

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

25th ANNIVERSARY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interview with DeWitt Higgs

June 27, 1984 — Mr. Higgs office, San Diego, California

Interviewer, Dr. Kathryn Ringrose

1 **RINGROSE:** I would like to go back to where we were a few minutes ago and have you talk
2 about how you became our first San Diego regent.

3 **HIGGS:** In 1966, there was a loud cry in San Diego for a San Diego regent. UCSD was new,
4 Jim Archer had been an alumni regent, and had been very active in getting the establishment of
5 UCSD here and was very interested in getting a San Diego regent. In the beginning, I followed
6 his efforts and the efforts of others in the newspapers, a number of names were mentioned,
7 mine was not. I had no connections with the University of California. My daughter had attended
8 Stanford. My son had attended [University of] Redlands. It is my understanding that Senator
9 [James "Jim" R.] Mills and Jim Archer brought my name to the attention of the governor,
10 Governor Brown, Governor Pat Brown. I had known the governor for many years, first in
11 connection with state bar work, when he was attorney of San Francisco and then when he was
12 attorney general, and I had worked on his political campaigns. The first that I knew that I was
13 being considered was when the governor called me and made it clear that he was not offering
14 me the appointment but asked if, were it offered, I would accept it. I told him I didn't know. I
15 asked him what was involved, and he told me, in his own way, that it would take a day or two of
16 my time each month. That was all it would be. I told him I would have to think it over, that I knew
17 that it would involve more than a day or two a month and that I wanted to discuss it with my
18 partners first to see if that would present any problems insofar as the partnership was
19 concerned, and I wanted to discuss it with my wife and see if it would present any problems
20 insofar as that partnership was concerned. I was encouraged both by my firm and by my wife to
21 accept. I called the governor and told him that I would accept if it were offered to me, and he
22 said, "You are now appointed regent." Within a few days there was the next regents' meeting
23 and the governor met me in San Francisco and took me over to [UC] Berkeley where I attended
24 my first meeting at Sproul Hall.

25 **RINGROSE:** What did you think of that meeting? What condition were the regents in
26 especially regarding Clark Kerr? There was a lot going on. Were there problems at that point?

27 **HIGGS:** At that particular meeting, obviously, I was so new that there were many problems
28 that I was not alert to. They were very friendly to me and everyone on the board made me feel
29 welcome. Some of the members I had known. [Theodore R.] Ted Meyer, a very prominent
30 attorney from San Francisco, was a friend of mine. Both he and I had been presidents of the
31 State Bar of California. There were a number of other lawyers there, and we were acquainted at
32 least by reputation. [Edward W.] Ed Carter was chairman of the board at that time. [Philip L.]
33 Phil Boyd of Riverside made me particularly welcome. Phil Boyd had sort of taken Irvine,
34 Riverside and San Diego under his wing and he was very helpful to me, not only during the time
35 that we served together on the board, but his friendship and mine continues. I see him on many

36 occasions. On the week before the meeting, he would drive south to Pala Mesa. I would drive
37 north to Pala Mesa which was halfway in between our homes. We would discuss various
38 university problems. At the first meeting, I wasn't aware of any problems, but I soon became
39 aware of problems involving Clark Kerr. In my opinion, at that time, the regents were almost
40 equally divided in their support or non-support of Dr. Kerr.

41 **RINGROSE:** I know that some of the problems with Kerr were centered on our campus, the
42 UCSD campus. The problem of support for the library, for example, is one important issue. I
43 think that there were certain understandings that John Galbraith had had with Kerr that had to
44 do with library support and directions of growth for the campus. Do you feel that San Diego
45 based issues were major, or just one drop in a large puddle where Kerr was concerned?

46 **HIGGS:** One drop in a large puddle. As a matter of fact, Clark Kerr did discuss with me the
47 library problems, but I think it was more than that. I think it was a personality problem. I think
48 that Dr. Kerr's personality clashed with some very strong personalities on the board.

49 **RINGROSE:** Earlier, when we were speaking, you described the events that surrounded his
50 firing, or what various people describe as his firing. Would you like to talk about that?

