

CWU LIVING HISTORY PROJECT

LARRY LAWRENCE

Lowther: Today we're interviewing Larry Lawrence who has retired from the English department and the interviewer is Larry Lowther and Ham Howard is operating the equipment. Larry, before we get into your career at Central, would you tell us a little bit about your family background. Where you were born and raised, what kind of family you were in and how you got your education and any career that occurred before coming to Central?

Lawrence: Okay. Born in Bozeman, Montana which was - haven't been there in a long time but Great Depression days went to high school in Stanford, Montana, the largest metropolitan center of the two basin County with 500 people in it. I found recently that it has gone up to 506 now. Graduated from high school in 1945 and of course immediately went into the army. I had scholarships from high school but by the time I got out of the army, of course, the G.I. Bill was much better. So I did get my bachelor's degree at Montana State University in English only because the V.A. said they would take my benefits away unless I declared a major. (laughs) I thought of history or law or something at one time they said I kept taking courses in English therefore I was an English major by accident. So, of course, from that time on got a master's at Stanford and then the doctorate eventually at Stanford. In the meantime, 1949, I married my wife Ann and by the time we - 1951 we went down to Stanford and we left there with one child and I was hired at the University of Oregon. Taught there seven years. We had three more children and that made four. It was sort of shameful to have a large family at the University of Oregon. We were very pleased when we came up here and found that Jim Brooks had more kids than we did. (laughs) Nobody was worried about our children here. So that was in 1963 that we moved up here, 32 years ago.

Lowther: Okay, and so what year did you retire?

Lawrence: 1988. Twenty-five years here.

Lowther: All right, were there - was there anything about the circumstances under which you were hired worthy of narration?

Lawrence: This is for college people. I left Eugene after seven years. I was getting an extension because I was an ABD, I hadn't finished a doctorate - doctoral thesis yet. They gave me an extra year. They didn't want to keep me there. Meanwhile, Keith Rinehart was here. He was a friend of Stanley Greenfield. The University of Oregon recommended me. I came up to interview and one thing I liked very much was that we were just going into the master's programs. I was told that I could build up the whole library for that and also of course teach all kinds of courses in my specialty and so that was a real attraction. And we planned to stay for a few years and we're still staying a few years after 32.

Lowther: What was your initial assignment?

Lawrence: Well initially I was hired as an Assistant Professor and initially actually I was given ? course and Renaissance Drama. We all taught of course Literary Values in the introductory freshman course and a composition course. So - and that was pretty much the pattern all through - well except I added a few things like Science Fiction and took over a course in the Bible as Literature and Graduate Director of the department. But I always liked the introductory courses.

Lowther: That Bible as Literature course, I thought that was introduced by Keith Rhinehart. Wasn't it?

Lawrence: It was and he turned it over to me because I taught that for I think about five years at the University of Oregon. They assigned the course to me there when someone retired because I was in Renaissance and so King James and all that therefore I could teach the Bible. (laughs) I had one quarter of

preparation and one quarter of teaching the Bible as Literature myself. But you work hard you know. You dig things up. So I taught it after that. I took that over from Keith as a matter of fact.

Lowther: When you came did you - were there many - as today - were there many part time people handling general ed. requirements?

Lawrence: Nope. One of the things I regret, everybody was hired with the idea that they would achieve tenure or move on and I don't think we had any part time people and of course no graduate assistants at that time. We were all permanent faculty although some people weren't given tenure. No that's a new development and I'm not too happy with it but nobody asked me.

Lowther: Do you remember what the teaching load was at that time?

Lawrence: Yeah. Four courses per quarter and the same at the University of Oregon where you would teach three comps and one freshman lit course so I was very happy there to get into teaching Shakespeare and the Bible and so on. Here it was usually two comp courses and then two literature courses. One introductory and one in your specialty but they usually seemed to get more in my specialty.

Lowther: Was the - were these usually three credit courses or four?

Lawrence: At that time they were pretty much three credit. Some of the introductory courses like Literary Values was five credits daily. Interesting enough later on the first time in 1968 when I first chaired the Senate I still taught four courses. No office, no secretary just on the side chaired the Faculty Senate you know but later on directing graduate students got somewhat lighter the last two years I didn't teach any composition. I felt so bad about that.

