Duke Kuehn

Interviewed by Anthony Zaragoza

The Evergreen State College oral history project

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FINAL

Zaragoza: Good morning. I'm here with Duke Kuehn [pronounces it as Keen], or is it [pronounces it as Koon]? How do you say your name, Duke?

Kuehn: Well, that's where we can start. In German, it's [German pronunciation]. It means brave or bold. I think it actually means risk taking. When all these people came to the United States, they didn't want people to think they were Jewish, so they didn't want to be called [pronounces it as Koon], they wanted to be called [pronounces it as Keen]. Throughout the Midwest, when I fly to Milwaukee, they know how to pronounce my name. So, as I tell people, I answer to almost anything that begins with a K. It's close enough for me.

Zaragoza: Wonderful. It's a pleasure to have you with us here on July 6, 2021. It's really an honor to be talking with you today. I just want to welcome you to the Oral History Project.

Kuehn: I'm excited.

Zaragoza: Fantastic. Duke, why don't you start by telling us about your early life, your parents, you early upbringing, your early schooling.

Kuehn: Sure. I was raised in California. I was born, I think, five days after the atom bomb dropped in Japan. My father was in the Navy at the Jacksonville Naval Air Station in Florida. Via Iowa, they came to California before I was a year old. I was in northern California until I was in the third grade. Then we moved to southern California.

My dad was the hardest-working man I ever knew, but he was fundamentally a workingman. He worked at Douglas Aircraft for many years. He worked his way up and he had some fairly high technical skills, but in the '60s, the defense industry went through a variety of stumbles. He got laid off over and over and over, so he made a major mid-career change and became a furniture salesman, of all things, for Sears Roebuck, which he was very good at.

My family was kind of an odd family in the sense that my dad grew up on a farm, came from a farm, rural people. He had a high school education but nothing beyond that. He was certainly not very intellectual. Hard worker. Dedicated worker.

My mother was very well educated. She'd been to Vassar. Started a nursing degree. Came from a very wealthy family in New England. How the two of them got hooked up in the middle of World

War II, I never quite understood, but they were very much in love with each other. Passionately in love with each other. But they were real contrasts.

My mother was very intellectual, very well educated, very much interested in the arts, very much a reader, and my dad was none of those things. My dad's greatest satisfaction was to take a Sunday afternoon and go work on his car. But they had a marriage that lasted, and they died in their nineties within six months of each other.

My mother had a son. I had a half-brother from her previous marriage, which was kind of, in those days, an odd circumstance in its own regard. My brother was older than I—I think 13 years—so we were not particularly close. In fact, he graduated from high school and went to the Marine Corps before we moved to southern California.

He was kind of an odd guy, I think. There was a family estrangement and he divorced himself from his mother. I never saw him after I was 13. Left me very insecure for the rest of my life about relationships. I realized no matter how intimate they were, they could end. It was devastating to my mother, who put a lot of pressure on me as the remaining son to be "the" son.

I had a good relationship. My mother would have given me anything. She made huge sacrifices for me to have the opportunities I did when I was a young man. As I said before, my father supported us, even under very hard economic circumstances at times.

So, that's kind of how I grew up. I was a happy kid. As in that piece that I sent you, very much an only child. Learned early on to be self-sufficient in entertainment, taking care of myself, playing with myself. Very imaginative. Rather artistic.

Went through high school without a particular ambition. It was a given I was going to college. What I was going to do with that, I was never sure. In the piece that I sent you, I became a sportswriter very early. I thought that was going to be my career. Won a substantial work scholarship to the University of Redlands, which is a very good liberal arts college. Small, 1,500 students. It was a wonderful place for me. I had a wonderful educational experience.

Fell under the wing of a mentor, a guy named Bill Klausner, who really was a father in many ways my dad had never been a father. Very supportive, very loving, very caring. He did much to advance my professional career.

I ended up going to graduate school, and as I told many people over the years, I got on at kindergarten and I got off at PhD. I didn't have any idea I'd ever get off or finish it. I finished all my coursework for a PhD by the time I was 25. Finished the dissertation a few years later.

Made a huge mistake. I'm a rather competitive person. I respond well to those kinds of challenges. Not a particularly good athlete, but a very competitive person. For graduate school, I ended up going to a very, very strong graduate program, as you know, at the University of Washington. In those days, it was probably one of the top 10 in sociology. It was certainly distinct among graduate programs in sociology by having an extraordinarily strong emphasis in quantitative methods and statistics, which is not my forte at all. But to survive, I had to get good at it. I learned it and became fairly competent in it.

When I went to the University of Washington, I had every intent when I got my PhD of coming back and returning to a liberal arts college, like Redlands. The idea that I would go to a large research university just wasn't part of my vision.

I got to the University of Washington, and it was a very competitive program. The people that I worked with—faculty that I worked with—made it very clear that if you went to a small, liberal arts college, you were a loser. Only losers did that. The real stars of the program went to large research universities and got grants and cranked out publications. I didn't like that, but I'm playing the game, and that's how you played the game.

I probably finished first or second in my class in my cohort, many of whom dropped out. Years later, I realized that many of the people who dropped out of the graduate program were far more clever and creative than I was. I just wouldn't quit. [laughing]

I ended up getting a job at the least desirable of all the University of California campuses at UC-Riverside.

Zaragoza: Can we pause there before we get to your first job. I'm curious about, are there any stories that stand out from your undergraduate days that were formative for you? And/or your graduate school days? Memories that you have that really shaped who you were to become as a scholar and teacher?

Kuehn: The piece I sent you really encapsulates very strongly my experience as an undergraduate because I saw myself, as a young man, as a writer. I was a sportswriter, and I think I was pretty good at it. I ended up forming a close bond with a professor, whose, motivations I'm still not quite clear about, but imagine found it necessary to cut me down to what he considered to be the right size. He totally destroyed, at 18 years old, my confidence as a writer. It was a devastating experience, and one I probably still feel today, strangely enough.

It certainly affected my teaching; I made sure for the rest of my life that when I worked with students, I never did anything close to that. I did nothing but encourage students, and encourage their talents wherever it took them, and hoped that they would go further than I could ever imagine for them.

But Professor Mitchell had a profound experience on me. He also opened some doors of opportunity that I am very grateful for, but he really, really, really crushed something that, at a point in my life, was very vulnerable and very important. This is taking a darker tone already than I want it to. I think you know me. I have a pretty good sense of humor about life.

That event, coupled with the loss of my brother when I was 13, shaped the dark side of me. Half of me is Irish. You know how the Irish are. There's always this dark thing over your shoulder you should be watching out for. That rejection by my brother and that—I don't even know what word to use for what Mitchell did to me—did a lot to shape my life, for the better and for the worse, I guess.

I've always been one of those persons who believes that the qualities that you have in your personality are both strengths and weaknesses, at the same time. If it hadn't been for my brother's rejection, if it hadn't been for Mitchell's diminishment of my talents, I might not have worked as hard to do many of the things I did in my life that were very positive, as a teacher, as a parent, as a husband, as a friend. By the same regards, those are scars, and sometimes in my life, they've gotten in the way. Those two things, both personally and educationally, really did a great deal to shape me.

My interest in sports and my interest in journalism was really the entryway into the social sciences. When I decided I didn't want to become a sportswriter—partly because of Mitchell's discouragement, and partly, as I mentioned in the piece I sent you—my job at Redlands was to run the press box during the football season. I set it all up and would be there for a Saturday night game.

