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Lark, Neil Oral History Interview

Doris Meyer

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FACULTY EMERITI INTERVIEWS
UNIVERSITY OF THE PACIFIC ARCHIVES



Neil Lark (1962 – 1999)
Professor, Natural Sciences, Raymond College
Professor, Physics, C.O.P.

October 11, 2011
By Doris Meyer

Transcription by Kelly Gerhold, University of the Pacific,
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Subjects: Raymond College structure and faculty, Raymond curriculum development and dissolution, importance of professional development leaves, transfer to COP Physics Department, closure of Raymond College, University service, committees, etc.

UOP ARCHIVES FACULTY EMERITI INTERVIEWS

Neil Lark—Professor of Natural Sciences (Physics)

October 11, 2011

Doris Meyer: Good afternoon, Neil! Here we are! (laughter)

Neil Lark: Good afternoon, Doris.

Meyer: Hello, everybody. It's October, it's a beautiful day outside, and what's the date today?

Lark: The eleventh.

Meyer: The eleventh. We were looking forward to that, and I'm in Neil Lark's home, and I'm Doris Meyer. I'm the interviewer for the Oral History interview, and Neil Lark has agreed to answer questions that would be helpful in our Oral History Collection. And, Neil, I'm sure your recollections are unique, because each of us have had a unique contribution over all these years.

Lark: Sure.

Meyer: You ready to go?

Lark: Mm-hmm.

Meyer: The question is always how you arrived at the University, and in what capacity, what you felt like about things, were you comfortable? Just sort of tell me a little bit about those early days.

Lark: Yes. I was in Amsterdam doing research in nuclear physics when I first heard about University of the Pacific and about Raymond College. Apparently, Emerson Cobb, who was chairman of the Chemistry Department at that time, had submitted a little news item about University of the Pacific starting these cluster colleges, and it appeared in *Chemical Engineering News* sometime in 1961 or '62, while I was in Amsterdam. I wrote and expressed an interest. I was, this was just a post-doctoral position I had then, and I was interested in a teaching position, so I wrote, and got a quick response, and was invited to say what I thought ought to be the curriculum in science for this new liberal arts college. And so I wrote out a fairly extensive thing and sent it in to Dick Martin, the Provost who'd already been appointed. And—

Meyer: Yeah, oh, excuse me, let me interrupt for just a second. Dick Martin, was that the Provost's name?

Lark: Yes.

Meyer: But Emerson Cobb, who was the chemistry professor, was involved in the recruiting of professors?

Lark: No, I don't think so. I'm just guessing that he must have had something to do with it, because this news item in *Chemical Engineering News* was in a place that nobody but Emerson Cobb on campus would have read regularly. He was chairman of the chemistry department.

Meyer: Right.

Lark: And I didn't have any direct contact with him until after I came to Pacific.

Meyer: And even though you were a physicist, the ad looked like it was for a general science person?

Lark: Yes.

Meyer: More of a generalist.

Lark: Yes.

Meyer: Ok.

Lark: The science was to be for General Education.

Meyer: Ok.

Lark: And I had, actually, my Ph.D. was in Chemistry, but it was Physical Chemistry, and I had sort of made a transition into doing first nuclear chemistry and then nuclear physics in my doctoral and post-doctoral work. So, it was natural for me to be interested in this, because I, by that time, was happy—I wanted to be involved in teaching in a liberal arts setting.

Meyer: So...

Lark: Back to Dick Martin, I referred to him as Dick—

Meyer: Yeah.

Lark: —his real name was Warren Bryan Martin, but he went by Dick.

Meyer: Yeah, I'm glad you clarified that. And, has he—

Lark: So, I came to the campus then without ever having been here for an interview, I was hired without being interviewed.

Meyer: Is that right. Did you feel ok about that?

Lark: Yes. But, I knew this was an experimental program, and I didn't have a good idea how well I would fit at first, so we deliberately did not come here and buy a house. We rented for the first three years, and by that time I knew that it was, the college and the university were a fit for me, so we bought this home and we're still in it, over fifty years later.

Meyer: And that was in the early or mid-sixties.

Lark: Mm-hmm.

Meyer: That's great. So then, move on with the Raymond a little bit. How many young professors like yourself were they able to gather?

Lark: The program began with, maybe eight or ten needed in first year [of the] program. The, Samuel Meyer was the—no relation to Doris Meyer, was he?

Meyer: Hee hee, not at all, but I—

Lark: Samuel Meyer was the Academic Vice President, and he had a fair bit to advise about how a science program would fit in here, and so his input was very important as well as Dick Martin's. But, I had encouraged, I had suggested, a way to do it was to not treat a group of separate disciplines, but rather begin with the most fundamental and move to the more applied, to move with what's foundational and what is more derivative. So, the suggestion was to begin with mathematics, and carry mathematics far enough that students were able to handle a little bit of statistics and little bit of calculus. And, then follow that with a course that looked at, basically, the subject matter of Physics, partly historically and largely logically, and then study Chemistry on the basis of knowing the physics of the atom, and then move from Chemistry into Biology.

Meyer: That's a unique sequence. So, all the students at Raymond went through that same sequence?

Lark: Yes. Yes, Raymond had, at the time, the first students entered in the time the curriculum was first established, 27 courses required for graduation. They were all considered a 5-unit course. Students took three courses in each of three semesters each year in a ten-month academic year, and of those 27 courses, as I recall, 24 of them were specifically required, and the sequence was required in some areas - obvious sequence in language, where the subject develops, but in the science area the sequence of four or five courses.

Meyer: So, repeat the issue about three semesters—is that right?

Lark: Yes.

Meyer: A three-semester year, and fifteen units or three five-unit courses per semester.

Lark: Yes.

Meyer: They were called, “semesters,” they weren’t called, “quarters,” or—

Lark: No, we called them, “terms.”

Meyer: Terms.

Lark: Mm-hmm.

Meyer: Yeah. I—there is nothing in the Oral Histories about this, what we’re talking about right now, so this would be really important to get this straight about the sequencing—

Lark: Yes.

Meyer: —and also the number of units and so forth. Is there anything more you can talk about that, to make that very clear?

Lark: I hope this helps. The strength of the program was, students had the same common background by the time they were into their second and third year. They and everybody in the class that they were in had had the same background, so they could be on a fairly sophisticated level. If they’re studying Psychology, or Sociology, they’ve already had a couple of courses in History, Western Civilization and the like. And they’ve already had Foreign Language; they’ve already had Literature, both American and World literature. And, in the case of the science, by the time the student got into Biology, the student had had college-level Math, Chemistry, Physics, and so the Biology class could be really quite sophisticated. These were no longer freshmen. It isn’t like typical liberal arts courses where anybody on the campus can drop in at any level and take the class, so you’ll have a mix of seniors and freshmen in a general interest class in, Geology, say. But everybody had the same background for it. And the efficiency, of course, is, we knew what the student load would be all the time, we knew what faculty we needed and where students would be. We could control that completely, so that efficiency made for nice, uh.

Meyer: How many beginning, how many first year students were there in that group from Raymond, and how many faculty at that very first beginning time?

Lark: I think there were about 65, 70 students in the first-year class. And, if retention had been very good, that would have worked fine, because the college was designed to have an enrollment of 220-260 or so, 240 sort of as a goal. But, the retention wasn’t all that high; I think there were less than 40 who graduated in the first class. 38, 39, something like that, after three years.

Meyer: So...

Lark: But in the next couple of years, enrollments were better. The third class that came in, I think, was more like 80 or 90 students as freshmen.

Meyer: So there were three classes, and then it recycled, and then there was, like, a beginning class again in the fourth year, so that was another freshman—of course there was a freshman group coming in each time.

Lark: Yes, yes.

Meyer: Approximately how many faculty?

Lark: About 18 or 20. Ideally, about 24 to cover the 24 different subjects we offered as the different courses, but some things changed the appearance of that a bit, like, [a] foreign language student would take two semesters of French with the same person, might take two semesters of literature with the same person, though we usually had two people teaching literature at any one time, and German was offered as well as French.

Meyer: The two languages that were offered, then, were French and German.

Lark: Yes.

Meyer: Not Spanish, because of—was Covell College here, had that started ahead of Raymond College, do you recall?

Lark: No, it started a year later.

Meyer: A year later.

Lark: And, we did have Spanish offered within Raymond College for a very short time.

Meyer: Why was that deleted?

Lark: It seemed—there wasn't that much demand for it among the students, and we had the possibility of taking a course in Covell College if people wanted to do Spanish, and I think that there was some flexibility in it. A student could take another language if they wanted to take Latin or something else that was offered within COP, they could do that.

Meyer: Yeah, do you think we had Latin? Was that a class that was offered at that time?

Lark: I think there was a department called Classics, anyway.

Meyer: Yes, and that would have been with that. Is there any other detail, I want to ask you some questions about the Raymond philosophy, but are there any more important details regarding the curriculum that should be brought forth?

Lark: Yes, several things I'd thought I'd like to include here.

Meyer: Ok.

