

CWU LIVING HISTORY PROJECT

HENRY EICKHOFF

Eickoff: . . . in the meantime I had decided I would much rather go into music so after graduating in St. Louis I went to Northwestern University and received a master's in music in 1950 at which point I came to Central as a - a one year replacement for a man who was going on to Harvard to do further graduate work. During the course of my first year, he resigned his position and so I find myself on the faculty. So I arrived in June of 1950 and essentially I taught here with some years off for further study as well as for sabbatical leaves until August of 1989 when I retired.

Lowther: Did you come from a musical family?

Eickoff: Yes. My mother was a - was a pianist essentially and she started me in music.

Lowther: When you came to Central, did you have any terminal degrees?

Eickoff: No, I had a master's in music - I should say a master's in music too in organ performance when I arrived but I decided that for further degree work I would much rather go into the history of music and I went back to Northwestern for numerous summers as well as a full year and in 1960 I received a Phd from Northwestern.

Lowther: When you came to Central, what was your beginning rank and what was your first assignment?

Eickoff: My rank so far as I know - I was very naive in those days and didn't pay much attention to that sort of thing - I assume it was instructor. It could have been acting, assistant professor, I suppose, but I'm not sure. My assignment was to teach whatever organ students there were but I also taught some piano lessons. I taught the courses in the history of music and also those in the introduction to music for non music people.

Lowther: Did you continue that pattern or did you decide to change over the years?

Eickoff: Well, essentially I continued that pattern but as the music department developed and as the - certainly after graduate courses came into being I concentrated more and more on the history of music and on teaching organ. Just those two. And the history of music courses involved basic courses for undergraduate music majors as well as upper division courses and graduate courses.

Lowther: You undoubtedly dealt with a great many students at the University?

Eickoff: I should say.

Lowther: Did you - have you observed any change in quality of students?

Eickoff: Well as I recall students at the - when I first started teaching here I - I felt that, of course, some of them were very serious, others just wanted to get through and that pattern of course held as long as I was here but I do feel that as the years progressed students tended to be better prepared and come with more serious intentions.

Lowther: Were you as a music faculty member held responsible for recruiting students?

Eickoff: No, I was not.

Lowther: Did the department, so far as you know, have any particular procedures for recruiting students?

Eickoff: I think certain faculty members from time to time attended high school - large high school concerts in order that they could talk with some of the students they considered more promising students to try to get them to come here but there were no so far as I can remember there were no definite procedures in place for recruitment.

Lowther: As you think back over those years of service, do you recall any particular problems that stand out in your mind?

Eickoff: I suspect I could say that there were mainly two problems particularly in the early early years. One is that the administration - people in the administration seemed to me to have the opinion that any student who came here should graduate honorably. As I recall that was even the phrase used no matter what his performance. I mean he would have to be pretty bad in order to be declined graduation. In other words, I think that the expectations in some instances were very much lower than they should have been. Secondly, in my early years and of course I can judge only from my own department there was a feeling that the - I should say the division. There were no departments in those days. The division chairman was - was just the autocrat and in a sense the faculty members were doing the day by day nitty gritty and, you know, by his grace and this was a feeling that pervaded at least certainly my department for quite a few years. Those are the problems that I can think of. Others may come up as the questions proceed.

Lowther: Okay. Did - what were the - what was the work load that you had?

Eickoff: I don't remember, frankly, what exactly what the workload was but I felt that there were times when all of us in the music department were expected to do extra things that were not - that were not part of our regular load.

Lowther: Can you tell me what a typical day of teaching looked like?

Eickoff: Do you mean back in the 1950's or in the '80's?

Lowther: Did it change?

Eickoff: I think it did. I think that if you remember the '50's -

Lowther: I can't remember the '50's. Or the 60's. In other words, was it 15 credit hours?

Eickoff: All I recall, what I can recall is that let's say in the '60's and '70's and the '80's essentially I recall it was perhaps 13 hours plus private lessons. It was always very difficult to judge the correct amount.

