Louanne Kennedy
March 22, 2013
interviewed by Susan Resnik
for California State University Northridge
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SUSAN RESNIK (SR): Today is Friday, March 22, 2013. This is Susan Resnik. I'm in the Oviatt Library conference room of California State University Northridge, about to begin recording the oral history of emeritus provost and vice-president, Louanne Kennedy. This interview will be part of the university's Campus Leadership and History Project.

Louanne Kennedy, Ph.D. Dr. Louanne Kennedy is emeritus provost and vice-president for academic affairs, California State University, Northridge, California. Initially, in 1993, she served as the provost and vice-president for academic affairs through 1999. Then she became interim president through 2000. Once again, from 2000 to 2003, she served as provost and vice-president for academic affairs. After retirement from California State University Northridge, she served in two interim positions: dean of students at Occidental College, and provost at California State University in Dominguez Hills. In 2003, she completed a six-year appointment as WASC commissioner, including serving as vice-chair of the commission. She also served as commissioner delegate to the ACCJC, the community college accrediting commission. She was a consultant to private and public colleges and universities on academic planning, management of academic and student services, and management evaluation.

Provost Kennedy received her B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. in sociology from New York University, New York. She has held administrative positions at Kean

College, New Jersey; New York University; and was an associate provost at Baruch College.

LOUANNE KENNEDY (LK)… of the City University of New York.

SR: Baruch College of the City University of New York, very good! Her full-time academic experience includes faculty positions at NYU in New York, where she was assistant professor in public administration; and at Baruch College, where she was professor and chair of healthcare administration. She has numerous professional and public service activities, has published widely, including books, government reports, chapters in books, papers, lectures, and book reviews. I would like to encourage Provost Kennedy to tell her own story from here on. Good morning, Provost Kennedy.

LK: Good morning. I think you can stop calling me Provost Kennedy, and I can just go as Louanne.

SR: Okay.

LK: I appeared as Louanne today.

SR: Okay. Well, let's start at the beginning. Where and when were you born, and tell me about your family.

LK: I was born in Wilmerding, Pennsylvania. That's spelled W-I-L-M-E-R-D-I-N-G. It's a company town owned by George Westinghouse. He owned the housing, and we rented the housing. At the end of the war, World War II, when I was about four or five, Westinghouse offered the houses to the people then residing in them, and sold them for $3,000. My family required a mortgage. My mother at that time was the sole support of myself, my two sisters, my dad, and my dad's

parents. Later my father went back to work. He had a heart condition, and he died in 1950 when I was eleven.

[00:03:59]

SR: Oh, that's hard. What year were you born in?

LK: Nineteen thirty-nine [1939]. My early education was in Catholic Schools. I'm an Irish Catholic by birth, on both sides of my family. I have an older sister, Mary Grace, who was adopted by my parents after they'd been married for thirteen years without children. And then I arrived a year or so later. And then four years later my younger sister was born.

SR: How nice.

LK: My parents both had parents who were born in Ireland, on both sides. My mother's mother died when she was nine, and she became—there were five children, the children were farmed out to different families. And then when she was fourteen, she was asked to leave school and take care of the family. About a year after that, my grandfather was killed in an accident, and she got married when she was nineteen, to my dad, and they lived across—the houses in Wilmerding are joined together, and they lived in the adjacent row house.

When I was born, living in the house was very crowded. These houses are very small. I always liked my address, because it's 620 Airbrake Avenue. I'll digress for a moment, because I remember being evaluated for a big NSF Grant, and they were looking at my resume, and this M.D., Ph.D., who was on the review committee, leaned over the table and said to me, "Were you really born in Wilmerding, Pennsylvania?" I said, "Yes." And he said, "I didn't think anybody

ever left there. I can't imagine what you're doing sitting here." And you know, there were incidents like that in my career, where if you knew where it was, you didn't think I could be where I am. And I think the interesting thing about being born in a kind of isolated town, in an Irish Catholic family, in an Irish Catholic community, in an Irish Catholic grade school, I was insulated from a lot of things. But I was always a very good student. My parents were also very petite: my father was five-five, my mother was five-one. By the time I was eleven, I was five-six. My two sisters, Mary Grace and Pat, are petite, and they had red curly hair; and I was very tall and had blonde hair and blue eyes. So there was always a lot of joking about that within the family. But I was also different, I think, in a couple of other ways, and that is I played make-believe all the time, and I couldn't get my five cousins or my sisters to be interested in playing make-believe, because they would always say, "Well, that's *not* a sheriff." I would take those little things—I want to say tchotchke—little tchotchke that people had on the end tables, and I wanted to make a game out of it. And I remember the loneliness of that, because then I would sit by myself, and everybody else would be playing, and I would do this imaginary world.

SR: There was a radio program—because we're talking about growing up when we listened to radio, which is another part of the context, called "Let's Pretend." Did you ever listen to that?

LK: Yes, I listened to "Let's Pretend." I thought "Let's Pretend" was the best news I'd had.

SR: I did too. So therefore, when you said that, it reminded me, because I was an only child, very much like that, listening to that program, and being very much into that kind of play, which is very interesting.

[00:08:36]

LK: Yeah, my earliest memory, actually, is my parents and my grandfather in the living room, crying when FDR died. It's a *very* vivid memory to me. And we did listen to the radio a lot. We listened to—I don't know if I can remember the names of the programs. Over the years people have given me the programs of my childhood, but I've not really listened to them. But it was fairly bleak and ugly. Part of the problem with the town was that—it's very near Pittsburgh—so you had Pittsburgh Steel blasting fire into the sky; and then you had Westinghouse Switch and Signal, which was another company town; and then you had Turtle Crick—Turtle Creek, for the uninitiated—Turtle Crick, which was a town that was Westinghouse Electric. And then there's Wilmerding, which is Westinghouse Airbrake. So there's these sets of towns where the factories went twenty-four hours a day, where the whistles blew to send the shifts in and out of work, and where it was *very* hard to see the sun. And I can remember many times running out into the alley behind our house, which is where we hung our laundry, to get the laundry in, because there was coal dust coming, and my mother was a meticulous housekeeper.

SR: Did a lot of people have respiratory problems?

