Susan Curzon
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Interviewed by Jane Meyers of Viewing Voices
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JANE MEYERS (JM): Today is Thursday, June 29, 2017. I am Jane Meyers, and today I will be recording the oral history of Dr. Susan Curzon, Dean of California State Northridge from 1992 through 2010. This interview is part of the university's Leadership Oral History Project. Dr. Susan Curzon, better known as Sue Curzon, began her career as a special librarian for Kennecott Corporation, a deep-sea mining company; followed by work for the County of Los Angeles Library system as a librarian, and soon as a regional administrator supervising eleven branch libraries, books by mail, bookmobiles, and libraries in jails. It was evident early on that Sue was interested in bringing the library to the people in a myriad of ways. Before coming here to Cal State Northridge, she was director of libraries for the City of Glendale. Sue earned her Ph.D. in public administration from the University of Southern California; her master's in librarianship from the University of Washington; and her bachelor's degree in English from the University of California Riverside. She's the author of several books on management, and she wrote a widely-acclaimed book titled *What Every Library Director Should Know*. Sue has received many awards, including Librarian of the Year in 1993 from the publication *Library Journal;* Distinguished Alumna from UC-Riverside; and perhaps most cherished, Administrator of the Year by the CSUN students in 1996.

Her eighteen years at Cal State Northridge from 1992 to 2010 included the years of huge change in the Oviatt Library, from just entering the Information Age to a multidimensional, multimedia, technologically equipped hub for staff and students. She also happened to be here in January 1994 when the university sustained huge damage from the Northridge Earthquake. She was responsible for bringing the Oviatt Library back to immediate service, and for extensive work involving rebuilding, renovation, and the improvement of the library.

But enough of the introduction. Time to give Dr. Susan Curzon a chance to share her life. Good morning, Sue.

SUSAN CURZON (SC): Good morning, Jane.

JM: We'll be having a conversation, as you relate your life story. We plan in this interview to enhance the CSUN Leadership Oral History Project with your story and your work as Dean of the Oviatt Library. At this point, rather than my continuing to relate your accomplishments, I ask that you share your life, beginning with your family and childhood.

SC: Well, I was born in England, and we came to the United States when I was still quite little. I had, in a lot of ways, an ordinary childhood, I think a typical childhood of that time, and so there was a lot of being out of doors in nature—horses, dogs. So a happy childhood, I would say.

JM: Can you remember some things that you really enjoyed as a child, or a specific memory that you'd like to share?

SC: Well, I was a kid who was just crazy about horses, so for me it was horses, horses, horses, and that's what I really liked. In spite of my later life, which seemed to be

mostly behind a desk or [in] a meeting room, I was always out of doors. So those were the best memories—actually out in the forest, out in the fields, in the snows.

JM: [00:03:42] So did you have your own horse, or how did that work?

SC: No, we used to go to a stable. At that time, you know, the stables were never far away, so there was a whole cluster of us that went regularly to the stables, and I used to ride out.

JM: And from that time, were there any—did you already have an interest in reading, and were there any special books that you remember that you liked as a child?

SC: Yeah, I was a great reader. I never remember learning to read. It just seemed like I could always read. Even from a young age, I always liked history and biographies quite a bit. I still do today, actually. I used the library a lot.

JM: Can you remember any specific biography or something that you read as a child?

SC: No, there was no one specific one that I would say sort of turned my thinking around, because I just read so much, and as much as I could get my hands on, really.

JM: And what about elementary school, do you have anything to share about that?

SC: You know, again, I went to good schools, I had good teachers, I belonged to a small group of friends. And really, it was not a spectacular experience, it was just a nice experience, and a solid education.

JM: It sounds like there was a lot of freedom to roam. Were there wooded areas and places where you could just explore?

SC: [00:05:11] Oh yes, we were very free. It wasn't—I sound like everyone of my age—but it wasn't at all like today, because kids would leave home in the

morning and come home before dark. And you'd just be all over the place with your friends and your dogs—just all over the place.

JM: Yeah, I share that. I remember that. In your school memories, is there anything that comes up in elementary school, junior high, or high school that was interesting or something that you would like to share with a specific teacher?

SC: Throughout my education—and I include all the way through—I had good teachers, but no *one* that really kind of chose me—partly because I was an ordinary kid, so no one was going to say, "Oh, I gotta get ahold of her!" So I can't say that really. But in high school I began to show my interest in literature. That's when that really began. And I began to note that as an interest. I didn't know it would even be an interest, because I didn't know enough about those kinds of things. But I showed a decided trend that way. I started writing poetry at that time, something which I haven't [done] in many years, but for many years I wrote poetry extensively.

JM: And is your poetry something you shared with family and friends?

SC: Hardly ever. I mean, I would submit it for coursework, but other than that, no.

JM: When you went on to later years in school, you went to UC-Riverside. Did you live near there, or what drove you to go to UC-Riverside?

SC: Yes, by that time we had come to California, and we lived in Riverside, and it was literally within walking distance from where we lived.

JM: Oh my goodness!

SC: [00:07:08] So that was natural.

JM: That's such a nice area.

SC: *Very* nice, yeah. Of course it's very different now. This was back in the sixties, when it was really kind of almost like a desert resort town. I remember it was the first time I'd ever seen palm trees. I couldn't get over them. I'd just never seen them before, and they were everywhere, and it was very beautiful. I liked UCR. I was an English major, and the program was very rigorous. They really pushed you.

JM: And did they give you opportunities to write and to speak?

SC: Speaking, never. And in spite of my latter career, I was a very shy individual, so speaking was horrifying for me, but there never were those opportunities anywhere. But writing was relentless, absolutely relentless, because of the constant reading and then three, four papers a week were not unusual. And I still have a couple of those papers left, and I realized my writing was so different then than it is now because in between I had forty years of writing memos. (laughter) Not exactly literature!

JM: Yeah! That's for sure! I know in my college experience—I was an English major too—there were a couple of professors who kind of stood out and were more amenable to being almost friends. Did you have any experiences like that?

SC: No. For me at least, it wasn't like that. They did maintain…. Even though it was a small campus and we were a small group, it was pretty distant.

JM: Did you read contemporary literature as well as the classics then?

SC: Well, it was, of course, heavy in the classics, and I think that's good, it gave me a very good foundation. But then you know how it is, course after course you take 19th century, 20th century, and so forth. You take the whole gamut. But my

particular fondness was always from about 1880 to 1920. That was my particular interest.

JM: [00:09:17] Yes, I didn't particularly like the older….

SC: No.

JM: Then basically in your college years, did you have a desire to pursue librarianship? Or did that come later?

SC: Oh, much later. I mean not *much* later, but…. In spite of the fact that I was a kid who was always in libraries—I mean, I'd use the school library, I'd use the public library—this just shows you how sort of unaware, somewhat clueless I was as a kid—I had *no* idea it was a profession. It didn't even occur to me. I mean, although I'd see people and I'd interact with them, but not that much. And actually it turned out that one of my fellow students, when she was graduating and we said goodbye, knowing we really would probably never see each other again, and she said that she was going to become a librarian. And I actually remember what I responded. I said, "Oh, is that a profession?" I didn't even know that! And so that actually triggered my interest—that very kind of casual conversation.

JM: Wow. And then going to the University of Washington—I've been on that campus, it's lovely—what drove you to go to the Seattle area?

SC: You know, I just had that feeling. You know sometimes you just have a feeling that's where you're going?