51 **HIGGS:** No problem with that. I realized very early that the board was divided about the
52 president. I did not form an opinion of him at that time that was sufficient to enable me to join
53 either faction, so I steered clear of both factions, and I listened. In many ways Clark Kerr
54 impressed me. In, I believe it was either February or March of 1967, after Reagan was elected,
55 we were at a meeting. Ted Meyer was the chairman. [Dorothy Buffum] Buff Chandler was the
56 vice-chairman. They came to the board and dropped a bomb- shell. They said that the president
57 had demanded a vote of confidence. A vote of confidence was then asked for and failed. I can't
58 say whether the president resigned or whether he was fired, but he didn't get the vote of
59 confidence.

60 **RINGROSE:** Did you have any sense of what had created the situation in which he felt he
61 needed a vote of confidence?

62 **HIGGS:** Well, I suppose that he realized that the board was divided, and I suppose that he
63 realized that no chief executive of any type of an organization can be effective unless he has the
64 board behind him, and he wanted to know right then, is this board behind me or isn't it.

65 **RINGROSE:** Well, he certainly was under a great deal of criticism from the press here in San
66 Diego. I don't know if this is reflected statewide, but certainly, here in San Diego, there was a
67 great deal of discussion about problems with Kerr. I also have had a sense, reading more
68 official documents from the period, that there had been the expectation that as the new
69 campuses developed a great deal of decentralization would take place and that they would be
70 able to function more autonomously than seemed to be evolving. On Chancellor Galbraith's side
71 there was, I think, concern about Kerr in this regard. He felt that the relationship between the
72 campus and Berkeley had not really been defined and worked out.

73 **HIGGS:** Well, I am sure that you are correct in that assumption, and that did not disappear
74 with Clark Kerr. There has always been the feeling on the part of every campus that it ought to
75 have more voice in its own future and that it should have pretty great independence, and that is
76 still true today, or at least it was true as of the last time I was on the board.

77 **RINGROSE:** You are not really inclined to blame Reagan for what happened with Kerr. A lot of
78 people do.

79 **HIGGS:** I don't blame Reagan at all. As a matter of fact, never in my presence, and I attended
80 every meeting, did Reagan make any statement concerning Dr. Kerr. He was quoted and
81 charged in many newspapers with being an enemy of the University. This just isn't true. And he
82 was not an enemy of Clark Kerr. And he was not instrumental in getting Clark Kerr relieved as
83 president. Much could have gone on which I wasn't aware of. He could have had discussions
84 with other members of the board of regents that I was not aware of. In the early days, Reagan
85 probably looked upon me with some suspicion because I was appointed by Pat Brown. We
86 became, however, good friends over the years and I was and am a strong supporter of Reagan.

87 **RINGROSE:** Could we back up a little bit. I am curious to know whether you had had any
88 contact with the university before you became a regent, and even if you didn't have any direct
89 contacts, as a member of this community, how did you feel about the university? What were
90 your expectations for the university? What was going on in 1955 when this project began to be
91 seriously discussed in San Diego?

92 **HIGGS:** Well, I think that I, along with everyone else who had an awareness of the fact that
93 there might be a campus in San Diego was hoping that there would be. We strongly supported
94 it. The newspapers were behind it over a period of several years. Jim Archer, whose name I
95 mentioned before, and his group were actively working to get a branch of the University of
96 California in San Diego. At that time, I had been practicing law here since 1934. I was a member
97 of the community. San Diego was my home, both my personal and my professional home. I was
98 interested, very much interested in having a campus established here and yet I cannot take any
99 credit for having ultimately brought it here.

100 **RINGROSE:** One of the things that I think is very interesting about this very early period, which
101 is clear when you look at Roger Revelle's correspondence, and this is something that I will be
102 discussing with him, is that what he had in mind was essentially CalTech South. That is, a high-
103 tech research institute that would be heavily involved in graduate teaching and research, with
104 very little commitment to undergraduate education. And, it becomes increasingly evident, or so it
105 seems to me, that the people of San Diego had something else in mind. They wanted a place at
106 home that was a really fine school that they could send their youngsters to for an undergraduate
107 education.

108 **HIGGS:** I think the people in San Diego wanted a full-blown university here. John Galbraith
109 was chancellor when I was first appointed. John Galbraith wanted a full-blown university here,
110 and every chancellor since then has wanted it to become a, you know, a true university. As a

111 matter of fact, I think it is certainly, if not the star, one of the stars in the university system right
112 now, no worse than equal with UCLA and Berkeley in many respects.