The reporter from the *Redlands Daily Facts* and the *San Bernardino Sun*, and occasionally, somebody from one of the LA papers would come on out. These guys were drunk by the middle of the second quarter. They were young and they were having a good time and they were drunk, and I looked at that and I thought, geez, that's not the life I imagined for myself. I could see myself sitting in the press box covering the Dodgers or the Rams, but here these guys are out covering the University of Redlands playing Whittier University, and the way they got through it was with a jug of whiskey on their hip.

I can remember going home that summer and talking to my mother, telling her that I don't want to go in the direction that I'm going. I decided, in the same semester—the fall semester of my sophomore year—I took Introduction to Psychology and Introduction to Sociology, both 101 courses. I figured, well, I'll immerse myself here and see what I like.

It probably was the personality of the teachers more than the subject matter itself that made the difference. Klausner just blew me away with the quality of his thinking, his insight, and his way of communicating. The guy who taught psychology was just a disaster. [laughing] If it had been reversed, I'd probably be a clinical psychologist today, but I ended up in sociology. Klausner was a powerful influence in my life.

Mitchell had gotten me into a program at Redlands called the "Able Student Program," which was an honors program. You had to write a thesis in your senior year to get honors. I ended up writing a thesis. It was a little bit of experimental social psychology. It was quite better than much of the work that I did later in my life. It was full of all sorts of youthful errors, but it was rather profound. I was trying to create in a laboratory a social circumstance that came from the writing of a Nineteenth Century sociologist, Émile Durkheim, called *anomie*, a state of social normlessness.

I tried to create this in a laboratory, and I kind of did. In the process, I learned a profound lesson that in some ways echoes through the rest of my life about trust, about the necessity of trust in social relationships. In fact, I still write about it today, about the necessity of trust in every social relationship, from families and friendships up to governments and corporations.

I learned an early lesson, and developed a profound interest in the concept of social trust—what it meant, how you achieved it, how you lost it, if you can regain it back, etc etc etc. Redlands provided the opportunity for me to do that.

It provided one other opportunity, too. Because I was an Able student, I was able, or allowed, to develop almost an individual major. I ended up with a major in sociology with a minor in English literature. I was fascinated by literature, but I was extremely fascinated in drama, theater. Not so much the acting of it but the reading of it.

I walked out of Redlands with what I treasure today as a wonderful education that opened door after door after door after door, professionally and personally. It allowed me for the rest of my life to pursue my curiosities wherever they took me, so I became absolutely obsessed with classical ballet for a while. Studied, read everything, saw everything, visited everything. I actually dated a ballet dancer from New York briefly.

Or Captain Cook and the voyages of exploration of the Pacific. The United States Navy in the Second World War. All these little things, when you look at my bookshelf here, you'll say, "This guy has a lot of interests." I've never considered myself an expert in any of those things, but I became knowledgeable about them, that for a personal level, I felt like, oh, I kind of understand that now. I see what that's all about. I don't need to know more.

Which, in its own regards, was my limitation as a scholar, because I came out of a liberal arts college with a liberal arts conception. The idea that I would spend the rest of my life studying something narrower and narrower and narrower and narrower. I couldn't do it. I had no interest in doing it. I was satisfied with becoming knowledgeable, but I've never needed to be an expert.

I'm just yammering on here. You've got to stop me. I'll talk, I guarantee you. I'm an easy interview.

Zaragoza: I appreciated where you were going, Duke, and I especially liked the stories that you told from your undergraduate years. Can you tell a couple of formative stories from your graduate school years? You mentioned the competitiveness. You mentioned becoming first or second in your class. Are there some stories that illustrate the experiences you have that especially formed you as a teacher and scholar?

Kuehn: Oh, yeah. Many. The Sociology Department at the University of Washington was quite a place, and it was not a good fit for me at all, except for the competitiveness. I won a huge, literally enormous, scholarship to go there, partly from the advocacy of Bill Klausner. I won a National Defense Education Act, four-year, full-ride scholarship to graduate school. Never had to work a second.

That was ironic because the National Defense Education Act fellowship came directly in the middle of the Vietnam War. Same time I was being reclassified 1-A, I was being paid by the federal government to go to graduate school in advancement of the national defense, a case I made to the Selective Service without much success.

Graduate school stories. I tried to recapture the relationship I had with Bill Klausner with some of the faculty. I ended up working very closely with two of them. My primary sponsor was a guy named Clarence Schrag—may he rest in peace—and he was a very helpful, very nice, very generous man.

He was kind of a strange guy in some ways. He had been raised in a small Mennonite community in Eastern Washington. He became very prominent. Schrag was the co-author, with a couple of other guys, of the largest-selling sociology 101 textbook in the United States. He was notable for having gotten involved as the Director of the Washington State Department of Corrections for a while.

But he had an extraordinary work ethic. He just believed that good work meant you got more work, and I took it on. I piled it on. I can remember one time sitting in his office. You know how it is in graduate school. I spent days in this guy's office, and he was very generous of his time, very helpful. I was talking to him about how here I am in this quantitative program where I'm learning the most sophisticated and complicated statistical techniques for the analysis of human behavior, but in my own style and in my own interests and in my approach, I was much more a qualitative sociologist. I was much more interested in observation and in experience and narrative.

I remember Schrag looked at me in surprise. It was amazing but he said this, "You know, Duke, you're a much better statistician and quantitative analyst than you think you are. You're not as good qualitatively." [laughing] I have not thought about that comment all these years, but it goes along with the Bob Mitchell comment. I kept running into these mentors who directed me in funny ways. I guess it all worked out all right. It turned out that those quantitative methods paid off big time later on in my life. We'll get to that. But I was left, again, insecure about my self-perception versus the perception of the people who I was attempting to join.

I was fortunate in that—I was talking to my granddaughter about this the other day. She's going through the college experience. Whenever I was confronted with a choice in life, and I was fortunate to be presented with many options. As you and I have talked about before, the concept of white privilege is not at all foreign to me. I was born with 50 points right off the go, and I recognize there are many people who have zero choices in life. I was fortunate enough, privileged enough, to be presented with lots of choices in my life.

Whatever I was, I always chose the choice that opened more doors, which was the opposite of most of my scholarly peers in college. They wanted to go narrower and narrower and narrower.

I had a conversation once I got out and I was teaching at UC-Riverside with a sociologist who was a little bit older than I. Very ambitious. He was standing in my office just bullshitting and he said to me, "You realize, Duke, the really important thing is who's number one in sociology." I looked at him, stunned. I knew how ranking systems worked. I'd followed sports all my life. I had no idea that there was a ranking system for sociologists, and that he aspired to be number one. I had no idea. I must have been eighteen thousandth on it, probably. I just didn't think in those terms.

My experience in graduate school was almost the opposite of my experience as an undergraduate. It was focused and it was narrow, and it became narrower. But I had all sorts of opportunities, and one of the opportunities I was given—and Schrag had access to the police records of the Seattle Police Department for one whole year. I think it must have been violent crimes or something like that. I was able to go through and do a qualitative statistical study of those records.

I came up with one of the first findings I had, and I actually got an early publication on it, my first. I found that if you looked at the description that victims gave of their assailants, and then compared those descriptions to the actual physical characteristics of the assailant when they were captured or convicted, I was curious if there was a discrepancy.