JM: Yeah.

SC: [00:10:36] That's how I felt about UW.

JM: Was there anything particular about *that* program when you were there, that you recall or liked? Or maybe did it drive you in a different direction? Or were there things you didn't like?

SC: You know, one thing I really give them credit for, is even at that time, which was pretty early, they had a technology orientation. And they actually brought—I remember him to this day—his name was Dr. Stanford and he came out of Oxford, and he was in computer science. But of course it was a bit of a mismatch because really, that wasn't much of a field at that time, except those gigantic machines. But he taught us early to do programming—you know, one of those machines that filled rooms.

JM: Yes.

SC: And so they were very advanced in that.-

JM: So you began your career right after you got your master's in librarianship?

SC: Yes, that's right.

JM: And then what made you decide to go for a Ph.D. in public administration?

SC: Well, you know, I've always felt like I had kind of a split brain. On the one half of me is a great interest—or at that time, of course much more powerful—a great interest in literature. And so I could have easily taken a Ph.D. in English. But there's another part of me that's very interested in management, which is a match for my brain, I guess, if you want to put it that way. And of course given the path of my career, because I was already in management at that time, it made sense to pursue that.

JM: [00:12:11] Yeah, when I think of public administration, I think of managing cities. I'd never thought of it in relationship to universities or libraries, but basically I can see how they would overlap so much.

SC: Yes, because, you know, public administration is made up of three things: one's the discipline of management itself; the second is the discipline of public administration; and the third is the discipline of political science; and all those come together into public administration.

JM: And certainly into libraries.

SC: Certainly into libraries, yes.

JM: Yeah. In this time in your early career, and then going to getting your Ph.D. in public administration, did you also do any travelling, or what else was going on in your life?

SC: Yes, I've always travelled. So that was sort of just part of the backdrop of my life. But yes, I've always travelled, internationally and nationally.

JM: And some of your favorite places that you've gone?

SC: Well actually, I've been in England, obviously, many times; and who doesn't like Paris? But one that we went to, actually just a few years ago, that I was very much struck by was Morocco. I'd always wanted to see Morocco—even when I was a little girl—and I hardly had any idea where it was. And so I was fascinated by it. It's a beautiful country.

JM: [00:13:37] Yeah, I remember a friend bringing me saffron.

SC: Oh yes.

JM: It's quite delicious!

SC: Uh-huh.

JM: You were already in your career, but when you were getting your Ph.D., was that a break from working?

SC: No. In fact, it was very difficult. At that time I was coordinating adult services for the county, so fortunately I worked in the middle of downtown. So between downtown and USC is not that far. And they were very generous to me, because I always worked very hard, but they would let me take off at certain times, and then I'd be back again, so I could go to the classes. But it was very, very difficult, because working full time and taking your Ph.D. full time…. I mean, by the end of it I was pretty sick and exhausted, actually. But, you know, you just push through.

JM: Yeah. Then when you were in your career, what were some of the most memorable parts of your career *before* you came to Cal State Northridge?

SC: Well, of course I enjoyed working for the county, because of the huge variety. At that time, there were some ninety-five libraries, all kinds of things were going on. So we were always all over the place. I mean, I <u>really</u> know the county, because of sixteen years of travelling everywhere, and going here, going there, getting to know all the communities. But I think there were two very significant events: One was Proposition 13, because the county library was a special district, so it actually lost about 95 percent of its funding. So it was very serious. I had a decision to make, and that was whether or not I would stay even in libraries, because I was a senior lib-rarian at that time, I actually was at the top of the layoff list. The person who was on the lowest of the list actually was hired the day I was

born, so the likelihood of my being laid off was extreme. I actually took off for a week, and I went to Paso Robles. I went to a ranch up there that occasionally took visitors. At that time I could still really ride, and so I just went out on the ranch. I lived with the cattle and everything like this, and just thought and thought, and I decided to stay. And when I came back, that's when I organized People for Libraries, which was a massive demonstration countywide, before the board of supervisors and with the State of California, to restore the funding. And so we had hundreds and hundreds of marches and all kinds of activities, and I was very, very busy. I think it had its impact. That was good.

The second thing that was a great turning point for me was the county library did a reorganization, and it turned my thinking around about what management is and does. It had a *huge* impact on me, and it altered my career forever—it really did, because I saw the *full* power of management. And I said, "You know, I can get there, and I will do it differently." That really changed me.

JM: [00:17:07] So there's a good way to do it and not such a good way to do it.

SC: Yes, that's right.

JM: That was the first instinct for you that led to you being so people-friendly, or basically welcoming and making the library the way this one is.

SC: Well, yes, and behind the scenes, the way that you managed: You know, what the goals of management are, and how you go about it, because what happened there is I had a very different understanding of behind the scenes. And I said the power of management. And then when I took my Ph.D., it gave me the intellectual framework to make decisions, so I was an instinctive manager, obviously, because

you can't manage without instincts. But I also had the intellectual framework. I mean, I knew why I was managing what I managed—the way that I managed, I knew why I was doing it. I had a philosophy behind me. And that philosophy drove me, actually, for the rest of my career. So it was a powerful moment. I could have gone to the dark side, and people did.

JM: Probably not!

SC: No, it isn't in my nature. Because I was more reflective and analytical by nature, I thought about it. And a couple of professors helped me demystify the process. And that's something I've learned a lot ever since too, is the importance of demystification.

JM: Was there anything else in your career before you came to CSUN and Glendale, or anywhere else that you would like to talk about?

SC: [00:18:51] You know, those were really the most powerful pieces of it, I think. The county library was an extremely social and vivacious place. Even today a whole group of us still lunch regularly, and get together, and I'm still friends with everyone in Glendale. So I've found libraries to be very delightful.

JM: Uh-huh. I certainly agree.

SC: They're not what people think they are. We have a good image, people love libraries, but I think that they think behind the scenes, of librarians differently than what we really are. I think most people are quite struck by how social they are, how nice people are, how congenial people are.

JM: Yes, I think so too. I had a recent experience going to the library and wanting to get the e-books on line, and basically there was a young woman there who was

probably twenty years old, and she walked me right through it. And not only did she walk me through it, she wrote it all down! She was very friendly, and it worked fine. Then I could go do it on my own.

SC: What good service!

JM: Yes, exactly good service. Then when you came to CSUN, share what that was like, arriving here. How did that happen?

SC: [00:20:14] I was ready for change. I loved my career in public libraries. I have absolutely no regrets. But if I hadn't been a Baby Boomer, if there hadn't been a glut on the market, I probably would have headed to university libraries earlier, or entirely. And then I saw this opportunity come up. I was about that point where the arc of my public library career was beginning to conclude, and I began to look around for something different, and this came up. So I just went for it. And it was an interesting crossover, because I came out of sixteen years in public libraries. And that's not a typical crossover.

JM: Right. So that was in 1992, and then you were here until 2010. So before—we always go probably before and after the earthquake—so before the earthquake what did you enjoy about being here, and what are some of the things that you were working on?

SC: Well, there wasn't really much before, because I was only here eighteen months before the earthquake struck, so there really—you know, we were working on strategic planning, I was reviewing policies and procedures, getting to know the campus, getting to know everyone here. So we were working on things, on the goals that we would have at hand, and getting a handle on the budget, because

when I came in, the budget was in the red, so you've got to get that in the black as soon as possible. So those kinds of things. And of course came the earthquake. But also before that, the president of the university—yes, that's right, that was before—the president of the university had given me part of the computer center, so it was, shall we say, at the least, a very busy time.