113 **RINGROSE:** I think that you are right about that, but we say that very quietly. (laughter) In fact,
114 when you read the correspondence and reports from the academic senate about 1960, there
115 was then a centralized senate for the whole southern district, and, in fact John Galbraith was
116 very much involved with the southern section of the academic senate, when he was still at
117 UCLA, and what you see is this great fear that indeed the San Diego campus might come to
118 rival UCLA.

119 **HIGGS:** I think there is still some of that.

120 **RINGROSE:** I am sure that you have a much better perspective on that problem than I do.
121 Would you like to speak to that issue a bit?

122 **HIGGS:** I just think that it is perfectly natural. Davis would like to rival Berkeley and UCLA. I
123 think that Irvine would. Certainly San Diego, in my opinion, would. Riverside is a little bit
124 different story, as is Santa Barbara or Santa Cruz.

125 **RINGROSE:** The premises were different with those campuses. But the San Diego campus—
126 you are right—of the new campuses, it had the best chance of really making serious inroads
127 into UCLA and Berkeley's autonomy.

128 **HIGGS:** I think that is probably true. Also, I think that you have to say that, as a regent, I
129 could not be a San Diego regent. I had to be a regent of the University of California. I had a
130 special interest, and a special knowledge about UCSD, because I lived here, and had talked
131 with the people and I had grown up with it, but no regent would be effective if that regent was a
132 Berkeley regent or a UCLA regent. You have to just consider the university as a whole. There
133 again, that is a fine line to draw. Everyone who has been in my position has difficulty walking
134 that line. There were things that I had to fight very hard for.

135 **RINGROSE:** For example?

136 **HIGGS:** For example, the purchase of the Black property.

137 **RINGROSE:** Still a big issue.

138 **HIGGS:** That's right. It is still controversial. It was being considered in 1966 when I was
139 appointed regent. I became aware of it, I became aware of the problems, of the great opposition
140 by Assemblyman [John] Stull. It seemed to me then and now that it was a wise thing to do. As a
141 matter of fact, I either made the motion or seconded the motion that it be purchased when it was
142 brought to the regents by the president.

143 **RINGROSE:** I'll bet you can answer a question that has puzzled me. If you look at the old
144 papers in the archive, it is clear to me that there is discussion of the Black property as early as
145 1960, discussion of the advisability of its acquisition. Yet, Mr. [William F.] Black went ahead. He

146 subdivided it. He certainly made all kinds of promises to the people who bought in there--the
147 private beach and the stables and so on--and yet, when the university acquired that property, all
148 the criticism landed on the university. I have never seen any criticism of Black for having broken
149 those covenants and sold the property. Do you have any insights to offer into that?

150 **HIGGS:** I am not sure that he broke any covenants. He may have broken some verbal
151 promises, but I'm not sure, in a technical sense, that he broke any covenants. I never heard any
152 criticism of Black. The criticism that I heard was directed at the university by the then property
153 owners. Probably, if I had been a property owner, I would have had the same objection, but my
154 job, and the job of the regents, was deciding what was best for the university and I think that it
155 has been proven that the Black property was a sound investment and some of what Stull said in
156 the newspapers - that he had talked to everybody in the university and he couldn't get any
157 information about the background - so I wrote him a letter and I said, "You haven't talked to me.
158 If you come to me, I will give you all the information that I have about the background." He never
159 called me. He never answered my letter.

160 **RINGROSE:** One of the interesting documents that is in the archive in a great mass of
161 miscellaneous papers is the final report of the committee that Stull had set up, the legislative
162 committee, to explore the Black property and its purchase. In fact, I could get you a copy of that.

163 **HIGGS:** I would be interested in having that. When my term of office was over, I had dozens
164 of drawers in my filing cabinet filled with university material. My secretary and I cleaned out,
165 probably too much, but it was of no use to me at that time. I had no intention of writing a book,
166 or anything of that sort.

167 **RINGROSE:** It is very hard to know what to keep, with the result that we have very little right
168 now. What do you think was really going on with Stull? Do you think that he had political
169 ambitions?

170 **HIGGS:** Oh, sure he did.

171 **RINGROSE:** Then this was his particular political hobbyhorse.

172 **HIGGS:** It was a pure political move on his part. Clair Burgener was then either in the
173 assembly or in the California senate, and I'm not sure which, and he invited me to Sacramento
174 to discuss this matter with the San Diego County representatives in the legislature. I went up
175 and I discussed it at the meeting where there was every representative to the legislature from
176 San Diego County. I explained the whole situation as best I could. Stull sat there and never
177 asked a question. He never made a comment. He got up and left. So, it had to be political.

