

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SAN DIEGO

25th ANNIVERSARY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interview with Dr. Clark Kerr

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Interviewer, Dr. Kathryn Ringrose

1 **RINGROSE:** When we talked earlier, we decided that we would talk a bit about your
2 conception for a larger university structure, what you found at UCSD when you became
3 president of the university in 1958 and how you saw UCSD as fitting into this larger structure.

4 **KERR:** Well, I had been appointed president by the regents at a meeting in October of 1957 at
5 Davis and I began thinking about what we were going to do as of that time. I didn't wait until
6 1958. At the same meeting at which I was appointed to the presidency, the regents decided to
7 have three new campuses which is quite a story in itself—how they came to that conclusion.
8 One was to be in the San Diego area somewhere, one in the Los Angeles area and one some-
9 where in the South Bay area. So, I had to begin thinking right away about what ought to happen
10 at each of these separate places.

11 To begin with, I felt that each of the three new campuses ought to be different from each other.
12 Each should have a distinctive personality. I had seen the terrible competition between Berkeley
13 and UCLA and between UCLA and Berkeley which was really not good either way. The faculties
14 hated each other, were suspicious of each other and, if Berkeley got something, then UCLA
15 wanted it two weeks later and two percent less and if UCLA got something, then Berkeley
16 wanted it instantly and ten percent better. I thought this kind of competition was bad for relations
17 within the university.

18 Also, I thought it was bad for the state of California to have two identical campuses even if they
19 were located in different places. Identical campuses didn't offer to the people and the students
20 of the state the same choices. I also felt that each campus would be better internally in the long
21 run if it had its own personality, its own character. So, that led to thinking how UCSD might be
22 different from UCLA in particular, since that was the nearest big campus, and also from
23 Berkeley.

24 Now, there had been plans for doing something at San Diego that went back for several years
25 prior to my time. They had to do with establishing some kind of institute for the graduate study of
26 science and engineering.

27 **RINGROSE:** The Science and Technology Institute.

28 **KERR:** I had sat as chancellor on the sidelines listening to those discussions back and forth and
29 I wasn't really convinced this was what the San Diego community needed or the University of
30 California either. It seemed to me that with the growth of the population of the state and the
31 growth of the San Diego community, there was going to be a need for a university that was very
32 broadly based.

33 Now, I think the idea of that institute, or whatever it was called, came about in two or three
34 ways. First of all, it was a way of saying to UCLA, "We are not going to compete with you across
35 the board." Second, it built on what the Scripps Institution already had and third, it appealed to
36 some local interests that wanted to attract industry in the high technology area. So, I can
37 understand why the institute was suggested, but it seemed to me, looking at the growth of the
38 state and the growth of the San Diego area, that more was needed than this very restrictive
39 idea. Likewise, I had always been quite convinced that better work was done in broadly oriented
40 institutions where there could be some conversation across disciplinary lines and there was a
41 well-rounded academic atmosphere than in narrowly oriented ones.

42 So, when I came in, I never really considered for even a moment going ahead with the existing
43 plans. From the beginning of my involvement in October 1957, I began thinking in terms of a
44 general campus. Beyond that, I began thinking privately that this would be the third big research
45 campus of the university to go along with Berkeley and UCLA. This later caused some trouble
46 with Santa Cruz and Irvine and there were feelings there that I was giving advantages to San
47 Diego that they were not getting. That is true. Their feeling about it was correct. I was giving
48 special advantages to San Diego because I thought that, just geographically, if there was going
49 to be a third great research campus in the foreseeable future, it was going to be in the San
50 Diego area. So those are two kinds of very basic and private decisions I made, one to have the
51 broad general campus and the second to give it a chance to compete with UCLA and Berkeley
52 almost from its inception.

53 Now, I don't think I ever, on the second point at least, went to the Board of Regents and said
54 that, but it was always understood in the discussions I had with the Board, and the Board went
55 along with both those ideas, the broad general campus and the third of the great research
56 universities. Now, this didn't mean that the others, Santa Cruz, and Irvine, couldn't, in a longer
57 period of time, be given the same opportunity, but rather that they would not initially be given the
58 same opportunity as San Diego.

59 **RINGROSE:** Was the hope then that Santa Cruz and Irvine would serve as undergraduate
60 training—

61 **KERR:** Well, no, not entirely. For Santa Cruz, we did want to put a good deal of emphasis at the
62 undergraduate level. The Lick Observatory on Mount Hamilton had always considered itself a
63 campus and I had a lot of problems attaching it to Santa Cruz. This was a way of saying to
64 Santa Cruz, "You are involved also in research, and at the very highest level."

65 The thing at Santa Cruz was more of being an alternative campus to the standard big land grant
66 campus. I had been chancellor at Berkeley for six years and I had open office hours where
67 students could come in without any appointment for two hours or whatever it took, one
68 afternoon once or twice a month, whatever happened to fit in. I would listen to a lot of their
69 comments and criticisms and Santa Cruz was intended, really, to take care of those who were
70 not entirely happy in a big monstrous campus, monstrous in the sense of size, not in any other
71 way. They complained about having no sense of community, no contact with faculty members.

72 They complained about the tremendous specialization of the curriculum in which they learned a
73 lot of bits and pieces and nothing larger or broad.

74 These ideas began in 1958 and as time went on there was more of this theme I had already
75 been thinking about—and more students who wanted alternatives to the big impersonal places.
76 I really began thinking about that and doing something about it before the middle '60s when it
77 became a great cause celebre. There were people at Berkeley who said I tried to recreate
78 Swarthmore which is my undergraduate college within the University of California or a series of
79 Swarthmores. I did look at it that way, in terms of having a Swarthmore, an Antioch, a St. Johns,
80 etc., a lot of variety and a lot of diversity. When Santa Cruz started out it was intended to take
81 an overflow from Berkeley. Actually, in the early years, there were more students who were
82 being turned away from Santa Cruz to go to Berkeley than from Berkeley to Santa Cruz. Santa
83 Cruz happened to fit that particular time, but times changed, and students became more
84 vocationally oriented, and that campus has lost a fair amount in terms of the original plans and
85 dreams for it.

86 Irvine was intended to be a land-grant university for the twenty-first century. The theme there
87 was to emphasize public service to an industrial society. The theme at San Diego was to
88 emphasize basic research. So, in a way, Santa Cruz was more oriented toward the student, and
89 sense of community and interdisciplinary instruction and research, Irvine more toward service in
90 the land-grant tradition, and San Diego basic research.

91 **RINGROSE:** How did Riverside fit in?

92 **KERR:** Riverside didn't fit in. It still doesn't fit in entirely. Riverside came along before my time.
93 There had already been the citrus experiment station there which was of worldwide fame in its
94 area. There was established next door to it a small liberal arts campus. The two never mixed
95 very well together. There was always in my mind a question as to whether Riverside was as well
96 located as it might be because it was very, very hot there in the late spring and early fall. If I had
97 really thought that Riverside had the potential to become a big campus and help take care of
98 what was then called the "tidal wave" of students, we would not have started Irvine.

99 **RINGROSE:** I see.

100 **KERR:** Now, if Riverside had been located as had once been talked about, on a piece of land
101 later taken over by Cal Poly, then it might have been located to take the tremendous increase in
102 the number of people in Orange County and eastern Los Angeles County. But it was located too
103 far away to serve that purpose.

104 **RINGROSE:** You often hear speculation about why we ended up with Riverside, Irvine, and
105 San Diego relatively close together and yet they don't particularly support one another.

106 **KERR:** Well, Irvine and San Diego are really quite a long way apart, and we wanted to have a
107 campus that would help take the pressure off of UCLA. That was Irvine. We wanted one that
108 would take the pressure off of Berkeley. That was Santa Cruz. Then, we wanted one to serve
109 what was becoming obviously the third great population center in the state. That was San

110 Diego. Riverside was left off a bit on the side. There are other reasons for that, aside from what
111 I have mentioned. There was very bad blood between the people in the citrus experiment
112 station and those in this little liberal arts college that was established under Gordon Watkins.
113 The people in the liberal arts college looked down upon the individuals in agriculture and would
114 actually call them "those clodhoppers". Now, as a matter of fact, those "clodhoppers" had
115 international reputations of which they were very proud and the people in the little liberal arts
116 college did not in their fields, have the reputations which the people in the citrus experiment
117 station had. So, it was a very divided campus in an area with a bad climate in the late spring
118 and early fall and too far away from the growing population of Orange County to really fit. So,
119 we never really tried to build that campus up. It had its own aspirations, but we never tried to
120 build it up as the overflow for UCLA. We would never have done that.

121 **RINGROSE:** At one point was there an experiment in which Riverside was supposed to be an
122 elite undergraduate campus?

