

**David Paulsen**  
**Interviewed by Nancy Taylor**  
**The Evergreen State College oral history project**  
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**FINAL**

**Taylor:** This is February 16, 2018. I'm here with David Paulsen in his house in Quilcene, ready to do an interview. To start, just tell a few stories, or talk about your family—your growing up.

**Paulsen:** I was born in Minneapolis during the Second World War. Shortly after I was born, my father shipped out overseas, and I spent the war years living on my grandparents' farm up near Duluth, Minnesota. They were subsistence farmers. My mother's father died in an industrial accident when she was three years old. He was working on the railroad in the cold, moving boxcars with a long lever to inch the cars along the track. He slipped, it caught him under the chin and broke his neck.

My maternal grandmother remarried. She was a Swede-Finn, that is, she was from the Swedish-speaking part of Finland, and my biological grandfather was also a Swede-Finn. But she married a full Finn named Pohjola, which is a classic Finnish name, and so my mother grew up in the Finnish community—Swede-Finnish community—because her parents also lived across the road.

She was young, and the times were tough during the years my father was gone. She moved back down to Minneapolis because she had been a nurse in Minneapolis before the war. My father was a dentist and earned his degree at the University of Minnesota at that point. So that was the family complex.

After the war, my father came back and we lived in the city of Minneapolis until my fifth grade. My father set up a practice not far from the house we lived in, and my mother was a housewife. I have two sisters, one was five years younger than I and the other 10 years younger than I. We stayed in that house and went to the local grade school until I was in fifth grade, and then we moved to the suburbs. I spent my junior high and high school career in the suburbs, and that had a lot of influence on me.

My father was a workaholic, starting his practice and working basically six days a week. He did well, but he wasn't around all that much—sort of the classic '50s relationship—and he died young. I was at college, but he died at 53. My mother continued to be a housewife. My father provided for her, so she was comfortable for the rest of her life, but lived a kind of lonely life, I think. She did have my sisters, who stayed in Minnesota, around.

My high school experience was one of the real formative events in my life. The community we moved into was a suburb called St. Louis Park, on the west side of Minneapolis. It was right next to one

of the wealthiest communities in the United States, Edina, which at that time had covenants, so there were no blacks, certainly, and no Jews allowed. Many members of the Jewish community in the Minneapolis area came from families in which the first generation had lived in north Minneapolis and the second generation moved to the suburbs, particularly St. Louis Park. So, at my high school, half the students were Jewish and the scions of Jewish professionals. There were actually only a few Catholics, because there was a Catholic high school there, so those who were local went to the Catholic high school. The remainder came from a Protestant (often Scandinavian) background. Even so, the dominant culture was actually, as I saw it, strongly shaped by Jewish professional culture, in the sense that the parents were very active with school, and had high expectations for their children and their schools.

The other thing that happened was that this was the Sputnik era, and the high school—in part because of parental interest—developed what would now be considered a substantial AP curriculum. There was ability grouping, so there was a series of more advanced classes. I had always been a fairly strong science student, and I flourished in that atmosphere. I did very well in the sciences and earned an award for being the best science student in my class, mostly A's and A+'s for my whole career.

But it also had a variety of faculty. We had a humanities program that I took one year and studied the Great Books curriculum, which was taught by an interesting guy who had been a pilot during the war; he was shot down over Europe and lived in a prisoner of war camp. He became a friend, so a group of us high school students would go out and see him. Plus, a number of the students ended up in a German program taught by a faculty member who was an expert on Central Europe, who, after the second and third year of high school German, was giving lectures about German history. We learned a lot from him, and a group of us would go and spend time, maybe once a month, at his house, talking with him about a whole variety of issues. It was very intellectually stimulating.

The third one was the only one that didn't officially teach us an advanced cohort, but he was a political scientist, and he would give college-style lectures, but he only did it three days a week because he needed to do preparation. The other two, he had movies. They were good movies, but he was quite straightforward in saying that was the only way he could actually do these sorts of things. He was talking about Max Weber and a variety of political scientists that Barbara Smith knew when she was studying at the college level, and so I was able to have that opportunity when I was in high school. So, I did work there, and I did science projects as well.

**Taylor:** Can you link the values you now have to formative times?

**Paulsen:** One of the things was that living in a community that both had a strong history that involved the Holocaust, on the one hand, and also being aware of the restrictive covenants surrounding it, I had very strong feelings about the social justice issues, but was fairly naïve about those sorts of things.

But, as I went to college and lived in Chicago, it fostered an interest in those topics. I met a number of people who were politically involved, let's say, and I ended up not spending a lot of time with them. The Students for a Democratic Society was being formed at Chicago when I was there, and I attended some of their early meetings, so I got to know a few of the people involved with that who went on to not such illustrious careers, being part of an underground movement and being chased by the FBI, one of them, for most of her life.

So, it did have an effect on the values I had even at that point. It also helped stoke an interest in the sciences and the humanities. So, all through my intellectual career, I have been straddling the disciplines. I had a strong science interest in high school and I went to a National Science Foundation summer camp, for example, where I worked with another student to develop an early, rather limited magnetic resonance instrument, which I was able to use in a later high school project.

**Taylor:** This was already in high school?

**Paulsen:** This was in high school, yes, it gave me the opportunity to do that. I went to Honeywell's lab where I watched them create silicon wafers, from which they produced chips. This was in the '50s, while silicon technology was in its infancy. I had very good background experiences in that area and developed some strong interest. Then, when I came to go to college, if you'd like me to continue?

**Taylor:** That's the next stage, yeah.

**Paulsen:** I had a choice to go either to MIT or Chicago, and it was a difficult choice for me to make. I had a good high school friend, who went on to become a fairly prominent sociologist named Dick Sennett, and we spent a lot of time in high school talking about a variety of topics; we were both on the debate team. He was something of a musician, so at some point we wrote a joint essay on Beethoven's Violin Concerto.

I was interested in that, so I finally made the decision—in spite of my interests in the sciences—to go to Chicago, which at that time still was a very strong school in the sciences, after all, the Manhattan Project began with an early atomic pile which was under the then abandoned stadium at the University of Chicago. I went there and it was a very interesting and formative experience. I still have friends from those days that I contact on a regular basis. It was an exciting place to be at that period of time.

I came right at the transition from the Robert Maynard Hutchins experiment. This was a segue into my interest in alternative education. Hutchins, early on, felt that strong students were wasting their time in undergraduate work, so he was bringing in students at the age of 16, giving them tests, and if they tested it out, they could go into graduate programs. That was an experiment that from my perspective—this was a little bit before my time there—was not all that successful. By the time I got there, there were the vestiges of it. You had basically a two-year general education curriculum that had a prescribed series of team-taught courses—mostly team-taught courses, as well as a few that weren't—in a variety of disciplines. And you were expected to take all of them, unless you placed out by exam. This harks back to the Hutchins era. So for two weeks before classes began, all first-year students came to campus and took exams covering all courses in the general education curriculum. Plus, if you had a background, as I did, in calculus and a few other areas, you could take more advanced tests that allowed you to be placed into a more advanced class, in mathematics, for example. So, I did very well on those. I entered the college as a third-quarter sophomore. I was there two weeks and I now had credit for all of these classes.

**Taylor:** Was that good?

**Paulsen:** Yes, I thought it was good at the time. In retrospect, I didn't utilize it as much as I could have, because I only stayed around seriously taking classes for about two years, and most of those were upper-division, and even a couple of them were undergraduate/graduate classes. So, I was able to move ahead very fast. And in part, I was able to do it because—well, you took these exams, but there were more general education courses than anybody could take in two years. If you didn't pass any of them, you were allowed to be excused from at least some of the areas.

I had some of these classes to take, and there were various kinds. I would, for example, place out of a second year of a humanities sequence, but not the first year, or social science sequence that covered 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century topics. Because I had heard lectures and knew about Max Weber and all these things, I knew what the topics were from high school, so I was able to pass these tests, whereas I didn't know as much about de Tocqueville and some other topics, so I had to take the first year, which I did.

That worked fairly well for me, but when I entered college, I probably took these tests when I was 17 years old, about to turn 18 at the end of August, and I could have used at least some more upper divisional work-- and in my second quarter, I was taking a course with some graduate students. I did pretty well in these sorts of classes in the Philosophy Department. I started out taking a couple of science courses, but I ended up migrating into the philosophy area and being more interested in it.

**Taylor:** Are there people who are particularly memorable, the faculty you worked with?

**Paulsen:** The faculty member with whom I worked most closely was Fred Siegler, who actually influenced where I went to graduate school. He had been at Stanford in the Graduate Programs in Humanities. He was a broad-based kind of person. He had done what was called a DPhil at Oxford, so although he was from Shaker Heights just outside of Cleveland, Ohio, he managed to have this distinct English accent, which had become second nature to him, but I always thought of this as some affectation. But he was strongly influenced by what had been going on in the '50s. He was in his thirties at the time—he was strongly influenced by what was going on in philosophy at Oxford when he was there. And that carried over; he did some interesting work on Ludwig Wittgenstein and various philosophical figures he influenced, in particular the work of a person that presaged my interest in cognitive science named Gilbert Ryle, who wrote an influential book called *The Concept of Mind*. It contained what might seem nowadays a bizarre theory of mind, but it was sort of a philosophical account, which was cognizant of behavioristic advances in psychology, so it's very behaviorist in its character.

I worked most closely with Fred. And then, when it came time to apply for graduate school, we talked—I had become quite friendly with him—and he suggested that maybe I would be interested in the graduate program in humanities at Stanford, which was an interdisciplinary program. When I entered it—because his recommendations carried a lot of weight, I think—I was able to get a graduate scholarship.

**Taylor:** Back up just a little bit. Can you describe the scene at the University of Chicago—students and social politics?

**Paulsen:** Yes, it was, academically, a very intense place. It had students, a lot of them who were very bright, but some of them were a little disturbed. The first year there were five suicides on campus. It was a kind of interesting place as an undergraduate because basically, it was a small college—about 1,800 students—in a large institution. They had 7,000 at the time. The graduate and professional schools were very strong. But the college was an independent entity, so you had the advantage of having some of the tailored programs—I think particularly general education programs—which drew from the faculty as a whole, but they also had faculty members who lived in dormitories, young faculty members; there was an academic life that was very rich.

The part I participated in was not the political side, but I might mention that one of my classmates, I discovered at my 50<sup>th</sup> class reunion, was Bernie Sanders. [laughter] Although most of the people I saw at the 50<sup>th</sup> reunion didn't even know he was a student until he became a public figure,

because he spent most of his time in the South doing political work. So there was that strain of the college. There was the rebellious strain of the college that presaged the protests against the war later on in Chicago.

**Taylor:** But you were more involved in the intellectual and scientific stuff.

**Paulsen:** The intellectual and scientific stuff. My best roommate and best friend—still is—became a world-class microbiologist—actually, botanist, working with plants. He ended up spending most of his career at a research institute in Basel, Switzerland, when they gave him an offer he couldn't refuse. He was very active as a high school student working in a lab; he had a position doing research at the cancer research hospital on campus at the university. I would go up and spend time with him and talk with him about the various things he was working on during that period of time. That was an influence.

I also had some connection with people in my department, particularly the first and second year I was there, a good friend, Ted Cohen, went on to Harvard and then came back to teach in Chicago. I kept in touch with him for a long time, and later brought him to Evergreen, where he gave a nice series of lectures. He worked mostly in aesthetics at that time.

**Taylor:** Then you went to Stanford in 1963.

**Paulsen:** Yes, I went in '63. I would say in retrospect I wish I would have stayed at Chicago one more year. There are things I would have liked to have done, taken more work. I had done standard undergraduate philosophy stuff, with quite a bit of emphasis on philosophy of science and logic. Though, working with Siegler, I tended to get involved in an honors thesis on an ordinary language philosopher named J. L. Austin, who talked about what he called the illocutionary and perlocutionary aspects of language. I was interested in language and how it worked, and had a sort of theory about that, so I wrote an account for my thesis. I still remember the exam, because you had to take an exam on this with Siegler and a couple of other faculty.