Lark: One was that we tried to integrate things well across the curriculum. In the Math-Science area, for instance, we used a book that was originally published in Russian, called, "Matter, Life and Mind," that Carl Sagan, who many people will know of, at least, translated and added a lot to and republished it as, "Intelligent Life in the Universe." And we used that as a coordinating text right through the Science sequence. So we did some Astronomy and Physics having to do with how atoms and elements are formed, how chemical reactions occur, how they can be complex enough to begin to look like life, and thought about this in the context of, 'might there well be life other places in the universe?' And that was liked by the students and liked by us in the faculty. It served as a nice integrating theme, and it led to one very important consequence: one of our graduates is now a leading NASA educator in this general field. She is a public education and outreach person at the NASA (Ames?) Research Center, and she's also this, plays the same role for the SETI Institute, which is an independent, privately financed group working outside NASA.

Meyer: Can you give her name, and spell her name?

Lark: Oh, Edna DeVore. The DeVore is capital D-e-capital-V-o-r-e. Edna Turner DeVore, and she's someone who was honored as an Outstanding Alumnus by the Pacific Alumni Association a couple of years ago.

Meyer: Oh good, so that, people know of her and are appreciative of what she's accomplished. Back to the class, for instance, the Science sequence and the book that we just talked about, were there actually a team, was there actually a team teaching feeling to the classes, or was there a central core upon which individual instructors would focus?

Lark: Yes, to both.

Meyer: Both?

Lark: We did both. Part of the time we team-taught. I helped with the teaching of Math as well as the Science, Physics area, and the Chemist Hugh Wadman helped me with the teaching of Physics a time or two, and then later helped with the teaching of the Biology, and usually, well, fairly early we saw that the difference in preparation of math as the students were coming in were such that some students, after one semester of math, were ready to begin with the

Physics-Chemistry-Biology sequence, other students needed two semesters of math before they were ready.

Meyer: So, what happened?

Lark: And so they come to class sort of split half-and-half, so each of two semesters during, each two terms during the year, I would be teaching Physics, and the third term I'd be helping somebody else in an area that was close to my field. To make all this work well together, one thing we did fairly early on, as soon as the curriculum was established, probably during the second year, but I'm not certain about that date, we did a complete curriculum study where each faculty member had one two- or three-hour session to tell the rest of us and show the rest of us in the college what they did in their classes and how it fit together with others that they heard from already. So we all knew what everybody was doing fairly well and what was important for them, what depended upon what, and what you could expect if you were teaching one of the more advance classes, what you'd expect the students to have read and thought about and discussed. I want to emphasize the discussion part of this. Raymond courses were mostly seminar format. They were mostly small group discussions. The sciences were, to some extent, an exception of that.

Meyer: Was there lab work available, or lab facilities available?

Lark: Yes, we did. In one of the quonset huts, Hugh Wadman designed—Hugh was the one who taught the Chemistry part—designed and helped with the construction of a lab that worked for our classes there quite well, that eventually was replaced when Wendell Phillips Center was built, and that we occupied in 1967. And, at that point, we had classrooms that were well-designed for us, including some lab space.

Meyer: I remember Hugh Wadman very well. Remind me of the other scientists that were in your cohort.

Lark: John Tucker in the Biology department—

Meyer: Oh, yes.

Lark: Both John and Hugh Wadman had come from COP departments to join Raymond as the students reached the level of beginning in Chemistry and beginning in Biology. So they weren't the original faculty, but they were there for all the teaching of their fields, anyway.

Meyer: Was there a math, a mathematician?

Lark: Hugh Wadman and I did it the first year, but the next year Theo MacDonald came. He was somebody who had his education in Canada, who was into both Biological Sciences and Mathematics.

Meyer: What was Mr. MacDonald's first name?

Lark: We always called him Theo, but I presume it was Theodore.

Meyer: Yeah.

Lark: Theo MacDonald.

Meyer: Theo MacDonald. I remember him.

Lark: The students just loved him. They said he was so effective—he could teach Calculus to a doorknob. (laughter)

Meyer: (laughter) Wow.

Lark: We were planning for a class reunion a year or so ago, and the students wanted so much to see him again that they were ready to set up a fund to pay to fly him here from London, where he is now. He's, he was in the outskirts of London on the Dover side, and passed away just a year or so ago.

Meyer: Oh, is that right. Walt Zimmerman sounded like he had something to do. Was he involved with Raymond?

Lark: Yes, he came in and taught mathematics while he was there. It was always sort of unfortunate for Walt because his areas of interest were Physics and Philosophy of Science, and that's where I had my strengths.

Meyer: Oh, I see.

Lark: So, he was doing things that were sort of secondary interest for him in Mathematics. He eventually ended up moving to the Mathematics department in College of the Pacific.

Meyer: Yeah, I knew that—

Lark: Similar thing happened to Boyd Mathias, who you may know.

Meyer: Oh yes.

Lark: Boyd was interested in coming partly because he had known and really like Mike Wagner, who was one of the original faculty members. They had been together at the University of Missouri at Kansas City.

Meyer: Yes.

Lark: And, he came with an interest in Philosophy of Science and Astronomy and Physics, and again, overlapped mine a lot, and ended up teaching math part of the time, then moving into Callison College and doing their science program, and then ended up with some other support service kind of things. He was sort of an Audio-Visual leader when, um.

Meyer: In the School of Ed, I think he became...

Lark: When Dard—when Jud Darden retired, Boyd sort of took over his position.

Meyer: I can tell by the tone of your voice and the smile on your face that your recollections are primarily positive.

Lark: Oh yes. This was a very good time for me, for the college. We were doing something we really cared about, and put a lot into it, and we did a lot of cooperation, and we had a group of students who were very much aligned with us and very close to us. The relationships were excellent.

Meyer: And—

Lark: We were emphasizing the Living and Learning sort of situation for the students, in that they all lived in the Quad, and they had meals together in Raymond Great Hall, and faculty had lunches with them daily, and we'd nearly always split up and sit with students. No real cliquishness about it, we all got very well acquainted all the way around, and we had our formal High Table at dinner once a week, with a nice served dinner, and usually a program, sometimes artistic, sometimes just good speakers.

Meyer: Yeah, and the youngsters would dress up, would they not?

Lark: Yes.

Meyer: Yeah, not the youngsters, the students. (laughter) But yes, I can just tell that, moving ahead but not wanting to miss anything, and thinking about your reunion, or celebration of the 50th year coming up, before we move into those things, is there anything more, in the details, the curriculum, the philosophy, or anything that you wanted to be sure that you brought forward?

Lark: Yes, there are a couple of things related to what we just talked about, the Living and Learning aspect of it.

Meyer: Ok.

Lark: 3 members of the faculty—the Provost, and Mike Wagner and his wife, who also taught in College of the Pacific, and Gene Wise and his wife—lived in dormitories. We had three or four dormitories for the students. We began with three faculty members living in them. They had no disciplinary responsibilities, they were simply there as teachers and counselors and had and received some privacy.

Meyer: Gene Rice? R-I-C-E?

Lark: No, Gene Wise.

Meyer: Wise.

Lark: He was somebody who was only here for five or six years. He was a very good specialist in American Studies, and he did well enough, he was well-enough regarded, he was able to leave here and go to one of the major Eastern universities which has an American Studies program, became chair of that department.

Meyer: Would you spell his last name?

Lark: W-I-S-E.

Meyer: Wise. Ok. And, Mike and Pat Wagner, and who was the third group?

Lark: The Provost, Dick Martin.

Meyer: Ok.

Lark: And his wife, Liz.

Meyer: Anything else, in the curriculum or...?

Lark: Still related to this closeness, the faculty had, during the first couple three years before Wendell Phillips Center was built, we had our offices in what were student dormitory rooms in the dorms on the first floor.

Meyer: Is that right. Which dorms were, did you occupy primarily?

Lark: Price, and Farley, and Ritter, and Wemys. Those four make up the Raymond Quadrangle.

Meyer: Repeat those four again?

Lark: Price House, Farley House, Ritter House, and Wemys House. That Wemys is W-E-M-Y-S.

Meyer: Was the Philosophy Lodge, that, was that part of the administration?

Lark: That was the Raymond Lodge, by name, and that was where the administration was done, and the Martins actually lived upstairs in there, so they had a little more private situation. The downstairs was [the] administrative secretary and the Provost's office, and we had a, sort of a local Dean of Student Life, who was Ed Peckham, who had come from College of the Pacific, and he had his office there too. And mail was delivered there. So there was all this traffic in and out of the first floor of the Provost Lodge.

Meyer: So, Ed Peckham. I remember Ed Peckham as the College of Pacific Dean. Was he, then, at Raymond before, or after, or do you remember that sequence?

Lark: He was at Raymond '62, when it opened, and I think he was there for maybe five years before he went on to other things. I don't know that he went to COP after that.

Meyer: Ok. Well, I do remember him, and I'm almost sure he was College of Pacific Dean for a short time.

Lark: I think his field was History, in COP.