LK: You know, not to my knowledge. I know that a lot of people in the mining regions, in the general areas, but I don't know how close you had to be. I just

remember as a kid, for me to go out from my house there were two ways: the front door was thirty-two steps down to the street, and then the plant was right across the street. And then the other way to leave was to go out the back door, which is an alley, and then the hill was held up by an embankment. And then I went down the alley and then up about thirty steps to a viaduct that went across to the plant. So the big excitement was to try to get to the railroad tracks so that you could stand in the smoke. I just remember this because it was like you'd get the timing exactly right so you could really do that. And this would be on my way to the Catholic school that I attended.

I did not associate with anyone who wasn't related to me. I mean, the idea of being an Irish Catholic in this time was very important identification: the things that you do, things you don't do. I once tried to have a conversation with my mother because I was feeling very desperate. I was about fifteen, and the girls came to the door to pick me up—I was now in public school. I had gotten a scholarship to a Catholic girls' high school in Pittsburgh, but they had to give a scholarship also to my eight-year-old sister, because I was responsible for her after my father died. So wherever I went, if she was sick, I didn't go to school. It was like that. And it was two trolleys into East Liberty—so it's pronounced Eastliberty, you have to run them together—but it's East Liberty. The school was in East Liberty, and it was really an ordeal for me. And it was the first time that I realized that I had no knowledge of most of life. I was now in an upper-middle-class private high school where I was a scholarship student, and I had responsibilities to my sister, so I couldn't really hang out with anybody after

school—not that anybody invited me. But I felt totally out of place and totally isolated, and I couldn't do the school work. It was the first time I really—I mean, I really had no idea what people were talking about. I really had no idea. What I really loved was music, although I'm absolutely tone deaf. And so I learned to play the cello that year, which I really loved.

[00:13:09]

SR: How wonderful!

LK: The next year, I asked my mother to let me come back to public school, which was really an idea that was anathema to her that I would associate with Protestants! By the time I married my second husband, who was Jewish, she was just relieved somebody married me. (laughter) In this time and place, right after World War II, I think what I most wanted was to live in a regular house, with a regular family. That's all I really wanted: I wanted a house, I wanted grass, I wanted all of that.

SR: Well, you know, speaking of that, because it's the historical context after World War II, I'm so aware of what it was like. You know, it was "Ozzie and Harriet," and wives in aprons, and green lawns and ranch houses, and Levittowns and all of that.

LK: It *was* all of that, and I saw enough pictures of it. I remember reading later about the effects that reading those *Dick and Jane* books had on children. I didn't go to kindergarten because my mother decided I should go to first grade. I don't remember why. But when I got to first grade, I was the youngest in the class. But my cousin who's a year older than me was in the same class with me, so that

made it okay. So I remember *that* transition, but the transition to public high school was really a big issue, but it was more comfortable for me academically. And I was treated as someone special academically—which I had been in Catholic school too. But this one year in between at Sacred Heart High School was—it was like I had arrived on another planet.

[00:15:14]

SR: Uh-huh. Well, I'm sure, as you're talking about loving to be a student, et cetera, you probably read a lot. And did you read books about other kids in different worlds?

LK: You know, the only books in my house were my father had a collection of Dickens, which I never saw him open—or anybody else open. But I remember times when I was given a book. The Catholic school I went to did not have a library. And we were told that the library in town did not allow Catholics to go in. It was a Carnegie Library, and they said Catholics couldn't come. Now I don't know whether this was my mother's idea of not mixing, or whether it was more a matter of it would have been uncomfortable. But I do know that the year after my father died—no, the year before he died—my mother petitioned the YMCA to allow Catholics to attend, because she wanted me to have outdoor activities. And my cousin and I were the first Catholics to go to the YMCA. Now it seems like ancient history, that things like this happened, but you know, again, I can't say whether they were protective of things, or whether actually someone said they couldn't go. I don't know.

SR: I think it's certainly possible, given that I grew up in a Long Island community where Jews couldn't go into the country club, and things like that, at that time. [00:17:01]

LK: Yeah, it's one of those things. And I don't know whether she was protecting me or not. I don't really remember.

SR: Yeah, it's certainly possible.

LK: When my mother went to work, my mother did something that I think is extraordinary, and that is she found a high school that had burned down, said she graduated from it, and when she retired she was the executive secretary for the Bureau of Mines in Pittsburgh, the highest position a woman could reach at that time.

SR: How incredible.

LK: And for her retirement, she ran the federal credit union for the Bureau of Mines.

SR: Wow. Extraordinary.

LK: She was an extraordinarily smart person. She was also terrified. She always thought things were going to just go completely awry.

SR: Well also, that generation lived through the Depression.

LK: Uh-huh, she was the only one working during the Depression, she was supporting everybody.

SR: Yeah.

LK: So she had no childhood herself, she knew very little about children. And I came to love and appreciate her over the years after I got over my, you know, my

attacks, and "why didn't you," and "how come you didn't," and "how come you did," and all of that kind of stuff.

SR: Amazing.

[00:18:24]

LK: Then when I graduated from high school, I wanted to go to Indiana State Teachers College.

SR: How did you know about that?

LK: Well, there were some kids from my high school class who were going to the state colleges. There was one going to Carnegie Tech. And there were a couple going to Pitt. They were all boys. And then there was myself. My mother and my uncle, who's a priest, decided that if I was going to go to college, which was probably going to be important because I didn't have the kind of personality that anybody would marry—they were very clear about that—so I needed to have the ability to support myself as a woman on her own.

SR: Was that because you asked questions, or you were assertive, or what? I mean, what was the….

LK: I think they would have said aggressive. I think they would have said hostile. I think….

SR: That was just so much of that time, where…. I mean, I can very much relate to that.

LK: I had these two very docile sisters, one older, one younger. But my older sister dropped out of high school in the tenth grade, and she was pregnant, and she got married, and she was on welfare most of her life. My older sister died of ovarian

cancer, never having had a Pap test, when she was sixty-two. My younger sister has had a career somewhat like my mother's, where she graduated from high school, she didn't go to college. She went to work in the plant, which is what we called the Airbrake—and became Miss Westinghouse Airbrake, which my mother loved—just loved that idea.

[00:20:20]

SR: Miss Westinghouse Airbrake. Okay.