This is probably my significant contribution to the social sciences. I found that, of course, there was a discrepancy. People tended to describe their assailants as physical larger than they really were. Rather consistently. I've forgotten this, so I might not be absolutely correct but close, but recollection was that when I looked at the description that white victims made of black assailants, the overestimation was even greater.

In my early twenties, I all of a sudden recognized right away that there was an inherent bias in terms of the way in which black offenders were compared to white offenders. I got a couple of footnotes in a couple of places because of that. That was a significant moment for me, doing that data analysis, publishing it. I got a trip to Hawaii through the Pacific Sociological Association to present the paper. This was my third year of graduate studies. That was really cool. It was fun all the way around.

Zaragoza: Is this the 1969-1970 period?

Kuehn: Yeah, I think probably 1970.

Zaragoza: Okay, so making a significant contribution also to an area of the literature that my guess was [it was] completely under-researched and understudied.

Kuehn: Yeah. Who cared? The other thing that I recall most significantly from those four years in Seattle was that the program was advanced in this regard. It required its graduate students to teach one year. That also freed them from having to teach sections of Soc 101, but it was a great experience. I was given, in my third year of graduate school, the opportunity to teach three sections of Soc 101.

It was one hell of a year, because, again, we're in the middle of the Vietnam War. I'm pretty sure this was the same year of Kent State, or certainly plenty of other things like this.

Zaragoza: I think that was the year that the UW football team stopped that game in protest. I'm pretty sure that was 1970. I could have that wrong, but there was a lot going on.

Kuehn: It could be. Almost every other day, the Black Student Union launched a major demonstration on campus. I always laugh because the Sociology Department was at one end of the building, and I think the Anthropology Department was the other end of Savery-Guthrie Hall. If the demonstrating students were coming through the Sociology end of the building, you would see dozens of graduate students exiting the other end of the building carrying their dissertation materials, letting the demonstration past, and then we'd all return and put our stuff safely away again.

It was a significant time because I could not—and I wouldn't have anyhow—but even if I had wanted to, I could not avoid touching upon the issues and current events that had either to do with race relations, or civil disobedience, or the war. It was the year that I honestly believe we were shut down for a week in the middle of all that. It might have been around the time of Kent State.

I was open. I was not a by-the-book teacher, even in my first effort ever, so I would open myself up to questions, and students would ask me. What do you think? What's this all about?

I can remember I had a student—a young black man—who sat in the front row, and he was just all over me all the time. I can remember, in a kind and gentle way, he started this one day. I can see him. I can see the hall I was in. I finally said—I forget what his name was—Bob—"I'll tell you what, Bob. Come on up here. Come on up." "Why, ah-ah-ah?" "Get up here. Come on. I tell you what. You come on up here and you teach the class, and I'll sit down and listen to you." [laughing] He didn't take my invite.

It was a very frothy, very heady time politically. At the same time, I'm fighting off getting drafted, which is a little story in its own regard. I had injured my back playing tennis in high school—injured it rather badly. At Redlands, I wasn't going to play competitively, but I was certainly going to play recreationally. It got worse and worse and worse, and it got to the point, when I got to graduate school, my back was really in bad shape. What's graduate school? It's sitting in class for hours and hours and hours and hours. The pain was just enormous.

Independent of the whole issue of the draft—well before—I finally ended up seeing an orthopedic guy in Seattle. He prescribed a back brace. This was right after John F. Kennedy and his back brace. I learned how to put on this rather cumbersome back brace with all these snaps and hooks and everything.

Sure enough, I get classified 1-A. I go see my orthopedic guy and he writes me a letter. I didn't want to screw around. I could have held off this whole process by asking for the physical to be set up in Seattle, but I decided, no, I'm going back home to Orange County. Let's get this done and get it over with.

I had every confidence that I wouldn't get drafted because of this back problem, which was in no way at all fake. It was real. It was so bad that—I was still playing tennis, stupidly, competitively, I still played tennis—to be able to play tennis, I would have to take, I don't know, four, six Tylenol just to get on the court, much less move around afterwards. I'd come out of the shower and the top part of my body would be this far off to the side from the lower part of my body. [laughing]

I go ahead and I fly down to southern California and stayed with my parents and go for my draft physical. I took a bus from Anaheim up to LA and go through this whole thing. They get to the point where all of us were in this room and somebody says, "Anybody here have any medical papers or anything that suggest you have a problem?" I'm the only one who raised my hand. I presumed everybody else left the room and got on buses and headed to Vietnam.

I go in and they had me going into an examination room. This is truly one of the cardinal moments of my life. It's 3:30 in the afternoon on a Monday or Tuesday in southern California. This doc comes in. He's got a clipboard. Kind of a sleezy-looking guy. He just didn't look very much like a doc. He asked me a couple of questions, looked at the letter that the orthopod had given me. He said to me, "Take your brace off." This was a trick. "Put it back on." People could take them, off but they didn't know how to put them back on. I put them back on. I'd been doing it for a couple years now.

I'm sitting on the edge of an examination table and he's standing. I can see it like it was 10 minutes ago. He stands, he's got a clipboard, he's got a pen over at the board. I looked at this guy and I say, in measured tones, "You know, you make the wrong decision here, I'm going to spend three days in basic training. I'm going to be so badly injured that I'm going to be medically discharged. The government of the United States is going to pay for my support the rest of my life." I pointed at him. "And it's going to be your fault." I'm not bullshitting. Just like that.

I'm not a very good poker player. I'm holding a pair of deuces and I'm calling this guy's shit. He didn't say anything. He scribbled something on a piece of paper, hands it to me, and walks out of the room. Not a word.

In those days, you knew the draft code. You knew what all these codes meant. I looked at this thing and it says 3-R. I'd never heard of a 3-R. I get dressed. I go out in the hallway, and I see a sergeant. I say, "Excuse me, sir. I don't know what this means." He says, "You've got three months to get more medical evidence." I'll take this.

I rode the bus back home to see my parents. Fly back to Seattle. Go see my orthopod. "Geez, how did they screw up like that? I'll write you another letter." In the meantime, shit, Tony, I'm in a statistical program. Right? So, I start collecting data. I started collecting data about every time I had the slightest pain, whatever I'm doing, whatever circumstance. I come back and see my orthopedist and I say, "Look at this! There's some correlations here. Every time"—I don't know—"I carry out the trash, or every time I play golf, or whatever, I get pain here and pain there." "That's pretty good stuff."

He was really impressed. I was really impressed because, honest-to-god, it was the first time I had ever used statistics to make an argument, and this argument is about as critical as I could ever want.

Zaragoza: That's right.

Kuehn: It is just before Christmas, and they transfer my physical up to Seattle—I'm not going down there again. No fucking way. They transfer it up to Seattle. It's a dark, rainy morning. I drive over to somewhere in north Seattle. Brand-new facility. Go in. Go through the whole process. Blah blah blah.

Get to the same point. Sitting in a room with a bunch of people. “Does anybody here have additional medical evidence?” All the rest get up and get on buses to Vietnam.

I got up and I go into this guy’s office. I don’t go into an examination room. Young Army doc, who’s sitting there across from me. He looks at the letter and he says—I forget what my orthopedist’s name was, let’s say Zaragoza—“Oh, Dr. Zaragoza. He’s a great guy, isn’t he?” I go, “Yeah.” He says, “Good enough for me. 1-Y.” That meant I could only be drafted in the case of an extraordinary national emergency.

I walked out of there after two hours. Drove home. All over. Incredible story, from my perspective. It’s difficult even thinking about it today.