Meyer: Yeah. When you think of those days, as you say, those were wonderful, memorable days. How many years would you say the program was really flourishing, and at what point did things become questionable about sustaining itself? Can you remember that?

Lark: If you don't mind, I put together some fairly well-organized notes on that to guide me in this question.

Meyer: Ok, that would be great.

Lark: Yeah. There were early indications that this was going to be a successful program, and that it was being successful. In the first place, the fact that it was a new college, and had an attractive idea and a nice facility, and the fact that it had a tough-looking program, where things that many students would choose to avoid, things like Calculus, Physics, Economics. It meant that the students who chose to come, who chose to apply in the first place, were basically strong and self-confident students, good academically and well-prepared. And, we didn't get, and apparently didn't accept, very many weak students. I don't recall students who just seemed intellectually limited. The quality of the students was good enough that, where the university had never had a freshman men's academic honors society, the core of Raymond students and some from COP made up a new society formed just then. I don't know what happened to it since, whether it's still active. Don't recall what it was called other than "Freshman Men's Honor Society." But, a really nice thing about that is that most of the same fellows who made up that Honors Society played on Raymond's intramural basketball game, and they were just freshmen, and *they won the school championship!*

Meyer: (lots of laughter) Did you all, did you root them on?

Lark: Yes!

Meyer: The group must have been so cohesive that they would root them, you know, regardless! (laughter)

Lark: There were a couple of really tall kids in the class. There was Rod French, who was the son of the superintendent of schools in Tracy, who was, like, 6'4", and Karl van Meter who was, like, 6'5" or 6", who was a strong enough, impressive enough athlete that when he graduated, we nominated him for a Rhodes Scholarship. He didn't get the scholarship, but he was a competitive nominee.

Other things that relate now with the development and success: One point that was different about Raymond was that we, instead of using standard letter grades, faculty sat down and wrote sort of a personal letter to each student that became part of the student's academic record. A term letter, it was called, as the evaluation for the terms were. And those would sometimes run to several pages, but often were just a paragraph or two. Despite that, we would continue to get requests from outside the university for something more quantitative when a student wanted to transfer, and so some of us, not trusting ourselves to reread letters later and being able to convert them later, assigned and kept, but never disclosed, letter grades for students. I did that in my Physics classes, and I was interested in the debate we were having among the faculty as to whether SAT was a good predictor. One thing I learned at that time was, the best predictor of success for college is your rank in Scouting. Eagle Scouts have the best academic success record.

Meyer: Is that right? That's interesting.

Lark: I'm not sure that it's still valid, but it was told as the truth at that time. Anyway, in the context of wondering how much difference it made, I did correlation studies between SAT scores of our students and how well they did in the Physics classes, and I found there was a very definite connection. The students with high SAT scores almost always did A and B work, and students who didn't do well in the classes usually had considerably lower SAT scores. The Math scores seemed to matter more than the Verbal scores, but both had an influence on it. Others on the faculty said they couldn't see any difference, and I'm not sure anybody did any quantitative checking on it as I had done. In 1965, when our first class graduated, several of the students were accepted in graduate programs in a whole variety of subjects in major universities, prestigious universities. And several of the students went into the Peace Corps, and there were several who received Fulbright grants for study abroad. Recently, in the University Bulletin, there was an article about an unusual class in which, or an unusual year, in which there were three students who received Fulbright awards on their graduation, and there

were a couple of faculty in the university who had received Fulbright awards that year. I think that first Raymond class may have done at least as good if not better, but I don't know exact numbers and exact number of people. We may pick up on information like this in our planned celebration of 50 years from the foundation of the college which is coming up next August.

Meyer: Repeat that again. You're going to try to gather some of that together? For the program that's coming up?

Lark: Yes, part of the rationale for having this celebration, besides just a matter of wanting to get together and talk with each other, is to do an informal sort of assessment for our own benefit as well anybody else's who's really very interested, as to how successful the college has been, how successful its graduates have been. One other thing that we looked at that was semi-quantitatively done is, our students did very well on a graduate record exam, and we compared graduate record exam scores with SAT scores, and considering the percentiles, which are the fairer percent for this...

Meyer: What percentile?

Lark: Considering where the students' scores were on percentile basis—

Meyer: Yes.

Lark: —it's better for comparing here. Many of the students did better on the GRE than they had done on the SAT, indicating we were doing a better job of educating them and raising them to graduate-level work than typical colleges were doing. We did one other thing just one time—we required all the students from one of the graduating classes to take the General Area Exams of the GRE. There's a General Area Exam in the sciences, there's one in the social sciences, and one in the humanities. And of the colleges that required that all, we were one of the very best in the nation.

Meyer: They all, they all were required to take it?

Lark: Yes, all graduates that year.

Meyer: How many graduates are we talking about per year, about?

Lark: 40 or so.

Meyer: About 40 or so?

Lark: Mm-hmm. And that number tailed away a bit later.

Meyer: Could I interrupt to go back on a couple of things that you just said, or would you prefer to move through this and then let me ask my questions?

Lark: No, ask your questions now, I'm ready to change the subject again.

Meyer: Ok, otherwise we'll, we may lose it a little bit. Talking about the quality of the incoming students.

Lark: Yes.

Meyer: Did the admissions brochures or recruiting flyers or whatever, what did they say that the demands might be? How come we got this group of bright people? What was it? Was it the uniqueness of the setting that was attractive, or what?

Lark: I think it was the uniqueness of the college itself and the college's style, how it was described as, at least, a living and learning, and it was particularly the academic program, the fact that it was not an easy-looking program but a solid-looking program, attracted strong students and tended to discourage students who were anticipating an easy, wanted to have an easy time in school.

Meyer: Did they come from a large demographic area, or not?

Lark: There were more preachers' kids in the first class than any other one single thing.

Meyer: Is that right? Is that right?

Lark: Yeah. We teased about that.

Meyer: So, that was liberal arts context...

Lark: And they tended to be a very liberal group of students. There was a point at which there was one conservative that we knew of who would admit to being politically and socially conservative, and that was, that was somebody you probably know.

Meyer: Oh, never mind. (laughter) Um, the narrative term letters, I've heard a lot of conversation about that over the years. Was that difficult to maintain, and did you have to fall back on the fall-back grades from time to time, or how did that work?

Lark: I think we maintained it as a matter of principle pretty well, but when somebody was applying to a place that wasn't interested in details about individual students but wanted to look at just numbers, like they applied to, say, UCLA. And the UCLA said they wouldn't accept these, they had to have letter grades, then the faculty would be asked to generate letter grades

out of, from their term letters. They would have kept copies of the term letters. So, we did cave in to that extent, but they never became official.

Meyer: So you hung onto those the whole way through.

Lark: I believe so, but of course I wasn't at Raymond until it folded. It folded about 1979 or '80, and I transferred to COP in '75.

Meyer: Ok. I think that answers. Are you now, are we now gonna go through the latter years of Raymond and what happened there? The demise, what happened at the demise?

Lark: Yes.

Meyer: Yes. You can carry that through any chronological order that you care to.

Lark: Let me do a couple of other things first. One, I wanted to go back to something that reminded me of, early on.

Meyer: Ok. Are we doing ok here?

Lark: I think so, generally so. But. One thing I did want to mention, we were talking about curriculum and program, is that I particularly, and some others to some extent, tried to get some outside evaluation and input into what we were doing, how successful it was. I invited two well-known academic physicists to come take a look at our program, people who were well-known for being interested in liberal education. One was Alfred Bork, who was teaching at Reed College then, and the other was Matthew Sands, who was one of the authors of the Feynman Lectures on Physics, which was a very highly regarded introductory series of three texts on Physics. I actually used that course, that text for one or two years. And I had them both come and take a, talk with me and others in the faculty, and see what advice they had for us. It happened to be at a time in Bork's career when he was all excited about use of computers in teaching.

Meyer: Yeah. (laughter)

Lark: And that was so counter to our personal hands-on approach, one-on-one personal approach, that it wasn't much help. And Sands simply marveled that there *was* a college where we were doing such a good job. A good job of getting science to liberal arts education. And, another thing that was done during their first year, which I think was 1965, we exchanged a group of faculty and students with the University of California Santa Cruz when they were first opening up.

Meyer: Yes.

Lark: And, again I had no envy for the people who were teaching at Santa Cruz. They just were not well set-up. Their set of priorities was too wide, their poor faculty couldn't do what they needed to. For instance, most of the physics materials that they should have had in their library were still sitting in boxes and they hadn't had time to even look at them.

Meyer: Years that...clarify the years that we're talking about. Like, when the two physicists came to visit. Was that about '65?

Lark: Yes, about then, maybe '64...

Meyer: (overlapping) When did you, when did you come on board?

Lark: In '62, when Raymond opened.

Meyer: '62, and they came in '65, so you would—

Lark: We would be well into presenting our whole science sequence.

Meyer: Uh-huh. And, they both were so complimentary. The one man couldn't get the picture, huh?

Lark: Yes.

Meyer: (laughter)

Lark: He wasn't all that interested in it. He thought everybody ought to be jumping on *his* bandwagon, which was computers in science and science teaching.