The most noteworthy of the other examiners, at least at Chicago, was Richard McKeon, who was well known for having edited a standard collection of Aristotle. Aristotle was a major influence in Chicago at the time. So, in the English Department, you had a variety of people who were structuralists in some sense of the word, who were always looking for structure. That was the main emphasis of their literary criticism, so I was sort of weaned on that. For example, in the first-year humanities program, you always dealt with structures, and the way it was done was for a whole year, every other week you'd change subject matters. You'd do art for a week and music for a week, and then two weeks interspersed was literature. You'd start out with things that were simple, and it got more and more complex. And I might add that you used books called *Learning to Look* and *Learning to Listen*. You had

to be able to detect whether something was in a major or minor key, and you listened to it and you talked about how it developed, and you talked about various forms. I had some background in that from my friend, Sennett, so I knew what the sonata-allegro form was. And I also picked up playing a Renaissance instrument -- the viola da gamba, a precursor to the violin, viola and cello. I never became very good, but I did get to the point where I could play in a group as part of a gamba consort. That provided me a musical epiphany: experiencing both my individual playing but simultaneously being part of and hearing a whole group play as one. But although I kept the instrument for a while after I left Chicago, I never kept up and never became all that good at playing.

So, getting back to the general education programs at Chicago, I may be on the verge of talking a little bit too long about this, but Chicago, at the end, had only one exam that counted. You got feedback at the end of every quarter, but it was limited—and sometimes you had only the comments of your fellow students and faculty in regular seminars or comments on papers, but nothing formally counted except for one exam at the end.

**Taylor:** Like Oxford or Cambridge.

**Paulsen:** Yes. I clearly remember that the final Humanities exam included questions on the Beethoven Violin Concerto, Henry James' *Portrait of a Lady*, and Picasso's *Gurenica*.

**Taylor:** We've done at least an hour, so I think we should go on to your experience in graduate school.

**Paulsen:** Okay. So, on to a bit more about Stanford. As I've mentioned earlier, after Chicago, I went to Stanford as a graduate student, the result, in part, of having worked with Fred Siegler, who was a graduate of Stanford's Graduate program in Humanities, and had convinced me that it fit my increasingly broad interests. I guess I also felt as though I needed to study more broadly after having been at Chicago for only a little more than two years. This program offered two years of classes in the Humanities over and above required classes in one of the participating departments. It led to a joint Ph.D.

So, I decided to enter the program, and it turned out to be more interesting than I thought. It provided both an opportunity for breadth in the graduate program in the humanities, which brought together history and language and a variety of other humanities topics, but not music and things like that; sort of standard literature, as well as philosophy. And then it had a requirement that you write a dissertation satisfying both the graduate program in the humanities—some of those classes were also taught by philosophers—and also to satisfy the requirements of your department. So, I did that, and the background work I had done in Chicago in the humanities held me in good stead, as did the philosophy.

But the Philosophy Department was an exciting place to be in the mid-'60s. The department was part of a movement in the study of philosophy mind and philosophy of language as well as philosophy of science and formal logic. It had some very interesting faculty at the time. I worked in particular with Patrick Suppes, who was ultimately my dissertation advisor, and he had a broad range of interests. He had done work with a variety of social scientists, and his whole approach to the philosophy of science was to emphasize a kind of probabilistic version of causation, which was a topic that I considered, in part, during my dissertation studies.

But it was also a department that was very strong in mathematical logic. They had at least one world-class mathematical logician, and you had a lot of collaboration between the work of logicians in the Philosophy Department and those in the Mathematics Department, because some of the world's great mathematical logicians had been brought to Stanford after the war, and their students had done some of the seminal work in the '60s, I'm thinking particularly of Paul Cohen whose work on the independence of the axiom of choice was an important example of the strength of the department.

I also worked with Donald Davidson, who was more influential than any of the other faculty, especially in the way in which he could teach. I saw him teach ethics to both undergraduates and graduate students simultaneously, and he did it in a way which was exciting to hear and see. It engaged both populations, and it provided a series of very valuable insights, which I used in my own teaching of ethics in subsequent years.

But what's most memorable to me is the way in which he was able to bring together two disparate subjects. One was called the philosophy of language, or theory of meaning, with some of his other topics on metaphysics and metaphysical epistemology, and in the end quarter he taught classes in both, with a lecture which tied them together in an impressive way. For the first time, I could see a mature mind working to synthesize elements of two separate domains, and bring them to bear in the course of a quarter in a consolidated position, which provided, for me, an exciting insight about what philosophy could look like when it was done at a fairly high level.

I was excited by Stanford, and I thought I got a solid education. I didn't like Palo Alto nearly as much as I liked Chicago in the sense that I thought Palo Alto and Stanford was unexpectedly, more blonde and white in two ways. One, there were fewer Jewish students and second very few African American students. Not that Chicago at the time had a lot of black students; they've done a lot better recently in bringing in people from the community. But living in Chicago and on the South Side, you were aware of the black community that surrounded you. I'd never seen as much blonde hair growing



up in Minnesota as at Stanford, though it was only later that I naively realized that, of course, if you have sun as much as you do [laughter] in California, you don't need peroxide to have blonde hair!

I think I got a solid education at Stanford. Certainly, my work in the graduate program gave me an insight into ways in which you could bring diverse material and diverse faculty together to work on topics. And I got a solid background in philosophy that I've been able to utilize.

**Taylor:** I didn't ask you earlier, but in your field, there you were at Stanford, right on the leading edge with these people who were contributing in significant ways in the whole field of cognition and cognitive science, or whatever you were working on. How does somebody in your position keep that leading edge?

**Paulsen:** Well, I guess I don't know that I have. I'm able to teach on the leading edge, and I think I've done that through my career by doing a lot of reading and keeping up on the literature. But I made a decision fairly early on to devote myself to being a teacher. In the area of technical subjects, that meant being abreast of what was being done, but not necessarily producing them. It's one thing to actually know what the issues are, and to be able to articulate them in ways that are exciting to students, without necessarily being able to produce books or technical papers, which demand a different sort of involvement with the field. It's always a sort of touchy relationship to have, but particularly since most of my subsequent teaching was done with undergraduates, I think that what you need to do is provide them with a kind of background, even in technical fields, which can hold them in good stead when they go on to other things. And for the bulk of students who are not going to go on to other things, you're teaching them something that's worth knowing in a way they can absorb. So, in that sense, that makes it possible to do. That means you have to go to professional meetings and read journals and things of that sort, which I did throughout my career.

**Taylor:** Did your aspirations change, or is it just that when you look back on it, this is just the way it happened?

**Paulsen:** Early on, I discovered that, particularly in philosophy, I didn't have one of the crucial skills, and that was to be able to read a paper aloud and do it fluently. When I was young, I had some speech difficulties, and in philosophy, at least, the classic paper was basically written and then read as a document. That was always a difficulty for me to do. It was only later that I developed—when I had a sort of broader base of experience, both in teaching and also intellectually—that I was able to give most of the talks I gave extemporaneously. So I became quite good at what I think of as intellectual modules that capsule particular points, and should they become relevant—whether it's in a lecture setting or

some other setting—I can deliver those in a way that’s different from when I actually have a text that I have to read in front of me.

And much, I think, certainly to the dismay of my wife, philosophy meetings I attended for years and years, were examples in which you had people who were really good sight readers and could probably have read the news off of a teleprompter, but not necessarily delivered interesting context, and certainly were not spontaneous and were not always interacting very successfully with the audience. I think I realized what my liabilities were should I try and pursue that. I did give some talks, technical philosophical talks, and they went okay, but it was something with which I was never really comfortable.

**Taylor:** You finished your dissertation at Stanford and then you—

**Paulsen:** Yes, I passed the prelims, did my initial work and got the approval of both the Philosophy Department and the graduate program in humanities about what I was going to do. I didn’t have it finished when I went off to teach at Reed; I finished in the next year and a draft version of the dissertation. I took an oral examination on that, and was prepared to polish it up. And, as push came to shove over the three years I was at Reed teaching in the humanities program, doing some philosophy on the side as well—I was unable to get it done as expeditiously as I would like. Every break in the year seemed as though it would take me two-thirds of a break to get up to speed again, and so I didn’t make the fast improvements I needed to do the final polish.

I finally finished it in the summer of 1970. We got it typed up and it was sent off. So, since I’d already passed an oral exam on it, and had completed all my course work, it was a matter of waiting till the next graduation, which happened to be January of 1971, although the dissertation was handled earlier.

So, teaching. I taught at Reed in a period that was quite tumultuous. Apparently somebody read a journal article which suggested that the optimum sizes for liberal arts colleges was 1,200, 2,500 and 5,000 students, and they decided they were going to expand from their 700, which they had apparently had early in the ‘60s, and they were going to expand to 1,200. So I was part of a cohort of visiting faculty brought in to teach these new students coming in.

**Taylor:** This was 1967?

**Paulsen:** This was 1968. I arrived to teach those students, and discovered that it was a place that was part of the tumult of the late ‘60s. It involved two factors. One was the issue of black studies and the civil rights movement in general. The other side of it was the Vietnam War, especially in the latter years I was teaching. So, it was a time in which Reed was trying to fortify its identity, but the decision to

expand --from my perspective anyway— made it impossible for juniors and seniors to live on campus because they wanted to have only freshmen and sophomores there, and they had limited facilities, and nobody read the fine print, which suggested that these numbers were optimum, if they were, only if you had the physical plant to support them, or if you got the donations to build new facilities.

Reed didn't have either of those things. So, as a result, you had two different cultures. The freshman-sophomore culture, which was more into the sex, drugs and rock and roll, and the junior-senior academic culture, the survivors of the freshman-sophomore years who were involved with their upper-divisional work, and ultimately with the senior thesis, which was the bellwether of teaching at Reed.

**Taylor:** But the students, you said, were extremely good.

**Paulsen:** Yes, I thought certainly the bulk of the students were very good. And in terms of national standards, I think a greater proportion of the students were in the top echelon than, say, the faculty, some of whom were very good and some were not as good, and some were quite surprising.

**Taylor:** So you were there three years.

**Paulsen:** Yes.

**Taylor:** And that's when you got married?

**Paulsen:** Actually, we got married in 1965. I married Maria, whom I met at Stanford. She was in Germanistik, the study of German, and we became friends. She had been a student at Reed and had come to Stanford as a junior. We started dating, and I certainly hit it off when I got the chance to meet her family. Her mother was German and had fled the Nazis. Her maternal grandmother was killed in the camps. Her father was 18<sup>th</sup>-generation English named Bradford, and taught English at Grinnell College. He was a Yeats scholar; but had the misfortune of having his seminal work ready for publication on Yeats when the family refused to allow him the right to publish it, and that had a devastating effect.

We got married. I got on well with her father--maybe better than I did with my own father. She finished her graduate course work at Stanford, and then I got the job at Reed. She came up with me and got a position at Pacific University teaching the German language. We stayed there three years, and at that time, since I was in a visiting position and Reed College was undergoing transformations, we decided we should go to Germany—so she could further her dissertation work on the topic of metaphor, which in retrospect is an academic bog that nobody should go into.

We decided to go to Germany in the fall of 1970. I'd finished my dissertation and submitted it. That was the last major thing we did together. We moved to Germany, and the mother of a visiting faculty in German at Reed arranged for us to get an apartment, and for me to become a non-degree

student, a *gasthörer*, an auditor, at the Free University, or Freie Universität, in Berlin. I found Berlin an exciting place although by that time, our relationship was, I think, feeling some strains. Moving around and going in different directions, I think, took its toll. By Christmas of that year, we had decided that we'd separate and divorce.

**Taylor:** What was the scene in Berlin?

**Paulsen:** It was a tumultuous time. Practically every night you'd hear reports of various radical groups smashing windows. This was in the Kurfürstendamm, which is the main street of West Berlin. It was a time in which faculty members at the Free University, who had less-than-stellar leftist views, were hung by their feet out windows and threatened with physical harm. The only one who actually survived that was a philosopher, Paul Feyerabend, who was—he's dead now—a well-known visiting philosopher teaching at Technische Universität Berlin. The students came into his lecture and demanded that they be given an opportunity to speak. He, being an old hand and a brilliant but offbeat person, said, "Sure." He let them get the stage, and he started asking them questions, and by the end of the session he had basically made them part of the audience. He acquired the reputation of being the only faculty at the Technische Universität to succeed in preempting the student attempt to silence him.

I think his political views were ones that were sympathetic to them as well. He was a faculty at Berkeley when I was at Stanford, so I had heard him talk. But by the time I got there, he had gone back, I think, to Berkeley, but his reputation was made, and when the young Germans I met learned that I was a philosopher they asked, "Do you know Paul Feyerabend?" And I said, "Yeah, I've met him."