The only thing that I remember doing is before I drove home, I went downtown. Do you remember the Bon Marche? Have you lived here long enough to remember?

Zaragoza: Yeah.

Kuehn: Okay. I went into the Bon Marche just before Christmas, and I was looking around the book section. I love maps. I love exploration stuff. Rand McNally, I think, had just issued a brand-new, huge atlas of the world. In those days, I think it cost 50 bucks, which was a lot.

Zaragoza: One of those that’s like 2 X 3. It’s like table sized.

Kuehn: Absolutely. That’s exactly what it is.

Zaragoza: Yeah, I know what you’re talking about.

Kuehn: I still have it. It has an inscription in it. I had written my name. I wrote the date with the date of that examination. I never want to forget this date. I still have that atlas. It’s a beautiful atlas.

Graduate school was scary. I’ve always been afraid of failing. I never have, but I was consciously afraid of it. Playing a very, very high-stakes game at a very, very high-stakes time. Ended up getting, by the standard of my colleagues, a great job. I won. I won the game.

I lost a lot of myself. I think this was part of your question is that those experiences of compromising who I was to win the game just had a profound impact on me, as a person and as a teacher. I felt that almost the minute I arrived at UC-Riverside and began to rehabilitate myself.

Coming to Evergreen—not so much Evergreen but leaving a publish-or-perish tenure track to go to a small liberal arts college—in this case, a crazy, ditsy liberal arts college—was suicidal in some ways.

The first quarter I was at Evergreen, I had a student who was the son of one of my professors at Washington. He came in one Monday and he said, “Dr. Duke, I went home to see my dad this weekend. There was a dinner party.” And he named five or six people who were all I’d studied with. He said, “You were a major topic of conversation.” I said, “Oh, really?” He said, “Yeah. They all couldn’t figure out what went wrong. “What happened to this guy? He left that tenure-track position at UC-Riverside to go to Evergreen, for chrissake! Is he okay?” [laughing] In their minds, it was a kind of professional suicide.

I’ve got to finish that story. Years later—years later—I forget who it was. I think it was a dean at Evergreen whose brother-in-law, I think, was the Dean of the School of Education at the UW. Somehow or another they all got connected, and this guy at the U calls me. He wants to interview me about the faculty position.

I go and have lunch with him, and we started talking. I’m all grown up now and I’m all professional and I’m all squared away. I’m honest with this guy. I said, “Come on, you’re wasting your time. You’re never going to hire me. Even if you want to hire me, your colleagues aren’t going to hire me. Look at my resume. I’ve got three publications, I think. I’ve done a ton of work. I’m not only a great teacher—"

At that time, I was working very closely with the school districts in the State of Washington and knew everything about school boards in the State of Washington. “I have no doubt that I could be incredibly valuable to your program. I can offer your students a practical experience rooted deeply in solid social science theory that nobody else can. I guarantee you. But you’re never going to hire me. It’s not going to happen. You’re wasting your time. Come on, it’s not going to happen.”

I actually had a kind of redemption in that, I guess, to say, “Look, I’m turning down your tenure. Even if you give it to me, I wouldn’t take it.”

Zaragoza: Duke, I was curious if there were some stories from UC-Riverside that you also wanted to relate that lead you toward Evergreen, because it’s an interesting movement. You go from a liberal arts undergrad to a research one graduate program, to a research one teaching gig, back to a liberal arts college. Maybe some things happened there at UC-Riverside that you used to open those doors to Evergreen.

Kuehn: I’m not so sure of that as much as it is getting back in touch with yourself. The very first day I moved into my office at UC-Riverside, it was set up in the way that most offices probably are in most research universities. You walked into the office and there were chairs for people to sit in. There was a desk, and the desk was turned away from the front door, and there was a workbench off to the side. I know it wasn’t comfortable for me.

I immediately took that desk and turned it around so it faced the door, so when people came in, I could welcome them. That was stupid. The reason they were turned around is so you could work your ass off to get publications to get tenure, not to sit there and talk to students.

So, I turned it around originally and I became enormously popular among students in the program. I liked that, and I encouraged it. I liked helping and working with students.

The other thing is, as you know, in large universities, staffing—particularly faculty staffing—is based upon departmental enrollment. If Craig Brown across the hall from me was teaching a course that had 13 students in it, he didn't even have enough to support one faculty equivalent. I was teaching courses of 300, 350 students in them. By choice, at the end. I was that popular. I taught Crime and Delinquency and Deviant Behavior and Organized Crime. People flocked to it. I was a good lecturer, even as inexperienced as I was. Those were fascinating topics.

I was tough. I was a fair grader, fair but tough. My policies in those days were, you show up to class, turn in the work, you'll pass. You want an A? You're really going to have to work your ass off.

I supported easily two or three faculty positions within that department. It didn't bother me whether I had—I don't know, I guess it's the showman in me or whatever—I felt I could teach as effectively in a crowd of 300 as I could in 30. Obviously, that's not totally true, but I was a good enough lecturer and a good enough performer that I could pull it off, and it was never a strain to me. Never. The larger the class, fine. It's just a bigger crowd. I kind of enjoyed that. Bigger laugh.

Teaching is—and I don't think this is a bad thing — from my perspective, a performing art. The degree to which you can create an environment where people can learn, and that part of that involved humor, showmanship or whatever, great. All I cared about is you walked out of there and you knew that one thing that I wanted you to know about.

The other thing that was happening, too, there's publish or perish. I'm cranking stuff out as fast as I possibly can, but there were two things that worked against my ability to publish. One was I had done a very, very interesting, complicated dissertation that turned out to be rather politically sensitive. One of my advisors at Washington had a connection at UC-Davis in the law school, and they had gotten a contract to do an evaluation of a program in California called the California Probation Subsidy Program. The program was built on the premise that if a county, instead of sending someone to the California Department of Corrections or to the California Youth Authority, would hold those people in the country on probation, it would save the state a great deal of money. Theoretically, it would be much more correctional.

To do that, the Legislature passed this probation subsidy law where if a county sentenced someone to probation in the country rather than to a state correctional institution, they'd get a subsidy. Several thousand dollars. All of a sudden, community corrections was infused with hundreds of thousands of dollars from the state to mount these programs. I was called to come in as part of a team to do the statistical evaluation of whether or not the program in fact had causally affected crime rates in the counties.

Well, I found out more than they wanted to know. The fact of the matter is the program didn't really work. Even today, the ability to look at a criminal and to analyze them in such a way that you could prescribe an effective rehabilitative program is very low. By the time people commit major crimes, they're pretty far down the line. It's not like, oh, just go for a little bit to this 12-step program here.

Plus, the counties had an incentive to do this, even at risk. So, the counties were putting more and more people on probation, but that meant two things. People who shouldn't get probation were getting it, and then immediately recidivating or getting in trouble. If you got bounced back off the program, there wasn't an option for additional probation. You went off to prison. What had been originally a decline in state commitments, all of a sudden started to rise again as the counties began to run out the possibilities of getting the subsidies.

My findings were not popular. That's not what anybody wanted to hear. They became controversial, and they became kind of a tennis match, and I was in the middle of it. I just was sick of it. I was too young to get involved in something like that. I was too inexperienced to get involved with something like that, so I never published anything off of my dissertation, and there was some stuff worth publishing.

