

**Charlie Teske**  
**Interviewed by Susan Fiksdal**  
**The Evergreen State College oral history project**  
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**Fiksdal:** Okay, Charlie. Ready to begin?

**Teske:** Well, we still have some things to pick up about the planning year, and something that is generally forgotten, the visit, before we opened to students, of four of us to the Danforth Foundation Summer Workshop that had something to do with the way that we later developed. That took place in the summer of 1971.

But I think, Susan—and this is difficult to talk about—but if we're talking about crises that the college had to overcome, and about being able to answer these "how come" questions. Why are we the way we are? Another way of phrasing it is, "You don't know where you're going if you don't know where you've been." Of course, to my mind, the biggest single thing there is the realization that the school was being planned to have an enrollment of some 12,000 by the early 1980s. And I deal with that in my *Notes to a Future Historian* under the heading of *March Mayhem 1973*. I spell that whole thing out.

One of the very large problems—and it already had started before I came—was—I don't know exactly how to phrase it—a feud or coolness, difficulties in working together—between two of our Vice Presidents that caused difficulty in the higher echelons of the school.

Okay, our three Vice Presidents. Dean Clabaugh—who was never a Dean, that was his name [laughing]—Dean Clabaugh had been hired first to work with the Trustees in their selection of a President. And Dean had many connections with the Legislature; he knew how the financing of the college had to be set up; he knew good people to get for the financing, and for liaison with the State; and generally, a very sagacious man. Unlike the rest of us, I don't think he had any axes to sharpen or anything like that. When it came to academic policy, he was quite willing to let that go, and to follow the lead of whoever was planning that. He would be able to supply the knowhow to get legislation drafted and things of that—especially to get the money flowing. That was a very big thing. So Dean, after Charlie McCann was hired by the Trustees, Dean became the first Administrative Vice President. His title may have at one time been something like Vice President for Business, but I think it ended up as Administrative Vice President.

Then the second person that hired after McCann was David Barry to be the Provost and Academic Vice President, two functions being joined.

And then, I'm not quite sure how this happened, but E. Joseph Shoben—Joe Shoben—came on and was given the title of Executive Vice President. I know that this historical doctoral dissertation of William Henry Stevens III does go into some detail about the correspondence between McCann and Shoben. And Shoben, at that time, was really riding high. I think, at the time that he applied, his bibliography contained something like 99 items. He was one of the main contributors for *Change* magazine that at that time was the big organ—journalistic organ—for academic innovation. And he had either just before he signed on with Evergreen, or just after, he became a major consultant for the State University of New York. In other words, this was a major academic theorist, and his field had been educational psychology. Very much interested in learning, but interested in students as people, and had experience that he was writing about, and so forth. He'd mainly come out of, I think, the USC, Southern California, background.

At any rate, he was given the title of Executive Vice President. Now here, I don't exactly know what happened. It appears, on the surface, as you look back, as if functions were taken from both the other two Vice Presidents, and given to Shoben. And at times later on, when there were problems with how this was working out, all I could think of was the problem that Charlemagne had three rather than two grandsons. But if you look at the map, and you look at on the French side, the Ardennes, and on the German side, the Eifel, it looks like a natural barrier, so that you have the French on one side and the German speakers on the other.

But Charlemagne had three grandsons: Charles, who took over France; Ludwig, who took over the German-speaking area; and Lothair, from whom we get Lothringen (German)=Lorraine (French), and his was the Middle Kingdom. He got Alsace, Lorraine, Burgundy, and they've been fighting over this Middle Kingdom ever since.

What happened was that you would think the Provost and Academic Vice President would be dealing with the Library and the Registrar. No. Shoben got the Library, got the academic computing as opposed to the purely fiscal. So, for example, anything to do with students' records with computing, that was under Shoben. And, of course, with the Library came the Media Services, which, as you know, was a large part of the school from the very beginning. Shoben also got Registrar, Admissions, Student Services, Counseling, eventually the Infirmary, and so forth, and I think even part of the Security force.