178 **RINGROSE:** Of course, later he gave McGill such a bad time when he was the chancellor. It
179 interested me, looking at some of those old speeches and things. Stull was a very interesting
180 character. I don't know what finally happened to him.

181 **HIGGS:** He went, to the best of my knowledge, to Arkansas, and he is living in Arkansas now.

182 **RINGROSE:** Is he still in politics?

183 **HIGGS:** What he is doing there, I just don't know.

184 **RINGROSE:** What did you understand would be the future of the Black property?

185 **HIGGS:** Well, I understood at that time that the whole of the Black property would be
186 necessary in the future for the UCSD campus. The plan was, at that time, that UCSD would
187 grow to 25,000 students and had it grown to 25,000 students, that property, all of it, would have
188 been necessary, in one form or another, for university uses or things closely allied to it. As you
189 know, the plans have changed. The campus is not going to grow that large, and some of the
190 property has been sold.

191 **RINGROSE:** Yes, some of the lots in the Black property have been sold along the way, and I
192 almost have a sense that this was a compromise position that the university had to take to
193 appease public opinion.

194 **HIGGS:** No, I don't think that is true.

195 **RINGROSE:** That was fairly early. There were agreements to start selling off those lots by the
196 mid-sixties.

197 **HIGGS:** There were some lots sold, perhaps to appease the property owners there, but they
198 were lots that were so located that they would not have been used for university property.

199 **RINGROSE:** I see. They would have remained residential in any case.

200 **HIGGS:** That is correct.

201 **RINGROSE:** There was also a great deal of criticism about the chancellor's house, about
202 having a chancellor's house that was such an elegant property. I gather that still continues to
203 come up periodically.

204 **HIGGS:** Of course, just as there is criticism of the now-president's salary. People are very
205 much aware of the cost of the university, and they say that the president's salary is very high. I
206 don't agree. Had I been on the board I would have voted for it. It is a competitive world, and you
207 get what you pay for. Just as an aside, David Gardner was very seriously considered when
208 Charlie Hitch retired.

209 **RINGROSE:** Oh, I didn't know that.

210 **HIGGS:** He was one of the three finalists. I was on the selection committee for the new
211 president. We very seriously considered David. Dave Saxon was also another. David Gardner
212 told us that he wanted to withdraw his name. He said that he had only been at Utah for a
213 comparatively short period of time, I believe a year or less than a year, and that he had an

214 obligation when he went there - that he had assumed an obligation and just couldn't walk away
215 from it. He just wanted his name withdrawn.

216 **RINGROSE:** Well, I hear nothing but good about him. I think it was just an excellent selection.
217 If you are tired and would like to take a break, just say so. All we have to do is flip the switch on
218 the tape recorder.

219 **HIGGS:** No, I'd like to finish before noon.

220 **RINGROSE:** I might try to impose on you to come back at a later date.

221 **HIGGS:** Oh, that would be just fine. After this is tapped, we might want to take a look at it.

222 **RINGROSE:** It will probably bring up other questions. The Black property and the difficulties
223 involved with it led to another question, and that has to do with the relationship between the
224 university and the community in La Jolla and also the community in San Diego. One gets a
225 sense that people in San Diego felt at times that the university was taken over by La Jolla,
226 became a La Jolla project that San Diego was paying for, and conversely, I think that there were
227 elements in La Jolla that felt that the university was an intrusion that brought a different kind of
228 people, a little different kind of lifestyle to the community, and they resented that. Do you have
229 any thoughts about that?

230 **HIGGS:** Well, the battle of La Jolla versus San Diego didn't originate with the University of
231 California, San Diego. La Jolla has always insisted on being called La Jolla. It is, in fact, a part
232 of the city of San Diego. That matter was thrashed out at great length in a lawsuit that was filed
233 involving the Scripps Memorial Hospital.

234 **RINGROSE:** I have never heard anything about that.

235 **HIGGS:** Ellen Browning Scripps had created the original Scripps Clinic and Hospital.

