UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SAN DIEGO
25th ANNIVERSARY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interview with Dr. Herbert York
August 9, 1984 — Dr. York's home in La Jolla
Interviewer, Dr. Kathryn Ringrose

RINGROSE: If you don't mind, would you start from the beginning and tell us how you were hired here, how you were recruited.

YORK: Well, I was working in the Pentagon at the time; I was Undersecretary of Defense, and I had been in Washington for about three years. But all that time I was on leave from the University of California.

RINGROSE: At Berkeley.

YORK: Well, yes, at Berkeley. But to make the story even more complicated, I had been on leave from Berkeley for the six years before I went to Washington. I was on leave from the Berkeley faculty beginning in 1952 but employed by the University of California as director of the Livermore Laboratory. Then, I went from Livermore to the White House, to the Pentagon, and then finally in 1961, nine years after I went on leave at Berkeley, I came to San Diego. Now, what had happened is that I had a heart attack the summer of 1960, that was election year, and decided that I would go back to California when the Eisenhower administration ended. I probably would have anyway - because I had assiduously protected my leave. I mean, I really liked the idea that I was on leave from the University of California. That was a big thing in my life.

RINGROSE: That was an unusually long period to be granted leave, wasn't it?

YORK: Yes, but you see, it was from one part of the university to another. Livermore Laboratory was also run by the University of California. I mean, nine years of leave would have been preposterous under ordinary circumstances, but six of those nine years were when I was at another part of the university, and the other three were for high government service. So, it was plausible after all. But at any rate, when I was still recovering from my heart attack–which had a lot of complications–it wasn't such a bad heart attack. but it had a lot of medical complications. I took the train to come out to California and visit with the people at Berkeley to discuss what I would do when I came back, because I was not interested in returning to Livermore. I didn't think that was what I wanted to do. I wanted to go back to Berkeley and do something, but I wasn't sure what there was to do.

So, I visited with Glen Seaborg; I don't remember for sure whether I visited with Clark Kerr. But just to let them know that I was planning on coming back when the administration ran out at the end of 1960. And very soon after I was back in Washington, I got a call from Clark Kerr asking me if I would be willing to consider being chancellor of San Diego. And I said, "Sure". And then he kept it confidential for a while, I presume because he'd been talking with [Edwin W.] Pauley

perhaps, but he had not yet put the idea to the regents. And so somewhere, as I recall, about February, he did put the proposal to the regents that I should be chancellor, so I got a formal offer, and agreed to come. I may be wrong on many of those dates.

The previous November, of course, Kennedy won the election. About a month after that Bob McNamara got in touch with me and asked me to stay. I said that I was really eager to get back to the University of California, and I agreed to stay long enough so there wouldn't be any pressure on finding a successor. In fact, I stayed until May, at which time I was replaced in Washington by Harold Brown, who had also replaced me at Livermore before that. I came out here about the first of May and have been here most of the time since then. In the beginning my family was still in Virginia finishing school, so I did a certain amount of traveling back and forth. We all arrived here on the fourth of July 1961.

My coming here–what brought me to the attention of the regents and others -well, the people here, however the selection committee worked–liked the fact that I had done a good job in Washington, and they are always looking for somebody who has a variety of skills. Ideally, when you're looking for a chancellor, you're looking for somebody who you believe understands something about education, usually because of having been in it. And you look for somebody you think would make a reasonable executive because there's something in his record that indicates he knows how to do that or has a talent for it–whatever the word is. And actually, I did not have a good background in education. In that sense they made a mistake! But at any rate, I had been with the University of California. I had briefly been a professor. The campus here was heavily research and science oriented, and of course the Livermore Laboratory is also. So, adding it all up, whoever was on the committee, came up with my name out of how many I have no idea–and I'm the one who made it through the filter of the regents, president's office, and so on. And so that's how I came.

I had determined to return to the University of California. I had come out here letting people know I was coming back but didn't quite know what it was I was going to be doing. I would have been perfectly happy just to return to the faculty at Berkeley. But I would have needed, even then, something a little bit different. I probably would have tried to get something going relating to science policy rather than straight science, even if I had returned to Berkeley. I was determined to come back to pick up my leave, return to the University of California thinking of Berkeley, when at the same time that the authorities in Berkeley were looking for somebody to be chancellor here. So that's how it happened.

RINGROSE: It seems like it was a good opportunity, and a good match of people.

YORK: It was a good opportunity for me. Or seemed like a good opportunity. And it was a reasonable match.

RINGROSE: When you came here did you realize that there was a group of people who had expected that Roger Revelle would be the first chancellor?

YORK: Well, by the time I arrived here I was very well aware of that. But I didn't know it clearly when I was first approached, although somewhere early on Clark Kerr apprised me, on a private basis, of the fact that there were people here who wanted Roger. Then, after I was appointed by the regents, but while I was still in Washington, because I was still in the Pentagon for several months after the appointment was announced, Joe Mayer came and talked with me. He was the Mayer after whom Mayer Hall is named–one of the two Mayers. I met a couple of other UCSD faculty members as well, but I remember that Joe sort of came back as an official delegate to talk with me, and he made that clear, but in a friendly way. There was a lot of hostility, but it was almost all among old timers at Scripps. And it wasn't really overt. It just was an extraordinary coolness on the part of most of the people–not all, but most of the people at Scripps. And so, I was very well aware of it by the time I officially came and took over.

RINGROSE: By the time you came, the decision had been firmly made that this would be a full-service campus. Right?

YORK: Oh, yes. Which was fine with me. That was my interest as well.

RINGROSE: It seems to me that there was a certain amount of hostility early on that was generated by the southern section of the senate.

YORK: I don't know about hostility. There were controversies in which the Los Angeles division–some people in the Los Angeles division–wanted to keep control over the graduate program here longer than people here were willing to let them do it. But I have no feeling about that other than that it was ordinary bureaucratic politics. It was not an important issue. It was probably more important here than it was anywhere else. The people here were determined to get out from under the UCLA Senate. There was a lot of eagerness. I think that the people in Los Angeles who opposed it were probably limited to a very small number. I don't think most people at UCLA cared at all.

RINGROSE: Do you think most people at Scripps were committed to a full-service campus?

YORK: I really don't have any idea. Most people at Scripps are committed to research in oceanography—then, as much as they are now—research and a little bit of graduate teaching. So, they may have had some ideas about it, but most of them were not really committed. There were just a few people at Scripps who had a really deep interest in expanding into a general campus. Roger Revelle was the principal one. And of course, by the time I was hired, there had already been hired, in addition, the first people outside of the ocean sciences–that is, there was the beginnings of a Physics Department, a Chemistry Department, and a Biology Department already.

RINGROSE: Now, these people had been selected by Roger Revelle?

YORK: Yes, and then they had selected further people themselves. I don't know all about it in great detail. I think that it's correct to say that Roger found [David M.] Bonner–or Bonner found Roger–but then Bonner brought with him [Jonathan] Singer and [Robert N.] Hamburger. Similarly, Roger found–well, I'm not sure whether it was Jim Arnold or Harold Urey came first–

but one of them, and then they brought the rest, including Stanley Miller, who was a student of Urey's, etc. And in Physics it was similar, and again I don't fully know the details. But [Keith] Brueckner was one of the first–maybe the first, and then he recruited others. So, Roger recruited the first ones, and then the first ones recruited the next ones.

RINGROSE: And then they created their own departments. Now you began the Humanities Department, essentially. You hired John Stewart, is that right?

YORK: Yes, but that wasn't the first. The beginning was a group in Literature consisting of Roy Pearce, Andy Wright, and Sigurd Burkhardt, and then Bob Elliott, and then, related to all of them, [Leonard D.] Newmark had come in. Those five–of whom I think I named the first three correctly. I went to Columbus [Ohio] to meet with Roy and the others. Then, the next three were in Philosophy. And there was again a group of three who came more or less together with [Richard H.] Dick Popkin being the central figure, with [Avrum] Av Stroll and [Jason L.] Saunders being the other two.

Then we began a systematic search for people in Political Science, Economics, and other social sciences, but with those two at the top of the list. And History. And Mathematics. Because although we had all kinds of mathematical science here, we had no Mathematics Department. It was Brueckner who got the first mathematicians. I remember interviewing quite a few people, trying to persuade a number of persons to come before finally [Stefan E.] Steve Warchawski came in math. In Economics and Political Science, we had small committees that were supposed to help, including people from off campus in those fields. Gifford Ewing was involved in the Political Science search, I remember, and Harold Urey in Economics. And it was, in fact, Harold Urey who discovered that Seymour Harris was interested in coming and phoned me to that effect from Washington. And so, we got those other departments going as well during that time.