Lowther: You enjoy teaching composition?

Lawrence: Not really. Too many papers year after year you know. But I didn't really mind it like as I said I did like to work with introductory students instead of majors because I learned a lot from them too, even composition.

Lowther: Do you think that something has been lost by having part timers and people below the doctoral level teaching the freshman courses?

Lawrence: Yes, that is what I was indicating before. I feel very bad about that. We lose a great deal including expertise but mostly dedication in the sense of collegiality. These people have no future and some of them are very good, spouses and faculty members, but they don't have a stake in it instead of the sense of building it up like we had before. So I think the teaching is probably not quite so good and the departments I don't think are quite so comfortable in the sense of being part of a group. I'm sad to see that come about.

Lowther: Did students - you know the time that there was a kind of a switching over to part timers. Do you remember when - about when that happened?

Lawrence: That was I think actually I suppose not too much until about 1980 is the years I can remember. It's a very rough guesstimation but before that it was pretty much full time people who were expected to work their way to tenure or to go on somewhere but in 1980 of course with graduate programs we would have sometimes needed graduate students who had been assistants teaching and that wasn't bad. They vary under supervision. They probably worked harder than some of the faculty members did and good experience for the students and that was fine but part time - full time part time people teaching in various courses, I think something is lost.

Lowther: Did - at that time do you recall many student complaints of the quality of teaching?

Lawrence: Before that came in?

Lowther: No, after this was turned over to part timers.

Lawrence: Yeah the students often did not take them quite so seriously. They - some of them would come to me since I worked with graduate assistants and when I was directing the Graduate Program and they would say they were having some types of trouble controlling students but I'm curious, that shouldn't have been. I remember when I was at Stanford and a graduate assistant I happened to share an office with a permanent faculty member and my students came in my first year of teaching and one came in and said, 'I'm so glad I have a real college teacher instead of these graduate students teaching me.' I didn't correct them at all. (laughs) But at the same time, graduate assistants do have other things more important things going on. Most of them try very hard and under good supervision I think they are quite effective but when you come to the full time people working only part time there is no sense of the possibility of tenure. That's a different matter.

Lowther: How much did the student evaluations of the instructor, how much were you committed to that in determining whether that part time instructor would be continued in this town.

Lawrence: Oh I remember those years. I don't think a great deal and that's both good and bad. The students were making snap judgments and of course they were the ones that were the important people involved. I think that when you get kind of a considerate judgment from your co-teacher that was better in a way but in some ways it was very good, that whole movement because it did make more response. I don't know. I remember when Ron what's his name? He ran for senator, black -

Lowther: Sims?

Lawrence: Yeah, Ron Sims. He was here and he was the Student Body Chairman and I was the Faculty Senate Chair and he made all kinds of demands on me or once or twice he did because he said, 'After all, we're your employers. The students are the ones who pay you.' And I let him know, no the state pays me and my discipline is more important and students is what I want to work with to get into that but that's the days of students rebellion you know. They wanted to dictate to the teachers you know.

Lowther: Did you have any consciously held teaching philosophy? That is do you feel certain techniques were more efficacious than others?

Lawrence: I didn't - it wasn't consciously held but I generally cared to lecture with periods left open for questions and with the invitation always that they could ask questions and as a matter of fact the questions were very good. It's just that I started off with lecture with 60 students or so in the class at the University of Oregon. Eighty- five in one class up here. It obviously had to be mostly lecture, but again I never used notes. I had done so much work before that I wouldn't use notes at all and so I was responding on and about things happening in class. So it wasn't a canned collection any way. But I somehow was trying to impart to them what I had learned and let them build upon that and go further than that was the idea.

Lowther: What did you believe was the best way of teaching writing to students?

Lawrence: Simply making assignments usually by the way of previous choices. Asking them to write. Correcting in red very carefully. Returning them to them asking for revision and as a matter of fact I usually had ? talk to them. There was always a text and certain principles that you can give them about composition and all but for the most part its a matter of you to see what you've got to say about this subject and jot down roughly worded into an organized fashion and put in developments and usually as I said I tried to find topics that were of interest to them based upon a reader which I often used with the course.

Lowther: Now let's see, you became Chair. This was about 1968?