236 They were two separate things; they were both adjoining in the little village of La Jolla
237 downtown. The board of directors decided to move the hospital up on to the mesa. Some little
238 old ladies of La Jolla got the attorney general to file a lawsuit to prevent it being moved out on to
239 the mesa. One of the issues was the mesa in La Jolla. What was La Jolla, because she had
240 used that term in her various wills? There were days upon days of testimony as to what was La
241 Jolla and what was San Diego. Is La Jolla in San Diego. So, there has been that feeling, and
242 this was long before the campus was established as such. Just as a matter of interest, I was
243 hired by the hospital and represented the hospital in its efforts to keep it out there (on the
244 mesa). I had to read a lot of Ellen Browning Scripps wills and codicils. One of her wills and
245 codicils made in 1912 talking about where the university campus is now, where the hospital is
246 now--that whole area says, "I have a vision someday this will be a great educational and
247 scientific center." That was in 1912, and those were almost her exact words.

248 **RINGROSE:** Now, did any Scripps property come to the university, or is it entirely built on
249 military and city property?

250 **HIGGS:** I don't think any of the Scripps property itself was part. I think it came from the city
251 and old Camp Matthews.

252 **RINGROSE:** Do you know any of the lore about how the campus happened to be placed on
253 that site? I was very interested in the number of sites considered. James Archer at one point
254 backed a Peñasquitos site.

255 **HIGGS:** I do not know.

256 **RINGROSE:** I think there are those in La Jolla who feel perhaps disappointed in the university.
257 I just have a sense that perhaps things didn't evolve in quite the way that they had hoped. Do
258 you have any sense of that?

259 **HIGGS:** Well, I think you have to recognize that most people in La Jolla are fairly
260 con-servative. And most universities are fairly liberal. They were very much concerned about
261 Herbert Marcuse, about Angela Davis. They were very much concerned about what they viewed
262 as extreme liberal views of some members of the campus, but I think that is only natural. The
263 people there are very conservative. The university shared different views from theirs, and that
264 was the problem.

265 **RINGROSE:** When you were regent, were there ever any discussions of the evolving
266 relationship between UCSD and San Diego State and the University of San Diego?

267 **HIGGS:** No.

268 **RINGROSE:** No. That's interesting. Now, I think, probably triggered by the law school
269 discussion, one senses that there is a kind of jockeying for turf going on in San Diego and I am
270 surprised that there was none then.

271 **HIGGS:** No, there was none that I was aware of at that time. Sometime before I became a
272 regent, an arrangement was made whereby San Diego State could have a limited master's
273 program of some kind. I don't think there is that much jockeying about the law school, and I
274 have been fairly well involved in that. I don't think that San Diego State is in any way involved in
275 it. If they have, I don't know about it.

276 **RINGROSE:** No, I don't think they are involved. I know that the University of San Diego has
277 expressed concern.

278 **HIGGS:** But USD, you know, supported the merger at a senate hearing here in San Diego.
279 Maybe tongue in cheek, but they did.

280 **RINGROSE:** The original master plan tended to carve up educational turf in San Diego. We
281 notice it now on the campus, for example, our economics department has a very good, very
282 small, very carefully concealed business school that they are running. They don't call it that,
283 because San Diego State simply wouldn't tolerate that. That is their turf and I suppose that early
284 on there was enough opportunity down here so that people didn't have to worry about it.

285 **HIGGS:** Well, I suppose that most of that jockeying went on among the administrators, and
286 not among the various boards.

287 **RINGROSE:** Are there any other things that you can think of that you might be able to
288 enlighten us about? I am still trying to get a sense of just what San Diego thought it was getting
289 when it launched this project (the university).

290 **HIGGS:** I think San Diego thought and hoped it was getting a first-class university.

291 The emphasis, as always, has been toward the scientific, from the very beginning, broadening
292 year after year the undergraduate school, but still there is the emphasis that the Scripps
293 Institution of Oceanography, the greatest in the world, and is recognized world over. San Diego
294 is extremely proud of that, and extremely proud of Bill Nieren-berg, who has been there forever,
295 and extremely proud of the grants that UCSD has been able to get from the National Science
296 Foundation. It is extremely proud of the corporations that have been able to settle in San Diego
297 because of the university, so it is an important part of the whole thing. Most people in San Diego
298 really haven't thought about whether this is a scientific school, a more liberal school. I don't think
299 they have even thought about it, about the campus.

300 **RINGROSE:** Bill McGill has commented that he is very interested in the way the city has
301 developed since he left the campus, especially the way the city has developed in the direction of
302 the university, and he feels that the golden triangle area has not really developed in the way
303 they had originally hoped. Do you have any thoughts about that?