RINGROSE: You mentioned that you interviewed many people. Did you find it was difficult to get people to come out here because it was so isolated?

YORK: Yes, although the thing that made it especially difficult was the fact that we had very high standards. And the people whom we wanted were all people who already had good jobs. We also got a certain number of volunteers. It would have been extremely easy to recruit if we had not insisted on high standards. But we all did. It was just universal among us. Different people had somewhat different views about what that meant. I was at one extreme with respect to feeling that high standards did not mean that a person had to be already famous, but merely very promising. There were other people who felt the same. But there were also people who wanted to hire faculty who were already well established and famous. I thought that was fine, too. But I also thought that some of the people here were too rigid with respect to their determination of high standards. They felt that a person, in all cases, had to have a good record, not just high promise.

RINGROSE: It sounds as though you were primarily interested in people who were prominent in their fields and outstanding researchers as opposed to people who had made a mark as teachers.

YORK: Yes, that's entirely right. The emphasis was always on research and creativity, whether you talk about science or non-science. We wanted artists who produced art. And incidentally in both art and in music I think that we were able to do what we wanted to do, which was to get people who were creative and willing to teach. In Literature I don't feel we did. Well, there we got a good but orthodox Literature Department, which likes to think of itself as unorthodox, but in my view, it's a high-quality orthodox Literature Department. The main characteristic of our literature faculty is that they are professors and critics and analysts of literature rather than creators of it. In our Music and our Art Department we really did get creative people.

RINGROSE: I had a very interesting interview with John Stewart regarding the founding of the Music and Arts Departments, and I can see why you two tuned in to each other so well. He had some very definite creative ideas about how you teach those fields.

YORK: Well, I wasn't so much looking for creative ideas about how you teach them. I was focusing on the idea of creativity and–I mean artistic creativity–and creative persons themselves. The other thing we did that had some novelty to it–but again none of these things was totally novel–the other one that was unorthodox, though, involved having language taught by native speakers with an emphasis on speaking primarily, and on reading and grammar secondarily. Again, it was not novel with us, but it was very rare in universities because teaching French and teaching German have historically been the main way of employing people who knew German and French literature. And so, the academic community—the literature part of the academic community–didn't like it. Well, some liked it, and some didn't. They were ambivalent about it. It meant fewer jobs. On the other hand, it meant that since most of them regarded teaching language as a terrible chore which is beneath their dignity, they were glad to be rid of it. So, you know, it produced a mixed situation, and it’s always given a mixed result. Our students, whether you're talking about Education Abroad programs or anything else, are substantially different in terms of what they can do from students from the traditional language programs. In testing, my recollection is, they usually show up worse, but then they adapt more quickly. I don't know. I've never looked into it enough to know the truth.

RINGROSE: I hear that they have a pretty high level of verbal skills.

YORK: And if you're going to go Education Abroad for a year, that's pretty important, and that's one of the things that we do with our students.

RINGROSE: Now the original plan for UCSD seems to me to be one in which you were trying to integrate departments and disciplines.

YORK: Well, yes and no. There was an enormous amount of conversation in that regard. There was almost no action at all. So that's one of the things that I would have liked to have seen that didn't really happen. We're just as rigid as any other university in that regard, and

despite a lot of conversation, we always have been. The only walls that have ever been broken down are walls between two different disciplines which are so close that you might as well call them the same discipline. You know, biochemistry, geochemistry, ocean chemistry. The real interdisciplinary work has not worked here any better than it has work anywhere else. There are very few exceptions.

The little program that Roger Revelle and Cliff Grobstein and [Sanford A.] Sandy Lakoff and I have is a kind of exception. It is interdisciplinary, but the only reason it works is because Grobstein, Revelle and I are all so senior that we can do almost anything we want to do. It would never have worked had it required young people as part of the basic group. We have been able to attach young people, but even then, they are, with only one exception, not regular members of the faculty. The faculty here, just like the faculty in most places, just will not–the appointment system just works, even you might say with ferocity, against interdisciplinary work. It will not give a tenure appointment to a person who is not in the center of a discipline. And people are willing to say that isn't it great that [J. Robert] Oppenheimer was a physicist who could play the violin. But if we wanted to hire him here, they wouldn't care about the violin. And it is probably right that they shouldn't.

Well, interdisciplinary programming was all talk. It always was, and it still is all talk. Not just here, but really everywhere.

RINGROSE: Do you think that the fact that we pay lip service to it on the campus gets in the way?

YORK: I think that it probably doesn't make much difference. It might get in the way a little bit because it may make people think that we're doing it when we aren't, and they might try a little harder. But generally, I don't think it gets in the way.

RINGROSE: But hasn't it led to the development of a somewhat unusual Medical School, though?

YORK: I don't think our Medical School is as different as some people think. It looks like a regular good medical school.

RINGROSE: But when it was started it was less orthodox than it is now.

YORK: By a little bit, but by the time it really got going and was really doing a job and educating doctors, which is what it's for, by the time the first doctors were coming out, it was rapidly approaching a quality conventional school. It does have–it did at the beginning–it still is different in some ways, although I couldn't describe them. And during the first several years it was more different. But it was easy to see that what was happening was we were going to get a quality, conventional medical school. And to be honest, I never thought it was going to be anything else. I mean, Bonner and Hamburger and a few of the others, and Singer, were determined it was going to be something different. But as I saw it, starting off the way they wanted to, was perfectly ok. But I believed the result was going to be exactly what we got. I have never thought we were going to get anything different.

RINGROSE: I'm looking forward to this discussion when Dr. Hamburger gets everybody together to talk about this very thing, because I think he still sees the Medical School as very different and would like to go back to the original conception.

YORK: Well, it's different from some, but that will never happen. It never had a chance. You've got to have people teaching–well, I'm not sure I want to get into it in detail–but you've got to have professors who know what it is to be sick, not just what molecular biology is all about. And in order to train students, you've got to have a hospital with patients. And those people have got to focus on the complaints of those other human beings. And that leads to a Medical School of the orthodox American type.

RINGROSE: This leads to another observation that I have been developing as I talk to various people about the campus, and that is that the original conception was highly theoretical, and that there was a tendency to avoid areas that have to do with professional skills that are oriented toward the practical. Perhaps I'm not phrasing that well.

YORK: Let's say more academic than professional. You could say theoretical as opposed to practical, but academic as opposed to professional is perhaps a better way to say the same thing. And therefore, we do not to this day have a Business School, a School of Education, and a School of Law. The case with Law is different from the case with the others. And that's also why it took so long to form a School of Engineering. That sounds too professional. And I was sympathetic with those general goals. I was not interested in having a Business School, or an Education School. And I was satisfied to forget Engineering. And I thought that Medicine was the best place to start, because of those it is the most sophisticated and certainly the most closely connected with science, where all their strength was. So, I did not share the ideological opposition to a Business School or Education School, but I was perfectly content not to have them.

RINGROSE: Not to have to deal with them. And yet it does mean that you're not going to be educating as wide a spectrum of the local educational clientele. That perhaps leaves the university open to charges of elitism.

YORK: Well, yes, but there I believe the university ought to be elite, so that it simply–well, I'll put it a little differently. I didn't think it ought to be elite. It ought to be high quality, and it's just inevitable that it also leads to elitism. For whatever reasons it's a fact that when you make the educational standards high, you get students from a small fraction of society, and from that small fraction of society that lives best. So, my goal wasn't elitism, it was high quality.

RINGROSE: Did you ever get flak from the community?

YORK: Yes, and I was perfectly willing to accept elitism as a result of insisting on high quality.

RINGROSE: Well, I think today students are so much more career oriented and they're so concerned about the results of their education, and whether they're going to be able to graduate and find a job and so on...

YORK: Well, we do adapt to those kinds of pressures. It just takes time. It may take so much time that we almost do it too late. I'm not quite sure. But we have established an Engineering School now. And that will evolve in ways that may never be entirely conventional but will look more and more conventional. And I'm not sure what will happen at the interface between business and economics and so forth. In fact, I haven't even followed what's going on in the campus as it is.

RINGROSE: Well, we do have sort of a small hidden program–it's carefully hidden - it's an interesting little program.

YORK: I remember meeting one of our first black students on an airplane after he graduated and was working in Sacramento. And he was quite critical. He had actually gotten a good job, but he was quite critical of the education he got here. He said he managed to go to work in Sacramento without having anybody ever telling him what a mortgage was. And he felt that especially since he came from an ethnic group where people usually didn't have mortgages, that that was actually part of the elitism of the campus, that the economics department felt that everybody would know what a mortgage was, and therefore it was ridiculous to tell anybody. Well, in Physics we don't rely on people knowing or having lots of prior knowledge, although it's no accident that they all come from a fairly well-defined group of households that are not necessarily upper class.

