

Edmund Peckham, Track 6

Tape 4, side A

JB: We are back onto the subject of the USC [University Student Center].

EP: Okay, and I was talking about the evolution of the University Student Center concept, which got us into difficulty because of the way the USC was, uh, very quickly a problem with the other USC, across the city, and so later on when we finally did have a facility, and when we said that was going to be a dance at the USC, uh, people thought actually that it might be over there by University of Southern California. And so that's the reason actually why we changed it to USU, University Student Union. At first, I'd oppose the word union, because I thought that a center was a much more attractive and a meaningful word. But we created the USU Board, those are the records of the minutes up, there going back from the beginning. A lot of wonderful people sat on those boards, and a lot of good thinking came. Eventually the funds that that students were paying each semester, uh, reached the point where we could begin to think about creating a building. Uh, we hired a good architect, at least one we thought that was going to be a good architect, uh, Quincy Jones, uh, who was much more of a visionary, and his ideas proved to be much too expensive, for the monies that we eventually were able to build, but, anyway, we had, uh, that's (pause) the Student Union was a part of the Student Affairs area. I was involved in all the way along in the plans for the building, working with the architect, with the hiring the director of the Student Union, first Griffin Proctor from Nevada, and then Pat Smith from Maine, trying to devise a building that would meet all the needs that we had, thinking much too big, and too costly, and therefore having to scope back when we found that we didn't have the funds. So, some of the problems that we even had with the present structure of the USU came about because of that fact of having to down scope. For example, uh, the very inadequate air conditioning system that we have in the USU, which originally been planned in a very, uh, grade A basis, in which there would be in all sorts of controls and zones, which eventually proved not to be feasible, for money. Having to find in the Northridge Center itself, uh, a facility that we'd originally thought to be just a magnificent place, with wonderful acoustics, and by the time we'd had to scale it back down to meet the funds available, we found that we had a facility that didn't produce either the size or the quality of a sound that we desired. But anyway, the fact is anyway that we needed to have a facility, and we do have one now, thanks to the generosity of a lot of students who went on before, and who had just taken a, really an opportunity, if they've ever come back to the campus, just to look at it, and think of the fact that there's something that they help to contribute to. But the same thing is true, John, when we are talking about the expansion of the USU now, the funds for the satellite in the USU that is now coming and will be available sometime next fall. Unfortunately, not as early in September as we'd like, but in the fall, anyway, at the corner of Lassen and Zelzah. These are all things in which students invest for the future and I think that it's a wonderful tribute to our students that these referenda do pass. Uh, one passed this last

spring which, uh, increases the taxation, if you will, on students for a permanent children's center. Now, a lot of them don't have children for one thing. A lot of them will not be here, certainly, when this children's center materializes, which won't be for another six to seven years, probably, according to the master plan, but they approved it at the very same election they turned down an increase in there AS [Associated Students] fee, which shows exactly the point that I'm getting at, that they were willing to see the need of a major benefit to the campus, and to share in the creation of it. I have a tremendous pride and love for our students, and I think this very, this very willingness to direct a portion of their fees year after year for something they will never benefit from directly speaks to that. Some of the students that I now work with are, interestingly enough, are the sons and daughters of the students I worked with years ago. Uh, we have a new member of our freshman class this last year, Christina Ball, who's the daughter of two students who were very close to me, way back in the 1970s, and late 60s. So, in effect, they are seeing the benefit of this investment, but from the eyes of their daughter.