JM: Yeah, with information technology.

SC: Indeed.

JM: And part of the computer center, was that in the library itself?

SC: No, that was in the old—it no longer exists now—part of the science library used to be in the old South Library, and then the South Library became the computer center operations. That building had to be taken down.

JM: [00:22:33] So that didn't change until after the earthquake? In other words, the computer center stayed the center, a little bit apart from the library, until after?

SC: It has always been separate, right. Although obviously it didn't stay there because the building was so badly destroyed.

JM: So it still is separate?

SC: Oh yes. Yes, that's right, they have a CIO which is the correct model, because it's a very intense field, as is the library.

JM: Yes. When you were talking about…. Is that what you were referring to when you talked about academic tech support, like basically you had to then run the library and oversee the computer center?

SC: That's right. So we ran all of the administrative systems, all of academic technology, and then later on was actually after the earthquake, was added all the

network as well. So I had everything. Everything that you think of today was also under me.

JM: So that must have been quite a load.

SC: It was quite a load, yeah—and the earthquake.

JM: Yeah. Well, getting to the earthquake, January 17, 1994, can you share your memories of that day?

SC: Sure. Yes. Of course I don't live far from here, so we ourselves were very…. Mostly it's just the intense shaking. I mean, you knew it was really, really serious. And then you could hear everything cracking and breaking, and the darkness was everywhere. And then we saw a ball of fire in the sky, because a gas main had broken a couple of miles from our house. And then also we had a fire water tower, and that snapped, sending cascades of water down the street. So it was very sort of horrifying the first few moments. You knew that it was as bad as bad could be. So after we checked the house, and this and that, and looked around, of course there were no utilities, there was nothing. And everybody got their cars out. This is, after all, L.A. So as much power as was left…. After that, all the electricity, all the utilities died. But everybody got their cars out, because you had to make a run for it.

[00:25:09] After a while, my husband and I came to campus, because I just had a bad feeling, a really bad feeling. And indeed, my first view of the library was from the north side, and it was so broken, so devastating, so dark, it did look like a ruin actually. Those were my earliest memories of it. It was sad. And of course we were completely cut off from communication, because nothing

was working. And this was really—remember, cell phones at that day were still the size of, you know.

JM: Yes.

SC: Exactly, they were like a foot long, with an antenna. And those were pre all of this. And there was no communication, so we didn't know the extent of it. We only knew that our immediate environment was very bad.

JM: So when you left your house, was your house okay?

SC: No, it was not okay. I mean, it was standing. And because my husband has an engineering background, he could look and see…. Because if it had been really ruined, that would have been a whole other story. But inside, it was completely wrecked, because all the cabinets, the bookcases, the china, the pantry—everything had come flying out by the sheer force of it. I mean, you couldn't stand. It was *literally* like a bucking bronco. It was *so* powerful, and it kept coming. It wasn't like one thing and it was over. So everywhere was smashed glass and ruined food and so forth. The one thing we did do before we left—of course we took care of water, because water is always the last desperate situation. So I did fill up tubs and all these kinds of things to make sure we had enough water behind us. You know, that preparation does pay off. You know, you do start thinking, as dangerous as it is.

JM: And when you got to the campus, did you see other people early on?

SC: We were very early, and so we actually came from the north. I was kind of looking at it, when two of the officers came running towards us, and they said, "Run! Hazmat!" And we could actually see a black cloud coming over the

Science Building. You really do start…. We got in the car and started to run. So I went up to the police station, and that's where actually everyone had gathered, as such. The provost was there, Louanne Kennedy. I believe you interviewed Louanne.

JM: I didn't, but yes.

SC: So but someone did. And so she was there, and a small gathering of people had already started. And that's where the operations then began.

JM: [00:28:09] Wow.

SC: Yeah. Wow.

JM: So what happened the rest of that day?

SC: Well, they were trying to find housing for the students that were—you know, because the dorms were in trouble. The provost herself was living up there, because she really had just arrived on campus too. So it was a little bit of sort of settling in. So everybody went home to take care of their houses and see what the situation is. And then essentially we all came back again to deal with the campus. So in the day you were here, and by night you were dealing with your own home situation. And of course I had to reach all the staff. I had to reach everybody: all the librarians, all the staff, all the students. And so we were calling, calling, calling. First we wanted to make sure everybody was okay. Fortunately, in our case, everyone survived, but their home situations were not okay.

JM: Yeah. So when you came back to campus on a regular basis, was that a week later?

SC: Oh no, it was right away. And of course, I think for at least a couple of weeks—I know I recount that in my article, I believe, so that's more exact the memory—but for a couple of weeks we were just standing in an open field. And it was a wet and cold January. And honestly, we're indoor workers, we're not used to standing outside day after day in the cold. But you do what you have to do. And then eventually [we] brought in tents and things like this, and that's where, for a long time, we ran the operation, where we began to strategically think about what did the library need, what needed to be rescued, what was the extent of the damage, how could we provide library service without a library? Because we knew by that time we couldn't—a lot of it was covered with asbestos, and the library itself was not safe.

JM: [00:30:10] So then how did you bring library service? How did that happen and evolve?

SC: You know, you just really do the best you can. And there was a little bit of digital resources at that time—it wasn't like now, of course. So we worked to make that as accessible as possible. We retrieved what we could retrieve, what we knew we were going to be able to do. We had massive rescue work to do in the archives and special collections, because unfortunately it was all rain damaged—you know, the most valuable books.

JM: And what happened with that, what was the process when you were looking at special library collections? What was the process as to what you were doing?

SC: Well the room, of course, was quite different than now. It was completely dark, because the whole area was sealed, so it was completely black. So I and a

handful—a couple of librarians and the staff—and some student employees too—we had literally to wear, you know, the headlights, and you literally had to crawl, crawl on the floor to find the books. You could hardly see anything. And then the curator of Special Collections, Tony Gardner at that time, arranged for freeze-dry trucks to arrive from San Francisco. And so we shipped out everything that we could ship out—because, you know, time is of the essence with rare collections. And then Robert Marshall was the archivist, and he was doing the same thing.

JM: So what did the books look like and feel like when you found them?

SC: [00:31:41] Well many of them were wet. Most of them had just flown off—the force was so great—just flown off the shelves. So you had to kind of put aside those that were going to make it, and those that really needed to be rescued. At the same time, the Computer Center was badly damaged. So we actually had to put the mainframe and the operations of the computer itself, on top of the main distribution frame. So we were moving that at the same time, because otherwise there was *nothing*. And you see, the president had decided—I think rightly so—that we would start campus again, we wouldn't take a break, and that everybody would come back to work. And everybody was happy for that, because they were terrified of losing their jobs. So people just did whatever they could, they just pitched in and did whatever they could do. So we were working on this too. So every morning we met in a tent and figured out what we were going to do that day. We had to kind of lay out the whole analysis of: these are all the things that would need to be done; these are all the things we need to do that day. And in the

late afternoon we'd come back and say, "This is what we've done," and look again at the next day. It was very operational, very detailed, very logistical the whole time. At the same time, the architects and engineers were…. I came in with the first group of architects and engineers, because they didn't know the building, but of course I knew it even in the dark. And so I went in with them, so they did their first analysis. So we were working down multiple tracks at all times.