RINGROSE: No, but they're going to be people who care a lot about education.

YORK: Well, the scientists come–there the young people don't necessarily care about education. They happen to come from families which are willing to answer questions and sort of cater to young people. But they aren't necessarily interested in education more generally. It's always been a fact when I was in school and even today, that you find an awful lot of physics students who are even worse at grammar and spelling than even the literature students are! Which is saying a lot! Because they're really not interested in education generally. They're interested in science.

RINGROSE: What can I say? I have one. They're a breed. They're totally different from anybody else in the world.

YORK: So, it isn't right that they're interested in education.

RINGROSE: No, that the parents are interested in education.

YORK: Well, many of them are, but not even all of that. You know in the mathematical sciences a very large fraction come from Jewish families, which indeed are genuinely interested in education. But the other half do not come from such families.

RINGROSE: Are you telling me that these creatures are born, they just kind of happen?

YORK: I think that it has a lot more to do with it than people are willing to say. Or, to the extent that environment has something to do with it, it's the willingness of parents to answer

bothersome questions during the first two or three years rather than environment in some bigger sense. So, I think it probably does have to do with being born to it. But I'm willing to give the first four or five years of environment a big–for instance, it's no accident that the best scientists are either always older children or only sons or oldest, and certainly the genes aren't changing. What's changing is the relationship between the parents and the children, and the willingness to play with them and bother with dumb questions. So, it surely is environment in some sense, though in a fairly narrow sense.

RINGROSE: Where scientists come from–is this a question that people at UCSD ever think about or deal with?

YORK: Not much. But there are departments where people do. There are departments where there are people who concentrate on a sociology of science, for example, which is probably the direct study of that question.

RINGROSE: There are all kinds of historians who are interested in what historical milieu will produce people who think this way.

YORK: Yes. The sociologists study it within America. I mean it's another kind of person who asks the question why there aren't any in South America. That's a different question.

RINGROSE: Or why there were so few in the early Middle Ages.

YORK: Yeah, that's right. In terms of time as well. Well, they must be related. One is "Why are they all in northwest European culture, and now Japanese culture?" And even the ones who aren't, really were. India is the only third world country that has ever produced any, and that was during the time the British were there.

RINGROSE: And yet in our egalitarian society, we have to be careful how we say these kinds of things.

YORK: Yes, in fact, for social reasons more than even legal reasons.

RINGROSE: Early on, in the planning of UCSD, it looks as though what Roger Revelle had in mind was that the campus should develop on a Caltech model.

YORK: He did have that in mind, and then he had another related one that was some kind of combination of Caltech and Occidental.

RINGROSE: Sort of like Harvey Mudd?

YORK: He did have something like that in mind. Well, no, he wanted it to be more at the graduate level, and Harvey Mudd is resolutely undergraduate. So, not Harvey Mudd, although that, in itself, is an interesting school, it's a different case altogether. Roger Revelle wanted UCSD to be research oriented, and he had certain other idealized pictures of even the undergraduates learning by being part of a research group or doing a large part of their learning

by being associated with a research group. The more or less specific ideas–those were the more specific ideas.

What I think of as the general ideas that Roger brought to the whole thing were two. One of them is that we would build from the top down. And the other was that we would divide them–if we did get big, we would divide the mass into pieces, and that's the basis of the college system that we have today. Now in addition he also had very strong views with regard to standards and quality. There he wasn't so unique. There were a lot of people who did. But the special ideas that he promoted were the two I named–well, my view of it–starting from the top down, starting with graduate work first, and then before you had very large units of anything, breaking them down into something like the colleges we now have. And fortunately, Clark Kerr was supportive of those general ideas. Clark Kerr and others were not supportive of making a state supported Caltech.

RINGROSE: It seems to me that the building from the top-down idea can be dangerous in the sense that you immediately shape the department.

YORK: Yes, but the first people shape the department no matter who they are, and if they are strictly teaching oriented, they'll shape it that way. So, yes, it shapes the department. But I think, as did all of the early pioneers here, that it shapes it in the right way. Yes, it shapes it. It does some other things that may be less than ideal, but I don't know a way to do it better. It also gets within departments certain subspecialties–they get a head start and tend to squeeze out others. So, it has other distortions than just those involved between research and teaching. Nevertheless, it's the best of all distorted ways.

RINGROSE: It puts an enormous responsibility on the early people.

YORK: Yes, but that's always the case. How would you not? Building from the top down doesn't do that—doesn't contribute to that. The first people have a big responsibility anyhow.

RINGROSE: Well, I think it's a contribution that Roger Revelle made that perhaps lay people don't recognize.

YORK: It's not the first time it was done, but the other times it was done sort of accidentally.

RINGROSE: Where else has it been done?

YORK: That's the way the Rockefeller University got started. I'm not exactly sure, but there were a number of Eastern schools that put great emphasis on graduate work, and then undergraduate work.

RINGROSE: Stony Brook?

YORK: Yes, but Stony Brook came after us. And, well, it was almost contemporaneous–Stony Brook was. You're right. Stony Brook really was an independent case because we hadn't gone far enough to be an example yet.

RINGROSE: I'm not sure they had gone as heavily into graduate teaching, either.

YORK: No, but they did have a similar set of ideas. On the other hand, we were unusual, but not absolutely unique.

RINGROSE: Around the circuit one gets the sense that the UCSD experiment has been the most successful.

YORK: Yes, I think so. Not only within the UC system, but it's one of the very few successful ones–it's post Sputnik. The changes in American higher education that came after the sixties have two origins. One of them is all the turmoil that happened in connection with Sputnik and so on. But much more important, although not usually emphasized, is just demographics. Affluence and demographics. Higher education had to expand because of demand. Sputnik and the immediate aftermath gave a certain amount of direction and got more sympathy in Washington than it otherwise would have had, but American higher education would have expanded anyway. Probably the University of California would have expanded something like it did, because we owe everything to Sacramento, not to Washington. And I think Sacramento would have made decisions something like were made even without Sputnik. On the other hand, alternative history is every bit as crazy and hard to predict as the future.

RINGROSE: If you compare UCSD to Santa Cruz, for example, and it did start about the same time.

YORK: Yes, and Irvine also. And really Riverside started about the same time as well.

RINGROSE: Yes, it did. In fact, I was out here in 1961. I taught out here for a year, and Riverside was just beginning. I was up in San Bernardino. But of the new campuses, UCSD is clearly the most successful.

YORK: Yes, but not merely within the university. If you measure success in terms of a first rate–well, I don't know what the right word is–but I mean what everyone would agree, a university with first rate graduate departments–then it's not merely the best within the University of California system. It's probably the most successful of all of the new ones. And there were a lot of other new ones created in the wake of Sputnik, and in the wake of this affluence and demographics I spoke of.

RINGROSE: Now, when you start this kind of a brand-new-from-scratch university it always lacks that kind of amorphous body of traditions and things that surround an institution. We were at Rutgers during the sixties, and of course it was expanding very, very rapidly, and yet had the old traditions of Rutgers College to work on. But there was really nothing like that here.

YORK: No, there was. There was the rest of the University of California. Because a lot of us who were involved here were from elsewhere in the University of California, and furthermore, there were all kinds of rules and regulations and customs codified in the rules–not only of the regents, but of the Academic Senate–some of which didn’t apply here. So that there was a certain controversy connected with the fact that we were part of the University of California. But

I think much more important than the few issues where there was controversy was the more fundamental situation that that is the pattern we used. That is the basic pattern we used. I used it perfectly willingly. There were other people who came from elsewhere who didn't like that pattern. But it was fine with me.

RINGROSE: When I interviewed Roy Pearce, we had a conversation that made it very clear that there were things about the structure that made the creation of the kind of literature department that he wanted very difficult.

YORK: Yes, there were. But I would claim that all of those put together were less important than the positive side. But one doesn't notice the positive side. You only notice the negatives. And Roy Pearce is the kind of person who is especially sensitive to that. And also, he's right. There were some problems. But some of them come not just from the fact that we are part of the university, but from the fact that American university customs in the large are there and part of the invisible background. For example, the reason it was difficult to make all the talk about interdisciplinary work into reality is American academic custom, not the University of California. It doesn't happen anywhere. Especially it doesn't happen at first class institutions, except in sort of special cases where there's a group of people who can do it. Around American academia there are some good–the things I know best have to do with science and politics, or science technology, and international relations and so on. There are some programs around. But there are only a half a dozen, and you've got two thousand institutions of higher education. There are only a half a dozen which are able to do that, despite the fact that all kinds of people say it ought to be done.