And Clabaugh still stayed with the financial part, the liaison of the State. But it must have been that when that deal was made—as I say, that was in operation before I came—that David Barry must have felt as if turf was being taken away from him and given to somebody else.

There was another thing in there that I actually did not know until a year ago, when I read this

doctoral dissertation. Shoben also, in addition to having under his aegis the Office of Institutional Research, he was given the function of internal analysis and planning coordination. And it wasn't that spelled out. What did it mean? In practice, the way Joe interpreted it, it meant that if Dean, who very rarely came up with anything that had a larger academic significance, or Barry, who continually was overseeing things academic, it had to go to Joe for his comment and his approval.

And at times—one of the memos that's included in this dissertation—Joe himself writes about a troika, the Russian three-horse sleigh that is very difficult to manage. And, of course, there are a lot of jokes about something we talked about earlier, that the first permanent structure that Evergreen inherited on the campus was a meat-packing plant, a slaughterhouse. [laughter] And Kurt Vonnegut had written the novel *Slaughterhouse-Five*, and so sometimes McCann—I don't know if McCann used it, but the Vice Presidents used it—McCann and his three Vice Presidents were the "Slaughterhouse-Four."

**Fiksdal:** Oh, my gosh.

**Teske:** But at any rate, there was this problem. Now, so what? You know? Well, early on, as I was trying to work with the other areas at the college—and I might insert here something that I did not earlier—at the time that Mervin Cadwallader and Don Humphrey and I agreed that we were going to serve limited terms, and then rotate, one a year, back into the faculty, there came a question of, how are you going to get continuity?

And not the whole idea, but just the verbiage, came from me. I said, "Why don't we use what the State Department and the Institute for International Education uses, and talk about desks. So that there will be, you know, a Baltic Republics Desk, and it will be headed by different people at different times, but the desk will be the locus of policies, information, files and so forth, so there would be that continuity."

**Fiksdal:** That still surprises people.

**Teske:** Yeah. And I believe that—

**Fiksdal:** I think it's a good, yeah.

**Teske:** I believe that we still use the nomenclatures of "Deans' desks."

**Fiksdal:** We do. It's a good organization.

**Teske:** Now, one of my desks was liaisoned with the Library. Another desk was liaisoned with the Registrar. But if I wanted to talk to them, and I wanted to follow sheer protocol, I would have to go up—literally up, because the Deans, when the Library building was founded, the President's office and the Vice Presidents were on the third floor on the side back of the clock tower. And we three Deans worked out with Jerry Schillinger—the Facilities Planner—that our offices should be on floor one at the furthest

possible distance from the President and Vice Presidents. Any further out, Susan, and we would have been on the loading dock. [laughter] You know? Why? To give an outward and visible sign that we were there for the faculty, and we were not just part of the higher administration.

We followed that again by the moment that the Lab—two years, later that the Lab building, Lab One, was opened, we moved the Deans' office over there. And it was only when I left that the Deans' office got moved underneath the higher administration. But I think by then the policy of rotation, and the sort of autonomy of the Deans' office, had been established.

At any rate, the important thing there was that I had intimate dealings with a couple of the people who were reporting to Joe Shoben. And if I would have gone up to Barry, waited for Barry to get willing to talk or send something to Shoben, and then Joe, bless him, was quite often absent from campus because he not only had this large consultant job going on, but he was in quite a bit of demand for speaking at conferences—and there were all sorts of conferences—on innovation. And so he very often would not be around to give his seal of approval. So this got to be a real problem.

Now, that being said, there was also a problem of temperament. Dave had been a champion heavyweight wrestler at the University of Iowa—and Iowa takes wrestling very, very seriously—and otherwise, big, huggy-bear man, heart as big as all outdoors. But if he felt threatened, he could pull in, get worried, get anxious, showed a whole other side of himself. And he felt threatened by Shoben.

Now, William Henry Stevens III, the author of this very large, very well-documented dissertation on the history of Evergreen, he never interviewed McCann or Barry—or Don Humphrey or me, for that matter—but he did interview Joe Shoben some five years after Shoben had been fired. And Shoben talked about Barry as having very strong territorial feelings, a turf war kind of thing. Well, [laughing] that wasn't completely wrong. But one of the reasons why Dave felt that way—now, McCann had been very much for being able to make use of library and computer and media staff to help generate credit, so that students would be able to use them as well as the, in quotes, "faculty" members.