Meyer: Then, the first graduating group was about what year?

Lark: That was 1965, that they graduated. They started in '62, and they graduated in three years. So they started in Fall of '62 and they graduated in the Spring of '65.

Meyer: Right. Did you notice, then, then help me figure out the chronological order so that I can ask you more of what happened. So, about what year did Raymond close, and then let me go back from there?

Lark: Yes, fine.

Meyer: About what year did Raymond close?

Lark: I think '78 was the last year that a Raymond graduate—gave degrees, but I think there were two more years, '79 and '80, during which Callison sort of administered granting degrees to people under the rubric of "Ray-Cal." It was referred to it as Raymond-Callison combination. I'll go back to the beginning and run through how I saw Raymond change over time—

Meyer: Yes.

Lark: —and how and why it was eventually closed.

Meyer: Ok.

Lark: I think the main factors were 1) Raymond was an experimental college by its very nature being set up, given the freedom to develop a curriculum, and so it was attractive to young faculty who were interested in experimenting themselves, but over the first two or three years, as the curriculum was articulated and developed and found to be successful, there wasn't much experimenting to do with it, and so young—young faculty were really quite stifled by the lack of flexibility they saw in having a fixed curriculum.

Meyer: That's really well said. That's really well said, and...

Lark: The timing on that would be, then, '66, '67, '68.

Meyer: Just like you were saying, the quality of the students who were interested in the rather innovative kind of thing, and so the young faculty also felt that gave them the liberty and opportunity and, and to meld things together.

Lark: Yes.

Meyer: Yeah, I can see that. Move ahead, there were several other things there that...

Lark: Another factor that was very important was just the tenor of the times in academia then, in '66, '67, '68. We're talking about the time of Free Speech Movement and revolt at Berkeley, and some of the ferment from that seemed to bubble over the Coast Range to UOP.

Meyer: (laughter)

Lark: And so we had students who were hearing that, at other places, students had all kinds of freedom in terms of how they lived and how they studied and what they studied and what sequence they studied it in, so they were demanding much more in the way of personal choice here.

Meyer: Could I, could I ask a question about that factor?

Lark: Sure.

Meyer: So, as we think about students wanting to get a career to make money, or students who wanted training in some professional thing, and students who were more interested in liberal, so you think that during this time, they weren't worried about getting a career that was a money-making thing? Or, where did that sit in priority, do you think?

Lark: I think that was a fairly low priority in the minds of many of the younger students in the first few years, first three or four years. But, there was always the possibility with just a three-year degree of doing a fourth year and specializing in something and developing a major, and the three-year Raymond degree was particularly good background for a career in Law, and so there's a rather remarkable number of Raymond graduates who've gone into law and related areas.

Meyer: Did the third semester go into the summer?

Lark: Yes. So our summers were only two months long.

Meyer: How long?

Lark: Two months.

Meyer: Two months.

Lark: It was really a ten-month program, and we really didn't take every break that anybody else did. I remember New Years Day, having classes one year. Dick Martin celebrating New Years Eve the night before, in the Common Room with the students there, so we were all on-campus, nobody'd gone home for New Years.

Meyer: Going to take a break here for a minute, for a little drink of water. You've mentioned about two factors, was there other factors that you think had to do with this change?

Lark: There were a couple of others. One that I'm sensitive to, and I'm not sure how many others would have the same opinion of it, was the increased prevalence of marijuana and LSD, and the enthusiasm over navel-gazing and trying to find yourself on drugs, just drove a wedge between some students and some of the faculty. And it was to the detriment of the close student-faculty relations, to have this going on, where students' personal lives were no longer acceptable in the minds of part of the faculty. Some of the faculty were quite sympathetic, and others were not.

Meyer: Did that build a wedge not only between some faculty and some students, but did that build other wedges between students, or between faculty and faculty? Was it kind of a difficult thing there?

Lark: Yes. It tended to put the wedge between faculty and faculty, which was I think more important than the wedge between students. I think the students were more tolerant of each other than the faculty were.

Meyer: Yes.

Lark: Now, the fourth important agent that drove change was the concern of the University for financial viability for the college. There had been a very substantial grant to the college that provided for building it, and initial staffing, and many of the niceties like being able to afford to bring in good speakers for High Table and the like. But the Raymond family's grant, as I understand it—but I'm not sure that I really was ever privileged to any specific details, I only got things second- and third-hand—the grant was eventually blended into University budget overall, and Raymond was asked to pay its own way, regardless of that.

Meyer: Who was president at that time, do you recall? '78?

Lark: I'm not sure by then. When did Dr., President Burns die?

Meyer: Yeah, no, I can't remember that sequence.

Lark: He had been really quite supportive of the college.

Meyer: Yeah, I'm not sure. So, Atchley came after—no, McCaffrey came after Burns? Is that right? I can't remember that sequence either.

Lark: I don't recall either.

Meyer: Yeah. But Burns was the original idea-person.

Lark: Yes.

Meyer: And did you want to speak a little bit more about the financial factor?

Lark: Yes, one thing that exacerbated the problem was the rigid curriculum. Having so many required courses meant that our students had a solid base from which they could transfer to other schools easily and gained admission into a whole variety of programs, but the other way around, students who'd gone to other colleges and taken whatever their variety of classes was found it awkward to transfer into Raymond and to find everything counted and would work toward their degree. We made some accommodations, but there were really very few people who transferred in, so retention was not very good, and that was one reason we were never really quite up to capacity.

Meyer: That's a very important thing, and I don't think I ever heard it said that way, and said that well. I've heard about the financial aspect, but the thing about maintaining retention, you could hang onto your students most of the way but there was no easy conduit to come in.

Lark: Yes.

Meyer: And, wow. Back up, back up a minute and help me get Raymond, Callison, or Raymond Covell Callison. Which, when did the three, when, what was first? Raymond was first?

Lark: Raymond in '62 was first. '63 was Covell College. I think Callison opened in '67. May have been '66. But it was two, three years later. And there was a fourth college planned that never got off the drawing boards.

Meyer: Yeah. I thought that way too, even from the outside. Then, at the very end, Callison and Raymond, there were several students that were left in Limbo, as it were, and then they were joined with Callison? Is that right?

Lark: Yes. By that time, they had come in under a program in which there were no required classes, so they were generating their own programs and were able to develop Callison-compatible degrees and graduated under that rubric.

Meyer: Anything more—

Lark: One other thing more about the economic aspect of it.

Meyer: Yes.

Lark: One thing that was done as a way to try to make things more efficient and easier, both with the administration and for transfers, was to change the academic calendar at Raymond so that it was on the same 9-month calendar as the rest of the University. And at that time, at the time of the change, I think that was a four-month semester, a one-month winter term, and a four-month spring semester. That changed Raymond into being a 4-year nine-month academic program rather than three-year.

Meyer: Yeah. What was that year about, do you think? I remember the 4-1-4...

Lark: Early '70s.

Meyer: The '70s?

Lark: Early '70s.

Meyer: Early '70s. Yeah. Yeah, I remember the 4-1-4, and so Raymond was asked to accommodate itself into that calendar, uh-huh.

Lark: And it worked well in some ways, we still could do nine four-unit classes in a year—or was it seven? Anyway, it worked through.

Meyer: Did they take the one winter term, too?

Lark: Yes.

Meyer: So they took, like, nine classes. How many units would that have been?

Lark: I'm not sure how they, how they figured it, I'd have to go back and look at the records.

Meyer: (overlapping) Yeah, I don't know either.

Lark: I don't remember how many, whether they were taking still three classes (...?) Still under five units, but they were shorter in length, the semes—the term wasn't as long as it had been before. I'm not sure that what I just said was right.

Meyer: (overlapping) Were there any other—were there any other financial issues?

Lark: Not that I'm aware of.

Meyer: Uh-huh. Was there a, was there any kind of a drop in the quality of the students toward the end, with regard to SATs or whatever?

Lark: Yes.

Meyer: There was.

Lark: There was an abrupt drop that happened in May 1971 as a result of all this pressure from both students and from newer faculty to loosen up the curriculum. All the required courses were abolished—

Meyer: Oh...

Lark: —and we started afresh with just the faculty we had each offering individual courses in what they thought the students would be interested in and what the students were asking them to do. And, that change really was the death knell of Raymond as a powerful liberal arts college, in my impression. The... It had a good effect in one small way for me. We developed new courses that we thought would be more attractive. We no longer could offer a sequence of courses and require something ahead of something else, so I developed classes in Earth sciences, in Astronomy, in Physics of Music, none of which I had taught before in depth. I had done some Astronomy, and done some, a bit of music in my Physics class before, but I separated those out as individual classes, and those became fairly popular as General Ed classes. And, when I later transferred to COP, I continued to offer those two classes.

Meyer: Oh yeah. And I remember those, I remember those very well.

Lark: I even did Science Fiction a few times—

Meyer: Science Fiction?

Lark: —making sure that the students understood that what I was doing was looking at the interesting astronomy that's in Science Fiction. [I] ended up publishing in a national magazine called *Mercury* an article on just that subject.