Lowther: Was there a formula for -

Eickoff: There was a formula which I can't remember now. But the formula certainly was not equated with the time put into the lesson. That is usually as I recall it was something like three half hour lessons for one credit load. Something like that which I felt was grossly unfair?

Lowther: Okay. Do you recall the atmosphere in the department? Was it a pleasant place to work? Was there a sense of collegiality among the faculty? Did you get along well with the administration?

Eickoff: Well the music department - my colleagues in the music department certainly were pleasant to get along with. I have no - we had arguments from time to time. It's inevitable. But basically yes, it was a very

pleasant place in which to work. As the years progressed, for myself, I discovered that my chairman and I were often at odds but we managed to get along.

Lowther: Are there people that come to mind as particularly outstanding. Like to?

Eickoff: Outstanding. Do you mean for good or for bad?

Lowther: For good and for bad, yes.

Eickoff: Well of course I think of the three presidents under whom I was active. Robert McConnell and Jim Brooks and Don Garitty. I think during the time of Jim Brooks' presidency I think particularly of Charles McCann who was - began his career here as a professor of English and went into administration and became - I can't remember what his exact title was - Vice President for Academic Affairs?

Lowther: Dean of Faculty?

Eickoff: Faculty or dean of studies or something. I don't remember the title.

Lowther: What do you remember about him as an administrator?

Eickoff: Well, he was I feel very progressive and forward thinking and I think brought a degree of higher - or a vision of higher academic excellence to the campus and this I think his quality was what led him to be named the first president of Evergreen State after he left here.

Lowther: What do you remember about President McConnell?

Eickoff: What I remember about President McConnell is that most of the faculty with whom I was closely associated really didn't care much for his approach. His approaches, let's say. One thing I do - one little incident that I do remember my good friend Floyd Rodine was in the history department. Somehow or another he was named the faculty representative to attend the meetings of the Board of Trustees. How this came about I am not sure who agitated for this. It may have been the Faculty Council. It may have been the faculty as a whole. It may have been the Board of Trustees. I'm not sure but Robert McConnell was violently opposed to this idea. Floyd told me once that the first meeting of the Board of Trustees he attended there was no chair for him so he sat on the floor. This was obviously - it seemed to him as very purposely done until one of the members of the Board of Trustees went out and got a chair for him. So I gather from that that the idea of faculty participation or even observation of administrative affairs let's say McConnell didn't like this at all.

Lowther: Would you say that McConnell had a kind of a paternalistic approach to the college administration?

Eickoff: Oh, I think so. He and his upper administrators, the autocrats - those who knew how to get at -

Lowther: Did you have direct dealing with him? Did you have to go and ask permission about anything?

Eickoff: Oh, he was very available in his office. I went to talk with him a number of times. I remember one occasion going and talking to him about the disposition of the records - the recordings in the music department. The chairman of the music department wanted those kept in the music building where I felt there was not adequate supervision for these recordings - supervision of maintaining the recordings and their usage - the use of these recordings. As I say, my chairman did not want them to move from the music department and I was very strongly opposed to this and wanted them moved to the main library where there was a music section and so I just went to Dr. McConnell and explained the problem to him which of course was going above my department chairman but - so I was able to do this.

Lowther: Jim Brooks? What do you remember about President Brooks?

Eickoff: Jim was young and I think he had many good ideas and put many of these ideas into effect. The main thing I remember, of course, is the tremendous expansion of campus during his time. I also remember certain things like the passage by the Board of Trustees - the passing of the academic - absolute academic freedom act. I don't know what it was called exactly but it was under his time that this academic freedom was stressed as a principle here on campus.

Lowther: Don Garitty? Do you have any recollections or remembrances of his presidency?

Eickoff: I have to say I don't have any particular reminiscences. All I can say is that he was a very good president and I'm sorry that he left.

Lowther: Did you have many direct dealings with him?