(00:05:37)

JB: I'm starting to have a similar experience now, which suggest you and I have been here for quite some time (EP slight laugh), uh, you since '67, I since '68, uh, (long pause). If I were to start to tally up and to describe the most memorable students that I have had, uh, I wouldn't know where to stop. Uh, I suspect you would have the same problem, but let me ask you to attempt it, who are the ones who are most memorable in your mind? What did they do? What sorts of people were they? (pause)

EP: When you asked me that, and it was a very difficult thing for me even to grope to find an answer, that the greatest joy that I have had over these years has been the opportunity to work with students and to get to know them. I have always loved teaching, uh, I have always loved my work in history and political science, but I have never had the same gratification from the involvement that I've have had in the classroom, even though I have known a good deal about the students in my classroom, as I have from the opportunity to get to know some people outside the classroom. In a way, that's sort of paradoxical, but it's certainly very true. And the students that come to my mind, I just want to approach really in categories, John, if I can, and if, uh, you want me to go into more specifics about them I certainly can. Uh, I mentioned one of them a bit ago, Yvonne Robeson, who was, uh, one of my advisees and one of my employees inside the Dean of Students' office, but one of the students who was involved in the most militant way in the fifth floor on November four of 1968. A person who eventually was convicted for a role in that and had to spend some time in jail. Another one from that very same group is a young women named—and I say young women, uh, she now I guess, technically, a middle aged woman—named Laverne Davis, who is still a counselee of mine and a friend. Uh, that she considers that I'm her mentor still. Uh, she is now a social worker, as Yvonne Robeson is now a teacher. Uh, many of the people who were involved in the 1968 period proved to be very productive and very good people. So,

that's one group, uh, another group that, uh, to me has always been very meaningful is the international student, and as I was making these categories in my mind, I was thinking about the daughter who became almost a daughter of mine. Who was, uh, the daughter of the Brazilian consul, uh, was actually the Brazilian ambassador to the United States, because he was appointed, uh, promoted to that task, and his daughter, uh, Anna Maria De Ventura, uh, became really in almost, in effect, one of my own family. Uh, another group in the international group is, uh, the Chinese students that we've had. We have been, uh, we don't have the large numbers of foreign students that some of the campuses have, but ours is still, uh, (pause) pretty important in size. And we've had the largest number of students, minority Chinese students, of any university in the United States. Uh, these particularly have been Uighur students, and I'm very much interested in them personally because they are the ones that my son is teaching in China, and there have been seven of these students particularly, who have been very, very close to Dorry and to me, who still are, in effect, very, very close as friends, although they aren't all on our campus right now, three of them still are. Uh, I could talk a good deal more about, uh, I thought two families might be of interest to you, uh, because they show a little bit about the extent of my involvement with students. One of them—the one I got to know first was, uh, Maureen Moran, who was vice president of our campus, for Jim Conrad, who eventually was recalled, but it was not Maureen's fault in any way that this took place, and Maureen and I became extremely close friends, we still are. Uh, she teaches now in Lancaster, but the interesting point about Maureen is that she was the oldest one of a family that traipsed through our campus, five Morans, and so, I got to know all of them very well and become a part of the Moran family. And another one, even more so along that line, is a young woman named Peggy Shea, Peggy Shea Casanova now, who was one of thirteen children in just a wonderfully warm, uh, Irish family living in Granada Hills, and I've been accepted, really, as a Shea. And they have family get togethers each year, Dorry and I go each year, and we know all the Sheas. Uh, I think seven of them have been on our campus at one time or another. It's, uh, that's, uh, another one. And another role, too, that, uh, where I have enjoyed working with students, and in effect these are outstanding people, are the minority students that I have been able to work with, uh, students from my own church in Pacoima, like Garth Gilliam, uh, a very dear person to us still. Uh, a series of students, Hispanic students, Chicano students, uh, whom I have been lucky enough to be able to mentor. Uh, two of them are both graduates now of our campus. Uh, Miss Margaret and Julia Oranda, both of them were named as outstanding students at our honors convocation, received the President's Award, President's Associate Award. Julia this very last year was given the real distinction being the only student to be invited to speak at any of the eight of our commencements, and the Orandas consider that I am an Oranda, which pleases me. Margaret is now a doctor, she, with great difficulty, has gone through University Southern California with tremendous sacrifice, uh, personally and financially. Uh, I am so proud of them, in what some of our minority students have been able to do. Uh, I've had others, uh, Anita Cortez graduated last year, uh, Helena Tuma(??) graduated this last year, and now I am working with a young man who is, uh, a real joy, uh, by the name Jesús Gutiérrez as, uh, just finishing his first year at Northridge. Uh, he