304 **HIGGS:** I'm sure that it hasn't developed in the way that some people had hoped, or as some
305 people had visualized. If I had known that it was going to develop in the way, it did I would be a
306 very wealthy man today. I would have bought property there. I talked about this very thing with
307 Bill McGill and Bill McElroy and with Dick Atkinson. They are very concerned about the way it is
308 developing out there, but they can't do anything about it.

309 **RINGROSE:** But it is interesting, when you read the old paper, that the problem of zoning and
310 how that area would be used, is an ongoing - I don't want to call it a struggle - that is too strong
311 a word - but it is certainly an ongoing subject for discussion between the San Diego community
312 and the university.

313 **HIGGS:** That is true of every part of the city, Otay Mesa, for example right now, Mission
314 Valley. We are growing and expanding. The mayor is trying to have what he calls a controlled
315 growth policy, and he is doing as good a job as he can, but you are not going to be able to
316 completely control growth. People are going to want to come here, and they are going to come.

317 **RINGROSE:** That's right. The tension between preserving residential property, preferably
318 moderately priced residential property, in that golden triangle area and actually exploiting the
319 land for what it is worth, has been a serious problem. I think that is probably one fight the
320 university has lost because they have very little ground to fight on.

321 **HIGGS:** I think probably the university was wise not to fight a losing battle. I think that it was a
322 losing battle from the beginning.

323 **RINGROSE:** Well, the university is certainly fortunate in having such a large and fine piece of
324 property, and we still have land around us. I think this probably comes before your time so you
325 might not be able to comment on it. but I am interested that Regent Pauley opposed the Camp
326 Matthews land acquisition, but I have never been able to find out why, other than the issue of
327 noise and the problem of Miramar, but that has always struck me as a somewhat artificial issue.
328 Do you know any more about this?

329 **HIGGS:** My recollection is that Ed Pauley was opposed to it. But during the period of time that
330 I served on the board, and that he served on the board, he apparently had gotten over whatever
331 opposition he had originally, because he strongly supported it.

332 **RINGROSE:** I have wondered if it had something to do with a long-range plan in some
333 people's minds that involved moving Lindbergh Field out to Miramar.

334 **HIGGS:** I have no idea about that.

335 **RINGROSE:** The two issues always seem to come up together, and at one point there was an
336 agreement made, that if the university took over that land that they would never support an
337 attempt to try to force the navy out of Miramar, and that seemed to make Regent Pauley happy,
338 and then he backed off.

339 **HIGGS:** That all happened before my time.

340 **RINGROSE:** It is just a small thing, but you pick up bits and pieces and keep trying to put them
341 together like a great puzzle, trying to figure out how things work.

342 **HIGGS:** Well, Ed Pauley, during all the time he was on the board that I was on, was, in my
343 opinion, a good regent, unpredictable sometimes, but he had the university at heart. He was a
344 strong supporter of UCLA, but that didn't prevent him from supporting the other campuses. I
345 think that he was a good regent.

346 **RINGROSE:** Would you like to say a few words about Roger Revelle? I find him a fascinating
347 man, but then I have only known him for the last few years, and he is aging rapidly. You knew
348 him when he was in his prime.

349 **HIGGS:** I really didn't know him well. By the time I was appointed a regent, Roger Revelle
350 was no longer very active in the administration of the university. He was not a controversial
351 figure. I know very little about Roger Revelle's background other than what I have read. I know
352 that the university at one time gave me the Roger Revelle medal, the first one. Otherwise, I
353 don't know anything about that.

354 **RINGROSE:** It always seemed to me that he must have been in a very awkward situation
355 given his relationship to the Scripps family and his real centrality in getting the university

356 established here and expanding Scripps. When you look at his old papers in the archives, there
357 are endless letters involving the establishment of the campus. What he put out to get the
358 campus established here - you would have to see that pile of papers to appreciate it.

359 **HIGGS:** All that happened before I became involved.

360 **RINGROSE:** Well, are there any other things that you think might be useful for us?

361 **HIGGS:** Well, for whatever value it is, when John Galbraith decided that he no longer wanted
362 to be chancellor, it was his decision, Herb York was made acting chancellor for the time being,
363 and then Bill McGill was made chancellor. I was on that selection committee. Bill McGill was on
364 the selection committee, and we were considering a good many very fine people throughout the
365 nation, and Bill made a very great impression upon the people on the committee, almost without
366 anybody knowing it, Bill McGill became a principal contender for it, not through his own - I don't
367 think he wanted it - I think it just sort of hit him over the head.

