

Eleanor Fenton

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Interview with Eleanor Fenton

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

**Interviewed on January 23, 1995
at the Home of Eleanor Fenton**

Eleanor Fenton - EF
Clarke A. Chambers - CAC

CAC: This is Clarke Chambers and I'm interviewing this morning Eleanor Salisbury Fenton, better and affectionately known by everyone as Sis Salisbury and, then, Sis Fenton. We are conducting the interview on January 23, 1995, a Monday morning, in her home in North Oaks overlooking lots of oaks and other trees and the winter landscape.

I suggested before we turned on this machine that we would start first with some autobiography, where you came from, family, early education, what influences there were there, how you got into graduate school, etcetera. You start in and I'll interrupt when it seems . . .

EF: Please, do. I might get too lengthy. [laughter] I'm inclined to do that.

CAC: [laughter]

EF: I was born and reared in Minneapolis, went to Kenwood School and University High School in the days when there was a University High School. I graduated right in the middle of the Depression for us in 1935 and went to college, not the college of my choice. My father couldn't afford to send me to Wellesley, so I went to Milwaukee Downer College . . .

CAC: Heavens.

EF: . . . which turned out to be very lucky for me. This probably is something I shouldn't throw in . . .

CAC: Oh, by all means. Anything you throw in is fine.

EF: . . . but I'm basically a very shy person, and my parents recognized that, and thought I'd better go to a women's college where I could find myself able to achieve leadership roles and so on.

CAC: Bravo. It was a women's college and a Catholic College?

EF: No. It's Protestant, I guess. They were all based in a Protestant religion of some kind in those days, I guess. Then, I came back and went to the University of Minnesota. Again, a very personal note . . . I needed to get to know people in this area again having been away from the age of sixteen to twenty, very formative years.

CAC: You went to college very young. You were precocious.

EF: I guess so.

CAC: Of course, you were.

EF: I came back and pledged a sorority, which turned out to be a very good thing for me to do because then I could make a body of friends in this area. I think that's important if you plan to live in a town. I went to the University of Minnesota for a year and a quarter in the School of, then called, Business Administration and enjoyed that greatly.

CAC: You must have been one of a very few women students at that time?

EF: That is true, but I've never been very conscious of that for some strange reason. I realize in retrospect my mother was an ardent feminist but she was very much a homemaker. She really steered me very quietly to ignore things of that nature and not to make anything of them. Then, I went to work at Anderson's China Store . . .

CAC: Ohhh, I know that, yes.

EF: . . . in downtown Minneapolis. I was only there a year, but it was a wonderful experience for me because I like beautiful things. I took a lot of art, and painting, and so on when I was in college—actually, I was an English major but with an art and French minor—and it steered me in the direction of having a little taste, if you will. That was a wonderful experience.

CAC: The senior Mr. Anderson must have been a wonderful manager and boss?

EF: He was a wonderful manager and he did what I've learned later is one of the most important things a manager can do and that is select a good staff. I'm not speaking of myself, but the head buyer was absolutely superb. He let her run the place and she finally decided that I was worth developing a little bit and offered me an assistantship as an assistant buyer, which sounded very glamorous at age twenty-one, of course . . . with trips to New York and . . .

CAC: Of course.

EF: But, the war came along.

CAC: Ah.

EF: This was 1941 and so in 1942, I joined the Navy and I went to Mt. Holyoke for a two-week introductory session and, then, to Smith College for three months.

CAC: Was this a direct commission?

EF: You'd go through basic training and, then, I became an ensign in March of 1943, I guess it must have been, and was assigned to Washington, D.C. where again—most of my life has been luck I think—I was in luck.

CAC: It won't surprise you how many people say that.

EF: I think it's true.

CAC: Yes, it was true with lots of people.

EF: Yes. I was assigned to the top secret code room of the chief of naval operations, so I was right smack dab in the middle of the war. That was, again, a wonderful experience because I lived in a large house in Chevy Chase with nine other WAVE [Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service] officers from all over the country. I was born and reared very conservative, very Protestant, anti-Semitic, anti-Catholic, all those things that were common, I think, in the 1920s and 1930s. My friends there were from the south, and the east, and the west, and the northeast and the most liberal people in the whole place were from Georgia and Tennessee. In fact, the woman from Georgia . . . her father was speaker of the Georgia House in those days and that was when Georgia was becoming very liberated with a very liberal governor. Norma had had a debut and she was really from the upper classes in Georgia, but she was as liberal as they come and so was my friend from Tennessee, who incidentally, later started the [Project] Head Start when she got through school.

CAC: Heavens.

EF: It was a fairly select group of women. We were the second class and they tried to be very choosy in those days. That was a marvelous broadening experience for me. I got out in 1946.

CAC: Did you do cryptography?

EF: Not really because that was all done on machine by that time. In order to qualify for the code room—you know the armed services—you have to go through all kinds of ridiculous training.

CAC: I was doing cryptography by hand out in the Marianas at the same time.

EF: You see, I was probably sending messages to you. [laughter]

CAC: No, I was in the Air Corps, but we were doing hand cryptography.

EF: We all had to learn to do it.

CAC: We'd be decoding and coding.

EF: Yes, we were doing it in machines in those days. I got out of the Navy, and came back to the university, and decided to go to graduate school. I didn't know what I wanted to do. Again, luck . . . I decided I would try to get into a master's program in philosophy. I lucked on George P. Conger who I suppose . . .

CAC: Oh, my what a grand old man he was.

EF: He was certainly a mentor and talk about an open mind. He always said everything was [unclear]. He said being open minded means having an open mind but not open at both ends.

CAC: [laughter]

EF: He exemplified it. He couldn't stand the word tolerant for example. He thought that should be expunged. It isn't tolerance. It's understanding and acceptance. George Conger was certainly a mentor. I spent four years in Graduate School. During that time, I got interested in politics. I was still a Republican. I got a job working for Harold Stassen.

CAC: Ahhh.

EF: I was the second person he hired [unclear] staff.

CAC: Good grief.

EF: He didn't hire me. His secretary hired me to run the ditto machine—maybe we had mimeograph machine, I can't remember—and supervise envelope stuffings. This was in 1946.

CAC: He was gearing up for 1948?

EF: He was gearing up for 1948 and, then, also during that time, I got a job for one quarter in the state legislature as a page, which was a wonderful experience because I learned about politics on the House floor and learned to stand cigar smoke. That, too, was a great experience. I went back on the Stassen staff, still at the time trying to take some graduate work, and went to the 1948 convention. That was pretty exciting.

CAC: Boy, that was an exciting one.

EF: Yes, discouraging because we knew he wouldn't win, but it was still exciting to do that. I'm trying to think if there were any mentors. Stassen wasn't a mentor. He was too distant a person to be that, but there were some people on his staff who were pretty good. I finally got my degree in 1950.

CAC: In philosophy?

EF: A master's degree in philosophy and comparative philosophy.

CAC: What other persons did you work with other than . . . ?

EF: Mostly Conger . . . Paul Holmer was one of my teachers. I had three or four very good teachers all of whom went off and became famous someplace else. John Hospers taught Aesthetics. Wilfred Sellers was a superb teacher. He taught Plato, and Aristotle, and all of those good things. But, mostly Conger was the person I really wanted to take courses from. I did have May Brodbeck though. She came my last year. I finally got the M.A. in 1950. Then, I wanted to go on for a Ph.D. Of course, in those days—I don't know how it is now—they were not taking women graduates in the Philosophy Department into the Ph.D. program. I suppose I wrote to fifty colleges—I don't know what kind of thing I must have written . . . probably very poor applications—saying I couldn't go on my own and I would like to have an assistantship and teach something but I wanted to complete a Ph.D. I got some very interesting letters back and I wish I had saved them. One in particular, I'll never forget was from Brown University and it said, "We do not hire women on our staff." Many of the rest of them made allusions to that possibility. I couldn't get a job . . . It was no great thing. I'm not a scholar.

CAC: You weren't dismayed by being turned back just because you were female?

EF: No, I was upset and disappointed, but it didn't really hit me over the head. I do think there are several sides to this sticky issue. Those were the days when you were hired by the old boy network, as you probably know.

CAC: As I was.

EF: As we all were. [laughter] I had made a very good friend at the university by the name of Mimi Nolte.

CAC: Ohhh.

EF: Mimi, at that point, was at Vassar and they were looking for a director of recruiting, so I was asked to come out to Vassar and be interviewed. I went there for a weekend and I felt out of my element. I didn't go to one of the Seven Sisters. It seemed to me I wouldn't fit—but they decided that, too. I came home and I didn't care one way or another. They didn't hire me. I found out later that they didn't really fill the position for another year or so, but that has nothing to do with it. I was not an appropriate person. So, Mimi simply told her father [Julius Nolte] that I needed a job.

CAC: That helps.

EF: That helped. So, I got a job as assistant to the dean. Malcolm Willey was the other vice-president, at that point, and Malcolm Willey told Julius Nolte that this position . . . I was the first assistant to the dean at the university and it was not an academic position for I don't know how long. [laughter] It says on the vitae.

CAC: But, it wasn't civil service either?