Lawrence: No, 1972. In '69-70 I went back and finished a doctorate and when I came back two years later I was selected Chairman. From '72-'76 I was Chair.

Lowther: Only those four years?

Lawrence: Yes, I decided one term was enough and I was followed by - I think it was

Tony Canedo and then Don Cummings. We'd go four years and I thought that was

enough and then I took over Keith who was retiring so I took over as Graduate

Director.

Lowther: Do you recall anything of particular significance in the way of change within the department that came during your tenure as Chair or would you recall any particular issues that stick out in your mind at that time?

Lawrence: Right. The - things changed within the department three years earlier and I think I was probably responsible for that and that is we wrote into the department code I think I was on the executive committee and Keith was Chair at that time and I think I spent my whole life on the Executive Committee too and that was helpful actually because again the chairman couldn't work with a group of more than four and had departmental meetings before establishing policy and so on. I made a mistake and this was during my own tenure. I asked the department to offer midterm evaluation. (laughs) I asked for it.

Lowther: Of the Chair?

Lawrence: Of the Chair. They did and they managed to get me with everything. I found out later that they really didn't care that much but boy I read that and thought I've been a lousy chairman and they told me, 'No there was a chance to - you don't give me Black classes, the ones I wanted this and that you know so but that was retained and was a helpful thing instead of just a faculty meeting that was too large to hear anything.

Lowther: About how large was the department at that time?

Lawrence: Oh, at that time I think we had about 20 people. It was one of the larger department. Education was much larger, psychology about the same. It was a large department.

Lowther: Was it, other than the evaluation, was it a relatively easy, pleasant job being the Chair.

Lawrence: Yes, yes I didn't find it at all - I kept teaching two classes by choice. Yeah, it seemed the sort of thing I should do. I was asked to run before. There was always a little trouble between teaching and administrating the department - time problems there but I still didn't want to get away from teaching which was my first love of course. Well there were bad times, the times when we laid off people and we voted to hire people and we were accused you see of being racist because we had no black people. We hadn't hired anybody for three years at that time and we were shrinking some. It was getting hard to cover all the courses. I'm pleased to say actually that just after I did step down from the Chairmanship they started hiring people. Somebody else had the pleasure of hiring with and in which I would have love to have done. We were not hiring anybody for four years there.

Lowther: Right, those were kind of the lean years.

Lawrence: Yes, closing departments and everything.

Lowther: Do you, other than the - that kind of lack of ability to hire, did the budget cuts that were taken provide any other particular problems for you?

Lawrence: I don't think too gravely. The budget for English without equipment is not a real problem.

Lowther: Mostly supplies.

Lawrence: Yeah, you know we had to be niggardly about everything supplies involved but it isn't too much of a problem.

Lowther: Did the faculty members give much chance to travel?

Lawrence: No, very little traveling. I think I made two trips, one all the way over to Pullman and I did get partial expenses for that but you know travel was always pay your own way when you wanted to go to a conference or something.

Lowther: Now, there were - I assume that you served under several different deans. Do you have any recollection of the deans? Anything you would like to say about any of them?

Lawrence: Yeah. Remember when I came we were on the division system and Burt Williams I think was here at that time in history of course.

Lowther: He wouldn't have been here when you first came.

Lawrence: No, no but at the time that we did drop out of the divisional system. At that time I think Keith Rinehart was the head of the division that the English, speech and comp and foreign languages was in but I worked a lot with Burt Williams outside to later on and of course Keith very obviously was important, he first hired me. On the Senate I worked a great deal of course with Jim Brooks and we had good times.

Lowther: When Brooks was President?

Lawrence: Yes, he was President. As a matter of fact I thought he was very good but then I was chairing the Senate and all of the sudden we had to argue a lot in the Senate. At the same time Jim was quite close to the faculty - identified with the faculty and seemed to me that he didn't have trouble. I ran into some problem too with Sam Mohler where he got me into it because the same year I chaired the Senate that first year I was president of the AAUP and -

Lowther: Now when did you become Chairman of the Senate?

Lawrence: That would be '68 and then again in '78. I got out in '88.

Lowther: Did you serve just one year terms?

Lawrence: One year terms but of course I was on three year terms in the Senate.