123 **KERR:** The idea was to have an undergraduate Oberlin or Pomona within the University of
124 California with a small number of students. We faced this tidal wave of students coming into the
125 system. In the course of the 1960's the number of students in higher education tripled. Gordon
126 Watkins—and I might say that Gordon Watkins was a wonderful person, and a very good friend
127 of mine—his idea of this little Oberlin was not going to take the pressure and the faculty that had
128 been recruited there thought themselves very precious. They had been promised that they
129 would have a little liberal arts college. What we needed was to take care of not just a few
130 hundred students but a good many thousands. And so that is another reason why Riverside
131 didn't fit into the plans for expansion. The college there was not prepared psychologically to
132 accept expansion.

133 **RINGROSE:** I see. Now, how did San Diego fit into the larger higher education plan at this end
134 of the state? I am thinking of the University of San Diego and San Diego State University.

135 **KERR:** Well, that goes into quite a bit of history. The University of San Diego was not especially
136 eager to have the University of California develop a campus here and there was resistance from
137 that quarter, which had some impact in city politics and even, to some extent, on state politics.
138 Nothing was done that was really out of order, but it is quite natural for people not to want to run
139 up against tougher competition. San Diego State was another matter. Before the master plan of
140 1960, in which I was heavily involved, and really was the central person in developing it, the
141 state colleges had aspirations, all of them, to become universities. As a matter of fact, when Pat
142 Brown was running for governor, he promised them that when he became governor, they would
143 get university status.

144 **RINGROSE:** I didn't know that.

145 **KERR:** They didn't get university status, but he promised it to them publicly during the
146 campaign. In working on the master plan, we had to put together the state college, the
147 community college, the private sector and the university sector into something that was also
148 good for the state. I worked harder on that than anything I ever did in my life. The state colleges

149 had this aspiration to become university campuses. I privately once offered four of them a
150 chance to come into the University of California system and we would then not establish new
151 campuses. One of the four was San Diego State, which was also perhaps the best or one of the
152 two best state colleges at the time.

153 **RINGROSE:** They refused?

154 **KERR:** The four that were involved were San Francisco State, San Jose State, Fresno State
155 and San Diego State. Now, I might say in the plans that the regents made or adopted in October
156 of 1957 they had said that after they got through establishing three new campuses, they would
157 consider one in the Fresno area. So, it was a potential campus too. I offered to them to come
158 into the university system and then we would not go ahead with our three and possibly four new
159 campuses. They refused this. Partly they didn't want to abandon the other state colleges. They
160 had all promised that they would hang together as a unit and try to get university status that
161 way rather than through the University of California. But also, I was told that if they became part
162 of the University of California they would have to be under the academic senate of the
163 university. Some of the presidents didn't like that because they didn't have any faculty groups at
164 all. They ran the place, and they didn't want to be put under all those restrictions. Now, I
165 personally think that one of the greatest strengths of the University of California is its academic
166 senate. It is a very strong senate, and they didn't like the idea of being put under senate
167 controls. Also, as one of them, when I was meeting with them all, I pointed out that there were
168 departments in the University of California that didn't give the Ph.D. They used as an illustration
169 one department that had run for a hundred years and had never been approved for the Ph.D. If
170 they got their own university status, they would be able to give Ph.D. 's across the board
171 according to their own standards immediately. They rejected my offer.

172 Now once, however, the master plan was adopted which said that they were not to become
173 universities, Malcolm Love, who was then the president of San Diego State, and was a very
174 good friend of the university, accepted the master plan. He accepted the fact that there should
175 be a research university. If it was not going to be his, then he was glad to see it developed in
176 connection with the Scripps Institution and gave us, as far as I could see, good support in the
177 San Diego community when one might have expected opposition. Now, I might say I always had
178 in mind that we didn't want to locate right next door to San Diego State. In the case of Santa
179 Cruz, I was very conscious of not being right next to Stanford, for example, or not being right
180 next door to San Jose State either. In the case of Irvine, we also didn't want to be right next to
181 an existing institution. There were many sites we looked at here in the San Diego area. Once
182 upon a time there must have been a list of about twelve. One of my concerns was that we not
183 be right next door to somebody else and make the competition more intense and the
184 comparisons more unfair.

185 **RINGROSE:** Now, it has always seemed to me that perhaps there was a certain parceling out
186 of academic turf that went on in San Diego. Initially engineering seemed to be at San Diego
187 State, and certainly teacher training is centered at San Diego State. Is that official, or did it just
188 happen?

189 **KERR:** There was an understanding, I think never written, that we would not begin competing
190 with them in what were their strongest areas, engineering being one, and that we would go in a
191 somewhat different direction. In other words, they were being good friends to us, and whether
192 they were or not, we really were interested in what was good for the area and for the state.
193 There wasn't any point in running all-out competition with existing programs which were as good
194 or better than we could start out with.

195 **RINGROSE:** Let's talk about some of the political figures that were involved in the
196 establishment of the campus, the people that were off campus, starting with the governor and
197 some of the regents who seemed to have very strong opinions.

198 **KERR:** Well, with the governor, Pat Brown, we located the three new campuses in the three
199 strongest Republican areas in the state, San Diego County, Orange County, and Santa Cruz.

200 **RINGROSE:** I hadn't thought about that, but you are right.

201 **KERR:** He, on occasion, would comment to me, as did his lieutenant governor, Glen Anderson,
202 "Why do you have to choose the strongest Republican areas in the state when there is a
203 Democratic governor, lieutenant governor, a Democratic legislature? "They would always do it
204 very nicely. I might say that I cannot say that I was ever subjected to any pressure. I was
205 subject to some questioning, and, you might say, some implication that it would be a little
206 friendlier if we chose locations more favorable to them. I would explain each time that we were
207 trying to serve the long-run interests of the state. We were trying to stay away from geographical
208 competition with existing institutions.

209 We were thinking of where it would be easiest to recruit faculty members. That was very high in
210 my mind. I always thought that Santa Cruz, with the hills and the seashore, that you could
211 recruit a much better faculty there than you could for downtown San Jose. With Irvine close to
212 the coast and the hills there and nice housing areas, and of course La Jolla and San Diego.

213 The general policy that we had, or I had, was that the University of California wanted to rank
214 among the best universities, public or private. Previously the idea had been well, we want
215 Berkeley to be competitive with Michigan among the state universities. My view was that we
216 were competing with Harvard or Chicago, and that was true also when we got San Diego and
217 the other new campuses. It wasn't just the competition with the other public universities, it was
218 competition to be good within the totality of universities. And this meant that you had to have
219 areas where you could recruit good faculty and, if there was any one thing uppermost in my
220 mind, aside from where population was increasing, it was whether an area would attract faculty
221 members of the quality that we wanted.

222 **RINGROSE:** So, the governor in general was supportive of the endeavor.

223 **KERR:** Yes, he was supportive. He was. I might say, he started out— Fred Dutton, who was one
224 of his two chief assistants, started out along the line that the University of California was the
225 wave of the past, and the state colleges were the wave of the future.

226 **RINGROSE:** What did he mean by that?

227 **KERR:** Well, that the university was an elitist place, and we were going into a more egalitarian
228 age. He also said, "The University of California is a Republican's institution, the regents are
229 Republicans and the students who go there either are Republicans or become Republicans and
230 the state colleges draw their support from the Democratic side of society." Now, Fred later
231 became a member of the Board of Regents. At first, he had a big impact on the governor and
232 the first budget that Pat Brown gave us was a quite unfavorable budget. I was up in Sacramento
233 protesting to Pat and to Fred Dutton and to Bill Coblentz, who was his other major aid—oh,
234 Warren Christopher was in there too. There were really the three of them. I protested about the
235 budget and the Governor was open-minded enough. He dropped his commitment to make the
236 state colleges into universities and he dropped his unfavorable budget. As a matter of fact, his
237 budgets got more and more favorable and Pat Brown's period of governorship was one of the
238 great periods in the history of the university, partly because of his support.

239 Now, we made every effort we could to get him to each campus to see what we were doing, to
240 get him to come to regents' meetings. I would always postpone my president's report about
241 what was going on in the university until he would arrive. He often arrived late. It was really
242 impressive to him to listen to all the things that were happening in this great university. He also
243 went around the nation and other governors were asking him, "How do you have such a great
244 university?" and he began to develop a very great pride in it. He realized what an asset it was to
245 the state. So, Pat started out committed to the state colleges and ended up as one of the
246 greatest friends and supporters the University of California had in the history of the state of
247 California. But with this hesitancy, this question, raised with a smile, "Why do you have to put
248 the three new campuses in Republican territory?"

249 **RINGROSE:** Of course, you could always answer that you were going to bring new ideas to
250 those areas.

