I did that, without having to tell them that I didn't run to the doorway; I was standing in the doorway.

Reti: In the library office?

Dyson: I was standing in Bob White's doorway. His desk was in front of me; he was turned towards me, and there's a window to the outside, behind him. Then it started. I was watching a redwood grove, a large redwood grove, shake like toothpicks, and every bit of dead leaf and branch and everything else in that grove was coming down. It was like somebody was shaking out a blanket or something like that. Right after it started I said, "Bob, I think you better get over here." And so he braced himself against one side of the doorway, I braced myself on the other side, and we hugged in the middle. (both laugh) That was the longest hug Bob White and I have ever given each other. It was about a minute worth of hug . . .

40. On October 17, 1989, at 5:04:15 p.m. a magnitude 7.1 earthquake, centered in the Santa Cruz Mountains near the Forest of Nisene Marks State Park, shook Santa Cruz County and the greater San Francisco Bay area—Editor.

There were some rapid-fire decisions that had to be made. The library was emptying out because it was getting to be dinnertime, and so a lot of the patrons had left, were going back to their dorms for dinner and things like that, but there was still a fairly large number in the library. I walked outside the library office and it became apparent that a large number of the stack ranges had fallen like dominos. This was on the third floor, and I could see them. It turns out it was even worse on the fourth floor. They didn't tip all the way over, interestingly. Because the shelves were relatively full, they could only tip as far as the books would allow them to tip, because when they tipped end to end, the books jammed inside the shelves and tended to hold them at a kind of angle.

Well, we thought it was a good idea to get everybody out of the building, because we didn't know what was going to happen once the shaking stopped. (sighs) And I have a confession, which I think is probably the first time this will have been recorded. As I walked out towards the circular staircase, which fortunately still seemed okay, I realized that on the floor and in the air was a great deal of white powder. And I was smart enough to know what that white powder was: it was coming down from the asbestos ceiling. So I had to do a rather rapid review of what I knew about asbestos at that point. I thought I remembered that it was the inhalation over a fairly long period of time, of asbestos, that caused the lung disease problems, not a onetime occurrence. Because in order to get to the circular staircase, which people were now pouring down, they had to kind of tramp through this stuff.

Reti: (groans) Oh God.

Dyson: I thought, okay, which is worse, collapsing building or possible long-term lung damage? Well, we decided that the possible collapse—I mean, and all of this was decided in five seconds . . .

Reti: Right.

Dyson: We had to get people out. No matter where they were going, since they couldn't walk through the stacks anymore, they had to take the main aisles, even to get to the emergency stairwells, you had to tramp through this stuff, because the stuff was down in the central areas, and you couldn't say, "Well, cut through this aisle," because that aisle was filled three feet high with books that had fallen off the shelves, or with stack ranges that had fallen over.

The stack ranges, I should mention this so people understand. The stack ranges fell not with the bookshelves coming toward you, but more from end to end. They tipped from the end panel down towards the other end panel, not as you would think they might when I say dominos, in just a big sort of big splat, up and down. That fall end-to-end actually proved to be extremely fortuitous. There was a reason that they tipped that way, or a couple of reasons, one of which, of course, is that's probably the way that the waves of the earthquake were going . . .

Reti: Yes.

Dyson: . . . but there's another reason that I'll mention later on that we found out. Anyway, we got people out. The only obvious building damage at that point to the library was there was some glass in the giant windows around the library foyer that had broken. People, I have to say, behaved in very strange ways. I remember seeing one person walk up to the library while we're all sort of huddled outside and aftershocks are going on and you're not sure what's happening. There was one piece of glass that was sort of hanging, guillotine-like from the top part of the frame, and the bottom had broken out. I watched this person. And before I could say anything, the person walked right through that window into the foyer of the library, and proceeded to go out the other side . . .

Reti: Oh!

Dyson: . . . and I thought, oh my God, you know, this glass is kind of teetering over the person's head as they walked through. I mean it's like . . . I don't know what that person . . . Well, I shouldn't say what were they thinking, they obviously weren't thinking . . .

Reti: They were in shock.

Dyson: . . . and they might have been in shock, but we were all in shock too, so it was a little hard. After that, we posted people there, and I think we actually tried to knock some of the glass down. But we did put in some hurried calls, as soon as we could, to get plywood put up there so that people wouldn't try to do that.

There then unfolded all of the kind of amazing stories that are recorded elsewhere, in terms of people's situations at home. My wife and I had our own circumstances, trying to find two cats that we had just bought, kittens, that it turned out were totally safe but were hiding under as much stuff as they could find to hide under. We really didn't want to be in our house when I eventually got home. We wanted to be outside, but we had these cats we knew were inside.

Obviously there was a great deal of turmoil. There was enormous tragedy in the city of Santa Cruz. The campus itself came through, in terms of the buildings, spectacularly well. There was very little damage. There was, I think, one building that required some substantial structural reinforcement over time, the Natural Sciences II building. But it wasn't obviously in need of it. I mean, you might almost say it was usable, until they found that out. There was some work that had to be done on the McHenry Library, but it was largely cosmetic. I do remember the head of Physical Plant, Louis Fackler, who had been here almost from the start of the campus, saying afterwards with tears in his eyes, that he felt like all the work that he had overseen in terms of the construction of the buildings and everything else on this campus, that everything that he tried to do to build buildings right, was in that one crystal moment proven to have been the right thing to do, to have not cut corners, et cetera. We've later seen what happens at other universities in California, in other earthquakes, that have not paid the same attention to quality of work, and getting those extra dollars to make sure that everything is structurally appropriate. They've had buildings collapse or come apart, including libraries in some cases, during major earthquakes.

Then, over the next few days, we first had an evaluation of what structurally the situation was in the library. I've mentioned the stack ranges, and there were problems both here and in the Science Library.

Reti: This is the old Science Library?

Dyson: The old Science Library, right. And the general evaluation when people looked at McHenry Library, not because of building problems, but because of the contents-of-the-building problem—books all over the floor, stack ranges toppled and things like that—was that it was going to take several months for the library to get up and running.

One of the very first things that we did was, we knew who the best book-stacks company was in northern California, because of the work that we had been doing in planning the new Science Library, the Ross MacDonald Company. Within a day or two of the earthquake we found a working phone and contacted them, and said, "We don't know exactly what we want you to do, but we will pay you to be here starting next week to help put us back on our feet. In other words, we want to tie you up. We want you." He understood what we were saying. He agreed to it. And so we had them available to us.

There then unfolded what was referred to on the campus by at least one senior official as the "Miracle of McHenry." The stacks guys came in, and they figured out . . . The problem we had was the stacks were unstable and the aisles were filled with books. There was a real chicken and egg problem, because you couldn't get into the stacks to fix

them because the books were there, but you couldn't move the books because the stacks looked like they were going to topple over on you any moment. When the fellows from Ross MacDonald Company came, he hired some local workers, and he figured out that the thing that they had to do first was to stabilize the stack ranges. The stack ranges, interestingly, had suffered a critical design failure. As I said, they hadn't gone down just on top of each other. They'd gone down from end-to-end. They kind of toppled sideways, if you will. And the reason they'd done that was there were earthquake cross-braces that went from the top of one corner of a stack section down to the bottom in the opposite corner and formed a big x, these metal rods. The braces were supposed to keep the stacks from collapsing the way they did. But those rods were very thin, and instead of being bolted at the top in the opposite corner, they were simply hooked. They might have actually even worked, that is, the hooking idea, if earthquakes had behaved the way that up to that point they thought earthquakes behaved, and that was these kind of long waves that move things back and forth. The problem is that nearby earthquakes start first with a big up-and-down kind of bouncing motion before they get into the waves. Well, the bouncing motion had unhooked many of the hooks. And the ones that the shaking didn't unhook, the waves unbent the hooks. So essentially we had no earthquake braces on these stacks, which is why at the upper levels of the buildings, where the effect of the earthquake was strongest, there simply were no earthquake braces at all, which is why they had toppled end-to-end. What Ross MacDonald did was he came in and threw about five very large guys on one end, and a couple on the other, and they just pushed the things back upright again, the guys on the other end to keep it upright, make sure it didn't keep going up and then fall down on the other side.

Reti: How did they get in through all the piles of books?

Dyson: They didn't need to go through the piles of books, because those fell off the shelves between the ranges. The workers only needed to get to the end of the ranges—where the end-panels are—to push the whole stackrange up again. Then they stabilized them with two-by-fours. So they got these things all upright and stable. Then you could get at all the books, because now you weren't worried about these stack ranges falling further, or toppling over on people who were pulling the books out that had all fallen into the aisles.

What happened next was amazing. We obviously had to clear out all the books, sort them, and then get them back onto the stack ranges again, the now-stabilized stack ranges. And what happened was that from eight in the morning until five in the afternoon everybody, and I mean everybody including me, worked on getting all of these books stacked, resorted, and we tried to figure out where the heck they went. And then, at five o'clock, all the student employees would be around, and they would see what we had done during the day, and they weren't going to let these old fogy career folks beat them, so they worked like dogs from about five p.m. till midnight. I mean, they needed the work. They needed to eat, even though they weren't checking out books, because the library, first few days at least, was closed. They were working like crazy too. Well then, the exhausted workers during the day, the regular career employees, myself and you and everybody else, would come in and we'd see how much progress had been made by these students at night, and that was energizing. Because,

you know, if you came back and you had the same mess that you'd left the night before, that was one thing. But you'd come back and all this progress would have been made. So it was sixteen hours a day of very, very hard energetic work. Several people told me that their situations in their houses were so bad—they knew they had structural problems, they had glass everywhere, and everything was a mess, and their TV set had fallen on the floor and their refrigerator had fallen over—that it was almost refreshing to come to something that had a definable problem . . .

Reti: (laughs)

Dyson: . . . that they could just put all this energy into, and work, and work, and work; it was fine. And those people who didn't have the physical ability to work those hours did a whole lot of other things. We published a recovery newsletter of several issues that could keep an update for the people as to what was going on. We actually were able, very quickly, to open up the main floor of the library. And then once we got that going, we could, as we were able, page books. We couldn't let people up on these upper floors, because there were two-by-fours holding up stack ranges and books everywhere . . .