Lowther: Yeah.

Lawrence: But anyhow, Jim through AAU - or Sam Mohler from the AAUP was pushing me to get things done and also we had some arguments with Jim Brooks but in the end were amicable and all. But then very shortly during later times Don Schliesman was always exactly the same. He was a marvelous man a great

steeple out on campus. Worked a great deal with Dale Comstock when he was Graduate Dean - I'm trying to think back - at the time of course I was the Department Chairman. And let's see, Wes Crum of course was Vice-president when I came. It's funny the names you just kind of -

Lowther: Yeah, well Charlie McCann was let's see acting wasn't he?

Lawrence: Yeah, I think he was Acting President one year here or was that just - went back to the National Conference in Education in Chicago in '78 with Burt Williams and Charlie McCann. The three of us representing the school and that was interesting. Including even the fact that they roused me out of bed one night to go down to some institutions we had to accredit and decide for accreditations and I dragged myself up and I went with them. They took me to several of the strip joints in Chicago. (laughs) But those were great years we had here.

Lowther: Yeah. So you remember McCann and then he was Vice-President for Academic Affairs one year?

Lawrence: And before that he was the Chairman of the English department.

Lowther: He was the Chairman of the English department. Did he follow Keith Rhinehart's job?

Lawrence: Keith, you see at that time, was the Division Chairman and then Charlie was hired in to replace him.

Lowther: Okay.

Lawrence: And then of course Keith later when we went to the departments came back and chaired some more.

Lowther: Did you - do you have any vivid memories of President Garrity.

Lawrence: Yes, should I tell these things? I recall when I was Senate Chairman in '78 it was the second time I was ordered out? I remember once that I managed to get the Senate Chair onto the President's Committee and the Vice-President for Academic Affairs and then before but I came into the University Committee and sat down and we had one member Dave Canzler in China at that time and Don as I said sat beside me. He said, 'Well, Canzler are over there in China. I wish the whole English department would go over there' So I picked up my material and said, 'I don't have time for this; this is not what I came for and started out the door and he said, 'Oh wait a minute I'm just kidding.' But, yeah I worked with Don quite a bit but I don't think Don had the identification with the faculty as much as Jim Brooks did. I remember people comphthing at AAUP meetings down in Portland about their presidents and I heard stories about them and I came back and tried to tell them that we're not that bad off after all but when Don was here the administration was distanced away from the faculty it seemed to me. Don Schliesman didn't manage to do that, he was the same as ever. But some would say that we're administrators and faculty members and we have nothing in common and I didn't like that.

Lowther: Do you think that he was kidding when he made those remarks about the English department. Was there anything else that he did that would indicate any hostility toward the department?

Lawrence: Oh, people in English can be a bit of a pain in the neck. I think sometimes there were fall outs but I don't think he was thinking of me going to China. They tend to make waves and noise but I think of this Berkeley kid he really accepted his way of doing it you know as a little unnecessary. This was a formal meeting and that was not what I came for. I came for university affairs. But Don just stayed a little more aloof always from the faculty and the other administrators seemed to be encouraged to do so too.

Lowther: Okay, now looking at some of the vice-presidents. You've remarked on Charlie McCann. How about Ed Harrington?

Lawrence: Ed Harrington I worked with for a long time. Ed was very good I think. He I think did a fine job. Was working for the faculty all of the time that's where his identification was. Ed was a valuable man. He ? talking in public and all this. He was sort of a shy man I think but it seems to me that he was a pretty stable man that did a lot of good for the campus. I always enjoyed working for Ed. He would let me at that time usually have a cigarette in his office. Not often by the way, but occasionally when we were discussing things. Yeah, Ed and I worked together for years and I thought he was very fine man.

Lowther: Yeah, and Bob Edington?

Lawrence: Bob Brown of course later on.

Lowther: Oh, yeah right. Bob Brown.

Lawrence: Bob was again a fine man to work with and had the type of interested heart.

Lowther: How about Bob Edington?

Lawrence: I don't remember him.

Lowther: Oh, he must have come after your retirement.

Lawrence: Yeah, I guess so.

Lowther: Okay. Well let's talk a little bit about your experiences in the Senate.