Eickoff: Not very many. I was free to talk with him occasionally when I met him on the campus but I never had any occasion to go to his office and talk with him.

Lowther: When you came, do you remember who the division chairman was?

Eickoff: Do you mean in the division of music?

Lowther: Was music a division?

Eickoff: Music - the curious academic arrangement when I came was that music was a division to itself. Art and industrial arts were divisions to themselves. I think home economics was a division all to itself and all of the - all of the so called social sciences which involved everything from history to sociology and all that was just all squeezed into one division so - and all of the sciences. All of the natural sciences were a division. So you're asking about?

Lowther: Who was the chair of your division?

Eickoff: Oh, Wayne Hertz.

Lowther: Wayne Hertz. So, he was the chair most of the time you were here?

Eickoff: Until he retired and I can't remember now the year he retired.

Lowther: He was there a long time. Do you have any particular recollections or funny stories?

Eickoff: Well, I have many many recollections of Wayne Hertz. As I mentioned, he and I were often at odds over policy in the music department and I really don't want to get into all of that but he, of course, I mentioned earlier this matter of - of allowing all students who came to graduate. He was very unhappy when I would give a student low enough grades to discourage this particular student. Also in the matter of let's say faculty hiring, this may have been true in other departments also. There were no national searches for faculty members. It was usually the word of mouth sort of recommendation. Wayne would know somebody in Oregon who had a brother that knew somebody that played the French Horn or something like this and the next thing we knew we'd have a knew tuba player or a knew trombone player or, you know, and sometimes these people lasted for years and sometimes they were Wayne's favorite boys for awhile and ultimately somehow if they got in his way he managed to have them resign.

Lowther: Would you describe your relationship with Wayne as tense?

Eickoff: At times. Certainly we got along on the surface most of the time.

Lowther: When - you mentioned that some of the students that you had you felt deserved low marks. Would that generally mean because of some laziness, an unwillingness to work on the part of the student or was it simply a matter of not having the ability that is required as a musician?

Eickoff: I think in some cases it was simply a lack of ability. It was that they were simply not ? for studying the music. Other times I know that it was simply not doing the required work. I think in my teaching I always kept it very clear what I expected the students to do and what they were responsible for and some of them just didn't come through.

Lowther: Did you get encouragement from your chairman and your department in maintaining academic standards?

Eickoff: Not really, no. From some of my colleagues, yes, but I felt that ? the standards that I was trying to maintain. I felt that many times my ? too high. That they were unrealistic expectations. For example, also in my grading practices I gave many many more C's than B's.

Lowther: Did you get a feel as to how students themselves felt ? to maintain throughout the department?

Eickoff: Well I was always regarded, of course, as a difficult teacher and the students knew that. On the other hand, many students - and I heard by a grapevine, not from students themselves felt that I was very fair because I made clear what I expected. Some students - there were some students, of course, who just felt that I'd been much too hard. They were students who shouldn't have been there in the first place.

Lowther: Well, let's go beyond the department. Did you serve on any campus wide committees?

Eickoff: Yes, I know that for quite a few years I was on a campus wide curriculum committee. In fact I was chairman of the committee for some years.

Lowther: Do you remember approximately when that was?

Eickoff: No I can't. I'm afraid I can't.

Lowther: Can you give me the decade?

Eickoff: It was probably in the '60's. It was at a time when all recommendations for new courses had to come through this one committee so our load got to be very very heavy. Then, after that, it was divided between two committees. I was on one of those. I don't remember how the committee was divided but that committee I remember very clearly. Another committee that I served on was at the beginning of Jim Brooks' presidency. I was on a committee - was chairman of the committee at least for a year which looked at the administration of the - division administration with a view to changing it to a departmental organization.

Lowther: An ad hoc committee?

Eickoff: Yes, yes. It was an ad hoc committee on the matter of academic organization and I remember that the committee recommended a departmental structure.

Lowther: Do you know why they did that? What was the rationale behind it? Going away from the division organization to the departmental organization?