Meyer: Um, exactly what subject?

Lark: Interesting astronomy in science fiction.

Meyer: Right. Gee. Astronomy, and... Oh, the music! Did, how about the music? Did it take off, or what happened there?

Lark: Yes, I got a big enrollment the very first time I did it, from, mostly from the Conservatory, or at least half from the Conservatory. And, the class went well because I happened to have a group of older students from the Conservatory who, partly, were interested in Music Education and who were just very helpful in helping me do demonstrations for the class, and making suggestions, answering questions that came up that I didn't have good answers for because I'm not a professionally trained musician.

Meyer: Sure.

Lark: So I was very happy with that, and I was very pleased that when I retired, Jim Hetrick continued to offer that class, and he's still doing it now.

Meyer: Is that right. And I know that's, when you interviewed Stan Beckler, you and Carl together, I think, and you knew, you were interested because of the music concept of composing and whatnot with Stan.

Lark: Yes.

Meyer: That was right. I wondered what that connection was, and that's interesting. So, toward the end, when the concentrated required courses changed, it just was more like, not so unique, not so demanding, it was more like everybody else—

Lark: Yes.

Meyer: —and not, it didn't create the pride and all of that, that goes with the quality.

Lark: And, the living situation had been, become much more flexible and free, and the use of drugs was up, and that attracted a different group of students.

Meyer: Yeah.

Lark: And the result was—and I, I took numbers on this pretty carefully—in the year before that revolution changed in 1971, the class that entered that year, the class as a whole had an average SAT above 1200, which is considerably better than COP as a whole.

Meyer: Yes.

Lark: Two years later, after word got around as to how the college was changed, how the program was changed, the average SAT was down at about 1000.

Meyer: And earlier, was it up close to 11, 12?

Lark: (overlapping) Usually, for those early classes, stayed close to 1200.

Meyer: Uh-huh. I think you sized that whole thing up beautifully. I don't think I've ever heard what you've said—and I got the picture exactly, I mean, you know, you were able to look back and see why such-and-such happened, and, you analyzed that very well. That's wonderful. What we've done up to this point is great. There is nothing about this. There're some black-and-white materials in the Archives. Mike Wurtz has told me that there's some written things. But there's, let's see. Mike Wagner—have you read his Oral History, by any chance? Mike Wagner's?

Lark: Yeah, I think I have, but I don't remember any details of it.

Meyer: Me either. And there was nobody else, I don't think.

Lark: George Blum had something to say about it. I interviewed George, and—

Meyer: That's right.

Lark: —George was not as focused on the quantitative aspects of it as I was.

Meyer: Yes.

Lark: Historian, not a scientist.

Meyer: Right. Yeah, that data. So, when your program comes up this coming year, the reunion, or, what are you calling it?

Lark: Celebration.

Meyer: Celebration. Will there be any opportunities to, either in small groups or in presentations or anything, to talk about what we've talked about today?

Lark: I'm sure there will be. Yes, I'm involved in the planning for this, along with the Alumni office and a group of three ex—former students, Raymond graduates, who are officers of the

Raymond Phoenix Institute, it's called, which is a non-profit organization that the Raymond Alumni have put together, independent of the Pacific Alumni Foundation—Association.

Meyer: Shall we move ahead on another, other subjects, or what?

Lark: Yes.

Meyer: Ok. (laughter)

Lark: Yes. I have one thing that comes earlier in my notes I don't want to forget to come back to, and that is about sabbatical leave program.

Meyer: Let's bring that up right now, before we forget it. So, when professors were recruited, was a Sabbatical leave a recruiting device, or was it, how was it involved?

Lark: Well, I'm not sure when it was first announced, but in, within the college, we agreed very soon that with us working 10 months a year and short summers, that a 7-year sabbatical plan would lead to stagnation. If we wanted to stay alive professionally, we were going to have to have more frequent leaves. And so, the administration was talked into granting a 5-year sabbatical plan, where in the fifth year you could take a full semester at full pay, or, excuse me, just one semester at full pay, or two semesters at half pay for the year. And, it worked out very well in that the Raymond faculty did well staying alive professionally, and I think it might help for me to mention a few of these. Lewis Ford, our Philosopher, kept up his professional activity and publication in Whitehead's Philosophy, even to and into his retirement. He's still communicating and publishing now, ten years after retiring. He eventually did leave Raymond College and taught elsewhere.

Meyer: Repeat his name again.

Lark: Lewis Ford.

Meyer: Ok.

Lark: And, Sy Kahn, who taught primarily literature but also put on plays at Raymond and later transferred into COP's Drama department, had several Fulbright grants to study and do play production and direction abroad. Gene Wise, who I mentioned before, was active enough in American Studies professionally that he easily moved from here to Carnegie Mellon, I think it was, one of the prestigious Eastern universities, and become Chair of their American Studies department. And, Dick Martin and Gene Rice and Jerry Gaff all did enough research on cluster colleges, and Raymond in particular, that they ended up in Washington, working for different government agencies and professional organizations concerned with liberal education and cluster colleges. And, Mike Wagner and George Blum, who were charter members of the

college as I was—and, it's interesting, the three of us taught the very first class that was offered at Raymond College. It was called Introduction to the Modern World. It was team taught with a scientist, a historian, and an economist. Both of them continued to be very interested in their fields, and worked on books for years, and both of them published, George two books, and Mike one, at retirement time or just after. I think there are others who similarly stayed alive. Not everybody on the faculty was able to, but I do want to mention my own case. I took a sabbatical leave in 1967-68, in my sixth year, and during that time I did research in nuclear physics and the Niels Bohr Institute in Copenhagen. It went well, I got several interesting publications out of it, several invitations to visit other universities and other organizations and give talks on what I was doing, including going to the Soviet Union at that hard time, and talking about my research.

Meyer: Mention the title of the sabbatical again, or the work that you were going to do in Copenhagen. Spell that out again.

Lark: It was nuclear physics research.

Meyer: Uh-huh.

Lark: I was working on super-heavy elements, ones that are beyond the Periodic Table that we learned in high school.

Meyer: Yes.

Lark: And what their characteristics were, and what the chances were of producing other heavier elements. Now, in the same institute where I went to talk about this, [the institute] has been responsible for the develop—for the discovery of most of the elements beyond 94.

Meyer: Were you in Copenhagen for one semester, or for...

Lark: For a whole year, and the summers before and after, so it was a good long time. In 1971, I spent a semester and a summer at Brookhaven National Lab in New York, again doing nuclear physics research, sort of following up on research that I'd done earlier, or research I'd done in Amsterdam when I was on a post-doc, before I came to UOP. And then, in '76, I had another sabbatical leave. I spent a summer and a semester at the Australian National University in Canberra. Again, it was research in nuclear physics, and that didn't turn out so well, in that I didn't get good publications out of that, but I felt that the expectations of the university here were, besides being a good teacher, they wanted to see good professional activity and staying alive, and I was doing it by moving from one field to another within nuclear physics.

Meyer: Yeah. What date, about what date are we talking about, with the Australian, er, time?

Lark: That was 1976.

Meyer: 1976.

Lark: Mm-hmm.

Meyer: So, at Raymond, you actually had an opportunity to do three?

Lark: Yes. Actually, by that time, I was in COP's Physics department. I managed, despite the short summers, from the time I got here until 1972, I had a position, a research position in either nuclear chemistry or nuclear physics each summer, twice at Lawrence Berkeley Lab, twice at Lawrence Livermore Lab, once at Los Alamos National Lab, and once at Texas A&M University. So, I never had a real vacation period until I'd been here for 10 years. And I continued to do research when I had a chance from then on. In Spring 1986, that was ten years after being in Australia, I took a Spring semester and the summer following it and then the second summer following it, doing research in Astronomy at the University of Hawaii, and again that was sabbatical leave.

Meyer: Yeah, I was gonna ask you that. So, before Hawaii, the others, before that, were they all in nuclear physics, primarily?

Lark: Yes.

Meyer: So then, the Astronomy one was about the same time as when you moved into the other fields, the Astronomy and Music and Science Fiction.

Lark: Yes. I had been interested in astronomy, been active in the local amateur astronomy society since soon after coming to Stockton, but I had not professionally studied Astronomy, so I just went basically from knowing the techniques of analyzing things from chemistry and physics to using similar techniques but with a telescope to analyze Haley's Comet and later Pluto, and Neptune's moon Triton. Those are the things in which I was involved in publications.

Meyer: Well, I know that you've been doing a lot with that even after you retired, because, you know, my friend Kay, I've seen so much of her artwork that she's taken from your prints—what do you call what it is that you're able to take off the computer and turn it into a hard copy?

Lark: What I send to Kay is, are images mostly taken by other astronomers and by, and published by NASA, which then puts them sort of in publish domain, and I just pick the ones that I think would make good art and send them along to Kay, and one other artist, local artist.

Meyer: Oh that's great, because I've seen—

Lark: Mary Lois Thompson.

Meyer: Yeah. They're lovely.