needs a great deal of help and encouragement, but I certainly hope that, uh, even in a retired state, I'll be able to, uh, give him some of that. I could good talk about jillions of people whom I have known and come to be very, very close to from my relationships with housing. Uh, with the University Student Union board, with, uh, employment in my own office with the close relationships that I have kept with our fraternities and sororities, and above all, I think where I would like to focus most, is with the Associated Students because, uh, if there is anything I've tried doing personally, it's to try to be a bridge between the student government and the university administration personally. And I think really that we have been very successful in this. I think I told you last time that there were two exceptions to this in the early 1970s, where we didn't get along with the student government, but those were really exceptions. Uh, I created a system with the AS's [Associated Students] a few years ago, where, at homecoming each year, we have a gathering for former AS administrative, uh, student leaders, of presidents and vice presidents, and it is fun to, uh, see them. It's fun to have them react to each other, as we do at my house each year. But some of them really, uh, you know, this sounds extremely paternal, when I say this, but some of them really have been, uh, to me a part of my own family, and some of them still feel that way. I had a call this morning from Lynn Westland, for example, who was our first woman student body president. I think that she was the first. I think she was, but anyway she was the one who was, uh, most in need of whatever I could give her, uh, because Lynn got herself into major difficulties, but she called to wish me a, uh, Happy Father's Day, uh, because she still sees me that way. It's, uh, fun to be with people that you care for as deeply as this. Michelle Cooper is another person, uh, with whom I've been very, very close this last year. She's looked me as a counselor, as an advisor, as a mentor, as a friend, and I guess I have been all of those things to her. She's gone through very difficult year, too, uh, she's still looking for answers to her own personal life and future, but these are the things, John, that are, uh, such a wonderful reward. Another student called me, Carlos Fuentes, a few weeks ago and, uh, he said that he wanted me to know something, because he knows that, at least he feels, and he is right, that Dorry and I are both, uh, deeply religious people, and he wanted some spiritual help. Uh, his wife, whom I knew quite well, as a member of our women's basketball team, Pee Wee De La Riva, has developed a major disease and, uh, it's life threatening, and it is one that is still hopefully going to be subject to, uh, to medical, uh, cure, but he wanted, uh, me to know and to be a part of, uh, this process. I've gone to many of these weddings, and most of them you go to with joy and happiness, thinking about how nice it is that people like Carlos and Pee Wee have found each other. And Pee Wee is gone, and managed to get her way all the way through medical school at Irvine, and just at the very time she's finished her residency, she gets hit with this, uh, with this catastrophic disease. Uh, well I could just go on and on because, there are many others whom I would name, if I were really to, uh, to give you a long list of the people that I have interacted with. One of the things that I do is to have a massive Christmas card list, and I keep up to date with, uh, I guess somewhere in well excess of one hundred to one hundred fifty students, former students, and they write me, and I write them, and had I guess we will continue to. (long pause)

(00:17:35)

JB: Let me ask you, you and I have, uh, shared feelings about CSUN students and, uh, I (pause) I just wonder if there any characteristics that you find the best of them to share. This is a list of those that you remember and will remember, is there anything—are there any commonalities that would tie them together or, are they as divergent as their names?