LK: My sisters are petite and cute and pretty—they're all those kind of things—and I was the smart one. But it also meant…. So I went to Mount Mercy College. It was also a miserable experience. It was similar to my experience at Sacred Heart. But the difference was that they didn't have enough money to pay for a lot of pieces of the education, and so I got two part-time jobs. I worked four nights a week at the Central Blood Bank of Pittsburgh at the University of Pittsburgh. It was four nights a week and Saturday. And then on Sunday I worked for the alumni association of Mount Mercy. And in order for me to go anywhere or do anything, I had to borrow somebody else's clothes. There's an occasion where I got into a terrific fight with a nun who wouldn't let me walk in the front door because my clothes were a little bit wet. But the clothes I had on were not mine, and so I pushed passed her and went in the front door because I wasn't going to go around to the back door and try to figure out how I was going to pay for this rich kid's outfit.

At the end of that year we owed ninety dollars, and she couldn't come up with the ninety dollars. The dean really thought I should be someplace else. So

the dean and I had a meeting, and I had written her about the discrepancies between Catholicism and the way in which Mount Mercy was run, which she did not appreciate. So she decided we should part ways. I didn't have the ninety dollars. Oh, that was it, she wouldn't let me sit for the exams, because to sit for the exams you had to have the final payment in. And so the agreement was then that I could sit for the exams, as long as I transferred. So at that point—I had been living in the dorms there—I got a room in a rooming house, and I transferred to the University of Pittsburgh and went to work full-time at the Central Blood Bank, the Falk Clinic. In a few months, I became secretary to the director, and I married the director. He had five children, ranging in age from two to fifteen, and by the time I was twenty-five, I had given birth to two more daughters. Some of the older ones had already left for college. So I usually had about five or six kids living with me. And I'm still in touch with five or six kids. So that's the sort of personal story on it.

[00:23:28] Now when the girls were four and two, I asked my husband—which I would have in those days—whether I could go to college now. And I wanted to go to Montclair State Teachers College, which was like the Indiana State Teachers [College], so I could be a high school history teacher. And he said, "You can go to NYU for free, because I'm on the faculty." When we got married, we moved to New York. We lived in New Jersey—Leonia, New Jersey. And we set up our family life there. I began by working in the civil rights movement right away. Even though I had a family, I would drive into Englewood where they were boycotting the schools. I had a van, and I would bring a vanload

of African-American kids home with me. They were fifth-graders, and I would run a fifth-grade classroom to the best of my knowledge, but mostly we would talk about civil rights, and we would talk about books.

SR: What years are we now talking about, more or less?

[00:24:38]

LK: Sixty-four to sixty-six [1964-1966]. I also joined Women Strike for Peace, and I also joined the League of Women Voters. So I began to associate with people who had a deep commitment to eradicating poverty, and to opening up educational opportunities for kids who had been disadvantaged. And in the process of this, I was trying to raise middle-class kids without any rules. I mean, that's really how I felt. I had a big house, I had a cleaning woman. The first couple of cleaning women, I sat and had coffee with them all day, because I couldn't ask a black person to do work, it just seemed so humiliating that somebody as young as me should ask an African-American woman, who is considerably older, to clean my house. So that led to my husband taking over that responsibility. But I just remember the sort of personal feelings that I had, particularly as people began to talk about poverty. I remember sitting in S. M. Miller's class—this is my first year in graduate school. I got my bachelor's degree. The last year I did eighteen units, starting at 6:30 on sunrise semester, and then going until ten o'clock at night. That's on the campus.

SR: Now, you were involved with sociology *and* history?

LK: I was a declared history major, but—I think this is the creative part of the way I operate—I wanted to graduate in '69 because I was turning thirty. Now, if you

know what ’68 to ’69 was like at NYU, as I know you do, this was when students were taking over the buildings and asking the professors to stand down, and we should have the elevator operators teaching us, because they knew about life. I participated in some of this—not actively as a leader of any kind—but I just remember thinking, “That makes the elevator operator *really* uncomfortable. This is humiliating. This is ridiculous. I know what they’re trying to do, but they’ve never felt what *I* feel.”

[00:27:10]

SR: They don’t understand them like you do.

LK: What I feel, right.

SR: True.

LK: I majored in history. Now I want to graduate by ’69. So in ’68 I have enough units and I wanted a very careful evaluation of my courses so that I could graduate, and my plan was to attend Columbia Teachers College to become a high school history teacher—which was consistent with “you should be home when the kids are home from school.” And what happened is, they told me that the historiography professor—I love this story, because it’s *so* involved—my actual ones, I had the ability to make other kinds of decisions. They told me that the historiography professor was on sabbatical leave the next year, my senior year—therefore historiography would not be offered. But I needed it to graduate, so I needed to delay my graduation another year. And so I went home with the catalog, and I did not look at my transcript, I did this from memory, that I had had a soc[iology] course at Mount Mercy College, and now let me look at how many

units it's going to take. Okay, so soc—because this was to graduate, it had nothing to do with whatever was going to happen to me after that.

SR: Right, I get it.

LK: So I found that not only had I taken soc 1 at Mount Mercy, but that there was a six-unit methods and urban sociology course being given at the Heights by Professor Aaronson, and I can't remember the other….

[00:28:58]

SR: Not Larry Ross?

LK: No. Uh-uh, I don't remember him.

SR: Because I remember taking urban sociology with Larry Ross.

LK: By the following year, the uptown campus was back downtown by 1970, I think. But I had…. Okay, so I had the soc course, I had the pre-req, so now I do the six-unit course, and now I just take whatever there is in sociology, and I'm graduating in '69. So I did it. Industrial sociology—that was really…. This guy read from the book from eight until 9:40. It was *un*believable! But I did it, and I was really happy about it, and I had a wonderful course on sunrise semester. I had a course in…. What was it called? Religion and society, I think—something like that. And then my senior year I took courses in the Schweitzer Program, so I took Conacruz O'Brien [phonetic], Literature in Society. I took courses with a wonderful new young professor who's quite well-known now and taught American literature. I had the best time, because I was able to concentrate for those two days on nothing but academics.

SR: Well we shared such a similar history at that point, because actually I was going a few years before that, but same kind of thing with sunrise semester, plus going two days a week, concentrated, because I had a child and that was part of the way I did it too. And I can *so* understand what you're saying about making the credits work. I was very goal-oriented as well.