JM: I'm curious about freeze drying books. What is that? You get the book, it's wet. Obviously you're drying it, but how does it come out?

SC: [00:33:35] It comes out not perfect, but much better. At least it's still readable, the pages are workable, and some of the restoration work was excellent. Some will always be water damaged, of course. But because the movement was swiftly to that. And the campus at that time too—I mean, I'm sure it's still true in any emergency—but they were very, like, "If you need to do it, get that contract and do it. Just do it, do it, do it."

JM: I know Blenda Wilson talked about the need that she thought was paramount was with bringing in funds, so that basically you wouldn't be delayed.

SC: Right. That's right, yes. Yes, she had a lot to worry about in terms of funding, and the politics, and the public relations of it all. So she had a lot to worry about. But for us, it was just we had to figure out what we needed to do, get the contracts to get it going, and just do it. And in some cases we had to move *very* swiftly.

JM: Yeah. Then when you opened some services, were they elsewhere?

SC: Yes, they were elsewhere. We first started in trailers, and those trailers were the best that they could get. They needed a lot of trailers. I forgot how many they brought in, but it seemed like it was hundreds to me. And it was okay. We just had like ordinary, almost like picnic tables—you know, like those kind of folding tables—and chairs, and a couple of phones. You know, you just do the best you can. Later on they put up these tents, but they are domes, so they had a cement pad. And we began gradually to move services into that. And that was our operations for quite some time.

JM: [00:35:23 ] Do you remember about how long that lasted?

SC: It was a long time, because at first they thought there was nothing wrong with the Oviatt—it was cosmetic—although it was severe cosmetic damage, but cosmetic. Then they realized that the wings were structurally degraded, so they knew they'd have to come down. But the old part of the building, the center, was intact.

JM: I know, it seems to be the case in reading about earthquakes, that the damage is not always perceived right away; and then sometimes the damage worsens because of the aftershocks.

SC: Exactly. Exactly, they worsen, and it reveals itself as well. And I was very concerned, because when I was in the wings, I felt there was a tilt to the floors. And in fact, I took a ball and I showed one of the engineers that it rolled. Now, they aren't supposed to roll to the west. It just wasn't supposed to, but it was clearly tilting. And indeed, what was happening was that the floors were beginning the very, very early stages of collapse. This was a much-studied

building. Literally hundreds of engineers and architects came to study it for their own knowledge—and that was good.

JM: And then who is responsible—architects, I'm sure—for figuring out what needed to be done with the wings? What would the rebuilding look like? Would it be exactly the same, or…?

SC: Well that fell to me, and our crew here. And then of course Facilities Management brought in architects for us, and engineers, so we worked with them on the design. So that was a very intense period as well. And there were a lot of people involved in that: our associate dean, Susan Parker, there's a lot of restoration that went on. So it was a team effort between Facilities Management, ourselves as the users, so we know what libraries need, what the design should look like, the architects, the engineers—classic, actually, in terms of whatever you're building.

JM: [00:37:37] And when all this is going on, the staff was working in either a trailer or a tent, what was the thought that the staff had; or take me through a day where you got together with the staff. How were they feeling, what were they doing, were they becoming exhausted, or what was happening during that time?

SC: I think some were definitely becoming exhausted, because the load was greater on some than others. And some we actually jobbed out to other places on campus because we didn't have the work for them, because their work just wasn't happening because that part of the library *couldn't* be in operation. Within about six months, everybody was back in library operations, but for the first couple of

months we jobbed out people. Generally speaking, people were just so happy to be working. But they put up with a lot.

JM: You talked a little bit about asbestos. Can you talk a little bit more about the ongoing surprises that happened—not the best surprises—as the process was going through? There was asbestos and water damage—was there other?

SC: Well, the answer as to, which looked like it rode out the earthquake okay, but it turned out that actually the skin of it was degraded, so water had gotten in. And also there was some minor cracking as well. But every book, every item in the library had to be…. We had hazmat teams come in, so for a long time it was completely closed off. Everything had to be hand cleaned, and cleaned and cleaned and cleaned. Then of course mold came into the ASRS because unfortunately they didn't protect the skin of it as well as perhaps they should have, not realizing the danger of it. And so mold came in, and once mold came in…. Well, you know what a problem that is. So that also had to be eradicated as well. So yes, some days it was a full catastrophe—it really was.

JM: [00:39:46] Can you tell a little bit about your staff then, and in a positive way about what…. I know they were very helpful.

SC: Yes.

JM: And then it was also a lot of outpouring from the community and other universities?

SC: Well, the community, of course, was suffering itself, because everybody was badly damaged, from here all the way down. But of course the most helpful of all was UCLA. I had called Gloria Werner who was the U.L. [University Librarian]

at that time, and because still a lot of our materials were not accessible, and yet our semester was operational, and so, I mean, the faculty were literally teaching out of the back of their cars. They'd stand at their trunks and teach the students gathered around them. Anyway, so Gloria very kindly agreed. So we sent her both staff and resources in order to help with the load. And then we had a bus service go between CSUN and UCLA, regularly, actually to take people up and down. And so that went on, I would say at least a semester—at least. Yes, I think about a semester.

JM: In Blenda Wilson's history, she talked about the every-day meetings. She talked about meeting in the morning. Were all the management staff involved in that, or how did that work with her? She had meetings at 10:30 and 4:30 every day?

SC: Right, she did, yes. I'm sure she had many more besides, but yes, she would pull in everybody who was on campus and involved at a certain level.

JM: And was that something that was a help?

SC: Yes. Yes, absolutely, because there was no mode of communication, because still a lot of the computers were down, and they themselves were trapped in buildings too, so everything had to be rescued.

JM: About how long did it take to get computer service back?

SC: Most important, of course, were the administrative systems, because without that there was no registration, no nothing. You can't run without administrative systems. So that was the most important. The closest system like us was in Fresno. So we sent a handful of our computer staff to Fresno so we could operate our systems off of their—at that time they were the big mainframes, so we could

operate off of their mainframe. So that was when we really became primarily operational again. And we were able to deliver that, that semester.

JM: So that was during that next semester?

SC: Oh yes. And I give our staff a lot of credit, their willingness to go to Fresno.

JM: Yes, definitely.

SC: And thanks to Fresno too, because we were in a desperate situation actually.

JM: Do you have a particular memory of the time where your staff or students or some conversation you had with someone or a group of people at the time—some kind of something that was poignant?

SC: [00:43:02] I remember the range of emotions. And I realized also that you cannot predict, actually, about human behavior. You think you can, and on a general day-to-day you can, but an emergency is a very different type of thing. There were people who were, I think, immensely courageous. And there were some I would have said, "Yes, that's going to be the one," who would be that courageous. And there were some that I wouldn't have plucked out of a crowd and said, "Yeah, that's going to be the one." Some people were genuinely terrified—*genuinely* terrified. And they were just frightened to be on campus. They couldn't bear to be in the building, because obviously we were still working in the building, getting things. And those, you just had to figure out other things for them to do. You know, there's always something to do, because if they really couldn't, they really couldn't. I think that an emergency calls for a person to be a full human being, to really be a human being with all of the compassion that that requires; and to understand that the reactions are going to be *very* different, and

give everybody the time and space they need to do it, in spite of the fact that you really need work done, and you *really* need it done, but if they couldn't, they couldn't. And there were some people who left California and just said, "I'm sorry, that really is it for me," which is understandable, frankly.