368 **RINGROSE:** What he has told me, and it might just be his own modesty speaking here, is that,
369 when the chips were down, nobody wanted the job. Things were heating up on the campus by
370 that time, and they were getting a lot of turndowns.

371 **HIGGS:** Well, that is typical of McGill. He is being modest. There were good people that
372 wanted it and would have taken it. Nobody at that time really foresaw that the San Diego
373 campus was going to become so involved with Herbert Marcuse and with the American Legion.
374 Berkeley was having its problems, but they hadn't spilled over yet to San Diego. I just want to
375 say that lightning struck in the right place when it struck and hit Bill McGill and I think that is
376 proven by the fact that Columbia took him away from us.

377 **RINGROSE:** Well, he is certainly a unique man, and I have valued the time we have spent
378 together. He is a singularly moral person in some very fundamental ways.

379 **HIGGS:** UCSD, in my opinion, has been very fortunate in every chancellor it has had, and
380 that is not true of all the campuses.

381 **RINGROSE:** Galbraith was drawn from UCSD's own faculty, which is also interesting - as was
382 McGill.

383 **HIGGS:** Herb York as acting was an excellent chancellor. Bill McGill, and then Bill McElroy.
384 They have all been top-drawer people. Every one of them has been different in the handling of
385 the regents. Their presentations to the regents were entirely different, but all of them were
386 respected by all the regents.

387 **RINGROSE:** Now that I have had a chance to get to know John Galbraith a little bit, you know
388 they have moved back down here - I am sure you realized that -.

389 **HIGGS:** I know they have. He is retired.

390 **RINGROSE:** Yes. He is coming back full-time to the History Department for a year and then I
391 assume he will retire. Of course, he is a Godsend to the History Department just now because
392 we have had some really unfortunate sudden deaths among our senior people and so they are
393 very short-staffed at the senior level. Anyway, he has such a droll Scot way about him, very
394 much like my father. I have tried to visualize how he would be handling the regents.

395 **HIGGS:** Well, he was very effective in a quiet, really shy sort of way. He worked very hard.

396 **RINGROSE:** He is very tough.

397 **HIGGS:** Both Galbraith and I were new to the job at about the same time, and I was never
398 than he was. He sort of led me around by my hand, and every month before the regents'
399 meetings. We used to sit down and discuss the various things that the campus was interested in
400 that came on at the regents' meetings and he would tell me what he thought, and I would tell
401 him what I thought about it. We didn't always agree, but we met every month and I think very
402 highly of him. When you see him, tell him that I sent my respects.

403 **RINGROSE:** I will. He looks marvelous. Have you seen him since he moved down?

404 **HIGGS:** I have not seen him since he was senate representative to the board. You know, at
405 one time, after he went back to UCLA, he became representative of the senate to the regents,
406 and met with us every month. He was very effective, and in an entirely different way from Bill
407 McGill or Bill McElroy or Dick Atkinson.

408 **RINGROSE:** Herb York has an interesting style, too. I have gotten to know him a little bit. I
409 think his choice as chancellor was an interesting choice, coming out of the Berkeley physics
410 community, as he did. I have wondered how that decision was made. It was a very good choice,
411 but a very Berkeley choice.

412 **HIGGS:** I wouldn't want to comment on that.

413 **RINGROSE:** OK I can understand that. The whole issue of the selection of chancellors is
414 fascinating. Every so often there is a pile of paper that people have forgotten to throw out that
415 gets left behind in the archive and you can follow the process.

416 **HIGGS:** I'm sure. Whatever comes out of the work you are doing, I would hope that it would
417 be constructive, because I am sure that you are going to find some papers that in there that
418 could be less than constructive and I'm sure that you can't overlook them, because I feel as
419 though - I think that UCSD is the greatest thing that has ever happened to San Diego, and I
420 would like to see that come out in its history.

421 **RINGROSE:** You must not feel concerned about that. I feel very protective where the campus
422 is concerned.

423 **HIGGS:** Sure, and you should be.

424 **RINGROSE:** It's worth working on. That's a very worthwhile endeavor that we are working on
425 up there on the top of the hill.

426 **HIGGS:** Let's see what this tape produces, and then if you would like to come back-- perhaps
427 we can both think of some other things that would be of interest.

[END OF INTERVIEW]