There were a couple of things I'd learned about public policy that makes sense today. In fact, I was listening to *This American Life* the other day—one of my favorite podcasts—and part of the discussion was about how legislative action can sometimes overcompensate and create other problems. That's kind of what I found is this effort on the part of the Legislature to correct one thing created a whole new problem that made the original thing and other things even worse in some ways.

I wasn't interested, I didn't want to, I didn't want to get involved with the dissertation stuff at all, and so I didn't. So, I didn't have that to fall back on, to publish from. I was pulling all sorts of stuff out of the air. I'd been on a TV quiz show, and I wrote a little piece about that and some other stuff. I can't blame them. I'd send them off and the editors of these journals would go, ah, this is superficial, this is not about anything of substance.

By that time, my ego was too strong, it didn't really bother me. Fuck them. I knew I didn't have anything profound to say. I did later on in life, and I got some of that stuff out, but in those days, the only way I would have made tenure at Riverside is if the department would have made up a huge fight for the fact that I was such an able teacher. They would have done, if for no other reason than the FTE I generated for enrollment. They liked me. I was popular. They didn't want me to go.

I came to Evergreen partly getting my feet on the path that I should have never gotten off of. But partly as a failure, too. I couldn't deny the fact the competitive me had left the competitive situation where I had simply folded my hand. Didn't play it out.

Zaragoza: I see. Do you want to take a break, or should we go right into your coming to Evergreen?

Kuehn: I'm on a roll here, unless you need to stop, keep going.

Zaragoza: No, I'm good.

Kuehn: Is this okay? Is this useful?

Zaragoza: It's lovely. It's lots of good stuff. I'm curious what quiz show.

Kuehn: Oh! I should send you the article. It was a program that, I think, was on at noon on ABC called *Split Second*. I've got to tell you this story.

Zaragoza: You do.

Kuehn: My wife at the time was really interested in that kind of stuff. We were living out in Riverside, and she sees this thing in the *LA Times* about "Want to be on a quiz show? Come and audition." Blah blah blah. So, she did. They had a little quiz over the phone, and she got invited for an audition. She told me about it and I said, "I'll try it, too."

I've forgotten this. I've got to go back a bit. While I'm at Redlands—I don't know if you remember it; they've actually revived it, I saw on TV the other day—Sunday afternoons for years when I was a young man, GE sponsored a program on NBC called *College Bowl*. They would have teams of four from two colleges play this quiz show, and if you won it four weeks in a row, your school got some big stuff. It was very competitive, and lots of universities wanted to be part of this. Redlands got chosen at the end of my sophomore year to appear on the *College Bowl* in the fall of 1964.

There was a big competition on campus, and I was one of eight students chosen to be on the team. Only four people went back to New York to play, but they had four alternates which they would rotate.

When we finished up in spring, I was number three on the team. I went off and I did an internship that summer, and I was kind of naïve about all of this. Number three! I'm going back to New York in the fall! I didn't realize that players five, six, seven and eight really wanted to go, and so they worked their asses off in the summer and I didn't do anything except rest on my laurels. I came back and they had more competitions, and I ended up ranked sixth. Boy, was I pissed! Fifth would have been cool because I would have gone to New York. I wouldn't have played but I would have been the alternate. Sixth, they had to win one, and then I'd get to go.

They played Dickinson University. I'm at home with my parents and my girlfriend watching this thing, and Redlands is leading Dickinson right till the last couple of minutes. In a moment I will never, ever forget, there was a guy on the team—it should have been me, not him—a guy named Joe Linn, this squeaky fucker—and I forget what the question was, but the answer was, marsupials. [slams his fist on the table] And Linn buzzes in and Linn doesn't know what the fuck a marsupial is from a Band-Aid. We lose. The question goes to Dickinson. They answer it. They go ahead. We lose! My trip to New York is blown away by Joe Linn's ignorance in the last 30 seconds in the game.

I carried this for me for several years, the fact that I was cheated—basically twice—out of my rightful position on the College Bowl team. So, my wife's going to try out for this thing. I figured I'd try out, so I call them, and they ask you these questions. They were trivia questions, and I used to be pretty good at that stuff, so I qualify for an audition, too.

We drive in. We go to the studio in Hollywood at ABC. We do more interviews, and she doesn't get selected, but I do. That's part of the premise of my article because I learned something about entertainment on television. It's that quiz shows are scripted, in a certain sense. This was in the days following all the great quiz show scandals, so they were very careful about security. But if you're going to pull together three people to play on *Jeopardy*, you're going to pick three people who provide some degree of not only competitive equality but have personality or something.

Anyhow, I got selected to be on this thing, and I get a call a couple of weeks later to come in. It was an evening taping, so they did them all on one day. They did three in the afternoon and two in the evening. "Bring in a change of clothing." I go and I sit all night in this thing, and they don't call me. I sit back in the dressing room, secluded, with a bunch of other contestants. I got pissed about that. I came all the way from Riverside to spend a whole evening and nothing happens. They said, "We promise we'll get you on next time. We'll put you in the first set."

I come back the next week in the afternoon. Now, I've got to have four changes of clothing, just in case I win all the way through. I carry in all my clothing, and the first round, I don't get to play. The second round, I get called. There is the reigning champion, the person who won the previous game, sitting there, there's me and there's a young woman. Perfect setup.

I'm introduced [as a] "A college professor from the Pacific Northwest"—even though I was at Riverside—this kid here, he's a college student. He's a community college student. [slams his fist on the table] from El Segundo or someplace. What a setup, right? College student versus college professor.

The game was a trivia game. They'd ask you a question, and each question, they have three answers to it, and if you get all three—"Name three movies that John Wayne starred in"—if you get all three of them then you'd get a bunch of points. If you only got two, then it would bounce to somebody else to get the third one.

Through the rounds of that, I won easily. The championship round, though—and there was a lot at stake here—over on this other stage here are, I think, five automobiles, and if you won the first round, you were given a key, and you could go up and try one of those five. If it worked, you got to keep the car! You won the second round, there would only be four cars. If you went all the way through, there would be one car and your key.

We get to the championship car round and I'm first.. Boy oh boy, I honestly forget what the first question was. I had to get three parts, if I get three parts I wipe all the rest of them out. I get to go try the car. But I only get two of the three, and I can't remember the third. I think he buzzes in and gets one, so now we're doing the second round of this thing. I've got to get one. He's got to get three. She's got to get five.

"Name three motion pictures starring Shir"—[slams his fist on the table] He hits the button. He knows every picture that Shirley Temple has ever been in. Of course, he's a film arts fucking major. [laughing] The college professor is defeated. The little banquette we sat on, the three together, is on rails. He steps out to go down to get down to get the car, and we are literally zoomed back on wheels. It's all over. I don't know whether he got the car or not.

Punch line. Okay, it's over. I'm kind of glad it's over at least. Humiliated by being defeated by this college kid. I get my changes of clothing, and I'm walking out. I am walking out of the studio down an alleyway to the front of the studio where my wife is waiting for me, carrying my clothing over my shoulder.

As I'm walking, a couple approaches me. In southern California, you can tell a tourist real quick, and these are clearly not southern Californians. But it is clear that they attended the show, and it is clear they recognize me. As I'm coming close to them, they walked up to me and said, "Oh, we're so sorry. We thought you were going to win." Blah blah blah. You've seen this. You've been at a cocktail party or convention. Their eyes kind of glaze over, and they see something beyond me, and they sort of disappear. I turn around, and who's coming out? The kid! [laughing] I'm sure they asked for his autograph.

How the hell did I end up telling you that story?