JM: Yeah. I keep picturing hunting for all these books. Were there engineers around you, or security people around you, or somebody watching what you were doing, to make sure you were safe?

SC: No. No, I can't say that. There was security on campus, of course—probably not as much—I'm sure Blenda would agree with this—that we probably needed—if I were ever in an emergency situation like that again, I would put around a huge cyclone fence and massive security, because it does kind of open things up for that. I would talk to the engineers and the architects, especially the engineers initially, because they were the most important, because they deal with the structure of the building itself. And so I was always in conversations with the engineers. But, you know, you had to be smart yourself. You couldn't be stupid. And some people I know on campus took some risks that just were not…. I mean, you have to be aware that probably there is something wrong, and just stay out of those things, and make sure you have your hardhats and your gloves and your whistles and your flashlights with you. Don't be without your little pack of emergency things.

JM: Wow.

SC: But on the other hand, you know, we're all city kids. We're all city kids, so we're not accustomed to being in survival mode, which is a little bit what it called for, I

think. And we were also *very* tired, so people made errors in judgement, from fatigue.

JM: Were there people in authority, engineers, people like that, who didn't understand the importance of getting all of the books and materials out?

SC: [00:46:39] Oh yes, oh definitely. The thing that helped us the most is I think Blenda held a vote, and the faculty senate voted unanimously that it was the library that was the most important thing to restore first. And that's when you really do understand the meaning of the heart of the university. But it also wouldn't be my expectation that an engineer would necessarily grasp the full range of that, even though they are very educated themselves. But their function is elsewhere. And that didn't bother me. That was my job to explain, and the team around me. That was our job. Because obviously I wasn't the one going to every meeting. There were lots of people going to these various meetings. And that was our work, to do that. Their job was to secure the structure.

JM: I know your library in particular is so much physically the center of the university campus.

SC: Literally, right?

JM: Literally.

SC: It's a beautiful placement.

JM: Yeah. And I love the area in front where you have gatherings.

SC: Uh-huh, the lawn. And it's circled by the colleges. Frankly, it's the most perfect placement I've ever seen. That was a stroke of genius of the early planners.

JM: Yeah, fantastic.

SC: *Uh-huh!*

JM: Oh, let's see…. After that first semester, were there other developments or anything that happened with the library structure, or something that basically was more surprising or in a way that there was structural damage that wasn't discovered?

SC: [00:48:25] Well of course it was a few months before the full reveal of the damage of the wings. We already talked about the asbestos, the mold, the damage to the collections, and so forth. I would say after that, most everything was revealed in terms of major things, because it was a seven-year process. And so it was just day-to-day "get to work, get to work." On the one hand restore, on the other hand provide library service. And for me, also the computer operations and the networking. So I had the three dimensions, and they required restoration as well as service. So we were constantly going down multiple tracks.

JM: So when the library opened, was it the core that opened?

SC: It was the core.

JM: And then how long did it take to complete the wings?

SC: I think it was about seven years, altogether.

JM: So that's a long time.

SC: It was a very long time.

JM: During that time were you able to have all of the library set up in the core, pretty much all of it?

SC: No.

JM: You still had resources elsewhere?

SC: We still had resources outside. We had two tents, actually. By that time we'd given up the trailers—by the time we moved back to the wings. And we moved library administration in there, kind of crammed in there. And also, others needed the trailers, because we weren't the only ones in a difficult situation. But we still had the two tents, because otherwise there just wasn't enough space.

JM: [00:50:01] So everything was damaged. The Science Building and the library—were they the most damaged, or were there other buildings? Or maybe they were the most important to bring up.

SC: They were very badly damaged. The South Library, which had become the computer center, but it was still called the South Library, that actually had to be taken down. It was completely structurally degraded. When w e were in there, because we were retrieving tapes, the 5.5 earthquake hit, and we had to come in through the second floor, in a cherry picker, actually. I'd never seen anything like that in my life, and I hope not to again. I actually saw the walls move, and the people were screaming at us below, "Get out! Get out! Get out!" And so we grabbed the last tape. We were almost finished, we grabbed the last tape and got out. And then Blenda shut the campus for a while. She said, "Really, this 5.5, we all need to go away for a day or so." And that was a good decision, I think. People really needed to take a break.

JM: I know people, as far as their homes went, they were living outside of their homes, not going back in.

SC: Yes, they did. In fact, one of my colleagues in the library fortunately had an RV, so they were living in their RV for quite some time. So I thought, really, if you live in an earthquake zone, how perfect to have an RV!

JM: That's right! (laughter) Along with the kit.

SC: Exactly!

JM: [00:51:41] Is there anything else you can think of that you would like to add regarding the earthquake and that time?

SC: You know, I felt that it was…. So here is my career, and it was building, and we were doing lots of different things, and I was speaking and writing and all of this, and then came—not just for me, but for everybody—The Earthquake. So *all* of our attention and focus turned *only* to this, as it should be. It was the most desperate situation. But I often look at that period of time as almost like a chunk out of my career. It was a very different career ever after. Of course ever after I did a lot of speeches and writing on the earthquake and disaster management itself. But it was a completely different shift.

JM: Uh-huh. And I guess for almost anyone who went through that earthquake directly, it shifts your life.

SC: I think so. I think so—both personally and professionally. And you never feel again as secure on this earth, because the earth itself moved. And the other part that I've developed too, is whenever I *do* see natural disasters—and where is not a natural disaster every day?—I do have a different kind of compassion for them, because I *do* understand what that means. I think that if you haven't really, really been inside those, you have a different understanding if you just look on. But

when you've been inside…. And in a way, we were lucky, because we weren't injured. I mean, people lost their lives—our students, you know. So you do look at the world differently ever after.

JM: After the earthquake and the damage was being repaired, and the library was in operation, albeit in a tent and in the core of the building; things were a little bit back to normal; can you describe those years, and what kinds of innovations you were able then to concentrate on?

SC: [00:53:59] You know, the earthquake, even though it was a disaster, was also an opportunity, because it broke a lot more things than the building. And of course I always want to remember what a tragedy it was for—I think it was about fifty or sixty people who were killed. But in terms of breaking, it also broke through a lot of policies, procedures, directions; and it was an opportunity, which we were aware of fairly early on, of the chance for change. So we began pretty soon to form a strategic plan, which we had started pre-earthquake, but now things were going to be quite different. And so we began to move down multiple tracks. First of all, was really starting to look at what kind of library we wanted for the future. We could see what was coming. It was already happening. You know, libraries have always had technology, but there was a gigantic shift because of the emergence of the web in 1992. So seeing all of that coming, we had to move out on the technological front, on looking at how we wanted to change customer service, the domain of information literacy, the way we went about just working our organization itself. So there was hardly anything that we left alone. And over time, we made changes in every direction. So every year we prioritized what we

thought was important. And there were some things, like technology, that never end. You're constantly building and developing, and building and developing, in that. So that was really the direction. And then of course the fundraising as well.

JM: I know in management, with the emergence of technology, there had to be different ways of managing, and some of it was some of the old by-the-book kinds of things needed to be more innovative and perhaps more friendly to this new arena, but also more people-friendly because of the instruction needed for technology, and the instruction as to media literacy is a huge amount. So what are some of the things that you felt were maybe major changes in the way the library was actually designed and the way it was run?