RINGROSE: Well, it's a brave graduate student that does an advanced degree in this kind of interdisciplinary -

YORK: I have a different solution, and that is that the graduate student should do an orthodox degree in terms of satisfying the requirements of some particular department but have a research topic within that department that relates to something else.

RINGROSE: So, you really see these as interdisciplinary organizations that put ideas together...

YORK: It's already hard to do that without taking the next step, which is to have a single person do everything.

RINGROSE: I think the hope in part was that the college system would provide some of the motor for this. We should talk about that.

YORK: Yes, by making it easier for colleagues in one discipline to relate to colleagues in another. And in that detail, I don't think it has worked at all.

RINGROSE: Well, it seems that the only place that interdisciplinary courses have really thrived at all has been in Muir.

YORK: Well, what do you have in mind?

RINGROSE: Well, when John Stewart and I talked, we talked about some of the environment programs, for example, which are interdisciplinary. But he will admit that it's been very difficult to keep those programs working and supported.

YORK: No, I would say that our STPA [Science, Technology, and Public Affairs course] is the best example.

RINGROSE: Is that lodged in a college? Are you lodged in Warren?

YORK: Well, we're lodged with the Political Science Department, and they're lodged in a college. And there we do teach courses that deal with politics and with technology, and science and technology. But that's because none of us, neither Roger, nor Cliff, nor myself depend on a discipline for our institutional well-being. Or depend on it critically, I should say. We have to maintain reasonable relations with our disciplines.

RINGROSE: But you're really not seen as a threat to any one particular department…

YORK: No, or to the institution. You see a department–a department of science A, if a large part of its people–I mean a large part may be as little as twenty percent–if they started fooling around with interdisciplinary subjects, the department would feel that its reputation was threatened. It was threatened in the sense–not that the other eighty percent were going to lose their pay or something—but that their reputation and their ability to get good graduate students and good colleagues was threatened. So, they do feel threatened, and that's how they feel threatened. And the social sciences are even worse. You know the Anthropology Department, Sociology, to name two, are probably the worst. You know the idea that somebody might not be in the center of sociology as defined by the group making up the ten or twenty best departments is just anathema to them. The Political Science Department with which I'm associated is the same, but they're tolerant of the three of us because we're outside it. But if Sandy Lakoff or one of the other early ones wanted to hire someone who knew something about political science theory, but who had been a congressman for twenty years, he could never get such a person hired.

RINGROSE: They did, however, just hire an historian.

YORK: Yes, but that's not–who?

RINGROSE: Paul Drake. The new Latin Americanist. But I understand what you're saying. It's interesting to hear it from your perspective, because the perspective I've always had on it has been one that involved not wanting to be interested in interdisciplinary things because you are always fighting for bodies and body count, and resources.

YORK: That is true.

RINGROSE: It's a resource problem.

YORK: That is true. They feel their reputation is threatened. I mean, our people–that's part of the costs of being...

[END OF PART ONE, BEGIN PART TWO]

RINGROSE: Let's try that conversation again, because that's interesting–about history of science and history of technology. And why they don't thrive in an institution that has very rigid ideas about who can do what.

YORK: I don't know why except that in order to really understand technology you probably have to–the person who really understands technology probably isn't as good an historian as an historian who understands culture and philosophy (or even diplomatic history) which have been, for a long-time part of history, and which contain ideas which are similar to the ideas that historians usually work with. Technology is made up of a set of ideas which are really quite different from the ones historians, or literary people, or anybody else work with. You wouldn't really expect to find a department that was made up of a combination of literature and technology. But in the case of history, there is something to do, because Western society–the difference between us and other societies–one of the large differences is our capability with technology. And yet there isn't anybody who really understands how that all happened, because the technologists have no sense of history, generally. Some of them, when they become older, develop an amateurish interest in it. And historians just never, as a group of people, have any feeling for technology. And so, there is in American–what is it, the Society for the History of Technology, called SHOT, a tiny group of people at just a few universities, but even then, as often as not, there is still likely to be someone who is interested in the introduction of iron smelting into Eastern Russia, as in the question of computers, or space.

RINGROSE: I think that what we are really dealing with in part is a problem that history as a discipline in the United States has to deal with. You are not rewarded in the discipline for doing nuts and bolts work. The person who really works out the development of iron smelting technology in Eastern Russia is not going to get to first base in the profession. European historians are rather critical of this in this regard, and in my own field, there is a tendency for historians not to spend enough time paying their dues with nuts-and-bolts manuscripts and small projects.

YORK: But the persons who go into history are similar to the persons who go into the humanities. And so, they're interested in the kinds of ideas that humanists are interested in, not the kind of ideas that technical people are interested in. I think that's got to count. Just the inclinations of the persons themselves.

RINGROSE: You need to talk to Stan Chodorow about this sometime, if you never have, because he started out as a chemist, I believe.

YORK: Well, there are a few. And I didn't know that he started out as a chemist, but there certainly are people who are like that. Even then it's somebody who gets a degree in

engineering and then becomes an historian that would be required to do what I'm talking about. Maybe we should get on to some of the other basic questions.

RINGROSE: How much long-range planning actually went on in the early days.

YORK: Oh, a lot. It depends–long range planning is one of those things that is in the eye of the beholder, because what one person will regard as adequate, another person will regard as lacking in sufficient detail, or foresight, or something. But we developed a plan, and it still exists, that had numbers in it and provided for more than ten years of faculty and student development in various departments. As far as facilities planning is concerned, it had twenty or twenty-five years of facilities planning. So, we had ten years of planning that involved the shape of departments, and twenty-five years of planning on the shape of the physical facilities and established a lot of specific general principles with regard to specific academic ideas. So, I think in the terms I believe are sensible, we did lots of long-range planning. Anything more would have just been whistling in the wind. I mean you can pretend you're doing more, but you can't do any more than we did.

RINGROSE: I've looked at the Alexander master plan, for the physical plant, and that.

YORK: There's a book around somewhere that is an academic master plan that was drawn up at the beginning of my first administration, but I don't have a copy. Some of the things were done in marvelously arbitrary ways. The question of how big a college should be Walter Kohn–I may have it just backwards, but I think Walter Kohn thought they should only be 900–that is, nice and small in terms of student size.

RINGROSE: Probably the size of the college he went to.

YORK: And Joe Clark and Joe Mayer thought each ought to be large enough to really be complete, and that that would take 9000 students. And the number 2700 is more or less an arbitrary number. Twenty-five hundred is what we finally picked. That would allow for twelve, I think–three clusters of four each. The only thing that [Robert] Alexander introduced was the idea of clusters. That instead of having just twelve—you know, growing one, two, three, four, five, six–one would grow one, two, three, four–pause - five, six, seven, eight–pause. And then of course the general land use plan, and so on, the details were all worked up by Alexander, but except for the notion of groups of three groups of four, Alexander just carried out what the faculty said, so it's not Alexander's plan. It was the faculty's plan, with the details worked out by Alexander.

RINGROSE: The land use plan–I haven't been able to decide if we've abandoned it or not.

YORK: Well, I think we've not, and in fact because we didn't–and it has produced certain oddities–what the students like to call the "not-so-central University Library" is the "not-so-central University Library" because it's where it belongs in the long-range plan. So, at the time that was built, we were still following a plan which was probably already obsolete, but it wasn't clear it was obsolete. And the accident that College No. 1, Revelle College, is in one extreme

corner, that's pure accident. That came out because at the time that we were ready to go on detailed planning and construction, and so on, that was the only piece of property we owned!

RINGROSE: That's right because things were well along when you got the master plan.

YORK: So, you know the master plan is one of those curiosities as is often the case. I don't have all that good a feeling about master planning. You're required to do it, but a lot of the greatest things that the human race has were not master planned, and I'm not sure that master planning is all that great. It works, but it does produce weird things, like having the university library on the edge.

RINGROSE: Well, it won't be there anymore, once we get the other...

YORK: Once we get that other stuff built behind it–even so it won't be the ideal place. It would be better if it were where the Mandeville Hall is.

RINGROSE: Did people like Jim Copley and James Archer have much to do with developing master planning? I knew they were involved in the land acquisition.