EF: No, it wasn't civil service. It wasn't anything. It was I suppose the first P & A [Professional and Administrative]. Three or four years later, Julius finally persuaded Malcolm that I should be an instructor and that started me up the line. If ever I had a mentor, it was Julius Nolte.

CAC: Say more about him then because he is a central figure.

EF: He is certainly a central figure. He was an absolutely fascinating man, born and reared in Duluth, did everything that young Duluthians did in his day. He logged. He mined and all that sort of business. He graduated from UM-D [University of Minnesota-Duluth] with a degree in English literature. He was about as literate a person as I've ever come across. I can't believe the stretch of that man's mind. He wrote the most wonderful limericks that anybody in the world ever wrote.

CAC: Where do you suppose they're preserved?

EF: I'm sure Mimi has them. I hope Mimi has them. Some of them were decent enough so that they could be recited in public . . . many of them were not. He had a turn of phrase and a knowledge of the language that was incredible. Incidentally, he went on to get a law degree, which . . . I don't think he ever practiced law. He got a job at UM-D in Extension—I don't know all the details of that—and, then, came to the university here. Of course, UM-D wasn't UM-D in those days. It was a junior college. He was the first person I was ever conscious of—although I'm sure George Conger was this way, too—who was truly, in his attitudes, asexual, truly asexual

. . . a very sexy man, actually, with a lot of charisma. That's a dreadful word. He was that kind of a person, but he really treated people without regard to their sex.

CAC: That's something.

EF: Yes, it was really something. I began then to see that it could be done and that it was important. So, that helped. During the first few years that I was employed, I also took a few courses in—by this time, I thought I should know something about education; I'd never taken a course in education—educational administration and I ran into Marcia Edwards, another mentor.

CAC: Ohhh.

EF: She was just a wonderful, wonderful person, very firm. She told me the very first time we consulted about anything, "If you don't get a Ph.D., you're going no place at this university." I said, "I'm sure that's true, Dr. Edwards, and I'll try." [laughter] I never got one. I might as well say that right now. I had Jack Darley and Horace Morse . . .

CAC: [gasp]

EF: . . . teaching a course together in Educational Administration. There, again, both of them mentors, but not as close. They certainly knew me and I saw a lot of them. They were such superb teachers in that team teaching. The two of them were just incredible. I didn't know what I was getting into when I signed up for that.

CAC: They certainly weren't very similar in personality and character.

EF: No, not at all. Jack Darley describing the way the university works . . . it was just as absolute eye opener to me. I should have said higher education. They both used the university as an example.

CAC: Can you remember specifically the kinds of things that Jack might have said about how the university was put together?

EF: I'll never forget the day that we arrived in class and he had drawn on the board an organization chart of the university with the Board of Regents, the president, and blah, blah, blah, blah. Then, he had drawn next to it kind of a collapsed organization chart showing the lines of strength and power at that time within the university. Then, he turned around—by this time, the class was sort of bored with the whole thing—and he said, "Miss Salisbury, what shall I draw to show how the university really works?" He picked on me because I was, of course, on the staff. I said, "I'm sorry Dr. Darley." He started drawing a great big wavy line and so on. He said, "This is an amoeba and over here, we have the Campus Club."

CAC: Ahhh.

EF: "That's here and that's really impinging . . ." He drew this out. It was just marvelous. He said, "The university is run from the Campus Club and you might as well know that now." Of course, those were the days when in the Campus Club there was what we women called "the order of the Sansevieria." There was a demarcation line planted with Sansevieria and the women could go on one side and the men on the other.

CAC: Was that in the reading room?

EF: No, this was in the dining room. Isn't that marvelous?

CAC: Yes.

EF: Of course, the men hardly noticed it, but we were very conscious of it . . .

CAC: God!

EF: . . . and made more so as more and more women finally were added to the staff. Incidentally, I should say right off that I think one of the reasons that I appeared on so many committees and so on is that when I started in there, there weren't very many women on the staff. I could almost name the handful. There were two professors, one in History and one in Philosophy . . . Mary Shaw in Philosophy and who was in History?

CAC: Alice Felt Tyler.

EF: Exactly. Those were the only two professors I knew. There may have been professors in Home Ec[onomics].

CAC: There was Faith Thompson in History, too, but she was so [unclear].

EF: You're right.

CAC: There weren't many.

EF: No, not many.

CAC: When they retired, we didn't replace for twenty years.

EF: I'm not surprised.

CAC: I'm not surprised. It wasn't until the early 1970s that we . . .

EF: I think that's one reason . . . there was some consciousness sort of growing in administration anyway that it was necessary to start putting women on committees . . . looked around and here was a handful of women to qualify, as it were. I think that's one explanation.

CAC: All this time you're an assistant to the dean in what was then the Extension Division by name?

EF: Yes, General Extension Division [GED].

CAC: What sort of assignments did you have then as assistant to Dean Nolte?

EF: Like everything else at the university in those days—you've already pointed this out—the staff was small so the assistant to the dean didn't really do much assisting to the dean. I really assisted the, then, director of Extension Evening Classes, it was called. I spent most of my time doing that. I did all the marketing, such as it was. I put together the *Bulletin*, which was a wonderful opportunity because in doing that I had to go around and meet everybody on the faculty who taught for us and arrange for all the courses. I got a university-wide look at things which also helped me. I've always thought that one of the advantages of being in General Extension is that, except for the St. Paul campus in those days, you got to know the whole university. You had to know the whole university. You not only knew who the good guys were . . . of course, the good guys were the ones who believed that adults had minds and that they enjoyed teaching them and the bad guys were the ones who really weren't interested . . . I always thought they really weren't interested in teaching.

CAC: They were moonlighting.

EF: And they were moonlighting. I don't blame anybody for that. Salaries were terrible. We used to argue with the Scandinavian Department, for example, because they'd hire teachers and tell them, "We can't pay you very much but you can teach evening classes." Very common . . . and I understand that.

CAC: How could you tell . . . was it student kickback to you that you could judge how these things were going or was it your own judgment just talking to these folks?

EF: Just talking to them.

CAC: You'd know right away?

EF: You'd know right away. I'd call them up and say, "I'm sorry, you've only got three people in X class and we can't afford to have you teach that." They'd say, "What am I going to live on?" I'm not surprised. In those days though, I will say, we had a policy that people were allowed to teach for whatever the tuition that they could bring in was. Now, I realized after awhile that that was a terrible policy and I said, "We're either going to establish a bottom line

below which we simply don't teach a class, but we're going to pay everybody the full salary. If we let them teach, they're going to pay the full salary." That's one of the things I did in Extension.

CAC: Do you have a sense of the quality then overall of the teaching staff at that time, doing evening work and the quality of the students?

EF: I don't think the quality of the students has ever changed.

CAC: You would describe it as what?

EF: I think we have in Extension, or did have in Extension, two or three kinds of students. I haven't even thought this through. I would say we had those that are there because they think they have to get some credits on a specific program in order to maintain their employment or become employed. There are those who take courses simply because they don't have anything else to do with their time in the evenings. They just sort of bounce around. Then, there are those that I would call the really assertive learners, aggressive learners, who really like to study and learn and they come year after year after year and just take courses. They discover teachers and they'll come and take anything that Clarke Chambers teaches. It doesn't matter; they'll take anything. I would call those real learners. I have no idea of the proportions, but I should guess that it's 40 or 50 percent of the last.

CAC: I remember a good number of students in that category because my evening classes were smaller in size than my day school. I was teaching 300 people in the day school and maybe 35 or 40 at night. I found there were a lot of high school teachers, secondary school teachers, who were in that latter category. They really wanted to learn because they wanted to carry it back into the classroom.

EF: Oh, sure, and History, of course, so many teachers . . .

CAC: Social studies, yes.

EF: . . . need and want . . . They're in the field because they're interested in the field, which I think is terribly exciting. I have a niece who teaches history and social studies. She's just a very enthusiastic teacher.

CAC: What proportions would you guess, from the instructional side, were in for supplementing income and which were really interested in working with adults?

EF: I can't guess that, Clarke. I think the people who were really interested in working for adults were few and far between. I say that because contrary to other opinions one might hear, I think that most university faculty members work very hard and they don't have energy to teach at night. Unless they're terribly driven to teach adults, it's just too much to expect of them. I

think many were there for the money, but they found that the teaching was very satisfying. But, I don't know what the numbers are.

CAC: This was a large program, Sis.

EF: Huge, just huge.

CAC: Compared with day time enrollment—I know that it's all part-time and evening—is there any comparison of the size of the students being served in the evening?

EF: I'm sure it has varied over the years. Of course, the measurement is difficult because, in my day, the day students were more full-time than they became over the years, so to compare full-time day students with part-time night students is sort of unfair. In sheer numbers, in night school, we almost consistently had more students in night school than in day school over the years. But, when you talk about student credit hours, then it drops down; although, I'm not sure that's a fair way. Today, who can sort it out? There's so many night school, so-called Extension students, taking day classes and registering through Extension . . .

CAC: And vice versa.

EG: . . . and vice versa that who can sort it out? It was a godsend, of course, to out of state students because they could come to Extension and take a couple of years' worth of credits and then earn their way into being accepted as day students.