[00:30:46]

LK: Right.

SR: And did you….

LK: I had a friend across the street who was a historian—*is* still a historian—at the University of Virginia, in women's studies. Her name is Ann Lane, and we had kids the same age. She was writing her dissertation, and she actually was the first kind of person/friend/colleague to explain the world of credits, because I had said to her, "Well, you know, it's not too bad majoring in sociology, because then I could be a social worker." And she said, "That's a separate degree. That's a MSW"—[master's of social work]. I remember this, because it was like, "Wow, I could have done this and thought that I was gonna get someplace else." But I absolutely knew I could not do one moment of therapy. There were too many kids in my house, there was too much going on. The last thing I needed was to look at anybody else's problems. And I think I deflected a lot to world problems as a way of not…. I don't know, my kids have their own story. They'll tell it on their own day in their own way. But I did, in my senior year, I wrote a paper for Robert Bierstedt, who was then the chair of the department, and he taught social theory, and I wrote a paper on Freud and Marx. Only an undergraduate could

have that kind of chutzpah. And I compared *Moses and Monotheism* and I-don't-know-what, by Marx, but something—I can't remember—I don't have the paper either. But he wrote on the paper…. This was the first feedback I'd ever gotten from anyone.

[00:32:45]

SR: What did he write?

LK: He wrote, "You are what I have suspected—a genuine scholar."

SR: Isn't that a wonderful thing, to have someone say that?

LK: Yeah. Nineteen sixty-nine [1969]. I will *never* forget that.

SR: I so understand it. And as you know, I also took that course, at a different time, with Robert Bierstedt, and he told me—which ties in—that I had a sociological imagination.

LK: Ah-ha!

SR: And I'm not sure why, because I don't know. But I do have an imagination—I guess we all do. But he was so special. I can picture and hear him as you're describing this.

LK: He asked me to stay after class.

SR: What a gift to have that happen.

LK: Then he said, "What are you gonna do next?" And I said, "I'm gonna go to teachers' college and get a MAT." I don't remember what the MAT was—it was different from the M.S., but it combined the credentialing and the content. I later came to not feel very highly about that degree. But what he said to me was finally convincing, and that's what really [unclear], is he said, "There aren't any social

science history high school jobs available. There's a glut on the market of people in that field. And if you come and get a Ph.D. in sociology, you can do lots of other things, and we'll give you a scholarship."

[00:34:19]

SR: Wow.

LK: So actually I didn't, in the end, need a scholarship, because I had my husband's tuition remission.

SR: But what an important moment.

LK: It *was* an important moment, yeah. And it was a very tense moment in my personal life, because it was one thing to be getting a bachelor's degree which he thought would be valuable for being able to talk about things with his colleagues' wives…. By this time he certainly…. I just remember him once at a dinner party—and I really cared about him. We were divorced. He died last year, and I'm the co-executor with his current wife, of his estate. I got along with him all the way through—someone I really regarded highly in many ways. I remember him once saying to me, "You know, some people's wives play mahjongg. My wife does demonstrations." It was kind of a disconnect, because when he married me, I said, "All I want to do is clean house and make babies." I really did say that. I wanted so to be out of the schools that I couldn't understand how they worked, the classes at Pitt were huge. I was living in a rooming house with a shared kitchen and bathroom, and there were boys in some of the other rooms. I had never had a male in my house. I didn't have men around. My dad had been dead for a long time, and all of that.

SR: Yeah, this is all so understandable to me, but I think it's so important to share, because it's such a different time.

[00:36:06]

LK: It was a very different time, because everybody was active in some way or another. I remember the first time I was on the personnel committee for tenure for faculty when I was at Baruch, I looked up at the guys in the room—I was the only woman chairman—I was the first woman chairman in the history of the business school—and I said, "God, there was somebody majoring in marketing, got a Ph.D. in marketing, in 1968?! I wouldn't have known there *was* a Ph.D. in marketing!" from where I sat, looking at the world, as an anti-war, anti-poverty, and all of that. And I started to say something about S. M. Miller, because when I first started graduate school in the fall of '69, I had an experience in that class where I felt violent towards this professor. Here's how I heard it—I have no idea whether this is true or not—for a couple of weeks he was talking about the nobility of the poor, and the ways in which their values about family and all of this was so much greater than the purchasing power of the middle class and its desire to be [styled?] or whatever. And I remember thinking, "My family wanted a house, better clothes, a nice car, and not to have to worry about money." And everybody I knew on Airbrake Avenue and living in that alley felt the same way, as far as I knew. The only thing they were missing was that education was the ticket out. I would say things in the class—the class was large—and I would say things in the class, and I was *so* furious. I was absolutely furious, because my last year, my senior year, I took a course in African poetry and history, Afro-

American society—African-American society—black studies it probably was called at that point. But I was trying to understand the whole system of access. My family didn't have access to healthcare. There probably wasn't much that could have been done for my father, in terms of his heart condition at that time. But he never even saw a doctor—he just started turning blue and he died in the plant.

And then as I took more courses in sociology…. Now I'm going to go fast ahead, because as it turned out, I had a *very* hard time finishing my thesis.

[00:39:17]

SR: I was going to ask you about that.

LK: The part of who I am that came apart at this time was how much I loathed sitting alone in front of a typewriter, writing about research. I mean, I could do the stuff, but my three areas of sociology for my Ph.D., for my exams, were quantitative sociology, which is sort of exalted statistics [unclear 00:39:50] modeling; social theory; and organizations, which is how it lead to my going to teach at public policy schools, because I wrote mostly about….

SR: Yeah, I was wondering what that pathway was.

LK: Yeah, that's the pathway, yeah, because I was really writing social policy documents.

SR: My doctorate's in health policy, actually, which is an interesting thing.

LK: My first job was a professor of health policy and management at the graduate school of public policy at NYU. So it was public administration and public policy, was the name of the school. But the health administration program

essentially—or the health policy program—bought the policy courses in general, from the economics faculty and public policy school. And then we taught the ways you applied that into looking at access to healthcare. And what I was interested in was always the question of access. So when I discovered that I would most likely *barely* get tenure, because I wasn't going to produce at the level that was necessary, because I had a *very* hard time working alone. I could be diverted by the kids, I should clean a closet, I should…. You know.