You were Chair two different years and you served two terms - full terms in the Senate?

Lawrence: Yeah, three years each.

Lowther: What was your impression of the Senate as a campus administrative body?

Lawrence: I thought it was extremely important. I knew from Sam Mohler and so on its out growth of course from AAUP and it was very important. For one thing it was one of the things that brought back faculty members out of their departments although that was one of the attractions of this school that it wasn't completely departmentalized. It also could effect as a check and balance of the administrative decisions. Even the Board sometimes listened to us and I think we all did all kinds of effective things, changing grading systems and of course defending the rights of faculty. We worked?

Jim Brooks. Garrity was not ? but he still recognized the Senate. It is a very important thing to have on campus and I remember meeting at Hertz Hall to begin with. The site would be later on in the Sub. Sometimes things got pretty hot and we did deal with important issues - very important and generally the - in fact even the Board later on would consult with Senate or the Senate chairman so it was a place where the faculty could -

Lowther: Do you think that it was influenced too much by the administration? That they didn't stand up to the administration?

Lawrence: It depended upon membership and particularly the chairman. The? when I was on the Senate and I think it was probably '76 to '79 that I began to argue with the president the way I did with the chairman. I thought that was the point of this Senate and he would listen after fighting this and that and the Senate could be very effective but I'm afraid sometimes in later years it was sort of a paper tiger. It had the ability to be quite influential on campus and I think that it did do good things in the support of faculty and in support of the University as a whole.

Lowther: Did you serve on any other campus-wide committees?

Lawrence: Yes, I asked Beverly Heckert one time why I always got stuck on committees or chairing them and she said, 'Because you never say no.' (laughs)

Lowther: Do you think that's true?

Lawrence: Oh yeah. I was twice on the Code Committee and did rather drastic rewriting on the code. I was on the Personnel Committee out of the senate. The first committee I was on here was the Emeritus Committee and that one I'm afraid didn't have any function. And then I was on several large committees. The committee of Full Bulls.

Lowther: The committee of what?

Lawrence: Full bulls they called themselves. That was people like Herbert Bird and Bert Anshutz, Maury Pettit and I can't think of - Marshall Mayberry and - oh it will come to me later. Anyhow, the Senate Chairman had appointed these people to a committee and that was for reorganization of the campus and it went on for about a year and I sat with them all of the time. It had quite a good influence actually because it was at that point it was suggested by the president a general reorganization of the campus.

Lowther: Did you ever serve on the General Ed. Committee or the Teacher Ed. Council?

Lawrence: No because I think most of the time I was on other things like chairing the department or something and then later on I was on the graduate - University Graduate Committee. I chaired it my last year as a matter of fact, Chairman of Graduate Studies. I did work of course within the department of General Ed. and Teacher Ed. but I was usually on the Executive Committee or chairing some other committee so -

Lowther: As you served on these - in the Senate and on the campus-wide committees, was there - were there any particular faculty members that stand out in your mind as being particularly effective?

Lawrence: That's hard. There were so many all along the line. It would be hard for me to single out because generally those committees were fairly strong and good. Sometimes they'd would be a weaker one but generally they were pretty strong. We usually worked together pretty well.

Lowther: You think they you were generally effective in your committees?

Lawrence: Yeah, I think so. At least the ones that I was on. Maybe that's why things don't stand out that much in my mind.

Lowther: Coming back to the Senate for just a minute, the Senate of course had it's own Curriculum Committee?

Lawrence: Right.

Lowther: Do you think that the faculty through the Senate had a good control of the curriculum of the university or was this something that was really controlled outside the faculty organizations?

Lawrence: Again it's that balance thing going on always. I think really the Curriculum Committee and then enforced through the Senate recommendations on requirements - general ed. requirements did take effect. There was a little argument with the administrators on it but no, in all the years it seems to me that what the curriculum committee was doing was usually put into effect with small modifications. Yeah, I think they were effective. In the end of course it was the full senate that presented these recommendations but usually they were put largely into effect.

Lowther: I think you said earlier that you have had some dealings directly with members of the Board of Trustees while you were on the Senate. Was this a usual thing that board members would contact faculty members?