CAC: Yes.

EG: I know that in all the years I was there, the University of Minnesota Extension was the biggest general extension in the world, I guess, and I think it still is probably. I don't have any idea what the figures are now.

CAC: Sticking still with the 1950s for the moment—historians always move chronologically—this portfolio really gave you the opportunity to learn the wider university not only the Arts College but in Engineering and the Agriculture and related schools?

EF: Yes, that's right. Although, of course, the Arts College was the most important. It was the most important to me anyway from my background. More people taught from the Arts College. The engineers have always been a little bit, what shall I say . . . I don't want to say that they were superior to teaching at night but many of them felt that way. They also felt more strongly that you couldn't learn engineering and all the IT [Institute of Technology] things at night. You'd have to be there during the day.

CAC: I'm looking at your vitae here which lists the various committees you were on. It's kind of a slow start in the 1950s and, then, the 1960s really just break away.

EF: Yes.

CAC: I look at university and college committees and it really expands. Before we go into the 1960s, you were on hand . . . you were on ground floor for the creation of Continuing Education for Women [CEW]?

EF: Yes.

CAC: Tell a bit about that story, please.

EF: Of course, I don't know all of the details, but I think that came about because Liz Cless came to Julius Nolte . . .

CAC: Who was she?

EF: All I know about Liz is that her parents were well-known St. Paul people. Her mother was in art and her father was a vice-president. Liz came to Julius Nolte . . .

CAC: Just from the outside?

EF: Just from the outside and at the same time, Virginia [Ginny] Senders was making a name for herself. I don't know anything about Virginia's sources. I know she's a psychologist. The two of them persuaded Julius Nolte that they should start a program in Continuing Education for Women in 1959.

CAC: They perceived this in what way, as you heard these conversations?

EF: That was an interesting combination of people because Liz was a liberal arts background person and Virginia was a social sciences background person. Virginia saw it as a reentry for women into the labor force and Liz saw it as cultural development, I guess is the best way to put that; but, the two combined made a very good combination. They managed to get a lovely grant from one of the big foundations; it might have been Ford. It was a three-year—the way they always were in those days—grant. It was the first one in the country. They started right in with a magnificent program that I think has never been replicated.

CAC: And there was no model at all for this?

EF: No model at all.

CAC: It just had to be creative inspiration on the spot?

EF: Creative inspiration.

CAC: Mr. Nolte as you described him earlier was . . .

EF: It was just ideal for him because that was the kind of a person he was. He combined a complete interest in English literature, and philosophy, and all those things with a real down to earth—he was a noted geologist among other things—scientific stuff that goes around. He just thought this was ideal. Of course, Liz managed to get the very top people on the faculty to teach . . . just an incredible array of people.

CAC: Were you on that committee or were you just observing it from within the . . . ?

EF: I was just observing it. Liz and Julius together assembled the, by that time, several women on the Extension staff to form sort of an inside committee. So, we were sort of advisory to Liz but she didn't need any.

CAC: I was wondering where this idea came for New Worlds of Knowledge, which was a real inspiration, a new way to open things up.

EF: I know. I think out of Liz and Ginny's heads and then the people they talked to. I think the faculty just sat down and talked for hours.

CAC: Ralph Ross?

EF: Ralph Ross, J. [W.] Buchta . . .

CAC: Ahhh, of course.

EF: I should have kept a list. It was the top faculty at the university, no question of it. John Wolf . . . incidentally, I should have mentioned him. What a superb teacher he was. Oh, boy!

CAC: We still correspond quite regularly.

EF: I'm glad to know he's still alive.

CAC: Oh, live and Theda is ninety-one years old and reading books and writing criticisms to us.

EF: Ohhh. I took a lot of humanities from him simply because he was such a good teacher. He'd face a class of 250, and call us by name, and call on us. Of course, that just made my hand go up like that because it was so much fun. He was a mentor in terms of teaching ability, I must say, although I knew I'd never be a teacher.

CAC: Were there other introductory courses?

EF: New Worlds of Knowledge was the first one. I think that was all that was taught the first year. New Worlds of Knowledge covered all the fields, now that I think of it.

CAC: You bet it did.

EF: It covered the social sciences . . .

CAC: The natural sciences.

EF: . . . and the natural sciences. It was done that way on purpose. Yes. Then, there was one that was more concentrated on literature in about the third year, I guess, and Ralph Ross took care of that one, set it up, and organized it, and so on. Basically, there were the two main courses for several years, but, new people teaching in them every year. Some would stay over, and some didn't want to continue, and some didn't work out as well as they themselves thought they did.

CAC: How soon does the nickname "Rusty Ladies" get attached to that program and by whom?

EF: I wish I could answer that. That is something that people do sort of argue about. I think Saul Bellow called that . . .

CAC: He was in humanities at that time?

EF: Yes. I think it was he who named it, but I'm not sure. That's when I first became aware of it.

CAC: Many of the clients, the students in the courses, were, in fact, rather well-to-do, elite women in their late thirties and forties?

EF: Oh, heavens, yes.

CAC: They were, in a sense, ladies and picked the term up themselves, didn't they?

EF: Without any question. The Social Register . . . that's where Liz came from in St. Paul, and she knew everybody in St. Paul and several people in Minneapolis, and that's how it started. The emphasis then was on the cultural end, which I think made Ginny Senders not terribly happy. Eventually, she left the program—I don't know when—because she didn't feel it was going career direction enough. Eventually, it started to do that through great effort on the part of several people.

CAC: Namely?

EF: I can remember going and talking to Isabel Harris in Nursing.

CAC: Ahhh, yes.

EF: I can't think who her predecessor was . . . Katherine Densfield [Katharine Densford]? She wasn't interested at all. Unfortunately, this is what happened with the career oriented tracks. She said, "You can't learn nursing by going to a few seminars." She was right, but that was hard to take and hard then to figure out how to introduce some career oriented things that had validity.

CAC: I'm guessing that a lot of them slid sideways into law with greater ease?

EF: I wouldn't be surprised, sure. Oh! nobody would have thought of going to the Law School for anything like that. Law School deans, in my experience . . . even the wonderful dean who was after [Everett] Fraser, [Maynard] Pirsig wouldn't have come near it. His successor wasn't any better and Bob Stein was even worse, so it was not a field that we could make any inroads in, which is too bad, in a sense. Although, I with a lot of other people think a liberal arts background is the best thing you can do for law.

CAC: The program had outside financing the first three years. Then, does the university pick it up?

EF: Yes, that's right. That's something that probably a point needs to be made of . . . the fact that Extension classes has always carried all of CEE [Continuing Education and Extension], all of it, all of General Extension Division.

CAC: I see, it's all self-sustaining.

EF: It's self sustaining because Extension classes make money. That has lead over the years to the belief that if the departments could get their hands on the Extension money, they would have the money, which couldn't work that way for a lot of reasons. We get it cheap in Extension. You're already on the staff. We don't have to pay your benefits or anything like that.

CAC: I see.

EF: All we do is pay your salary, so we can make money. If we get enough classes with fifty or sixty people on it, then, we can carry a few that only have nine or ten and, then, the rest is gravy and that supports the rest, and always has, of General Extension. It's very hard to convert that money into use by departments. There's no way that it would work, but it's a constant tug and pull. When the CEW money ran out, I think they had it renewed for the second three years and then it was the end.

CAC: By that time, the program has its own vitality.

EF: That's right. It was slowly changing. Ginny Senders left. I think Liz left.

CAC: Then you had someone in counseling that was crucial to this?

EF: Vera Schletzer.

CAC: Was she a counselor to the Extension Division?

EF: No. Vera moved in and took Virginia Sender's place when Ginny left. By that time, CEW was in two pieces. One was the teaching end and the other was the counseling end. The counseling end had sort of a semi connection with the Student Counseling Bureau, so it was a separate entity. Vera was then on the Student Counseling staff. I had been doing all of the student advising in Extension, in the old GED and it got to be a pretty heavy load.

CAC: How on earth could you do that and do all these other things?

EF: I don't know . . . how I did it was not well is the answer. Again, I got to know the whole university. I knew all the programs, all of the curricula.

CAC: Whew!

EF: I knew every university and college and little podunk thing in the country because I was evaluating transcripts all the time and saying, "I think this will transfer." It was a wonderful education for me, Clarke. Julius Nolte was the kind of a person who just turned me loose.

CAC: That sounds like a twenty-hour job to me though.

EF: Yes, it was.

CAC: I mean a day not a week. [laughter]

EF: I know. I finally told Julius that—I never called him Julius incidentally . . . Dean Nolte—we really should have somebody hired to do the counseling. He said, "Go and find somebody." [laughter] I interviewed two people from the Student Counseling Bureau, one of whom was Vera. I said, "There's no question in my mind that what we want is Vera." I hired her and she set up the Counseling Bureau.

CAC: Is Barbara Stuhler part of the team at this point or does that come in later?

EF: Barbara was the first woman Julius brought in in what I'd call a managerial position, not secretarial, in other words. Barbara came in 1950—I came in 1951—to be in the World Affairs Center.

CAC: Which was under the General Extension?