251 **KERR:** Well, I couldn't really do that because I knew enough of the statistics to know that young
252 people who got an elite education tended to make a fair amount of money and tended to
253 become Republicans. Now they tended to become liberal Republicans, but they tended to
254 become Republicans. I was not able to say that we were trying to turn them into Democrats, and
255 even if I had been able to say that I certainly wouldn't have. Now, the legislature, of course, that
256 was a different matter. Higher education was in the process of booming all over the United
257 States during that period. There were legislative suggestions for campuses all over the state.
258 Just before we began working on the master plan a man by the name of Donnely, who was the
259 head of the Assembly Committee on Education, got a state college located in the town of
260 Turlock.

261 **RINGROSE:** That is in the far Thules.

262 **KERR:** Turlock is famous as being the turkey capital of the world but not the academic capital of
263 the world. I just give that as an illustration. Every crossroads had planned for a college. The
264 legislators wanted us in any area we wanted to go into, but they wanted us in their area, not

265 someplace else. One of the reasons for the master plan was that increasingly the legislature
266 was taking over control of higher education as they had done in the case of Turlock. I thought
267 that higher education ought to be determined by other than strictly political principles, and one of
268 the purposes of the master plan was to take it out of politics and have the decisions essentially
269 made by academic people. That is what did happen, incidentally, out of the master plan. So, the
270 legislators were just all over the place. They were generally favorable to new campuses, but
271 each wanted it in his particular territory. The same way with the citizens. You know we had bids
272 from all over the state of California for new campuses of the university, absolutely every place.
273 Now, I know that once the campuses got there, there tended, sometimes, to be problems in the
274 community, but when they didn't have a campus of the University of California, they wanted
275 one.

276 **RINGROSE:** My sense is that there was a great deal of backing in San Diego.

277 **KERR:** In San Diego there was a lot of backing. Now, one thing we did when we decided to go
278 into each of the areas was organize the alumni of the university, set up committees of alumni in
279 each area. For example, Jim Archer was the leader down here. He pulled together other alumni,
280 mostly from Berkeley. They really became our citizens' committee. The same thing was true at
281 Irvine and Santa Cruz. I very early set up faculty advisory committees from the existing
282 campuses to give advice and to bring faculty interest and support— Also, these committees
283 became the initial academic senate. Now, San Diego already had faculty, so it was rather
284 different, but in the case of Santa Cruz and Irvine there were senate committees established to
285 get the senate idea going there from the very beginning. They established the traditions of the
286 university and the involvement of faculty in making decisions. So, we used existing faculty and
287 existing alumni as the basis for the campuses.

288 **RINGROSE:** Now, down here in San Diego, did these alumni groups, the people that were
289 working with Archer, believe that they were working toward a full-service campus?

290 **KERR:** I never raised that with them, because by the time I got them in that issue had already
291 been decided. It was going to be full-service. They favored the full-service. They wanted a law
292 school, a medical school. I never heard anything except support for the idea of the big campus
293 from them. Now, there was opposition—

294 **RINGROSE:** Internally?

295 **KERR:** Internally? No, no but externally, and in dealing with the city council—after all we were
296 bargaining altogether for twelve hundred acres from the city, and you don't ask for twelve
297 hundred acres if you are going to set up an Institute for Science and Technology.

298 **RINGROSE:** I have noticed that you were always very careful not to ask for too much. You
299 never let the campus get greedy.

300 **KERR:** No. Once this campus wanted to have a plan for forty thousand. You may know about
301 that. I said no. I had battles with all the campuses that way. They all wanted to plan to have a
302 hundred thousand students someday. That wasn't in the cards, and it wasn't wise. You see

303 there was also, you might say in the background, this is all very complicated, there was once a
304 plan to have all of this massive number of students go to Berkeley and UCLA, and I kept
305 arguing that it would be better to have more campuses around the state which were smaller
306 than to have two monstrosities. Ed Pauley once asked, when I was talking about the new
307 campuses and asking to have a reasonable size set on them, we had to have an eventual size
308 when we talked about land, he said, "How many people can be held in the Memorial Stadium in
309 Berkeley?" Eighty-three thousand. And so, he said, "I move that we plan the campus for 83,000
310 because I think that every student ought to be able to see the football games."

311 And I said "We're going to serve the state better by having more locations and having each
312 campus have its own separate personality. Also, we'll be better situated for the people of the
313 State to know what we're doing for the State than if they concentrate on two big campuses."

314 **RINGROSE:** Now, this must also be the same time that the community college movement was
315 getting underway.

316 **KERR:** Yes.

317 **RINGROSE:** So, there must also have been people who suggested that the answer was two
318 years of local education and then....

319 **KERR:** Let me say that the university totally supported the community colleges. There had been
320 a liaison committee between the university and the state colleges. I sat on the sidelines and
321 watched them operate. It was one versus one. Nothing could ever be decided. That wouldn't
322 work. When I went into the master plan, I knew one on one wouldn't work because you couldn't
323 get a majority and so I first thought, let's bring in the community colleges, which makes a third.
324 Then I thought, let's bring in the private institutions, which makes a fourth, and they have got an
325 interest in it as well. We brought the private colleges in very heavily. We can say that the
326 relationships between public and private institutions in California are better than anywhere else,
327 partly because we did that. So, we had to break this stalemate of one versus one. We had to
328 bring in somebody else, and so we brought in two other partners and had the four segments
329 involved.

330 Now, we were in the process of trying to protect the elite status of the University of California.
331 As a matter of fact, in the master plan we raised entrance standards far beyond what any public
332 institution had ever done. At the same time, I was fully conscious that there were great
333 egalitarian pressures developing in the United States and in California. We went absolutely all
334 out to support the community colleges in spreading throughout the state. This state was the first
335 geographical government in the history of the world to guarantee that every single high school
336 student in the state could find a place at a community college. We had guarantee of universal
337 access. Then we also put in that their transfers would have number one priority for getting into
338 the University of California, so you couldn't say we were putting them in a dead-end place. They
339 could move on.

340 We were concerned about another part of this problem. I had to break the stalemate of one on
341 one. I also had to be involved in making it possible for a state university to operate at the
342 highest level in the competition with Harvard and Chicago and Columbia and not be pushed
343 down by the egalitarian pressures. So, we wanted the community colleges to spread
344 everywhere and to give access and then, of course, we also made provision in the master plan
345 for the state colleges to become somewhat more selective. This opened up more opportunity for
346 the community colleges. The state colleges took about the top fifty or sixty percent and they
347 were bound to the top one third. But then students could go to a community college, transfer to
348 a state college and then to the university. Opportunity was never to be closed off. It was
349 supposed to be open for people to show what they could do at several stages of their lives. It
350 was a very complex thing putting that all together, and I must say that when we got through with
351 it, it was adopted unanimously by the State Board of Education which then ran the state
352 colleges. It was adopted unanimously by the Board of Regents, and with only one dissenting
353 vote out of 120 in the Assembly and the Senate of the State of California put together. I raised
354 the question of a master plan at my second meeting as president in August 1958 and we had it
355 ready in the spring of 1960. This is now 1984.

356 **RINGROSE:** So that is twenty-six years, and it is still valid.

357 **KERR:** Yes, it still holds.

358 **RINGROSE:** That is a wonderful track record for something like that.

359 **KERR:** Yes, well you see in the absence of a master plan we could not plan. If the state
360 college... For example, who was going to get the medical schools? Who was going to get the
361 law schools? Nobody could plan. They couldn't and we couldn't and the whole thing was falling
362 into the hands of the politicians who were fighting over who gets this and who gets that.

363 **RINGROSE:** What kind of professional schools did you originally envision for the San Diego
364 campus?

365 **KERR:** The full range.

366 **RINGROSE:** Did you feel that you had support for that internally, or did you feel that the
367 campus would have to work for that support?

368 **KERR:** The regents always agreed with that idea. The community always agreed. There was
369 internal opposition, let me say, here, in San Diego, within the existing faculty. You see the
370 existing faculty was accustomed to Scripps. That was the faculty we started with. Now, Scripps
371 is really post-Ph.D., post doctorate. I remember coming down here to an early meeting and I
372 was talking about making this a general research university and not a specialized one.
373 Somebody stood up and said, "Why are you forcing us to take undergraduates? Why are you
374 forcing us to take M.A. candidates? Why are you forcing us to take Ph.D. 's? Let those run-of-
375 the-mill Ph.D. candidates go to San Diego State and let us concentrate on the post-doctorates."
376 He said this to applause. So, there was opposition, not from Roger Revelle, though Roger was
377 the one who proposed this Institute for Science and Technology, not from Roger but from a lot

378 of the existing faculty, opposition to the idea of having a broad university and then also
379 particularly to having professional schools. They were looked down upon as some- thing low. I
380 remember at another faculty meeting some faculty member got up and said, "You are trying to
381 make us just another Harvard. We are never going to sink so low." That was in reference to
382 undergraduate teaching and the professional schools.