YORK: I don't think they were involved in master planning. Certainly, they were involved in the use of the land. It depends on what you mean. They actually had nothing to do with what you earlier called the Alexander Plan. On the other hand, they had a great deal to do with the general approach because we acquired the land in–I mean going back to the original Scripps–we acquired it in three major steps. One was the land where Revelle College is. That was acquired before I got here, and I don't remember how that happened. But then there was the Camp Matthews piece, and then there was everything that was north of the combination of Camp Matthews and Revelle College.

RINGROSE: You mean the pueblo piece.

YORK: Well, even Camp Matthews was originally pueblo lands, which had been given to the Navy for its use, with the proviso that it should be returned to the city when the Navy was done with it. And it was sort of an issue there. The Navy was not involved according to the original grant, the Navy had to give it back to the city, who wanted to give it to us. There were people who wanted the Navy to do something else with it. Sell it to the university, or...

RINGROSE: You mean city people.

YORK: Well, people in the Navy. The Navy was not too eager to have us here, for a good reason. And that is that we were a major factor in the development of North City, and the development of North City imperils the Miramar Naval Air Station. And the Navy saw that very clearly right from the start. Building the university up here would hasten the day when they would have to move out of Miramar. So, the Navy opposed it. And the Navy had a lot of influence with Copley, and so forth, so the location became controversial for that narrow reason. Copley, you know, had an ambivalent relationship with us. He wanted a university here, but he didn't want a university with real students and real professors. He had some kind of an

idealization of bringing culture without bringing all those painful political and social things that go with it. So, he, for a long time, long after the decision was made to call this–and that desire on his part, and on the part of a number of others, reflected itself in a number of odd ways. First of all, they wanted a Caltech -type school with students who would keep their noses to the grindstone and supply good Ph.D.s for General Atomic and so on. And they wanted the theater. There were sort of these little odds and ends, but they didn't want what we've got! And so, one of the manifestations of that was Copley's insistence for several years that the name should be University of California at La Jolla, rather than University of California, San Diego.

RINGROSE: Oh, I didn't know that he pushed that issue.

YORK: Yes. Some of the people on the campus liked that name as well, so for a brief period, that's what it was known as. The only place I know where you can find that engraved in stone is in a rock. I think there's a stone just outside IGCC [UC Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation] which is memorializing some gift, maybe it's a statue that's there, and it mentions University of California, La Jolla. You know, where it's engraved in concrete or bronze or something. Other than that, it exists only on paper. But Copley for years would not allow the press to publish our name. It took that small form. It's an interesting joke. There's a picture of me and Governor Pat Brown with a shovel breaking ground at Urey Hall. And the name of the university is carefully cropped out! It's published in the newspapers. There's a big billboard behind us that tells what it's all about. It doesn't say University of California, San Diego. And news stories from those times refer to University of California, La Jolla, and I said, 'That's not our name". And then they started saying "University of California situated at La Jolla". And I said, "Well, that's true. We are situated at La Jolla, but it's still not our name". And then the next step was to change it to "University of California, Here." Finally, they gave in, but they really fought this rear-guard action. University of California, La Jolla. University of California, situated at La Jolla, with small "s" on situated. They didn't try to make the name UCsaLJ. Small situated. And then University of California, here. It was not an accident. It was editorial policy. Our name was the University of California, here–small "h "· I suggested to Sybil [York] at one point that we should propose that to Berkeley. That our name should be University of California, Here. That would put us after Berkeley and Davis, but ahead of Irvine in the alphabetical order.

RINGROSE: Or University of California, South!

YORK: No... they wanted here, and the question in my mind was whether they should–Sybil said, "No, they'll name it the University of California, There. And then we'll be last. And then at Berkeley they'll call us University of California, There, and then we'll be last. So, you see, South would make us last also. No, University of California, here, was the only reasonable alternative.

And then Archer had a different connection because Archer was Regent. And Archer therefore in a way had the job of helping me relate to the community. And so, he did, to a degree, introduce me to the local power structure, and I think it was he who got me into the downtown Rotary, and things like that.

RINGROSE: I found it interesting when all of a sudden, he came up with the possibility of just moving the whole kit and kaboodle out to Peñasquitos. It looked like an Irvine Company style development.

YORK: Well, that was happening, and the Irvine analogy is a key, but it's not just Irvine. When the University of California master plan was developed, the architectural side of it involved the notion that we needed a thousand acres in order to build a campus with 27,500 students. For all of the new campuses we needed a thousand acres. So, the word was around that the University of California is looking for a thousand acres. Well, anybody who owned eleven hundred acres of remote property, or you might even say a thousand and one acres, could give us a thousand and get rich on the one that remained. And so, we were–not deluged–but there were lots of offers of people with remote property all over the state of California. That happened at Irvine. It happened at Santa Cruz. It happened elsewhere. People just loved to give us a thousand acres of desert if they owned a thousand and one! Get rich on the remaining one!

RINGROSE: With a filling station on the one!

YORK: Well, that's too much of an exaggeration. But people with ten thousand acres, to give us one thousand, just would have it made! So, we had that everywhere.

RINGROSE: The Peñasquitos property did look like that kind of thing, and that was not unreasonable.

YORK: That's right, but it was too late. This was the sensible place. And it was sensible because Scripps was here, and we grew out of Scripps. The other alternative that was considered by some was the unused half of Balboa Park. Which also would have been a good idea, and in terms of what finally has happened, even big enough. But the idea of a metropolitan center campus is not all that great an idea, and it is too small in terms of what we literally thought we needed. And of course, the people who pushed it, one never knew–at least some of them pushed it because they knew it couldn't happen, and therefore that was a way of getting rid of the whole thing. I don't know what the facts were, but it was widely supposed that the reason–Pauley was one of the people who pushed that idea–that at least part of his reason was to just throw the whole thing out.

RINGROSE: He was clearly not happy with having a campus down here, and you don't have any insights into why.

YORK: No, except in part it was that–it had a lot of dimensions, and at least one of them was that he would never have approved of Roger as chancellor, and probably not having any campus at all was a simple solution from his point of view. Or, I shouldn't even say just Roger. It was the whole thing–the whole matter of (guests arrive–break in interview)

RINGROSE: Pauley had very close connections with the military, didn't he? I thought that might be...

YORK: Well, he had close connections to government. He had been an adviser to Truman. He had been head of some kind of independent agency during the war. He had close connections with high level political figures–whether his connections with the military were beyond those he had because of those other interests, I'm not certain. Maybe. I just don't know.

RINGROSE: Well, that may be one that we're just never going to solve. You mentioned the theatre. Talk about that a little bit. The little we talked about it the other day I got a very different view of it from what I got from John Stewart, which makes it interesting.

YORK: Well, I think all of the people who were deeply involved might have different views and probably contradictory ones. My view of it–which I don't claim to be complete–was that there was this project when I arrived. I had nothing to do with setting it up or anything else. It had been something that Roger had worked out with his rich friends in the community. And other... -

RINGROSE: It predated Roger Revelle I suspect.

YORK: Well, there was an independent interest in theatre, that's for sure. But the notion that the University would somehow be a partner in all of this dates from Roger's time and Roger's relationship with local–and Ellen's relationship–with local wealthy people, including Copley, but a lot of others as well. There was a lady named Longstreth–Marilyn Longstreth–during my time who was absolutely a key figure in all of this. She was the dominant person outside of the University. And from my point of view the problem was that whenever we would start to move that way, once we got some people here in Literature–Roy Pearce and the others–they had their own ideas and there was this problem relating to what we talked of earlier. They were convinced that unless they kept it under their absolute control, the whole thing would proceed in a way that would ruin their reputations. That's a slight overstatement, but not very much! And so, this divergence appeared in which people on campus were developing an antagonism towards the off-campus people that centered around this question of control over everything, but especially the program. I mean the idea that somebody might have a popular play at some time or other seemed–maybe I'm painting a caricature or something–but I mean Roy Pearce was horrified at the idea.

RINGROSE: John Stewart referred to it as the Straw-Hat Caper.

YORK: That's right! But you know, even when people wanted to do Shakespeare, Roy wanted to know, "Who are these people", and unless it was a member of the Senate or the old man himself, it will ruin our reputation. So, there was a hostility, to the point where you could say there was hostility there, although a genteel one. On the other hand, the townspeople were no better. Again, to paint a perhaps unfair caricature, what Marilyn wanted was a beautiful theatre with a great terrace with ceiling to floor glass overlooking the ocean where she and her friends could come a few times a year and show off their evening clothes. The fact that there was an opening night for a play - that would be the reason for this particular party. But the party was what they focused on. At one point it seems to me there was just about enough money to build a theatre -or a theatre that would look adequate to me, but the townsfolk wouldn't go for it because it was too plain. It didn't have the nice promenade that was so essential to them. So,

you know, the fact–in my view, it was these extraordinarily different views of the world that was the problem.