EF: Which was under the General . . . another one of Julius' brilliant ideas. That was his idea to have the World Affairs Center. It was combined with something called the State Organization Service.

CAC: Yes.

EF: The State Organization Service was a service for state organizations and the World Affairs Center was an offshoot. He brought in Bill Rogers and where Bill came from, I can't tell you. Bill, eventually, hired an assistant and Barbara came in as his assistant. She was there in his office for a long time. Her field is really economics and politics. Then, she finally became an associate dean . . . I can't remember when. There were two or three of us by that time.

CAC: From the outside . . .

[End of Tape 1, Side 1]

[Tape 1, Side 2]

CAC: You and Barbara were partners, I'm guessing, in quite a few things?

EF: Yes, we did a lot of things together. Although, Barb is a good administrator, she's a reluctant administrator. She'd much rather study and write. In fact, she's just coming out with a book.

[break in the interview]

CAC: Maybe, we should shift now and talk a bit about . . . It is in the 1960s, as I look, that you begin to take on just a large number of . . . the Tenure Advisory Committee, the first assistant professor, the first woman on the Senate Committee of Business and Rules, the first woman on the Campus Club Board—we'll come back to the Campus Club—the Senate Committee on Committees. You said that was very important. Why don't you say something about—do you want to look at this list?—these committees, and how they function, and how you really think that they help perform the function of the university . . . making it work?

EF: You've got the Tenure Advisory Committee . . . that was a strange committee in the sense that it reported to—remember?—Dean [Robert Edward] Summers.

CAC: Yes . . . summer school.

EF: Summer school and he was director of admissions in those days. Why that had anything to do with the Tenure Advisory Committee, I'll never know. I was very green and I had no idea why I was there. I was awed. Again, I think it was the feeling of, I got to find a woman, and

it's got to be a faculty member, and there I was. I will say, I think Julius—in retrospect—Nolte pushed me into things. He wanted to have GED visible in the university and I seemed to be a person who was willing to do this. In fact, I loved it. [laughter] He could see that.

CAC: Do you think in his mind and in the mind of others that this came to be part of what you were expected to do for your salary and for your position?

EF: Absolutely. I'm sure of it. In fact, one of my first assignments in GED in 1951 was to draw up the program of what was then called the National University Extension Association Annual Meeting. I didn't go to it. It was in Oregon; I remember that. I was supposed to draw up the program. I had no idea what I was doing, but I drew up the program. [laughter] So, you see I got to know people all around the country in extension.

CAC: God!

EF: I went to the next one the next year. About four or five years later, I eventually took over what was then a four-page little flyer of the National University Extension Association. He said, "Develop a National . . ." [laughter] Well, Clarke, you know Extension is not that . . . I'm sorry. I don't even consider it a professional outfit. I don't consider it academically professional.

CAC: I do.

EF: It's pretty much on the edge. I'd had to agree with the P & A thing even though I fought it desperately. I think he pushed me. He pushed me both locally and nationally. I don't think he saw me as a person to be used. He just saw me as somebody who would be useful to GED.

CAC: You did good work on the job so you got [unclear].

EF: I suppose. There were lots of people in the old GED who had been around a long time and were not that interested in doing the university-wide thing. There weren't very many of us so there I was. I just owe that to him. He saw somebody who wanted to do something.

CAC: Which of these committees were bureaucratic and which ones were really policy? You're on so many of them.

EF: I know.

CAC: Can you give us a comparison?

EF: This ridiculous little Senate Educational Policy Subcommittee on the university's mission, frankly, was something that was a combined committee of education, educational policy, and another university committee I was on. Ruth Eckert, and Cy Barnum—did you ever know Cy Barnum?— . . .

CAC: Oh, yes.

EF: . . . and Merrill Rassweiler from General College, and I were this subcommittee, but Ruth did it.

CAC: She's powerful.

EF: She never became a mentor because I never could warm up to her or she couldn't warm up to me in the sense of really helping me, but I learned so much from Ruth about power and about how to use it.

CAC: What do you mean by using power?

EF: She used it by knowing her field so well and knowing the university so well that when she drew something up and presented it, who could argue with Ruth Eckert?

CAC: The lesson of doing your homework.

EF: I also learned some kind of interesting words like [unclear] from Ruth. [laughter]

CAC: Is that the same as interfacing?

EF: I think so. That was a tiny little committee, but it had a real effect—which nobody could ever trace at this point—on what the university's mission was. There were lots of relationships then with other colleges and universities in the state, many more so than are now the case. We used to go out and evaluate the private colleges in the state . . . one committee, Institutional Relationships I guess it was. In order to do that with any degree of knowledge, we not only had to know what the whole higher educational scene was but what the university's role was and that was the reason for the committee. It was to define the university's mission.

CAC: What did you and the committee see as the university's mission at that time.

EF: I think it was to maintain our superiority, if you will—though it was never put that way—to be a servant of the lesser lights, shall we say, in higher education, to be there to . . .

CAC: To set a model?

EF: . . . to set a model but to train their teachers.

CAC: Ahhh. So, it really was a hierarchical sense of the university . . .

EF: Without any question. I don't think anybody, certainly on that committee and I guess not probably anyplace, of the powerful people that I ran into in those days . . . the university was

head and shoulders above. We didn't worry about who came. We didn't worry about diversity. We didn't worry about anything like that . . . accessibility. That was not important.

CAC: It was academic standards?

EF: It was academic standards and, as you say, a model. It was above the salt and below the salt sort of thing very definitely, which Ruth exemplified and did very well indeed.

CAC: This may seem as a marginal question; but, it's been my impression—maybe incorrect—that not many persons from the health sciences ever serve on All-University committees and Cy Barnum was out of there.

EF: Yes.

CAC: Could you say something about why Cy and his commitment to the larger university?

EF: I don't know that I ever got to know Cy very well. Actually, he and I grew up in Kenwood, but he was older than I, of course. I think he had as good a marginal commitment to the university, the whole university, as most people from the health sciences did in those days. I can think of two or three that served that way.

CAC: Dr. [Maurice] Visscher?

EF: Yes. Meade Kabrud when he was . . . Bob Howard before he was a dean and after he was a dean, of course. Richard Varco . . . did I mention him? He was another one, surprisingly. Cy was quiet but very strong minded. I thought he was very, what I would have called, left-wing in those days.

CAC: I think he's out of the old YMCA [Young Men's Christian Association], the social gospel.

EF: Oh, yes. That was another interesting thing I learned from that little committee . . . he brought that view to the committee unabashedly, which he should have and always did. It was very important. I don't know how it influenced Ruth who finally wrote the report, but it was very important. I saw the importance, which I needed to learn of the Mulford Sibleys and people of his ilk who irritated lots of people because they asked for such outrageous things and, yet, how do we move in that direction unless we have those people out there? That was something I learned from being on that committee. We met, I think, weekly for a year. As I say, I sat kind of on the sidelines. I can't even imagine what I contributed, but Ruth certainly did. It was a very interesting learning experience for me and I thought it was useful to the university for those days.

CAC: I'm going to press a bit on this. If we get places you really can't answer, that's fine. We'll go on to something else. On these committees, it gave you a chance to work with individuals from different colleges and different parts of the university?

EF: Yes.

CAC: But, you must also have had an awful good sense of which units in the university were well-managed and were up to this kind of work?

EF: Yes.

CAC: Could you share that? We're thinking now of the 1960s, which really would have been [Meredith] Met Wilson's presidency. You talk about Education and the figures there who were powerful. Do you have other observations?

EF: Yes, I think I can answer that to some extent. Again, it goes back to my belief that it's strong people who make organizations, institutions work. I think, in those days, there were some very strong people in Education, Ruth being one. Hod Morse made the General College work.

CAC: Ah!

EF: That was a very well-run college in those days, extremely well-run, I thought . . . from my point of view. English was sort of a sloppy mess, but it had some big stars in it—at least that was my impression. It had some wonderful big stars and when you have wonderful big stars, I guess it doesn't matter. Music was hopeless. Art was pretty divided. There was Art History and there was Studio Arts and Art History was maybe Carl Shepherd and he didn't do a very good, I didn't think. Studio Arts was one where they kept passing it around so nobody learned how to do anything. Sociology . . . who was the fellow who stayed in Sociology for twenty years?

CAC: [Elio] Monachesi.

EF: Monachesi was a dictator.

CAC: [laughter]

EF: From the outside, he was a dictator. I thought that department was a mess. Again, that's my outside view.

CAC: I'm pressing a bit. I've interviewed sixty-one people now, so partly, it's confirmation. Historians look, as judges and lawyers, for two independent sources.

EF: Yes. True. History . . . I'm trying to think who the chairman would have been over the years?

CAC: [Harold] Deutsch was one and Stuart Hoyt.

EF: I never knew Deutsch. I knew of him, of course.

CAC: He was the star in Extension though.

EF: I know.

CAC: He did a double Extension. He taught from six until ten o'clock.

EF: Yes, but I think that's because I never knew him. I never felt close to Deutsch; I should put it that way.

CAC: He brought in more money to Extension, I'm guess, than almost any other . . .

EF: I wouldn't be a bit surprised.

CAC: He thought so.

EF: I never had a sense of how that department was run.