But as that developed—and Jim Holly, head of Library, was very much interested in that. We were getting the kinds of faculty librarians, faculty-status librarians, who would be interested in doing that kind of thing. Well, that part was great. But it meant that Barry had assumed that he, as Academic Vice President, would have the oversight of any credit-bearing activities. But here you had the specter of people who reported to another Vice President starting to do that. And that, of course, made Barry very antsy.

Another issue—and I hope I'm not misstating the case here—Barry, several times, would take up portions of Deans' meetings trying to reason about why he was second-in-command. And he used the

fact “I am Provost. Therefore, I’m second-in-command.” Well, I think the reason he did that is that Shoben had said, “I am Executive. Therefore, I am second-in-command.”

Now, fortunately, we never had the kind of emergency when Charlie McCann was off campus that would have forced that issue. A very practical thing would have been in the winter, a snow day. Only the President can declare a snow day, and he’d better declare it fast. If he does not, then all of the classified staff in—Facilities, academic secretaries, Finance, Library and so forth—who would not be able to make it to campus would be docked either a sick day or a vacation day. Whereas if it were declared a snow day, then that went by the boards. So it had both tremendous fiscal implications, as well as morale and so forth for the staff.

**Fiksdal:** Yeah, especially for classified staff.

**Teske:** And it had to be the President who would do that. Now, what if McCann had been at a conference, or looking at another school or something like that, when that would have occurred? Who would have been second-in-command? I don’t think we ever knew for sure who was going to be doing this.

And I don’t understand where this internal analysis and planning coordination in effect had almost a veto power. Now, it was one thing for us three Deans to have veto power when we were looking at the faculty candidates, but it’s quite another when you’re talking about institutional policy. And you get something together, and you send it over, and nothing happens. I had that happen to me once, and I’m going to handle that in writing later.

And I also don’t understand—because Charles McCann could be a very deliberate man. He would sit and listen and listen and think, and then he would act. And why he let this go on, I do not know. Maybe he feared that he would lose one of the troika. I have no idea, and it’s not something that a Dean could have gone to a President and said, “Why are you doing this?”

Now, that being said, there were so many things to like about Joe. Joe was one of these people, if you were in a meeting and somebody said something inadvertently funny, you could look around the room and you could be sure that maybe the only other person in the room who would get the joke would be Joe. You can feel very close to him about that.

And another kind of thing that went on, my wife Lilo mentioned, who was it who came out to her bookstore in Lacey and said, “Hello. I’m representing the Evergreen State College. Let’s sit down and talk, and I’ll tell you about what we’re doing. And I’ll look at your store. We’ll have our own bookstore, but still, it’s nice to know . . .” He was the only one who cared. He and his wife, [Ann], were large movers and shakers in setting up ECCO, the Evergreen College Community Organization, which got

townspeople and college people together once a month during the winter. There would be dinners, there would be special lectures, and even excursions to art exhibits and things like that that would be ECCO. That was Joe and Ann.

One of the times that I came out here during this siege [laughing] in late winter and spring of 1970, when I was almost commuting, one of the Saturday evenings that I was out here, the Shobens invited me for dinner. And there were Sam Sumner Reed and his wife, and some other people, who had kids who were ready to go to a ballet school—and at that time, Olympia didn't have any, and the reason why they were there—and I was invited so they could lobby me for trying to get somebody at Evergreen.

And sure enough, Susan, sure enough—it was two years later—I did not have the money left to hire Bud Johanson full-time, but I had the money left to hire him half-time. And he and Mary [Johanson?] were very much interested in setting up a ballet school. And so, when I interviewed him in the morning, I called up Mrs. Reed, and she and her people got together and got a chance to talk with Bud, and they guaranteed the ballet school that would make it financially worthwhile for Bud and Mary to come out. That was Joe. That was the kind of thing that he could set up.

