

## Barbara Lukermann

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**Interview with Barbara Lukermann**

**Interviewed by Professor Clarke A. Chambers  
University of Minnesota**

**Interviewed on October 27, 1994  
University of Minnesota Campus**

Barbara Lukermann - BL  
Clarke A. Chambers - CAC

CAC: This is Clarke Chambers. It is Thursday, October 27, 1994. I'm interviewing Barbara Lukermann, who has recently been associated with the university through the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs and also working through CURA [Center for Urban and Regional Affairs]; but, her outreach before then to the community, really out of an academic setting, has been a very important part of the university's mission of outreach. We talk about teaching, and scholarship, and outreach, and citizenship and you've combined all of those very clearly.

Barbara, I'd like to begin with just a little academic, intellectual autobiography, if you will. I know that you're English by birth and education and, then, came to Minnesota. Let's get you in your background quickly.

BL: I did an undergraduate degree in geography at the University of Cambridge. I found that I didn't quite know what I wanted to do when I finished that. I got a good degree. I got a first-class honors, which would have allowed me to continue as a Ph.D. candidate there; but, at that time, I really didn't have a burning research issue. There was no course work after your undergraduate so I felt it was not appropriate just to go in and continue with graduate work. I taught in a girls' school for a year. I came over to Canada to McGill [University, Montreal, Quebec] for a summer school in geography and learned a little bit about the North American post-graduate education.

CAC: Excuse me. You knew McGill was a really fine geography department at that time or was that just luck?

BL: No, no.

CAC: You cased it out?

BL: I cased it out. There was a Canadian Geographical Society scholarship that was offered that covered my way; so, I was really aware. There, there were some real sort of gurus of geography from Canada, from Britain . . .

CAC: Oh, wonderful.

BL: . . . people like Wooldridge, who had written this text on the physical geography of the Appalachians. Here, he was in his sixties and he'd never actually seen the Appalachians. [laughter] There were Arctic geographers. It was just a really stimulating two months. Then, I went down to Washington, D.C. for the International Geographers Congress. It was this that really sparked my interest to say that, given my uncertainty in terms of my post-graduate work, I would find in a United States setting the opportunity to zero in. So, I went back and applied to several geography departments: Michigan, Radcliffe, California, and Minnesota. I was accepted at two or three. Probably out of this serendipity or happenstance, my tutor at Cambridge had been in Wisconsin at Madison in the geography department and had known John Borchert. The faculty at these various geography departments in the United States were relatively unknown to me. I think it was primarily on some discussions that I had with my tutor at Cambridge that made me say, "Yes," to Minnesota. I came and I served as a research assistant to John Weaver.

CAC: Oh, my.

BL: His research project was on crop combination regions of the Middle West. It was done through a grant from the Office of Naval Research. To this day, I cannot figure out why the Office of Naval Research was funding a multi-year study of the crop combination regions of the Upper Midwest. [laughter]

CAC: [laughter]

BL: Beside coloring maps . . . that was way before the time that we have computers now and geographical information systems; so, it was sort of slugging away hand-coloring. It did give me an opportunity to travel around in the summer.

CAC: You got field work with this?

BL: I got some field work in this.

CAC: Excuse me. I'm going to interrupt. I know that there's a long field work tradition at the University of Minnesota, Department of Geography. Would this have been true generally in all departments, at that time?

BL: In departments of geography, yes.

CAC: It's been lost at some departments now, I gather.

BL: It was also a big tradition at the University of Cambridge, particularly, for physical geography and for some parts of human geography.

CAC: So, Minnesota was not unusual, at that time, in doing that?

BL: No.

CAC: Do you think it's unusual in holding to it now?

BL: There is less opportunity. I think the one thing that troubles me greatly about the United States education system is the financial need to work while you're going to university. I probably didn't realize at the time how fortunate I was. Essentially, I had a full paid state scholarship to Cambridge for three years and it paid everything. I think that's still the case today for at least certain kinds of university placements. Here, undergraduates, graduates alike, are just torn, in terms of how much time they can give to their university experience and how much they have to also do to learn a living at the same time.

CAC: Which leaves no elbow room for field work, which is very time consuming?

BL: That's right . . . back to field work. Right now, in the Geography Department here at Minnesota, John Adams and Helga Leitner both offer field experience. In fact, they offer field experience in Europe and I think John has taken a group to Russia and looked at Russian cities. During the regular school year . . . very limited. You may have a day trip around the Twin Cities. For example, this is coming up to the present quarter in 1994, I'm teaching a course on land use planning, the Introduction to Land Use Planning. Part of that is to do a comprehensive plan for a small city of 10,000 that's going to grow to 20,000. I did this a couple of years ago [unclear] and I find that many of the students have never lived in a small town. They know the central city. They know the suburban; but, they don't have a mental map of what a small town looks like. I took them for a day's field trip down to Faribault, a city of 16,000 that's sort of in the middle. I'm a great believer in the fact that you get information from census and you get information from historical records, obviously, but from observation. Field observation, I think, is a really important part of putting the pieces together and synthesizing what students know.

CAC: I remember John Borchert telling me once that when he checked into a new town, he always went to see the town banker who knew more about real estate, and property, and structure than . . .

BL: Exactly. Bob Einsweiler used to say when he checked into a town, he went to look at the council records minutes because the minutes really told you things . . . and the newspaper morgue.

CAC: You had field experience along with your regular academic training here?

BL: Yes. I'm going back now. I came in the fall of 1953 as a foreign student but not feeling very foreign. The hospitality of the university and the Minnesota International House was really great. I remember my first Thanksgiving here was at the home of Skuli Rutford, who was with the Minnesota Extension and lived in St. Anthony Park. Bob Rutford, one of his sons, was also in the Geography Department, a little later actually. It's amazing . . . the tightness of the community.

CAC: Say something about International House.