RINGROSE: Do you spend the money on the inside of the theatre, or the outside.

YORK: It was the deepest philosophical difference. There was Roy Pearce and his friends, wanting to make sure there was room for a lot of plays but to use my terms nobody could possibly understand what they're all about, and the local people who not only wanted straw hat theatre, but wanted straw hat theatre for rich folks. It was really just that bad a split. And the local people were interested in a few local Hollywood types who were interested in that sort of thing. I think Jose Ferrer—have I got the wrong name—and who was the other one, [Henry] Fonda, maybe. Was it Fonda?

RINGROSE: No, it wasn't Fonda. It was Gregory Peck.

YORK: Well, it was an archetypical town/gown split, but probably slightly more extreme than would have happened. I mean, it could have happened in Buffalo or Cleveland, or anywhere. But the fact that it happened here, in a rich local clientele on the one hand, and an elitist academic institution on the other, just is what made it impossible. So, I don't know what details John Stewart or others will tell you, but it was, in my view, this general split that sort of made things impossible. I don't know how it was rescued. Marilyn eventually left and died. She lived right across the street for a while, but she left this neighborhood before I moved in.

RINGROSE: Well, it must have been a bitter thing because she was pushed out...

YORK: She broke up with her husband. That also happened. She and her husband divorced. He was an alcoholic or...

RINGROSE: We were talking about the theatre.

YORK: I think we finished that unless you have some other questions.

RINGROSE: No, I think...

YORK: Because then I found it to be basically a boring topic, so as soon as I didn't have to deal with it, I didn't follow it. I thought everybody involved was crazy, and I didn't want to fuss with it.

RINGROSE: I think it's amazing that they finally did settle it and get some kind of... it's virtually impossible to book any kind of use of that theatre.

YORK: Oh, it is? Because it's so well booked? Is that so? We did have in mind that it would be used for university exercises of various kinds, that we would use it for things that were not theatre.

RINGROSE: No, it simply is not available. So, there obviously was a need. It's very, very successful.

YORK: I guess when we need something bigger than what we've got we need ten thousand... and Mandeville has done well with providing a large hall for some things.

RINGROSE: Yes, that is true. It's still not quite large enough, though.

YORK: It's one of the problems where being part of a big university had a negative feature, because we were faced with rules about classroom space and other things like that developed at the mature campuses. And those did interfere–we would have done a lot of things differently if we were not so hidebound by rules, especially those relating to space.

RINGROSE: Would you have had more small classrooms?

YORK: Well, maybe. But we would have also had more big ones. We would have had at least one, and probably several bigger auditoriums than we have and bigger lecture rooms than we have. We might have had more small ones as well. That I couldn't say. What we found stifling was the big ones, because as soon as you built more square feet for them, then you couldn't build–there were certain rules about how many square feet of classrooms. And so, the plan had to be distorted in order to fit those rules.

RINGROSE: Ultimately, what you've got in terms of classroom space shapes your curriculum, in a very subtle way.

YORK: Yes. Although not as much as you might suppose. It makes you go way off optimum when you have–the only thing it really–well, maybe I'm wrong, but maybe the impression–what it prohibits is some very big classes. Which we then break down into smaller classes, so it's a little bit less efficient. I'm not sure that it does anything... go ahead.

RINGROSE: Let's talk about the development of the undergraduate curriculum. That must have been a major issue when you were chancellor.

YORK: Yes, it was. And I was never really very happy with it, because what we had - well, for reasons which you anticipated earlier–we had a group of people who were very much research and graduate student oriented, who were determined to be the authors of the undergraduate plan, and the university's organization, that is the creation of a senate, and so forth, gives them much more authority in this than the university officials would have. Now, because my background wasn't all that good, I wouldn't have done any better than they did. But if there hadn't been all those rules, I might very well have consulted people who were good at undergraduate education! But it simply isn't allowed. It's one of the things that I should say, in a small way, and only a small but cumulative way, turned me off on the whole business of being chancellor. In a sense, the undergraduate curriculum is one of the most important things, and the chancellor has almost no place in it. It's the Academic Senate that works out things like that.

RINGROSE: It's all done by the faculty.

YORK: See, with regard to personnel, the chancellor, although there's a lot of power in the senate, the chancellor really does share the power, because ultimately, he does make the appointments, and while he cannot very often veto anything, he can sometimes. And furthermore, the kind of people we wanted took a lot of persuasion, and so the enthusiasm of the chancellor made a big difference. It was hard to recruit somebody if the chancellor wasn't interested. So, in recruiting, even though the faculty has enormous power, the chancellor, especially then, still had a lot of power. But on things like curriculum, the chancellor doesn't have any! I soon discovered that the chancellor had authority over parking lots and a few things like that, and in really interesting, substantive things, the chancellor had no authority. The faculty expected the chancellor to do exactly as they wanted. Now the chancellor could influence what happened, but it was by constantly playing politics and maneuvering, and things like that, and I wasn't interested in that. So, I was turned off by the lack of authority of the chancellor over anything interesting!

RINGROSE: Did you find that the faculty was unwilling to make decisions about the undergraduate curriculum?

YORK: Oh, no. They were quite–they were perfectly willing. They sometimes had a hard time agreeing with each other, but beyond that, they were perfectly willing. But the decisions were being made by people I thought of as mostly the wrong people. Not entirely. I'll name the positive ones, and not the others. I was glad to see Jim Arnold involved, for example, on the scientific side. But some of the others were just so research oriented and so graduate oriented that I did not regard them as the right people to be making these decisions, but the rules of the senate are such that you have these committees and that sort of thing.

RINGROSE: It's very easy to take a sink or swim attitude where undergraduates are concerned. You develop a really tough curriculum, and if they can't make it, well–that's how it is!

YORK: I thought in some ways it was too rigid. I never liked the Revelle curriculum. I would have liked it if it had alternatives. The object of the Revelle curriculum was to require that science students get some exposure in humanities. That, I thought was great! I was 100% enthusiastic for that! But what they then did was define what culture was. I mean, they set up essentially a two-year sequence, which indeed did contain a lot of things that were good to teach them, but not necessarily for everybody. From the start I would have preferred to see a Chinese type of menu, where you had to take serious courses in the humanities and in the social sciences, but not a prescribed sequence! I never liked the humanities sequence.

RINGROSE: Everyone I've talked to about the early Revelle curriculum says that it was a curriculum that was designed to see to it that science students had a good humanities background. But the original premise is that all the students are science students.

YORK: Well, that wasn't so much the premise as the fact. I mean, there was this fact that we were attracting them. The science departments were stronger. So, it was never the premise that they would all be science majors. But it was the fact that so many were, and we wanted to make sure that those who were did do things in addition to science. We tried to do the reverse, to

make sure that those who were in humanities also had to take science, so the curriculum was designed to do that, to make everybody have to take things in other fields. But as I say, I think the right way to do that is the Chinese menu type of curriculum. Even calling it that sounds pejorative, but I mean a Chinese menu in a serious sense. It would have to offer good courses. Not this humanities sequence where everybody had to learn, as the students used to say, the Jews, then the Greeks, and then whatever else there was! Now they did have an interesting arrangement in which they tried to make them interdisciplinary in a narrow sense! I mean, they showed how Literature, History, and Philosophy go together. Even there, I don't think they did very well. But they tried to do that.

RINGROSE: They still fight a lot among themselves about that particular piece of the curriculum.

YORK: Well, incidentally, I think it's a good–I think it's not a bad thing. The only -my objection to it is its exclusive nature, not the fact that it's different. As one alternative, I think it's a good one. So, I always thought the humanities curriculum was a good curriculum, but not as the only alternative.

RINGROSE: You just hinted at one of the reasons why you were happy to not have to be chancellor any longer. Do you want to talk more about that?

YORK: That's the main reason. I just discovered that I was–it's hard to find the right words. I didn't dislike, but I didn't particularly like it. And I gave some of the reasons. They have to do with the fact that you discover that the chancellor is in charge of everything that's not particularly interesting and has very little to say about the things that are.

RINGROSE: I can see that you weren't going anywhere.