Now, he was also very good as a speaker to Rotary and Kiwanis. He did, out of conscience, make several big public speeches against the Vietnam War that got the more conservative elements mad at him. But still, it was really painful to watch these two people, about whom there was so much to like, but realize that they simply did not get along.

**Fiksdal:** So when was that that he was fired?

**Teske:** Well, I'll get to that in a moment. But one other thing—and you can read all about this in my *Notes to a Future Historian*—what saved us was the Deans and Directors breakfast. From before the students came, the summer of 1971, through, I believe, the summer of 1973, just about every Wednesday, the Deans and Directors would meet at the Golden Carriage restaurant out on Plum Street, right off the throughway. Nice, big parking lot; nice room where we could meet. And the President and Vice Presidents were not invited. In two years, [there was] only one meeting where we asked them to come.

And what we would do—no decisions were taken. Now, I go into detail of how we worked, but the point is it was a chance for us to talk, to clear the air, not to gossip, not to have rumors, but to set things up. So the typical kind of thing would be we'd go around the table, and I would be it. And I would say two kinds of things. "Here are some of the things that are on my plate. If anybody doesn't talk me out of it, here's what I want to do, and here's what I want to do here. Now, these other things, I don't have a clue, so I would appreciate any suggestions that you would have."

And after I would be done, you, let's say, would be speaking up for Admissions, and you'd say, "Okay, Charlie, your folks are causing us problems here, because your language is not clear. This afternoon, we can straighten that out."

It was a way of our getting rid—let the Vice Presidents do what they wanted to do up there. We were getting things done by talking to each other. And frankly, it sounds melodramatic, but I wonder if the school would still be there if we had not had—and it was Ken Winkley's idea, Finance Officer, Comptroller—if we had not had those breakfasts for sharing. But it certainly made a strong bond.

The whole story of our being cut down—one of the major catastrophes—is in my piece *March Mayhem 1973*. We had been planning—and I naively, not knowing State education—assumed you tell me to plan for something, fine, I will plan for something, which included a 2,000-seat auditorium, because we were going to have 12,000 students by the mid-'80s, and we had to plan ahead. So I had to plan the first building so it would fit into—etcetera.

And I mentioned how I really messed up, but I couldn't help it, on foreign languages and in the arts. Foreign languages? I wasn't going to commit to hiring until we knew what our students, in the absence of requirements, would be wanting to take. So we had to use the tutor apparatus, which you worked so well. And with the arts, to bring on anybody else in music and drama and dance and visual art when we didn't have the buildings, the assumption, Susan, would be that we would be growing by almost 1,000 students a year, which would mean 40 to 50 new faculty positions. I figured we could afford to wait until we saw what the demand was in foreign language; then hire a whole bunch of people. Ditto with the arts. So when we had the facilities, then we could hire the people.

Well, guess what? Understaffed on both of them, or just skeleton staffs; and then March 1973, the lid was placed on it—no more growth, or just very small growth in the next years. And I defy—people talk about academics not having much business sense or something like that. I defy a corporation to try to set up a factory that's planning to produce thus and such and so and so, and then to be told, "No. You're not even going to—you're going to have about a fifth of that." They would not be in business, you know? We had to live with that.

But it was that crisis, in which, as I say in my article, so many people were going to have to be let go. That's what finally stiffened McCann's resolve. And he let Shoben go, and he moved Barry into the position of Legislative Liaison. And Dave stayed for, I think, two years, no, one year in that position. Then he taught for a year, and then he moved on to become an administrator elsewhere. So with Dave, it wasn't so much being fired or let go. It was what Lawrence Peter in his book, *The Peter Principle*, calls the "lateral arabesque." [laughter] You find something over here with someone else.

**Fiksdal:** Well, you certainly needed a better structure.

**Teske:** Yeah. And Ed Kormondy, who had been serving as one of the Academic Deans, was moved into the provostship. And I think, as a kind of segue to the other sort of problem, I think Mervyn Cadwallader pretty much assumed that he would be chosen as Provost.