But I was elected to the faculty senate. I had very good advice from my first department chair at Baruch College. He said, "This is a male field, it's all of those things. So what you want to do is, you want to get your name out there. I'm going to put you on the educational policies committee of the business school"—which wasn't where I was located. I was also on the faculty of the Mount Sinai School of Medicine, because that's the way that program worked. And so I started writing…. And then he said, "Be the secretary. Don't get caught up in this idea that if you're a woman you're never taking a note. Be the secretary, because you create the meaning out of the meeting."

SR: Interesting advice—and very wise.

LK: *Very* wise. And I thought, "You're right. When you take the notes, you create the meaning."

SR: Actually, I have heard that from someone whose oral history I did, a person with hemophilia, who was a very active, outspoken, one of the first to speak up against the then doctors at meetings where patients were allowed to come in at last. And he said, "I'll be secretary." And he said the same thing.

LK: Yeah. It was really interesting to me. And then I actually was elected president of the faculty. Now that's for all colleges—arts and sciences, the business school, and the college of education. So because I represented educational policies in the business school, but they're related to the arts and sciences, I got that connection pretty quickly. But there had been a battle at Baruch about the calendar. Okay? Classes had always begun a week after Labor Day. Then it's a lot of Mondays out for the Jewish holidays. And then you had Thanksgiving, and then you had Christmas break. Then you came back for two weeks for the semester. The battle was, Why can't we start in August, finish before Christmas, have January off, as many other colleges did. I'd been listening to this fight—I was on the senate, and I was elected the senate representative of the business school—so I was sitting there, "Whoa, man!" So when I was elected president—and the president and the provost sat in the faculty senate meetings—I said, "I want to make this really simple, this decision about the calendar. The calendar now advantages the swimmers. They get to stay at their ocean places or whatever their vacation place is, until after Labor Day. It *dis*advantages the skiers. The skiers can only ski in January. So if we start…. So I feel that since this calendar's been in place for many years, advantaging the swimmers that we now need to give a break to the skiers." And they stood up, cheered, and said, "This is the best. It makes sense." Because I didn't try to do this…. What they'd been arguing is, The educational advantage of being off for the Christmas break so that you can prepare for your…. It was just deadly, and it needed another frame.

SR: Right. That's terrific.

[00:45:15]

LK: So that was my frame. And then the president said to me, "Would you like to come into administration?"

SR: Wow. (recording paused)

LK: One of the things that I learned in my time as the associate provost at Baruch College was how much I really loved administration, that I really liked the fast pace of it, and I also liked that we could finance programs that would advantage students. We had a very high dropout rate among students of color in the undergraduate programs—not so much in the graduate programs. But it was a very tense kind of environment about whether you would provide services for students, or whether you did a more Darwinian approach, which is when they're ready, they'll finish, and they'll do well, and they need to go through the school of hard knocks in order to get there. Based on my own experience, and my own sense of meeting the students—not in the MBA program that I was the chair of, but the undergraduates that I met as I worked on these programs—was the extent to which they never got the rules. They didn't see them, they didn't look at them, they didn't understand. And the favorite comment of a well-educated faculty member who cares is to say, "But the catalog is our contract." And then, of course, if you look at the catalog, it's got courses that haven't been offered since the Year One, and you have a whole bunch of assignments—courses that can be mixed and matched in various different ways to get the degree. But you have to be savvy enough, or have someone sit with you and figure this out, after they understand what you really want to do. And when I had started at NYU, we did

individual advising of every student. Some days I would see thirty students. Some of them only wanted me to sign it, and they knew exactly what they were doing. And some of them said, "I don't know *what* I'm doing." I would spend more time with them. But at Baruch, there didn't seem to be anything like that. And I was responsible for faculty development that was one of my portfolios. And also the library. I've always done the library. The library was in a design stage, they were building a new library at Baruch, and interestingly, the first design had all the librarians at the windows, and the students in the center. And I thought it represented a lot of ways that the people thought about the students, that they're itinerants who come and go, but we're here forever. I found it really exciting.

[00:48:24] So I left there, I took the Harvard program, Baruch paid for that. I went on then to learn about a place called Kean College, where they were doing student assessment through a grant, in a way that was revolutionary. There was a whole office set up to do it. It was really quite a marvelous place. And so I saw an ad in the *Chronicle* and I applied blind. I wrote a letter, I applied, I just did what you do. And I got the job. It had two pieces to it. It was *so* invested in student assessment that it wasn't clear the content was being equally focused on. And the students ranged from, coming from the suburban communities in Orange, to Newark. And there was a lot of concern about whether we provided the appropriate amount of advisement and all of those sorts of things. So I was there for three years, and I knew I wasn't going to stay. It was too small, it didn't have enough money, it was too low down the hierarchy in the state system. Because all

the state systems support their flagship campus first—which would be Rutgers for New Jersey—and then their campuses that have always been run well. At that time it was Montclair and New Jersey Institute of Technology, which is training architects and city planners. And then they opened a law school at Rutgers. But it was just a way that I could see pretty early on that there was never going to be enough money to develop the kinds of processes that would really be useful, but that it would happen over time, and it *has* happened. But I started the conversation, someone else finished it, [this stuff? 00:50:39]. And I wanted a bigger field to play in. I wanted a larger campus. I think in those days all of us thought of California as the highest-performing educational system in the country. [00:50:58]

SR: We did. Yes, we did.

LK: It was tough. And when I got here, I believed it for the first couple of years—I really did.

SR: I found this. Actually, it was in *Suddenly a Giant*. He says, "The golden age of education in the golden state," is what people thought of California.

LK: Yeah. And I thought, "Wow." And my husband, who was then sixty-two—I was fifty-three—would have to take the bar again. He graduated from Harvard Law School, number five in his class, in…. Oh God, what year was it? I don't know. He was twenty-one, because he graduated from high school at fifteen, and then college at eighteen, law school at twenty-one. So he was a little uneasy about this. But he did feel his daughter was here in Los Angeles, and that he would make the move and he would study for the bar and do all that kind of stuff. I was

just in love with the place. I just thought, "It's large, it's got resources, it's got all this stuff."

[00:52:22]

SR: Yeah, I understand that.