So, it was interesting in that way. Also, when I separated from Maria, I moved into a politically motivated commune, so I got an opportunity to see some of the excitement that was still there after the 1968 riots, as well as some of the tensions that existed between East and West Berlin across the wall.

**Taylor:** You leave Berlin . . .

**Paulsen:** Yes, I got divorced in an 18<sup>th</sup>-century castle with three judges, according to the Napoleonic Code. Just after we separated, I had gone back to the United States for the Christmas holidays, and was able to interview for a position at Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin. I got the job for the subsequent fall, and I had the winter and spring to do what I wanted, so I continued to use the library at the Freie Universität, which had a good philosophy library, explored the city of Berlin, and met a lot of interesting people. I met, for example, West German Chancellor Willy Brandt's daughter, who was living in Berlin at the time, and some people in the artistic community who were living in some of the old abandoned buildings—they occupied them—so I got to meet a variety of different young people as well.

I was ready to grow, and I did some classes at the Free University. One on Kant, in particular, I found useful.

Then, in August of 1971, I went off to Appleton, Wisconsin. Lawrence had a position in philosophy that was occupied by a person I knew from Stanford, but who was going on leave for a year. So, I went there for the year. As it happened I had an office next to Barbara Smith. She's the person who has been most influential in my life. Both of us exited an office at the same time and literally bumped into each other. We started talking, and later started dating, and formed, with a group of other young Lawrence faculty, a kind of dinner club. We went out and had dinner together—psychologists and anthropologists in particular—so it was an engaging time. The Lawrence students, on the whole, were classic Midwestern. Pretty good students.

**Taylor:** You were there just one year?

**Paulsen:** I was there just one year.

**Taylor:** Fateful year.

**Paulsen:** Yes, it certainly was. By the end of that year, Barbara and I had decided we wanted to spend more time with each other. She was looking for a job, and she got one fairly early on in the process at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. We talked about it and decided that I'd go with her. We spent the summer actually on Vashon Island working on a book together.

**Taylor:** Did that book get published?

**Paulsen:** Yes. It was a political research methods book.

**Taylor:** Then you ended up back in Lincoln?

**Paulsen:** Lincoln yes.

**Paulsen** We got married at the end of that year. That was December 1972. I subsequently got some part-time teaching in the Omaha area, and ultimately got a permanent position in the Goodrich Scholarship Program at the University of Nebraska-Omaha in the second year of that program. It was a fascinating educational project. The University of Nebraska-Omaha (UNO) was the reincarnation of the Municipal University of Omaha, which was transformed when it became a part of the Nebraska University system. In particular, what was created, in addition to the existing Arts and Sciences College, was the College of Public Administration and Community Service. It was headed by Hubert Locke, who subsequently became the head of the University of Washington Graduate School of Public Affairs—now the Dan Evans School of Public Policy and Governance.

He was a fascinating guy, and he had managed to convince a member of the Nebraska unicameral—Glen Goodrich—that the way to carry out Goodrich's notion that universities should

prepare people for a successful life, particularly a life that can help poor communities, was to provide the right kind of education. Goodrich grew up in poverty and he saw in himself the way in which education could transform. What he wanted to do was create an avenue by which students—particularly underserved students, poor students—could succeed in their college studies and go on to do other sorts of things.

Locke took up the mantle. In addition to founding this new college, which had an urban focus—it had a public affairs department that offered an MPA (a Masters of Public Administration), but it also had graduate departments in urban studies and criminal justice—they would have this undergraduate program, which provided scholarships for inner-city students—a full ride for up to five years, plus support services to help them develop their writing and speaking and other skills. It involved giving a series of general education classes that occupied the first two years—half their load—and the rest of the load was in whatever department they wanted to study. That program sort of set a model that helped recruit students, but it also firmly demanded that the faculty be teaching-oriented, and that our job was to make these students succeed.

The Goodrich program provided a lot of resources to do that. I wasn't there in the first year. The person who headed that program was a more classically trained person in the humanities that provided what would be later called European-American studies, but did it in a way that was not so focused on the life experience of the students in this program, 60 percent of which were black students, about 20 to 30 percent were Hispanics, some Native American students, and the rest were Eastern European whose parents worked in the meat-cutting industry that was strong in the area.

**Taylor:** There were six faculty in that?

**Paulsen:** Yes, six faculty and an administrator and recruitment people, and somebody who was very good, actually, the first years I was there who did the support services. It had a writing lab and a variety of support services.

**Taylor:** Were you attracted to this program, or did this program change you?

**Paulsen:** When I found out about it, I was attracted to it. And Jerry Cederblom, with whom I subsequently taught and co-authored a book, *Critical Reasoning*, that grew out of our collaboration in the Goodrich Program. He had been there the first year. I had done some part-time teaching in the Philosophy Department before I was hired in this job, and he talked to me about it. When the initial director left, the model was changed to have a team collaboratively working. Instead of one luminary giving lectures, Hubert Locke recruited me to be part of that team. The first two years included interdisciplinary programs, one year in humanities, in which I taught and the second year in the social

sciences. In order to keep the program from being marginalized in the institution as a whole, faculty were offered positions in the Arts and Science College departments that fit their expertise. These faculty were supplied out of the Goodrich Program budget but generated student hours that were accrued to the participating departments. Goodrich faculty regularly taught a class or two a year in their affiliated department. This generated wide spread support for the Goodrich experimental venture.

I worked with Jerry Cederblom and with a colleague, Diane Gillespie, who subsequently ended up at the University of Washington-Bothell. She actually started out in literature, but went on to study psychology and wrote a book called *The Mind's We* which embodied her views of what had become cognitive science. Its title was a takeoff on another book called *The Mind's Eye*.

That program flourished. Locke was a very charismatic guy. He's the only person I've ever met as an administrator to go to the first meeting at the beginning of the year, and give a talk that makes you feel uplifted, that you can go and face the year and it's going to be exciting. He did that all the years I was there. He would talk and you'd go away and think, Wow! I can do this!

It was an engaging program, but it was also a very demanding program. A lot of the students had personal problems. You were always coping with that. I ended up tutoring students who had been put in jail to try and get them to inform on relatives on sort of bogus charges. I'd talk with them about *Native Son*, Richard Wright's book, and Herbert Marcuse. I did wonder, as I sat there in the tank listening—it was always very loud in the jail—talking about this whether in fact it was being recorded [laughing] and what the local officials would think about those topics, dealing with the black community.

**Taylor:** Did you know that at one time we tried to recruit Hubert Locke to be President at Evergreen?

**Paulsen:** No, I did not know that. He would have been a charismatic—

**Taylor:** He didn't want to do it, but we went out in search of him. That was early '70s, I think—middle '70s.

**Paulsen:** Yes, I would think that he would have been great. I kept in touch with him.

**Taylor:** Wonderful man.

**Paulsen:** Yes, and I thought he was a terrific guy, and when he came to Washington he went on to do statewide work on issues of concern for the African-American community and criminal justice. But the University of Nebraska Omaha was an attractive place and I hadn't worked in a non-arts and science atmosphere, so I spent time with people in the Public Administration program, for example. In fact, there was somebody who literally had the same first and last names as me.

**Taylor:** You're here, and we were talking about MPA.

**Paulsen:** Yes. I was part of the first year of the MPA program. You taught particular quarters of MPA, sometimes two, sometimes three, sometimes other things. At least the first couple years, there was a full-time component. A few students—not many—were full-time students and they took it for 12 graduate credit hours, which was more than the standard. I think eight was considered full-time, was considered a full graduate credit at that time, some complicated formula of that sort. Those were the in-service students. I taught both in-service and at various times a graduate module for the relatively few students who were full-time in order to complete their coursework a little more quickly.

**Taylor:** Do you know the history of the development of the MPA program, and how it got started, and what its curriculum should be and how you fit into all of that?

**Paulsen:** It was in process when I arrived. Russ Lidman and Guy Adams were, I think, the principals doing that. The program had to get approval of the CPE or whatever to have a graduate program. I think it was the first one.

**Taylor:** It was.

**Paulsen:** At that point, they had determined certain topics they were going to deal with, and I got involved with the discussion then. But the curriculum had not been developed, and over the first three or four years, there was a constant discussion, not of the elements per se, because they remained constant, but the order in which you presented those elements. That became an ongoing discussion, and it had to do with the pedagogy and how students were prepared and what made the most sense. You had Financial Management and you had Organizational Behavior. I was involved in the quantitative research methods primarily, as well as public policy. I was hired in a public policy slot.

**Taylor:** I remember in those days, with the new graduate program, there was an issue about faculty being hired for that program and faculty being hired for the college. How were you hired?

**Paulsen:** I thought that issue was moot in the sense that we were hired to teach in the graduate program, but very little was said about exactly what was needed and what the commitment was. And nobody that I recall ever said that I had made a lifetime commitment to doing that. Right from the beginning, I did do undergraduate teaching because MPA faculty members would not be suited to teach all components. So Org Behavior was not something I knew anything about. Because I had done some work in quantitative methods, particularly in evaluation research—I'd taken some extra graduate work when I was at Nebraska, so I had some background there, and I knew what the political science of public policy issues were at the time because I had done this book with Barbara and a couple of other authors on political science research methods, and I'd always had an interest in what, broadly speaking, were social science research methods, so that was something I was particularly suited to teach.



**Taylor:** Who were you teaching with?

**Paulsen:** I taught early on with Duke Kuehn and also with Jerry Lassen. I've taught with Bill Arney in Quantitative Methods when he was still doing Quantitative Methods. He had a background in it from his graduate work in sociology. I did that a couple of times. I taught with Ken Dolbeare in Public Policy. I was nominally involved with Public Policy; the area in which I had done some work was criminal justice policy. I knew a little bit about that. I knew the Deputy Director of the Department of Corrections, and this was a time in which that was a big issue in the state of Washington, questions about who ran the pen at Walla Walla.

**Taylor:** I don't know if you want to talk about this or not, but it's always occurred to me. Were you welcomed when you joined the faculty? How did people treat you? It's been an issue at the college for years and years and years about hiring spouses. There's been tension, there's been wonderful hires. There are many partners on the faculty. Did you feel welcomed? Did that whole problem work out satisfactorily for you?

**Paulsen:** I think it did, but I was also proactive in the sense that, very early on, I began teaching undergraduate modules in much less touchy subjects than public administration, for a year and a half before the MPA opening came. Until the MPA program, I wasn't a regular faculty hire. I was around, and I was teaching some undergraduate classes part time.

**Taylor:** Did people treat you well?

**Paulsen:** Yes, they did, but because I was the spouse of the Dean who was explicitly brought in from outside meant that people treated you a little bit differently, not badly, but warily, so I was aware of that. But I didn't notice anything of any great consequence, but that may have been my lack of perception about it. The other thing is I consciously decided to eat at the dinosaur table. I saw very quickly that this was a group of people who were more welcoming than others, across disciplinary lines, and I got on well with them. So, long before being a full-time spouse became an issue, I had connections with Beryl Crowe and that group of people. I got to know them and they got to know me. I thought it was important that they got to know me and what I was capable of doing on my own, rather than being brought in and paraded as somebody who could fill this niche in the college.

**Taylor:** It seemed like you carved out an identity that was your own, that was separate.

**Paulsen:** Yes, and that was quite intentional. And exactly what that was going to be morphed over time, but that's another story.

**Taylor:** When the job was announced, was it a logical fit for you?

**Paulsen:** It seemed like I could do some of the sorts of things they wanted to do. I hadn't done that much; I was more of a theoretician in the policy area, and I had done some stuff on quantitative research, especially as it applied to evaluation research, and I'd used the computer to do those sorts of things. I could do graduate-level factor analysis and related more advanced things using the computer.

**Taylor:** You worked mostly with MPA for three or four years, I guess?

**Paulsen:** The first six years, I did at least one component, one quarter in the program each year. Sometimes more, depends on the year. Whether it was the first year or the second year depended on what the curriculum was, which was an evolving beast.

**Taylor:** It's always been an issue, with the graduate programs particularly, but with hiring. Because the graduate programs required certain people, certain skills, and if you were going to offer that graduate program, you needed those people. On the other hand, I think the college as a policy said you were being hired for the college, and the people in that graduate program could then choose to teach in the undergraduate program, but you had to have the graduate program staffed. So, there was always a tension. How was it that you shifted to the undergraduate program?