**Fiksdal:** Oh, I see.

**Teske:** And that, I am sure, changed his attitude toward the school somewhat. Any other questions that you have about the vice presidential problem?

**Fiksdal:** No, that was very clear.

**Teske:** Okay. I hope it's right. You know, it's very hard. After all, I was reporting to Barry, and our friend here who did the doctoral dissertation did not interview Barry. And it's just that document makes it look as if it's all Dave's fault for wanting to consolidate turf. And, no, it isn't like that. There is much to be said on both sides.

**Fiksdal:** Well, we both know—we've both been Deans—it's never one person's fault. There's always different perspectives.

**Teske:** Yeah. And, of course, the other thing, too in the Deans' office that you probably found, and my buddy at Oberlin explained to me, he said, "Look, Charlie, in the Dean's Office, you're going to find out that there are a lot of arguments in which one person thinks 60 percent this way and 40 in the other, and is against somebody who thinks 60 where he thinks 40, and 40 where he thinks 60. But they will both argue as if they're arguing 100 percent against 100 percent. And you just have to be aware that that is going on."

**Fiksdal:** Yeah, that's good advice.

**Teske:** Yeah. Now, I did not have a clear vision in moving from Oberlin about what I wanted to have happen. There were various things I knew I did not want. Departments. I'd had some not actual political problems, but just the sense of the departments—stemming from the compartments of the Germany university system—were oftentimes where people were rewarded for being more loyal to the field than they were to the college and the college's programs. Well, maybe in the upper reaches of graduate schools, that's fine. But if you're trying to run an undergraduate school, which will appeal to the whole person, and trying to enlighten the whole person, you can't have everything chopped up like that into tiny fiefdoms.

**Fiksdal:** But can I interject right there?

**Teske:** Sure.

**Fiksdal:** Because you just reminded me that I didn't ask you about why Evergreen was founded as a

purely undergraduate institution. Was that something that was planned from the very beginning?

**Teske:** Yes. The Legislature plan—see, we never got a legislative mandate to do what we are doing. The idea was it was to be a counterpart of Western, Central and Eastern, which at that time were colleges that had originally been teachers colleges, colleges of education, and at that time were colleges, and were until—what?—the late '70s, when people decided to go for the big bucks and call themselves universities. Whereas we, being snobbish, said, “No, we’re going to stay a college. Even though we do have Masters programs, we’re going to stay a college.”

And William Henry Stevens does a very good job of talking about the minutes of Senator Gordon Sanderson’s discussion, where he says—it’s not in the charter, or the legislative action—but he says, “It was never the intent of the Legislature that Evergreen should be just one of the same, but should take advantage of its opportunity of starting new.” And didn’t stipulate what that should mean.

And I gather—this is hearsay—that Evans told the first Trustees, “Don’t think you have to have what everybody else has. Start thinking on your own about what makes sense now. And while you’re at it, do emphasize—make use of your location to be offering work in public administration.” Fine. So that’s how that occurred.

But I knew I wanted—one of the things that sort of frustrated me at Oberlin was here you had a topflight conservatory, and it was the only one that was right next to and part of a very good liberal arts college. And aside from the fact that the students ate together, and that they were in my beginning classes for English Comp and English Lit, the conservatory students—there were all sorts of opportunities that were not taken advantage of. I was able—once—to run an evening seminar called “Words and Music,” with six students from the conservatory and six students from the college. Once in 12 years, I was able to do that.

So I had these visions of what could happen. Opera—you know, being able to study the text, the librettos, the poetry, and then the drama of what was going on, and the music. And, of course, if you get into Wagner, you’ve got the mythology and the anti-Semitism and the politics and so forth, and happy hunting ground for interdisciplinary study. And, as I told you in one of our first interviews, my favorite undergraduate course had been a sort of interdisciplinary course, which was just one-sixth of my time. But I thought, Wow! Suppose you could have the same group of people, and the teachers, instead of visiting, a good number of them would be inside the program working along with the students. So that was sort of in the background. I didn’t have any dream of doing something like that, but still, that was something that we were thinking about. And, of course, doing away with grades. I felt they were too ambiguous to bother with, and they were getting inflated so they were even more ambiguous. Etcetera.