BL: When I came, I don't think I made as much use of it as, perhaps, people coming from Turkey or Tanzania might have done. For example, when you arrive in the Twin Cities . . . I came by train from New York. I came over on the Queen Mary and, then, I had this wonderful experience of a train journey across the United States and coming, in the morning, up the Mississippi River. It was something that you can't do today—at least, I don't imagine that that happens. Somebody from International House met me at the train station. I think that was the Milwaukee Road. I had accommodations for the first couple of days and, then, I went to live in the dormitory. That was a real shock. [laughter] In other words, it was good for the first part of your coming over not to have to worry about finding a place; but, I think I had outgrown dormitory life by that time. It was an interesting experience. The International House did arrange for visits. I remember one in the fall when I went up to, not Glencoe . . . the town outside of Alexandria [Glenwood]. A group of about twenty foreign students were hosted by families in this Alexandria area and got a chance to see a little bit about the outside of the Twin Cities. I guess at that time, I didn't have to stumble over Greater Minnesota and outstate Minnesota. It was clearly outstate Minnesota.

CAC: [laughter]

BL: Today, politically correct, you've got to look at your language in terms of what words you use. It was a very appropriate . . . and I'm sort of grateful for it. I drew away from the international community in a short while because I found the Geography Department very much an intellectual and academic community. It was relatively small. Jan Broek, a Dutch person, was the chair of the department and, at that time, it was sort of a permanent head. It was not what it is today, a rotating department. The department was located on the fourth floor of Ford Hall. Broek had made arrangements that there would be a little kitchen put into one of the small spaces by the washrooms and that one room would be used as a seminar room and a library. It was set up so that, on an informal basis, faculty and graduate students would meet and talk. That was a really important part of being a graduate student. You were either a research assistant or a teaching assistant so you had a contact with the faculty and the students.

CAC: What, approximately, was the size of that family then? How many professors and how many graduate students with appointments?

BL: Probably not more than five or six faculty and probably not more than more fifteen to twenty graduate students.

CAC: That is a real community.

BL: Yes.

CAC: Did they have the Friday afternoon ceremony then?

BL: That came a little later when the department began to grow, and add more faculty, and add more students. I think it did grow out of a tradition of faculty/graduate student interaction on an informal basis outside of your formal advising or going to a class.

CAC: That's the chief place it came from? I'm asking because, as I listen to people tell their departmental stories, some clearly have a community, particularly graduate students and faculty, that is really very informal and a source of learning for everybody. In other departments, that isn't the case. It's not entirely a matter of size I deduce so far. In your case, you're saying there is a tradition built in so that people are socialized to this?

BL: Yes, exactly. I didn't know at the time but later found out that there was a resistance to the head and a fairly autocratic decision making. The chairman of the department or the head of the department made a lot of decisions then that probably would be more shared decision making [today]. Broek came with these values, that this interaction was an important part. I think to begin with, I was concerned about the emphasis that the department placed on the graduate students and the nurturing that the faculty gave to the graduate students—I thought at the expense of the undergraduates. I had come from Cambridge where there was really no graduate students as a community per se. You were researching, doing your dissertation, and field work wherever it may be; so, the undergraduates were the core of the experience. Here, I felt that the undergraduate experience was not given sufficient attention. That was my criticism.

CAC: If you look back upon, you still hold to that perception?

BL: I think I still hold on to it because of the way in which the American university credit system is set up. In other words, from my experience, I went up as a geographer and I did three years of geography; and here, you are two years of general education and only by your third year, you're beginning to identify with your discipline. Again, it's a commuter campus and, again, the students are working. There are all kinds of reasons why that nurturing was put more on the graduate side. I still think it's an issue that the university needs to grapple with because you do get a spark coming usually from someone as to which direction you're going and it could be an opportunity to talk with a faculty member or it could be a field experience. It could be all kinds of things. Perhaps, we don't recognize that there are so many doors in which you can enter a discipline or a profession. I think we could do more. Now, the Geography Department did institutionalize an annual event called the Brown Day. That was started while I was still a

graduate student. Ralph Brown had been a professor of historical geography here at the department and a nationally recognized scholar. We institutionalized this Brown Day and every year since then. It's gone on now, since the 1950s and into the 1990s, forty years.

CAC: He stayed here, but died prematurely?

BL: Yes, he died in 1949. His wife and his family were still here. People like Richard Hartshorne had been on the Geography faculty and then went to Wisconsin, had become a guru on his nature of geography, his sort of historical German geography book. People like Hartshorne came back as a visiting lecturer that day. We still have an evening social event where the award is given to an outstanding undergraduate student. A few of the seniors come to that as well as graduate students, faculty, and former alums.

CAC: I'm advised not to interpose too much by manuals of how to do oral history.

BL: [laughter]

CAC: When I was a graduate student at Berkeley, after the Second World War, my adviser said, "There are certain basic books you've got to read. Ralph Brown's historical . . . "

BL: *The Mirror of the Americans*.

CAC: . . . was one that he had me read. I knew . . . [laughter]

BL: It was very touching once we decided. My husband, Fred Lukermann, who was an instructor actually at that time, became an instrumental part in nurturing this.

CAC: Brown himself committed himself to historical geography among other fields.

BL: Yes, that's right. He's a Minnesotan, and had started in history, and found that geography and history were the things that he wanted to do. What that did is it made reconnections with the Brown family in the community and for awhile members of the family used to come to the Brown dinner.

CAC: Good.

BL: That now has sort of fallen by the wayside as she has died and members of the family have grown away.

CAC: It's forty years after all.

BL: Yes. I forget where I was.

CAC: You were a graduate student and describing community.

BL: Another thing that struck me was that here I had grown up in an education system of British high school whereby at the age of sixteen, you drop your six or seven subjects and you focus on three. I had history, geography, and French. Then, I went to Cambridge where my all three years were focused on geography. Then, I come and look at the United States system, wondering whether or not I would have this tremendously deeper knowledge of geography than these other graduate students. [laughter] I have to say that my course work here opened new avenues. I was not repeating things that I learned.

CAC: Good.

BL: While I still bemoaned the lack of geographic education in our high schools and the way in which those who choose to go to graduate school in geography had obviously developed an interest, the intellectual capacity of the graduate students was just great. I found that I had a great deal to learn from my fellow students, even though I'd concentrated all of this effort. I don't know what it speaks for my ability . . . to have absorbed limited information or more information. [laughter] It was a very good graduate experience.

CAC: And you found a husband as well.