**Paulsen:** I would fill in and teach one quarter or two quarters in programs, depending on whether I was going to be free that particular quarter. I taught, for example, Introduction to Natural Science with Linda Kahan and K. V. Ladd in the winter quarter one year.

**Taylor:** There wasn't tension about that? You moved back and forth, and you made friends, and you started teaching in teams, and it was natural?

**Paulsen:** Yes, teaching in teams, but in that sense, I was not developing coordinated studies programs, I was involved with the planning and delivery of the graduate programs. I also had to be aware what went on in other programs that I might be part of, but I was not the faculty initially envisioning them.

**Taylor:** When and how did that change? Because you became pretty instrumental in the Computer Science program and other kinds of programs.

**Paulsen:** There was a decision that Evergreen was going to have a Computer Science offering. In those days nobody got a degree in computer science initially. Later Sherri Shulman and Neal Nelson, and ultimately Judy Cushing did get CS degrees, but initially it was mathematicians that were staffing what was our version of it, and it was theoretical computer science, or formal computer science, as it was called. I taught in parts of the Business of Computers as well as Society and the Computer, and I think that was the year York Wong and Beryl Crowe also taught in it.

I was involved with that and Al Leisenring was teaching the Computability program, so that became one thread of the new upper-division offering in computing. We decided to expand that

program and do what became Computability and Cognition. AI had done a little bit about philosophy of language and mind, but I added to it because I had become interested in issues about the interface between philosophy of mind and artificial intelligence, and I had worked in some computing topics and did a little bit of work on PLATO programming on the side. So that was one thing. I also early on taught some modules in statistics for undergraduates.

**Taylor:** Who were the people who mattered the most in terms of what you taught, and who taught you the most?

**Paulsen:** I think certainly Al Leisenring was somebody who, in several different ways, because I taught with him many times—and the other is Linda Kahan. They certainly made a big difference. I'll talk about them in a minute, but I think the ones early on, the people who made the most difference were Beryl Crowe and, I think, York, in different sorts of ways.

**Taylor:** What was it about Beryl and York?

**Paulsen:** I had this connection with Beryl. He actually knew Barbara from Oregon when she was a graduate student. He taught at Corvallis for a while, too, so she knew about him early on; actually we looked at his house to buy when we first came to Olympia. We heard stories. But I knew him ultimately from the dinosaur table where he carried on. I found him an interesting mind, so I got on well with him.

The other was York, who I didn't know so well when I got into teaching with him, but what I saw—learned—from him was an uncanny ability to encapsulate what students said in seminar, and to make that experience something that was structured by delivering a summary at the end of a session that tied together the somewhat often disparate comments of students, and the way that related to the theme of the program. I thought that was very influential in terms of actually seeing the teaching being done, so I was very impressed by doing that.

Let's start with the Science and Mind. In the mid-'80s there was some talk of a cognitive scientific revolution taking place. There was a book that talked about that and what it was: *The Mind's New Science*. It envisioned an inherently interdisciplinary study—cognitive science that brought together computer science and cognitive psychology—as it was called at that time—and philosophy of mind and philosophy of language I was very involved with discussions on that, and we had a group of faculty that read a related book *The Emperor's New Mind* and talked about that. The group also read the Julian Jaynes book on the emergence of the bicameral mind —Chuck Pailthrop, a dean at the time, was instrumental in this.

Then we started talking about what Evergreen could do in this area. I had an interest in biology because I had done some philosophy of biology in the late '70s and '80s and followed that. At one point

before I was hired in the MPA program I was interested in doing something that had to do with topics Sally Mendoza had introduced, involving evolution and the philosophy of biology. I was interested in the biology of mind, and teaching with K. V. and Linda, I saw there was a natural connection there, so I thought maybe we could create a program if we got the right kind of cognitive scientist.

So I pushed to have Carrie Margolin hired. I was active in the hiring, trying to find a cognitive psychologist who'd be interested in doing an interdisciplinary program that included cognitive science topics. That particular program brought together topics in cognitive psychology, in which I was interested and which allowed me to follow in the tradition of my thesis supervisor, Patrick Suppes, although he dealt with behaviorist psychologists when he was doing his early work. Such a program would also include issues of neurobiology, which had become a topic in the philosophy of science because of the neurobiological revolution, which occurred roughly in the late '50s, early '60s.

We began by asking, "What kind of program would students want?" One of the notions, especially promoted by Carrie Margolin, was to have a program that involved a big spring quarter research project, and aim toward that. As part of that process, you needed somebody to do statistics, so my focus there was a two-quarter program that was aimed at psych statistics. That's a different field. When I was in the graduate program, I did social statistics, and that's primarily regression analysis or factor analysis, and partial path analysis, various sorts of things that dealt with the kind of data you get in sociology and quantitative political science. But you use very different kinds of statistical techniques when you're doing experimental psychology, and you use analysis of variance techniques. So I put together a two-quarter program that was focused on getting students able to do rather sophisticated kinds of analysis of variance that work with different kinds of experimental models. Carrie would do the research methods and cognitive psychology component, and Linda would do a two-quarter neurobiology, the first quarter of which was classic neurobiology with maybe some talk about invertebrate biology, and the second quarter of which was systems biology, which she worked on and developed over a course of a number of iterations. That was the model that worked.

Then in the spring quarter, three-quarters of their time was spent doing a real research project. Sometimes it was one that involved animals, although those were relatively rare, and a little harder to carry out, but often the psychological research models, where they actually collected data, and they actually went through the whole research project. We started in the winter quarter.

**Taylor:** Do you have an example? That program went on for several years, right?

**Paulsen:** I think it was six or seven.

**Taylor:** Can you remember any student projects, any student research that came out of that that was particularly memorable?

**Paulsen:** I remember one that had to do with gaits and insects that we worked on, an apparatus in which you had cockroaches on treadmills. I think we did one that involved using an EEG cap, and did some modeling on that. Every year we had a bunch of different examples, in all kinds of areas. Some were ed psych, some were dealing with special populations, some had to do with memory. They were sort of classic examples of what cognitive psychologist do, or did.

**Taylor:** Do you know of any students who went on and did anything in that world?

**Paulsen:** One of the students went on to Cal-Tech and did cognitive science there. Another went to ed psych at the University of Texas at Austin, and actually found that the research project and the kind of experience at Evergreen worked very well for her, because she had all these classmates who had come from Ivy League schools who had mostly listened to people talk at them. She had been in seminars, and she had been working only with faculty, not with TA's. She walked in and she looked at the various labs, talked with faculty, and had a research position before classes began, whereas most of her Harvard and Yale classmates had to wait till their second year to get involved with their faculty and research projects. Those are things I remember, and some of our students are doing very well. The one who went to Cal-Tech also worked in computability and did some marvelous work. He entered Evergreen at 16, and so we guided him through. His father was a physics professor at UW. He went to Argonne Laboratory, and Cal-Tech recruits at Argonne National Laboratory and so he was able to build a career doing that. Those are memorable students.

**Taylor:** How has it been possible for you and for Evergreen to keep up with technical knowledge?

**Paulsen:** I went to professional meetings on a regular basis. I was a member of the Neural Network Society then when I started doing connectionist AI. The computer folks used to have two days of workshops that were given by people in the field to get you up to date on what were the latest developments that were being done. I went to those to do things that were in that particular area, and reading some of the literature, too.

**Taylor:** I'm naïve about this, but it just seems like in your field, things are changing so fast. As a historian, you don't have to keep up. It's not the same sort of thing. You have to keep reading, but you don't get out of date in your field like someone in computer science.

**Paulsen:** One of the advantages was in the Science of Mind, I also was instrumental in the seminar, which did issues in the philosophy of mind, and in keeping up with that, my background was doing the statistics. I tended to specialize in that aspect of it.

But the other thing, I learned a lot, particularly from Linda Kahan. I got her to keep bringing in new material. I knew my neurobiology well after the third or fourth iteration of it. I taught with some other people, like neurobiologist Stu Matts, and saw a different approach. This enabled me to follow the technical literature. I was able follow the technical literature fairly well. For the neurobiology component, we were reading *Science* magazine and keeping up to date. They always have some of the latest results in neuroscience there. I read it on a regular basis. And I thought that was my obligation, to be aware of what was new and transmit, as best I could, to an audience of sophomores and juniors, which is what this was aimed at, and any other students that were interested.

**Taylor:** It seems to me that one of the huge advantages of team teaching is that you're constantly inspired and—

**Paulsen:** Yes, that's why I love team teaching. I have done a little bit by myself, but it was not as gratifying. I liked the team teaching part, especially the learning of new topics and ways to teach. So Science of Mind one program, the other one was with Al Leisenring. Even though I'd studied mathematical logic, that was his forte, and so he delivered that portion of the curriculum plus some discrete math and some other material, that is part of what's called formal computer science. You can do various kinds of things having to do with algorithms and with various topics about what can be computed. It's called complexity theory. He dealt with that part, and I worked on doing two things. I'd become interested in artificial intelligence, and early on, I taught programming for Artificial Intelligence using Prolog and Lisp, two specialized language for artificial intelligence. Al also became interested in the underlying structure of the Prolog (PROgramming LOGic) language. In subsequent versions of the program, I became interested in what's called artificial neural networks or connectionist networks, which are actually what's behind what's called big data nowadays.

The classic example is what's called a backpropagation algorithm, which allows you to refine, using large amounts of data, to come up with models—I like to think of them as similar in some ways to statistical techniques like regression. I don't know if you're familiar with regression. You can have just bivariate regression which gives you a "best fit" line, but you also have multivariate regression, and in multivariate regressions you try to put in not a straight line but a plane, or a hyper-plane if you have a lot of variables. The backpropagation algorithm is an iterative technique that can be seen as giving you a much more nuanced surface, which allows more precise prediction in mathematical model. It's not quite listing all the data, but it gives you a surface that is indefinitely articulatable. You can think of it as a "statistical" technique in which you're closer and closer to error free application. And by the time you are finished with iterative refinement, you may have something which is not easily seen in your data,

but models your data fairly well, and can be projected to new cases, and it can come up with new things that you don't put into the data but emerge from your analysis of the data.

I taught about that technique, and I tied it to the teaching of the language called C++, which is a version C used for object-oriented programming. I had students work on projects in which they would develop a C++ workbench for doing artificial intelligence, and tied it to matrix mathematics. So you could just take an algorithm, like the backpropagation algorithm, and write it in mathematical form, and you could literally run it on the computer using this piece of software. They learned intermediate C++ programming by writing this package, this toolkit, which allowed one to develop these models relatively straightforwardly.

I thought that was a nice thing for them, so I taught that with AI, and I developed some spring quarter offerings. We had Plato lecture money, so I developed a lecture series with it for a number of years while Judy was in graduate school, and I tied it to topics that were interesting. We did Philosophy of Language, because that's related to some of the topics in computability. For a couple years, we brought in leading linguists who were doing formal linguistics and translation. People like George Lakoff, who wrote a controversial book. *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things* in part as a challenge to the linguistic tradition promoted by Noam Chomsky. He was a fascinating person to have on campus.

Then, because the enrollment in Computability as in all of these technical classes was down, I would have a special seminar in the spring for anybody that wanted to go to the lecture series, and we'd talk about the subjects in the lecture series

**Taylor:** Does a student have to have a certain amount of background, or can you take a student in September and put them in one of these programs and, over the course of the year, build them to the point where they can do this work?

**Paulsen:** In Science of Mind, you can take them. It helps if they've had an introduction to stats, but that's not required because I start out with basic, straightforward stats, but they have to have some algebra. And Linda taught them; all you needed was a little bit of biology and she taught them all the rest that she needed them to know.

AI's program was much more sophisticated. You had to have some math background there. The reason you use discrete math is that you can deal with the mathematics from scratch—permutations and combinations and things like that—and you can then look at them from the mathematician's point of view. How do you prove these things? AI had the wonderful ability to model what it was to be a mathematician dealing with the proof of mathematical theorems in the way mathematicians do them, and not just using the cookbook. He would spend time in the morning—students never saw this—

redoing proofs and maybe modifying them. He didn't use old lecture notes. He was always on top of it, and he would get up on the board in his beautiful hand and write all kinds of things on the board. Some students had difficulty with it because it was a very hard subject, but he as a person modeled what this was about. And if you're dealing with upper-division mathematics class or a graduate school material. It did some introductory logic but it was much more sophisticated than that. And he developed wonderful computer programs to help him deliver it, but he himself in his teaching was a model, and I've never seen anybody who could do that kind of things in the way that he did them.