Lawrence: I don't - you know I don't know about earlier years. The Board tried to stay a little aloof and the president usually tried to keep us apart but at the same time the Senate chairman at least would be invited to the meetings and we would be allowed in the early days to present a case for something and then sometimes afterwards we would discuss with some of the board members you know. So we did have some effect although it was sort of sacrosanct. The Board of Trustees and the faculty were meant to be separated by the administration and it was hard to get through that.

Lowther: Can you recall an instance in which because of faculty intervention so to speak the Board changed its mind and went contrary to the recommendation of the president?

Lawrence: Oh I'm sorry, I can't. I just can't think of anything.

Lowther: Okay, let me get back to the department. Did you say you had a Graduate Program when you came or was it just being instituted?

Lawrence: It was just being instituted.

Lowther: Okay, so that would have been in 1963.

Lawrence: Yeah, correct. They had just given the approval the State Legislature for it at that time so it was going in.

Lowther: And did you work with graduate students a great deal?

Lawrence: We didn't really. It was just getting off the ground and so at that time I didn't work with them too much. Charlie McCann would do more with them but we had very few graduate students. It was just building. I did teach a course or two in which they were there but really it was such a small program and was just getting off the ground but I didn't do much with them.

Lowther: Did it grow much later?

Lawrence: Oh yes, oh yes it did. Gradually it grew into - we would have when I was Graduate Director I think we had up to 27 graduate students and I suppose about half of them were Graduate Assistants at that time. But it developed slowly much more slowly than we had -

Lowther: So there wasn't a particular period of time when there was a sudden jump in the number of the graduate students it was just a gradual growth?

Lawrence: Yeah, it was a gradual build up and some of that went along with the growth of the university population of course. Others however because there were openings for teachers of course outside, but more or less a gradual growth increasing.

Lowther: Did you get - after your graduate students get their degrees, did you hear much from them after that?

Lawrence: Not as much as you'd like to but two or three did travel back. One had finished a doctorate from I've forgotten the state now - elsewhere and came back just going through and wanted to let us know that he'd been given fine preparation for his doctorate work. I think that's one of the things we've prided ourselves on in the way that we give a good sound master's education and we give good graduate programs. And we did have several that are doing very well and you know they'd keep in contact but of course like the rest of us far far from the country if they found a job they really didn't have time to come back. But majors and undergraduate - awful lot of contact. We get lots of letters from them that they'd loved it? Unfortunately they always don't recognize the teacher, there's only one of those. They always know me I've worked awfully hard to try to remember them. No we had a good sound graduate program. I felt perfectly comfortable after Stanford and University of Oregon that they did have a sound basis for doctorate work.

Lowther: Did you see - were most of your graduate students in your opinion - know you didn't know all of them, but those that you knew would you say that they were doctoral caliber?

Lawrence: No, no.

Lowther: Most of them you would not expect to go on.

Lawrence: No, and I don't think that really occurred to them. No as a matter of fact we scaled down the graduate level and I came here after teaching at Stanford and the University of Oregon I did not find as many good students but I found as good of students there were fewer here as I did there ? but just in general you know the level of competence in college and so on was ? and again they were good enough students who went here.

Lowther: Did you recruit most of your graduate students from the undergraduate while here or did most of them come from outside of Central?

Lawrence: Oh, about half and half. To begin with of course you know we relied upon graduates from here but later on actually people were here already and they just liked the town and were offered an assistantship or something so I would say really just about half that would come had nothing to do with our undergraduate.

Lowther: Is it your impression that a - quite a high percentage of them were public school teachers returning to get a degree to improve their situation in the public schools?

Lawrence: Maybe. I don't think much more than half, maybe 60 percent. They were

- some of our graduate students would be actually as a matter of fact spouses of faculty and I don't really think they were going into teaching. They just wanted to get a master's degree and we tend to have students - well for one thing English is one of the recommended undergraduate majors for a law degree and this kind of brought them in so we got students going into other kinds of things would get master's in English but I would say you know 40 to 50 percent were furthering their career for school teaching.

Lowther: Now, concerning the undergraduate students, did the - did the quality of students hold up pretty well over the years you were here or do you feel they were improving or that the quality was going down?

Lawrence: It went up and then it came down.

Lowther: Where would you say was probably the peak?