Lark: Well. The results of all these sabbatical leaves and summer activity were a respectable list of publications, particularly in the earlier part of my career, but continuing to some extent later. And, the more important—the importance of the result, in my case as well as in the case of the other faculty members who stayed alive, is we remained vital, lively, interested professionals in our field, and the students could see that and appreciate that.

Meyer: Yes. So the administration bought that, huh?

Lark: Mm-hmm.

Meyer: They, and then, what about the univers—the rest of the university, were they jealous?

Lark: They sure were! There was a problem of young folks in COP who weren't getting leaves as frequent as that.

Meyer: Right.

Lark: And they pushed, and we supported them, and they ended up getting a more generous sabbatical leave program. I always argued that faculty are not 'given' sabbatical leave—

Meyer: They've earned it.

Lark: —it is a *right*. It is an obligation on them. The university obliges them to pull up their roots and go out and do something else in order that they stay alive professionally. Everybody ought to be doing sabbatical leaves.

Meyer: I like what you're saying, you've used that word "alive" a number of times, even when you talked about the very first ones that were done, and the philosophy that Raymond had to that, which is a really, it clarifies the way that one looks at a sabbatical, I think.

Lark: Yes.

Meyer: And, if the administrators would look at it that way, we, the whole picture might be different even today. That's, that's well said. I was gonna ask you another question about this, but let's move, let's move on.

Lark: Ok.

Meyer: How are you doing, are you holding up?

Lark: I'm feeling fine.

Meyer: (laughter) I think we're doing great. I, um, we haven't gone very far in our questions, but it makes no difference, because the Oral History Project needs to cover, as you well know, the gaps and the holes and the, that's not covered by other interviews, so this is exactly what we're doing here. Can I move into a question about your move, then, from the cluster college into the College of Pacific. And, was that a phase-in thing, or was that an abrupt change, and was that change difficult, or not difficult, and so forth and so on? Tell me about that.

Lark: It was gradual in that I had begun teaching in the Physics department after just a few years here. I had good relations early with Carl Wulfman and Dick Perry and other members of the department, Andreas Rodriguez, and after Fred Inman left the department, I taught their nuclear physics course for them two or three times. In the early days when they had, the Physics department had moved into the basement in Pharmacy, I was involved in helping teach both Advanced Lab class and Nuclear Physics class. And, so, I was on good terms with people, and liked the situation, thought that it was a good group to work with, but the change was abrupt in that I taught full-time in Raymond through the Fall semester of 1974, and then started Spring semester full-time in College of Physics, Physics department.

Meyer: In '75.

Lark: January '75 is when the break was made. And, I think the understanding was, when I came into the department, that I would take responsibility for those courses the Physics department offered that were intended to be General Education, liberal arts-oriented classes. So, the Concepts of Physics class I taught quite frequently, and I continued to teach the Physics of Music in alternate years, and the Astronomy in alternate years. And some years, I taught an Astrophysics course in the Physics department for students—

Meyer: Which one?

Lark: Astrophysics.

Meyer: Ok.

Lark: A little bit more advanced look at astronomy, where we were using the techniques of physics to understand just really what's going on and why. And it was not a painful move, I was welcomed, and enjoyed it, and I was relieved to be out of the muddle that I thought Raymond had fallen into by that time.

Meyer: Yeah, I can, I don't mean to put words in your mouth, but it seems like when you talked about the conflict or the wedge, that, we used the word "wedge" before, about those that found a program that was more liberal for students, that wedge is something that is, something

that's bothered you for a long time, that sort of created a, what was a cohesive, seems like cohesive, wonderful, proud group to a fragmented group.

Lark: Yes.

Meyer: And that was a shame.

Lark: Well, it's interesting what happened with the Raymond faculty. Starting about that time, different members of the faculty moved back into COP, in the case of Hugh Wadman and John Tucker.

Meyer: Yeah.

Lark: And George Blum eventually moved into COP's History department, John Williams and John Smith moved into COP's English department.

Meyer: Did everybody move over?

Lark: No, not everybody was welcome. There were some people who had not been very active professionally, who didn't have the paper qualifications. I'm thinking of David Burke who taught French and didn't have a Ph.D. and had a lot going for him in terms of general culture. There wasn't a place for him in the French department, and he ended up not having a position. There were a few others I'd rather not mention who weren't really welcomed by a department. They didn't have the qualifications to fit the department, they weren't specialists enough. Their interests had been quite general, and they hadn't been very active professionally.

Meyer: I interviewed Roy Whiteker, and Roy spoke quite a bit about his role of Dean at that time, where, I'm not sure he was Dean when you moved over, but it seems like it was about that time, because he talked quite a bit about his role in that transition of most of you all. So...

Lark: My impression is overall that was pretty sensibly done. I think Roy and the department chairs in COP made sensible decisions.

Meyer: Uh-huh. And I'm not sure who was president at that time, I can't remember all those, all that detail, but anyway. How about moving into something totally different?

Lark: Fine.

Meyer: Ok? Let's move (laughter) How are we doing here, my goodness, we've, who would think we would be talking this long? Um.

Lark: One area where we haven't answered an early question is 'what were my positions'? I came in as an Assistant Professor—Professor of Natural Sciences, that's what it was called in

Raymond. Those of us who were doing math and science were called Professors of Natural Science, and I was promoted fairly early to Associate Professor, and still on the early side promoted to full professor. And, I moved into COP I think as a full professor, I don't think that promotion came later.

Meyer: (laughter) So the Raymond was, the title was of Natural...

Lark: Natural Sciences.

Meyer: Natural Science.

Lark: But I also put Physics in parentheses to emphasize where my strength was.

Meyer: Ok, right.

Lark: But then in COP, I was just a member of the department until my last three or four years, I served as department chair.

Meyer: And how many chair—how many member of that group, of that department at that time? So you were—there was Carl, and there was...

Lark: Andres Rodriguez.

Meyer: Right.

Lark: And Dick Perry.

Meyer: Yes.

Lark: And I, who were sort of all similar vintage, and Joe Alward who'd come more recently, and for a while there was Alex Granik, so there were six of us in the department for a while.

Meyer: Does the department see itself—does the COP department, now—see itself as a major, does it see itself as a service unit? We in Sports Sciences always were not sure, I think, of that. How did you all see yourself? Both, or?

Lark: We really were both, in the sense that, for us to stay alive professionally and be doing things in physics, we needed to be active in some area within physics, each of us.

Meyer: Right.

Lark: And, we needed to be teaching classes in those areas. So each of us had sort of a specialty. I was doing atomic and nuclear physics; Wulfman was doing theoretical physics; Rodriguez was doing physics education; and Perry was sort of a generalist with some specialization in electricity and magnetism. And, we liked the idea of sort of covering the bases;

I think this was probably Wulfman's leadership that led to the department of the, of people with different interests that could cover the bases fairly well. I'm pleased to see that the new department chair that came in when I retired in '99, that's Jim Hetrick, has used a different model and made a big success of it. He has decided to make a small research group of people with similar interests that can work with each other, stimulate each other, and so they have a nationally and internationally recognized group of theoretical physicists doing lattice-gauge theory of elementary particle studies. Just theory of it is computer calculations, mostly done on supercomputers or on gangs of supercomputers tied together for tremendous computing power, and that's seemed to work out well. And among those people, there is enough interest that they're able to cover the other subjects other than elementary particle physics quite well. Hetrick himself is really a Renaissance man, with strong interest in music and astronomy and education, generally, he's cooperating with the School of Education. I'm very pleased to see that.

Meyer: I can see exactly what you're describing, and when you first, with the group of four or five of you were, you had your own specialties, and then as they have moved now into a focus group. What does that change of philosophy, does that have anything to do with the emphasis, the greater emphasis on scholarly production of materials, or was that their idea regardless, or does it have something to do with increasing the visibility of the department to the outer world, or what?

Lark: All of the above. You see well what it's done. It's just really focused the professional development of the physicists involved in an area where they're mutually supportive and helping each other be productive and nationally visible. And it's, the students must truly see that these are interesting people doing interesting things, and this is an interesting field, and it's accessible in that they don't, because they're involved in computation, the students who work with them learn, and they've learned a lot before they get there, about computer programming and handling difficult computational problems.

Meyer: Gee, that's really interesting. Yeah. You said, when we were going to be doing this, that I'd learn a lot about you, but I've learned a lot about the whole, everything you've talked about, and here, (laughter) I've been here a long time, but you've described it so well that, even one who is certainly not a scientist, I understand the big picture, and you've described that so well.

Lark: Oh, thank you.

Meyer: There's a question here that I think you've covered in different ways, it talks about the people with whom you've worked—the number four, you know—we've talked a lot about the students, we've talked about your faculty colleagues—I'm on number 4—staff, regents, what

about regents? You know, we've sort of, over the years sort of made fun, because way back when, regents were not very aware of what was going on, it was certainly an old white boys' club, kind of, it wasn't a diverse group at all, and. What is your feeling about regents, in a private institution like this, and have they changed your attitude about them, or what? Anything?