BL: Yes, I did, indeed. He was both a student and an instructor. He was in Turkey doing his Ph.D. dissertation work when I first came; so, I'd just heard about Lukermann. He was doing his work on the Hittite empire in Anatolia, Asia Minor. I'd heard about him. My plan was only to stay for two years and, then, go back to Britain. When he came back, as you said, I did find a husband, which was a tremendous asset. The negative part of it was that there were nepotism rules at that time. I had finished my course work and [was] ready to go on to a dissertation. I married but recognized that I wouldn't be able to teach because he was already teaching at the university. I looked around and there was only one other college that had a geography department; that was Macalester. Hildegard Binda Johnson, a German geographer was there.

CAC: I know her.

BL: I didn't see any opportunity there. There were no other geography departments around. So, I began to ask myself, "What should I do?"

CAC: Even Carleton had one person in geography at this time; that's it.

BL: Things have changed . . .

CAC: Happily.



BL: . . . for the better. Macalester, particularly now, has a very strong, excellent geography faculty. I debated the merits of going on. Financial considerations played a part. I can't remember exactly, but I think Fred's salary for the nine months was something like \$3500 a year. I'm not quite sure.

CAC: That's ball park. That's what I came . . .

BL: We had an apartment in south St. Anthony Park . . . \$110 a month. People would kill for that now. I think financial considerations did enter into my final calculations; but, I was also looking at what else I could do. That was, what, 1955, 1956?

CAC: You got your M.A. in 1954.

BL: Yes. Then, I was doing the course work for the Ph.D. in 1955. Some of the geography graduate students . . . I remember Ed Mirander and Don Carroll were my contemporaries. They were working as part-time people for a consulting firm that had just started up. It was a boom time for suburbanization. At that time, there were only planning departments in Minneapolis and St. Paul. There were no other planning agencies. This was seen as an opportunity. Bob Cerny who was a faculty member in architecture at the university at that time . . .

CAC: He designed quite a few of the buildings on campus here.

BL: Right. He teamed up with a Chicago planning consultant called Carl Gardner and opened a local office. A couple of grad students had been working there doing field work and a little bit of analysis on urban change and development. I'd been interested in historical geography, too, and urban development. It was, in a way, not a commitment at that time to use my geography as more of urban planning; but, it obviously turned out that way that that became a major career shift from an academic life, continuing in academia, to one that would be a practitioner using my geography.

CAC: Urban planning is an awfully big word. When first you started with Thorshov and Cerny, what kind of assignments did you have?

BL: Doing land use . . . collecting information on how land was used on a parcel by parcel basis in these first-ring suburban communities. We were working with St. Louis Park, Bloomington, Roseville, what are now pretty well developed . . .

CAC: Golden Valley?

BL: Golden Valley . . . but at that time were going through their real suburban boom period. You'd be out there doing field work, finding out how the land was being used.

CAC: Rather than residential purposes? This would include public schools and transportation, right?

BL: You'd include everything; so, you'd end up with a land use map at a very large scale. A map of the community of Roseville would be something like four feet by three feet so you could show the use of every parcel of land. You got an understanding of the development pattern, the vacant land, the physical characteristics. Then, you'd do some demographic analysis and start projecting the growth potential.

CAC: Then Thorschoff and Cerny would use that in what way?

BL: The firm was a planning consulting subsidiary of Thorshov and Cerny and Carl Garnder. Our contracts were to provide urban planning services, comprehensive planning services, to suburban cities. The interest at the architect . . .

CAC: The money came from the burgeoning municipalities themselves?

BL: Right.

CAC: You weren't doing it for realtors or development folks?

BL: No, doing it for the city. By the time of the late 1950s, there was also federal dollars coming through, what they called the 701 program, whereby the federal government provided fifty cents on every dollar for local planning. That was the carrot to get local communities to engage in long-range planning.

CAC: That early, was there a concern with environment considerations as well as economic?

BL: Less so than there is today, I would say. You can go and the attitudes toward wetlands are totally different today. Wetlands were something that you could fill and, therefore, create a buildable parcel. We were just not aware of what the environmental consequences were for certain kinds of uses. For example, in St. Louis Park, the Riley Tar Company occupied a big site by the railroad in a fairly low lying area. They were creosoting the railroad ties, a long-established use in that area. You can just well imagine what happened to that creosote as it went into the ground water. The company finally left. It's been gone for more than twenty-five years; but, it's been the most vexing and costly environmental problem that the St. Louis Park's Housing and Redevelopment Authority has had to cope with as to remediation. Now, a big issue is the contamination sites.

CAC: Sure.

BL: At that time, I don't think we'd even started asking the right questions on that.

CAC: If I read your career summary right here, you were at this with different auspices but doing the same kind of work for twenty years?

BL: Yes.

CAC: What was it in that twenty year period that made consulting firms and communities themselves more sensitive to the environmental issue?

BL: I think, initially, it was fueled from a national level . . . NEPA, the [National] Environmental Protection Agency, William Riley and the Nature Conservancy and others in the 1970s. It took a long time. I was starting in the 1950s. By the end of the 1960s, the consequences of growth and sprawl . . . It wasn't just environment but environment came into it. It was the cost of sprawl as well as the environmental consequences [that] came into the public's agenda. This is an interesting issue of itself as to how do you get an issue onto the public's agenda?

CAC: You bet.

BL: It takes a lot of time. By the late 1960s, it was clearly on the public's agenda. You got then, in 1969, the National Environmental Policy Act. You got, in the early 1970s, the federal Clean Water Act saying, no fishable, swimmable waters by 1987. You got the Clean Air Act. Minnesota adopted its own Environmental Policy Act in 1973; so, from then on, you've had this heightened awareness. It's taken us till the 1990s to really take action on wetland management and the recognition of that contribution to the recharge of the groundwater. We're still making horrible mistakes of expanding the Twin Cities out beyond the aquifer . . . our ability to provide water supplies to northern Anoka County and polluting groundwater. We still have got an awful lot to learn. But, today in planning environment issues, the balance between the environment, and the economic, and then the social . . . things have really changed in terms of looking at the social issues of growth. At the time when I started in the 1950s, it was, how do you accommodate growth for a middle class population? The returning veterans wanted a rather modest 720 square foot home with one bathroom and no garage and today, the minimum expectations of a first time home buyer are much, much different.

CAC: To what degree and in what way did the university, other than yourself, supply information, or personnel, or research projects that would, during this twenty year period from the mid 1950s to the mid 1970s, accelerate or focus on issues? What I'm interested in is the relationship of the university and the immediate community.