CAC: Isn't that interesting?

EF: Who succeeded Deutsch . . . Stuart Hoyt. I knew Stuart Hoyt very well. Again, I have no feeling for his managerial sense. He was a charming person and, I guess, a very interesting teacher. I have no feeling for the management of the department. That's interesting and it's a good question. I think of that department as a series of stars . . . John Wolf, but I don't think of how it was managed. I have no idea.

CAC: The last interview I'm going to do, Sis, is myself.

EF: Oh! then the real truth will come out.

CAC: I succeeded Stuart.

EF: Yes, I remember that. He died when?

CAC: Cancer . . . it was in the winter of 1971.

EF: I remember sitting next to him at some president's retirement party. Who would it have been?

CAC: It would have to have been Met Wilson's.

EF: Sure. I couldn't tell about the management of Political Science either; although, there again, I had the greatest respect for the people in it . . . [Charles] McLaughlin.

CAC: The Institute of Technology . . . or is that more marginal? You've seen that through Stuart [Fenton], of course?

EF: The Chemistry Department has not been well-run, I can tell you that. Stuart was too gentle and he didn't demand enough from Central Administration. He knew what was happening, but he's—I shouldn't talk so personally—basically, a purist and he did not believe in having research money dictate to the basic sciences how they should run . . . The only way Chemistry was ever going to get enough money was to get research money and he simply didn't press that enough. It didn't do well under Shepherd because of that, I think and he thinks so, too. It's done better, in terms of management, I think now that they've gone out and gotten some research money and have money to spend, but they're not as teaching oriented as they were.

CAC: I hear you suggesting that certain units, colleges and departments, have systems in place, but that it really is again a matter of leadership and someone who is powerful who either does well or ill.

EF: I'm afraid I do believe it.

CAC: You don't need to be afraid of it.

EF: Except I wish it would be some other way. I'm an administrator. I ought to believe in some things and basic administrative tenets. I guess I don't very much. I believe in a few basic ones, but not much of anything in terms of planning and organizational charts and all that sort of thing.

CAC: But you speak of Dean Nolte, and Dean Morse, and the General College, and Ruth Eckert, and others, and Marcia Edwards so that I think there's clear point of evidence.

EF: They were all strong people, which tells me I really didn't know how well they were organized and run. I don't think the GED was run very well under Julius Nolte, except he was such an inspiration to all of that we just worked hard.

CAC: There you are.

EF: [laughter]

CAC: That's not a bad managerial style.

EF: No, I guess not; although, he was much too interested in what used to be called the Center for Continuation Study. He was much too interested in that aspect of Extension. He tried to run that department all by himself and to heck with person who was in charge. They were good friends but Julius would spend a lot of his time sitting there telling him how to do their job and letting the rest of us alone, which was fine for the rest of us. It was a hands-off management . . .

CAC: As long as you did your job?

EF: . . . as long as we did our job. That goes back to the old business of choose your staff.

CAC: Ahhh.

EF: I never knew that that was good management until I read someplace many years ago that the, then, CEO [chief executive officer] of Minnesota Mining, Lou Lehr said, "The only important thing a manager does is select his staff. After that he steps aside." I guess I believe it.

CAC: By the late 1960s and, then, into the 1970s, you're really going into high university committees, the Senate Consultative Committee, for example, which would have been middle [President Malcolm] Moos.

EF: Yes.

CAC: Say something about the committee because it is thought of, on paper at least, as *the* crucial committee to advise on policy matters.

EF: Again, it depends on the leadership of the committee. I think it varies; it varied when I was there. The dean of the Law School was chairman . . . [Carl] Auerbach.

CAC: Oh, yes.

EF: He ran that committee as though we were a group of servants and we did what he wanted until some of us argued. Bill Martin was on it then.

CAC: From Soils.

EF: Yes. About the second year of Auerbach's reign, we began to say, "Why don't we ever see the president? Why do you do all the . . . ?"

CAC: Ohhh.

EF: We never saw anybody. Carl would go and interview the president, and come back, and tell us truth. Yes, between Carl Auerbach and the president, the university got run rather well by the Consultative Committee, if I may put it so bluntly. [laughter] Into the second year . . .

CAC: [Gerry] Shepherd is vice-president? Did you ever see him?

EF: No. Ohhh, once in a great while, but no, we never saw anybody.

CAC: You're suggesting that the chair of that committee did, in fact, determine what access there was and what policies were to be brought up? He controlled the agenda?

EF: Yes, yes.

CAC: That's interesting. Did you have any sense of Mr. Moos in his early years? These are the years where all the student activities are happening. Did you have any recollection of that?

EF: Not much.

CAC: Or the creation of the African-American Studies Department?

EF: I remember it, but I don't remember the Consultative Committee as having anything to do with it.

CAC: All right.

EF: One of those years—I think it must have been the third year—we went through a tremendous budget thing. Everybody had to reduce by 10 percent or something like that. It must have been about 1972 or 1973. It was the third year of my tenure on the Consultative Committee.

CAC: It's 1970 to 1973. My recollection is—I did some homework in the University Archives—that 1971 is the first little retrenchment. It's 1973 which is a more serious one. You would have been on the Consultative Committee then, 1970 to 1973.

EF: Let me just say one thing about the Consultative Committee. By my second year on the committee, May Brodbeck had been elected to the Consultative Committee. She was a doer. She was a wonderful woman. Oh! there was a mentor if ever I had one . . . intellectually, at any rate. She rebelled against Carl. She was quiet about it for awhile, but finally after about the third meeting of the year she said, "I think we ought to have a vice-chairman of this committee." Carl was stunned! There was never anybody else in the room so this was always behind closed doors. Carl was stunned and he finally said, "I suppose." So, May nominated me. Of course, he nearly fell out of his chair, I'm sure. [unclear] what May would do. So, I became vice-chair. The next year, in 1973, Carl was either on leave for a quarter or something happened and I stepped in and became acting chair for one quarter during a lot of the budget hearings. That was

kind of interesting. It was hard for me because it was early on in the days when women were beginning to move into things. I felt a little bit uncomfortable, if only for the reason that I didn't feel that my unit was very academic. I didn't have the credentials to be there. That was an interesting experience, too. Also, by that time, I think we did—I guess every other week we met—have Gerry Shepherd there most of the time.

CAC: Yes, in those late Wilson and early Moos . . .

EF: Yes, he was there. I may be exaggerating Carl's supremacy, as it were, but I really don't remember anybody else being there except those of us who were members.

CAC: He was a [Hubert] Humphrey Democrat.

EF: I believe that . . . I'm sorry. By that time, I was a Democrat, too.

CAC: Very upset by the [Viet Nam] war . . . I don't know to what degree that influenced other things. He was very hawkish.

EF: Yes.

CAC: Did you want to go back in the 1960s and say some more about that before we move forward in time?

EF: The only thing of interest . . . in fact, I think the only thing of interest in most of what I've scribbled down there is that I did have the opportunity to break the gender barrier in a lot of committees. I don't know why that was except that, believe it or not with all my gabbling this morning, I don't tend to say very much of anything unless I have something to say. Sitting on committees and in groups, if somebody has already said it, I don't repeat and I don't insist. I can come on very strong, but I'm basically quiet and I think people were not afraid of me. The men were not afraid of me. Isn't that an awful thing to say? But, I think it's true.

CAC: It may have been combined with respect, if when you spoke you had something to say.

EF: I hope it's that. I think that helped. I didn't come on as a strong feminist and combative, confrontational. I don't like confrontation anymore than most people do and I'm unwilling to do it unless I just can't stand it. I think that's how I got eased on and also, as I said before, because not very many women were available.

CAC: Maybe this is a good time to talk about . . . you spoke earlier of Jack Darley saying that the university was run from the Campus Club and, then, you become the first woman on the Campus Club Board.

EF: [laughter] I can't even claim that. That was because Willard Thompson was the chairman and he nominated me.

CAC: That's all right. Willard Thompson [unclear]. That's fine. On the board, did you think Jack Darley's observation was confirmed or modified?

EF: I have to say I didn't think much of the Campus Club Board service. I thought it was just a nice men's club, except for me of course, and they enjoyed the free lunches and the nice annual dinner and didn't do very much. [laughter]

CAC: But, you didn't see, in fact, that a lot of business was done at the Campus Club?

EF: Not in the board but in the Campus Club . . .

CAC: I'm talking about more broadly.

EF: . . . itself, I saw it happening around me all the time. Of course, I was impressed with Jack Darley and when he said that was the case, then I looked for it and there I found it, I suppose.

CAC: A lot of people do research like that.

EF: Yes. I think he was probably right then. I can't imagine that it's the case now.

CAC: You continue to be a member of the Campus Club?

EF: I continue to be a member. I'm a member now, but I never go there. That's because I'm not there. Nothing is served by my going there.

CAC: Let me make a statement—then, we'll go to other things—about the Campus Club. Others have said that with the expansion to the West Bank, the psychological distance and the logistical distance was so great that it kind of weakened the Campus Club, that departments that had been central, Economics, History, Sociology, Geography, etcetera, were not able to go that easily and that it changed.