EP: Well, they are, um, you know, you and I both experienced the University of the Pacific and, uh, I think you know how much UOP means to me still, and certainly meant to me then, but, uh, I think our student at Northridge is different from the UOP student in a very significant way. I think that the UOP students, and I know this, it's terrible when you use generalities, but most of the UOP students, uh, have much more the world's means than our students do. Our students come from a much more modest background, many of them are, many of the ones that I have mentioned to you this afternoon, are first time graduates in their family. Not only first time graduates, first time, uh, first time ever college bound people in their family. And thus the particular triumph of people like the Orandas, for example, is, uh, is one that brings, uh, enormous satisfaction. Where I think that there is a difference is, I think that a lot of them, men and women, both very much more independent as a result of this, they've learned to fight a little harder for what they need and require. And indeed, succeed in so many ways. They can be involved in student government and student activities and, uh, be just as vital in student life, and yet at the same time work twenty, thirty, forty hours a week on the outside, and still do well academically, too. People tend to downgrade the academic ability of our students, because we don't necessarily have the huge numbers with grade point averages of 3.5 and above, although we do have an awful lot of them, but the fact is that our students don't, shouldn't be measured quite that way. They should be measured on whether or not they have the full time and opportunity to concentrate on their studies, which some of the students at more privileged schools do, and ours don't. And this is particularly true of women students, John, and maybe this has been your experience, too, but so many of our women students are independent at an early age, at a time when at UOP, uh, the tradition was that the son might go out and work part time while he was in school, but the daughter was supposed to just stay, and be protected, and sheltered and study, and have a good time. Our students, uh, have a good time, alright, but at the same time they hardly are sheltered and protected, in many cases. I'm thinking about people like, uh, Holly Holdridge, who was our vice president a year ago, who is, and still is a very dear friend of mine. Uh, who now is going to be going to, uh, start her PhD program at, uh, in New York, NYU [New York University], uh, in Student Affairs, partly because of the experience and the exposure she had in Student Affairs working with us but, uh, Holli comes from a divorced family, in the way that so many of our students do. She is very proud of the fact that she got herself through every single expense in college, herself. She has, uh, fought very valiantly to maintain her integrity, and she's just a wonderful person. I worked with another student very much just like this last year, an employee of ours inside the Dean of Students' office. A young woman named (unintelligible) Moffat(?), whom I don't know that you would know, but again from a

divorced family where she really doesn't feel close to either side and maintains herself. Every single penny that (unintelligible) spends, she generates herself, and yet at the same time she earns B plus grades in our School of Business. Its, uh, really (pause) the accomplishments of our students are just wonderful, to me, at least. And I do think that it comes about because of their character. Not that the students at other schools don't have that character, but that ours I think do have a very special kind of character. (long pause)

(00:22:30)

JB: I see you dually as a student at UOP then, and having a son at Northridge now. Very interesting.

EP: Uh-huh.

JB: Very interesting contrast(?). Our time is limited I know, but I wonder if, in the bit of the time that we have remaining, we might look back on the last year of Division I athletics. You headed the committee that produced the Crossroads document of 1988. Have things worked out this past year about as you expected? Have there been surprises pretty much confirmatory of what you expected? How have things gone? (long pause)

EP: What I've wanted for our athletic program is what I want for the history department and music department and all the others, that is, the opportunity to grow and be recognized nationally, and we are in many, many ways, inside our university, and it seemed to me very, very much wrong for our academic—for our athletic program to be straitjacketed in Division II status where people didn't know who we were. I've always been a part of athletics, wherever I have been, uh, participating in college at Brown and involved at Rice and Pacific, and here with the athletic board, I was chair of our athletic board for many years at Northridge, and eventually when a time came when Athletics needed an administrative home, after its separation from Physical Education, I welcomed them as a part of Student Affairs, and I'm very pleased that they are. And as I say this is a natural outgrowth of the approach that I have for our university, the sense of pride that I have in it. In one way, I think that, uh, our Division I move has been enormously successful in the first year. There was an article in The Times, uh, that came out last week, while I was in Costa Rica, that I enjoyed reading, went for five pages, talking about what Division I has been like at Northridge. And except for some criticism of our—the lack of success that we've had with men's basketball particularly, uh, the success that we've had has absolutely remarkable for—indeed, even more so than any other schools has had in its first year in Division I as an independent. We've had one student already win a national award in uh—by winning the fifteen hundred, a woman named Darcy Arreola. We've almost won, uh, national championships already in three sports. I think in time we will, uh, but the fact is that from an athletics stand point, despite the constraints we have, because we don't have anywhere nearly enough backing, uh, in money, for our athletic program, compared to other schools of our size, and the fact that we are independent,