Lawrence: I think probably 1963 we weren't getting quite such good students and I would say actually by the end of the 70's or late in the 70's we were getting I think better students and I think that held up until somewhere mid 80's and then like probably progressively their preparation wasn't as good as our graduate students. Probably some response for how we prepare the teachers but I think that when I was 61 and I retired a student majoring in English, a senior student I gave him a D and he came in and complained about that grade. He didn't know why he got that low grade. He worked so hard he said on his thesis you know term paper. I said well how long did you work on it and he said, 'I worked two weekends on that.' (laughs) I looked at him and I knew that by his standards he was ? term paper in his senior course of English as a major you'd spend the whole quarter working on it and I thought you know much longer if I get students like this much longer I'm going to get crotchety and that isn't going to help me at all so I guess I chickened out by retiring at 61.

Lowther: Well let's take a break here while Ham changes the tape.

Lawrence: Okay. You're getting me to talk so much.

Lowther: Now, Larry I'd like to have you talk a little bit about your department. Was it a congenial department, easy to get along with? Were there sharp divisions within the department? If so, what were they?

Lawrence: Well, by nature, by definition I don't think an English department is an easy department. There are too many strong opinions. It was a very small department when I came. It was more cohesive at that time I think. As it grew of course there would be more divisions. Many of the arguments really were meaningless. We liked to quarrel and had different ideas. Something did start happening it seemed to me about the last ten years however and that is the sense of collegiality within the department I think was waning. When I was Chairman of course we had - part of my job I thought was regular parties and that had always been true of the previous chairman. For the years after that the chairman of the department didn't feel the need to get together as faculty anymore for just a party. Because of that even at department meetings there just wasn't a sense of closeness between - we didn't know each other socially we didn't feel obligations to be involved as much. I don't know what brought that about.

Lowther: Do you think it was a function of size?

Lawrence: In the end, of course, it's the kind of people we hired. That is partly size because there is some growth going on but this happened even actually the old ideas of scholarship - literary scholarship and so on were changing. The old ideas of somehow teaching itself as being a service to society seemed to be completely?. Kind of increasing in the last few years was more of a sense of for me and I don't want to get involved in things that aren't going to lead to my betterment or something. I don't want to overstate this but yes I think that to a degree there was a sense of more looseness, more division within the department.

Lowther: Do you think the divisions ran along generational lines as older against the younger colleagues.

Lawrence: Yes, that is to be expected. At the beginning I'd find the same people here on staff with the same sense of dedication to the discipline and the school. One thing that Charlie McCann said in early years which always bothered me he said, 'Your dedication is to your profession not to this school.' I couldn't quite do that somehow I couldn't ? and I think that other people had the same feelings at that time. Some of that sense of you know being a teacher for one thing, better for the students instead of just using this as a way to make a living and the sense that you did have something in common with all of the other teachers in your department I think some of that was really good.

Lowther: Was there was of a division between the literature people and the language people?

Lawrence: No, there was you know a little bit but not too much because - because most of us really weren't specialists that way but had to teach some courses. I know some people who taught language couldn't understand why we needed a course in film or something like that but that's partly a joke too with a little truth in it. But no there wasn't, I'm real surprised. It wasn't generational. The - at one time when I first came there was a little division between a department and a school of Education which prepared public school teachers and with the addition of the of course the Graduate Program those who didn't? it became teachers in the class and at the same time there were people for graduate work and general education. There was a little of that about that time let's see ? but it wasn't too strong. It was never a real problem I don't think.

Lowther: Are there any particular members of your department that stand out in your mind as particularly quality people?

Lawrence: Oh yes, Tony Canedo was a very fine teacher although he's ? - and Keith was - Keith Rinehart and Dave Burt sometimes as ornery as I am but he was good. In different areas of course I'm trying to think of what names that haven't escaped me. Yeah, generally there was some very effective teachers. ? Some of them didn't stay. Yeah during the early years you know there was a very small group Burt Anshutz. Later on Frank Collins and Sidnie Mundy and Mary Mathews and Don Cummings, so on and so forth. But I think actually there was usually more in common ? problems between language and literature or education versus liberal arts. Dick Johnson was really a problem.