EF: I think that's very true. In fact, even before the West Bank, the St. Paul campus people didn't come to the Campus Club. I remember that because when I was on the board, we worried about membership on the St. Paul campus and tried everything we could think of to get them to come and do things.

CAC: Phil Raup would show up and surprise everybody.

EF: Yes. [laughter]

CAC: He so often came.

EF: Yes, there were a few, sure. The other thing, in those days, the president never appeared in the Campus Club. Oh! my word, no! I think he thought it was beneath his dignity . . . any president. I never saw a president at the Campus Club. I think some people would go to the Campus Club not to be in the presence of the president necessarily but to be in the presence of power. I don't think that's a bad thing to do. If you're part of the community, I feel you try to be influential in the community and one way to be influential is to go to things, be seen, take part in things. I think people did that in those days—I have no idea what happens now. I do think the West Bank separated. Were you at the Senate meeting when the West Bank was announced? Was it Eville Gorham who got up and stalked out? It was somebody in Botany who got up and stalked out and said, "I can't be part of a university that will do this."

CAC: There were a lot of dramatic moments there.

EF: Yes. The people who objected were right, in a sense. It did separate the university. I think it did diminish the influence of the Campus Club. I never got around to asking Jack if his views had changed. [laughter] Maybe all it did was simply say that, for awhile anyway, the centers of power, which had normally been the social sciences, if you will, were shifting away and that the Campus Club was putting together new centers of power of those who were closer and handier, but I can't verify that. It's just a thought, but it did disperse the power I think. Even the College of Education people didn't come to the Campus Club in the early days. When I'd go there regularly, very few would come . . . not casually the way people from . . . before [Guy Stanton] Ford was there. The scientists, I don't think, came very much. The physicists and chemists came and they sat by themselves, but then everybody does that now. I don't think they did that so much in the early days.

CAC: I see. Others have said that so I'm interested in your observation.

EF: I hadn't thought about that until just this minute, but, we'd go up there and sit down with people I didn't know for the fun of it and, of course, it was part of my job to get to know people I didn't know.

CAC: That's engaging. Do we want to say something more about the 1960s?

EF: Was there anything to say, particularly?

CAC: In the late 1960s, 1969, 1971, it's the Committee on University Women's Progress. Let's move to that then because that's right at the cusp. It's early Moos, but it's the beginning of the Women's Studies program. It's the beginning of African-American Studies. University Women's Progress . . . you say you're one of four founders. Who were the other three?

EF: Shirley Clark was the driving force.

CAC: Ah! Again, from Education.

EF: Yes. Maybelle McCullough . . . you probably didn't know her.

CAC: She was from?

EF: Counseling, I think. Behind the scenes . . . Theda Hagenah, of all people.

CAC: Ohhh. She was in Counseling, too.

EF: Yes.

CAC: And yourself.

EF: Yes, and, then pretty soon, Jeanne Lupton came in. Do you remember Jeanne Lupton?

CAC: I've interviewed her, sure.

EF: Jeanne then came in early on. I should have thought of Caroline Rose.

CAC: [gasp] Yes. Widowed by now?

EF: I think so, but I never knew her that well.

CAC: You came together on your own initiative? You weren't appointed?

EF: No, no, no. Shirley Clark pulled us together and got up and made a speech.

CAC: What was her speech?

EF: She said she thought it was time to send the men home to bake cookies . . . [laughter]

CAC: [laughter]

EF: . . . and we'd get started with a bake sale. Of course, the first thing was, how do we find five dollars to send a notice out? She had me in the palm of her hand. She was a wonderful person—until she became a vice-president or whatever she became. Shirley was marvelous and she just said, "We've got to do something."

CAC: What kind of an agenda? What did she want to accomplish?

EF: First of all, she thought women should at least meet once in awhile and talk about the organization of the university, and how the faculties could be prevailed upon to hire more women, and how to put ourselves in positions of importance and power.

CAC: Which we were doing by your own?

EF: Which we were trying to do one-by-one. The first hurdle we had to get over was to get a list of women on the faculty. Do you think we could get that from Central Administration? Of course, not. They weren't interested in our having such a list. Several of us sat down . . . remember the little orange faculty address book?

CAC: Oh, my.

EF: It was about that big.

CAC: Yes.

EF: It told you not only who was on the faculty and what their professorial rank was but whether they were married or not. Do you remember that?

CAC: Yes.

EF: [laughter] Married ones were asterisked . . . wonderful. We sat down. We paged through this thing and copied addresses down. Of course, there weren't any computers in those days. Somebody in the president's office would have had to type it up. I don't know how many vice-presidents we had then but still not very many. We got a list and we sent a mailing out and said we were going to have a meeting. Then, we met monthly for maybe two years. It simply had people come in from the faculty, faculty women, and talk to us about what they were doing in their departments. We got to know each other.

CAC: It becomes a group of what size?

EF: I think at it's maximum . . . there wasn't any organization per se.

CAC: I understand . . . floating.

EF: But maybe, we'd get twenty-five or thirty. That was a good proportion of the women faculty members by that time.

CAC: Did CEW play any part in this?

EF: Not really. Liz [Cless] wasn't interested for some reason. I suppose she came; I don't even remember. One of the results was that Jeanne Lupton was appointed assistant to the president. Am I right?

CAC: She was.

EF: By Malcolm Moos?

CAC: I think it was.

EF: Yes, yes.

CAC: She was there for the student protests when they kicked her in the shins.

EF: That's right. She reminded you of that, I'm sure. It began something. Of course, Shirley would have gone to top anyway because she was a very capable person—she still is. She really got us going. We took turns chairing the meetings and planning them.

CAC: That was good feminist horizontal . . .

EF: Yes. I suppose it had name. I should say, because you've mentioned it and you won't find it on the list, I did not become part of the Women's Studies group. I disapproved of it. When a graduate student, whose name I guess I've forgotten—I don't know who it was—came and talked to me about it, I said, "No, I disagree. I think this university should get to the point where every discipline incorporates women's studies in its curriculum. If I were doing it, I'd start with history. I simply do not believe in setting up departments of any kind for special studies related to race or gender." I think somebody else came and tried to talk me into it and I just wouldn't have anything to do with it. I don't regret it. They had plenty of support; they didn't need me anyway. I still think it's wrong. I suppose it's a good thing to do and I'm sure there would never have been the development of Women's Studies per se that there is if the colleges and universities hadn't done that all over the country.

CAC: Shirley Clark committed herself to it.

EF: I know she did.

CAC: She chaired the committee.

EF: Yes, yes. All my best friends were involved in it, but I just couldn't. I just wouldn't. I don't think I did that selfishly. I really believed that.

CAC: It was a view held and not an inconsiderable one. Did that group, the Committee on University Women's Progress, continue?

EF: No.

CAC: That was really a pulling the trigger or whatever the metaphor might be?

EF: Sure. What could you do? You could meet for awhile; but, the best thing to do is to go back and work in your own field.

CAC: Yes.

EF: I think that's what people tried to do.

CAC: It never became official?

EF: No, no.

CAC: It was an informal network?

EF: Just a network, yes.

CAC: Are there other things about the 1960s before we go into the 1970s? We've covered a lot of territory. I think the first things that pop in are the ones that are important.

EF: I suppose so—if anything is important.

CAC: Why do you say that?

EF: I really don't feel that I did that much. Maybe, it's because I was enjoying what I was doing that I didn't think I was doing very much. I didn't think it was that important, in a sense. I think the only important thing I really did at the university was to be visible in terms of my own organization, General Extension and then Continuing Education. I never wanted to be a front person. I remember when somebody retired . . . it must have been Julius . . . one of our deans retired . . . Fred Lukermann was the associate vice-president then.

CAC: That was in the early, mid 1970s, 1972, 1973, 1974.

EF: Then, that would have been Tommy.

CAC: Willard Thompson?

EF: Yes. When Willard Thompson retired, Fred came around and said—things were done in different ways then—"I'm looking at two people to be dean of Extension." It was still General Extension then. He said, "You're my first choice." I said, "Fred, I don't want to be a dean. I'm not that kind of a person. I think you need somebody who is very articulate, who can think on

his feet, who can respond quickly without having to back up and look at every detail. I can't do that. I'm not that kind of a person. I don't think I have the stature anyway. I don't have a Ph.D. I think it would be a great mistake. I don't say that for my own aggrandizement. I just say that because I can't be that kind of a person." I do know that limitation is an affliction to me. I don't like it. That's why I would never be a good teacher. I don't have enough ready . . .

CAC: It may be, Sis, that the greatest virtue is to know one's strengths and shortcomings.

EF: That's nice.

CAC: Not nice . . . I think that's a profoundly wise statement.

EF: I think I studied too much philosophy, Clarke. I was very impressed with [unclear]. [unclear] said lots of the things that I believe in, if I believe in anything.

CAC: You were clearly committed to the unit you were in and to its mission?

EF: Oh, yes.

CAC: To outreach?

EF: Oh, yes, yes.

CAC: In a way, you were committed clearly to the university and its missions?