383 **RINGROSE:** This must have been in the height of the period when really serious faculty just
384 were not interested in being involved in teaching.

385 **KERR:** Well, they were riding extremely high, the ablest faculties across the country, right then.
386 We had had sputnik and the tremendous emphasis on scientific research. We had this huge
387 tidal wave of students. They knew they could get jobs anyplace. After all, Scripps was a little
388 jewel. It was the greatest center in the world for oceanographic research and areas growing out
389 of that. But I can see how the people—I was really always sympathetic to their point of view
390 given what they had. They had this beautiful little world of their own. They all knew each other.
391 And here, somebody was coming in from the outside and saying, "Your world is going to be
392 changed. It is going to become bigger. It is going to become more diverse than it has been." I
393 would argue that in the long run better research would be done if there was more cross-
394 fertilization among fields than if there was more narrow specialization. I have always been
395 extremely critical of the Russian system of a National Academy of Science unconnected with
396 teaching, little specialty by little specialty, and clearly, they have not been as productive as we
397 have. The French have somewhat the same system, in fact the Russians got it from the French.
398 So, I would argue that it would be a better intellectual atmosphere for your work. But it did
399 change their community.

400 **RINGROSE:** And their style of operation because

401 **KERR:** Yes, it was very informal.

402 **RINGROSE:** Yes, and also you are free to go out on the boat and do your research.

403 **KERR:** And you didn't have any classes to meet.

404 **RINGROSE:** With undergraduates suddenly, you are tied to classes and schedules and
405 quarters and leaves—

406 **KERR:** You know, there was just a real feeling about it. As I think I said to you earlier, I have
407 said several times jokingly to myself that I had better be there on the first day that an
408 undergraduate comes on the campus to see that he isn't shot. The feeling was really quite
409 strong at that time. That is a gross exaggeration, but there was the feeling—. But I had to look at
410 it from the point of view of the total university and the state as a whole, and that San Diego
411 deserved, and some day was going to have a general research university. It was better that it be
412 done then and at the highest level of quality that we could get.

413 **RINGROSE:** I think the long-term result of this has been that Scripps remains somewhat
414 isolated.

415 **KERR:** Yes, that's right.

416 **RINGROSE:** It really isn't the core of the campus. Perhaps that wasn't intended from the
417 beginning.

418 **KERR:** It was never intended. It was always intended that they would be able to live, to the
419 extent they wanted to, their individual lives. But I am certain that some of them made friends up
420 here on the mesa. Some of the people up here on the mesa have gone down there and seen
421 some of their work. It is a richer intellectual and also cultural environment than it would
422 otherwise have been for Scripps.

423 **RINGROSE:** Talk about the college structure as you envisioned it here on this campus.

424 **KERR:** Well, I favored an approach of decentralization particularly of those things which
425 involved human contact. You realize that a lot of impersonal things like budgets and figures
426 have to be centralized, but otherwise it is important to decentralize as far as possible the human
427 contact into smaller communities. I also felt that in a smaller community you would have more
428 contact with people across fields, a multidisciplinary impact. At Santa Cruz we went ahead with
429 colleges that were supposed to run about seven hundred and fifty. The plan here was for
430 twenty-five hundred. I might say that Roger and I talked about this, but he really came up with
431 the plan for San Diego which I accepted with enthusiasm because it was along the same lines
432 that I had been thinking which was smaller units than a massive campus. I had lived through
433 Berkeley. I had seen the anonymity of it. I had seen how faculty members didn't get to know
434 each other. The first year that I gave the reception for retiring faculty members I assumed that
435 they would all know each other, they had all been around for twenty or thirty years, and I found
436 that somebody in geology had never met somebody in the next building in engineering. So, I
437 was very much interested in having these smaller communities and one of my themes was to
438 make the University of California seem smaller to the individual student and faculty member
439 even as it became bigger in total size. We did that at Santa Cruz where Dean McHenry and I
440 jointly developed the plans. Roger really developed the plan here, which was entirely
441 compatible. It was different from Santa Cruz but entirely compatible with what I had in mind. He
442 just told me, and I said fine. We never debated or disagreed about it. I adopted it with
443 enthusiasm.

444 Then, of course, I had to go to the board because we were doing things differently. I quickly
445 convinced the board that these new campuses, if they were just going to be overflows from
446 Berkeley and UCLA, or, as once suggested, "satellites" – that was a term that was used at
447 UCLA – you couldn't get the faculty you wanted, you couldn't attract the students. We wanted
448 each campus to have its own individual personality. Each one would be different. The regents
449 picked that up very quickly. I had more difficulty with the Senate committees working on it and
450 not quite seeing, and I might say to a certain extent they were right, how these new approaches
451 would work as well as what was the tried and standard approach that they were accustomed to.

452 **RINGROSE:** Well, a structure based on strong departments is traditional.

453 **KERR:** I know, and that is what has happened both at Santa Cruz and here in San Diego, that
454 the departments have increasingly taken over. I still think, however, it was better to start each
455 place off with its own—

[END OF PART ONE, BEGIN PART TWO]

456 **RINGROSE:** We were talking about the college system, and you said that you thought that
457 new campuses were better off having their own personalities.

458 **KERR:** Yes. The new campuses were better off having their new personalities. When I was
459 chancellor at Berkeley before the statewide administration was making any plans for the tidal
460 wave, we decided that we didn't want to go over 27,500 students. I had gone through endless
461 discussions with the faculty on that. We knew something had to happen and we did a certain
462 amount of planning about a satellite campus in West Oakland or on the Gill tract which is near
463 Berkeley. We all came to the conclusion that we didn't want to recruit faculty members for a
464 satellite campus, and we didn't want to accept students at a satellite campus feeling they were
465 second class. So, that was burned into my soul. To give the new campuses a fair chance they
466 had to have some sense of independence and individuality from the very beginning. San Diego
467 was San Diego, not overflow for UCLA, etc. As I have said, the regents accepted this really
468 without debate, this differentiation. I tried very hard to differentiate UCLA and Berkeley. That
469 was more difficult but also somewhat successful. You don't have the same "watching each
470 other." We worked out some different specialties for UCLA than Berkeley had and so on. So, it
471 wasn't just for the new campuses. Santa Barbara had to get its own personality, and Davis its
472 own personality. The regents accepted that. The faculty members were the ones who were
473 doubtful whether it would work. They were about two-thirds right as it has turned out.

474 **RINGROSE:** Well, as you were saying earlier, the faculty in the University of California is
475 extremely strong. It makes it a difficult unit to administer.

476 **KERR:** Well, not difficult to administer. The faculty is very, very strong. I came out of the
477 academic senate myself, and when I was chancellor at Berkeley one of the common phrases
478 was that it was almost impossible to find out where the Senate ended and the chancellor's office
479 began, we worked so closely together. But the faculty does have a lot to say, and faculty
480 members tend to think about the standard pattern that they have been trained in and
481 accustomed to and they think that is the one and only way.

482 **RINGROSE:** It is very difficult for them to change.

483 **KERR:** Yes, it is very difficult. And it may turn out to have been impossible, but it is still better to
484 have made the effort than not.

485 **RINGROSE:** Herb York made an interesting comment when I interviewed him. We were
486 talking about the role of the chancellor on the new campus, which really should have been very
487 exciting, and he rather wistfully said, "You know, the kinds of decisions the faculty let me make
488 were how many parking spaces to have and how wide to paint the lines."

489 **KERR:** That is right.

490 **RINGROSE:** Obviously early on this was a very strong faculty and it made its own decisions.

491 **KERR:** That is right.

492 **RINGROSE:** And you were happy to have it that way?

493 **KERR:** I was not only happy to have it that way, I really started every campus with a little senate
494 in the University of California model.

495 **RINGROSE:** The other thing that I think is characteristic of this campus, and probably not
496 unique is that the faculty was built from the top down.

497 **KERR:** Yes. Now that was a very wise idea, incidentally, and it was Roger Revelle's idea. Again,
498 I agreed with it completely from the beginning. It was possible to get started at the graduate
499 level. Remember there was this post-doctoral feeling in the minds of people already. You can
500 start a campus at the Ph.D. level with a single department, just Chemistry. When you start
501 serving undergraduates, you have to have pretty nearly a full range of faculty. So, he started
502 recruiting people in individual departments at the full professor level. Now, I made available, and
503 this caused me lots of trouble everywhere else in the university, except not with the Board of
504 Regents, more overscale appointments here than any place else. There were very few new
505 appointments at overscale anywhere else in the university. There were overscale professors
506 who had been promoted up the line at UCLA and Berkeley, but—

507 **RINGROSE:** You don't usually come in at overscale.