SC: [00:56:45] I do have to go back to the technology again, and we were very fortunate throughout my career I had Eric Willis who was the systems administrator. And Eric was extremely adept at all levels of technology. So not only did we need to bring in a new system for the library itself—and that, as you know, impacts every arena of the library, every operation, so we had to do that. We had to move much more into the digital resources, so that required not only the changes in the technical services area, but the changes for the librarians themselves, because they were now teaching in a different way, teaching new things in a different way. And then, of course, the entrance of personal computers, accessible to the public, for the library. And then all the security and protocols and all the things that go along with that. And then also the presence of the library itself on the web. So we had to move the physical library into, of course, the electronic domain. And our goal was always that we would have the

most robust presence that we could, so that many of the services would eventually be available, as much as you can, that don't require that person-to-person interaction. And even that is more and more possible now. So that was under the leadership of Eric Willis. I think he did an excellent job with that.

We also moved out in the domain of information literacy. I was very fortunate I had very excellent department chairs: Ann Perkins, Michael Barrett, Lynn Lampert. And Lynn, who was fairly new at that time, was very strong in information literacy. And so she and I particularly partnered, because I, and all the librarians, felt very strongly that our foremost business, the foremost business for the librarians, was the development of the collection, and teaching students how to use our resources. So I had moved the librarians out of operations, meaning they were no longer charged with circulation or interlibrary loan or anything like that, which can be done by extremely capable staff, of which there is plenty in the Oviatt, and move them into those directions. And that was a unified approach, and that's when we launched this massive information literacy program.

JM: And then what staff development for the librarians did that involve?

SC: Well it was a real opportunity for staff, because they were able to move up, take responsible positions—you know, had somewhere to go. And that was great for them. And I've always felt that we should use the librarians in the areas in which they are *truly* trained for, and I think came into the profession for, really. And of course they're still working reference, and doing the high-level cataloging that was required: you know, the things that are truly the professional domain. When

I came in, I didn't feel—although it was an excellent library group—but I didn't feel that we made the fullest use of them, because they were very much in operations.

JM: [01:00:06] Yes.

SC: And I think that it was much better that they're out there with the departments, on the academic side of the library business.

JM: Did that involve new training for the librarians in some ways?

SC: Not really, not really. You know, they had all that background—they just did more of it. And then of course we began to attract librarians who were attracted to that as part of their work, as well. See, here's the whole goal, here's our whole goal. Our whole goal was that we needed to be deeply imbedded in the academic enterprise. I know I was one of ten deans. They were library faculty, part of the faculty, so we wanted to deeply imbed ourselves into the enterprise. And those are the strategic ways that we looked at that.

JM: How did that involve actually the physical layout of the plant, of your library?

SC: Well things were changing even in that time, but that's when we launched the Collaboratory, for example. We had a couple hundred computers operational there, and staff to help people. We, later on, developed things, the coffee cart, to get students in. You know, books and coffee do seem to go naturally together, don't they?

JM: Yes.

SC: So we did those kinds of things where we really looked. We put computers everywhere on the first floor, so we wanted to integrate. We wanted the students

to come in, and we wanted it more fully integrated, always looking to integrate the physical and the digital world.

JM: [01:01:43] That's fantastic. The students are often, in my experience, ahead of the teachers—in my realm—and basically I'm sure that that was true here. Did you involve student volunteers and students in technology?

SC: This, I thought, was the trick: that you had to be slightly ahead of where your customers were going to be, but not so far ahead that they were completely confused by it. Now we did do anthropological studies of the students, particularly in terms of their skills with information literacy. That was very interesting, it was very revealing. And we did do various marketing with the students as well, and actually we invited a professor in to come and have her marketing students walk around the library and give us opinions and so forth. And I had always established a very close relationship with the president and vice-president of Associated Students. And so I would meet with them formally at least a couple of times a year—take them to lunch, you know. And so they knew who we were, and if they had any issues or concerns, as much as possible to be a partner with them. I feel, even today—I don't have to think about these things so much anymore—a library can never have too many friends.

JM: Right.

SC: So what you want to do is establish formidable partnerships in every direction, because our job *is* support. So partnership with the colleges, with the departments, with Associated Students, with everyone, really.

JM: Can you remember anything that the Associated Students wanted more of, or anything of that sort? Or were they concerned about information literacy?

SC: [01:03:37] Not especially, no. I think there were projects they wanted to do with us here and there, and that was always fine by me. I think because we had an open door, we never had an issue with them, so that worked out very well. Besides, they were delightful to know. I always attended all of their inaugurations and other events like that.

JM: How did media video kinds of equipment and that play into your library?

SC: Well, it just has to be. So whatever's on the market, you need to look at it, worry about whether or not it's going to last, because some of it really doesn't stand. So we had to make those judgements. And of course no technology is forever anyway. So we just had to make the best judgement we could, and what would be enduring, and just inch-by-inch, month-by-month, year-by-year, you just grow the directions you need to grow.

JM: So the goal is to be state of the art?

SC: Oh always. Yeah, the goal was to be state of the art, but not alpha, not so much that people are going, "Oh, I can't go there, that's too scary!" So that was always the goal. And every year I used to call for everyone's requests—you know, as we started the budget year—so all the equipment…. Because all of the librarians, we supported the librarians to go to a lot of conferences so they were always sort of up with it, and the staff were constantly aware. So a lot of them were advancing in their own areas, they were staying up themselves and saying, "Look, Sue, this is the newest, this we could do with this, that we could do with that." And I did

think it was very important for me to go out and actually see the demonstration so I could understand too. So that, I think, really made the difference. And they were always happy to say, "Let me show you what this will do for us."

JM: [01:05:43] And did the professors around in the colleges collaborate and cooperate with the embeddedness of the Internet and basically kids doing work, research, that they may—because of information that they may grab what they see first. I mean, were the professors working with the students on how to research?

SC: They brought their students, because the librarians would outreach to the professors at the start, a couple of times a year, at least, and so the professors would book their classes in. And so some were, obviously more assertive than others. Some were more committed than others. But considering the scale of it, I mean literally thousands of students moved through this. So yes, I think they were very interested in having their students know how to work in this domain, really. And they're, I think, just being faculty, are very worried about information literacy. They may not articulate it that way, but they're very interested in making sure the students understand the difference between facts and not facts.

JM: I know. I'm starting to see changes in—well *more* changes, now that I have grandchildren in that age group, in elementary school—when the kids are doing research, what to believe, what…. Kind of looking at it already when they're in elementary school.

SC: Right. Exactly.

JM: I'm interested in the fundraising too. You were quite successful in bringing in more money—I guess after the earthquake, when you realized that's something, endowments are important.

SC: Right.

JM: [01:07:24] I mean, they always were, but they were super-important.

SC: Well, and remember before that, some universities did heavy fundraising, but the Cal States did not do so much, because as a state-supported institution…. So there wasn't a need. But gradually the state support reduced, and the need for special monies increased. And so Cindy Ventuleth, who before Mickey Martinez was my assistant, showed a flair for outreach events. She was a lovely writer. S he's retired now—and so she had a natural inclination, so she launched the program with her assistant Joyclyn Dunham, who's still here. And we started, we just started. And just inch-by-inch, we made what contacts we could, and went to lunches, and had some hits and some misses.

JM: Yeah. And that, I'm sure, is still going on now.

SC: Oh, I'm sure it is, yes.

JM: I agree with you about the state universities, and now I know San Diego State University too, there's a lot more fundraising, and necessarily so.