Reti: And we were still having aftershocks.

Dyson: Yeah. Exactly. But we were able to get going. And what happened was the campus was closed, I think, for the better part of a week. I think it was a Tuesday that the earthquake happened and it closed through the following Sunday. On Monday, when

the campus came back, the library opened. At that point we were still only allowing access, I think, to the main floor and the first floor. But we were paging materials from places that we had cleared. And then, I think within a week after that we had everything on the shelf and the library was open completely for business. In the meantime, we had people come in and reinforce the stacks with larger rods, replacing these poorly designed structural rods that had been in there before. This time we didn't hook them. We bolted them through (both laugh) the stack range. And they anchored things to the floor, and they did it right this time. As that same head of Physical Plant said, "We always seem to find the money to do it right the second time."

Reti: (laughs)

Dyson: So it was an amazing recovery. And people were flabbergasted. They just could not believe, because there had been pictures in the papers and everything of how awful the situation was. But fortunately for us the building held up, so that wasn't a problem, and we were able to put it back together again in a way that provided excellent service. We received a lot of credit from the campus for doing this. Word had spread that the library was going to be shut down literally . . . I mean, it was calculated in months. The idea that in two weeks we were up and running, pretty much as normal, just flabbergasted the campus.

Reti: That's a remarkable story.

Dyson: It was a remarkable event. Not something that I particularly want to go through again.

The Jazz Photos Exhibit Incident

Reti: (long sigh, pause) Jazz photos?

Dyson: Oh, jazz photos. Oh my gosh. This was an incident that received quite literally worldwide attention. I mean, all the way across the US, to the *International Herald Tribune* . . . I'm sure *Der Spiegel* in Germany and everywhere else covered it, because it got on to the newswires, AP, and was a sufficiently interesting story. Even though, again, like the *Stack O' Wheats*, the story was told in a way that made it make the most sense. It eliminated any subtlety in it. Even though that didn't happen to be the truth.

The library was putting on an exhibit. It was part of Black History Month, and the particular focus of this exhibit was going to be on jazz musicians. There was a library staff member who knew a gentleman, a fairly elderly gentleman in town who had a collection of photos of jazz musicians, and approached him about the possibility of using some of these in the library, for the exhibit. I think that that's pretty much everything, the only amount of it that was agreed on by all parties. After that, the stories widely diverged.

The story as it was told in the press went as follows: The library borrowed what was called a "priceless collection of jazz photos"—the word "priceless," although literally

conveying that no one knows what it was worth (it may be nothing, or it may be a lot), implied great value. The collection was given or lent to the library; it was made into an exhibit, and many of the items, in order to be shown on this exhibit, were trimmed and cut in ways that were thought to be foolish. And when it was returned to the gentleman, and he was actually given the posters from the exhibit, he was outraged that, from his point of view, this priceless collection had been destroyed by the trimming, and that kind of thing. And this was played in the press as that this library had unknowingly taken a priceless collection of original jazz photos and effectively destroyed it in order to make an exhibit. I mean, I received . . . I did find a lot of old friends around the country. People would read about it in Florida or something like this and I'd get mail, phone calls. (sighs)

As near as we can tell (this is our version of what happened), the "photos," so called, involved were things like pages from calendars and stuff like that, where, yeah, they were signed, but it wasn't an original signature on these things. And this person had just kind of put these up with thumbtacks on his walls and had a Post-it note on it or something. In some cases he'd put them up with tape and the glue from the tape had kind of eaten into the paper. The trimming that was done was more to provide like a frame for the photo, and cut off damaged parts and things like that. And these were not, as far as anyone knew, anything remotely like a photo that had been personally signed by the jazz musician in question. There were some elements of the story told by the gentleman that clearly caused one to at least question what this material was. He told a lengthy story that was quoted, about how he remembered, so clearly, going to a concert

that had been held at a particular arena in Oakland in such-and-such a year, and how he'd gone up and this and that and the other. Someone happened to research it and it turned out that the particular auditorium that he, quote, "remembered so vividly" hadn't even been built until several years after the year that he said that he had so vividly remembered, exactly what year, and all, this was. So there was . . . you know, one couldn't know.

Unlike some folks, I think that the guy believed everything that he said. Some people thought that he was just out to get some money. I don't think he was right. But he was kind of elderly, and he had kind of built this story up over the years in his own mind. And things that were a calendar page that he had taken from some jazz organization's calendar from 1973, or something like that, with a bunch of photos of jazz greats, had in his mind somehow evolved into that these were original photos that he had had the person sign at some concert or other. It wasn't clear. The guy was an expert on jazz; he did have these things thumbtacked all over his house, or taped up. He obviously still had a whole lot of them. He would talk about the hundreds of items that he had, and how the collection had been destroyed. But then somewhere else you'd read that only thirty-seven items had been lent to the library. Well, if you had hundreds, and there were only thirty-seven that were lent to the library—some of them were returned okay; some of them were trimmed—how did the whole collection somehow get destroyed if you started with hundreds and only thirty-seven even came to the library, let alone were corrected, or fixed? There was an independent evaluation of the "damage," that was done by someone who had been recommended by the Smithsonian, saying that he did

not think that these were items that were particularly valuable.

Reti: Couldn't somebody determine whether the signature was original? An expert could tell something like that.

Dyson: Well, yeah, but if someone says, "Here's something and it had an original signature on it, and it's been cut off."

Reti: I see.

Dyson: That's part of the problem. This particular expert said in his letter that he felt that the materials had probably been returned to the gentleman in better condition than they had been borrowed. No one wanted to hear that. The media take on this was that this poor little old man had had his priceless and only worthwhile possession destroyed by this faceless bureaucracy that was represented by this University Library.

Ultimately, by the way, just to take care of this part of the story, there were legal negotiations, depositions were taken, and the fellow I think eventually settled for something like five or six thousand dollars, which, as far as the University was concerned, was simply an amount to make it go away. There was a lot of legal discussion. I always felt that the outcome of it proved the library's point that if this had been a priceless possession of originally signed photos by Louis Armstrong and Ella Fitzgerald and people like this, it was going to be worth a hell of a lot more than that. But

anyway, that was the ultimate resolution of it, between his lawyers and the lawyer representing the University.

Now, there were several things that were important about this from a managerial point of view. First of all, one of the questions was: do you mount a vigorous counter-attack on this fellow's claims, or do you indicate that you're sorry, and that this was a sad thing to have happened? Clearly, one of the problems was that the material was not appropriately acquired from the gentleman, whether it was given, which was what some thought, or lent on his part. Clearly that had not been handled in a way that was acceptable by a state institution. I mean, we should have had a clear, and now do have, clear forms that indicate—I am lending this; it's of this value; there are these many items; the insurance on it is going to be handled in this way. It'll be lent on this date; it'll be returned on that date. All of those things are now handled very, very cleanly and clearly.

Reti: Yes.

Dyson: And there's a clear understanding, probably in this library better than (both laugh) practically any other institution in the world, having been through all this, as to how that is handled.

So, we were not blameless. And once the story started being carried by the media, unlike the *Stack O' Wheats* case, this was one case where the *Sentinel* consistently got it wrong. They always had to use "priceless," although they had no evidence that it was a priceless

collection. The word “priceless” practically became hyphenatedly connected to the word “collection” in all of the stories that they ran about this. It was always a “priceless collection of jazz photos.” It was so annoying to me, because they had no evidence that it was, and the only evaluation that had ever been done indicated that it was what the library staff thought it was, not what the owner was claiming.

But my evaluation of the situation, which ran counter to my boss’s, the executive vice chancellor, was that anything that we said that appeared to be attacking the credibility of the gentleman involved was only going to lead to worse consequences for the library or for the University. That since this was already being played as “big institution screws the little guy,” the more we trotted out lawyers and experts and the more he appeared to be kind of this doddering old guy . . . Regardless of whether it was valuable, it was priceless to him. It was his only collection, right, and he wasn’t . . .

Reti: Right.

Dyson: So, the more you attacked him, the worse you appeared to be.

Reti: I see.

Dyson: My staff understood that. It was a bitter pill for them to swallow, but they understood it. But there were people on the campus in the senior administration that, although they allowed me to play it the way I wanted to, God bless them, they disagreed

with me. And I, to this day, will always believe that the ultimate public perception, as far as I know, from the community, from people that talk to me, from faculty, as time went on, was that this was a tragic event that occurred in an otherwise extremely wonderful organization, namely in the life of the University Library. And they were willing to overlook that. They were saying, "Oh, isn't it terrible that it happened, and these things do happen, and you've got such a wonderful organization. Isn't it terrible that it's you, of all people, that this should happen to." And as far as I know it never affected donor relations or anything like that. We had people that, in fact, came out and wrote to the paper, that said, "Well now, this is so silly to attack the library. It's a wonderful organization. I'm going to give my collection of papers to that library, because I trust them to handle it so much."

Okay. Another thing that occurred within the library is that there were some folks within the library who had had no involvement in the circumstances, that wanted to distance themselves publicly from the event. And . . . I don't issue a lot of orders in the library, but I made it very clear that if you really wanted to be far down on my bad list, you would go out and start announcing that, "Well, I didn't have anything to do with this bad thing that happened." Because the minute you start pointing fingers at yourself as being a good guy, you are implicitly pointing at other people as having been bad guys. I said, "We're going to take this heat. There were a whole bunch of people that were involved in this incident. As far as I can tell, nobody did a single thing through bad intentions. They all have good work records in other circumstances. This is not a case of, you know, 'Old Joe screwed up again.' I mean, this was a unique circumstance and we're going to hold

together. And our public face is we're extremely sorry this happened, and we're going to see to it that it never happens again."

Ultimately that won the day. It did. It created a lot of sympathy for us from our supporters. It kind of defused . . . If someone is beating up on you and your response is, "You know, we screwed up. We're really sorry," they kind of stop beating on you after a while. They're not getting any jollies over (laughter) hitting you on the head and watching that lump on your head get bigger and bigger. It really did defuse it.