508 **KERR:** No, but here we did make arrangements to give Roger— Of course, every case had to
509 be judged on its merit. We gave him a substantial number of overscale full professor
510 appointments. That was at a time when Irvine and Santa Cruz were recruiting assistant
511 professors or associate professors. That caused me a lot of trouble at UCLA, Irvine, Santa Cruz,
512 Berkeley, at all the campuses. Santa Barbara, Davis, Riverside. It was because we were
513 building this to be the third great research university inside the total University of California.
514 Roger was terrific at recruitment. He got people that warranted this. Also, compared with the
515 other two new campuses, there was the fact that Scripps was already here, and a certain
516 number of scientists were here, and the attraction of the San Diego area. San Diego was
517 certainly given a better opportunity to start off than many other new endeavors of the sixties
518 across the country. I don't know, there may have been close to a thousand new institutions
519 established. San Diego was given a better chance than any place else in the country, in some
520 ways almost a better chance than ever in American history. Now, Chicago was given, with the
521 Rockefeller money, a very, very good opportunity, but they didn't have anything to go on, you
522 see. Here there was Scripps to go on and the reputation of the University of California. Stanford
523 started off with Stanford money, but nothing else. So, we had here a very attractive community,
524 San Diego. We had La Jolla at the highest level. We had the good reputation of the University of
525 California. We had a somewhat unique plan and then I made available all these overscale
526 appointments. That was a combination which couldn't fail.

527 **RINGROSE:** Would you say that this has been the most successful of the sixty's campuses?

528 **KERR:** Oh, clearly. I would say that of new campuses in American history, campuses that
529 started from scratch, and then got into the first rank very quickly, there really are only three, and
530 they are the ones we have been talking about. Chicago very quickly made it. Stanford very
531 quickly made it · and San Diego. You might add Johns Hopkins, although that took a little bit
532 longer to do. You know Berkeley took a long time and Harvard and Yale and Wisconsin took a
533 long time. I guess I would add Johns Hopkins in as a fourth, but not so instantaneously. You
534 see, the other campuses, their view was that I was showing favoritism to San Diego. My view
535 was that I was showing special treatment, but because the situation was very special. That is
536 just a different way of saying the same thing. A different perspective. The way I say it, special
537 treatment well-deserved, makes it sound good. Favoritism makes the same thing sound
538 somehow unfair.

539 **RINGROSE:** It seems to me that in some people's eyes the long-term plan was to have
540 Berkeley and UCLA and then a group of other campuses.

541 **KERR:** With the others given a chance to rise over a period of time.

542 **RINGROSE:** But then there is also another possible scenario that is the north, middle, south
543 scenario that would have Berkeley, UCLA, San Diego and then a lower tier group.

544 **KERR:** Well, both ways are true—three great research campuses distributed around the state.
545 There was more sense in putting research here than at Irvine. Also, with UCLA, it would have
546 been much more difficult to make Irvine the third with the opposition of UCLA, some regents,
547 and the faculty. It would have been the same way with Santa Cruz.

548 **RINGROSE:** The second scenario makes special treatment for San Diego make sense, but it
549 also requires that Irvine and Santa Cruz—

550 **KERR:**—have to wait a while. Well, Santa Cruz had its own special plan. Once it was more
551 attractive than Berkeley to students. It still has the highest verbal scores of any of the
552 campuses. We did add Lick observatory to it to give it something special. And Irvine was given
553 this chance to be a rather ill-defined idea, the land grant model for the twentieth century. It never
554 really did develop as I hoped it would—the kind of sense of service to a modern industrial
555 society that the land grant model implied. We did things for Santa Barbara. We gave them study
556 abroad, for example, and we gave them an engineering school that has developed quite well.
557 Davis was just really asked to keep on being the best agricultural place, center for agricultural
558 study, in the United States and perhaps in the world. San Francisco moved up tremendously.
559 When I became president, it was about 25th or 30th, and now it is in anybody's top four or
560 perhaps top three. Also, there were some dreams there that didn't come true. The idea there
561 was to be not a medical center but a university that concentrated on the total care of human
562 beings. Some of that did get done, bringing in those aspects of city and regional planning which
563 affect health. And they did add some anthropologists to do comparative studies of what is a
564 healthy environment to live in. They were all given some opportunity to look forward to, to

565 distinguish themselves within the university and the nation. San Diego was given, by all odds,
566 the best opportunity.

567 **RINGROSE:** This same model for San Diego as a third research university, I assume this is
568 what made John Galbraith so sensitive to the library issue, which I gather became—

569 **KERR:** About the library issue. there never really was that much of a difference in my mind as I
570 think there was in John's mind. He took that extremely seriously.

571 **RINGROSE:** That was his baby.

572 **KERR:** Yes, I know. We agreed from the beginning that the San Diego library would grow faster
573 than the other two and I had all kinds of antagonistic criticism from Irvine and Santa Cruz for
574 having it grow faster. It did grow a lot faster. John was very impatient. He wanted results very
575 quickly. There were limits to what I could do compared to Berkeley and UCLA, not just with the
576 faculty but with the regents, getting the money out of Sacramento. But I never disagreed with
577 him about this being the third big library. The grounds I used to justify it to the other campuses
578 were that it was farther removed than, say, Irvine or Riverside, from Los Angeles or Santa Cruz
579 or Davis or San Francisco from Berkeley. What we did there was set up daily bus services for
580 each of them.

581 Then John got extremely upset at this suggested delay of one month on presenting plans for the
582 new library building to the regents. I only asked for it because of his design which was an
583 unusual one. When this came up, I was already involved in all the problems of the student
584 movement, the FSM etc. on top of running a big university and under intense political attack all
585 over the state and at the beginnings of the attacks within the Board of Regents. I wanted a great
586 library here. There was no question of that. I had fought the battles for it. If anybody fought
587 battles for it, I did. It was easy enough for John to say he wanted it, but I was the one who had
588 to get the money and get the regents to approve and faculties elsewhere to not rebel. I did ask
589 for a one-month postponement so that I could talk with him about the design for the library and
590 its location. I had a question that I wanted to raise with him, not opposition. I wondered whether
591 the design was best, this Corbusier thing where you kind of give away your first floor and the
592 winds tend to— I have been in Corbusier type buildings in many places around the world and
593 they tend to become wind tunnels. I had a concern about that. I wondered also whether the
594 library was located close enough to the center of the campus.

595 Well, anyway I was concerned about location and about the first two floors of the Corbusier
596 design. I just asked for one month's postponement. Then John, to my regret, became very
597 angry about it and I think saw in it more than was ever there. I just really had at least what I
598 thought were very legitimate concerns and I asked for one month so that I could get a chance to
599 talk with him and I was not then situated to do so and so I asked Elmo Morgan (I should have
600 called myself) but I asked Elmo to call John and say that wanted to talk with him and wanted to
601 put it on the next agenda, not this agenda. I never knew exactly what Elmo said, but I gather
602 Elmo did it in a way that made John even more unhappy.

603 I might just say on that issue I was in no way holding up the San Diego campus. I was point
604 man for the San Diego campus out there fighting faculties on other campuses. There was some
605 hesitancy, especially on the part of Southern California regents identified with UCLA and in the
606 legislature, there was favoritism, too. I was the point man for the Campus. I asked for one month
607 to have a chance to talk with him personally and he got very unhappy and resigned temporarily.
608 He withdrew that.

609 There was one other big problem with John. The original plan for the medical school called for a
610 school costing twenty-five or thirty million dollars and John brought in plans that cost one
611 hundred and twenty million, something like that. I wanted some time to study those. The
612 meeting on the library took place in San Francisco. The one on the medical school took place at
613 Irvine. I was having tremendous difficulty with the Board because the campus— I had gone to
614 the Board and I had gone to the Governor and I had gone to the legislature with a medical
615 school that was to cost twenty-five million and all of a sudden, I was asked to find a hundred
616 and twenty-five million.

617 **RINGROSE:** You can't keep your credibility that way.

618 **KERR:** With a jump that big, I wanted to take another look at it. And John, I know, looked upon
619 that as an unfriendly act. As a matter of fact, if I had moved immediately to accept that figure,
620 there never would have been a medical school here because people would have felt that they
621 had been just terribly misled.

622 **RINGROSE:** Wasn't there also some controversy over the type of medical school that was
623 planned here?

624 **KERR:** Yes, there was a controversy over whether it was to be a research-oriented medical
625 school or was also to be of service to the community.

626 **RINGROSE:** And this all is involved with the issue of hospitals and clinical education.

627 **KERR:** That is correct. It is tied up with Scripps Hospital and... There were a lot of problems.
628 And there again I wanted a little bit of time and John, I think quite understandably, wanted to
629 move a little faster than I was able to move. But I can just tell you that if I had not asked for
630 some time to study it and told the regents we were going to study it; they might very well have
631 just right out of hand— or when it hit the Governor or legislature with a figure five times as large
632 as they were expecting, they might just as well have said that they had been terribly misled and
633 that was the end of that.