Discrete math was good entry into more advanced topics. I remember going to a meeting when I was a PUC (Planning Unit Coordinator) about the sciences having to do with the State—all the four-year institutions as well as the University of Washington—and what the requirements were for transferring from lower to upper division. The UW mathematicians said they didn't want people to have much of anything when they came into the Math Department because they probably learned it wrongly. But I asked them—what they do offer as maybe a sophomore level program, or maybe it's just a junior level—the first program in what mathematicians do. And they used discrete math because that's more accessible than calculus-based math. That worked well for most students.

The problem with that being in the computer curriculum is a lot of students—in those days particularly—just wanted to code and write their own code and hack it out. And they didn't want to learn about how you can do that effectively, and more importantly, how you decide you can prove that your program is going to actually do what you want it to do in cases you haven't yet devised.

**Taylor:** What's happened now? You're retired, Al is retired, Linda's retired. I don't know about Carrie.

**Paulsen:** She's still doing her thing. She teaches So You Want to Be a Psychologist, where she does some of the research methods and some of the project stuff.

What Carrie and I did on a number of occasions is we would do a student poster presentation. That was what you had to do at the end of the spring quarter, and you had to write a research paper. We put a writing requirement into it, so you had to write something in a version that could be submitted to a journal. Some of the students on occasion were able to get their work published, but you had to do at least a poster presentation.

So what Carrie and I did was we'd collect our own data and start a quarter before the students were actually doing it, to give them an idea of what's involved, and talk a little bit about doing it, and how you get through human subjects review, and all this other step that are part of doing psychological research. Then we'd make a presentation of our results, and they would have to do it a few weeks later



with their project. We'd get them all set, and they'd start collecting their data in the second or third week of the spring quarter, and by the end of it they had to have it ready to go.

**Taylor:** And Carrie's still doing that?

**Paulsen:** She's still teaching some of this.

**Taylor:** But Computability and Cognition doesn't exist anymore.

**Paulsen:** No, not in that form. I'm not sure how much formal computer science is included anymore. I think they do have people who do compiler theory and algorithms, and related topics. But now that Neal and Sherri have retired, I'm not sure—but Brian Walter can do that. He did it for a while. I don't know if he's still doing it.

**Taylor:** And Rachel [Hastings]?

**Paulsen:** Rachel does mostly analysis, and she does linguistics. That's one of my regrets in not being able to continue having the cognitive science. I just met a lot of resistance. Nobody wanted to replace me with faculty who would work in this area. I'm wasn't the only one who could work in this area. I thought that Science of Mind was just a natural way of getting people to do what was needed—because students liked neurobiology as well as cognitive psychology. But it also is a natural way to introduce seminar topics in the philosophy of mind, and if you can get somebody who can do it—and there are faculty members who can do parts of that, but you don't have anybody that consistently wants to do it. The emerging field of cognitive neuroscience contains many of these topics.

I thought that there was a natural constituency, because in the Science of Mind, we could read all kinds of broad text of various kind such as those written by VS Ramachandran or Oliver Sacks. The history of behaviorism and its demise could be included as part of the seminar readings, and you could use it to get science students to do some writing and to do various sorts of things which are crucial to becoming successful students in the sciences, as opposed to basically letting that fall by the wayside and leaving it up to somebody else who can or can't do it.

**Taylor:** It's one of the flaws of the system. Everyone does their own.

**Paulsen:** Yes, I tried for several years to get a cognitive science appointment, and it never worked out

**Taylor:** I'm back with David Paulsen. It is March 9, 2018 at his house. We're going to continue this interview, and the question is, how was it that you came to Evergreen? How was it that you came to the Northwest? Maybe you go from there.

**Paulsen:** As I had mentioned before, I had taught at Reed, so I knew the Pacific Northwest very well and I was intrigued by it. I was eager ultimately to come back. We loved the area. When I was teaching at the University of Nebraska in the Goodrich Scholarship Program, we would spend our summers out here

working on academic material initially—that's Barbara Smith and I—but ultimately building a cabin and spending our summers outside of Nebraska. In fact, we were teaching there for five years and managed never to spend a summer in Nebraska. It was always a shock coming back to temperatures—since they started in early August—in the 80s and 90s. It was not a climate that we liked, and we certainly relished the time we spent in the Pacific Northwest. We both got tenure at the University of Nebraska system—me at the University of Nebraska-Omaha and Barbara at Lincoln—so we could have remained teaching there through our whole careers.

Our interests were shaped, in part, by the fact that both of us became involved with experimental programs, I with the Goodrich Scholarship Program, which was as I described earlier aimed at inner-city students was—and still is—a very successful program. It still exists almost 40 years after it was created.

That was an exciting opportunity, but for me, and Barbara in the meantime in addition to being Vice Chair of the Political Science Department also became involved with some experiments in education at the Centennial College, as it was called, at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. But we came to a point at which we had to ask ourselves whether we wanted to spend all of our time, our remaining career, pursuing what we were doing, even though we liked many aspects of our life in Nebraska. And given that we are coming out here every summer and became more and more devoted to the Puget Sound area, it was natural that we started to think about options. And when we heard about the possibility that Barbara could apply to Evergreen, we certainly wanted to leap at the opportunity.

I had heard a little bit about Evergreen when I was teaching at Reed, not directly by name because I don't know if the school was even named at that time, but inklings of it. And there were people who ultimately came to Evergreen from Reed, and some of them were already talking about what was going on, though it was all in a formative phase. So I knew that there were discussions about the possibility of a new college, but I wasn't sure exactly what it was going to be. When we first returned to the Pacific Northwest during the summer of 1972, we became aware of what was going on, and became much more interested in that.

Coincidentally, one of the first people I met who was actually employed in the college at the time was Maxine Mimms, who came to the Goodrich Program and talked about what was being done in Olympia, and gave a picture of what Evergreen was about, from her perspective. Now, Maxine is an incredible, charismatic person, and that made a big impression on me at the time, so that added to the impetus of first, finding out more about the institution, and second, thinking that maybe there was a possibility that we could return permanently to a place we loved, doing something that was still part of

experimental education, and it involved a lot of the things that we had been working on in different respects throughout the '70s.

So, we arrived here. Barbara got her position; I came. It was a little complicated because I was a trailing spouse and there were no guarantees that I would be able to get a job. But we decided that it was worth the risk, and I felt fairly confident that something could be worked out, and indeed, very soon. In fact, the first year I was here I was able to teach in a single-person program filling-in on a part-time basis for the year. And ultimately, taught a couple of other times separately, and then when the opening in the newly founded MPA program emerged, I applied for that. And since I had been involved in some writing in the area, and had a background that would fit in with some of the stuff they were trying to do, it seemed like an opportunity to do something that was both interesting because it was part of the foundation of a new program-- I had been party to that in Nebraska, not its first year but the second year when we retooled the program, I had some experience in developing new curricula, and I had some knowledge about the ups and downs of putting together a new program that was just starting and had to be fine-tuned.

**Taylor:** Okay, that's perfect. That fills in the conversation that was lost when the battery ran out, talking about MPA. That really fills in nicely and was what we needed there. You said you wanted to talk a bit about educational innovations, and things that you are proud of that you taught, that you did with various people at Evergreen during the course of your teaching career.

**Paulsen:** Yes, that's something I'm interested in. As we talked about earlier, I spent quite a bit of time teaching with Linda Kahan and others in the Science of Mind program, and developing that kind of curriculum. I guess I see myself as a founder of that new curricular offering. And I also developed an alternative with Al Leisenring, an extension of his Computability program, and brought in a variety of issues which made it, I think, an interesting way of doing upper-division work in computer science and mathematics in a way that had a strong humanities content in the seminar portion of the program. In both of those, I think, my contribution was to help shape the program in a way that bridged some significant science background and a big humanities component.

The Science of Mind program was aimed more at sophomores and juniors, and it was a program that took people with relatively little background in the sciences. We encouraged them to have some background, but it provided a medium for them to get up to speed, and to do it in a way that led to a significant project in the spring quarter. It involved utilizing project-based education, and most importantly, devising a mechanism by which the students could get both substantive content that enabled them to do an interesting project, and time in the winter quarter and ultimately in the spring

quarter to work on the project itself, so that in that program, the students spent three-quarters of their time in the spring quarter working on a project, which they had initiated and got ready for and went through human subject review, because there were often psychology-oriented projects, so that they could actually do experimental psychology, and ultimately analysis. And at the end, they came up with a poster presentation of the kind that could be offered at a professional meeting. And indeed, a number of the students actually made presentations at psychology meetings doing poster presentations. So it was, I think, a useful way of getting students into a place where they could get into the sciences and do more than just learn about the sciences; they could actually do some stuff in experimental scientific psychology. So that was an interesting innovation.

**Taylor:** And that was really a response to—Byron Youtz in about 1976 wrote a paper: “Can You Do Advanced Work in Science at the College?” There was a big argument about it, and there was real concern that it was not possible to prepare students to do advanced work. This sounds like by 1980.

**Paulsen:** No, it was about 1989.

**Taylor:** . . . you and Linda—at least that team—came up with an answer that, yes, you could do advanced work.

**Paulsen:** Yes, but I’ll add that many of the students went on to do Molecule to Organism, which at that time was one of our premier science programs.

**Taylor:** And that was advanced work.

**Paulsen:** I would say that was junior-senior-level work, so that was an opportunity. But there’s another side of that in terms of the work I did with Al Leisenring. That program was, I think, more clearly a junior-senior, even in spring quarter, sometimes graduate-level program. So students had to be brought along there, but these were students that were more advanced and had some mathematical background.

**Taylor:** How did they get the preparation to join those advanced programs? Did you have anything to do with that?

**Paulsen:** Well, we had a sequence of things so we could move them through. But Al was a master at giving a program which did discrete mathematics, which often is used by math departments as an entry-level program to teach students about the nature of mathematics. He also incorporated material that was relevant to the development of formal computer science. I became involved with this about the time the college decided that they were going to have a Computer Science program and did some hiring of people to advance that. They offered some programs like The Business of Computing, in which I participated. And as I mentioned earlier ultimately I regularly worked with Al in providing some

computer content in computability and cognition as well as, and specialized topics in artificial intelligence and the type of things that have now been popularized. And I did it in the context of giving students some at least intermediate-level programming skills as well, and the use of specialized programming language like Prolog and LISP, which were designed for the artificial intelligence research of the mid-to-late '80s and into the '90s.

The program morphed as we went on to do a little bit more concerning artificial neural networks, which are the transition mechanism for moving from standard, old-fashioned AI into modern, big-data AI, which is the current popular thing.

**Taylor:** Did the planning unit Scientific Inquiry solve the problem of how you would have students that were well enough prepared that they could take your program with AI? Because I know it was hard to get enough students that could do advanced work.

**Paulsen:** It certainly was that, and certainly we could get a certain number of students by drawing on those that had an interest in philosophy of language and the other topics that had some skills coming. But there was always a problem of having two full-time faculty. Initially I was teaching in the graduate program, so I would drop out of that for the spring quarter, for example, or even the winter and spring quarter, to be teaching in the graduate program. That worked out pretty well. But when I started teaching in the full, yearlong program, we had to find some way of dealing with that. What I did was took advantage of the Plato Royalty Fund and set up a spring quarter lecture series, which our students attended in class and we had our seminar, plus I would then open it up for a whole separate section of students and give them a separate seminar and take advantage of the topics. Those were ones that related to things in the program, and it brought in a variety of people who were doing things in the area of language like George Lakoff, a well-known linguist. Plus every year we had a series of people who were doing cutting-edge work. So it's one of the few areas in which we had a lecture series bringing in practitioners who were at the cutting edge of the field. That's one way of enhancing at least the overall milieu. The students that went through that program were well served to go into computer science programs. That formal computer science is something that is part of most—and still is—part of most curricula.