Lark: I had little respect for the Board of Regents in the early years, but I gained a lot more respect when the Regents supported the enforcement of Title IX to involve women in athletics and supported women's athletics as well as men's.

Meyer: Yes.

Lark: And I respected them more when that group that really supported the football program at the expense of a lot of other things that could have used the money was being lost there, when that group lost their power, and other regents approved of the termination of football. But I haven't had personal contact with any of the regents, don't know any of them personally.

Meyer: Right. They're a necessity, in an institution like this, I think, and how they fit into the big picture, you know.

Lark: No, I take back about not knowing a regent. I knew Jose Hernandez as a student here. He was a teaching assistant in the physics classes, and I think he took at least one class with me, maybe two.

Meyer: Yeah, I see he thinks he might go into government, huh?

Lark: Yes, I was pleased to see that. He seems to have a very good head on his shoulders.

Meyer: Yeah. So, when he was here, even though he was an engineer, you had him, huh? Did, was he an advisee of any sort, or anything in your class?

Lark: No, he was much closer to Andres Rodriguez, they were good friends, and he was a teaching assistant for Rodriguez's classes.

Meyer: Oh, is that right?

Lark: And he took, I think he was an Engineering Physics major, at least he took some of the courses that Engineering Physicists usually do, like Atomic Physics and Advanced Lab. I think in one of those, I was his instructor.

Meyer: Have you had anything to do with governance, while you've been here? Has faculty governance involved in Academic Council, or those kinds of committees?

Lark: Yes, I've always thought it was worthwhile both for my own satisfaction because I wanted to get my point across to serve on university committees. And I have served on the Academic Council more than once. I served on the Executive Board for a year or two. I've served on the Promotions and Tenure committee for a couple of times, and gained a new respect for the importance of more heads than one being involved in decision-making. The, a thing, a pattern that I see in committee work and may be good for me to mention first is, so often committees have a charge and some kind of general principles on which they're supposed to act, and they get down and don't have as much confidence in their own reasoning and judgmental abilities as they should. The reason we have committees is for them to make decisions in borderline cases and things for which we haven't been clever enough to write a rule that fits exactly. If we have rules and regulations that are spelled out very precisely, we could just use clerks to administer them all. But the reason we have university committees is because we're not clever enough to figure everything else ahead of time, and we need to do some ad hoc thinking, the committees usually do that. That's their charge. And when I see the committees bogged down, it's usually because they are too concerned with trying to either manufacture or to find precedents, rules that will make the situation clear instead of applying their own judgments, which is why they were elected to the committee, is that people trust their judgment.

Meyer: As you talk I think of the committee called Courses and Standards—

Lark: Yes.

Meyer: —where petitions kept coming forward for which there was not a rule, or whatever, and that reminds me then of Jan Simmon—Timmons, I remember Jan was, I think she was the chair in a role of Assistant Dean or something, she was chair of that committee. Where there other committees that you didn't mind being on, or others that you did not like being on?

Lark: No, I think I served on Courses and Standards once, at least. I served on the Faculty Compensation Committee for a while, and I was particularly proud at the time that the year that I did most of the math on it and the leg work on it, we got the biggest percentage increase overall across the faculty that we'd had for quite a few years, and that we had for several years after. I found that a very frustrating thing to work on, because that was at the time that the administration was very secretive about budgets, where they were covering up losses on football.

Meyer: That was tough.

Lark: And they managed to change the accounting system every year, so I could not see what things I could compare it with, because of the new format for each year's accounting. I appreciated the fact that there was an annual presentation of a budget, but it was very, very difficult to make heads or tails of it because of lack of consistency in the system.

Meyer: Have you, in line with that, have you been close enough to the university to say how you feel about how things are moving along generally, either the fact that the university seems to be able to have its head above water now, financially, and other—what is your reaction to the evolution, they use the word “evolution” here, of the university? How do you feel?

Lark: I’m very pleased with most of what I’ve seen. I haven’t seen enough detail on the General Education program now to feel as satisfied with it as I was in the earlier days when I was on the GE Committee. I served on the Course Selection Committee for Science for years, and I thought that was a very worthwhile thing to be doing, and I had a lot of respect for some of the people who were also devoting time to that, but overall I’ve been pleased with what I see at the university. I like the fact that I don’t hear of financial problems as deep as we did have, and I think things are a good bit more open, so I think it would be apparent if we had as deep of problems as we did before I retired.

Meyer: Yeah, I, like you, didn’t know very much about finances, and I don’t know very much about them now, but I also, I personally enjoy working with you through the Emeriti Society. Have you felt that that’s been a good—let me back up on that. When you first retired, you moved into the Science program at the Farmington School, and that sort of thing.

Lark: Yes.

Meyer: And I wanted to be sure that you said something about that. And then, you mentioned somebody, was it Jim Blankenship or somebody, who said that, has continued that job. Can you tell me a little bit about that?

Lark: Oh yes. Yes. I should back up a little bit on this.

Meyer: Ok.

Lark: Later in my career, I thought that I would, I’d had enough experience with teaching, and with a range of students, that I just wanted to help out generally, and go out into the community. And I got active in a group that called themselves the Valley Association of Science Teachers, VAST, and gave several talks for them and participated in their meetings and discussions, and this was a group that included teachers from elementary, and high school, and college, and junior college level.

Meyer: Were you still teaching then?

Lark: Yes, while I was still teaching. In doing that, I got acquainted with a good number of teachers, particularly high school teachers, and some elementary school teachers, and got encouraged to continue to show them ways that they could teach things that I had experience with, like astronomy. One area that was particularly helpful was astronomy activities that can

be done during the daytime. I gave several presentations on that to various teaching groups including this Valley Association of Science Teachers. And I thought, as I was approaching retirement, that I would like to continue to do that kind of thing, thought it would be helpful to be working with teachers and helping them, but then I was approached by people who knew me and knew what was going on at the county Office of Education in Science and Special Projects Office. They had a program that had been going for a couple of years that involved training retired scientists and engineers to be effective science presenters and science leaders in elementary schools. The program got its original funding with the intent of it being for rural schools and for schools that were largely minority students. And, I had my misgivings, thinking that I would not be effective in working with little kids, I wouldn't know how to do it, but I went ahead and went through the training, and felt better, and just loved it!

Meyer: Yeah! (laughter) Always so affectionate!

Lark: I started immediately on retirement, the first year I was retired I was assigned to the Farmington School, and Dale Dunmire from our Engineering, Electrical Engineering department had been out there before, and he'd retired from the program.

Meyer: Oh, I didn't know Dale did that. Yeah.

Lark: And, the teachers were appreciative, the students were appreciative. There was never enough time, there were so many demands on the students and teacher's times that there was never enough time to be there, and I always felt that the kids were being short-changed, that there wasn't enough science there, but I went ahead and got training, and any time there was an institute offered I thought would be helpful, I went. And, that program is still continuing, and several of the people who've retired recently, including David Fletcher, um...

Meyer: There's a fellow from the Pharmacy School. I think he was, maybe I'm wrong. So, how many years did you actually do the children's program?

Lark: Eleven.

Meyer: 11 years.

Lark: I did the first two years by myself, and late in the second year I had a stroke.

Meyer: Uh-huh.

Lark: And had difficulty with reflexes, and lost the use of one hand. So, I stopped driving of my own volition, and Liz started coming along with me, not just to drive me but to help me with passing out materials and working with the kids, and the fact that my wife had been a preschool teacher and knew younger children meant that she could, she was much more sensitive to

where they were, and did a good job of keeping me at their level, and their interest level, so we made a great team. We liked it well enough that we continued until last year, when we retired from that program.

Meyer: What grade level, mostly?

Lark: Kindergarten through fifth grade—

Meyer: Oh!

Lark: —and I tried to visit all the classes.

Meyer: Oh, and then so you just adapted to the age, of, the material.

Lark: (overlapping) Mm-hmm, did different activities and different materials, depends on what the grades were studying. Third grade and fifth grade, there was more astronomy, some chemistry at fourth and fifth grade level, life sciences at all levels.

Meyer: Well that's great. I didn't know that Dale was part of that group earlier, too. So, now that you've been retired for a while, what are you doing with yourself? Are you keeping the Astronomy emphasis going?

Lark: Mm-hmm. You see a big stack of astronomy magazines over here. I still subscribe and read journals in physics and astronomy.

Meyer: Right.

Lark: And I spend a good bit of time following science news on the computer, on the Internet.

Meyer: Right. Do you miss teaching?

Lark: Not much. I've got plenty to do, and I'm enjoying being a student again—Liz and I are spending a lot of time with the OLLI Lifelong Learning Institute on campus, so we go to lectures, we've gone to classes that are sort of physical health, like strength and balance classes done by physical therapy faculty and students, and just yesterday I was over at physical therapy for an hour and a half as a victim for their students, their graduate students, to practice on. They had maybe eight or ten different victims of stroke and other things, other problems.

Meyer: You mean, at our, our pharmacy school?