We were pretty sure we were right. So that was another whole element. One can't let an event like this destroy the organization by creating camps of people that are pointing fingers at each other. An analogy I draw is to the *Stack O' Wheats* event where the senior women in the library came to me and said, "You should not be the public face of the library on this one. Our sense of it, from the people that we know in the activist community of Santa Cruz, is women need to be up on the stage. Women need to be making the statements. Women need to be meeting with angry faculty members, et cetera. We're going to all hang together on this, regardless of what the circumstances were." That was the same communal attitude that was taken a lot later in this particular thing with the jazz photos. And as inevitably happens, it blew over.

I really don't know what happened, and we did spend a lot of time talking to the individuals that were involved. It's so hard when you're involved in any of these incidents, because you will have someone that you trust, who has an absolute clear

vision of a sequence of events. And the next person that walks in the door, who you absolutely trust equally much, has a totally different version of what the events were. I think there's a certain kind of self-rationalization process that goes on in people's minds that then becomes reality to them. It's not that that they're thinking, "Well, I don't think I'll tell them about that part." You know?

Reti: Right.

Dyson: It becomes their version of the truth. So . . . you know. I don't know what was said. I don't know . . . And I'm willing to grant that to the gentleman that was involved from whom we borrowed the photos, also. If I'm going to say that that's a human trait for my own staff, I have to say he believed that this was a priceless collection of photos, even though there's no evidence that we're aware of, that that's, in fact, what these things were. The one thing I do know is that if you have hundreds of things, and a few are destroyed, you haven't destroyed the whole collection. So there was obviously a lot of hyperbole that was going on. And I often wondered about people that wrote stories and went and interviewed him standing in his house, looking forlorn, and up the stairs behind him are all these photos. And they're writing how his collection was completely destroyed. And it's like, if you're a good reporter, don't you say, "But (both together) what are those?" (both laugh)

Reti: Right.

Dyson: There were reporter's pictures showing some holes in the collection on the walls of his staircase, you know, halfway up, blank spots from that group that was taken down. No reporter ever asked. Nobody ever did. And I was the last person in the world to be able to point that out, without sounding completely self-serving.

Well, (sighs) that one occupied a lot of time too. Again, there were the usual faculty behaving badly, and other people that would come out and send terrible emails to me about what an awful person I was . . . Yeah, one learns to use one's delete key to maintain one's sanity, when you get an email page of just the word 'shame' written a hundred-and-fifty times—it's like, gee, you know, get a life!

There were some excellent exchanges too. I had some very thoughtful questions from colleagues. I remember one who had been a UCSC undergrad who had gone on to library school and was now working somewhere in the Midwest. He said, "I don't want to believe the story. It doesn't seem like the library that I knew. But what happened?" And *those* you gave very long, thoughtful answers to, because you felt—this is something other people can learn from. You talked about the problem of not having a clear-cut written policy and form for when you can borrow material, who's responsible for it, how much it is worth, and all that.

There were people who I will love forever that would call up and just say, "Don't worry about it. We love you, and we'll love you a year from now." People in the community. And, "This is a terrible thing, but . . ." And people who actually took the time to write

letters to the editor of the *Sentinel*, not disagreeing with their coverage, but just saying, "Look, this is a really wonderful organization up there. Don't judge it by this one incident." So all in all, it worked out okay. It is one of those events in life that I will not say was better than a poke in an eye with a sharp stick, as they used to say on *Monty Python*. This was definitely beyond (laughter) merely getting poked in the eye with a sharp stick, but we survived it.

The Bankruptcy of the Faxon Company

Reti: Well, I believe the last thing on our list is the bankruptcy of the Faxon Company's effects on serials.

Dyson: Yeah. I won't spend as much time on this one, because it was totally internal to the library, and tends to involve lots of library jargon words, which nobody is going to understand but other librarians, and they already know about the bankruptcy of the Faxon Company.

The way that libraries buy journals is by contracting with a jobber or vendor, because you don't want to deal one-by-one with each subscription that you buy, with its own invoice and its own records and its own postage stamps, and all that. So you'll order a lot of subscriptions through one jobber that deals with all the publishers, and therefore, because they're dealing, for different universities, with a thousand subscriptions to this particular journal, that's very efficient. They get a discount and you get a discount for having gone through them. The amount of money that's involved is in the hundreds of

thousands, and often millions of dollars. Because if you have twenty or thirty thousand subscriptions and each one of them averages somewhere between one hundred and ten thousand dollars each, it adds up to a lot of money. Completely out of the blue, to us, the company with whom we had deposited a large amount of money, this vendor, went bankrupt.

Reti: This is Faxon.

Dyson: Faxon. They were bought by somebody, which was bought by somebody else, and so Faxon is the name that we always call it, but the legal entity is muddled. But they're the folks . . . I mean, they were the same people. We kept dealing individually with the same humans, although their overall corporate name changed. Faxon became one of those, "a division of, which is a part of the something group," that kind of thing. And evidently the parent company invested some other parts of the corporate money in things that didn't work out right.

Suddenly we were faced with not getting these journals, which would have a substantial impact on our students and faculty, and being out hundreds of thousands of dollars. We were not the only entity within the University of California [affected], fortunately. It was interesting to me that the organizations within the University of California libraries that lost the most money were ones that were not members of the Association of Research Libraries. And the reason I mention that is, I later found out (curses!) that there had been rumors going around within the Association of Research Libraries that this particular

company was in trouble. No one had passed those rumors on to us, and because we are not members of ARL, and we've talked about that before in these interviews, we didn't find that information out.

All sorts of very good organizations, highly reputable, respected university libraries across the United States were caught in this. Fortunately, as events unfolded, we were able to get a lot of the materials from other sources. A company bought out the Faxon division of the bankrupt company, and we were able to switch our subscriptions over to them. When all was said and done, the actual amount of out-of-pocket money was more like in the five-figure range rather than the six-figure range. And again, faculty on this campus supported us very substantially. We were able in some cases to switch over to electronic access to this material instantly, to get some of the issues that were missing. And the staff did an incredible job of trying to make up for this gap of all these journals that we weren't getting and the money that we didn't have to buy them.

I think the thing that was of most interest to me, looking at it as a management issue, was how we really weren't at all attacked by the faculty as having not been aware that this was going to happen. They really took it at face value that if we didn't know, there was a good reason why we didn't know, and it was being covered up. There was a lot of newspaper coverage of the unexpected bankruptcy because of the larger corporation involved.

Reti: You mean general public-oriented newspapers, not just library journals?

Dyson: Yeah. The *Chicago Tribune*—the parent company was based in Chicago, I believe, and you could actually find a lot of the inside details of what was going on through the Chicago newspapers. The case is still pending. There's still some possibility when things are divvied up that there'll be some money that actually comes back to the University Library here.

I was able to bring together quite a few entities within the University of California that had lost money. It was a funny group, the Lawrence Livermore Lab, the UC Press. The press lost it from the other side in that these people weren't distributing their journals anymore.

Reti: They have a lot of journals now.

Dyson: Yeah. So they suddenly were caught short because people weren't getting the stuff that they had ordered. UC San Francisco had a small amount of money on deposit. And it was funny, because the other UC entities weren't the mainstream library groups. That suddenly struck me one day, that we were all the ones that wouldn't normally hear the rumors of something like this happening because we weren't part of this larger group that seemed to know what was going on, or at least suspected it might happen.

But trying to pin down how much money we were out, all of the various ways that we could acquire the materials or have access to the materials, reassuring faculty that things would work out, and if anybody needed an article we would give it top priority,

acquiring it from someplace else and all that kind of thing, took a vast amount of time, both internal to the library, and then coordinating with the other UC groups to try to figure out what was going on. It was a painful time. The Faxon Company had been around for decades and decades. It was one of the wonderful old companies that libraries across the world had relied upon. And because you were dealing with the same people, you didn't pay too much attention to the various corporate shenanigans that were going on farther up, because they kept these same folks that you were always dealing with. And as I say, it wasn't Faxon. The Faxon division itself was fine. But the whole corporation went bankrupt and they siphoned off . . . What the higher corporation was doing, they were investing in some things . . . They were taking the money that was being put on deposit by their customers, like UCSC. See, if you put money on deposit, you got a certain discount. You got a five percent discount; you got a seven percent discount if you paid even earlier. As I've talked about in these interviews before, we were always looking for angles to stretch our collections budget as far as we could. This was great for us. But then this parent company was, in effect, taking the deposit money out of that division. I keep having to bite my tongue and not say "stealing." Because they weren't stealing it. They were a corporate entity, but they were taking this money and then using it for other purposes, assuming they'd then have it to put back. But then Faxon wouldn't have the money on deposit to go and pay the publishers for the journals that the publishers were sending out.

There was, on the publisher's side of all this, a great deal of activity that was going on, because a) they weren't getting their money, but b) they didn't want people to find out

they could get along without these journals, either. So many of the publishers said, "We will continue to send the journals, even though we don't have any money from you, because we've got the damn things. You know, all it's gonna cost us is postage." There were a lot of intriguing elements to all this, and pretty much people behaved pretty well, outside of the particular organization that went bankrupt. Everybody else tried to pull together. And as I say, there are some resources, and I have no idea. . . . It'll be pennies on the dollar, but there may still be someday a check for, you know, twenty-thousand dollars or something that arrives unexpectedly (laughter) seven years from now, in the library, and my successor will wonder, "Wow, this is nice. This is good, we could use this money." But nothing makes you feel worse than when an organization that you worked with and trusted, and people that we had worked with in the corporate world suddenly . . . I mean, they were out of jobs. They didn't know what they were going to do. They felt, of course, horrible, because these are relationships that they had built up with libraries over years and years and years. So it was a tough time, but I think we came out of it all well, and it's behind us now.

Impressions of the Academic and Executive Vice Chancellors

Reti: Today we're going to start by talking about your impressions of each of the vice chancellors and chancellors that you worked with during your tenure here. Let's start with the vice chancellors.