634 **RINGROSE:** Since we were talking about the regents and we skipped ahead a little bit, could
635 we go back and talk about Regent Pauley and some of the individuals, some of the political
636 interconnections which we will probably never really work out completely, between people like
637 Boyd and Pauley?

638 **KERR:** Pauley, for a reason, or reasons I never understood, was very antagonistic to the San
639 Diego effort. He was personally very antagonistic to Roger Revelle. He carried with him the

640 support of several of the southern regents. Others beyond that, Catherine Hearst on one
641 occasion was quite violent, I never knew why, also about San Diego and about Roger. And
642 Pauley, I can't say that he really— He caused an awful lot of controversy. He always kept
643 raising the question about noise from the air base. He wanted us to look at other locations like
644 Balboa Park, which was an impossibility. This went on, it seems like forever. My guess is that he
645 was raising objections to this campus at every meeting over a period of two or three years. Now,
646 I might exaggerate it because it seemed like it was just endless. I don't know whether, in the
647 end, it delayed the campus or not. It certainly made it much more difficult getting it underway in
648 that atmosphere. I did not think that his objections were well taken. I did not agree with him on
649 the merits of his objections at all, but he made us go through all kinds of studies of feasibility,
650 etc. Why he did it, I don't know. I don't think it was the air base. I don't think it was Balboa.

651 He also kept harping on the fact that Roger and some of his friends had bought some property
652 in the area. I was always quite convinced that Roger had done it before the prices rose so that
653 other faculty people who came in would not have to pay exorbitant prices for the land.

654 He found all kinds of things to object to and made it very personal against Roger and to some
655 extent personal against me. I was already in battles with him. He had been chairman of the
656 board and was the senior regent and he wanted to be the permanent regent as Dixon had been,
657 his predecessor.

658 **RINGROSE:** I think I don't understand what you mean by the permanent regent.

659 **KERR:** The permanent chairman as Dixon had been. I got the regents to vote that we would turn
660 over the chairmanship every two years. That is a big argument on both sides.

661 **RINGROSE:** I see. That wouldn't make you very popular with him.

662 **KERR:** No, and he is a man who is very oriented toward power. He also had a view that the
663 senior regent, whether chairman or not, could veto various things. The tradition of the Board had
664 been that nobody could do anything that the senior regent wanted to veto. There was a terrible
665 battle over an honorary degree for a professor at Berkeley who was dying of cancer and had
666 earned the degree but who had been the major opponent to the oath. The famous case was
667 Tolman vs. the Board of Regents. I came in proposing an honorary degree for Tolman as a
668 psychologist. To Pauley that was a treasonable idea. He tried to exercise his veto as the senior
669 regent on that. This had always been that no honorary degree could be given if the senior
670 regent opposed it. I got the Board to vote that honorary degrees would be given on the basis of
671 a secret ballot with a two-third majority. He resented that terribly.

672 Likewise, I think he had expected me to be a more pliant president, less independent than I
673 turned out to be. There were a lot of reasons why he expected that. He, of course, was a
674 powerful man. The Los Angeles Rams, you know, once belonged to him. He was important in
675 the Democratic party.

676 **RINGROSE:** I wasn't aware he was a Democrat.

677 **KERR:** He felt much more that the president –he had terrible problems with my predecessor,
678 Robert Gordon Sproul, whom he fought at every regents meeting– he never treated me
679 disrespectfully, he fought me. But he had treated Sproul disrespectfully over the six years I sat
680 on the sidelines as a chancellor. So, I never knew... He didn't fight about Irvine. He didn't fight
681 about Santa Cruz. Why did he fight about San Diego? I don't know.

682 **RINGROSE:** It also seems, when I look at it from the historical material that is left at this end,
683 that he seems to have had excellent political pipelines into San Diego so that when he went
684 after something, he got heavy coverage in the press. This is why I hadn't realized he was a
685 Democrat. I had never really thought too much about his personal political affiliation. I always
686 assumed he was a Republican because he got such good conservative backing down here.

687 **KERR:** No, no, he was a conservative Democrat.

688 **RINGROSE:** Of course, I think one of the problems for John Galbraith was that once he
689 resigned, he became the hero of a very conservative kind of constituency down here and that
690 was not a very comfortable position for him at all.

691 **KERR:** No, with Bob Biron and some other people who, in my judgment, were Birchers.

692 **RINGROSE:** He clearly was very eager to get out of that situation.

693 **KERR:** He moved out very fast. My impression is that some of the faculty members encouraged
694 him very strongly to change his position if he wanted to have their continued support. Some
695 faculty members pretty much laid down the law to John.

696 **RINGROSE:** I can believe that the faculty here could do that.

697 **KERR:** Yes. If he wanted their support, he had to withdraw his resignation and support me and
698 not be part of this right-wing opposition to me that had developed with Pauley's leadership at all
699 times.

700 **RINGROSE:** It does seem to have centered on Pauley.

701 **KERR:** John Canaday was also heavily involved, and, to some extent, Phil Boyd.

702 **RINGROSE:** That is a very interesting phenomenon, and one that I really haven't gotten to the
703 roots of.

704 **KERR:** There are quite a few reasons why the right wing should be opposed to me, including
705 reasons within the San Diego community. La Jolla was a place that restricted access to minority
706 groups including Jews. This was true, I might say, also of the Irvine Corporation. In both cases I
707 had to make it absolutely clear that the University of California would never move into a
708 community which had any restriction on religious or racial grounds. That was an underground
709 thing which spread very widely in the conservative and landowning community.

710 **RINGROSE:** It was a serious problem here, but one that people are very reluctant to discuss.

711 **KERR:** Yes, but it was a much more serious problem in 1960.

712 **RINGROSE:** I meant in the past. It was a very serious problem here at that time. Now, today,
713 people are still reluctant to discuss it.

714 **KERR:** It was a factor. It was a big factor. There was a time when Dan Aldrich thought I had lost
715 him his campus at Irvine because I told the Irvine Land Company people that they had to
716 remove, on all that acreage they owned, these exclusionary—there is a special name for them.

717 **RINGROSE:** It is a kind of covenanting, isn't it?

718 **KERR:** That's right. They had to remove all their covenants, or we would not move in, and they
719 said they wouldn't do it, and Dan took me out and said, "You have just lost me my campus." And
720 I said, "Dan, I just won it for you. because they are going to cave in. You can never build a
721 campus under those circumstances."

722 **RINGROSE:** There is a community, a very old faculty community that is just north of the
723 Scripps campus that is built on land that belonged to the Scripps family and was pretty much
724 used for Scripps faculty.

725 **KERR:** Yes, I am familiar with that.

726 **RINGROSE:** Is this connected with the problem we have been discussing? Was it started to
727 serve Scripps faculty at a time when the area was restricted?

728 **KERR:** Yes, in that restricted area. That community was not at all exclusionary.

729 **RINGROSE:** I understand that. Did Roger Revelle establish that community in order to provide
730 available housing that would not exclude anyone?

731 **KERR:** I don't know. I assumed that was one of the reasons for it. I never asked. The problems
732 we had were with La Jolla most specifically and San Diego more generally on these
733 exclusionary practices. It was something that never got into the press or was commented on,
734 but it was a basic factor. It was wrong, what they wanted. Aside from that, you couldn't develop
735 a great university under those conditions.

736 **RINGROSE:** No, it is very difficult.

737 **KERR:** It is impossible. Of course, later Federal law and court decisions changed all that but,
738 you see, nobody could then say I was taking my position because of the law and therefore it
739 became quite personal. There are many other reasons why the right wing was upset with me.

740 **RINGROSE:** By this time there was difficulty with the students at Berkeley.

741 **KERR:** That's right. They blamed that on me, that my more moderate policies had been
742 responsible. You see the rules of the university when I became president, were that no
743 controversial person could speak on the campus. When I was chancellor, twice Adlai Stevenson
744 spoke from Oxford Street. He was not allowed to set foot on the campus because he was a
745 controversial speaker. He was controversial because he was running for public office. The
746 public office was the Presidency of the United States. When I became president, one of my first
747 actions was to change that and say that people of all persuasions could speak on campus, and
748 somebody found a special rule that Communists couldn't. It took me several years to change
749 that, but I got it changed. It became a state issue. When Nixon ran for Governor in 1962, in
750 opposition to what I had done, he said that when he became Governor, he was going to issue
751 an executive order to the university saying that it had to go back to the old rules.

752 **RINGROSE:** Reagan made a lot of hay on that issue too, didn't he?

753 **KERR:** Yes. I had to tell the press that if a Governor were to issue such an executive order, we
754 would study it carefully, but then we would stand on our constitutional independence. We would
755 do what was best for the university and that was to allow all points of view to be expressed. So,
756 there were various reasons. I had made ROTC, which had always been compulsory, voluntary. I
757 required that fraternities and sororities could not discriminate on the basis of race and sex if they
758 wanted to keep the name of the university. There were a lot of reasons why the right wing was
759 unhappy. Pauley was the leader of that, with John Canaday and Phil Boyd and a few others
760 within the Board of Regents.