BL: There were faculty members. You can't speak now about anyone other than John Borchert, initially, in terms of a faculty member at the Geography Department whose intellectual career really began to reach out into the community. He has probably been responsible for so many geography graduates of this university taking up their careers in the public sector in planning related positions. At that time, you didn't have to have a master's of urban planning. A

geography B.A. or a master's in geography provided people with the intellectual capacity, and the commitment, and interest in urban issues to go and work at the Metropolitan Council or on different public agencies.

CAC: Public Affairs, Economics?

BL: At that time, what is now the Humphrey Institute was a School of Public Administration that had grown out of the Political Science Department.

CAC: Right.

BL: They saw their graduates being city manager types . . . the administration of municipal government. It was only evolution that the Humphrey Institute broadened out its mission to include planning. There was a lot of discussion as to, if the university was going to have a professional planning degree, where should it be located? Back in the 1950s and 1960s, a lot of the planners were coming from the design professions and the engineering professions. This is still true in eastern Europe, for example. You go to a planning function inside local government and you've got registered engineers and registered architects. The social sciences are not there.

CAC: Does this mean that civil engineers at the University of Minnesota were engaged in these kinds of concerns here in the Metropolitan area . . . or not?

BL: I'm not really aware of a lot of civil engineers. The architects probably were there looking at commissions related to growth. Going back to an earlier comment about what did Thorshov and Cerny, the architectural firm, get out of this . . . it was more than altruism. They thought by becoming part of the planning process for these communities, there would be commissions for building new schools, city halls, and so forth. One of the reasons why they got out of the consulting business in planning and why I and two others took over all the contracts and created our own consulting firm was that they found it became a conflict of interest as to how could you if you were the planners of St. Louis Park be also retained? The rest of the architectural community would cry foul.

CAC: Bob Cerny himself came to appreciate this conflict?

BL: Yes. What they were ready to do in 1960 was to sell their planning contracts with local governments to the staff who had been working for them. By 1960, I and two men who had joined . . . one was Howard Dahlgren, who had had an undergraduate architecture degree from the University of Minnesota and, then, Gunther Liverpool to do a master's in town and country planning [and he] wanted to come back to Minnesota and the other one, Jim Horicks, was someone who'd done a landscape architecture master's degree. Here I was, as a geographer, and a landscape architect, and an architect—those are still the academic backgrounds that an awful lot of planners have—started this consulting firm.

CAC: Now, for emphasis and clarification . . . the first ten, or fifteen, or twenty years, it was primarily John Borchert from the university who was a focus of feeding this whole system?

BL: Yes.

CAC: Until the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs picks up later, the university was not involved in a major way?

BL: That's true.

CAC: That's very interesting.

BL: John Borchert did one of the first impact studies for the Minnesota Highway Department. I don't think it was called MN-DOT [Minnesota Department of Transportation] then; I think it was just called the Minnesota Highway Department. They were, obviously, engaged in the interstate system and also the traffic problems of trouble going through the center of town that led them into constructing by-passes around town not just the interstate system but also the arterial road system. John and his graduate students did this sort of impact analysis. What is that doing to the economic base, the health of the old retail community? What is it doing to the growth patterns? [It was] sort of like a more geographical cost benefit analysis. It wasn't the economists. I could go on about Borchert and the number of things he did . . . the lake shore study that's now sort of part of state government. John should speak for himself; but, it was the Geography Department really . . .

CAC: I did interview John when I did Fred four or five years ago; but, I should come back again.

BL: Oh, I think so. The last four years, I've been teaching the Introductory Course on Land Use Planning in the university which is cross-listed between Geography and the Humphrey Institute. For the first three years we taught that course, I co-taught it with John Borchert.

CAC: What a treat.

BL: It was a wonderful experience. He used to have these anecdotes in class as to the ways in which he'd interacted with the community. He'd done some trend analysis of the growth of the Twin Cities Metropolitan area and, then, projected it out on the basis of spacial patterns, the distribution of where that growth would be. I think one comment was that he'd saved the highway department millions of dollars in condemnation suits where they were going to put a highway and what it would do to property values and what it would do to growth patterns.

CAC: They were smart enough to recognize that?

BL: They were smart enough to recognize it.

CAC: Was any of this staged through the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, CURA?

BL: To some extent it was.

CAC: John was the founder of that, too, and Fred?

BL: Yes, he was. The resources of the university through CURA did engage faculty and graduate students in some of these projects. I think the lake shore study that I referred to was partially funded, maybe 100 percent funded, through CURA. They took Crow Wing County as an example of looking at what was happening for lake shore development. That became, again, spun off to the state planning agency, the Land Management Information Center. CURA had sort of a policy direction that they would start something, nurture it, and, then, it wasn't necessarily going to house it forever . . . that it was going to be spun off. That lake shore study was probably one of the early examples of how CURA was willing to invest . . .

CAC: Were you engaged in that one yourself?

BL: No, I was not engaged in that; but, a lot of geography students . . .

CAC: Can you give me a for instance of one that you were through CURA?

BL: While I was a graduate student, I wasn't engaged.

CAC: CURA wasn't there then.

BL: No.

CAC: It doesn't come until the late 1960s.

BL: Right. One of the first things I did for CURA was around the condominium conversion. That was 1970. Housing was getting less and less affordable and you were also getting into the Twin Cities the emergence of condominium ownership and also a conversion of rental units into condominium ownership. It was a tremendous spate of conversion of rental units into ownership units. I got some support from CURA to do some research with graduate students then.

CAC: Whoever is interested in these things five, ten, twenty-five years from now, I hope will be interested in process. By that I mean, could you walk us through how a contract was struck, what the initiating role was from an outside group, what the initiating role was from inside CURA, and where did the monies come from? Can you give a for instance of that?

BL: I knew Tom Anding who had also been a Geography graduate student who was the associate director of CURA.

CAC: He still is.

BL: He's retired as an associate director of CURA now.

CAC: Oh, I see.

BL: He's still there on a part-time basis; but, he is no longer the associate director but he was at that time.

CAC: For a long time.

BL: For a long time. Tom was like a roving ambassador, in terms of spending a lot of his time out looking and talking to people as to what are the emerging issues.

CAC: By this, you mean people in the community?