Dyson: The first vice chancellor I worked with, John Marcum, came into office at just about the same time that I became university librarian. So he and I both were learning

the ropes at the same time. It's important to make a distinction, in the terms of the vice chancellors, between those who were academic vice chancellors and those who assumed the broader title of executive vice chancellor. John Marcum, Kivie Moldave, and Ronnie Gruhn were all academic vice chancellors, and then during Michael Tanner's term, he went from academic to executive vice chancellor, I believe, and his successor, John Simpson, was executive vice chancellor. And I'll talk a little bit about the change in title, what that meant.

But for the first three—John Marcum was just a great guy who helped me assume the role of university librarian. He had lots of good advice, and I'd oftentimes chat with him about particular issues in the library. I got along with him very well. He's a really nice fellow. And I think, on a personal level, I couldn't have had a nicer guy to be my first boss here.

Now, academic vice chancellor, I have to say, was not a particularly powerful position, in that budgetary control was not in the domain of the academic vice chancellor. It was really the responsibility of the vice chancellor for business and administrative services. As it turned out, however, the first few years here were fairly tumultuous, both professionally—because of the changeover, the problems that had gone on in the library and the various changes that occurred in personnel under me. Therefore having a sympathetic ear I could bounce ideas and occasional complaints off of was nice. Also, in my personal life, I was going through a transition here, getting [finalizing] a divorce and then another relationship which ended a bit to my surprise, and I really needed the

support of some folks to go through some . . . to recover from some disappointing activities in my personal life. And John handled it so well. I remember—this is just so typical—one day I was really down in the dumps and John just said, “Let’s not sit here in my office today. I have some errands I was going to run later in the afternoon. Why don’t you just come with me? And we’ll talk . . .” It was just perfect. Our relationship never was across the line of being buddy-buddy, but it was so much easier just to be off the campus and driving around with him while he went to the hardware store, and we had our meeting. It worked out well. And he invited me to his home for social events and things like that. The fact that I had thought that I was going to be here with a partner, and about eighteen months after I got here discovered I was going to be here alone, was a bit of a dramatic change for me. The people here on this campus were just wonderful, and John was very much a part of that. I should add (as an aside), the staff also here were wonderful. If you’re going to have some problems in your personal life, Santa Cruz is a wonderful place to have them. (both laugh) My staff threw me an anniversary party on the anniversary of my arrival, but it was widely understood, and in fact stated with some irony by some, that this was a Lan Dyson recovery party, after the sudden and surprising breakup of a relationship that I had invested a lot into. They rallied around, and made me feel very loved, that this was a place that they wanted me to be. The combination of an understanding boss and a supportive staff saw me through a personal crisis that could have otherwise been very difficult. My sense is that John was probably my boss for five or six years.

Reti: That sounds right, because I know by 1985, Kivie Moldave . . .

Dyson: Yeah. Kivie Moldave was only here for a few years. I interviewed the candidates for that position when John decided to go back to teaching and take on some other responsibilities. Incidentally, John has now been for many, many years the person that runs the UC Education Abroad program, and he's still very highly thought of.

I've never quite understood what the qualities were that one looks for . . . Excuse me, I know what I would look for, but what others are looking for when they are hiring a vice chancellor. It's largely a difficult management job, but oftentimes, it seems to me, people are hired based on the quality of some research project that they've done. I was a little surprised, having seen all the finalists, that there were those who thought that Kivie Moldave was the match that was needed for UCSC. That was not my impression. And ultimately I think it came to be that it was not his impression either, along with several other people's feelings about it. It was not a good match here. I always got along well with the man; there was no personal animosity. But he did seem kind of disengaged from the campus and from the library.

There was then an interim vice chancellor, Ronnie Gruhn (Isabel Gruhn, but everybody called her Ronnie), who was a longtime professor here at UCSC. And darned if Ronnie wasn't one of the best and toughest bosses that I ever had. I think there was some element on the campus of . . . This was really the first senior, serious woman administrator I think, in the history of the campus. Certainly none of the chancellors, and . . .

Reti: There was Helene Moglen, who was dean of humanities.

Dyson: Yeah, right, but to have an academic vice chancellor who was a woman required some adjustment in the thinking of others. I didn't have that problem. In librarianship you work with women, all of the senior women, the university librarians that are senior to you on other UC campuses, et cetera, et cetera. I really enjoyed working with her. But she sure had a knack of asking me the tough question, the thing that I was kind of hoping she wouldn't ask. If I went to one of my regular (it was probably bi-weekly) meetings with Ronnie hoping she would not ask about something, you could almost guarantee she would ask about it. (both laugh) She really had good insight as to what the questions were that needed to be asked. I enjoyed working with her. I think it was it was a bit of a tough time for the campus. That was kind of a transition period.

Reti: That was one of our periods of growth.

Dyson: Yeah, exactly. Right. And it's tough being an interim-something if you're overseeing fairly substantial change at the same time. Because in one sense, you're kind of a lame duck; on the other, critical decisions are having to be made.

The next person that came in was Michael Tanner. Michael had risen through the ranks here at UCSC. He was a computer scientist, had gone up, I think all the way to dean of natural sciences, or certainly chair of the Department of Computer and Information Science, by whatever name it was known as then. Michael and I got along very, very

well. He was in that position for something like nine years. And my wife, Susan Cooper, and he and his wife, Eileen, got along very well. We actually on occasion would see each other socially, that is, we'd go out to dinner together, or things like that. Michael was arguably one of the brightest people I have ever met in my life. He also, a little bit like Ronnie, had a really good technique of allowing me an amazing amount of flexibility in how the library was run. But the kind of unspoken *quid pro quo* for that was that I always let him know if there were problems in the library. I did my darnedest never to let him get blindsided by anything. And I do remember one time when some of the issues that we covered probably already, one or more of them might have come up, and I was really apologizing, and kind of criticizing myself as a manager for letting it happen, and he looked at me with a funny grin on his face, and he said, "Lan, of all the problems I have in terms of management of this campus, you are not the one that leaps immediately to my mind." (both laugh) Which certainly was reassuring, given that at that particular moment, I felt I was at some low ebb for some reason or other. He and I would test management ideas out on each other. He'd toss an idea out, more treating me as a management colleague, and would call on me to take on assignments, on occasion, that I've mentioned.

During the period of time that he was in that position, he transitioned from the kind of powerless academic vice chancellor, to the executive vice chancellor position to whom all other vice chancellors reported. This was a very, very significant change because, in essence, it meant that the executive vice chancellor was responsible for running the campus. And the chancellor position took on much more relationship with the outside

world, whether that was fundraising, or the University of California administration, or public relations activities, or anything like that. That, of course, increases the scope of responsibility for the executive vice chancellor, the vice chancellor position, enormously, because not only does he have deans reporting to him, but he also has the other vice chancellors reporting to him. So he has a pretty broad span of control. But I was pleased that he was unequivocal in saying that the university librarian would continue to report directly to that position, and he considered that it was critical for the library and for the campus that I have direct access to the executive vice chancellor.

I felt that Michael did a fine job as executive vice chancellor. There are always situations where win-win solutions are not possible. But I rarely found myself in a situation where I felt that he had not done the very best that he possibly could in terms of maximizing whatever good could be made out of a particular decision. There were times when Michael and I disagreed, and I think I mentioned already that he and I disagreed on what the campus public position should be with regards to the jazz photos incident. He felt that we should fight back against what he understood to be mistakes that were made by the gentleman that had lent the jazz photos to the library. I felt that any public attacks on that fellow, as opposed to dealing with behind-the-scenes kind of legal discussions with him and his lawyer, would simply make us appear even more to be the bad guy—this enormous institution of the University of California attacking this poor little fellow who had already been beaten up enough—and that “he said, she said” kind of arguments are never won by large faceless bureaucracies. The press will always pick up on defending the little guy in that kind of circumstance. But as I say, even though he

disagreed with me, and presented his arguments, he ultimately would say, "It's your call. You're the one that the press is going to want to talk to. You're the one who's going to be giving the depositions, et cetera, and you have to run with this the way that you see fit." That was very typical of any number of issues that we worked out. I would say that there were very few where he and I did flatly disagree. I'm wracking my brain trying to think of other examples and I can't remember many more than that particular one. He also was somebody that tried to do the best for the library, and oftentimes that meant budgetary situations.

It was good that he and I worked so well together because his wife worked for me (both laugh), and that is a situation that could be ugly if you did not have a totally official understanding and relationship with your boss. She was in charge of the Center for Teaching Excellence, which reported to the head of Media Services, who reported to me. I think I mentioned earlier in my interviews that occasionally the library would play the role of incubator on various kinds of activities: Media Services or campus websites. The Center for Teaching Excellence [CTE] was yet another one of those, where we were assigned to manage it. It hadn't been working well; it was kind of run by committee out of the faculty senate with no clear chain of command as to who reported to whom, and things weren't getting done. By bringing it into the library we were able to regularize its procedures, its budget submissions, and so on. That made an enormous difference in its ability to grow and become a real force on the campus, and Eileen Tanner did a fine job of working with faculty. In essence, CTE was an instructional improvement kind of thing, where they would do any number of things for faculty or instructors that wanted

it, such as quietly videotape a lecture or a section that they were giving, and then work with the person, critiquing it when they played it back as to how they could improve and things like that. Doing mentoring activities, any number of things that I think a good institution does, especially one like Santa Cruz, that says that it pays a great deal of attention to undergraduate education, to see that the promise is, at least in part, fulfilled.

Reti: Yes.

Dyson: But it worked out fine. I got along well with Eileen. There was never an issue that came up, budget[ary] or anything like that, where I was in the slightest ever pressured by Vice Chancellor Tanner as to, well, maybe we should do it this way or that way. That's what made that situation work very well.

The final vice chancellor was John Simpson. I got along with him personally, I think, as well as I got along with Michael Tanner. I enjoyed my time with John on a personal level. I never got to be friends with him. He went through a difficult, I think, marital change while he was here, and so it never got to be as, kind of, clean as Michael and Eileen and Susan and I. But I like John a lot. He did what he could for the library. He understood the library. He fought for the McHenry Addition, perhaps more so even than Michael Tanner had. There was a lot of organizational change going on during his tenure during the last year or two before I retired, and if you wanted to look at it in terms of winners and losers, I wasn't always the winner on that, such as the transfer of Media Services over to the new kind of information czar position on the campus. But I like John a lot, and he

was always very straightforward when he had to make a decision that I might not agree with.