But I did not have a firm sense. The one thing I knew was that I was being brought in to organize the individual learning contracts that McCann had been very much for right at the start. Indeed, Susan, he is quoted in Stevens' doctoral dissertation as saying—and I think he said that in his statement the morning of February 8, 1970—“If, by a student's fourth year, he is not doing most of his work as an individual, we have failed.” So that was a very big interest of McCann's, and I was being brought in because I had experience with that.

That being said, then we get to this crucial time in the first meeting when Mervyn explains—talking also briefly about [Joseph] Tussman's program, and, of course, mainly his own program at San Jose State—of comparing Athenian politics and the stresses and strains on the polity of the Peloponnesian War to the current situation in Vietnam, and working in this area at the intersection of humanities and social sciences. Though Merv at one point, in presenting it, said, “It's not so much interdisciplinary, it's non-disciplinary; that you're getting human beings working on a problem and using the skills and different disciplines to do so.”

But as we go through that first hour and 50 minutes, after some housekeeping, McCann reads his statement. Bob Barringer, Computer Director, reads to us the editorial in that morning's *Olympian*, saying, “When are we going to hear about the program of this place?” And backing and forthing.

Of course, what interests me in listening to this is where I hear the beginning seeds of the things. For example, the word “coordinated” turns up several times. I use the word “subcontractor,” which other people then start using. But the big word is “preceptor,” who would be both your advisor your teacher.

But at one point, it gets really flaky. They're talking about a teacher of having three functions; of handling individual learning projects, handling a seminar, and being a preceptor. And I think it's Joe Shoben who points out, “If we're having an 18-to-one ratio of students to faculty, that means a given teacher would have to deal with 54 different students. This is ridiculous.”

And we're going along, and finally, about minute 151, Barry says, “Look, we have to focus. We have to leave here with something that we can use for hiring the Planning Faculty, something we can tell them. We must come up with something specific.”

And McCann adds, “Let's forget about these other things for the moment and start going after something.”

And Merv said, “Well, okay, I'll go first.” That's when he describes, for about 10 minutes, the idea of having one, at most two, five faculty-100 student programs, which would be two years long, and that would take up a fraction of our first-year students. And then he goes on to extol the glories of

getting close interaction; how the problem of advising would be largely solved; and how there can be fairly easy movement among component seminars in the program, etcetera.

And then when he finishes, that's where I jump in and said, "I haven't talked to Merv about this, but I think I see a way that we could use this as our main vehicle in the early years."

And I go on, and then we start shifting. So right at the start, Mervyn had come to talk about a specific content focus in which you would use these pedagogical means to deliver the content of the program. And, as Richard Jones points out very clearly in his *Experiment at Evergreen*, what the Planning Faculty did was to disjoin them. Nobody in the Planning Faculty was interested in replicating Merv's and Tussman's subject matter.

What they did was to take the method, the methodology to be used, of the seminars, and a combination of those group meetings, etcetera, [water running, dishes clattering, making it difficult to understand what he is saying] and individual projects contributed, etcetera, and do those things, but with different subject matters. And really, until Merv himself had, I think, a three-person program for a year called "Democracy and Tyranny," nobody followed the content idea that he had proposed.

**Fiksdal:** I didn't realize that he wanted a particular content. So that helps explain that.

**Teske:** The methodology with Tussman, and, to a certain extent, I think, with Alexander Meiklejohn, the methodology was devised to teach a certain kind of content.

**Fiksdal:** Oh, I see.

**Teske:** And what Merv and I—wait, Don Humphrey and I did was to take that and bring in the arts and the sciences, which Merv had never contemplated having in there. But there was no conflict about that. I never felt at all undercut by Merv. He did not like individual contracts because to him, part of the problem with the *Education Between Two Worlds* that Alexander Meiklejohn talked about, part of the problem was the fragmentation of the students' responsibilities, of the students' concerns, of the students' time, which also led to a fragmentation where you separate the issue of ethics from the issue of technique.

Can you turn it off?

**Fiksdal:** Yeah, I'll stop.