**Taylor:** And you didn't have to have an undergraduate or lower-division program to feed into that program?

**Paulsen:** No. In fact, the real problem there was that some of the students who knew most about programming were hackers who didn't deal with the formal issues--hackers in the sense of just putting together programs without worrying about how you actually structure programs, how you prove that

the algorithms you're using might in fact give you results in cases you haven't really tested. And that's the sort of thing that professional computer scientists do, so a number of students—and this was always a problem with the computer science curriculum initially—was getting people who could code and come up with something which worked for the most part, but didn't want to spend the time to do anything but get the immediate satisfaction of having a program which will give them the results they want in the few cases that they tested. Whereas serious computer scientists were interested in how you can develop programs that are robust, and can be scaled up. Plus they were provided background in mathematics and in related formal topics, like algorithms and compiler design and other things that professional computer science people do, as opposed to people who design nowadays Web sites and so on. Nothing wrong with doing that, but it's a different kind of activity.

**Taylor:** Did you have anything to do with getting Judy Cushing and Neal Nelson and Sherri Shulman hired?

**Paulsen:** I was party to that being developed because I became involved with the computer science group within the SI specialty area, and ultimately the planning coordinator.

**Taylor:** That must have been about when they were hired.

**Paulsen:** Yes, they were originally hired—Judy first and then Neal and Sherri. I spent time with Neal. He's got a good strong background in some of these areas. He used my Critical Reasoning text when he taught outside the area, for example, and so I thought of myself as doing some mentoring of him, and making the sometimes difficult transition new faculty have to Evergreen a little more palatable.

**Taylor:** I don't know if we're ready to move to that topic, but I know you took seriously that mentoring of new people. Do you want to talk about some things—

**Paulsen:** Before you move to that, I guess I want to say a couple of other things, and these have to do more with pedagogy. The one thing I think that I always both liked and was suspicious of as I began to teach at Evergreen was how you can structure a seminar to make it something which takes the text that we use seriously, and becomes more than just the expression of momentary impressions, like a college bull session. So I think the question is how you can utilize that.

And what I discovered, particularly in the kinds of seminars we had, which dealt with philosophical texts and with difficult texts that had science content, was to do a set of study questions for each seminar. I developed a technique over a course of a decade or more in which the faculty seminar discussed the texts, but also worked together to come up with discussion questions for seminar. Typically what we did in those seminars was to spend the first half of a four-hour seminar in

small groups, looking at questions that focused on what the faculty thought would be significant portions of the texts to be familiar with.

So they'd talk in small groups, and the faculty would circulate around and talk with people, and get involved with those questions, and then move into a group of the whole for all the seminar students that the faculty had and talk about more general implications and develop broader-based questions, or, in the absence of that, some broader-based questions that the faculty might have thought could be addressed later or could be interjected later. And although some students, when they came into these programs, said they like the freedom, just talking about anything and how they reacted to it. I guess I found, and my colleagues found, that in fact a lot of students wanted a structured environment, and they saw that the faculty took this stuff seriously, particularly the part about looking at text and reading it seriously, as well as utilizing it as a springboard to larger questions that related back to the theme of the programs, and the texts were not seen merely as one-time topics that didn't relate to anything, even though the faculty may well have selected them because they had a picture of how the program would develop. My view anyway was that the faculty ought to be providing this overview and know how these things get together, and that actually by having them work together in the faculty seminar. I don't know how faculty seminars typically function nowadays, if at all, but for me, it was one of the singularly most important thing in delivering something that had significant content as well as having an opportunity for students to absorb it and talk about it and make it their own, and be able to relate it to larger issues there. You can't expect them to relate to the larger issues if you can't yourself relate it, at least in part, to those larger issues. It forces a discipline on the planning process and it gives students, I think, a feeling that the faculty has got their act together in ways that will enable them to do it.

And if you are responsive to the discussions and to feedback, then you also can get students to generate their own questions, which many times can be better than—at least sometimes can be better than the faculty produces. You don't want to stifle that spontaneity. So by promoting that, and in the case of teaching various people that were new, I think I helped develop a tradition of using these techniques, and taking seriously the seminar, which, I must say, when I first came into the scientific inquiry area, were not taken as seriously as I thought they should be. So by having a program that had significant science content, but also took seriously the need to be able to talk about serious intellectual issues that are related to the topics of the program and have science implications, if not science content, is an important thing to teach and learn.

**Taylor:** I think that's partly because your program designs had more issues of philosophy of science or cognitive science, or things that leant themselves to questions and conversations that could be done in

seminar. I know a lot of science programs didn't have that as a topic or an option, so they didn't know how to put science into the seminars. And that's what you do.

**Paulsen:** Yes. And there are other ways of doing that. I know that some of my colleagues use it as an opportunity to raise issues about science by looking at journal articles and so forth. And for really advanced programs, that's like what goes on in a good science lab, that you have a lab time where you discuss the recent literature, and if the students are well enough prepared, then they can look at these articles in a serious way. I've done some of that in programs with Rachel Hastings and Kevin Francis by looking, particularly in Rachel's case, of fairly advanced texts by linguists, for example, and they're mercurial. And look at current serious documents that are written in professional journals.

**Taylor:** So what did you teach with Rachel? What was it called?

**Paulsen:** We taught programs in cognitive science and language.

**Taylor:** And Kevin?

**Paulsen:** He's a historian of science. I taught with Rachel in a program called Language and Mind, and with Kevin, History and Philosophy of Biology, which was supposed to be the second part after the colon. The name that we thought might intrigue people was Life and Consciousness. We're talking about the concept of life and the concept of consciousness. The concept of life was one that got modified in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and so it gave Kevin, who is a historian of biology, an opportunity to talk about how the concept of life matured and developed, along with our understanding of biological mechanisms. Then my interest, from a cognitive science point of view, was to deal with the emerging issue of how you can deal with consciousness in a scientific way, a topic which was—and still is—one of philosophical interest, but also of scientific interest.

**Taylor:** Did this program attract students that were sophisticated enough to do it?

**Paulsen:** Yes, I think so. These were more history and philosophy than they were actual science, although we did deal with actual substantive science of Nobel Prize winners of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and the various different concepts of how the brain was structured, and whether it was a kind of large network, or whether it was something else, and so we could talk about those as well as the history of biology going back like that. So, that was that program.

With Rachel we did—she's an expert in linguistics and applied mathematics, so we did treat some more advanced topics and talked about what kinds of problems interest professional linguists. We also did a lot of work with the Chomskyan Revolution in linguistics, and then the kinds of criticisms that emerge, and how his views have been transformed in various sorts of ways. Ultimately there is a debate that's taking place between him and several other people, like Steven Pinker and a variety of others,



about the nature of language and language acquisition. That led to a series of, I think, impressive papers that responded to each other, and we examined those in programs I taught with Rachel.

Finally, my last program at Evergreen in 2012 was Language and the Evolution of Mind, which I taught with both of them. The first two as well as this one was when I was on a post-retirement contract, and I convinced the powers that be to allow me to take my five quarters over six years. The reason I wanted to do that is that I had to finagle to get both of them free and do it that one quarter.

**Taylor:** Did you get students?

**Paulsen:** Yes, we did, and it was a wonderful opportunity. It was a great experience teaching. It worked out great for all of us. It was a program that made me feel as though I had done something good helping to nurture these folks and develop this kind of program. But also, the feeling of intellectual excitement. It was a capstone.

The other two quarters I taught in post-retirement contracts were related to a topic in my book, critical reasoning and ethical reasoning, the combination of those. I'd taught critical reasoning before. So I thought that those sorts of programs—especially the latter ones—were an interesting examples that could help some new faculty at least see what could be done in terms of these sorts of topics. Now, I think, particularly Kevin is a brilliant and innovative teacher. I know he's done a lot of administration recently, but I've been really impressed, especially in this last program, about the way in which he came up with just ingenious assignments and projects that could be done. I was very impressed by his ability to do it.

Rachel is, you know, she's got two sides to herself. She's an applied mathematician on one side and a linguist on the other. I think she does a good job of both of those things, and she was a good colleague with which to teach.

So I thought that the development in terms of teaching of an approach to seminars that was developmental for faculty and helped focus on programs and make them more tightly integrated and accessible to students, and to move them along, and as in the case of Science of Mind, in a way that got intermediate-level students interested in the topic, and gave them sort of a grounding, particularly in neurobiology, which could hold them in good stead in more advanced work. We did send students off to graduate school, and others at Evergreen took more advanced programs. At least one of the graduates is now the Director of the Washington State Department of Ecology.

**Taylor:** That's right, Maia.

**Paulsen:** That's Maia Bellon.

**Taylor:** Yes. In a way, that's a legacy you left with the college, an approach to science through the seminars, the questioning.

**Paulsen:** Certainly some of the people continue to do that. I think Carrie Margolin certainly took up, in her programs about scientific research methodology and psychology, some of the sorts of project-oriented stuff that we did together in the Science of Mind.

**Taylor:** So, you left some things behind. When you retired, you weren't all gone.

**Paulsen:** Yes, I think the subject matter areas that—this is one of my big regrets—is that at one time, you couldn't swing a cat without hitting a neurobiologist. [laughing] And by the time I left, there was no practicing neurobiologists or people with that background teaching the subject. And they certainly weren't interested in some of the broad topics that I thought were interesting. I thought in the case of Science of Mind in particular, I can't imagine a better topic for bringing together some science content and some broader issues, in philosophy of mind and scientific methodology and a whole variety of those sorts of things, which I thought would be natural for developing something that would solve a problem you alluded to a little while ago in Byron's paper about teaching a more advanced work in science at Evergreen.

**Taylor:** How many students do you suppose you taught in Science of Mind or the Computability program when you add all those students together? Several hundred?

**Paulsen:** Science of Mind was usually completely full. It was three faculty, so at least the fall quarter was 75 students at a time, and I think we did it eight or 10 times, so that's 700.

**Taylor:** That's a huge impact.

**Paulsen:** Yes. And the Computability had a smaller number of students that did the whole program. That was more like 300 or 400 over the course of more than a decade

**Taylor:** And neither one of those are available today?

**Paulsen:** No. Portions of the formal Computer Science are taught the way that computer scientists do them, not necessarily how mathematicians do them. Though one of the hires I helped get when I was a planning unit coordinator is Brian Walter. He teaches some of those, and he's got a cognitive science degree from Stanford before he went to UCLA. He's a mathematician and computer scientist, so he keeps up that tradition.

**Taylor:** He was hired when I was Dean, and I remember we used to ask everyone, "What kind of equipment do you need to do your job?" You know, what kind of computer, what kind of lab, whatever you need? And Brian's answer was, "A pencil, a piece of paper and a rug." [laughter] and everybody just laughed, because that's what he wanted.

**Paulsen:** He's a creative guy, and I spent time with him after he came to Evergreen, talking with him. He said several times to me that I helped him become involved with the college. That was my intention.

**Taylor:** So that's a big part.

**Paulsen:** Yes, those are two things. I also helped in the course development or at least evolution of the graduate program when I initially was in that program.

**Taylor:** Are there other pedagogical things you have on your list that you want to talk about?

**Paulsen:** Those are the two major ones. Well, the spring quarter projects I've already mentioned, so that's the other.

**Taylor:** How about governance? What role did you play in governance, and what was your whole attitude about being involved with governance with the college?

**Paulsen:** I served on DTFs, some that helped created the computer science offerings. And I was on the agenda committee. I actually was a co-chair of that with Gail Tremblay at a time in which there were factions on both sides and they couldn't agree. And she and I knew each other because she taught in the Goodrich Program before she came to Evergreen, so we were friends, and for a time colleagues, before Evergreen. So we could work together and we could bridge the gap there.

The other major governance thing I did was a long stint—I think five years, maybe six years—as planning unit coordinator for Scientific Inquiry. I did that longer than I think anybody else ever has.

**Taylor:** So you rationalized the curriculum, or you helped the faculty.

**Paulsen:** Yes, I did that. But I think, along with Sally Cloninger, who was in expressive arts and was also a long-time as coordinator. It was a time in which I did an empirical study that showed where the students were and how we might be able to reach them through SI. What we needed to do was think of increasing offerings and hiring the SI faculty to handle them. Both of us were able to help recruit faculty to fill in and to expand the offerings.

I've always thought that in spite of the fact that it's not billed that way, one of Evergreen's strengths is what it can do for students in the sciences, and that doesn't get promulgated in the recruitment process as readily as I think it should have done. When Jin Darney was a dean, she encouraged the planning unit coordinators to go out and help recruit students, and we did. We went to various community colleges to recruit students and to talk, and to try and bring them in. My role there was to speak in terms of what the science could be.