BL: People in the community . . . public agencies, primarily. It could be state agencies, local governments, developers. CURA still does have this special appropriation from the legislature; although, I think the dollars are winding down. They had this discretionary income that they were able, then, to make those allocations for having some research. At that time, I got support for a graduate student and—I'm wondering if I've got it quite accurate now—I don't think I got paid for my time. I think I was a private consultant at that time. CURA provided graduate student support to do a lot of the research.

CAC: It's a brokerage . . . it's a liaison back to persons within the university who can take on a part-time special project?

BL: Yes.

CAC: Then, you staggered from one project to another . . . CURA?

BL: CURA was always trying to reach out to different collegiate units. It wasn't just the social sciences; but, they were trying to engage the medical, the nursing, the College of Agriculture to the extent that you got faculty interested in that. They've always had a land use interest. Maybe that's because of John Borchert being involved and Tom Anding as a geographer.

CAC: Most of these were short-term?

BL: Short-term projects, short-term contracts . . . some went on longer, for example, the peat study in northern Minnesota. That was a time in the 1970s when we had this gas scare, of the shortage of petroleum, and looking at biomass as a possible source of energy. CURA supported, I think, for two or three years a major research project looking at the peat resources in

Koochiching County and that northern Minnesota area. Some of their projects would go on for a couple of years; then, some would be relatively short-term.

CAC: It made it difficult for the university to monitor or to evaluate these short-term projects?

BL: CURA, I think, has been evaluated by an outside, external group.

CAC: But, I mean from project to project though. I'm suggesting and then questioning for your response. It's difficult to evaluate if it's kind of a churning [unclear]?

BL: Yes. It is [unclear].

CAC: I don't mean to monitor CURA, but CURA monitoring all of these different projects. That's a lot of stuff to haul under control at one time.

BL: It really is, yes. The number of graduate students they support is just very large. I have not had a lot of contact with the intern placements of CURA; but, I know they have a lot of interns, undergraduates that are placed in non-profits in the local community to provide help to these organizations. My association with CURA started on very much an ad hoc basis. Then, I started teaching a workshop for the Humphrey Institute. They recognized that they needed at the . . . now it was a School of Public Affairs that had a planning program. It was now a professional master's of planning program at the university.

CAC: I see. This is by the mid 1970s?

BL: Yes.

CAC: And it's housed in the Humphrey Institute?

BL: At that time, it was still the School of Public Affairs and the College of Liberal Arts. It was a department within the College of Liberal Arts.

CAC: Then when the Humphrey name is put on it, it becomes autonomous? Then, they pick it up?

BL: Yes. Then they had the dean, Harlan Cleveland, and Harlan essentially wanted to cut loose from the College of Liberal Arts and become independent. Now, it has a status of a collegiate unit. I think I started to talk about the issue as to the decision that the university needed to offer a professional degree of a master's of planning. There was a lot of competition and concern as to, where would this program be housed in the university? Ralph Rapson, who is the head of the College of Architecture in IT [Institute of Technology] at that time . . .

[End of Tape 1, Side 1]



[Tape 1, Side 2]

CAC: . . . the location of planning degrees and courses?

BL: Architecture felt that a master's of planning should be in the College of Architecture. They were offering two courses. One was actually being taught by Bob Einsweiler, again, on what we call a limited teaching status now; but, he was teaching this one course on urban planning for the Architecture Department. Then, there was Hosni Iskander, an Egyptian, who was teaching another course within the College of Architecture. The university set up a process to discuss this. The commitment was made that there was going to be this degree. John Borchert, and Fred Lukermann, and I don't know who else, but there were many others from the College of Liberal Arts who made very cogent arguments as to how the social sciences had an increasing role to play in urban planning. In the 1960s, you had a shift with planning having an advocacy role for those least well off in society, plans for equal opportunity, and, increasingly, the problems of urban development were not just environmental or physical . . . how are you going to use the land but also the social justice, social equity. If you look at how the literature in planning journals shifted toward the integration of these social values as well as the physical and the economic . . . I guess the social scientists won out. Political Science already had this School of Public Administration, which had this connection with local governments and city managers and that urban connection. The decision was made to expand what had been the School of Public Administration into a School of Public Affairs.

CAC: Then, when [Hubert H.] Humphrey dies, they pick up Humphrey's name and move it to another level?

BL: Yes.

CAC: It was to that school, then, that you came back from your private consulting firm?

BL: Yes. I came back initially on a part-time basis as a practitioner.

CAC: By now, the nepotism rule has been softened?

BL: Exactly, yes. In fact, often there are these spousal hires now. [laughter] Rules have not only softened, but the rules of the game have greatly changed. I come back to the university as a practitioner to diversify the experience of students. I'm not a tenured faculty member. I have remained on a contract basis because I did not finish my Ph.D.

CAC: There are many people in this category. It would be nice to talk about it now. Usually, they are called senior fellows, right, which is your title?

BL: I have a title but it's a bizarre title because my role is a teaching role rather than a research role.

CAC: I understand that, yes. You came back in the mid 1970s?

BL: Yes, on a part-time basis.

CAC: Then, that became full-time?

BL: Yes. It became full-time partly through the outreach work, if you want to call it outreach work, with CURA. I maintained a constant contact with CURA-based research projects that are doing the applied research. My home base is in the Humphrey Institute. That's where my appointment is; but, as I moved up to full-time status, my research has, primarily, been through CURA.

CAC: This means that within the Humphrey Institute, even when you came in in the mid 1970s and still, that some of the faculty there have traditional faculty appointments with tenure, etcetera?

BL: Most of them do, yes.

CAC: Then there is a shifting group that kind of sponsor themselves or where does your salary come from as a senior fellow? Sometimes it is said, "Those senior fellows have to raise their own money."

BL: Primarily, they do. [laughter]

CAC: How does that happen? How does that work?

BL: I'm sort of bizarre. I don't fit the mold of that.

CAC: Okay.

BL: It is true that at the Humphrey Institute a senior fellow coming in, essentially, raises their own research dollars and they also teach one course.

CAC: Where do those monies come from typically?

BL: They come from foundations to a large extent. Sometimes, they come from a government agency. For example, we now have a very large grant through USAID [United States Agency for International Development] at the Humphrey Institute for doing an environmental training multi-year project in eastern and central Europe.

CAC: You plugged into that yourself?