Zaragoza: I was curious about the quiz show.

Kuehn: That was it. That was it. I got an article out of it.

Zaragoza: Beautiful. You didn't get a car, but you did get the article, and maybe a little bit of a lesson there that led you to your Evergreen—

Kuehn: Better than that, Tony. I got 275 bucks and a set of stainless steel flatware. [laughter] It was worth the effort.

Zaragoza: Nice.

Kuehn: The worst part—I'd forgotten this—I had told everybody, all my colleagues at Riverside, that I was going to do this thing, so they're all excited about it. [laughter] Now I've got to tell them what happened. Worse, I have to invite them over to our apartment for lunch and watch this thing. It was a humbling experience.

Zaragoza: Yeah. That, in some ways, is one of your leadups to teaching at Evergreen. Can you tell us, Duke, how did you hear about Evergreen? How did this opportunity present itself to you? How did you get out to Olympia to teach at The Evergreen State College?

Kuehn: You know by now, you know I've got stories. I had heard about Evergreen because I think in the last year that I was in Seattle at the U, it got funded or opened. I can't remember the exact timing of it, but I knew there was a new liberal arts college in Olympia. I vaguely followed it. I didn't realize how alternative it was.

My wife and I wanted to come back to the Northwest. We had become Northwesterners the four years we lived in Seattle. Looking at liberal arts options, the two choices that were first in my mind were Lewis and Clark in Portland and the University of Puget Sound here in Tacoma. I think PLU and Evergreen had come lower, sort of secondary choices, but they weren't primary choices. It was not a good hiring year for that kind of stuff. I didn't get anywhere with them. But I did get some interest from Evergreen. Not a lot. In some ways, at that time, I was not a particularly good fit. You'll learn more as we talk about this.

I was scheduled to present a paper at the Pacific Sociological Association meetings in Seattle in mid-April. I had been communicating back and forth and not getting anywhere with Evergreen. Llyn Patterson was one of the deans at that time and I called or wrote or something—communicated with Llyn—and indicated I was going to be in Seattle. Was there any possibility that I could come down for a visit? So, I invited myself to Evergreen.

I remember it was a beautiful spring day when I drove the car down to Olympia. Went on the campus for the first time ever. This was the spring of 1975, so the college had been in operation four years. It was a zoo. It was unbelievable. Extraordinarily creative but, boy, it was non-institutional. There were no handrails.

I came down and I visited. She sent me to sit in on a seminar with Oscar Soule, who became a good friend. I watched that. She had me meet with a faculty member whose name I can't remember, and who left not longer after I came. He was a psychologist. Really nice guy. We met and he showed me around the campus. I felt kind of sorry for him because they hadn't told him anything really about what to do.

They didn't have any real plan for me, so we go to the Student Union and have a cup of coffee or something and we come out and we're all done. It's late in the afternoon, and he doesn't have anything to do with me or do. He's stuck with me. Right? We're standing by the clock tower in Red Square, and I could see he was kind of uncomfortable because he couldn't get rid of me. [laughing] Finally, I said to him, "Hey, I've got to get back to the airport anyhow. Thank you very much." He just kind of backed away from me. [laughing]

I left and I didn't really think anything was going to happen. A month or so later—true story—Sunday night I get a call from a student of mine—undergraduate, senior, good kid. He says, "Dr. Kuehn, I really need your help." I said, "What's that, Larry?" He said, "I've been arrested and I'm in the San Diego County Jail. Do you think you could come down and get me out?"

That's the kind of teacher I was. Right? The guy felt confident enough to call his professor, so Sunday night, I drive all the way from Riverside to San Diego, about a three-hour drive. Get down there like 1:00 in the morning. Get him out of jail. Drive him all the way back home.

I go to class and I'm hardly awake, and I get a call that day from Llyn Patterson. They offered me a job at Evergreen. I took it. It was not my first choice, for a variety of reasons. Nevertheless, I was ready to get out of Riverside, so I took the job.

You know this history as well as I do, but there was a planning faculty—30 or 35—who were hired in, I think, 1970. They did a year or so of planning, and they hired a cohort to join them, I think another 30 or so faculty. When the college opened, it opened with, I guess, 60 or 70 faculty, all either part of that original team, or handpicked by that original team. To this day if I went on campus, I would still be seen as a newcomer. I was not part of those initial two cohorts.

Over the next couple of years, they hired people like me, and Ginny Ingersoll, and Joye Hardiman, and a bunch of good faculty. I'm not sure what rationale they used. I think they were plugging holes, or they were adding here and supplementing there.

There was one other sociologist on the faculty at Evergreen at the time, a guy named Earle McNeil who taught very, very—in my mind— soft sociology. One of the founding deans, a guy named Merv Cadwallader, was a nationally known sociologist, but very, very qualitative, not quantitative at all. I think Cadwallader was largely instrumental in making sure the social scientists they hired were all qualitative kinds of people. There were no quantitative people.

Either the year or two years before I was there, Russ Lidman was hired. Russ was a quantitative economist, so Russ and I were the only two social scientists on campus who did anything with data. Hard data. In fact, I was told at a hiring DTF meeting, a faculty member at Evergreen threatened to resign if I were hired, not because of me personally, but because of the pedagogy that I represented and the scholarship I represented.

So, I wasn't particularly welcome. I wasn't unwelcome, but I wasn't really welcome. I didn't really fit in all that well, even though my inclination was very much towards the liberal arts. I did much over the time that I was at Evergreen by trying to bridge the liberal arts with quantitative analysis.

So, that's how I got to Evergreen. I don't know how I got hired.

Zaragoza: Would you tell a little bit about the early educational atmosphere and philosophy, as you experienced it in those first couple years, Duke?

Kuehn: [Laughing] It was a fucking zoo. [laughter] Literally, the curriculum was designed every spring for the fall. Faculty teams were composed, and the best comparison I can give to it, it was just like fraternity rush. People would clump together because they wanted to teach with some people and really didn't want to teach with others, and they would find something to teach, a topic to teach.

I had no understanding of this at all. I'd done a little bit of interdisciplinary work at Riverside, strangely enough. I team-taught a course with a guy from the Poli-Sci Department, which was very revolutionary. The concept of interdisciplinary education was not foreign or unacceptable to me, but I'd never seen anything like this.

The first assignment I had was perfect. I was assigned to a program—I forget what they called them in those days, but it was a freshman-level program, entry-level program—called Self Exploration Through Autobiography. Here I am, a quantitative social scientist, assigned to teach with Thad Curtz, a Lit guy, someone whose name I've forgotten, another Lit person, and a visiting faculty member from Ireland, kind of a very low-key Dylan Thomas. [laughing] Also a Lit person.

I was supposed to provide the social science side of this program that was looking at exploring yourself. All the other exploration was very, very, very much . . . you can imagine it. [laughing]

The students were required to do seminar, to write, I think, at least 20 pages of autobiography a week. That's extraordinary!

Zaragoza: Wow.

Kuehn: I've written an autobiography in my seventies, and I couldn't do 20 pages a week for 10 weeks. I didn't realize my colleagues were simply sampling the pages. I read every friggin' page—400 pages of autobiography—every week.

Zaragoza: Wow.

Kuehn: Here's the other problem. This was a freshman-level program. These were mostly 18- or 19-year-old kids. Hard for them to have much of an autobiography for the first 20 pages, much less the next 120, 180. They went very deep, some of them. Very, very deep. Supernaturally deep. But I hung in there. I taught a good seminar. I read all their stuff and I helped them, and they became better writers, no question. We helped them with their writing. I don't know how much analytically it was helpful, but it was interesting.