**Taylor:** From my point of view being outside of it, it looks like the Scientific Inquiry Planning Unit and the science programs and the science students have been much more solid, predictable and responsible, gradually building up and increasing their reputation. Because it was a guarantee. You knew if you

came to Evergreen there were good science opportunities that made sense, that built on one another. It seemed like that was the message that came across.

**Paulsen:** I think that's absolutely right.

**Taylor:** And I think the science faculty learned how to do it. Because I think early on, the first few years, people didn't know how to do it.

**Paulsen:** And there's always the problem of how you structure it, how you do Introduction to Natural Science, which was an entry-level program for the sciences. It was the more advanced but still entry-level program, Molecule to Organism, which was, I thought, an excellent program for pre-med students and people who wanted to get solid background in particularly chemistry, biochemistry.

**Taylor:** There's always been a tension at the college just because of the nature of subject matter, I think. The social sciences and the humanities wanted to be creative and do new things all the time, and sort of the underlying rule was you never do the same thing twice. Whereas the scientists, starting quite early, started to do some predictable programs—Matter and Motion, Molecule to Organism, Natural Sciences, various things—because every year you still need to teach those things. And you could name it something different, but the content was still the same.

**Paulsen:** That's exactly right. What I promoted was to make sure that we did do those. And there were a variety of different approaches to the same content.

**Taylor:** And the scientists were more willing to do it because it was in their nature.

**Paulsen:** Yes, because you didn't have to start over from zero-based learning in a particular field every quarter, including the second quarter and the third quarter. And a lot of the programs have some project-orientation, and you need to have students around for three quarters, so there has to be some kind of development to be able to have them do it.

I think the other thing that happened in the '90s—it wasn't my doing—was the opening of labs that were doing serious research, and served as an opportunity for senior students to get the kind of lab experience which enables them to go on and do more advanced work in graduate schools. That's one of the reasons they've been successful in doing that. We're not Reed, but we still send some of our best students to some of the best institutions. I think that's true not just in terms of Molecule to Organism and medical schools but also some of the other programs that had to do with physics, Matter and Motion and some sustainability offerings.

But also in psychology. I remember one of my students from the Science of Mind went to the University of Texas as a graduate student. I'm not sure if I mentioned this earlier—

**Taylor:** Yeah, she was more prepared than any of their students.

**Paulsen:** Yes, because she had had seminars that enabled her to successfully speak out and deal with faculty.

**Taylor:** Does the college still have those predictable programs? I know we don't have Health and Human Behavior anymore, which was another one of those that was just guaranteed that would have students and would last three quarters, because it made sense. And that's gone, I think.

**Paulsen:** I think most of the programs in science are still there in one form or another, but I've not followed it. It's been now five years since I taught my last class at Evergreen. I'm hoping that with whatever restructuring takes place in the current environment that it keeps in mind the need to deal with those sorts of science students, because if they don't I think that will lead to increased problems. We can't just be lower division. And there was obviously the remark that was occasionally made in my hearing early on that Evergreen was one of the best damn community colleges in the country. I hope that that can be resurrected if need be, but I think that some of the things that we did can be replicated. You've got to get the right kind of faculty, and you've got to get them to think about what they're going to do. At the same time, you've got to avoid making it too specialized in teaching in ways that you don't have preparation. Because in the sciences, sometimes the programs, we're setting students up, if they weren't well prepared, for failure because they didn't pay enough attention to where students were coming from. They didn't assess that early enough.

**Taylor:** Right. Or offering only like one-quarter programs, where you flit around but you never get the background to do the advanced work.

**Paulsen:** Yes.

**Taylor:** Were there other issues—college debates—that you were in the midst of?

**Paulsen:** Well, I was there when the role of graduate programs was being discussed. And as I was teaching in one, I was party to that sort of debate. It did seem to me that the MPA program was kind of a natural thing that could be done, since we're in the State Capital, and there was a general view in those days that the college had a service obligation to do it. That's why one of the things I stood behind, was the development of the various centers that were created. Those programs tended to have structure, and provided an opportunity. There was some undergraduate preparation that could be done. Some of the topics we initially covered, within the MPA itself didn't need to be done, because we'd developed certain requirements, like statistics requirement, which enabled us to do deal with more advanced topics at the graduate level.

**Taylor:** Did you ever participate in MES?

**Paulsen:** No, I did not.

**Taylor:** Because that was another natural that's done well.

**Paulsen:** Right, and I certainly supported it. And there was crossover from faculty who taught in it. SI faculty tended to do some of the serious lab biology. Most of the biologists in the MES are in ecology and other fields there, as well, of course, policy, so that the students, people that wanted to do a little bit more advanced work in water quality and get the certifications that they may not have otherwise had, they were able to work with Jeff Kelly and others that . . . I don't know if that continues to this day.

**Taylor:** So, complete switch. I know you went on the Kobe exchange to Japan.

**Paulsen:** Yes.

**Taylor:** And I did, too, and it changed my life, and I know that it had a huge impact on probably 25, 30 people. How did you get involved in that, and what's your story?

**Paulsen:** I knew the early exchange faculty to Evergreen—I was involved with the whole program because Barbara was Dean and Provost, and we regularly took winter skiing vacations at Bend with the exchange faculty that were up to doing it. So we spent time with the faculty and their families, and to this day, we still have contact with some of those people.

Second and related to that, Rikiso was one of the computer scientists from Kobe Shodai, I got to know especially well. He was a natural bridge, and so when the opportunity rose, I was interested in that. We arranged that he would be my faculty sponsor there and I taught a program in English that had to do with programming.

**Taylor:** This was when the campus in Kobe was at the old place, right?

**Paulsen:** Yes, in the Tarumi district of Kobe.

**Taylor:** So it must have been . . .

**Paulsen:** '87. And as in your case, it was a life-changing experience for me because it was an opportunity not so much to teach the computer science. That was in what they called the management science area. I did my duty in teaching it, but it was the other things I learned that mattered most. It was not just in terms of finding out about computing per se, but the burgeoning use of computers in actual life in Japan. So I was able to go through people who had contacts—Mitsui was the name of one of them who had connections all over the region with various people. So he would bring me along on "field trips" to visit with them.

I remember one very clearly where we went to talk to somebody who had affiliations with bringing computers to Japan from the United States, selling them, and helped integrate them into existing Japanese markets. But he also had another business where he did numerically controlled production of tatami mats for replacement. So I spent some time talking to him, and like many of the

small business owners in Japan, he had a motto. Basically, his motto translated into something like this: “Preserving tradition through technology.”

So what did it enable him to do? Because at that time (the ‘80’s) the Japanese middle class houses had tatami mats, and replacement was very expensive because you had extensive hand labor to install them. What he did was to use computer technology and a communication network to take orders from all over Japan. Local people measured the rooms, which are not square, but instead of having to have some person meticulously shave the classical mats, he fed them into his computer program, which laid them out in computer and custom cut them—and so somebody could call in from Tokyo and send the detailed shape of the room, and three days later he received his tatami mats, and a numbered diagram where you could just drop them into place. So that enabled a basically middle or even lower middleclass Japanese to avoid giving up their tatami mats and avoid bankruptcy from having to pay exorbitant costs to have them hand crafted. I found that kind of information very interesting.

**Taylor:** That’s interesting, because I always thought tatami mat rooms were a certain size—you know, it’s an eight tatami mat room, and that was a very defined size.

**Paulsen:** You’re right, but the problem is that tatami mats come in standard ones, but if you have to fit them into a somewhat irregular space—and it’s very complicated—a computer is much better at doing that.

**Taylor:** Sure, because the rooms aren’t all exactly the same shape.

**Paulsen:** The other example that I still remember, and that Matsui taught me—and this was more cultural than having anything to do with computers and technology—he brought me to talk to a friend who worked south of Kobe, and he had a company which made chains for large ships. This was a time in which shipbuilding was shifting from Japan to Korea and other countries in Asia. So he talked with the guy, and the guy was nice, but on the way out, I asked about him, and Mitsui said, “Well, I’m a little worried about him. I’m not sure how long he’s going to be around.” I said, “You mean the company is going to fail?” He says, “Yes, the company is having trouble now because the shipbuilding industry in Kobe, Kobe Steel is collapsing because of the change. Then he said, “I don’t know that he’ll be able to survive losing his company with this technological change.” Basically, he said he feared his acquaintance or friend might commit suicide as a result of having failed his family and his firm.

**Taylor:** And you don’t know whatever happened?

**Paulsen:** No, I don’t know that. I suspect, even though Mitsui tended to exaggerate somewhat that his pessimism was justified.

**Taylor:** So many things interesting about the Kobe exchange. The college was totally unmatched to Evergreen.

**Paulsen:** Oh, sure.

**Taylor:** It didn't have the same values, I guess it was the same size, but it had tremendous rapport. Once you went to Japan on this exchange, you paid attention to that exchange forever, and vice-versa. We had a big impact on that college and the faculty that came here. And often the faculty coming here were young, maybe just married, and it was a hugely important thing to them. It was an exchange that I think—I guess it's still going-- started in 1977 or '76.

**Paulsen:** Something like that, yeah. Richard Alexander, I think, was the first one. And I don't know if that was official. He helped sculpt it after.

**Taylor:** It was hardly official then, but he did start it. And I don't know what accounts for its longevity.

**Paulsen:** It has an impact on virtually everybody that I've talked to, different people in different ways.

**Taylor:** It didn't matter what you taught, it was the relationships.

**Paulsen:** It actually helped some Evergreen students. I had a student here at Evergreen who graduated and ended up working for state government, department of trade, and was sent to Kobe Shodai for a master's degree. He was actually one of the Kobe Shodai president's students when I arrived there, and he played on the intramural basketball team. He was an African American, good at basketball as well as a karate expert, so he was interesting guy, and he helped me especially when I first arrived.

One of my most embarrassing moments actually was something I heard from him. The first day I was there, I was brought out by the president to a sushi place and got bento for lunch. I had just gotten off the plane and I was in jet lag. We sat there, and it was strange because Rikiso and I talked in English and Rikiso and the president talked in Japanese. But the Japanese president didn't know much English, but he talked to me in German. We ended up having this funny conversation. We're eating, and as we got to the end of the meal, I looked across and I noticed for the first time that there were these green garnishes that I assumed were nori {sea weed}, but it looked more like plastic than anything else. But I figured, well, maybe it's a variety only found in Japan. So I looked over at Rikoso , and his bento was completely clean, as far as I could tell. I thought, "Well, I guess in Rome you do as the Romans do." I grabbed my hashi [chop sticks] and I was about to pick up the plastic piece, when the president yells "Nein! Nein!" [laughter] And then I discovered that my friend, Rikiso, had the nervous habit of putting his plastic seaweed up against a side of his box—facing me in this case—and therefore it looked like it was gone, but, of course, it was there. If that weren't enough—a little embarrassment—I



discovered from my student, who had a class that afternoon with the president in which he began by talking about the crazy American exchange professor [laughing] who eats plastic!

**Taylor:** I remember when Richard Alexander came back from Kobe Shodai. He had studied Japanese at the University of Washington from a very distinguished older woman who taught him very formal Japanese. He worked really hard on it, and he went to Japan and he was absolutely humiliated because he said he spoke “women’s Japanese.” That’s what he had been taught, so that was pretty funny. But that exchange, I think, is one of Evergreen’s biggest faculty development . . .

**Paulsen:** Yes, I think it changed my attitude. It certainly helped me understand. I did some background reading on education, and there was a fellow at the UW who wrote a book on Japanese language and its role in the in shaping Japanese cultural beliefs. He had worked as a translator in post-World-War II era Japan, and then became very active in sort of assessing Japanese education in particular. He said in an aside, that you talk to academics, educated Japanese, and you get on the topic of language, and they’ll tell you it’s the Japanese language which shapes the Japanese mind, and it’s absolutely crucial. He gave this one speech where he outlines what people typically would say about language.

One of the last things that happened to me was that I was given a banquet just before my departure. I was sitting next to one of my colleagues who spoke pretty good English, and he asked me, “What did you learn while you were here?” And I said, “A few things.” I then said, “What do you think is the most important thing to learn?” And he gave this speech as though it were directly out of this book that I had read. [laughing] I had never had such a situation in which we had confirmation of somebody’s sort of speculative claim in the flesh in the proper circumstances. So that gave me a fresh perspective on how that aspect of intellectual/cultural memes functioned in Japan, which was an important thing. And understanding how the Japanese education system worked, too.