BL: Yes, I plugged into that, too. I remember Harlan Cleveland more or less asking me what did I want to be called . . . what title? I did not push for tenure. At that time, I was well into a career and looking back, maybe it was not the right decision to do that. I don't know whether I would have got it or whether I would not have gotten it. Who knows? The title of senior fellow was sort of given to me; but, it is confusing now.

CAC: Yes.

BL: Except for me, all the other senior fellows are full-time research, teaching one course sort of pro bono. My job is as a planning faculty member and I teach a full load of course work and follow the same expectations of service, research, and teaching that a faculty member would be expected to do. My salary comes out of endowment.

CAC: Of the institute?

BL: Yes.

CAC: Your arrangement is not a typical one?

BL: No, it's not a typical one.

CAC: So, that the senior fellows are more peripatetic than you have been typically?

BL: Yes, yes.

CAC: What is the relationship then of the regular faculty . . . I understand you're a tertian quid, right? You're a third thing?

BL: [laughter] Yes.

CAC: What is the relationship generally, then, within the Humphrey Institute of staff faculty appointment persons on the one hand and the senior fellows on the other as far as governance is concerned or setting priorities?

BL: You've touched on a sensitive subject.

CAC: Sensitive and crucial.

BL: It's crucial and it's also very political. The Humphrey Institute has a constitution that was developed when Royce Hanson was the associate dean. Royce Hanson is currently a dean at Dallas at the University of Texas for social sciences. He came when Harlan Cleveland was dean and he came with, again, a very diverse background, a Ph.D. in political science but also significant applied research. He'd run for Congress. He'd run a planning commission in

Maryland in Montgomery County. Royce's version of the constitution was that the stakeholders were faculty, senior fellows, students, and staff. The constitution gives certain voting privileges on certain matters to that broader constituency.

CAC: I see.

BL: There are certain things that are exclusively the prerogative of faculty, which is to vote for new faculty members. Senior fellows can be on a search committee and I've been on many search committees. Actually, I do have a faculty status. I'm an associate in the Graduate School; so, I can now advise students and I can serve on Ph.D. committees, but I can't chair a Ph.D. committee. I'm the only one of the senior fellows that can vote as a faculty member; but, I certainly can't vote on any tenured position. There is a great deal of ferment at that moment in terms of what should be the decision making powers of the faculty alone, vis-à-vis the other stakeholders. When senior fellows are voted upon as to whether or not they would become a senior fellow, the other senior fellows have a vote. Some faculty feel that's inappropriate, that that decision should be only the faculty. We currently have a committee put up to sort of revisit the constitution.

CAC: Things are rarely neat.

BL: Rarely neat. I think for a School of Public Affairs, in the name of Humphrey, with a goal for public service, it raises some interesting mission related issues as to governance and participation and how to have shared decision making.

CAC: You've been in there about eighteen years?

BL: Yes.

CAC: You've had about the same period of time as a private consultant outside . . . now you're inside. Within the Humphrey Institute the last eighteen years, then, that you've been in that setting, having in mind that your chief interest in urban planning broadly perceived, what kind of colleagues do you have, either peripatetic senior fellows or core staff, who share that? What is the nucleus of planning, the kind of planning issue that you've addressed in your career there?

BL: The Humphrey Institute offers two degrees. It offers a master of arts of public affairs and it offers a master of planning. They share a core curriculum. It's a very long answer, but I think it may help on this.

CAC: That's what I want.

BL: Our planning program is linked for the perception of the outside world with a policy school rather than a planning school. The shared curriculum provides the planner, our graduate, with a piece of policy analysis and a piece of management, but with a focus of planning in the middle.

The idea is that a planner as an effective change agent needs some of the skills of the policy analyst which involves the use of microeconomic techniques of looking at the problem and analyzing it and also needs some knowledge of the manager in terms of organizational behavior and process and how it's done. This core curriculum is shared and, then, we have requirements for the planning students that, essentially, are much more professionally oriented. We are an accredited planning program. It's not certified in the sense that you'd be a register or certified architect or engineer. There's nothing in the planning profession that will prevent you from exercising your profession without that final piece of paper. There is a planning accreditation board and most of the major schools who offer a planning degree have sought this accreditation. It does give an edge to our graduating students when they go and look for a job to say they come from a program that is nationally accredited. We, just last year, went through a reaccreditation for another five years. As part of that accreditation, you have to have faculty who are identified as planning faculty and you have to have the equivalent of five full-time equivalents.

CAC: These are drawn, in the case here at Minnesota, from what disciplines?

BL: At the university, we've got Dick Bolan who has a Ph.D. in public administration but has a civil engineering background. We had Bob Einsweiler, who left and went to the Lincoln Land Policy Institute, who had degrees in architecture and planning. We've got another faculty member, Ragui Assaad, who has a Ph.D. from Cornell in urban and regional planning; but, he's very much an applied economist doing international work, labor markets in Egypt and the Middle East. We've got another person who has a Ph.D. from Pennsylvania in policy analysis and he teaches state and local finance and growth management. John Adams, in the Geography Department, has tenure also in the Humphrey Institute and he teaches courses on metropolitan analysis in North American cities. I'm a geographer . . .

CAC: This is just truly cross-disciplinary. We talk about cross-disciplinary in the university. My gracious! that's a cluster drawing from many, many persons trained in different ways.

BL: Yes.

CAC: And doing different kinds of work.

BL: Very different. Then there is Zbigniew Bochniarz who is this senior fellow from Poland, who is an economist who teaches sustainable development that teaches a couple of courses. The planning faculty has a much more broad-base disciplinary input than the faculty teaching in the public affairs and the master of public affairs.

CAC: They come mostly . . . ?

BL: They are economists and a couple of political scientists. So, there is this tension that exists.

CAC: Oh, that clarifies . . .

BL: There are sort of certain view points that the microeconomist, the policy analyst, is the core set of talents that you need to be an actor in the community. Planners are really working much more at the state, regional, and local levels. Very few . . . I can't think of one of our planning graduates that has really gone to work for a federal agency. They see themselves . . . the opportunity for making a difference in action. The planners are really action oriented trying to get things done. They tend to gravitate more to state and local governments where they see their niche. Now, this doesn't mean to say that the masters of arts in public affairs don't also see their roles there; but, I think we are much more focused at that local level.

CAC: My next question has to be, then, whether the Minnesota model is freestanding by itself or whether there are other major schools that would be structured as you're describing Minnesota's school?