Eickoff: Well, I think one of the main elements of reasoning was this matter of the unequal distribution. For example, all of the natural sciences in one division. All of the so called social sciences in one division where on the other hand certain disciplines such as music and art were in a division entirely by themselves.

Lowther: They didn't have a division of fine and performing arts.

Eickoff: No.

Lowther: Do you think it had something to do with the growth of the institution?

Eickoff: Oh, I'm sure. I'm sure.

Lowther: Was there much opposition to the change?

Eickoff: I recall some opposition. I don't think essentially there was much opposition. I can remember Sara Spurgeon in the art department complaining and well, within the field of art there could be separate departments such as the history of art, art education, and painting and sculpture and what have you which of course essentially I suppose each discipline would be subdivided into sub departments. But this is the sort argument that ? sometimes.

Lowther: When you were on the curriculum committee, do you recall any major issues?

Eickoff: It was a more routine committee. The meetings, as I recall, were quite routine except when a person would come and put in a plug for a particular course and we would not recommend the course. I can't remember any specific courses.

Lowther: Now, you didn't have responsibility for the general education requirements? That was a separate committee?

Eickoff: I believe so.

Lowther: Okay. So you served on the curriculum committee, the ad hoc committee on academic organization. Were there any others?

Eickoff: Not major committees outside of the music department. In the music department certainly I was on various committees.

Lowther: When I came in 1965 there was a very different general education program than what we've had in more recent years and I don't know whether you remember it. As I recall there were about eight or nine separate categories and sometimes the course was required, sometimes a choice. Would you care to react to the changes in the general education program?

Eickoff: All I can say is that when I first came this divisional structure was part of the basis for the general education program. Each division was allotted a certain number of hours for a general education course or perhaps several courses. I don't recall all of the changes along the way through the years that I was teaching.

Lowther: So you didn't have any particularly strong reaction to one pattern over another?

Eickoff: No, not any strong reaction to one pattern over another. However, I always had a very strong reaction within the music department about the feelings of some faculty members that music students shouldn't have to take all of these other things. I was very very very upset about this.

Lowther: What was your own position?

Eickoff: My own position was that - that students in music should first of all be well educated students. That they should be taking as much history and English and science as possible outside the department.

Lowther: Were there some in the department who felt that they should operate pretty much as a music conservatory?

Eickoff: Well, I think so. They were all - they felt that the general education program was too demanding of student's time. They wanted more time for specific music courses and performance. That sort of a thing.

Lowther: Did most of your students plan to go into performance or were most of them planning to be teachers?

Eickoff: I think most of them were planning to be teachers. Some of them came just for a general education in music. Some of them came for emphasis on performance but I feel that mainly they came - or the history of the music department was there was a strong emphasis for teaching.

Lowther: It seems to me that about ten or fifteen years ago the music department adopted a very large major - over 100 hours. Do you recall that?

Eickoff: I recall just very very vaguely and I know there was - what I do recall was that there was antagonism on the part of certain people outside of the music department because of the number of hours that would be required. My own opinion was that it was ridiculous for a music student to try to get a degree in three or four years what should have been a five year program.

Lowther: Would you have liked to make it a five year program?

Eickoff: Yes I would.

Lowther: And especially, I suppose, for teachers?

Eickoff: Not necessarily. For the performance requirements. Not only individual performance but also group performance requirements. Or simply the amount of time involved in student preparation for performance but my idea was also that they received an adequate education in all disciplines.

Lowther: And that would really be more than what could be done in four years?

Eickoff: I think so.

Lowther: Okay, now since a great many of your students were in the teaching program, do you have anything to do with that phase of the major program and did you have any dealings with the education department.

Eickoff: Not really. There was in the - there always was in the music department a specialist or two maybe even in music education and I myself had no direct dealings with any - I did not teach any courses directed towards education because part of my idea was that in order to be a good teacher first of all your student must be knowledgeable about music history, music theory and also perform some kind of performance so that is what I emphasized in my teaching.