LK: And it felt really exciting when I got the offer. So we were living in the dorms on January 17, 1994. Herb had been here ten days.

SR: That's the same time I moved to California. Same feeling.

LK: I had been here since August first, and I was living in a two-story attachment to the dorm. I had brought with me the things I cared about, because he didn't know when he would get a job here. So what we did was, have me bring the things I cared about, so I would be surrounded by things I cared about. So I *lost* the things I cared about. (laughs) It's funny how you stop caring about the things you used to care about, because they're not there anymore.

SR: Right.

LK: But then the job changed dramatically. I mean I had five months as the vice-president of academic affairs and a provost; and then I had the building campaign. I was the one who had to come up with the estimate for how many trailers we were going to need. And I hadn't been in all the buildings yet, because I was making visits to all the departments. But the leadership that President Wilson provided was really pretty extraordinary, because one of the things that she did was she said, "You know, Louanne, this is a disaster, but it's also a time when we can think of making the university we always wanted to be in. And this is a chance we'll never get again." And it was very exciting, because one of the

things that had happened here is that departments grew at different speeds, so faculty were scattered. You know, you would have the sociology chair and five or ten faculty members in a building, and then you would have the other ones that were hired later in a building on the other side of the campus. The sciences were pretty straightforward, but the liberal arts and the…. And Education was straightforward, they had a building at the edge of the campus. But there was no…. There were colleges called—and this was one of the funniest things I'd ever heard—there was a college of communication, health, and human services, because the communication faculty didn't want to go with somebody else who was in the other…. So there were these scatterings and kind of bizarre…. And it was hard to sell the film program from a college of communications, health, and human services. You know, you couldn't really talk to the industry about how good your film students are. So one of the things that the earthquake offered us is we probably have one of the most beautiful campuses.

SR: It's gorgeous.

LK: It's gorgeous here.

SR: Can you go back and talk about the earthquake a little bit?

[00:55:27]

LK: Yes. You know, I'm sort of so burned out by giving talks about the earthquake, and it's been a long time since I've talked about it, so let me try it from a fresh perspective. What happens on the morning of the earthquake is the place I was in, I couldn't get out of. The bed broke, glass was all over, the windows broke, water from the pipes came down. So in my little white tee shirt that I slept in, and in my

tie pants and Birkenstocks, no water to comb my hair or anything, I went to the police station. My husband said to me, "You know, I think it's first comes the earthquake and then comes the riot. So we need to board up our windows." But he was very calm. So I went down to the police station, and they said, "Ma'am, we've been looking for you—you're in charge." So I said to the chief, "Well, what do we usually do in an earthquake?" And he said, "We secure the campus." I said, "Well, let's secure the campus." So what that meant was, we got into this golf cart and we drove around. The science buildings were on fire. The library sides had separated. The arts media building, at the "L," had completely separated and moved onward. And when they put the fires out in the science buildings, they would go to the next thing that was an emergency. But then the fires would come back because of the chemicals that were in there. And you had faculty standing outside saying, "That's my life's work in there!" You know, their labs, their papers, everything. And so Blenda wasn't there until late that evening. She was behind a freeway that had gone down. And so the next day we started working out of an RV on the campus. We put up army tents and the chancellor's office sent us police from Dominguez Hills actually, because our police chief whom I had been talking to actually had a concussion and he needed to have bed rest.

On that first day when I talked to the chancellor's office emergency people—we had a walkie-talkie kind of system—there were no phones working anywhere. This was before cell phones. So what we tried to make sure was that people were safe. And we were adamant that the message was, We will be back,

we will reopen. What would happen, though, over those first weeks was we had a—we worked in running suits because we were on the fields and we were in tents, and we had heat lamps, and sometimes we had food trucks come in, which meant that most of us were eating pizza and doughnuts as a weekly kind of diet. The issues for us were, okay, the earthquake people, the contractors, would be into a building and they'd say, "Okay, one, two, and three buildings. Okay, Sierra, this one, and that one can be opened." Then there would be another aftershock, and that building would go down. So that would come *off* the list. And then we would try something else. We had a telephone system, so that you got a message in the morning from the vice-presidents of each division. So when you called the main number, you always got a human voice. And at the end of the day, we did a summary of the day. So you knew that if you called after seven, that Sierra was *not* open any longer, would not be opened, and such-and-such another one would be open. It was like that. And it went on like that for weeks. But in the middle of that, we still were going down that path, but Blenda said to me, "We need to set up trailers, we're going to have to set up trailers." So I worked with the facilities people to work out what each college pod, where it would be. And the question came, How many trailers are you going to need? I came up with the number 350, and that's what we got. But I really…. It was one of those educated guesses—like 200 is too small, 500 seems like a lot. You know, it was like that. And then working with the facilities people we were able to identify, Okay, this is the site for *this* school, this school, this school. And we were supposed to open—we were in intersession, we were in the January

intersession—we were in the skiers' schedule (laughs) in my old language. And we opened on, I think, February 14. I don't know why I think that's the day. February 10 maybe. We were two weeks late, that's all. There's all kinds of wonderful stories from it, but the one I remember is that How do you get a schedule produced? How do you even know what kind of classes? And at one point, the librarian, Sue Curzon who was the librarian, who just retired a year and a half ago, she got up on a cherry picker, because she had I.T. as well as the library, and she went in with two librarians to try to retrieve student records. While she was in there—and there were all these reporters on the campus while she was in there—[an aftershock of] 4.6 or something, hit. And things started swaying. Obviously we got everybody out, but I'm using that as an example of just one kind of thing that went on.

[01:02:20] The other one was that we were told that in a certain section on the north campus was the business college, and I worked with a wonderful dean of social and behavioral sciences—and I've lost his name right now—but he was a geography professor and he had a *great* sense of space. And *he* was the one who actually said, "It'll be here and here and here and here." But we were told that the business school trailers were in. So he and I walked up the morning school's opening, and there's not a single trailer. For reasons I won't ever fully understand, we were to continue saying that every college is accommodated. (laughs) What the faculty did, they were just remarkable. They would come as close [as they could] to the campus with their cars, and then they would put a

sign: Geography Department, History Department, English Department. So people could find things like that.