BL: I think there's been a trend in the last decade for planning programs to shift away from colleges of architecture where they may have started and become more linked with public policy schools. This has happened at Rutgers. At Cornell, it's got this linkage.

CAC: But, Minnesota may have been ahead of the curve on this?

BL: I think so, yes. I think a little bit.

CAC: The Kennedy School, for example, would be much more toward the public affairs and federal government?

BL: Yes, it's much more a policy school. Again, they've gone through their upheavals in terms of the design profession's role and niche in this kind of a program versus the economist's niche in this kind of program.

CAC: How many schools that offer a planning concentration have the interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary perspective of Minnesota? I'm trying to get what ways Minnesota differs or is really kind of like others.

BL: I think the planning faculty diversity is replicated in other planning schools; but, when you take the whole of the Humphrey Institute faculty, I think we have a much larger number, proportion, who come from the economist's perspective.

CAC: Okay.

BL: If you look at Chapel Hill, North Carolina, [they've] got a very fine planning program which is much more targeted for regional and urban planning. They're more likely to have a lawyer person on their faculty.

CAC: Ohhh. You don't have a lawyer on your . . . ?

BL: We don't. We contract with a practicing attorney in the community to teach a required course on law and urban affairs. That has to be part of planning education to know the administrative law and the constitutional laws that govern land use.

CAC: Sure.

BL: I think it would be great to have someone on the Humphrey faculty with that perspective. The opportunities for more diversity are there: anthropologists, sociologists, lawyers, a whole range of these disciplines. What's been interesting though is to see the diversification of faculty interests in other departments outside of the Humphrey Institute. I advise my students to look at what the Geography faculty can offer. There are five faculty I could pick off on the Geography Department right now that teach courses.

CAC: Your students are advised to take their courses?

BL: Yes. Roger Miller in Geography teaches a course called Geographic Perspectives and Planning, which is really a planning history. Landscape Architecture has shifted its interests to more of a research focus rather than a professional degree with planting materials and site planning. Now, they offer a master of science and they've hired faculty in environmental planning, regional planning. There are courses there in Agriculture and Applied Economics, Conservation Biology, Natural Resources, Forest Resources so that students come and the program is set up in a way that you acquire these generic skills. My subject matter is land use planning using my geography background.

CAC: Sure.

BL: Other planning students may have a really strong interest in the environment and in taking courses in Conservation Biology, Forest Resources, Landscape Architecture. Others are interested in community development and neighborhood level planning. I know we'll be looking for supplemental course work there.

CAC: Let me restate this to see if it's clear. This is a very complicated notion that you're presenting. You've been working with it for twenty years so you know it very well and your description is very clear. It's not only in planning that the faculty itself comes from diverse disciplines and has different agendas and different skills, but it is true of your own students who are taking this concentration within the institute, and it's also true of students elsewhere who are taking courses that are offered in the Humphrey Institute, and Humphrey Institute students are taking courses in Landscape Architecture, Geography, Agricultural Economics, or whatever?

BL: Yes, that's exactly right.

CAC: That's just amazing! How typical is that of other schools around the country?

BL: I wish I knew more about that. I think that the planning faculty and the planning courses are attracting far more outside students than would be typical of a planning program. We're rather a small part of the Humphrey Institute. Currently, we have thirty-two graduate students enrolled in the planning program here at the Humphrey Institute. But, the Humphrey Institute admitted sixty-five students a year ago and a hundred students this year . . .

CAC: [gasp]

BL: . . . for fiscal reasons partly.

CAC: Did they want the tuition?

BL: Yes. So, you've got now essentially 165 students in a two-year program of which only thirty-two have actually opted for the master of planning. The rest are doing the master of arts because that's what we're seen as on the outside world. We're seen as one of the top public policy schools in the nation and we're attracting now . . . more than half of our incoming class are not Minnesotans. I chaired the admissions committee for the last year and we had something like 450 applications.

CAC: International students?

BL: We have a few but not as many as we'd like to. Some of the international students applying to come to the planning program have this earlier notion of it being architecture and engineering related; so, you have somebody from India with a civil engineering degree applying to come to the Humphrey Institute to do a masters of planning without really knowing that we're not the kind of planning program that they want. Maybe they should go to a school of planning that has got much closer linkages with IT. We'd like to attract more international students. The reason why I'm teaching a lot of non-planners in my planning classes is that a lot of people are interested in the issues that the planning faculty are teaching, but they have not chosen to do the professional degree. For example, in my land use planning class, I have a lot of geographers, a lot of Humphrey Institute people; but, I've also got some forest resource [students], landscape architects. In my other planning course, I even have a couple of historians and I've got people from the St. Paul campus working in the housing program, that peculiarly named Design, Housing and Apparel title in the College of Human Ecology.

CAC: It must make your teaching responsibility much more joyful to have that mixture of students who are really concerned who are taking it because they're excited about that course.

BL: You also have some practitioners. Most of our courses are labeled at the 5000 level; so, that practitioners can come in . . .



CAC: Part-time.

BL: . . . either as adult special or through Extension. Some of our classes are held in the evening to be able to attract practitioners. It's a very nice mix of students.

CAC: Oh! they must learn a lot from each other.

BL: Yes, they do; that's true.

CAC: I'm going to follow up, just very briefly, about the student body. Working for a master's degree, they must be older than most candidates for a master's degree elsewhere in the university?

BL: I think so.

CAC: Do they come with experience.

BL: The median age, I think, is about twenty-five, twenty-six but, then, that could include a couple of forty year olds. [laughter] We have a fairly good cohort that are coming right from undergraduate experience; but, a lot of them have had a couple of year's experience and some have had more. I think the students get more out of our graduate program with a couple of years out in the work experience.

CAC: Oh, I should think so. Are there ways that the institute could take to encourage persons from the field with experience to do that?

BL: In our application, we do ask for a statement of purpose as part of the way of deciding who we'll admit into the program and letters of recommendation, just like every other department does. In choosing the brightest and the best, I think if we had two people with exactly the same academic records and GRE [Graduate Record Examination] scores and one had had this experience, it would be reflected also in their statement of purpose, and we probably would choose, if we only had one place to offer, the one that had the experience. We've been a lot more successful this last year on our minority . . . 15 percent of our incoming class this year are minorities.