YORK: But worse than that, I was spoiled, and that's very important. My previous jobs had been jobs in which I was also an executive. I'd been an executive for nine years before I became chancellor. I started very young. I mean, peculiarly young–at age thirty I was a high-level executive: In fact, at age twenty-eight, or twenty-seven or something, and I liked it. But in all my previous jobs I had–it was the central substance that I focused on and hired other people to take care of the parking lot! When I came here, I discovered it's the reverse! I was supposed to take care of the parking lots and leave the central substance to everybody else! I just wasn't interested because my previous experience as an executive had been the reverse. When I was in the Pentagon, when I was at Livermore, I chose what to be interested in, and I chose the central core of the activity in every case. I made the decisions with respect to the most interesting and most central matters. And I left the peripheries to aides. And here it was the reverse.

And furthermore, to maybe overstate it, and what I only came to realize years afterwards, I, like nearly everyone else who has had a successful and interesting job in Washington, had a certain form of Potomac fever. Now the virulent form requires that people stay there. A lot of my friends and acquaintances who have been there just simply stayed. I felt no–you know, when I was

finished in 1961, I had no desire to stay in Washington. But I did have a desire to stay involved in Washington affairs, and so after I came here, I gradually got reinvolved in special committees and things like that. The President's Science Advisory Committee, the General Advisory Committee on Arms Control and Disarmament, congressional testimony, and so on. That's where my real intellectual interest was, not in the parking situation here! I could have developed an interest in the undergraduate curriculum, but that was already in other people's hands! And so, my real inner intellectual interest was in national affairs. There was the matter of my health, because of this heart attack I had in '60. It made me feel that–I mean at that time, my record of heart trouble–made me feel that the only way–being chancellor is burdensome, even if you are in charge of the uninteresting things, it's still a lot of work! I felt that I really couldn't put out the effort necessary to both combine a real interest in national affairs and do the job of being chancellor properly. So, I resigned, using a statement having to do primarily with health, which wasn't false, but it wasn't the main truth.

RINGROSE: But it was kind to the campus.

YORK: It was obvious to me a year before it happened that the idea of continuing as chancellor–I was only forty then–the idea of continuing for twenty-five years, just wasn't what I wanted to do. This was a good time–and 1963/1964 was as good a time as any to quit and get somebody in to build up the undergraduate side of the house.

RINGROSE: Were you involved with the Galbraith selection at all?

YORK: Well, yes, but only peripherally since I was already a lame duck and had been for several months. In fact, I even tried to persuade a couple of other people to get interested in it. The only one I think I literally offered it to was, interestingly enough, Andreas Papandreou, who told me that he had these three possibilities–one was to stay at Berkeley, the other was to go help his father in Greece, and the other was to come down here–I love to tell people in politics or history that if I had been a little more persuasive, it all would have been different! But he considered it. Lynn White's another person I tried to interest, and he said, "You know, I've been president of Mills College and–" he had the same view of it I did–you know, "I know perfectly well how to be a university executive, but I don't want to do it." And so, when I was still looking for some solution to this, it was Kerr himself who suggested Galbraith. You're talking about twenty years ago, and I'm not 100% sure who said what to whom, but–and he leaped at it, so that yes, I had something to do with it, but it was not my initiative. But I thought it was a very good idea, and I still do. I think it was a fine choice.

RINGROSE: Well, I'll be curious to see how he felt about the undergraduate curriculum.

YORK: I would also have–that's as vice-chancellor. With no one saying, but nevertheless–they were still searching for a chancellor at that time, without giving him any kind of an inside track, which I also–In other words, the idea of him coming as vice chancellor I welcomed wholeheartedly–I didn't welcome the idea of Byron. That was forced on me, but there I was a lame duck, not because I opposed Byron, although maybe I should have, but because the other half of the deal was that the man who was my assistant for business, was not acceptable to

Kerr. I mean Kerr required that I replace this other person as Number 2. And then as soon as Byron came in, he fired him. His name was Jack Clark. He probably wasn't quite the person who belonged - you know, as chief administrator in a larger institution. But anyway, I opposed it.

RINGROSE: That, perhaps, should have been your decision, though.

YORK: No, you see, I was a lame duck. It should have been–the correct alternative was not to make it my decision, but to wait until there was a new chancellor. But here, you see, I don't know to what extent he did clear it with Galbraith. That's what I don't know. And when he cleared it with Galbraith to what extent he thought of Galbraith as being the next chancellor already. I would have–I was unsure about it. I did think that Roger was a reasonable possibility to follow me as chancellor, given that there was already so much momentum and a fairly large, well working administrative set up on the side. I didn't necessarily think it was the right thing to do, but I thought it was a possibility. It is a long time—sometimes I thought one thing, and other times I thought another thing. But I was happy to see Galbraith here, and I was happy to see Galbraith named chancellor. I thought, and still think, he was a good choice.

RINGROSE: Well, I have wondered if perhaps part of the reason for the selection and I think I will probably ask Kerr this, was because Galbraith did have experience with the senate. He had run the southern section, and working...

YORK: Well, the answer to that is surely, yes. But that's the sort of thing that would be a plus for anybody. That record is a plus for anyone you'd consider. I didn't have that experience, but it's not an absolute necessity. It's a big plus, so I'm sure it weighed in. I would be surprised if that was the reason. The main thing I looked at was that he had long experience in a major, quality American university, and he was outside of the sciences. I felt very definitely that we needed somebody outside of the sciences.

RINGROSE: I think that's an important reason, and also, I think he has some interest in undergraduate education.

YORK: And experience as well. Yes. So, I was involved in planning for undergraduate education, but only in the sense that I was the chief executive, was overseeing the planning of all sorts of things–facilities, and employment of officials of the kind you need, you know, bursar, and admission officers, and all that sort of thing, and working with the faculty on the development of curriculum. Actually, I worked closer with the faculty than the rules would normally call for. Just look at the senate rules. There isn't any room for the chancellor at all, but because we were so small, I did, in fact, work closely with the faculty on curriculum development, more closely than the chancellor usually works. Nowadays, the chancellor is involved–now that we're big–the role the chancellor has in curriculum has to do with very large scale but indirect things, like being the final arbiter with respect to what direction we're going to grow in, or the final arbiter with respect to establishing a dean of Engineering, or something like that. But he still doesn't have anything to do with determining requirements for graduation or anything else.

RINGROSE: Where was the purchase of the Black's Farms property when you were chancellor?

YORK: It was just starting to move, but nothing much happened, and Galbraith was already here. He was much more involved than I was from the very beginning.

RINGROSE: The idea of acquiring the Black property goes all the way back. Roger Revelle and everybody else here had their eyes on it.

RINGROSE: The earliest mention I've seen of it is '58.

YORK: Because it was basically empty. There were only a very few houses there then. All that development followed the establishment of the university.

RINGROSE: But what you're telling me is that things really didn't move ahead in any important ways when you were chancellor.

YORK: I had almost nothing to do with it. I found myself annoyed with the fact that they—that Berkeley was moving without discussing much with us. There, the treasurer of the regents who always played his cards extremely close to his chest, and a couple of powerful regents...

RINGROSE: Was that [Harry R.] Welman?

YORK: No, he was vice president. He was a man named [Owsley B.] Hammond, I think. And then he worked very closely with two powerful regents, Ed Carter and Ed Pauley. I'm not even sure how much Kerr–he must have had a lot to do with it, but they preempted essentially our local interest. Again, I have to say that if I hadn't been a lame duck it might have been different, but since I was a lame duck, they felt no obligation to include me in, and it wasn't going to be me who was either going to live there, or work with the property, or... but, so I was only peripherally involved.

RINGROSE: I don't know if the business with the nuclear accelerator is particularly important. Can we talk about it if...?

YORK: No, it's not, but let me just clarify it. There never was a plan to build the nuclear accelerator in the sense that there was a plan to build a library. The word plan in those two instances is utterly different, because we had to have a library, and we were going to build it with state funds. An accelerator was a possible project for which we might have been able to get government funds, and which a number of important people here wanted. It would have helped the growth in physics. It would have moved it in a particular direction. And so, physicists here did work with physicists elsewhere and I even was included in a small way, and they wanted it because they wanted to do the kind of work that's involved.

[END OF PART TWO, BEGIN PART THREE]

And I, and some of the other campus authorities at that time supported it because that would be one good way to expand our research activities in a very interesting direction. So, we wanted it for real. There may have been some people who saw this as a way of getting a foot in the door with respect to getting some of Camp Elliott, and that's probably true. But the basic reason for wanting an accelerator was because we wanted the accelerator! It's what I had done my graduate work on, on what was then the greatest accelerator in the world at Berkeley, and although I would not have worked on it, I would nevertheless have a soft spot for accelerators. And that is the right word for it–accelerator, just like the one on the floor of your car.

RINGROSE: The last thing I wanted to ask you about was this question that involves research-oriented campuses, and the fact that they seem to have been seriously impacted by the changing availability of federal research funds, and what this has meant for the campus.