Lowther: You don't recall any particular humorous incidents involving department life. I didn't prepare you for this so -

Lawrence: Yes, there's always a few interesting things like Dave Burt always taught a course in Mythology and I taught the course in the Bible. I can't remember what happened but Dave one time in a department meeting tried to figure out our courses and our ? and all. I was getting mad about it and he said, 'All right then just make it easier I'll just drop my course in Mythology,' and I was not the chairman of the department and I said, 'Okay, that's a good idea Dave.' It was not the reaction he wanted to hear. (laughs) Funny things, Bruce Teets taught here for a while and I was Chairman at that time and Bruce was - tended sometimes to be a little bullyish with his students and many came in to me complaining one time about something with students or something so I proceeded to tell him that he was twenty years older than me - I wasn't that old at the time - I proceeded to tell him he should stop acting like an old bully with the students. He said, 'Well you're right.' I wasn't sure what I was getting into but - the trouble is humor you know. I thought a lot of things were funny but they are not like - well like teaching in Hertz - 85 students at eight o'clock in the morning. I remember one morning the lights hadn't been turned on and nobody was there to turn them on. I could see there were doors closed and there were students out there. It didn't matter to me if I used notes so I decided to tell the students it's okay there are no lights because I can still lecture to you. I lectured for about five minutes and realized that of course they couldn't see to write any notes. I tried?

Lowther: The English department I assume relied heavily upon having the library.

Lawrence: Were you generally satisfied with library services with the state of the collection?

Lawrence: Yes, because again that was one of the jobs I was given to come here was to try to build up the library in my field and others were allowed to it so I thought we had quite a good library, It wouldn't have served for doctorate studies but for master's I thought we had quite a good library. But we had to change even its curious and the better. The department chairman before I - just before I came. I can't think of her name right now. At any rate she - when I came and tried to get some more books that we wanted to get some other editions of Chaucer, she didn't understand it. She said, 'You've got one book on Chaucer in the library. Isn't that enough?' She was real concerned about that. But the library did build up and I do think it was quite a good library for master level work and for our department.

Lowther: Okay. How about relations with other departments on campus? Ed. department for example?

Lawrence: One of the attractions here to the University of Oregon was the fact that we weren't departmentalized. That's one of the things that drew me here. I suppose I had much to do with that but I never felt like I was just in the English department. I'd meet friends and people who worked in other departments all over and the Intellectual Idiots.

Lowther: Yes, tell me a little bit about that. The rise of the Intellectual Idiots.

Lawrence: Bob Yee and McCann as I understand - it included almost everybody was invited to join.

Lowther: I was a member for a time.

Lawrence: We met of course as you know down at the Highway Grill. Somebody had to give an address each time along with a good deal of collegiality. I did once and he asked me something about Japanese poetry or drama. Well that wasn't my field but I got around it. But it was great because we all got together regardless of department and all.

Lowther: I was told that the organization - the society rose out of reaction to a letter from someone in the community. A letter to the editor referring to the people on campus as intellectual idiots.

Lawrence: I wouldn't be surprised. One of the things we were aware of when we came is the town tended to be like that somehow.

Lowther: Was it - did it get worse then? Did it improve or get worse after that?

Lawrence: No, I think it improved. When I came here anybody that heard I taught at the college sort of sneered and turned away from me. I didn't quite understand that. I didn't like it so we worked with townspeople on many things. The Western Art Shows because we felt like we were part of the town not just of the college and I think really as the town grew and grew in educational background and so many people in town? and so many people did deal with city matters I think it did improve but it's still hard for me to say I'm a college teacher.

Lowther: I think I interrupted -

Howard: One more minute.

Lowther: - when you were talking about the Ed. department in relation between English.

Lawrence: Oh, I don't think we had too much trouble. One time Conrad Potter was the Chairman and I was the Chair. Conrad and I had a little trouble. I thought we should teach Children's Literature in our department and Conrad at one meeting we had with the deans told me, 'You can't teach Children's Literature in that department. You haven't really taken all of the kinds of courses you need and I said, 'Maybe that's why we can teach it better than you can.' (laughs) But no I don't think? I think we all knew that we were preparing teachers and I don't remember really any problems with the Education department.

Lowther: Okay, thank you very much Larry.

Lawrence: You're very welcome. You're very welcome.