761 **RINGROSE:** The people down here were also just scared to death that some of the kinds of
762 problems that existed at Berkeley would emerge on this campus, and, indeed, eventually that
763 happened.

764 **KERR:** It was a nationwide, a worldwide phenomenon.

765 **RINGROSE:** Right, but of course it can't happen in La Jolla. Not our young people.

766 **KERR:** That's right. So, anyway, John fell in, temporarily, with that group, not meaning to at all. I
767 think he was repulsed by it.

768 **RINGROSE:** Why don't you give me an idea of what the general atmosphere was like in the
769 early 60's nationally when the campus was started.

770 **KERR:** Well, the planning for the University of California expansion really began in 1957 when I
771 was appointed as president, and then went on through the period to about the middle sixties. By
772 that time, the plans were made. Of course, there was the very heavy birthrate. The net
773 reproduction rate then was 3.5%. It has now dropped down to 1.7 or 1.8%, but 3.5% was a very
774 high level and people were making their projections. California was in the process of taking in,
775 aside from the high birth rate in the state, taking in people from outside the state, half a million
776 people a year. So, it looked as if this was the westward tilt of the continent, to California. Aside
777 from the growth of the nation and particularly of California, it was a period of optimism generally

778 then. We had gone through Eisenhower, and a period of good feeling. We came to JFK and the
779 New Frontier. Anything was possible.

780 We were then the great military power of the world. We were then the great economic power of
781 the world. We also had become the intellectual center of the world. For so long we had been an
782 offshoot of Europe and our scholarship was derivative and imitative and now, all of a sudden,
783 we were the intellectual capital of the world. There was generally a feeling of hope and
784 expectation that anything was possible. It was within that atmosphere, particularly in science,
785 that new knowledge was going to lead us to this better world. You could do whatever you
786 wanted to, and you could do it better with knowledge and science. It was a kind of euphoric
787 period for the American people and for higher education even more than the American people
788 as a whole. Plans were made within that atmosphere. And so, some of the things at San Diego
789 which went beyond the plans we approved, like having a campus of, say forty thousand rather
790 than hold it down to twenty-seven five, and having a campus that was not held down to the
791 standards of Harvard, etc., were sort of expressions of that period of fast advance, building a
792 new world, and everybody wanted to be part of it and their institution was going to lead.

793 **RINGROSE:** Alexander's master plan (the master plan for the San Diego campus) certainly
794 reflects that.

795 **KERR:** Yes. It was beyond anything— If anybody was the author of planning for the University of
796 California I certainly was, with the master plan, the campus physical plans, campus academic
797 plans that I had begun as chancellor and then had carried through the whole university. Plans
798 ought to be made only as far as you can see ahead. That plan, and the idea of having forty
799 thousand students, went beyond anything that was going to happen within the future that
800 anyone could see. I thought it was excessive. We never did adopt it.

801 **RINGROSE:** So, those things were generated locally?

802 **KERR:** Yes, they were generated locally. Well, I'm not sure the Alexander plan was. The regents
803 probably asked for it but the campus would have asked the regents to ask for it.

804 **RINGROSE:** But somebody must have told him to plan for a campus of forty thousand.

805 **KERR:** That I just don't know. I just say that there was his plan which was not feasible within any
806 advanced period that anybody could contemplate, and we didn't want to go that far. We had
807 made that decision when we had decided not to let Berkeley become as big as Ohio State or
808 Michigan State or Michigan or Minnesota. We wanted to have institutions that, while they were
809 big, didn't keep on growing forever and become monstrous. So, the Alexander Plan was not
810 made effective, and the forty thousand figure was not accepted. But they were within the temper
811 of the times.

812 **RINGROSE:** Why was the naming of the San Diego campus such a volatile issue? It seems so
813 insignificant.

814 **KERR:** It was a volatile issue in the La Jolla community because it had always been the Scripps
815 Institution, La Jolla. The campus was to be in La Jolla and La Jolla was very proud of its name
816 and wanted to attach a university with a worldwide reputation to it. However other people might
817 have felt, I never felt that was a possibility. We were, after all, dealing with a city council of San
818 Diego to give us 1200 of the choicest acres in the world and they were not going to give it to
819 anything called La Jolla. Aside from that, we were building a campus for the southern part, not
820 just for San Diego and San Diego County, but for the southern part of the state. To name it after
821 what was, literally, then a village, had, to me, no justification.

822 It was just a question of how to handle the local protests. That was mostly handled by Roger
823 Revelle. There was some debate within the Board of Regents, let me say, about that, but I
824 never had any sense that I would have any difficulty over the name University of California, San
825 Diego within the board. In other words, it was a temporary obstacle to be gotten around and not
826 a barrier.

827 **RINGROSE:** Given everything that Roger Revelle did for the campus, obviously people on the
828 campus still puzzle that he never was named chancellor of the campus. Our first official
829 chancellor was Herb York. Were you involved in that selection?

830 **KERR:** Yes.

831 **RINGROSE:** Would you talk about that a bit?

832 **KERR:** First, on Herb York, he had been a professor at Berkeley, and he had also been the
833 director of what became the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory. He had also been, by that time,
834 assistant secretary of defense for research. The regents had a great deal of confidence in him.
835 We faced a huge investment of money and Herb looked like a person who had handled big
836 problems and big budgets and big construction projects. Herb was not happy in the job and
837 asked to be relieved of it. One of the sad days was when he came to see me and told me that
838 he just couldn't take it any longer and for me to get him out as fast as I could.

839 On Roger, one of the difficult moments of my life was when I had to tell Roger that he would not
840 be the chancellor. He dreamed about this campus. He put a lot into it. He used to come up here
841 on the ridge on a moonlit evening and think what the campus would look like when it was built.
842 He told me he had been promised by my predecessor, Robert Gordon Sproul, that he would be
843 head of whatever this institute was. You see, the title chancellor only belonged to UCLA and
844 Berkeley when I became president. I extended it to the other operations. But Sproul had
845 promised him that he would be head of this new enterprise. I had to tell Roger what was going
846 to happen. I might say that within the administration of the university there were only two of us,
847 maybe I would want to qualify that if I thought about it, who had broad intellectual interests. I
848 think I did, and I know Roger did have intellectual interests. So, we had more in common than
849 two administrators normally would have.

850 The regents would not accept Roger. To go through a prolonged battle to make him chancellor
851 would have been bad for the campus. Pauley was totally opposed to him. Pauley carried with

852 him some other regents. He was a very dynamic, powerful person. In those days he carried with
853 him Ed Carter, who later broke away from him. But I must say, Carter, in those days, was doing
854 anything that Ed Pauley said for him to do. Catherine Hearst followed along with him, as did
855 John Canaday. There was quite a group. To try to make Roger chancellor would have held up
856 the development of the campus. It would have been a long battle. The regents would not have
857 accepted him.

858 Partly it was Pauley's opposition, but there really was some concern among other regents about
859 the wisdom of his having bought up property in the area. Among those who liked Roger and
860 believed him, there were those who worried about the political wisdom of it, while not distrusting
861 his motives, which I never did. I always thought that his motives were of the very highest. But it
862 showed lack of political wisdom.

863 **RINGROSE:** He certainly wasn't alone in doing that.

864 **KERR:** No, he certainly wasn't alone in it.

865 **RINGROSE:** Many people connected with the campus were—

866 **KERR:** I know that perfectly well. Roger was a fantastic recruiter. He was less good at managing
867 the campus, getting budgets in on time, having them carefully thought out, developing plans for
868 the campus. Roger was a leader. There was a question in the minds of some of the regents who
869 liked him and admired him about whether he would be the kind of a manager it took to make the
870 budgets, run the large bureaucracy, build the buildings, build the bureaucracy. He was not a
871 bureaucrat at all. He would come back from a trip at midnight, call his secretary and work until
872 morning. It was not the type of business approach that the regents were accustomed to. Roger
873 had no support, and, in fact, some opposition from the other chancellors. He was very arrogant
874 about San Diego in relationship to UCLA and to Berkeley and to the other campuses. I had to
875 carry the responsibility for making the decisions that favored San Diego, his comments—

[END OF PART TWO, BEGIN PART THREE]

876 The other chancellors gave him no support, and I am sure, in talking with the regents, probably
877 quite the contrary. Likewise, there was a question— he had had this terrible battle with Jonas
878 Salk.

879 **RINGROSE:** Right. I have wondered how much that hurt him.