YORK: Well, it did impact. It impacted us less than it impacted others, partly because the quality here was so high. I mean, we didn't lose as much as–I may be wrong. I've never gone through this in the sense of working out the statistics. But my impression is that we were able to ride through some difficulties, some cuts in Washington in support of research that other schools were not able to ride through. And a major reason for that was the high quality of what was going on, so that even when money was short, we were still able to get probably more than our share. It made a difference only in that the proportion of graduate work here would be somewhat higher than it is, if the trends set in the early 60s had continued. However, it was my–I made the observation in the late 60s—no, the early 60s—I considered all the projections wrong anyhow. And I told Kerr that, but he just wasn't listening. The master plan for the whole university called for certain growth in research support, and that in turn would lead to a certain growth in the research side of the faculty, the number of Ph.D.s, graduate students, and so on. And I concluded even before I was a lame duck that that was wrong, that the growth was not going to be the way they projected, and so all of the–the entire university's plans with respect to the growth of graduate education particularly–Ph.D. education -were wrong.

RINGROSE: And you were right.

YORK: Yes, I won't say that I saw what happened, but I was convinced it was wrong. And I had it in the right direction. I knew it was going to be much smaller than people were projecting, much smaller than we were projecting here. I continued in our own planning to use figures based on the official plans, which assumed that it would go on, because it's all about the future. What could I know? I mean I couldn't know that it wasn't going to grow that way. But I was in a fairly good position. I was on the President's Science Advisory Committee, and I was on early, then off, and I was back in Washington on other committees, and in fact, I concluded I was one of a very small number of people. It goes back even to my Pentagon days. One of the first things that happened to me when I was at the Pentagon because I was in charge of all research and development that was sponsored by any of the Armed Services–and because of that, it turned out that one of my minors, but formal, duties was every year to send over to the National Science Foundation a ten-year projection of our manpower needs. Now that projection was generated by the offices which were already there–the civil servants I inherited. And they

brought it in, and as is absolutely the norm, said, 'This is where you sign." I mean, that was my function.

RINGROSE: You mean you read it?

YORK: No, my function was to sign this covering letter that sends this to the Science Foundation. I insisted on reading it. That was not so much a surprise that I wanted to read it. The surprise to them was that when I finished reading it, I said, "I won't sign it. It's wrong." "All you have done", I said to this small staff, "is taken today's situation, –and you've got out a piece of semi-log paper, which means everything grows exponentially, you drew some lines on it, which are projections of the last three or four years on semi-log paper. That's not a projection that ought to come from us. If we pretend to know what the future is here in the Pentagon, what our needs are, you've got to do it better than just use semi-log paper." And so, I refused to sign. They kept telling me, you've got to sign. It says here in the master plan for the United States that the Defense Department shall supply a ten-year plan! And of course, there was no way I could generate a better plan. There was no way I could generate a better plan by myself. And they weren't cooperative. They weren't capable of doing anything except using semi-log paper. So, I finally did sign it and sent it over, but at least I called my opposite number, that is, the Director of the Science Foundation, told him what I was doing and why, and that I didn't regard this as a good prediction. And I told the White House also. I mean the chief science people in the White House, I'm signing it because everybody says you have this piece of paper that the bureaucracy says you have to have, but it isn't right. And I believed, for the same reason, that we were not going to grow the way those projections said. We didn't need to. And the congress wasn't going to give us the money.

And in fact, I was right. The Defense Department R&D topped out at about 10% more than it was, and then started down. Instead of continuing exponentially, it topped out. And we were the biggest factor in research, and so when we topped out, everything topped out.

And then when I came here, I found the same sort of thing. The financial officers in Berkeley were using the official figures from Washington, and then their own semi-log paper. I remember all of this in connection with a particular conversation I had with Franklin Murphy, who otherwise I didn't have a very close relationship with. He was chancellor at UCLA. And he said, "You know, the master plan is wrong. There should only be three campuses of the University of California–Berkeley, UCLA and San Diego." And I was surprised at that, but I thought about it, and ever since I've thought he was right. Because if we had limited it to those three, we could have maintained a situation in which the ratio of graduate to undergraduate education at those three institutions stayed at the level of Berkeley at that time, the level projected to be everywhere. But there was no way that eight general campuses could fulfill the master plan. The research money–the money for the research required to support those graduate students absolutely was not there. Nor was the job market. And Murphy, I think, saw it also, from a very different perspective, but he also saw that. But people in Washington didn't want to believe it, the science people in the White House didn't want to believe it, people at Berkeley didn't want to believe it, and so, it's why I'm not disappointed in the way the numbers developed–the size of the graduate school developed. It was never possible for it to develop any other way, without

adding a lot of professional programs. We could have developed a large graduate school by developing a School of Education, School of Business, lots of master's programs. But the ideal which everyone had–which was a graduate school in which essentially everyone is working for a Ph.D.–and that was the ideal, that was absolutely impossible. It wasn't going to happen, here or anywhere. It came closer to happening here than elsewhere. It isn't as if we failed relatively. We did better than any other new institution. The schools which have bigger graduate schools proportionately are either those like Caltech, which do it by having a tiny undergraduate school, or Berkeley and UCLA, which do it by having lots and lots of professional schools. So, I never– how did we get on to this? What question did you ask me that has drawn out this lengthy answer?

RINGROSE: I started out by asking you about government funds. Really, you ended up answering some important questions on long range planning, because I've been trying to get a handle on it for a long time where the campus development was concerned.

YORK: Here I was almost a lone voice also, so I didn't even make a big point of it. Here, for a different reason. In Berkeley and Washington, it was because the bureaucrats were using semi-log paper. Here, in San Diego, it was because of enormous self-confidence! You know, Keith Brueckner and others just knew that the money was there, and all they had to do was keep asking for it.

RINGROSE: Because the best people get it.

YORK: Yes. But they were wrong, too, because the money wasn't there. And although we got more than our share, we never got what they thought we were going to get either. But I found myself badly out of step with almost everybody on this question. It wasn't a case of what I wanted versus what they wanted. It was my conviction of what was going to happen.

RINGROSE: I can see that that would have been a very unpopular position to be taking in the kind of state of euphoria the campus was in...

YORK: Very few people agreed with me. I brought it up even in the Pentagon. No, even in the White House in some of the planning sessions there. Later–you see, the idea that we were going to keep on growing persisted even after the growth stopped. People thought it was only temporary. And I remember arguing in say–'66 and '67,'65 and '66–in the White House. They said we were going to recover from this minor hiccup, to which I said, it just can't happen. Your growth figures, Mr. So and so, you know, assume that research is going to be far and away the biggest industry in the United States, and I don't believe it is. The American people are not going to support - but the scientists, who were the group I was dealing with, were so convinced they were right–you know, that doing research Was what America was going to do with its affluence. We were just all going to start doing research! As we get richer and richer and satisfy our needs for housing and beer and skittles, we're going to spend the extra money on research.

RINGROSE: And learn how to do things better, and make them cheaper, and there's a whole...

YORK: No, scientific research. These people, like a lot of people here, were oriented not as far as making things cheaper for people but oriented towards the purest forms of research–the production of knowledge as a cultural activity.

RINGROSE: It's a nice dream.

YORK: Yeah, well, but that's not what the people want. If we had continued to move that way, we would have contributed our own little bit to what's happening anyway. Polarization of society. You know, sort of the destruction of a real middle. Everybody is either going into service jobs, which pay minimum wage, or into professional/academic jobs, which pay a lot more. The steel worker who got–you know–the blue-collar worker who got four or five times the minimum wage has disappeared. And we would have helped!

RINGROSE: Working in blue collar professions no longer carries any status with it. There are interesting kinds of sociological changes that have come about, too, that really have nothing to do with what you're paid.

YORK: The split I'm speaking of–when I say that that would have contributed to polarization–what I mean in terms of people's interests. There just is an enormous part of the population, probably a large majority, that absolutely is not interested in intellectual pursuits, and doesn't want to be! And if we had tried to pursue the notion that what we do with America's affluence is do research for the sake of knowledge, it just would have increased that split even more. It would have been the wrong kind of elitism. As I said earlier, I'm in favor of elitism that is a natural product of insisting on high standards for a relatively small part of the whole enchilada. But to do it for a larger piece, or for a majority–try to make half the population elite and the other half non-elite is too unbalanced. Elites have to be small in order to be socially acceptable.

RINGROSE: Well, I want to thank you very much. This has been a great pleasure.

[END OF PART THREE, END OF INTERVIEW]