rather than a member of a conference, which is another terrible constraint, uh, I think we have done wonders. But where I feel tremendous disappointment, uh, personally because I think that it is fair to take personal blame, as well as where I try to gain personal credit for certain things, uh, is somehow failing to get through the message to the faculty on this campus, that athletics are not really a threat to the academic program, but rather, hopefully, a complement to the academic program. And this has led to all sorts of, uh, unhappy, unpleasant times for the executive committee, for the faculty senate, uh, several meetings in the faculty senate where almost a blood bath of vitriol heaped upon the athletic program. (pause). Suspicion which is, uh, a terrible thing to try to answer, but suspicion that somehow the dollars that are being expended in athletics are coming out of the departmental resources, which is not true, but I have not been able to persuade faculty of that. And now that I think that there is sort of general consensus, that indeed that might be the case, of any of the faculty feel that the support that the athletic program has been provided by the foundation, should really be money going to the academic departments, even though those dollars never have gone to the academic departments in the past, but rather have gone to student projects, and the students vote that these dollars should be coming to the athletic program rather than to their student project funds. But still a feeling that research has been stultified, that other things that the faculty need and certainly require, and god knows they do need and require things, would be alleviated somehow if we didn't have a big athletic program. And, uh, out of this has come the creation of an oversight committee, uh, that is still not sure of its, uh, of its responsibilities. It's really a presidential advisory board taking the place of the old intercollegiate athletic advisory board. Its name technically is the oversight of intercollegiate advisory board, but the members of that committee, and a huge percentage of the committee are instructional faculty, feel that their responsibility is to the faculty senate, although it's an advisory board to the president. Now, politically, there still is this strain, and I don't know that we are ever going to be able to solve that, certainly not in my lifetime at this university. Uh, because of the fact that the budget is in such sorry straits right now, and thus any dollars that are expended other than for the instructional program, clearly, members of the faculty feel are expended improperly, whether those dollars are expended for athletics or for frills like Student Affairs. (pause) But, all in all, I think the path of our athletic program has been a very positive one, and I think that we are on the right track. I think that in time, uh, California State University, Northridge, will be a very recognized school throughout the country, which I want it to be. And whether some members of the faculty agree with it or not, one of the best ways to attain that is by recognition through your athletic program, rather necessarily of how well one does in cancer research. Great as Steven Oppenheimer is, and his research capacity is undaunted, he's one of the most vital people that I have ever met, and yet at the same time, the wonderful things that Steve does, even though they may be in faraway(?), far more long lasting, don't have the national recognition which one can attain by getting a baseball team to the world series and perhaps even to win it. It's a strange set of dynamics, but I think that athletics do work positively for a university, but I am a very biased person. (long pause)

JB: We've just about, uh, exhausted our time. (pause) So thank you for giving me a second opportunity. Further questions that we only opened up last time, and I'm going to ask new ones again, is there anything that we missed all together, that we might have taken up, that you wish we had?

(00:30:18)

EP: Well, there really are two, and if you don't mind we can spend just a minute or two, just, uh, I'll outline what each of those two might have been, if we'd taken the opportunity to do them. Uh, one is very much the same kind of path that we have described in the evolution of the University Student Union, the need for some kind of centrality for our campus, and by the very same logic, it has always seemed wrong to me that the only housing that we had on the campus was Monterey Hall, and gradually our high-rise, Rincon Hall. It seemed to me that what we need, if we're ever going to be a great university—(no sound/long pause).

[END OF TRACK 6]