When I talk about these decisions, I should mention that the areas that these things tend to fall in are the organizational, such as, is Media Services going to report here? Or, should the Center for Teaching Excellence be transferred to a different situation? Sometimes we would be in agreement on the outcome and sometimes we wouldn't.

There are two currencies on a campus like Santa Cruz. One is dollars, and the other is space. They behave amazingly similarly. You increase space in the same way that you might . . . it causes the emotional reaction that's similar to a budget increase or decrease. So when I say decisions not necessarily going my way, I'm not talking like I wanted to hire somebody and the vice chancellor didn't want me to. That's not the kind of thing at all. Usually it almost always involves either budgetary decisions or space decisions. Space decisions can range, just as much as budget decisions, from the trivial to the global—from whether or not a particular tiny office someplace that someone has “borrowed” for one quarter ever gets returned to you (both laugh)—that's a lesson I learned, hard. My tendency is always to be a real nice guy with your boss when they ask you for a favor, but I quickly learned that if your boss asks you for some space on a temporary basis . . . I think Bob White and I once figured out that we had never, ever gotten a bit of space back that we had given away. It's sort of like giving away budget dollars and then hoping somebody's going to come back and return them to you later. It doesn't happen.

Reti: (laughs)

Dyson: So, budget or space issues were the ones that, most likely, one would come into conflict with a vice chancellor on, on some decision or other. But never anything really terrible. I always like to think that I won the big ones. And John Simpson, as I say, believed in the McHenry Addition. I mean, in his gut. And he did absolutely everything he could, working with the chancellor and Vice Chancellor for Budget Meredith Michaels to make it happen. And since, as I mentioned earlier, we had a chancellor who didn't in her gut believe in it originally—she understood it, but she understood it on kind of an intellectual level—John Simpson believed that for this campus to grow the way that everyone wanted it to grow, it had to have a larger main library. And he did everything he could: phone calls to key officials at the University of California at propitious moments, those kinds of things, where it wasn't just patting people on the head and saying yes, he agreed with it; he really went out on a limb to make it work.

For someone that was here twenty-four years, such as I was, to have only five bosses, and that's counting the interim one, is a relatively small number. Vice chancellors usually turn over fairly rapidly.

Impressions of the UCSC Chancellors

Reti: Let's move on to talk about the chancellors you served under.

Dyson: There were an even smaller number of chancellors. The four chancellors I had

were Sinsheimer, Stevens, Pister, and Greenwood. I came in about a year or two after Bob Sinsheimer had taken over the campus.⁴¹ He had taken over a campus in some disarray. He really, I think, had accomplished most of the reorganization of the campus administrative structure before I got here. He was active in that first year. The decisions had been made, for example, as to who had final authority in terms of hiring faculty, that the colleges were essentially not any longer, for all practical purposes, involved in most of the academic and research activities at the campus.

I always got along very well with Bob. I liked him. He liked me. I've already mentioned his role in fighting and ultimately achieving the funding for the Science Library, and the support he gave during the *Stack O' Wheats* controversy in terms of keeping the library independent, and being very clear about the library's role in determining what should be added to the collections and things like that.

The person that succeeded Bob Sinsheimer, Robert Stevens, was kind of an interesting case, because on paper he should have been the perfect person for Santa Cruz. He was an Englishman, had a charming wife, Kathy Booth Stevens. He had come from a highly respected college on the East Coast. I believe it was Haverford in Pennsylvania.

Reti: That's right.

Dyson: And for whatever reason, he just wasn't the right person for Santa Cruz. He was,

41. Robert Sinsheimer became chancellor of UCSC in fall of 1977.—Editor.

oddly enough, the right person for me. I absolutely enjoyed Robert Stevens so much. I don't think he was a particularly good administrator for a growing campus, in the sense that he had to delegate a lot more responsibility than it was necessary for him to do in a small college situation.

Reti: He wasn't familiar with the University of California.

Dyson: Yeah. I remember one typical kind of thing, where the deans who nominally reported to the then-academic vice chancellor were going to go through this process of requesting budgetary resources, but the final session was going to be held with both the vice chancellor and the chancellor. It was real obvious to me that if you were going to do that, the person you need to aim your presentation towards was the chancellor, not the vice chancellor, because why would you go through all this other stuff . . . It was stated that the chancellor would make the final decision on this. That was fairly typical of the awkward situation that the academic vice chancellors found themselves in, because they were supposedly in charge of this academic operation, but the things that funded the academic operation were decisions which were largely made by either the chancellor or the vice chancellor of business and finance, with, kind of, the academic vice chancellor as the cheering section off to the side.

Nevertheless, Stevens had a very, very dry sense of humor, which, perhaps because of my New England background, I totally understood. I thought the man was absolutely hilarious. But I sat in meeting after meeting, both here on campus and . . . I remember

one, I think it was at the Coconut Grove, where he would make a disparaging remark which was as much disparaging of himself as it was about the person he was commenting on, and the people would just not get it. They just wouldn't get it, and they'd think he was just making some nasty comment. Well, it was very English humor and it was just kind of funny. His wife and my wife were both teachers. They put together a conference on campus together in some area of teaching. I found Kathy Booth Stevens and Robert Stevens to be a delightful couple. He's gone back to England and is master of one of the colleges at Oxford, I think (I apologize, Robert, if it was Cambridge), but we still exchange Christmas cards and stuff, and there's no particular reason, because I never reported directly to this person; it's just we always got along exceptionally well. When he first came, Susan and I took him and his wife out to dinner, and he was just fun. (laughter) I absolutely enjoyed the guy. But it wasn't a match for this campus. And that's really all I can say. Sometimes the chemistry works, and sometimes it doesn't. He moved on after a relatively short period of time.

The next person that came along should not have been a match for this campus. You know, here's a crusty, old, kind of interim person who's going to hold the place together until they can find a "real" chancellor. His background was in engineering. He'd always been at Berkeley, and I don't think he thought that much about Santa Cruz during his academic life, certainly. Karl Pister. It turned out that he was the perfect match for the campus. Everybody loved him, and I loved him. He had a kind of whimsical humor and personality that just worked. And it turned out that the growth of the college of engineering began, which I think wasn't that expected when he was brought in. He

certainly wasn't brought in in order to make that grow. But as it turned out his background there was absolutely perfect.

He had a strong commitment to ideals that were a lot easier to implement in Santa Cruz than they were at Berkeley, such as scholarships for low income and minority students—the Leadership Opportunity Awards Program—which was his completely. He developed it, he fundraised for it, and so on. Especially because he was an interim, he could see very clearly how the campus worked and what kind of campus administrative structure he wanted to leave for his successor, whoever that might be. And so he is the one that created the concept of the executive vice chancellor, that transitioned Michael into that role. It worked out exceptionally well.

Karl was amazing in his ability to understand his audience on whatever topic that he was speaking on. I heard him give fundraising speeches to a couple of different groups, and I forget exactly what it was they were trying to raise money for at that point. It could have been the Seymour Discovery Center. Or more likely I guess it would have been (since I think that was after his time), probably the Leadership Opportunity Awards, which was a program that funded scholarships for students transferring from about ten different community colleges in the area that Santa Cruz serves: Santa Clara, San Benito, Monterey, and Santa Cruz counties, I think, is where they were located. And it was interesting because he essentially gave the same speech, but all the nuances were different, given the two different groups that he was talking to. I happen to have been wearing two different hats and so was at each of the speeches, and I thought, this guy is

incredible. He had a knack for inspiring people. He wasn't a friend of the library in the same way, interestingly, that Robert Stevens was, because Robert Stevens was a historian and to him the library was his laboratory. I didn't have to go in and make any arguments as to why the library was important with Robert Stevens. That was what he saw as the heart and soul of . . .

Reti: He was the one humanities person we've had as a chancellor.

Dyson: Exactly.

Reti: Well, I guess Dean McHenry—but in your time.

Dyson: Yeah, true. But certainly in my time, of the four chancellors, Stevens was the one that . . . I talked earlier about gut-level response to the library. I never had to make any arguments with Stevens about the importance of the library budget or anything like that. With Pister, Karl was more of a scientist in the way he used a library. I mean, the library is for data, and that kind of thing. He could listen to the arguments of the humanists, and the art historians, and the philosophers, and people in literature, and many of the people in the social sciences, and understand on an intellectual level the critical role that McHenry Library played for them. But it was always kind of an interesting exercise. I would have to occasionally remind him that I was there. The library was not first in his mind.

But Karl was great. Anybody that spends any time with the man really, really enjoys it. He has gone on, I think, in his kind of second career, his post-dean-of-engineering career, to be much more active in areas that he couldn't do that much at Berkeley, such as the awards program here, interested in education and minorities, interested in undergraduate education. And I think he's gone on to play a role, systemwide, in the University of California, in these areas too. So, it was a very enjoyable time to have him here. You always looked forward to any meeting that he was going to be in charge of. And since I was already close to Michael Tanner for the years that he was academic vice chancellor before Karl arrived, that transition all worked well. Some of the most pleasant years that I had here were while Karl was chancellor and Michael was vice chancellor.

The final chancellor, MRC Greenwood, was the person that was able to build on the organizational structure for the campus that Karl had laid down. I often thought that MRC would never have been as successful as she was if Karl hadn't preceded her. Because he's the one that took whatever grief . . . Because it was impossible not to like Karl Pister, when he made the transition to making a much stronger executive vice chancellor position, and setting up the role of a chancellor as the chancellor of a medium-size research university rather than a more college-like UCSC in its early years, everybody . . . You know, if Karl thought it was a good idea, it must be a good idea. And nobody questioned it, because at the time, this fellow was kind of an interim elder statesman. He wasn't really made the chancellor until after he'd been here for a while and everybody said, "This guy is great. Let's call him chancellor rather than interim or acting, and just leave him here as long as we can keep him interested." If an executive

vice chancellor is what Karl wanted in order to stay, then everybody thought, oh, that's a great idea. But that new chief operating officer role for the executive vice chancellor was one that then enabled MRC Greenwood to flourish in the way that she did.