SC: It's not going to support the operations, but there's lots of things around the edges that it does, that's important.

JM: Uh-huh. There was a mention of a growth in instructional lectures at the library. I'm not sure what that is.

SC: [01:09:03 ] That's the information literacy.

JM: So were there actual, then, classes taught in information literacy?

SC: Yes. Right. Well, not a course, but the faculty would bring their students into the labs here. Sometimes the librarians would go out, but because we built up the equipment in the labs to their specifications, it was easier for them to bring their classes in.

JM: Then with the design and the atmosphere of the library that you really fostered during your administration, your paramount idea was to make the library a welcoming, more frequently utilized place. And I think that you were very successful in that. That seems to still be going on.

SC: Uh-huh.

JM: Talk about the ambiance of your vision for the study rooms and the garden area in the library.

SC: I don't know that I isolated those. I think it was just—for me, and for everyone with me here—it was more of a total picture of what we wanted. I personally, and I think this is a shared value, I like to see the library packed with students and faculty. I mean, that's the purpose, isn't it? So the more in, the better I felt, and I felt we were achieving our goal. Then we had to acknowledge the range of functions that would come here. Some would be doing very heavy research. Some just studying. Once in a while, a few taking a nap. But they're young people—not all of them of course, because CSUN has an age range. But you know, that's okay too. It was important that they had the library experience. But most important to me, I felt, was that they felt not that they were a guest, but that this was their place. You know, this was their place. So it wasn't like they were

coming as a guest into *our* home, but this was *their* place. And I think that's a very valuable shift. It doesn't mean there aren't rules and regulations, because there are, even in a home, right? You see 2,500 people or so, you have to watch things and take care of business. But 99 percent come in and feel that they are at home.

JM: [01:11:37] And unless they're doing individual research, I assume that so much of their work is working with a team or a group, and that certainly is evident in this library.

SC: Increasingly, yes. Of course when I first came into this university, group work was not so much done by the faculty. And that's all a faculty-driven process. But increasingly, as years went by, we noticed that, and so came the importance of study rooms and other collaborative spaces as well. And I think the work that Mark [Stover], Kathy [Dabbour], Coleen [Martin] and a whole group of librarians and staff have done here, in terms of establishing more collaborative spaces, have been excellent. I love the transformations that have occurred. It's beautiful.

JM: I was kind of intrigued with your book, *What Every Library Director Should Know*. I understand that it's something…. Has it evolved? Is it widely used in universities, or is it more individual?

SC: I don't know its use. I do know that the impulse, obviously, for my writing it is I felt that here I had a nearly forty-year career, and I wanted, before too much time went past, to collect up all that I knew and remembered and learned, and put it into writing. And that was my…. It was the book that could only be written, I

felt, after retirement, after the years of experience, and saying things the way I wanted to say them. I mean, it's a very straight story.

JM: [01:13:25] Have you heard from people who have used the book?

SC: Variously, yeah.

JM: Are they really positive?

SC: The feedback has been positive, yes.

JM: And it seems to be more of a friendly, "this is the insight that I want to give you…."

SC: Exactly.

JM: Rather than a direct [unclear 01:13:54].

SC: It's not a textbook—not at all. It is really "this is what it looks like from the inside. And if you want to be successful, if you want to avoid the pitfalls, these are things to think about."

JM: Have you ever thought of maybe teaching a class at a graduate level?

SC: I have taught at the graduate level, yes, but years ago now.

JM: Was that enjoyable?

SC: Very enjoyable.

JM: You were involved with the information competence committees developed for all of CSU?

SC: Yes, that's right.

JM: I'd like to hear about that.

SC: Yes. The Council of Library Deans—there's twenty-three campuses—so anyway, we'd meet three or four times a year and do joint projects together—

most notably like joint collection buying so we could get deep discounts, and things like this. But one of the things that we launched was a CSU Information Competence Initiative. I was the chair of that committee, and the chancellor's office put a team around us—not just librarians, but also faculty from various campuses—and we met to really launch a system-wide information competence initiative, with the backing of the Council of Library Deans, and it received a lot of national notice, because it was very early. We were very early out the gate. We were one of the first and the largest of the campuses out the gate to take care of this. Later on it became such a thing, everybody was doing it, as it should be.

JM: [01:15:41] Exactly.

SC: But it was new, it was different, it was very big. And it was *such* an enjoyable committee, *such* an enjoyable committee. I mean, we really…. You know how sometimes you have very good committees, but the people really liked each other, so it was a pleasure to meet. I think we did good work.

JM: I'll bet you did.

SC: I was on there for quite some time. But these things have a natural arc. Then once it becomes imbedded, then it has to go and stop being a project, and just be a thing.

JM: So what are some other things that you would like to share about your tenure here at the library? Maybe about Mickey? (laughter) Maybe what this place kind of gave to you, rather than you also gave so much to it.

SC: Oh, it does give a lot. You know, wherever you work, I think it does enrich your life. And I think people do make a place—they really do. You mentioned

Mickey. Of course Mickey Martinez and I worked together for eighteen years. And I also had a special assistant, Peter Prager, who has since passed away. And he was also very able. I had a series of excellent associate deans: Susan Parker, Marianne Afifi, and now Kathy [Dabbour] is here, who is very good. Kathy was hired by Mark [Stover], though. That was after me. You know, it *is* the people I think, that create those memories, because for that period of time, you really do share your lives together. I mean, it may not be your personal life, but it is a life, and it's a big part of it too. Plus you do form those partnerships where you're working constantly towards a single goal. And I would say if there's anything you miss in retirement, it's that sense of teamwork—you know, where you have people with you or around you that you are working together for a common goal.

JM: And are there any wishes or desires that you have for libraries in universities in California? You've probably travelled to other libraries in universities across the country. Is there anything that you feel should be happening and isn't, or that is happening that other people have copied, kind of like the information literacy beginning?

SC: You know, when I concluded my career, I was very fortunate that I was at the right age when I felt that the natural arc of my career had come to an end. So when I concluded my career in 2010, my career actually had a long tail to it, because I still did a lot of teaching and writing and consulting. I was kind of surprised, to be honest with you. But I felt at that point then, when I finished, then the world of libraries belonged to others. I sit back and enjoy what might be happening, or worry about what might be happening—not here, but when you

look at libraries in general. But I myself do not comment or think or these kinds of things. It was a world that was important to me, but it's no longer *my* world. You know, this belongs to others now. So I think this is the real meaning of legacy in a sense, that you have this perception such a period of time, and then you give it over to capable people.

JM: [01:19:32] Are there any libraries, either university or not, that you visited across the country or the world that stand out to you, or that you really enjoyed going to?

SC: Well, I have to say when I was at Oxford, I had really wanted to tour the Bodleian. And you know, you just don't get into that. You just don't get into that library. But I sent my card in to their library administration, and out came an administrator and gave me an in-depth tour of the Bodleian. And you know, that's only exclusively for their students and faculty. It's not a place to wander around. And I was very struck by that. It was really a unique privilege. Many years later, they came here, because they wanted to see how the ASRS worked!

JM: Oh, wonderful!

SC: So we hosted them in reverse. It was like twenty years later. So they came in reverse, because they had a massive thousand-year-old collection. I don't know what they finally concluded, but they came to visit.

JM: Yeah, I think I have two favorites. I like the British Library, and the New York Public Library.

SC: Ah, yes!