It was crazy. The faculty seminars were crazy. My colleagues were very nice and very kind and very helpful. It couldn't have been a better orientation to Evergreen in some ways. This was a very strong program. The students really learned a lot. They learned too much, in some ways. I was able to pass on a little bit of Soc and Psych 101 to them.

The spring rolled around. I forget what I went to in the second two quarters. Spring rolled around and I didn't realize the fraternity rush aspect of all of this. A faculty member—an established faculty member—at Evergreen came in and said, "Hey, we're putting together a program and I'd really like you to teach with us next year." I was honored I didn't have to go seeking. We talked a little bit about this and I signed on.

As the rest of the team progressed, he said he wanted to add a certain member of the faculty who I really didn't want to teach with. I really thought the guy was a flake. I still think he's a flake. Nice guy. Good teacher, but just touchy-feely, flakey stuff. This was kind of a political economy program, as I recall. I really didn't want to do this.

By then, places were filling up. I'd already been selected to be in Alpha Tau Omega. Right? I did not want to do this, so I went to see Ed Kormondy, who was the Provost. Ed was a terrific guy. Really nice guy. Good Provost.

I said, "Ed, you're wasting my talents here. This is not going to be a good program, and I'm not going to contribute very much to it. I don't want to do that." And, in a decision that kind of saved my life—certainly changed my life, absolutely; you and I wouldn't be talking if this hadn't happened—Ed says, "Evergreen is really Southwestern Washington State College. We have an obligation to work with and serve educational institutions throughout the region and the community colleges. We're trying to forge a relationship with Clark College, a community college, down in Vancouver, and it's been suggested by one of the deans that we might start an upper-division human services program. Would you be willing to run that program, help put it together?" "Sign me up."

I helped put it together with one other dean, Will Humphreys, and a couple of other faculty, Richard Alexander and Leo Daugherty. We mounted this two-year program, which was, at that time, situated at Clark College. We took 65 students through in two years to earn their degrees. They were all adult returning students. Given the fact that it was 1976, there were many, many adult returning women students.

It was a powerful, strong interdisciplinary program with a focus on careers in human services, administration or clinically. It was the first administrative position I'd ever been given in my life. I commuted once a week the 104 miles from Olympia to Vancouver. Stayed in a motel there two nights.

It was a wonderful experience. It was a good program, strong program. Great students. My first real experience in teaching adult students. It was just a great program. The college got great public relations from it.

Ironically, exactly at the same time, maybe a year before, Maxine Mimms had started the Tacoma Program, but the college nowhere ever promoted that as much as they promoted my program, which I think presented a little bit of resentment on the part of Maxine. Who the hell was I when she was doing all this stuff out of her kitchen?

Right in the middle of all of this, lo and behold, Charles McCann retires as President and Dan Evans becomes President. As I told you before, I have great admiration of Evans. It was great working for him, and I learned a lot. He's a terrific guy, but it was an odd choice on his part. Just as I didn't understand much of Evergreen, nobody else did, either. He understood the Vancouver Program, and he understood me, and I rose in his esteem very, very quickly. It didn't make any difference to him that I hadn't been hired in 1969. He could see what I was doing and how it was working.

So, I got known by Evans, and Evans—I think it's a true story—when Evans arrived, almost one by one everyone of those original 70 faculty members sought Evans out to tell him what he needed to know. I didn't. I was one of the few that Evans sought out.

Suddenly, I learned then and learned for the rest of my life about political relations; basically, how to work with decision-makers. I never had an agenda to advance, but if you asked me, I had opinions. That forced an early relationship that paid out later on when I became his assistant.

The Vancouver Program was a profound, compelling experience, and it proved I was able to stand in front of faculty from that day forward and say there is no inherent conflict between liberal arts and careers. There's no inherent conflict between—and many of these planning faculty, they'd come from all these fancy liberal arts colleges, and—no question—their image of the ideal Evergreen student was somebody who was at Reed. Reed was the model. Reed students were the ideal. The idea that you would end up with a classroom of people who were 35, 40 years old looking to advance their careers and finish their education—that did not fit their conceptions. That was not Oberlin. That was not Dickinson. That was not Reed. That was not all these other places they had in mind.

I don't know why I felt this way, Tony, but from the very beginning, I believed that the power of a liberal arts education was that it did allow you to pursue academic careers or professional careers. It was a powerful foundation for that stuff.

In a very brief amount of time—18 months—I had become, I wouldn't say a presence, because I don't even think many people even knew me, but I had become an icon of a different approach to things at Evergreen. Ginny Ingersoll had been hired in the same cohort I was hired in, and she was doing the same thing on campus with her management program. She and I teamed up, we had the same vision.

Ginny and I and Russ Lidman and a couple of others represented a different approach to the social sciences. It was not only more vocationally oriented, not only more oriented towards hard data, but more traditional in a lot of ways, no question. It didn't mean we weren't open to interdisciplinary approaches and invited interdisciplinary approaches. We were good with interdisciplinary work, but there was never any question there's a solid base here, and it's rooted in the social sciences.

That's my early experience. I would not get fraternity rushes. I don't know what would have happened if I hadn't been invited to join the team that I backed out of. I don't know what would have happened if I had not gone to Vancouver.

I'm a relatively religious person. I don't make a big deal about it, but I do believe in a sort of divine direction to things. Because if you had asked me six months before, I could have never told you. If you had asked me when I came here, I could have never told you I'm going to end up teaching at a community college with adults. Never. It wasn't even anywhere on my radar. Unimaginable. That I did, changed my life. You and I would not be talking right now if that had not happened, I guarantee you.

Zaragoza: Sorry, Duke. Say that one more time.

Kuehn: If I had not been given that assignment to Vancouver, you and I probably never would have met. Not in this kind of context. It absolutely changed my life and changed it for the better. But it confirms that point that I made earlier to my granddaughter. If you've got a choice, take the one that opens doors. Because all sorts of things after the Vancouver Program materialized.

There's a little footnote to that, and we'll probably get to that later on, but when I didn't—I was the acting director of the Evergreen's Institute for Public Policy, and when I didn't get it, I was really crushed. It really hurt me. I remember going home and telling my wife—this came right at the beginning of the summer—I said, "I'm really going to make this consulting business work. If it works, I'm quitting. I'm leaving Evergreen. I'm quitting teaching." Well, I need to get enough contracts to replace my Evergreen salary and benefits. Almost, but I didn't.

A couple years later, we're sitting in Paris at a bistro eating French onion soup. I love Paris. To me, it is the world. Sipping this wine, eating this French onion soup. I look at Kathleen and I go, "If I'd gotten that job at the institute, we wouldn't be sitting here right now." [laughing]

That's been the story of my life, these kinds of odd doors that open. All right, I'll try thst. Then all of a sudden, I'm in Tokyo, or meeting a ballet dancer. Whatever it is, I just always "Let's go see. Let's try that and see what happens," and be open and responsive to that. I will thank Evergreen for that in that regards. Evergreen was a site of enormous opportunity. They allowed me to do things and get away with things that I never would have been allowed to at any kind of conventional institution, even a liberal arts school.