I, and I think everybody else, always found it hard to work for MRC because she always had more energy than all the rest of us put together. She was full of ideas. She, again, was back to the scientist mode of thinking about the library. One of the things that worked very well for me in the early years of MRC's time was the fact that Michael Tanner and I understood each other so well that he would run interference with MRC regarding the library if there was some issue. Largely MRC's involvement with me would be about how to get the money to build the McHenry Addition, whether that was fundraising for private money to augment the building project, or going after the capital money through the University of California and ultimately up through the state.

I think in the way that Karl was the perfect person, at one point, for the campus, MRC was the next perfect person, although they were very different. People felt that if MRC wanted something, you damn well better do it. She could be, occasionally, a bit abrasive in meetings and things like that, but I always felt that she was a superb chancellor for UCSC in its kind of maturing phase. I've talked about how she came around to believe in the critical importance of the McHenry Addition to the future of the campus. That was not an easy ship to turn, but once it was turned, the good ship Greenwood . . .

Reti: (laughs)

Dyson: . . . took that project on with a speed that was amazing to see. So I have nothing but praise at the way that she ultimately made that happen. She put her credibility on the line and made it clear to the University of California administration that if this campus was going to grow in the way that . . . It was almost in the sense that, "Look, UC, you have to grow because the University is mandated to grow. We're one of the campuses that can help solve your problem, but you have to give us the structure that can enable us to do that." I think when she grasped onto that argument, saying how critical to the growth of the campus that the McHenry Addition was, then she settled into a spot that she could become a comfortable advocate for it.

That's about pretty much all I have to say about the vice chancellors and chancellors. I always felt that I was incredibly lucky, that there was . . . I talk to colleagues around the country, and it's quite possible to have vice chancellors and chancellors who are pushing their own almost personal agenda for the campus, or that have particular prejudices regarding library activities. In all the time I was here, I always felt listened to. I always felt that they were people that responded to good arguments. They sometimes asked for the impossible, but were willing to hear that x complex set of data was probably not possible to give them in the next twenty-four hours. (both laugh)

One other thing I should mention about MRC, and that was the connection that we were ultimately able to make between MRC and the library. This is something you're always looking for as a manager. I mentioned with Stevens you didn't have to find that, because to him the library was critically important to his whole professional life's work. With

MRC it was Special Collections. She became fascinated and delighted with the materials in Special Collections, to the point that she would come over personally every year, and choose something from Special Collections that could then be turned into her official Christmas card that I'm sure went out to literally hundreds upon hundreds of people.

Starting with Karl Pister, and more so under MRC, donor relations were an increasingly important aspect of the chancellor's role. And MRC came to understand that many of the donors were interested in Special Collections. We had some donor occasions when the campus needed a place for people to meet, or have a reception or something, or to have a tour for some very important people, or things like that. We always made sure that any that were done in the library, and in particular in Special Collections, were more successful than they could possibly have been anyplace else. People were always fascinated by rare manuscripts or beautiful photographs or whatever, or the unusual types of books and art material that we have.

Once we learned that that was the hook that we could get our chancellor on, I think we made an extra effort to see to it that she was never disappointed when she called on us. I think that, emotionally, is what got her. It wasn't the library as a repository of data, because by her time the data she needed or would want to keep up with, essentially could be found on her desktop computer. She didn't need to come to the library for the limited amount of research or whatever she'd be doing. She was president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and things like that, so she still was very much involved in the scholarly world, even though she wasn't, obviously, as

chancellor, having time to go off to her lab and do research. But most of that kind of stuff, reading articles and keeping up with the scholarly activities of the world in her fields, was online. But she also understood—I think we helped her to understand, I hope—that the research libraries of the world were preserving the original materials that ultimately wound up being the things that she could look at on her desktop. And then once that light dawned on her, she, I think, became a real believer in the need for a top-notch Special Collections department inside a major research library. So ultimately that worked out well. It took me a little while to figure that out with MRC, but fortunately some of the staff, while I was busy figuring it out, or trying to figure it out, they were busy, you know, helping her select her Christmas card. Finally it got through my thick brain that this was more than just an idle eccentricity on her part. This was the key to having her understand why the library was important.

Susan Cooper

Let's right here mention the role that my wife, Susan Cooper, has played professionally in my work here. Susan and I have been married for almost eighteen years, and we went together for a couple of years before that, so except for the very first years that I was here, she was with me on the journey here at UC Santa Cruz. Susan has a niece that calls her "the goddess of organization," and she's also wonderfully social. I can probably match her on the organization part, but the social part . . . I am not naturally a social person. Fortunately I've been smart enough to hook up with people that are, whether that's professionally, [such as] people like Katherine Beiers in the library office (I think I mentioned that early on in this oral history), who saw to it that I was introduced to the

community and the important leaders in the community. Katherine and I had a clear understanding that that was a role that was really important and that I tremendously appreciated that she would help me there. Susan did a very similar kind of thing. Susan was very involved in the Women's Club on campus, and some of the other activities, and would make sure that I understood when it might be appropriate to make some social gesture, whether it was sending a thank-you note, or inviting somebody out for dinner, or whatever the heck it might be, occasionally having groups over to our home. The first three chancellors had wives—in order, Karen Sinsheimer, Kathy Booth Stevens, and Rita Pister, who were each very involved in the support groups and social life of the campus. Susan got along with all of them, and was very highly thought of by them. I could tell this by phone calls organizing things, or, as I said in Kathy Booth Stevens' situation, they both were teachers who had taught similar grades and things like that, and gosh, you'd go off to a dinner, I swear they could have talked for twenty-four hours straight (both laugh) whenever we got together. But that also helped ease me into the social life of the campus. I like to believe, whether it's true or not, that an administrator having a significant other who's saying, "Oh yes, they're a nice couple. We get along well, wasn't that fun?" et cetera, helps when some issue is coming up on the campus that is going to determine whether you should be picked to serve this role or that role or whatever. Susan has been fabulous in that way, and a perfect complement to me. I just don't naturally think that way, and she's really educated me over the years. She also got along real well with MRC directly, regarding the Women's Club and things like that. I appreciated the role that she has played to make me a fuller university librarian than I would otherwise have been.

Women in Librarianship

Reti: Why don't we talk about, speaking of women, what it meant for you to be in the female-dominated profession of librarianship.

Dyson: Okay. That's an interesting question, and it was something that I felt I had to pay attention to, that is, that there are issues that are present in being a male in a predominantly female field.

I have to say that I . . . I was much more interested in the talent of the person involved than what their gender was, and my gosh, there sure are a lot of talented women in librarianship. Over the years, there have been quite a few women that started out at Santa Cruz in completely non-managerial roles—any number of the women section heads right now, for example—that we were able to half mentor, and half take a chance on their having the abilities to transition into a more important managerial position. It was fairly easy here to do that, because of the fact that the department heads reported directly to the university librarian. So it wasn't like they were going from being a reference librarian to being the assistant university librarian for public services, a position we don't have. But I take a particular pride in, for example, having someone come who is a bibliographer or something—Catherine Soehner comes to mind—goes, takes over as head of the Science Library, and then is called on to make presentations back at the National Library of Medicine, and I get emails from my colleagues saying, "Boy, what a superb job so-and-so did!" and I think, yes. Really good to hear that.

At the same time, it isn't always easy . . . you are faced with decisions that you have to make. And early on, I guess this is the best example, shortly after I arrived here, I was approached by the founding chancellor, Dean McHenry, who said with obvious pride in his voice that he very much wanted to take me to what he knew would be my first meeting of the Bohemian Club, the very famous club in San Francisco, which I happened to know was an all-male club. I have no doubt that some of the connections that I might have made there could ultimately have helped in terms of fundraising and things like that. At the same time, I felt that if I was serious about the kinds of support and mentoring that I felt I had started in my first major job at UC Berkeley as head of the Undergraduate Library, where two or three of the women that I had hired and worked with there went on to become directors of libraries after they had worked for me, that I had to set an example that was beyond reproach. I simply couldn't reconcile the kind of discrimination that an all-male club implied, especially an all-male club that clearly had a powerful role in the political community. So . . . (sighs) . . . as I say, this was very shortly after I arrived here, within, I guess, probably the first six or seven months, and I had to think how I was going to tell the closest thing to a local icon that we had, that I was going to turn down his invitation.

But I did write a note to him and then had a brief follow-up conversation, which essentially went along the lines of the following: That if one professed certain values they couldn't be of the nature that you give up spinach for Lent. You know, sometimes you're going to have tougher choices to make. One of the things that I had always felt was that I would not take part in any event that clearly discriminated against women,

given the career choice that I had made, and that while I hoped that he would in no way think that this was anything reflective on him or anything, I really thought that it was not appropriate for me to take part in going to a meeting of the Bohemian Club. And as far as I can tell, it never seriously affected the relationship that he and I had. I did it kind of on a personal level, and he said he understood, and that was that.

I guess that was probably the earliest thing that happened here. In the past week, interestingly, I was kind of confronted with that same issue yet again when I had to make a decision as to whether or not I was going to continue something that I've done over the years, which is to be one of several interviewers in this area for prospective students at Harvard. I had read a lot about the situation at Harvard, not just the particular recent incident where the president of Harvard made some unfortunate remarks about whether or not women were capable of doing top-notch science and math, but also something that set the tone for that, and the fact is that since the current president arrived, that the percentage of women hired into ladder rank faculty positions has gone down precipitously.⁴² And that's not, I'm sure, because of anything directly that he did; it's more some things he directly didn't do, and that is, continue to emphasize it. Under Neil Rudenstine, his predecessor at Harvard, the number had been going up rather dramatically. And all of a sudden it started to drop, just about exactly the same time after the current president arrived.

42. On January 14, 2005, Harvard University president Lawrence Summers suggested at a scholarly meeting attended by many accomplished women scientists that innate differences between the genders may be one reason that fewer women than men pursue careers in science and mathematics. UCSC chancellor-designate Denice Denton was then dean of engineering at the University of Washington, and was outspoken against these discriminatory remarks.—Editor.