880 **KERR:** Roger, in the course of that battle, antagonized some people like Jim Archer and some
881 of the other local people who wanted the Salk Institute. There is one chap, I forget his name
882 now, who had given a lot of money in connection with the Salk— he was very much involved in
883 the Salk interests in— Anyway, he was a prominent alumnus here and prominent in town—
884 They very much wanted Salk here and Roger didn't want to give up the right to that piece of
885 land. There were times when I was down here when Roger and Salk would almost fight each
886 other physically. I remember one time in Jim Archer's house I had Roger in one bedroom and

887 Salk in another so they wouldn't get into a physical fight, yelling at each other, and I was going
888 back and forth talking with them.

889 I really worked out for the Salk Institute. I hoped they would be closer with the campus and
890 become closer than they did in fact. I thought it would be an advantage to have that talent that
891 close by. I was really the one who worked out making this land available to them rather than
892 claiming it belonged to us. The regents agreed with me that we should give up whatever claims
893 we had to that beautiful piece of property in favor of having the Salk people come in. We wanted
894 to see a general environment of intellectual endeavor not just the campus by itself. We thought
895 we would add to it. So, that turned off— The regents got involved in it, some of them, and the
896 local community. Roger had some other disagreements with La Jolla and with the city council.
897 The regents developed doubts that he could handle— You see, he was so involved personally
898 in this campus. He felt so personally strongly about it, so attached to the ideals he had. The
899 regents developed doubts as to whether or not he would be diplomatic in how he handled it.
900 They heard from the chancellors that he was not diplomatic in dealing with them. They heard it
901 from Salk, and Salk had some very high-powered supporters and from the local community. So,
902 the regents would not have approved him. There would have been a bitter fight over it, which
903 would have held up the development of the campus.

904 So, I never took his name to the regents to be turned down and fought over. I told him that he
905 was not to be the chancellor. Both of us were very sad. It was a very sad affair. Then we
906 brought in Herb York with the experience he had and the confidence the regents had in him to
907 move the campus along. Now, Roger made a tremendous investment central to the ideas of the
908 campus. He got together a core of faculty that was really superb. The question I had to face is
909 was it better for the campus to move to somebody else than Roger, though he had done what
910 he had done, somebody else who would be more on the managerial side to carry it through with
911 less controversy. What was better for the long-run future of San Diego? The cost was to Roger.
912 It was, in a minor way, also to me in having to tell him that. I could easily have taken it to the
913 Board and had a vote against him, which would have been public, and not taken the
914 responsibility myself.

915 **RINGROSE:** It was probably much easier on him this way.

916 **KERR:** Easier on him?

917 **RINGROSE:** Yes, and harder on you.

918 **KERR:** Harder on me, but, hopefully, easier on him in the long run. Then I came in that the first
919 college on the campus should be named after him. I developed a job, which never interested
920 him very much, being statewide dean of research and development. Then he went off to
921 Harvard. Those are some of the tough decisions that you have to make.

922 I had to make a decision to drop Ray Allen who had been brought down from the University of
923 Washington with the promise he would be Sproul's successor as president. The regents, when it
924 was all over, chose me unanimously. He hadn't a single vote. I was the new man. a young

925 faculty member brought in as chancellor with a man who had been the president of a big
926 university. Then, beyond that, I had to go to him and tell him, after he had been turned down as
927 president, that I thought UCLA would progress faster under some other leadership. It wasn't as
928 though Roger was the only tough one, I had to deal with. And UCLA did progress better under
929 Frank Murphy than it would have under Ray Allen. The question is, if I had been interested in
930 surviving, and I didn't survive, I could have survived a lot easier if I had been interested in
931 managing what existed. I could have done that. But it was a very special time in the history of
932 the United States and the history of the University of California and unusual things could be
933 done. I decided to try to do the best I could by Berkeley, and Berkeley did get rated ahead of
934 Harvard. There were some tough decisions there, removing department chairmen, and a lot of
935 other things. And UCLA and San Diego and elsewhere took advantage of that particular time. I
936 was sophisticated enough to know that I would someday pay the consequences, and one day I
937 did. They were greater than I had expected and harsher than I expected, but I did pay the
938 consequences.

939 **RINGROSE:** One of the things that seems to me, looking at the materials in the archive, is that
940 you positioned people on the campuses in order to be able to move them into managerial roles.
941 Am I right that you essentially sent Galbraith and Tschirge down here? Nobody ever says that,
942 but when I read the papers, it crawls right out.

943 **KERR:** I was always looking around all the time for talent. I would try people out on something.
944 John, for example, had been chairman of a senate committee advising Irvine and had done an
945 extremely good job. I have tremendous respect for him. I tried him out, not necessarily thinking
946 of San Diego at the time, I was just thinking that here was a person that would be a good
947 campus head.

948 **RINGROSE:** You sent him down here to get some experience.

949 **KERR:** In the same way Ivan Hinderaker was vice chancellor at Irvine and became chancellor at
950 Riverside and there were other people

951 **RINGROSE:** So, this is more a matter of recognizing talent and then putting it in a place where
952 it can develop rather than trying to put people onto the campus that could act as your agents.

953 **KERR:** Yes. There was no case of anyone acting as my agent. Well, after all I had been the
954 author of decentralization of the university. I had been chancellor under a centralized
955 administration. I cut the statewide administration from 1,000 to 250 people when I was
956 president. As the university was more than doubling in size and in its most active period, starting
957 new campuses. So, I wasn't in the business of assigning anybody to be my agent on campus.
958 That wouldn't work anyway, with— It would be a crazy idea.

959 **RINGROSE:** When Reagan was elected in 1966, funds for the university system were
960 severely cut. What was the impact of this for this campus?

961 **KERR:** The first budget he came in with cut the state support for the university maybe thirty or
962 forty million. I have forgotten which it was. I think it was forty million. from two-hundred and thirty

963 million to a hundred and ninety. This was a sum of money which the university, in those days,
964 would notice. Actually, that money was restored. There was private understanding that he had
965 with some of the regents that if they got him a president who would be more cooperative with
966 him—I had several battles with him, not just one, several with him. It was clear I was not going to
967 be subservient to the governor. I had never been subservient to anybody. We also, at that time,
968 did not know how much Reagan places an emphasis on being a team player, as has been
969 shown. I presume he felt that way then and I was not on the governor's team. I was on the
970 university's team. He privately told the regents that if he could get a more cooperative president,
971 he would restore that money. So, the money was restored.

972 However, he later gave a series of unfriendly budgets. Charlie Hitch, who was my successor,
973 and was one of my vice presidents, in his last year as president said that during that period of
974 time when he was president and Reagan was governor, the real resources per student at the
975 University of California had been cut by twenty percent. That went far beyond anything that
976 happened during the great Depression. The remarkable thing is how well the university survived
977 it. If somebody had told me, when I was fired, that the man who fired me was going to cut the
978 resources of the university by twenty percent in real terms per student, I would have thought, my
979 god, that is going to be just terrible. Actually, the university survived it. Now, Jerry Brown's worst
980 budget was as good as Reagan's best budget, but it didn't make up for what had been lost
981 under Reagan. So, Brown, sort of accepted what Reagan left to him, and did not improve on it.
982 This meant that there were sixteen years of budgets which were not what the university
983 deserved, given its distinction and the need to keep up with the competition. The miracle is that
984 the university came out of those sixteen years as strong as it did. One thing that helped it was
985 that lots of other places around the country were having trouble too with their states and with
986 their governors and with private giving during the seventies, which was a bad decade with
987 OPEC and recessions and depressions. It indicates that the university was an extremely strong
988 organization. It had very great loyalty from its faculty members who stayed with it during that
989 period of time.

990 **RINGROSE:** What is your larger vision for the University of California at this point? How do
991 you think UCSD fits into this larger structure?

992 **KERR:** Well, the University of California system is clearly the best university system in the
993 nation. Berkeley still gets rated number one, which I might say is incredible to people in the Ivy
994 League. UCLA is now in the top ten. San Diego is moving up fast. So is Davis and Santa
995 Barbara. Irvine, of the new campuses established since World War II, is sort of tied with the
996 prestige campus of the State University of New York at Stonybrook as the most successful. So,
997 it is the best system. I think it is also the best governed system. Generally, systems are not well
998 governed. There is much more trouble than within this particular system, decentralized as it is.
999 California is not gaining in population as it once did, but it is still a pretty prosperous state and is
1000 gaining in population. Our education faces at least fifteen difficult years as the size of the age
1001 cohort goes down almost twenty-five percent by 1997.

1002 There are bound to be some economic readjustments with the budget deficit and trade deficit
1003 and all the rest of that. There will be some tough years for the University of California, but I

1004 would expect that on a comparative basis, by the year 2000, it will be ranking even higher as a
1005 total university system, and San Diego in particular, than it does today.

1006 **RINGROSE:** I want to thank you very much. It has been an honor to talk to you, and I have
1007 certainly enjoyed it very much.

[END OF PART THREE, END OF INTERVIEW]