Because there was no structure. There was nobody to say "no." Or if there was, there was nobody who could argue very forcefully against what I wanted to try, so I got to do basically whatever the hell I wanted to do. I think, to the betterment of the school and the programs and the students. I saw other people do that. It was an environment where it rewarded entrepreneurship at the highest level. But I'm not sure intentionally. I think it just didn't have any structure to control it. [laughing]

Zaragoza: Right, so people could find things that interested in them, and they were passionate about, and pursued those pathways.

Kuehn: Yep.

Zaragoza: Duke, you mentioned your work in management and administration, and teaching those at Evergreen. Is that the next step for you? Is that the next direction after Vancouver?

Kuehn: I tried to think about it the other day. I meant to pull out my portfolio and look. I cannot specifically remember what my assignment was when I came back from Vancouver. It might have been Political Ecology. I don't know. I'll go back and look it up.

I was kind of a sociologist for hire for a couple years, and I enjoyed that. You could drop me into a program and there wasn't anything that I couldn't adapt what I was trying to teach about. Because the longer I taught at Evergreen—you know this—the more I began to develop a very personalized, individualized conception of what the social sciences were. The more I adapted the things I had learned myself as an undergraduate and graduate.

So, I fit in well if you were teaching a program about ecology or teaching a program about whatever. I fit in well because I was looking at rather high-level processes. I spent a lot of time—I taught a program with Ginny Ingersoll on decision-making, just that alone, because that was the focus of much of my work. How do people make decisions? If you contextualize it, how do they make decisions in courts? How do they make decisions in legislatures? How did they make decisions in boardrooms?

I spent a lot of time learning about the support of social processes. Parenting. Socialization. How do these processes work in social systems? Which meant that I fit in well. And I was a good colleague. I was supportive of the people I taught with. I didn't always necessarily like them or agree with them, but I supported them, so I was a sought-after faculty member. I got to teach in some fun programs. Taught a course with Sally Cloninger. A big chunk of my piece was on pornography. It was fun.

Made some wonderful friendships, most of which gradually deteriorated because I'm away from there and got disconnected altogether from it. We'll talk about this later. As I began to consult, I was already a marginal faculty member in some people's minds. I was even more marginalized because they couldn't figure out, what the hell was that? Why is he doing that? Money. That would be money. Bought a new car. I think some faculty thought — that's why consultants all get those fancy new cars. That wasn't it at all, but I didn't turn away the money, that's for sure. [laughing]

Zaragoza: Would you talk some about the decision-making program that you were in, and some of that work? That sounds fascinating, Duke. What was that like, and what was driving that program?

Kuehn: What was driving it was my friendship with Ginny. We both sought what I would call kind of hard thinking social science work, so we formed a very, very close brother-sister kind of relationship. Very supportive of each other.

I'm not sure exactly how we hit on the theme. The program was built as the follow-up to her Management in Public Interest Program. It had a strong evening component, so it was attracting a lot of adult students who were already employed by the State here in the county.

We just looked at the concept of decision-making. I can't even remember what we read. A lot of autobiographical stuff, probably. How do people make decisions? How do you do that? Is there a process, or are there processes? I used then something that I have used a lot of. I used the cockpit flight recordings from the National Transportation safety reports of airline crashes. I used the communication between the pilot and the first officer and navigator in those days. They were profound, live case studies of how decisions get or don't get made. We drew upon that kind of stuff. How do people really make decisions? I'll have to dig it out. It's been a long time since I've thought about this. That would have been . . . that might have been what I came back and did after Vancouver. That may have been it.

The concept of decision-making has fascinated me since the beginning of when I started studying the social sciences. I was particularly curious, as a sociologist would be, how decisions get made in an organizational context. It wasn't just that I went to the grocery store and decided to buy a leg of lamb. It was I decided to merge with Amazon.

I have in myself fought for years a battle in which I stress the importance of human cognition. I was never one who accepted psychological or social scientific explanations that people were just things that were battered around by forces other than their own conscious thought. I think conscious thought means something.

Ginny and I were very compatible, not just as teachers but in terms of the theoretical approach to this. I think it was a very practical course that really did help people lesrn how to understand how decisions were being made, along with their own role in all of that, if they had one. It was a good program.

Zaragoza: You also mentioned this Management in the Public Interest. Would you tell us some about that? That sounds fascinating, and in some ways, it sounds like what some of the best work in the Masters in Public Administration program should be all about.

Kuehn: Yeah.

Zaragoza: Love to hear some of those.

Kuehn: I don't know the origins of that program because Ginny and I came in in the same cohort. She was, I think, hired to put that program together. She and I didn't interact or know or see each other at all for the first few years. First, because I was in that autobiography program, and then I was in Vancouver, so I only got to know here tangentially over time, and then when we began to discover the common interests we had.

I'm sure she was hired and encouraged to develop an undergraduate program like that because of the constant, incessant cry from the community to have a program in management. She put it together, I think with one other guy. I can't remember his name, maybe Chuck Nisbet. But she was the heart and soul of it for years.

The title was perfect: Management in the Public Interest. It immediately assuaged all those fears that this is a business program, and it appealed very well to the cohort of people at Evergreen or within the community who were involved in the public sector.

I wasn't a part of the design or the initial handling of that program. I think if we'd known our common interests and abilities, it would have come earlier. Ultimately, it was. I was a key faculty member in it for years, but never as much as the three or four who had taught the program in the very beginning. It was a good program, and it was a significant turn in Evergreen's development.

I'll tell you this now, but it will be more important later on. When I was looking at the problems with Evergreen's enrollment in the late '70s, I found almost everything was going down. Down, down, down, down, down. There were a few places where we weren't, and her program was one of them because it attracted students from community colleges and from the local community. All the other programs, no. No appeal, or little appeal. It was a very, very strong program.

Zaragoza: You also worked with the Masters in Public Administration program? Do you want to talk about how that got started, or how your work with it got started?

Kuehn: I don't know how it got started exactly. It must have been in some proposal at some point in time that Evergreen start a graduate program. I think they decided simultaneously that a program of public administration and a public program in environmental sciences would make sense.

A small, tiny faculty were put together. They hired a guy named Guy Adams, who taught with Ginny in the management program, and who was a public administrator. I think Guy and Russ Lidman and a couple of other people were a planning team for that. I wasn't involved in the planning for it at all, I'm not sure why. I'm not sure I even would have been that interested.

They put that program together and then I taught in the first year. I taught Quantitative Methods with David Paulsen. You know how ironic that is, given my own experience in graduate school, but here, the guy who was skeptical about all of that, suddenly becomes the proponent of it. David, a fellow faculty member who has since retired, and I taught that first Quant Methods class. It was really good.

Probably of all the things I taught at Evergreen, the best stuff I taught was statistics. As I think you've heard, I taught a statistics course with Gilda Sheppard in which we taught statistics alongside the history of jazz. It was unbelievable. She's unbelievable.

Zaragoza: That sounds incredible.

Kuehn: It was extraordinary. She is, without a doubt, the most extraordinary person I ever taught with.

Zaragoza: That's great.

Kuehn: I'm so happy for her late-arriving success at filmmaking. It's well deserved and long overdue.

Zaragoza: Yeah, yeah. I think we're just at the beginning of it, to be honest with you.

Kuehn: I think so, too. I'm so happy for her. I don't want to stop this. Keep going.

Zaragoza: I wonder if we should take a break here and then come back another day to get some of the other stuff—your work with Dan Evans, the Tacoma Program, among other things?

Kuehn: Sure.

Zaragoza: Why don't we pause here?

Kuehn: Sounds good.