Lark: (overlapping) In our physical, in the Physical Therapy department of the Long School Pharmacy and Health Sciences. And I've done that several times now, for more than one teacher. They find it helpful that they have somebody who's comfortable with students, and who's still making progress with something that's usually considered a terminal situation.

Meyer: Yeah. Well, you've made phenomenal, over the years since you had the stroke, I mean, I can, anybody can see the progress that you've made. It's just remarkable!

Lark: I'm very fortunate.

Meyer: Yes, and, but that's, that's been diligence on your part, and encouragement, I'm sure, by Liz, and everybody else that's helped you. Is there anything else that you can think of? I'm...

Lark: I'm thinking of individuals who were most memorable and why. Robert Burns, and Meyer, have to be the head of the list, the President and Academic Vice President when I first came. The COP Deans, particularly Bob Benedetti and Roy Whiteker, had been very helpful. I served on sort of an advisory committee to Benedetti for a while, and really enjoyed that. The quality of the other people who were working with him as well as his own personal and administrative qualities, just made that a real pleasure. Very interesting. I've got a lot of respect for Bob McMaster, who was in, took care of finances, the nuts and bolts of finances during most of my career. I hope we have a good Oral History interview with him.

Meyer: I think he's had a tough position all those years, when financial matters were, and I, and you know, the whole deal about the trustees and the President and the finances and everything, and, most of us in faculty, we did not know, really, what that was all about, I think. But it must have been tough for people working in the financial area.

Lark: Yes.

Meyer: Did you see Bob, did you get a chance to talk to Bob the other day, at the luncheon that we had?

Lark: Just briefly.

Meyer: Me too, just briefly. Yeah.

Lark: I did have a rough time as department chair in dealing with administration, particularly with the Academic Vice President, in that he came with the charge of tightening the program and achieving some financial stability, and one thing that he focused on early on was the fact that the Physics department offered a wide range of majors. We offered an Applied Math-Physics major, we offered a Geo-Physics major, we offered an Engineering Physics major, we offered a B.A. program, as well as a B.S. program in Physics, and we had a Masters program that involved research with Carl Wulfman, or research in Physics Education with Andres Rodriguez. So, that seemed like too much for the small number of student majors that we had. But the fact of the matter was that these didn't, having these majors didn't require any additional courses from what we would do. The Applied Math-Physics was just a selection of Physics courses and Math courses together that made good sense to pair, and the Geo-Physics, again,

was just courses that we would offer anyway, plus some courses in Geology that they would be offering anyway. So it was an efficient way, and some very good students have gone through those majors. One of the outstanding examples was Herb Reinelt's son, who did the Applied Math-Physics and ended up going on to graduate study in Cal Tech on the basis of it, has his Ph.D. now.

Meyer: That was your choice as a department, and the question was whether that was too huge of a variety, that you couldn't handle it properly, but then you're saying that you could without adding courses or watering down anything else. So what happened?

Lark: Well, the, we lost a position. The Vice President, he chose us as one of the three or four programs to be done first in program evaluation, and the decision was made to lose a faculty position, and two or three of the combined programs were eliminated. We were no longer able to offer them. So we had a smaller number of options for students, so we had a smaller number of students at advanced levels. And that I fought against tooth and nail, I thought it was, would be the death of the department, because it looked like we were going to be reduced to a purely service department. To come back to an issue you mentioned earlier, where we were only offering the elementary classes that had big enrollments because Pre-Med and Pre-Dent and Engineering students were all required to take specific lower-division physics classes. And, I lost a lot of sleep over that, and was very much under stress and strain for two or three years before that was resolved, and didn't feel I'd done as well as I could have. I saved some of it, but I reached a point where I was told I was no longer welcome to go in and talk with the Vice President about it.

Meyer: If you were to do it over again, would you do it over again, the same way, if you, if, knowing what you know now, in other words there were going to be the repercussions from the Academic VP, or whatever, do you think that it was still the wisest move at the time?

Lark: On my part, I felt so. I didn't feel it was the wisest move at the time, on the part of the Academic Vice President, I don't think he achieved any savings or any improvement in program quality, but.

Meyer: But you mentioned earlier that the department now has changed itself around and moved into a smaller focus, emphasis, so... That was tough, huh?

Lark: Yes, that was hard to live with.

Meyer: And you were trying to save jobs, probably, everybody?

Lark: Not just jobs, but trying to save the quality of the program. I wanted to have the program good enough that I could hire good people to come, and I thought I did. The first person that

was hired, with the retirements of first Wulfman and then Rodriguez and Perry, was a woman, and she was just very good at one thing the rest of us had not been doing very well, and that was getting students into the laboratory and doing individual undergraduate research projects with her.

Meyer: Which they're doing a lot of now, I think, throughout the university.

Lark: Yes.

Meyer: Yeah. We look back at those times, and they were difficult, but mostly your attitude and your spirit and everything is very optimistic. I mean, there are a few, I'm sure, bumps along the road, we've all had, but you should feel like everything that you did was the right thing to do, morally the right thing to do, and should have no regrets at all.

Lark: Yes.

Meyer: That's, yeah, I know, I can picture that situation and similar kinds of things. Well, I've run out of steam, I don't know, if you want to be sure that there's anything left over to include...

Lark: I've gone through the notes that I've taken myself, and looking through the guidelines— Oh, I'd like to say something about community.

Meyer: Yes, oh yeah.

Lark: A couple of things have come up already, of doing science for the community, involved with the community. Wulfman, Perry, and especially Rodriguez, and I were involved in education and helping teachers, not just in this Valley Association of Science Teachers but in personal contacts with individuals. And, it's Jim Blankenship, in Pharmacy, who you were trying to think, whose name you were trying to think of as somebody who was in this program.

Meyer: Yes.

Lark: And, there are a handful of others who, like me, have been involved in helping in elementary school science teaching, where we went and helped the teachers with particular lessons, bring in equipment and toys for the kids to play with, and know how to use it to get some effective learning. And that's, that's been nice community connection. And we've enjoyed ourselves personally, being connected with the World of Wonders Science Museum in Lodi. I've done a couple of programs for them.

Meyer: Have you.

Lark: I once did a program for our church, the Unitarian Church in Stockton, on science-related topic, this question of if there's other intelligent life in the universe, what is it that we would want to tell them is interesting about us, and I think that's a very important thing, a question to ask. It leads to interesting self-reflection on our own society.

Meyer: I've seen that building up there, I went in a couple of times, and I'm not seeing children in action. Has that been a successful endeavor?

Lark: I think so. They do school groups during the day, and so you wouldn't see it in the ... during the days that they've got programs going. They do special summer programs and they, they do have activities where they reach out, like at the Grape Festival or at the Literacy Day in the park. They were there representing, publicizing what they do, encouraging people to come. And one other thing that I'm involved with that (...?) community, and this is primarily Liz's, for thirty years now she and a handful of other women who were interested in early childhood have been bringing professional children's musicians here to put on concerts for kids. In the last few years, I've been doing the bookkeeping for them. Liz is the Treasurer and the Box Office, and I do the computer part of that for her.

Meyer: Explain or, title that group again.

Lark: They call themselves Education Through Music, Inc., which is not a unique title. There are some other organizations with the same name around the country. And they call their program Musical Chairs: Children's Concert Series, and we rarely run into somebody who has, who teaches at the primary school level, the primary grades and elementary school or preschool, who doesn't know some of the artists who we've brought here.

Meyer: I noticed the other day, when we had our program about Stockton Harmony, or Harmony Stockton, that Liz spoke up when the question came up about the violins and the purchase of the violins for that group. How do you think that group's going to fare out, do you think it's a one-shot thing that won't make it?

Lark: I'm hopeful it will. I'm impressed with the young fellow, Randy Fisher, who they brought in as their community outreach person to arrange that program. He's done similar programs in Sacramento and outside Sacramento, at Winters or some other small town out to the west of Sacramento. And, we didn't actually buy a violin. Liz just donated a violin that she used when she was a student.

Meyer: Is that right? (laughter)

Lark: So their first donation may not have been what they quite wanted—

Meyer: (more laughter)

Lark: —but Randy Fisher was excited about it because the case that it was in was identical to the case that he had used for many years, except it has a compartment that his didn't.

Meyer: Well, I hope it really works. I heard about that program quite some time ago, maybe I saw a program on TV about it, but when it came here, forward, I thought, "Wow," so we'll see. Well, on behalf of the Archives, on behalf of the Oral History Project, on behalf of our friendship, I thank you for our afternoon. I didn't say we'd go two hours, but we've gone two hours, and we have a lot.

Lark: Didn't really surprise me, I knew you had a lot of interests and I had a lot of ideas.

Meyer: Yeah. (laughter) I think everything about the Raymond program is really unique, and your, the way you analyze the behind-the-scenes kind of thing, and make it so clear, was very important, to see the picture and to bring it forward, like the four factors that you had mentioned earlier, and that was good. Thanks a million.

Lark: You're sure welcome. I'll be interested to hear what kind of response we get, when we get other people who've been involved with it who read the interview.

Meyer: Right.