JM: Because I'm a New Yorker. (laughs) But I just went on a tour of that library recently. It was *extremely* interesting. You get to see all the back rooms that you don't usually see.

SC: These are great libraries for a reason. You know, they really are.

JM: Yes, exactly.

SC: And I also think that the LAPL downtown is still one of the premier West Coast research libraries. That's an *amazing* collection there.

JM: And luckily wasn't damaged.

SC: Yes. But they did have that fire, as you know, many years ago.

JM: Oh, that's right, yes.

SC: But they did ride out the other.

JM: I know that you're also an author and a speaker. Of course we talked about you being an author. Are you still doing any of that, or did you do any speaking engagements after?

SC: I did. I did. But now no more. I really have left the world of libraries. But yes, I did for the first couple of years. In fact, I continued to write the first couple of years as well. In fact, I think my last article might have been as late as 2015, actually, which I collaborated with one of the librarians here, Jennie Quinonez-Skinner, but I don't know that I'll write any more. You know, you have to be in the dynamic of the field to write in the profession, I think.

JM: Yeah.

SC: So no longer, but I enjoyed what I did. I liked speaking.

JM: Do you think you might write anything else?

SC: [01:22:26] Yes, I do, but it will be different, quite different. I might do something on management, of which I still have…. But it will not be management in libraries, but straight management probably.

JM: And I think that will be wonderful for managers! (laughter)

SC: We'll see!

JM: It'll be helpful.

SC: We all need all the help we can get, at all times, that's for sure!

JM: You have received a lot of awards, which I talked about in the introduction, some of them, but I am curious about the one that you received from the students here, and what that was like.

SC: Yeah. It's really meaningful, from the student body themselves.

JM: Yes.

SC: Yes, it is.

JM: Librarian of the Year from *Library Journal* is very nice too.

SC: Yes. That was really something. And I was nominated by the staff here, particularly the lead nominator was Donna La Follette. And that itself was very precious, because I didn't know that nomination had occurred. So I was really struck by that. That was excellent. And then that directly led to the UC-Riverside's Distinguished Alumna, that directly, because one of the librarians over there, in reading the background, realized I had graduated from UCR, and so she made that connection and proposed my name.

JM: My son-in-law went to UCR.

SC: Oh really?!

JM: [01:23:55] Yes!

SC: What major was he?

JM: He was, I believe, political science. And he loved it too. His daughter would like to go to be a veterinarian. (laughs) I don't know if that will last, but we'll see. Basically, your scholarship too is exciting.

SC: Yes.

JM: How did that come about?

SC: That just was spontaneous from Associated Students. When you begin to conclude your career, people know you're ending not just your job here, but your career, it becomes a very different thing, and I think people very kindly do want to do things for you that last in your memory. It leaves you with a very good feeling.

JM: Yes.

SC: I think it's so important for people to, regardless of all of the joys or the trials and tribulations, I think it's very important for people to leave a job with a good feeling.

JM: Oh absolutely, yeah.

SC: And to value the fact that you worked to make a contribution somewhere on this earth.

JM: And it's always difficult when you know people have issues. Like during the recession they left their job under other circumstances, even though they had a wonderful career.

SC: Yes.

JM: [01:25:13] That's too bad.

SC: Plus the fact that many cannot get back into the workforce in the same way that they wanted to, too. Yes, it's very hard. And that's what Prop 13, I was going to be faced with that kind of a choice. And that made me sympathetic, because when I saw my name at the top of the layoff list, you know, you say to yourself, "Oh boy, now what?!" Because that's what I was trained for, trained to be a librarian.

JM: Yeah. So you've talked a little bit about some people you've worked with, that you're still in touch with. Are there people that you see from here and you socialize with, or….

SC: Sure. And also from my previous jobs as well. Ironically, because I built my career largely in Los Angeles, I still know and see people around. So yes, definitely, yeah. And that's nice too. I think that not every friendship you have in the workplace carries into your personal life, but that doesn't mean that you don't have good feelings about what you had in the workplace, and love to see the people again. But there are a few that you take on with you also. And that's very precious, I think.

JM: Yeah. Now in your life, what are your interests, what do you enjoy doing, where are you travelling? Talk a little bit about what you're doing these days.

SC: Well, our grandchildren live in Honolulu. They're little magnets—they are, grandkids. My husband and I have been able to do a little bit of travelling here and there. Otherwise, it's friends and family. I have been doing some research on our family history, which has been fascinating in particular. I don't know how

much we want to digress on this, but there is one very interesting story in particular. My mother was married before, and her husband was killed in World War II. We knew very little about him, so I set myself on a course to find out what happened. Not only did I find out what happened, because he was shot down over Germany, I actually talked to the surviving crew member.

JM: [01:27:46] Oh my goodness!

SC: So I tracked him down all the way in Melbourne, Australia. You may imagine how surprised he was for me to find him from something that happened sixty, seventy years ago. And so I'm still friends with the surviving crew member. And his daughter and I have become good e-mail pals. She is a librarian!

JM: Oh my goodness! How interesting!

SC: Yeah. And I do intend to write his story. It's a powerful story, and I think people will be fascinated on the trail I followed to find him.

JM: [01:28:22 Definitely. Were your parents happy in the United States?

SC: My mother always wanted to stay in England, and always wanted to go back, but she spent her life here.

JM: Did she ever get to go back?

SC: She travelled back, but we built a good life here all the same.

JM: Yeah. Do you feel like you'd like to spend more time in England?

SC: Now? No. I mean, I've been so long here. I have relatives there, of course, still. We talk frequently. But to go back, no. Visit, yes, but no more.

JM: Yes. Tell me about your husband and your family a little bit.

SC: My husband is retired, he's a professor, information systems. His background is from—he has a Ph.D. in engineering from UCLA. Then he retired also a few years ago.

JM: Where did he teach?

SC: He taught at Cal State L.A., the sister campus.

JM: Are there things you like to do in the community? Do you like to walk or do yoga?

SC: [01:29:41] Yes, we *do* like to walk, actually. Yes, we do. And we like to travel together to see friends—nothing really out of the ordinary particularly.

JM: And tell me about your grandchildren, how old are they?

SC: They are five and six. The eldest is a girl, and the younger, the boy.

JM: When you go to Honolulu, do you spend the winter, or what?

SC: No. I usually go in spurts of like three or four weeks at a time.

JM: We're kind of ending up here. Is there anything else that you would like to add to this, to your oral history?

SC: I think we've covered a lot. I felt like I had a good career. It's not like every moment was happy. No one has that in this life. But I had a good career. I was able to do a lot of good things. I felt very good about it, because libraries is a value-driven profession, and you don't have to have any internal struggle about the rightness of your life, because you live in a world in which you're providing library service, and that's all a good thing. You know, there's no disconnect between your personal values and your professional life. So I think that's a great privilege, because I think a lot of people wrestle with that, where they're a

mismatch, or they worry because they're in a job that does harm in some way, to the environment, to this, to that; or maybe it's not as honest as they might like to be. So I think a lot of people can be in very difficult situations, and some reasons, sometimes they have no choice. I mean, not all the world is full of choices. So I considered I was lucky to find this job, which I didn't even know existed as a profession! (laughter) And to find it a match for me, and something that I cared about and was important to me. Plus it's just filled with nice people—everyone who works with you, the customers, the clients, the students, the faculty who come in. It's a profession I recommend to anyone.

JM: Well thank you so much for our conversation!

SC: Thank you.

[END OF INTERVIEW]