So I was asked again if I would interview. I don't have that much connection with my alma mater—but I felt I needed to make a statement. So I said, "Well, no, I'm not going to do it this year. I will direct my money that I give to Harvard to a student organization that I was involved with at Harvard. I will continue to support them, but I will not give any . . ." My thought is that someone somewhere will mention that they had this conversation where there was an alumnus upset about it.

I was helped in that stand by the fact that one of the people who happened to be in the room when the Harvard president made the statement was the incoming chancellor of UC Santa Cruz [Denice Denton], (both laugh) who was very, very upset by his comments, and I thought, well, I can kind of kill two birds with one stone here. I can support my chancellor, and also stand by my values. But, I don't know. It gives you a very different perspective on the work world, on your life, on whatever, when you see talented women performing absolutely as your equal. A longtime buddy of mine in the profession happens to be the director of the Harvard College Library, and so there is some irony. I always visit her whenever I'm back in Boston/Cambridge. A lot of stereotypes disappear after you've had a career within a female-dominated profession. You know women are just as capable, and whatever is standing in the way, somehow or other, is Pogo-like: "We have met the enemy and it's us," meaning males.

It's also changed rather radically. When I first got into librarianship, in the Association of Research Libraries, of the roughly hundred largest research libraries in the US and Canada, there were very, very, very few women library directors. I would say probably, I

don't know, five or six of the major academic research libraries. And now I'm sure it must be in the thirty to fifty range, probably fifty-fifty, approaching it. And I would say that's still not good; it's certainly a heck of a lot better than five, but if the profession is, in academic librarianship probably sixty-five to seventy percent female, you would expect to find that percentage in the director ranks too. But that's largely how it has affected me, and it has made me have to make some personal decisions, and those are two of them.

Reti: Do you think that the feminization of librarianship contributes to the ambiguous position of librarians within the power structure of the university?

Dyson: Well, almost all of the professions that are predominantly female are, what you might say, supportive professions, whether it's nursing, social work, teaching—lower grades teaching, as opposed to academic teaching—and so on. I think that's as much it. There's always a question that comes up all the time, on this campus, for example, most relevantly—is the library an academic division, or an academic support division?

Reti: That's what I was thinking of when I asked that question.

Dyson: In my view, it's kind of silly, if you're in a meeting about tenure and student-teacher ratios and things like that, to have the university librarian sitting there. Why would I be there? Why would any UL be there? The problem is that if you're not there for that discussion, you're not there for the next one, which is about budget and things like that. The way that the campus was divided in the last few years, that is the advisory

groups that Vice Chancellor Simpson set up, had the library involved in the academic support area as much, or more so than in the academic, in the sense of the instructional divisions area. I always found that I could move either way. We were actually more able to get library opinions advanced through the academic support structure because they were perfectly willing to listen, and I wasn't saying, "Well, I need a new librarian position for this that's competing with a new professor of engineering." (both laugh) And so in that sense, I could actually get our positions moved forward without a great deal of change or competition if there was some issue that was coming up.

But . . . there's a real chicken and egg problem. You have to take the extreme. If all librarians were men, would the libraries have a much clearer role? I don't think so. In other words, I could have gone out and said, "What we're going to do is emphasize our hiring of men."

Reti: (laughter)

Dyson: Twenty years later we would have a library that was twenty-seven men and three women. Quite aside from the fact that I'd probably be in jail, would that have changed the role of the library on the campus? No, because the library is in this kind of foot-in-all-camps, foot-in-no-camps situation. We obviously are critical to the support of academic divisions. We have academic professionals, et cetera, et cetera. And not knowing anything about it whatsoever, but if you look at something like nursing, would that make a difference? If nurses, if there were more men . . . You know, after the Vietnam

War or something, if the medics had all come back and gone into nursing, would that have changed the relationship between nurses and doctors and hospitals? Perhaps a little, but I don't think necessarily for the better.

I think that what tends to happen in part, and I'm not sure this is trendy to say, is that women tend to gravitate towards clearly helping professions. They want to help people. That is something society should value. It should value it by paying appropriate salaries and things like that. For example, when you see more women doctors, what it tends to do is to make the profession better and more caring—and to me that's a desirable thing—and not that women adopt the attitudes of male doctors. I think that in any of these situations the best result is a mix, whether you're talking in terms of gender, or you're talking in terms of race, especially when you're serving a community that is so critical, is critically changing into . . . more women going to college over the decades, more minorities going to college, and that kind of thing, that that's the thing the library has to reflect, and that's what I always strived for.

Other Changes in Librarianship

Reti: What other changes besides gender representation in library management have you seen during your time as librarian? I know we've talked about the digitalization of library materials.

Dyson: I think that most of the changes in librarianship have been technology-driven. That's been the single most important item that has changed how we do our work. It

mirrors the change from when you had a centralized computer room that was air-conditioned, and people, literally in white clothes, for some reason, would be there tending to the stuff, to suddenly, it's all out on the desktop. You need some mainframes for some things, but largely, the vast proportion of computing activity is a personal activity, not a centralized one.

In a sense that's what's happened with librarianship. We were the repositories of all the knowledge and people had to come to us. They asked the reference questions and we allowed them to check out books, and so on. What's happened is that the spectrum has kind of stretched in librarianship. When I first went into librarianship, the role of academic librarians was pretty clear, and the kind of student we were dealing with was pretty consistent. We tended to have white kids who came from suburbs and went to the University of California. The population that we serve has stretched. You still have the very bright kids that have had a lot of advantages in growing up, and you have kids who, rather clearly, have never used or had a library very much available to them, and they may be the first in their family to go to college. So in that sense the clientele has changed, and then the way that you serve the clientele has changed. So we now become less the people with the answer, and more the people to help be, kind of, the sherpa—how you get through this information. There were these wonderful couple of lines I read, oh, probably ten or fifteen years ago, which said, in essence . . . "Two years before we were saying, 'All information will be at our fingertips.' And then two years later we said, 'Oh my God. All information is at our fingertips.'" (both laugh) So we went from the finders of the information, to teaching how to discriminate among the quality, and

finding out, is this a good source, or is that a good source?

Reti: So library instruction becomes more and more important . . .

Dyson: Yeah. It does. And in some of the areas the statistics can be kind of misleading. If you're doing a good job your circulation statistics have probably gone down because more and more material is available online. And circulation statistics, remember, isn't just books. It's also things that people before might have put on reserve, papers that they put on reserve, or things like that too, which now they'll probably mount on a website or something because there's no reason for students to have to come and check it out. But at the same time, your reference work becomes more important, and getting out there and doing that reference work.

The other major element of all of that, of course, is getting the information to the desktop. That, of course, has been an enormous new role that the library plays. When we took a look, as part of a campus ten-year growth plan, what we saw in terms of personnel, was that we were going to need more and more technical people. They were the library staff that was going to get that information out there.

So those are the two big changes. First, and most importantly, the technology one. Our ability both to get what I would call the standard information, the journal articles and everything, out. And also in the area of the unique materials that are owned by the library, the ability to digitize information and make that available for the first time to

people without them having to come to the library.

[And the second change:] At the same time, the clientele we've dealt with has really broadened. So we've had to stretch ourselves that way too. At the most extreme, we've sent librarians to people's houses on Saturdays to help them figure out how the heck they can get access to the journals that the library has that are online, because their computer set-up doesn't seem to enable them to do that.

Reti: Really? They've actually done that?

Dyson: Yeah. Yeah. You don't do it every Saturday, but sometimes that's the best way to solve a particular problem. I know that the professional staff here has done that. On the other hand, you may be working with kids that really don't have any sense as to how to do a research project.

I would say that those two changes are the biggest that I've seen. The nature of the academic enterprise hasn't changed that much. How we serve it, the techniques we use, and who we serve has changed. That's largely it.

Challenges and Rewards

Reti: We've talked about many of the challenging episodes that you had to deal with. Last time we did a whole interview session on that. But generally, what would you say the biggest challenge for you has been as UL?

Dyson: In a sense, nothing really leaps to mind, because I've had so much fun doing the darn job over the years . . .

Reti: (laughter)

Dyson: I really felt that this was a good match between my talents, the profession, and where I practice the profession. I regret that it took as long as it did for me to figure out that our recruitment of minority librarians was seriously off kilter. There was no reason why it needed to take me ten years to figure out that one. I wasn't the only person, obviously, in the organization, the library, that had a hard time figuring that one out, but it should have happened faster. Most of the other things that I regret are things that it would have been hard to anticipate. As you say, I've talked about most of them. It's hard to anticipate that somebody's going to cut up jazz photos, you know?

Reti: Right. (laughter)

Dyson: And I think that if you wish to give a meaningful amount of independence to your department heads so that they feel strong and creative and do their thing, there's no perfect amount, because you can keep bad things from happening, but then you don't get anything else done because you're micromanaging everything. I think, overall, that we've done about as well as we could. Now I realize I'm starting to sound like George Bush here. "What would you have changed? What do you regret? What mistakes have you made?" "Geez, mistakes? I never thought about that."

Reti: (laughter) Well, I'm thinking more in terms of your advice for a successor. What's challenging about this job? I know there are many rewards as well.

Dyson: Well . . . it always . . . it's, you know, people. (laughter) Anybody that doesn't answer that question that way is lying to you flat-out. (both laugh) I mean, anything that involves serving a large number of very bright, in some ways eccentric, folks that decided to spend their lives analyzing some particular small topic to death, is probably going to occasionally cause you problems. And anything that involves managing a large group of very bright people who are in a helping profession that isn't always treated by its surroundings with the full amount of grace that it should have been treated with, is going to cause problems. It just comes with the territory. You are going to have irascible donors, and occasionally you're going to have to decide that they're so irascible that you don't want them to be a donor. You're going to have occasional clientele that go over the edge. You're going to have occasional staff that sure look good on paper that don't work out at all, and then you have the grief of having to move them along to a different institutional choice, shall we say. But those are the things that always bug you. On a given day, it's the people that ought to be looking for ways to get along seeming to look for ways not to get along, you know. I'm sure you have experienced that in your career too. But I find that if you strive for a kind of consistent fairness, when bad things happen, people will give you the benefit of the doubt.