When school opened, we had essentially runners. Let's see, I'll tell you how registration and the schedule got done. The student records were run from a different campus. I can't remember which campus did it—one further north—but somebody who was using the same system we did. So when you went in to register, you were actually being registered through a campus partner, but you didn't see that, because you only saw our logos, our materials. But we couldn't get it to the *Los Angeles Times* on time to print it. We wanted it printed as an insert. Blenda had come up with this motto: Not just back—better! Some of the students and faculty would say things like, "Not just back—bitter." But, you know, they did what they did. It was hard. It was hard for everybody. There was nobody having a good time. We set up these information booths. Student affairs took the major responsibility for it. Every time, no matter where you came in, you would get the registration documents. But what we did is, they were printed in the *Daily News* in the *Valley News*. We ran a full-page ad, which *Daily Times* didn't charge us for, telling our students to buy the *Daily News*, because we couldn't meet the *L.A.*... So we had a really good public affairs person that really knew how to do that kind of thing. I was just amazed at the kinds of things people suddenly knew how to do.

SR: That's marvelous.

LK: Yeah. And Blenda, who had a Ph.D. in communications, knew from the first moment that she arrived—she came in late that night, and I stayed, waiting for

her. I mean, I stayed up. I had nowhere to go anyway. But what she said was, "Everybody has to be able to get somebody on the phone." And then we have to develop the messages. So that's what we did.

[01:05:54]

SR: How wonderful.

LK: I know. And those trailers, I remember at one point inventing the paper bag as "this is the mail for the department of history, this is the mail…." Because they were in this huge dome, like I was in for many years. We also announced that we would not occupy space—senior administration would not occupy space until every faculty member and every student was taken care of. And so we converted the old administration building into a student services building, and we waited to get a new building built, which took…. Jolene was appointed in 2010, and we moved in that fall. So I was here for seven years in a tent, a dome.

SR: Wow.

LK: But it did give the opportunity to really start looking at things. We didn't have a good system of seeing which classes were closing, and which weren't; which classes needed to be augmented, and which weren't. And I remember even before the earthquake, one of the things that I did that nobody'd ever particularly seen a provost do before, was that I put an announcement in the school newspaper saying, "If you can't get a class, come to my office." So when you came to my office, I would then call the dean to come to my office and take these students and get them into class. And so it became important then for the deans to take care of getting the schedule worked out better. It was much more of a…. I mean it was a

wonderful place to work, everybody was really wonderful to one another. Sort of the idea of the student, nobody in her family to tell her anything about college, who arrives here and is told "the catalog is your contract"…. I tried reading the catalog once. I couldn't understand it. So by the time I left, you could actually go online—and we had *tremendous* technology people here, great technology people, great budget people. They weren't perfect, but they were imaginative and could work in *very* strange environments, because this was all strange.

[01:08:26]

SR: Well that's so terrific.

LK: All strange. And as each building opened, there was just a sense of joy. So when you're asking about CSUN Rising, it's when the last building was the administration building. Jolene Koester was appointed president, and so CSUN is now rising because we are ready, we are ready for whatever there is. Although I think CSUN Rising actually is a term, now I'm thinking, that came up with Blenda, when we got the last students in, and we got the…. See, one of the things that Blenda did extraordinarily well too was [recognize] the real relationship that you needed was with FEMA, with the chancellor's office, and with the State. And she had those relationships built solidly, and she was able to see that huge picture. So Clinton came when we opened—no, Gore came when we opened. Clinton came a year later. I was the warm-up act. I remember this so clearly, because he was late. There were some security issues, because he needed to have people on the tops of the buildings and all that kind of stuff. And it was drizzling. And the president and the chancellor turned to me and said, "Just keep the crowd

quiet, and just think of yourself as the warm-up act for Elvis Presley." It was the morning of…. I mean, that's what I mean by the fun of being here. I mean, it was….

[01:10:13]

SR: I feel that there's just such warmth here. Coming from the East Coast and academia, I certainly understand, because I was there, and now I'm here. Even this experience, there's just this friendliness and warmth.

LK: Yeah! It so happened that that morning, the Kobe [Japan] earthquake occurred on the same day as the anniversary of ours. I began the day by saying, "You know, the University of Kobe was the first foreign university to send us donations, and I can assure you that today *we* will collect donations to send to Kobe." I don't know, from then on I sort of did the history of where we had been and where we are now, and how great this is. By that time, it was a little bit muddy, but Clinton arrived and people were screaming. He *is* like a rock star.

SR: Oh yes.

LK: He really is like a rock star. But we continued to operate the administrative offices out of trailers and domes—these huge plastic domes. You can see pictures of them anywhere on the campus. They're really worth looking at, because you would have the entire academic affairs senior administration, which was technology, I.T., graduate studies, undergraduate studies, counseling, you name it—we were all in it. There was no ceiling except in my office—I had the only ceiling. And so the *din* out there was incredible, and everyone just got used to it. The air conditioning didn't work in the beginning, and I just said when the dome

hits 95 [degrees], everybody goes home. And nobody would leave—nobody would leave.

[01:12:22]

SR: That's terrific.

(recording paused)

LK: It was the student-faculty … somewhat of a disconnect. The campus was founded as an offsite for Cal State L.A., and then we in turn founded Channel Islands. So part of my responsibility was the building of the enrollment out at Channel Islands, in order for them to open. But the campus when it first opened, people talked about founding the Harvard of the West. And a lot of the hiring was done through networking with UCLA or Berkeley or somewhere where someone else had gone to school. It's not that they weren't an extraordinary faculty, but they were prepared to teach themselves at an earlier age.

SR: I totally understand that.