EF: Heavens, yes. Yes. I find that's an affliction. I remember when [Harry S] Truman was president, outsiders, who didn't know anything, criticized him because he saved his friends, and promoted his friends, and protected his friends. I realized finally, after I thought about it a bit, that I would protect my friends only up to a certain point and that I thought the institution was more important than my friends. That was sort of a hard thing for me to realize. I want and need my friends, but I have always been very institution loyal. I don't know why. Why are people different like that? It wasn't hard for me to be loyal to the university.

CAC: That you were a Minneapolitan and a Minnesotan?

EF: And I don't have a discipline.

CAC: Ah.

EF: I don't have a professional discipline. I think one of the worst curses of any university is the loyalty to the discipline rather than to the institution. I see that all around the university.

CAC: Do you see any change in that over the years?

EF: I think it's gotten worse.

CAC: Why?

EF: I think the professions have become more important and the getting of money through the exercise of one's profession has become important. There isn't as much room for importance in the university because it's too big and sprawling. I haven't really thought that through.

CAC: And becomes more so?

EF: Yes.

CAC: And through Stuart [Fenton] you would see some of the same things operating?

EF: I think so. I think Stu was a very good chairman because he was a very good teacher and got teaching awards, but I think he finally became somewhat frustrated by the deemphasis of teaching and the emphasis on research . . .

[End of Tape 1, Side 2]

[Tape 2, Side 1]

CAC: The theme we've come to and it is a theme that I've heard from others is the increasing specialization in the provinces, in the departments, and in the colleges and the decline of institutional loyalty and participation. When I was changing the cassette here you were recalling Al Nier as an example of a man who was, perhaps, one of the greatest research persons we ever had and, yet, one who was intensely loyal to the larger institution, not only to Physics but to the university.

EF: Oh, yes.

CAC: I'm paraphrasing you and would you pick it up?

EF: I think you've said it. He simply was dedicated to the university and to his students. He must have been a superb teacher and, yet, as you say, his research was remarkable, basic, and he always put himself down. We got to know them fairly well and he and his wife were here a couple of times. We never could get him to talk about himself. He just was a humble, wonderful, institution serving person. There were lots around like that really; but, it's unfortunate when I have to think who they were instead of everybody is like that except for this poor oaf over here and all he cares about is his own image.

CAC: You've been retired for . . .

EF: Eight years this year.

CAC: But, you had a sense even before your retirement, if I'm hearing you correctly, that there was a decline in that kind of person making a commitment to the mission of the university?

EF: Yes, I think so.

CAC: You can ascribe that, again just for emphasis, to what kind of factors?

EF: I think it's just the sort of dispersal of power, if I may be so blunt about it, at the university so that it didn't look maybe as though it were worth climbing to the top. I think the department chairmanship being rotated is probably a good thing in principle, but I really wonder if that's worth doing because it's not a place to which to aspire within a department.

CAC: That's for sure . . . it came to be not.

EF: It came to be not to be a place to be. It's, in fact, in a sense, looked down upon. Administration is looked down upon. It's not understood; the need for it is not understood. I'm speaking, of course, as an administrator.

CAC: Sure.

EF: There wasn't that place to which to aspire within the system. I think people had to turn outward to have their scientific knowledge recognized. The university puts emphasis on it. It's recognized—in the sciences, I know something about the way Chemistry is run anyway—by ever larger research labs, by ever larger salaries, by being on the market, being marketable at all times, and, therefore, being able to say, "If you don't keep me with X amount of money, I can go there for twice as much."

CAC: You saw, over the thirty-five years you were in the university, an increase in that kind of behavior?

EF: I think I did, yes. There were, at the other end in the real old days, abuses of power within departments. For instance, the tenure of some department heads for twenty years was not good and where do you get new ideas? I'm still torn about the wisdom of youth versus experience and I think if you can get a little of both, that's fine. As I get older, of course, I think experience is more important, naturally. [laughter] Youth is brought in to be there and to be heard, but I think they have to earn their wings. I think that's all part of institutional disintegration, which I see at the university.

CAC: Some have suggested that it runs beyond the university and that it seems to be a cultural . . .

EF: I wouldn't be surprised. I wouldn't be surprised at all. Look at the public regard for politicians. We should be looking upon these people with awe and admiration and respect and some of us do but it's pretty rare and they don't all demand it and who wants to . . .

CAC: And they aren't all loyal to their own party.

EF: They're not loyal to their own party. They're not loyal to what they were elected on. It's become such a degrading thing to run for office and it's probably true at the university within the pale, as it were, that many of the really good people won't subject themselves to it. I'm sure that's true in the university. It probably always was. We've gotten to the point—we had before I retired—where every person on the faculty was expected to be a researcher, a teacher, an administrator and to do them all well and divide their work up so that they do it all well and cover it all. I think that's foolishness. I think that contributes to the feeling of discouragement.

I have to also say that I've gotten to the point of disapproving of the tenure system. I offered to resign my tenureship ten years before I retired. I think it's helping to destroy the institution. There ought to be ways around it and nobody has figured them out yet.

CAC: As you speak, what echoes in my mind is the phrase that one person I interviewed used . . . *the melancholy of the professoriate*.

EF: Ohhh.

CAC: He was commenting on the last changes the last fifteen years that he found unacceptable.

EF: Yes. That's another thing that's sad—I suppose other people experience it; I'm sure they experience it—is that I loved my job at the university until about the last two or three years. I, unfortunately, am a person who has never held my tongue when I really ought to have on many occasions. I spoke my piece and spoke it loudly and firmly . . .

CAC: To whom?

EF: To my dean and left under a cloud, even though subsequent events have proven me right, and even though I left with . . .

CAC: On what particular issues . . . on this general thing we're talking about now?

EF: General administration of CEE, at that point . . . the way to organize it, the way to keep it going, the ways to relate to the faculty, the individuals who should be put in places of important relationships with the faculty. I wasn't smart enough to keep my mouth shut and just live out my term. On the other hand, I got an award . . . the only thing I've put in that I shouldn't have put in.

CAC: Before we . . . No, no, that's fine. I was saving that for the ultimate observation.

EF: Ahhh . . . I shouldn't even have put it in.

CAC: No, because I was going to ask it. We all know it. Sis is referring to the Fenton Service Award. Before we get to that . . . we've covered lots of ground here; but, you were, in the early 1980s, on the All-University Review on Women's Intercollegiate Athletics?

EF: Yes.

CAC: That's a hard thing for historians to break into and for professors and administrators also.

EF: Yes.

CAC: Say something about that experience.

EF: What was the year . . . remind me of the year.

CAC: It was 1980, 1981.

EF: It was just before Merrily Baker came. It was actually when that position was created, wasn't it?

CAC: Merrily was the first.

EF: So, it was the year before that position was created.

CAC: But, there were women's teams?

EF: There were women's teams, that's right. There was a woman on the staff in Intercollegiate Athletics who wanted to be the director. She was, in fact, one of the candidates. She was not selected. It caused a lot of turmoil in the department and the department, such as it was—I should remember this more clearly than I do—was fractionated and split, much the way, I'm sure, it is now with all of the brouhaha about [Chris] Voelz and company. Within the Intercollegiate Athletics Committee, a very small group was appointed to review the state of the department. That's really what we did. We met once a week with the, then, chair. I wish I could remember her name. She was one of the finalists. We met with her and with two of the people on her staff, two of the team directors and Gary Engstrand. Did you ever know Gary Engstrand?

CAC: Yes. He's out of Morrill Hall.

EF: Yes. The five of us met once a week simply to talk through the problems in the department. They sound just like what's happening today. The women weren't being paid

enough. They were suspicious of each other. There were undertones of homosexuality running through all of the discussions—which made me sorry . . . that’s not a problem for me; I have no problem with it at all—to the point where people were almost accusing each other of earning favors in ways that were disapproved of . . .

CAC: I see.

EF: . . . in those days and probably still are by many people. There’s very little to say except we were a sounding board.

CAC: Who was chair of the committee?

EF: Gary got us together, but I don’t know that we really had a chair. He was a staff person and he kept notes on it.

CAC: Part of the resolution was to get a director of Women’s Intercollegiate Athletics?

EF: We knew that was going to happen; but, what we wanted to do was try to hear out some of the complaints and, as I say, it sounds very much like what might be going on today.

CAC: Did you talk also with the men in the department?

EF: No, we didn’t talk with the men at all. Isn’t that crazy?

CAC: With Bob Stein who must have been, then, a representative from CLA [College of Liberal Arts]? [In fact, from the Law School]

EF: No, I don’t think we did; although, I can’t remember. Yes, Bob was the representative then. I suppose we did at some time or another. That’s all we did. We just talked through the problems of the department and they seemed to be all very personal. I suppose I conjectured, at that point—not really knowing—that running a department of that kind is very difficult. Again, I just guessed that it’s because most of the women involved in Intercollegiate Athletics are very strong, very strong minded, very driven, very highly motivated to succeed.

CAC: They’re coaches.

EF: Yes! Imagine having to work with these people all the time. [laughter] It must have been awful.

CAC: Interesting, yes.

EF: What could you do about it? There it was. I've been a great supporter of Women's Intercollegiate Athletics and I just applaud what they're doing. I think it has to be separate from the men's department because of the nature of our times.