What you strive for is not avoiding the bad things that happen once in a while that we've talked about. What you strive for is having people say, "Gee, you know, that's really bad."

They're such a good organization, and fate has to whack everybody once in a while, but it's too bad it was them, and I'm sure they'll land on their feet." If you can achieve that, then you've achieved a lot. I don't think since I arrived that anybody ever doubted the quality of the library. That's not because of me; it's just that over the years, the decisions we've made, the service we've provided, et cetera, et cetera . . . they've always been willing to say, "That's a good organization, and if this or that thing is happening, it doesn't seem appropriate, I mustn't know the facts," or, "Gee, this is just a bad one and I'm sure they'll come out of it okay."

That's really it. I mean, I would have liked to buy stock when it was fifty cents, and went on to become Apple Computer, or something, or HP . . .

Reti: (laughter)

Dyson: . . . and the equivalent kind of things, but I don't have a lot of regrets about, "Gee, if we'd only taken that other path then we'd be twice as big and an ARL library," or, "Gee, we had this shot at this really good person and we didn't hire them and they went on to do wonderful things." Well, the person we hired was probably great, and did wonderful things too. Maybe different wonderful things.

Reti: Well, that's a good place to be at retirement.

Dyson: Yeah.

Reti: I know there are many things you enjoyed about your job, but what would you say was the best part for you?

Dyson: Oh, the most enjoyment I ever get out of the job, absolutely without question, is when somebody that I have brought along goes on to do something that's spectacular. I just can't tell you the thrill that I feel when someone from systemwide would come up and say, "Boy, that person you put on that committee was just superb." And I say back, "And, yeah, wait till you see the next three I've got coming up." Almost all of the really best part of it is seeing—and obviously, as you get older—seeing younger people come in, and you giving them advice, and seeing them grow, and do good jobs. I could run through nineteen different people over the years that I would think, oh, yeah, that time that they did that, and then I got that email saying, "Oh boy, what a superb job they did." That absolutely, is what you have to live off.

A lot of good management involves avoiding the disastrous. There's a wonderful *New Yorker* cartoon. The fact that I think it's a wonderful cartoon shows you a lot about my management style, which I probably should mention a little bit about. It's of that middle-aged kind of droopy fellow with the briefcase who gets home and his wife is standing there and he says, "Well, another day without irreversible damage." (both laugh) And somehow there are days, weeks, and sometimes months that that's the most you can hope for.

As I guess has probably come through in this whole series of interviews, I've often

thought of myself as an executive director. And by that I mean I am the person that creates the climate, that sets the standards, that generates the space and budgetary resources, whereby the professional and top-notch support staff can do their thing. I'm not the best reference librarian. I'm not the best cataloger. I'm not the best science bibliographer. I'm not even the best shelver. There's very little that I add in terms of what people, the clientele, expects from the library. You don't make the best neurosurgeon on your staff the head of the hospital. It's the last thing in the world you want them to be doing. (laughter) You want them out there doing neurosurgery. And in a sense, I think, a top library administrator has to have that kind of sense of what it is to manage an organization like this.

So what that means is you don't see a whole lot of creativity coming out of me personally. There've been a few things over the years that I can point to that really were my ideas. But for the most part I have tried to create an atmosphere where the best ideas that came up from professional or support staff, we found ways to implement. I call it the "effervescence theory" rather than the "sediment theory." I suppose you could have swamp gas bubbling up from the bottom, instead of champagne bubbles. But that's always been my image of how the system ought to work. I've said over and over again to people, "If you come up with a good, solid, creative idea, we will find a way to fund it. I don't care how bad the budget situation is." I remember that in absolutely the worst budget year, the one where we really had to make the statement, because people were fearful for their jobs, that there would be no layoffs, that we had budget committees all over the library finding where we could save an extra pencil, we still found the money

to—if I remember correctly—the project was to increase the ability of putting our slides collection online, the Slidecat.

Reti: Yes.

Dyson: You either do that stuff or you die, because if all you do is cut back, and you give lousy service, then when the budget starts to improve, “We don’t want to give you the money. You haven’t had a new idea in years and the service you have now is worse than it was before.” So you always have to be coming up with new, creative, beneficial ways of showing that you’re a top-notch organization. And we’ve always said that flat-out. I’ve said that to department heads. “I know the budget’s bad, but don’t ever stop bringing forward your best ideas. I will get the money for it, one way or another. I’ll get it from the campus, or we’ll use some donor money, or I’ll find a new donor, or something.” And we’ve always done that. That’s what I mean by being an executive director and being able to find resources for our creative staff.

I like to believe, and I don’t know if this is true—this may be rationalization—but I don’t think you can be both. I don’t think you can be seen as the person who generates most of the new ideas, and not have that have an impact on the staff, that their job is to carry out the boss’s ideas. You make a kind of fundamental choice. What kind of organization is this going to be? It’s been the very rare organization that has somebody come in, and I don’t just mean library organization, that has somebody come in that’s very creative, that does spectacular things for the first year or two or three, but then can continue that

kind of thing forever. If you don't build an organization where the new ideas are also coming from everybody else around you, if that isn't your focus, then you're going to die real fast. Because no one human can possibly generate, in my case, all of the creative new things that need to happen in serving our library clientele. I mean, how could anyone possibly do that? I've got thirty professionals on my staff, all of whom were supposedly the best available in the country at the point that we hired them. It's going to be my job to figure out how to give better science reference classes? I don't have a clue how you do that. I could find out cheaper ways of checking in journals in the acquisitions department? I don't think so. But you create an atmosphere where you reward people who do that, and it's as much psychological rewards as monetary rewards, because there's not a lot of flexibility in the way that a civil-service-like organization is set up to give a lot of monetary rewards. But people can advance; they can get new challenges; they can take on important committees; they can get recognition. Those kind of things can happen. They can go off to conferences and give papers about what they did. So that has been how I've approached librarianship and how I've particularly approached this job. That's why I say it's hard for me to think of things that I regret, because there weren't that many things I initiated. (laughter) It was more encouraging the good work, all the exciting work that the staff did over the years.

Issues Facing the University Library

Reti: What issues were facing the University Library at the time of your retirement?

Dyson: Well, the big one, of course, is the McHenry Addition. I mean, more than

anything else, that's been the kind of thing that's dominated our life, in the sense that it even affects, "Gee, can we accept this new collection into Special Collections?" You spend money deselecting books and sending them off to the regional storage facility. Your bibliographers are spending their time doing that. Your reference librarians are helping people find other sources for information because the material that you have isn't here. All of that kind of stuff.

The other thing I have to say . . . It's disappointed me how long it's taken the campus to replace my position. I say that simply because of all of the things we've said about the library as academic support; the library's needing to kind of be in-your-face, to remind people that we're there and what our needs are. I have absolutely no doubt that the professional staff that was here when I left is capable of having the library continue in its current form almost indefinitely. Bob White and Kate McGirr have done a wonderful job leading the library in the interim. But in terms of new resources, in terms of keeping the library in the mind of the chancellor or the executive vice chancellor and that kind of thing, that's an awful hard thing to do if you don't have someone. I gave my notice at the end of November 2002, and it's now 2005. That's an amazing stretch of time for them. I doubt if they'll have anybody before the fall of 2005. They're actively recruiting right now.

There was some feeling, and I don't know how much this was rationalization, that they didn't want to hire the new university librarian until the new chancellor was in place. I don't think that's going to lead to any different decision, but once people get that in their

mind it's hard to argue with it. That's a chronological kind of thing. Now the new chancellor is just about to arrive in the next couple of weeks, and they have set up a new search committee. That's been appointed. They're starting to search very seriously. So I suspect they'll be successful.

The concern I have in terms of the McHenry Addition, (laughter) as I said to Bob White recently, "Somehow I think they're taking this 'library without walls' a little too literally." I mean, the construction costs have gone up enormously and they're talking about cutting things out, and no, no, no! "Library without walls" is a metaphor. (laughter) It doesn't mean we can afford not to have the bathrooms and loading docks and things like that that you have to have. I'm hoping it will move along quickly.

Retirement

Reti: What are you doing now?

Dyson: What am I doing now? In a certain sense I'm decompressing. I didn't realize how much responsibility you feel when you're in this job, until I didn't have it any more. I'm just allowing myself a lot of time to wind down. In a sense, I'm waiting for myself to become bored. (both laugh) So far I haven't been. In part, it's because I, if you remember, I was called back for eight months, part-time, and so that kind of filled in the time around the edges. Then this fall my thirteen-year-old daughter started at a wonderful little school for kids with learning issues down in Seaside. My wife and I have been very involved in that school and getting her back and forth, on school days, and then going to

see her basketball games and all that kind of stuff takes up a lot of time. It's an hour and a half to two hours round trip every time you do it, and you eat up a lot of time in your day, and when you've just driven that, you don't feel like immediately rushing into some project. We've done an enormous amount of work around our house which kind of backed up: painting, and new windows, and redoing the kitchen and all that kind of stuff. My wife retired this fall from being a full-time teacher, I think for many of the same reasons that I feel grateful about not having the responsibility and accountability for a university library on my shoulders. She worked very hard, and was very good as a fourth grade teacher. But we're both taking it easy.

I could invent all sorts of wondrous things that I intend to do, and I don't know whether I'll do them. You know, maybe I'll go to a Red Sox spring training one of these days.

Reti: (laughter)

Dyson: I would love to do that. Because one of the high points of my life was last fall, to watch the Red Sox win the World Series, after waiting sixty-two years for that to happen. So, yeah, the Red Sox blood—I guess you can't say my blood runs red because it does anyway, (both laugh) but if blood wasn't red, mine would be.

Reti: It goes deep.

Dyson: I've been an enormous fan of the Red Sox my entire life. And I'm starting, finally,

to get to read some of the books that I have so carefully watched over all these years. Let's see, what am I reading right now? Something called *Founding Brothers*, which is incredibly interesting stories, Pulitzer Prize winning stories about the founding of the United States, the interrelationship of the various people. It's nice. I was a government major in college and it's great to be able to have the time and just sit down and get into a good book and read it as much as you want.

Reti: Well, thank you very much, Lan. I've enjoyed this.

Dyson: I'm glad you have!

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