LK: And I used to walk around saying, "You know, you're romanticizing a time that never was. I don't think you were reading Sartre or Socrates in the library for eight hours at a stretch. You were trying to get by, your social life, your personal life, and all of that." And these kids come really disadvantaged. And it wasn't about race in the beginning—although it *was* always about race. I remember when I came here, after I'd been hired, there was a reception held for me, and I cannot tell you that there weren't at least three or four faculty that came up to me and said, "One of the things you have to fix is that black students are getting degrees in black studies, and they're having only their own, and there's no

standards." So what I did, I took the lists of things people would say about others, and we had a very small part-time faculty member was all the institutional research was at the time, but I would ask him to analyze the grades of Chicano studies, Pan-African studies, Asian studies—we have Jewish studies, but at that time it was more of a minor—and look at the pass and fail rates and compare it to history—wherever these people came from—history, English, biology. And it turned out that in some cases the fail rates were higher in African-American studies or Pan-African studies, than anywhere else. So I would send notes out like that. "You know, you mentioned to me…." Most of it I did orally. I'm a better speaker than I am a writer, and so I would go visit with the faculty of a particular college, and I would say, "You know, some of the things that I've heard are …" and I would go through that. And then I would say, "So I brought these data. So let's look at the data." But I also did kind of, I probably was far too morally justified on why I was doing this than I needed to be. Even though I produced it, I would use the example of myself or a student that [unclear 01:15:48] knew, or something like that. At some point I started interviewing students who had done very well and graduated in four years, and I would say to them, "How did you do it?" "I just looked at the catalog, I talked to no one." (laughter) I just remember that. Oh man, this keeps me humble.

The thing was, there was a lot of tension between the faculty and me a lot of times. I came *very* close to a no-confidence vote. I remember I was in Greece and I was going to the hotel room, looking online to see whether I was in or out by the end of the…. But I think what was important to me was that I worked with

a group of people who worked as hard as I did, who cared as deeply as I did. And you know, there was a certain amount of tension between student affairs and my office, because over time everything that looked a little off would be put under my direction. And that made things really tense, because the other places…. I don't know, it could have been done more gracefully. It wasn't done as gracefully…. And part of it was the earthquake. Part of it *was* working in a trailer. I knew where not to walk in the president's trailer, so that I wouldn't walk through the floor. We're not talking about little problems, we're talking about…. Or if my desk looked funny in the morning it was because it was covered with ants. It was plastic, it wasn't a solid building.

[01:17:39] So I think what I look back on, that I think I'm most proud of, is that we put the systems in place to help every student be successful. I failed at the revision of general education—getting the units down, getting them to accept the community college units, not having them repeat it. I tried lots of different things. But I think there's one faculty meeting where I presented that only one percent of our students graduated in four years. And I think people thought it was unbelievable, and they ran the data themselves, and they found out that only one percent…. That was first-time freshmen. I mean, I wasn't looking at transfers. We made up our rate of graduation by using the transfer students. But there was always a group of core people that we could work together, that we could make this thing work, because the point at which a student can withdraw has to be established, so that the financial people can work with it. There has to be some counseling by the student affairs people for somebody that needs to drop classes.

So there were all these things that hadn't been systematized in…. What I always thought I was trying to do was a rule-governed environment; that there *was* a rule that you could refer to; and that it *wasn't* that you had to ask three people about what you needed to graduate, and then take two out of three. It was messy. It was just messy. And part of it is it grew very fast. Part of it was the first president was a much more withdrawn person, much more the administrator at the end of the hall. I never saw the man.

[01:19:37]

SR: I just read about him.

LK: Yeah. Well, and there's also a movie that you should see called "Triumph of Valley State." It's about the anti-war movement here. They locked the president, Cleary, in his cubicle.

SR: Yeah, I read about it, but I'd like to see that.

LK: There's a film. I think the history department has it, or it's archived here somewhere.

SR: I'll find out.

LK: It's "Triumph of Valley State." So I think to focus the campus not on faculty credentials and on how much they wrote and how much they did. We absolutely needed that, but that was already there. But to focus also on the interdisciplinary nature of the way knowledge was being transmitted. You really *didn't* need a department of urban planning *and* a department of geography. But sometimes you do it, and sometimes you don't. Sometimes you win, sometimes you lose. We had [four] art departments when I came. It was fat, flat, old, and new. That's

what it was. Fat…. I forget what it was. But it's sort of painting, sculpture, and ceramics, and art history, and animation—four different departments. So they were all buying one piece of the same equipment. And so there's this one grand day where the president and I go down and call a meeting of all the different faculty and we say, "There will be one art department." And then we had runners. We sent people to close the accounts, as she made the announcement. And you can imagine how charming…. I mean, if you know anything about academic life, you know you do something like that, and you're close to being an authoritarian something-or-other. But I think I left it a better place. I left it for someone as smart as Harry to be able to come in and [unclear].

[01:21:58]

SR: And he's going to take it up. As you said, this is the perfect segue.

LK: He really did a great job in reforming general education and really working closely with student affairs. I was never able to work closely with student affairs. [Sentence redacted.] People want to talk about student development, and I wanted them to get their classes. I wanted them to have the choices of the major, I wanted them to stop getting three majors. I wanted them to stop having 180 units but didn't have enough to graduate in any one field. It was just … it was messy. And I think that's about it.

SR: This is so marvelous for you to share just so much about your own personal life and pathway, and also what you brought *to* the situation and clearly have contributed so much. I really appreciate you doing this.

[01:23:11]

LK: Yeah. It's the best job I ever had. I didn't always love it. There were some days that I just thought, "One more day of this…." (laughs) But it was contentious a lot. From the earthquake on, nothing stayed the same for people who had put their heart and soul into it. And trying to be inclusive about bringing those people along with what we were trying to do to rebuild the campus, it wasn't always democratic—it just wasn't. There were just certain times when we just said, "That's not gonna happen." And I'm not gifted in that way. I don't have a preamble that says, "You know, we're having a difficult time here." I would say, "I can't make it work." And so I think if I had it to do over again, that would be something that I would want to change. But I wanted every student to get a clear understanding what was expected of them. I wanted every student to have a class with a syllabus. We didn't have that. And I wanted every student to know exactly what was expected of them, to get through the class with a passing grade.

SR: And so….

LK: And so in order to do that, you had to hire different kinds of faculty, and you had to say no to other kinds of faculty. Part of my job was recommending tenure to the president. I may not have called it always right, but I called it as I saw it at that moment. And I made a lot of enemies. There were a lot of people that…. There was one guy that got up at my farewell party—when my husband was dying of cancer, and my kids were there—and talked about how vicious, vindictive, and vile I was.

SR: Oh my!

LK: Yeah, it was pretty bad. So I don't want you to think that I think I did such a great job. I want to say there were lots of times when I could have done it better.

SR: Well, sharing what you *have* done is a gift, and thank you very much.

[END OF INTERVIEW]