Lowther: There are a number of topics on this list if you recall that you may want to react to and you may not. If you have anything you'd like to say about them why go ahead and if not we'll pass by them. The faculty salary schedule?

Eickoff: I have nothing definite to say about that. Of course, I always complained with all of the others that we didn't get paid enough.

Lowther: Okay. How about the promotion policies and merit policies? Did you feel that these were fair?

Eickoff: I think that in the music department they were not always fair and I think it was a matter of popularity of the often - I don't mean entirely but partly a matter of the popularity of a particular instructor with students, his relationship with the chairman and certainly also his relationship with the other faculty members rather than a really objective analysis of the teaching.

Lowther: Within your department, how were such things as merit increases -

Eickoff: Recommendations for promotion?

Lowther: Yeah.

Eickoff: These were handled through a personnel committee on which I served a number of different times.

Lowther: Were there - was there very much controversy about decisions that they made - did decisions have to be ratified by the department?

Eickoff: I don't recall. I don't recall whether these - whether these recommendations from the personnel committee went directly to an administrator or whether they were ratified. I just don't recall.

Lowther: Okay. Faculty code?

Eickoff: Well, when I came here for the first decade let's say the faculty code was regarded as the - how should I say it - contract on which a faculty member could count on vis a vis the administration.

Lowther: Okay. Were you happy with the code generally throughout your career?

Eickoff: I think so. I never had anything directly to do with it.

Lowther: Okay. Was academic freedom ever an issue in your department?

Eickoff: No, I don't believe so.

Lowther: Do you have any recollections of Boards of Trustees? Were you much aware of their presence?

Eickoff: I knew some of the people on various Boards of Trustees. Very slightly. But I was not much aware of their activities outside of reading about their decisions after it was over.

Lowther: The legislature? Did you have any recollections of the relationship of this institution and the legislature?

Eickoff: No.

Lowther: And related to that, the adequacy of financial support?

Eickoff: Well, one always felt that there could be more support.

Lowther: Okay.

Eickoff: I don't have, you know, strong opinions about all of this. I was never greatly involved politically, you know, with the Board of Trustees, the administration and their dealings with the legislature and so on.

Lowther: Do you recall any talk of closing Central?

Eickoff: Yes, at various points.

Lowther: Why did these suggestions spring up?

Eickoff: I really don't know. The rumors just surfaced from time to time.

Fortunately nothing ever came of them.

Lowther: Okay, the faculty senate? Anything that you recall concerning the faculty senate?

Eickoff: Well I had a feeling that more and more as the - as the years proceeded and I think I served on the faculty senate on two different - I just don't remember. Not too long but there were several different times that I served on the faculty senate. I had a feeling that more and more it was sort of becoming somewhat irrelevant and unwieldy. The whole arrangement should have been a smaller body that could handle work more efficiently.

Lowther: Okay. Town and gown relationships?

Eickoff: I have no - I have no definite feelings?

Lowther: Were you encouraged to present programs and recitals?

Eickoff: Yes, we certainly were. For example, every other year or so I presented a program for the Ellensburg Musical Club. I played for quite a long time in a local church. So yes, in other words, we became in that regard part of the active community.

Lowther: Okay. Do you think that the department was well thought of?

Eickoff: Yes, I know it was.

Lowther: How do you know that?

Eickoff: Because they would come to us for programs or either faculty programs or student programs. The department always obliged so I think we were well regarded.

Lowther: Did you feel that these performances?

Eickoff: One of the problems I discovered in teaching in the music department and particularly because I was both an organist as well as a music historian that it was very difficult to try to do some scholarly work in the history of music as well as to keep up my keyboard performance so that I could give some

performances. Furthermore, so far as I was concerned, there was not time enough allotted in the schedule to do this sort of thing. One simply had to make time and fill one's day rather full in order to make time for let's say practicing on the keyboard.