CAC: I can confirm—it isn't my interview—that the following year Barbara Stuhler chaired a selection committee and I was the token male.

EF: Yes.

CAC: You think you were retiring on some committees. I didn't have much to say at all.

EF: [laughter] You didn't need to.

CAC: But, I did listen and my experience would confirm what you're saying now that it was a very ticklish, delicate matter and Merrily Baker brought to the job a kind of control that it needed.

EF: Yes, yes, she did.

CAC: Then, she went on to higher things.

EF: To her regret, I think; I still keep in touch with her. I have to say this because I thought it was sort of interesting. Marcia Eaton, whom I got to know quite well and think very highly of, asked if I'd have lunch with her one day at the Campus Club. I met her and she said, "I want to ask you about Women's Intercollegiate Athletics." I said, "Yes?" What she said in effect—it took her awhile to say it, I must say—was that there were rumors around that the, then, director is homosexual and that she is destroying that department and she said, "Is she?" I think I said almost exactly this, "Marcia, I have no idea. To me, it makes absolutely no difference what a person's sexual choices are." I don't know that we used "sexual preference" in those days. I said, "I don't think that's destroying the department, but I cannot even be party to thinking about the possibility that because a woman is a homosexual, she's going to destroy a department." That may happen and I've heard of relationships both bisexual, heterosexual, and, in addition, homosexual that are very discouraging. It happens around the university all the time. I said, "I don't think that has anything to do with it." Eventually, Merrily got the job. Of course, as a member of the Intercollegiate Athletic Committee, we interviewed the candidates, too . . . or somehow I was interviewing the candidates for something. That's about all I can say about that funny little committee.

CAC: That's fine.

EF: We sat and listened for a long time. One of the same people is still complaining, but she's a wonderful coach with winning teams. You might guess who that is.

CAC: Whoever is listening to this ten years from now wouldn't guess.

EF: Jean Freeman was one of the continuous complainers and boy! she stays here.

CAC: There are lots of other things we can talk about, but I think we've covered really some very important things. I would like to inquire though . . . I see here that you did do freshman Honors colloquia through the Arts College Honors program?

EF: Yes, it was almost the first year of it.

CAC: You did it four years. What seminar did you give for them?

EF: I have to say that I put that in simply because it's part of my vitae.

CAC: It's very interesting.

EF: I can't really claim much of any of that. The first year, I think my partner was George Shapiro.

CAC: Ohhh, my.

EF: I don't know why I volunteered for this. I'm not a teacher and I know I'm not a teacher. I volunteered because I thought it would be interesting. I got George Shapiro and I'll tell you it was interesting. I didn't have to do a thing, Clarke, not a thing! I was just another student in the class. [laughter]

CAC: What was the subject?

EF: i can't even tell you what the subject was. I went every other week, I think, and was mesmerized by George and so were all the students in the class.

CAC: He was and is a master teacher.

EF: He is just superb. He was a little far out for me at first. Here, I am, still Kenwood raised; but, he was wonderful. I can't tell you for a minute what it was about, but it was fascinating and we all came and the students were fascinated. One of those years, maybe it was the second, I was teamed with [H.] Mead Cavert and, there, I was helpful because I persuaded Mead—I take full credit for this one—to teach a course in medical ethics.

CAC: Ahhh.

EF: It was not taught.

CAC: No, of course.

EF: It was not taught anyplace. You see my background was philosophy and I tried to think, what in the world . . . Ethics was kind of a minor piece of my philosophy. He just didn't think that would sell. I'll tell you, it was a gem! Again, he did it all. He had to. I could bring some of the ethics part of it to it. Those students were all freshman, but they all intended already to be medical students. They were a fascinating group of students. I kept up with all of those students for several years because they were so interested in the subject. Mead taught a lot of it himself. He'd bring other people in to talk about all the ins and outs of medical ethics that were just being talked about, just surfacing. I did that one again with Mead because it went so well. It was full and people wanted to get into it. I can't tell you anything about the specifics, but it was old donor ethics and . . .

CAC: Abortion?

EF: Abortion, sure, but very little on abortion. It was legal in those days. It became legal in about 1965 or 1966, I guess. I did another year with Mead on the same subject and, then, I did one with Jack Parker.

CAC: Oh.

EF: That was fascinating.

CAC: What subject there?

EF: Travel, as you can imagine.

CAC: I see.

EF: Again, I didn't really do much.

CAC: You must have been doing something because you kept being invited as a partner.

EF: I know. Again, Jack had all the information. He'd pull out the maps and we'd talk about travel in the old world. I'd learned about the [James Ford] Bell Collection a little bit. Then, we devised the scheme of sending the kids out on a jaunt of their own. They were to go by some means of transportation, if they could, otherwise they could walk. They were just to go someplace, and come back, and report.

CAC: Like an explorer?

EF: Yes. [laughter] That turned out to be a real gem.

CAC: You get Honors students . . . they could run with that.

EF: I thought they were marvelous kids. They were Honors students . . . you know where I sat in administration and Extension, I didn't see students like this. It was really exciting to me just to sit there.

CAC: Sure.

EF: I remember a pair, a boy and a girl, who hadn't known each other before this class, decided to hitchhike to southern Minnesota someplace and that they would only allow themselves to be picked up by a big truck, a trailer truck. They did. They were carried all over southern Minnesota . . . a most wonderful experience. I guess the girl thought she was trouble, at one point. That was fun. I guess they did that over spring break. That was with Jack Parker. Then, I didn't have time to continue.

CAC: Obviously, you had a rewarding career even though at the end, there were certain differences that you had.

EF: Yes.

CAC: At the end of your career, the Fenton Service Award . . . that was to award persons who made particular contributions of service within CEE?

EF: Within CEE and the university.

CAC: And the university?

EF: Yes.

CAC: So, it could come from anywhere . . . the candidate?

EF: No, I'm sorry. The award was just within CEE, yes.

CAC: This presumably was wonked up by your close associates and colleagues?

EF: Yes, there was an Honors committee of about ten people and they put together the award. We've never done this in CEE. We now have four awards that are given. One is for length of service. We've never done that before. That was done about three years before I retired. Then, there is one for a particular program service and that can be won by two or three people in any given year, but it isn't always given. Then, there is a dean's award and that's a person selected by the dean only. Then, this award was created and the Honors committee recommends three names to the dean and, then, he makes the selection.

CAC: These are people who are within Continuing Education providing service to the larger university?

EF: Yes. Yes.

CAC: So that it would match the kind of career that you had and be appropriate?

EF: Yes, it was worked up for me.

CAC: That's nice.

EF: I think it's been given twice since I retired.

CAC: Good. I often have a dumb question as we near the end. The penultimate question is, have you got any other reflections about all these years? [unclear], this is an invitation to think big, to reflect on changes in the university. We talked about them earlier at some length, but is there anything else in addition?

EF: I started out by saying that I think everything that happened to me was luck and I still think that. I lucked into almost everything I did—including my marriage. I just consider myself a very fortunate person to have been part of an institution of the distinction of the university and, within the university, to be part of an Extension operation that is recognized nation-wide, if not beyond the borders, as one of the finest Extension operations. Incidentally, Herbert Heaton was an authority on extension. Did you know that?

CAC: Yes.

EF: I heard some of my first history about extension from him.

CAC: It's an old English tradition.

EF: Yes, yes, that's what I learned.

CAC: The Settlement House Movement in England grew out of, in part, the university extension service work.

EF: That I didn't know.

CAC: Toynbee Hall had a lot of folks who were into adult education.

EF: Sure. I think that's the other thing that being with the university taught me and should teach everyone there and that is the wonderful magnificence of relationships and transference of skills—that's a dull word—and thought . . . learning to transfer thought and to make connections

with things. That's, I suppose, a fairly basic philosophical statement and I probably learned it from George Conger because he taught metaphysics and that was basically what he taught. It's sort of interesting to me now to pick up articles about biodiversity and the DNR [Department of Natural Resources] in our state isn't going to diminish the importance and fish and wildlife. It's going to think about the whole ecology, the biodiversity and so on. Well . . . if that isn't old hat, I don't know what is.

CAC: Ecological principle.

EF: That's right. But, that's what a university is about.

CAC: Ahhh, that's a good thought.

EF: I'm just so lucky to have been part of that even though I wasn't in the middle of it ever. I was in the middle in the sense I was in a position to learn a great deal.

CAC: And to facilitate all kinds of things.

EF: Yes, that's what an administrator does. Burton Paulu had a wonderful description of an administrator. He said, "An administrator is a person who either rocks the boat or spills oil."

CAC: [laughter]

EF: Isn't that marvelous?

CAC: Yes.

EF: If nothings happening, boy! you better rock that boat. If things are going well, just pour a little oil on the waters. It was a wonderful experience for me. That's all I can say. I'm glad I was there. I don't regret any of it. I'm a little sorry about the way it ended, but that was my own doing.

CAC: That's a good closing statement to end on. These conversations can go on . . . some of them have gone on too long.

EF: Sure, like this one.

CAC: It's been a very disciplined and very focused and I really appreciate your sharing this with posterity.

EF: You do a good job of interviewing. That's a very difficult skill.

[End of Tape 2, Side 1]

[End of the Interview]

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