**Taylor:** Have you kept up with Rikiso and his family?

**Paulsen:** He was over here for a while. I kept up with him for a reasonable amount of time, but not recently.

**Taylor:** He lived next door to us when we were there, and Yuka, his daughter, was about 12. They lived in Ballard for a couple years, so she’d gone to first and second grade, so her English was really good. But when she got back to Japan, she couldn’t admit that she knew any because you just don’t do that. So she understood everything but she never spoke any English. But we would be around and she would hear us, and she would laugh at our jokes because she would understand them, but she would never speak English. So she went through the whole school, and then I heard later, when she went to university, she majored in English.

**Paulsen:** I'm sure that changed her. And you have Yoshiyuki Kimura, who was another mathematician, whose daughter stayed with the Dimitroffs.

**Taylor:** That's right. We brought her a violin.

**Paulsen:** And I think she ended up going to the University of Hawaii or something like that.

**Taylor:** She did, and that was a crazy thing because it wasn't popular in Japan to go to an American university, and she had actually gone, I think, against her parents' wishes. She only applied to Hawaii and she got in there. So that's where she went, and I don't know whatever happened.

The other one, Masa was a mathematician. He was a funny guy. He was a Marxist and he had come from Oxford. His two boys stayed in Oxford after they lived there and never went back to Japan. Well, they traveled back to Japan, but they went to Oxford University. They both got PhDs in computer science and they live in England. They couldn't go back to Japan to live

**Paulsen:** That's the problem that Japan had at least in the old days. I think that may have changed there because there are more opportunities with American firms, and they have less of a strict policy and some of the classic things that are demanded are not necessarily what makes for a successful corporate culture in the modern world.

So, I agree. That was one of the things—I think Evergreen doesn't do too many of those things. I think it's important for Evergreen faculty to have connections. I had some connections outside of the college. Of an academic sort, I was a member of the Neural Network Society as well as the Philosophy of Science Association. I regularly went to meetings of those organizations for most of my years at Evergreen

**Taylor:** Did you take sabbaticals?

**Paulsen:** I took a sabbatical. I went back to Stanford. My thesis advisor had an institute for the study of mathematics and the social sciences. He worked with a lot of psychologists as well as developing computer learning programs. But the institute that he was in was amalgamated in the same building with a group of people who were doing cutting-edge research in cognitive science at the time, so I spent the quarter listening to the debates that were going on there as well.

**Taylor:** When was that?

**Paulsen:** That was in '86, I think.

**Taylor:** So you only had one sabbatical?

**Paulsen:** No. Later I had another sabbatical quarter in which I worked on cognitive neuroscience topics. In addition I participated in an NSF grant that Judy Cushing put together that sent me to the Oregon Graduate Institute, where I worked on language recognition software? That was before it was folded

into Portland State University. That's where Judy got her degree and Neal and Sherri got their degrees. I spent a quarter down there living in an apartment that Judy leased. She was off teaching at Evergreen that quarter.

**Taylor:** Any more comments you want to make about your career at Evergreen or your parting ideas that you want to share?

**Paulsen:** I thought it was based on a wonderful idea. It was a great place to teach. I think it can do really good things for students. I'm thinking of some of the practices that the college had early on during the years I was there. When I originally arrived, I had the sense—as a lot of faculty in my era did—that we had missed the golden age. But the more I heard about what was going on, it was a mixed golden age. [laughter]

**Taylor:** I do think scientists took a while to figure out how to make it their own. It wasn't that they went back and did traditional things. It was that they had to figure out how to work.

**Paulsen:** Yes.

**Taylor:** What do you see from your point of view as the challenges of the college at this point?

**Paulsen:** I think that some of them are not all that different from the early years. One is how you can, in a liberal arts context, have basically an open enrollment situation; how you are going to be able to keep up quality and standards and things like that. I think that's always an issue that the faculty were all creative and tended to do a lot of interesting things, but I don't know that the students were as engaged in those sorts of things. I think it varied. The amount of diversity, all through the time I taught, was quite astounding, from brilliant students who could have succeeded anywhere to troubled students who needed to be mentored because they were either too young or too much into the culture of sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll. Some of those failed, but others of them succeeded brilliantly and were able to do things at Evergreen that they might not have been able to do at a lot of other places, and had successful lives as a result of that. Evergreen contributed and accepted that sort of thing. But there were a number of students who, I think, maybe just stayed for a while and discovered it's not for them. We've always known that it's not for everybody.

The question is, how do you recruit to get to the strength without getting sucked into admitting only or mostly people who have some real obstacles to dealing with the kind of material the faculty is teaching. That's always a two-edged sword. The fact that we have someone prepared to teach the students who are here and develop techniques for doing that, and that's not always easy.

**Taylor:** And that's the situation now. It's totally open enrollment. There's no selectivity at all. And also one of the things, I think, about the new group of students is something like 60 percent are from families

where they're the first to go to college. So it is a different student body in terms of expectations. I think when the college started, the idea was probably everybody was going to be 18 to 22, they were going to come and stay for four years, and they had always wanted to go to college since they were children. It was that expectation about who the population was going to be. And it wasn't that even at the beginning, but certainly by now it's not that population.

**Paulsen:** My experience for most of the years I was here is that I had a wide range. I don't think I was the oldest person in the classroom until probably 2004 or 2005, and that there were always students where the average age was much older. But as a faculty member, I guess I devised courses which I thought would be attractive to people who would sort of self-select. I think I was blessed by having an opportunity to teach maybe a wider group of students, I mean, a better-prepared group of students than maybe some of my colleagues. I did teach in core programs, and even there, I tended to get in the programs that had a cachet that tended to have strong students — for example I taught in The Human Condition program one quarter.

**Taylor:** With Beryl Crowe?

**Paulsen:** Beryl and York Wong. I saw York the other day and I told him I've certainly thought that he's one of the inspirations for me to teach. I've never seen anybody else who can synthesize student comments and summarize a seminar. That's another technique, different from the one I use because I didn't have that ability to do that.

**Taylor:** And he had it.

**Paulsen:** And he had the ability to bring in themes and talk it out on the basis of what grew organically from the seminar conversation, which is a great skill to have.

**Taylor:** Yeah, he had a lot of skills. When I taught with him, he was living in Seattle and he was driving down, and he would plan out his lecture as he drove down. And I thought, oh, my, I would never trust myself for doing that. But he did, and then he would lay this out. He was a very smart man.

**Paulsen:** In terms of lecturing though, I think the person I saw—that I taught with anyway—Al, in his own way, I always described him as a person who exemplified in the very way he would go to the board and write up what the formal method was in mathematics, he was a living example, and students saw. And they thought that he did it spontaneously, but like York, in the morning I know he would come in early and he would re-prove things that he hadn't looked at for a year or two, and have it at the tip of his tongue. Then he would expound apparently extemporaneously and write it all in his clear hand on the board. And that all worked out very well. The students just were mesmerized. They'd never seen anybody who would do that sort of thing.

The only time I saw it fail was once when he was doing a complex presentation that involved the distinction between an object language and a metalanguage. He wrote one in white chalk and the other in yellow chalk, and the problem was that for him, since he is colorblind, they looked really different. But for the rest of us, including me, who knew what he was doing and was in the front row, I couldn't distinguish between these two things by the color of the chalk. [laughter] But he lived that sort of model.

The other person that I thought did great things was Thad Curtz. I mean, he would always, when we were planning things, he would come in with a great bundle of books, and he had a clear idea. He gave some of the most inspirational, substantive and comprehensive summary lectures that I've ever heard from any faculty member in programs that tied things together. I was astonished how good he was at that in the one class I taught with him.

**Taylor:** It makes me think that every college is made up of its people, but somehow Evergreen, as a college, the relationships between people and the people themselves in their character had more to do with what the college was than anything else. We did have structures and plans, but it's the individuals that you start talking about, the people that are there now, or then, and that's the college.

**Paulsen:** Yes, and then I think that the problems are maybe with the individuals who are currently here. I've seen some of the younger people I've been lucky enough to work with, but they also have to be liberated enough to see that they can do these sorts of things. To the extent to which we were hiring people who were quite competent, but are coming not because they realize that it is difficult to teach and still carry on a professional agenda of the sort a research university might have, that that's difficult and only a few faculty have done it.

**Taylor:** And we're 50 years old, and the situation that they come into is different. Without being nostalgic, it's just there was more freedom and there was more opportunity than there is now. It's just the fact.

**Paulsen:** I think, in terms of overall, it's been a wonderful ride as far as I'm concerned. And I think I've done well for my students and in various sorts of ways. Maybe the last thing I can do is show you an early evaluation of a visual sort. [He is walking away from the microphone].

**Taylor:** Okay.

**Paulsen:** I still talk to some of my students, and they call, but often they are ones from the early years of the college. But here is what one of my students did for me.

**Taylor:** [Laughing] That's wonderful!

**Paulsen:** It says . . .

**Taylor:** It says, “David Paulsen is the Super Prof!”

**Paulsen:** And it’s got a big “SP” there.

**Taylor:** In needlepoint.

**Paulsen:** In needlepoint. She went on to become a businesswoman, in what? A shop that sells needlepoint in California.

**Taylor:** Oh, for heavens’ sake. That’s wonderful. That’s wonderful.

**Paulsen:** Yes.

**Taylor:** We really only have one more thing that we need to talk about, and that is life after retirement. What have you been doing since you retired five years ago?

**Paulsen:** Well, it depends on what counts as retirement. I officially retired in 2006 from being a full-time faculty, and I did a post-retirement contract from 2006 to 2012, at which time I taught five spring quarters in six years.

**Taylor:** Mostly with new people?

**Paulsen:** Well, yeah, or alone. [laughing] Twice alone, three times with new people, though the same two. So I retired twice; moved out of Olympia.

**Taylor:** When you were teaching, were you commuting from here?

**Paulsen:** I was commuting from here, yes. Well, I stayed overnight in a colleague’s house. I’d usually stay two days in a row and then a third day on the commute. And I had a sort of leave, and then, I think, leave without pay. Then we moved up here, so I would spend time working around here. I took classes in furniture building at a school for furniture building in Port Townsend [Port Townsend School of Woodworking & Preservation Trades]. That led me to build furniture and learn techniques of doing it. I’ve always been handy, designed our house and supervised as well as executed much of its construction.

**Taylor:** Don’t play that down. This is an unbelievable place.

**Paulsen:** We love it, and I’ve learned skills there. I took some classes at Evergreen, too. I took a welding class there and I was involved with woodworking as sort of leisure class time. So I took advantage of that as I was anticipating retirement. And I’ve always had a sort of double life in terms of doing it.

I’ve always thought that if life had turned out differently, then I might have done experimental science because I was a top science student, and I got an NSF grant to go to summer institute when I was in 10<sup>th</sup> grade. I had a choice between going to the University of Chicago and MIT, and if I’d taken the MIT course, I probably would have turned out differently than I have. But I have no regrets about

being able to do what I have done, within the joy of teaching at Evergreen, as I have been able to exploit some of my background and interests in the sciences, as well as in the broad area of the humanities.

**Taylor:** But you're also a builder.

**Paulsen:** I'm also a builder, but doing this sort of detail. I'm a detail-oriented person, so it holds me in good stead in doing computer programming and devising very intricate programs that articulate very well.

**Taylor:** Are you still keeping up with that intellectual life?

**Paulsen:** Not maybe as much as I would like to. I keep up a little bit in cognitive science and read recent books, and some of the other literature. But I mostly spend my time just being active and doing various sorts of things, including seeing my grandkids. But it's a lot of work doing that, but I manage to keep my mind busy. It's not been that long since I stopped teaching. I did find that every year I went to teach, I'd start out wondering if I still had the fluidity of speech that I once had. And typically, after the first day or even the first few sentences, I discovered indeed I could still do that.

**Taylor:** It's like riding a bicycle.

**Paulsen:** Yeah. And I do less of that now that I'm no longer getting rejuvenated there, but it's important to carry on that kind of conversation and talk with friends about matters of mind. And, alas, politics, which is something I consume too much.

**Taylor:** We're all in that position now, I think.

**Paulsen:** Yes.

**Taylor:** I'm going to turn this off.