CAC: What percent are females?

BL: This year's entering class . . . 60 percent are female. It's a little larger than usual. We've had roughly a 50/50.

CAC: Has that changed also over the twenty years?

BL: Oh, yes.

CAC: When does that influx come in?

BL: It was starting to come in in the mid 1980s.

CAC: That's kind of late when one looks at other academic programs.

BL: They were coming in as women but in large numbers . . . By the early 1980s, you would have had maybe 30 to 40 percent maximum and, now, we're getting 50 to 60 percent that are female.

CAC: There's one area that I still want to have your reflections on and that is community and civic affiliations. People can look this up later, if they wish, but it's the Minnesota Environmental Board, Metropolitan Waste Control Commission, the Citizen's League, Regional Health Planning, Minnesota Waste Management Board, Landmark Center, Riverfront Commission, and so forth. Say something about that part of your life and career.

BL: That's a very important part of my life. I see it as very much enhancing my capacity as a teacher. I don't see it as a separate piece, that I leave the university and go and do these other things in the community. I think teaching is enhanced by your ability to take your own experience and give specific examples and maybe telling stories sometimes to make these things sort of relevant.

CAC: Sure.

BL: (a) I get a lot of satisfaction about being able to make a contribution to the community in terms of the issues that they're dealing with and helping move things along; and (b) it feeds my teaching and improves, I think that; and (c) it develops networks, my contacts with the community, so I think this is extremely helpful for job placement of my graduates, and I can open some doors for internship opportunities or a final job, and it also allows me to bring other people into the classroom. I teach a two and a half hour session this quarter every Wednesday night, Introduction to Planning. For one hour of that two and a half, many times, I'll bring in somebody from the community whom I know and it's not just calling them up and not knowing what . . .

CAC: Sure, you've worked with them.

BL: I know what they do and I'm able to link it into the syllabus.

CAC: And you've done it *with* them.

BL: Yes. I've worked *with* them.

CAC: They know, when you do this on a volunteer basis, which most of these positions are

. . . ?

BL: Yes.

CAC: . . . that they're getting someone from the university? Again, I'm coming back to the theme of the university in the community and that's another way to do it. It's not only as a consultant for twenty years, but in this capacity. It's an outreach that is not formally recognized generally. It will be by specific groups. The Citizen's League knows that you're coming from the university . . .

BL: Oh yes.

CAC: . . . with all that experience and background?

BL: Yes.

CAC: They're drawing on your talent, and experience, and connections?

BL: Right. I think the university, through its faculty and from me just as one example, is drawing on the expertise in this voluntary capacity. It's also giving more visibility to what the university can do. We haven't had a chance to talk about CURA; but, I am such a big supporter of CURA's mission and the way in which it is willing to experiment, and willing to sort of try things out, and provide resources. CURA, for example, helps to support four planning interns every year working for local governments for twenty hours a week. It gives these four planning students a tremendous work experience for their résumé and, at the same time, CURA covers half the cost for the city or the county so that the county, in its budget or the city in its budget, can say here they're getting X hundred hours of really talented people who can take on professional level jobs at a very modest cost. I get calls—I sort of supervise this piece of CURA—saying, "Send me somebody else who is Mark." [laughter] They've had really good experiences with that.

CAC: What's the payoff for the university, to ask a crude question. I think these things are not largely visible with the citizenry generally or the legislature, let us say.

BL: No. The payoff for the university is that it does have an enhanced presence in the community; but, probably, the direct beneficiaries of that presence aren't always the ones that the decision makers are communicating with.

CAC: I've had to do so much reading and talk with so many people the last four months, Barbara, and what comes up is taconite—we're still playing that one—or the development of particular brands of soybeans. What you're talking about never is brought to me as something that the university represents to the community; but, as you're talking, it is of enormous and persisting significance.

BL: I think so. The classes that we teach, too . . . I taught a course on strategic project planning last year. Students are required to take a real life project. One group, for example, took on a project for the Minneapolis School District where they were concerned about violence in school buses. They, essentially, developed a plan as to how you could work with the transportation, have bus monitors, and potentially look at how you could get those AFDC [Aid to Families with Dependent Children] moms get training to do that and at the same time meeting the school monitoring needs. That is a non-traditional sort of—quote—planning problem or social.

CAC: Ohhh. It touches the lives of many people.

BL: Yes. The assistant superintendent, Betty Webb, was just thrilled to pieces with the quality of the work that these three students had done in ten weeks.

CAC: The other thing that people in Morrill Hall talk about is the high-tech corridor. Again, I'm putting the work that you represent so well as of enormous significance in the old Land-[Grant] mission of the University of Minnesota and, yet, it doesn't get, as I read it, much publicity. I'm wondering why that is the case.

BL: The case may be that it's so dispersed in hundreds of relatively small project; therefore, it's not as visible as one or two really big projects. The overall impact is tremendous . . . hundreds of them every year.

CAC: Oh! I certainly know more about it now than I did two hours ago.

BL: I hope it was useful.

CAC: Have you got any other final reflections about this whole story?

BL: [laughter] The story is that the higher education system . . . I appreciate its flexibility to bring people like myself back into the academic community. It allows me to live in multiple worlds at the same time. I don't think it would be as easy back in England if I were there.

CAC: It's wonderful for you; but, it's wonderful for the community.

BL: I think it's a win/win situation.

CAC: Yes.

BL: I don't think we are able to somehow toot our own horn in enough market places. We've got to find new avenues of talking about how the little things mount up to a great contribution.

CAC: You see yourself doing this for a time more?

BL: I hope so! I don't know how retrenchment is going to impact all of these things or which way academia is going, whether or not practitioner scholars, like myself, are going to have as much a role in the future as they've had in the past. I think as resources get tighter, I see less opportunity for reflective practitioners to really play the kind of role . . . I look back and I'm not sure that if I were coming into academia today with the experience that I had that I would be able to carry the niche that I'm now carrying—and that's sort of sad.

CAC: As they say in New Zealand, "Good on ya!"

BL: All right. [laughter]

CAC: Thank you very, very much.

BL: You're welcome.

[End of Tape 1, Side 2]

[End of the Interview]

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Hermes Transcribing and Research Service  
12617 Fairgreen Avenue, Apple Valley, MN 55124  
(612) 953-0730