Lowther: Did you feel that you should be doing more in terms of historical scholarship?

Eickoff: Yes, I do. I feel I should have done more, yes.

Lowther: You didn't have any guilt feelings did you?

Eickoff: Yes, I did.

Lowther: But circumstances were such that you just couldn't do teaching, performance and scholarship all at the same time.

Eickoff: Well I usually spent a great deal of time in class preparations and this took some of the time that I should have devoted to some research and also some music practice.

Lowther: Were you under much pressure to teach summer school?

Eickoff: No, no not at all. I never felt pressure. I usually was able to teach when I wanted to and not to if I chose not to.

Lowther: Did you teach summer school very often?

Eickoff: The first several years I did. I taught here during the summers. In fact my very first trip out here was for summer school. Then when I started working on my doctorate at Northwestern I used all my summers to study. And then after I received my doctorate I taught when I wanted to and I did teach quite frequently.

Lowther: Do you - when you retired what was your rank?

Eickoff: Professor of music.

Lowthr: Were you under pressure to continue to publish in your field?

Eickoff: No, I felt no pressure. The only pressure I felt was from myself.

Lowther: Okay. What do you think you have contributed to the progress of your department and the university?

Eickoff: Well, I think I helped in the push towards higher standards of achievement in the music department. I worked on curriculum committee a number of times in the music department and I helped to expand the offerings in the theory of music and the history of music. Both of which I felt were not adequately treated in the curriculum during my early years here. So I feel I particularly developed curriculum in the let's say the academic aspects of music and also in general music standards I think I contributed something to the music department.

Lowther: Do you have any - would you like to say anything about any of your colleagues that you considered particularly outstanding in your department?

Eickoff: This is very difficult. I haven't given this any thought. I would prefer not to just randomly pick out –

Lowther: That's fine, Is there anything else that you would like to say about your career? Any particular anecdotes you want to tell?

Eickoff: Well one anecdote that came - or one story that came to my mind when I saw that list of topics during my very early years here - perhaps the first three years there was always - or perhaps even longer than that - there was a summer school graduation - a separate graduation program at the end of summer school. Often this was held outside. Right at the - in the - at times - right at the beginning it was held on the lawn right underneath or in front of the old music building which was between what is now Shaw-Smyser and what is now the computer –

Lowther: You mean the old Edison Building?

Eickoff: Well, the music department was in the old Edison Building.

Lowther: Yeah.

Eickoff: Yes, okay. And for some reason or other there - I don't know whether there were no band instruments or band performers available. They chose not to use the band but they wanted organ music. Dr. McConnell was always terribly interested in having some type of organ music. Not per se, but just something going on the background. So, several times a - the organ - and it was just a small very inadequate instrument on the top floor of Edison Hall, which was the music building, was used. The windows were thrown wide open and it was expected that the people down on the lawn could benefit from hearing the organ music come out of the windows and this was for some time before the ceremony, for the march for the ceremony itself, for the singing of the hymn - the college hymn - whatever it was called. And the whole thing was sort of ridiculous to imagine how this possibly worked but some how or another it did.

Lowther: And he wanted that before the graduation ceremony?

Eickoff: Well, he wanted music before the ceremony to be going on when people assembled and also certainly during the time when the graduates and the faculty marched to their seats.

Lowther: You, of course, had to play the organ?

Eickoff: Yes, I played the organ and there was someone at the window watching so they could tell me when - I couldn't see a thing.

Lowther: Well, was that where the line formed to go? I assume the ceremony was held –

Eickoff: It was on the lawn right in front of where Mitchell Hall is now.

Lowther: Oh, okay. So it wasn't very far, was it?

Eickoff: No, it wasn't very far away but someone had to be there at the window to tell me what was going on so I would know what to play.

Lowther: Okay. Ham, did you have any questions?

Howard: No, I don't.

Lowther: I want to thank you very much for this interview.

Eickoff: My pleasure. Hope it was useful.

Lowther: It will be very useful.