

Allegra “Ally” Hinkle
Interviewed by Susan Fiksdal
The Evergreen State College oral history project
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FINAL

Fiksdal: I’m Susan Fiksdal. I’m here with Ally Hinkle.

Hinkle: Allegra Hinkle.

Fiksdal: Allegra Hinkle, who we call Ally, on March 24, 2022. We’re going to do an oral history. I’m so pleased to have this time with you, Ally.

Hinkle: Thank you, Susan.

Fiksdal: We will start with your childhood. I’d really like to know when you were born, where you grew up. You might have moved a lot but just go ahead and tell us about that. We’d like to know also a little bit about your parents’ background.

Hinkle: Okay. I was born in 1953 in the Oakland area of California. At the time, both of my parents had attended college. Neither one had graduated at that point. My father was just about to enter the military. I don’t really remember anything much pre-military, although I did have a few years of civilian life.

When I was in first grade—or it could have been kindergarten—we began moving. We moved from California to South Carolina once when Dad was in the Army. He was in officers’ training on the East Coast. We lived in South Carolina for a couple of years. My younger sister was born there. Then we moved back to California. Two of my brothers were born there in California. Then we moved back to Georgia for three years. [When] we moved back to Georgia, I had another baby sister born in Georgia, a “Georgia peach.”

In total, there were two children born before me, so my family was seven children. It was a big family, and we were traveling cross-county by car, so that was exciting. Pre-seat belts, of course. Rattling around in a big Chevy van.

Fiksdal: We did a lot of that, too. [laughter]

Hinkle: Those were the days. It was never a dull moment, that’s for sure. We did a lot of cross-country traveling. We spent summers in the Great Lakes area because my father was a marksman and they held

Army competitions in the summer in the Great Lakes area, so we were always living in tents during the summer by Lake Erie and Lake Ontario.

We finally moved back to California, which is where both my parents originated. Both of my parents came from the Tahoe area. My father was from an educational background. His mother was the principal of the Tahoe High School and had been my mother's principal as well. My mother had studied some nursing in college and dropped out when she and Dad got married.

We ended up back in California, which was where my grandparents were living at the time. My grandparents [then] moved to Washington State to the San Juans. My father decided that he was specializing in Far East Asia. He was studying Korean and was certainly heading to Vietnam.

At that point, my mother decided no more of this packing up seven kids and moving across the country, and besides, we couldn't go to East Asian tours anyway. So, my mother drove us up, on her own, to Washington, where she and her mother had found us a house in Olympia. My mother still lives there. We moved in 1963, when I was 10, right before Kennedy's assassination, so I was here when Kennedy was assassinated.

Fiksdal: Which high school did you go to?

Hinkle: I went to North Thurston for one year. I went to South Bay Elementary in Olympia for a year and a half. We got here midyear of fifth grade. Then I went to Chinook Junior High, and then I was at high school. I was pretty happy being settled in one place, especially at that age.

Fiksdal: I can imagine.

Hinkle: I went one year to North Thurston. I was having a great time educationally. It was wonderful. I was in the choir. I always loved music and North Thurston had a terrific choir. I was having a pretty great time.

I found out at the end of my tenth-grade year that my father was going to be stationed in Korea, and it was an accompanied tour. That meant his family would go with him, and that we were moving, because Mom thought if we didn't, at that point—he had never been stationed in Washington all those years.

Fiksdal: Oh, so you really didn't know him.

Hinkle: No. We saw him TDY. He was in Vietnam for a few tours. Then he had gone back to parachute school, and he was a paratrooper and a Green Beret.

Fiksdal: He was a lifelong learner.

Hinkle: He was. He was a very interesting man. We did end up going to Korea, so I did my junior and senior years of high school in Korea, which was a blow. I was not happy. I was extremely resistant.

Fiksdal: Was that an international school where they spoke English?

Hinkle: Yeah. There was a base school, which is just for the Army, and there was also an international school off post. I went to the base school. It ended up being a wonderful experience for me. Terrific. I was very resistant at first, and once I came around, there were a couple of things that were extremely disappointing and very difficult for me. One was that the choir was horrible, and the choir instructor was horrible. I didn't have the same kind of options that I'd had in the States at all, so my music study suffered those last two years. I started teaching guitar at that point, so that helped.

And I was able to graduate half a year early. I had all my credits, and once I convinced them that I had something to do to keep me out of trouble, I guess, [laughing] they allowed me to graduate early. I had been hired by a traveling folk group that was all GIs and their wives, except for me. I was the only high-school-age person in the group. There were eight of us.

Fiksdal: You traveled around South Korea?

Hinkle: We traveled around Korea. We went to all the MASH hospitals, and we did USO shows, things like that.

Fiksdal: Amazing, Ally.

Hinkle: Yeah, it was a great experience for me. I really enjoyed it a lot, and I taught guitar, so I did get to do music, just different music. That was fun. I'm grateful for my experience, bottom line, in Korea.

Most of us moved back to the States at the end of my senior year of high school. I graduated in '71 and we came that June back to the same house in Olympia. We'd had somebody from our church staying in our house while we were gone.

The culture shock coming home was much worse than the culture shock going from here to Korea. That was a really difficult time for me. At that point, my friends had changed dramatically, the people I'd known here. It was a time of hippie love and drug experimentation and all that stuff. I had gone through similar times at the high school in Korea, but they were really very different.

Fiksdal: It's a much smaller school, I'm sure, too.

Hinkle: Right. And you're all relatively new. Nobody's been there for a long time, so there were no cliques to speak of in Korea. There was no peer pressure. I shouldn't say no, but minimal. Nothing like what I found when I came back here, even though I didn't enter a school.

Fiksdal: You could still sense that?

Hinkle: Oh, yeah. My sister and I would go to parties and things, and it was really tough, so that was a really difficult period for me. I have a sister a year and a half younger than me, and she was my primary support because we were going through the same thing at the same time. That was great. We're very close still.

I didn't know what to do about college. We didn't have college career counseling stuff in Korea. It didn't exist. They did later, but when I was there, they didn't have it, so I hadn't really thought much about it at all, and my family didn't have a lot of money.

I ended up going for two quarters, I think, to Centralia, which I hated because it was really just like being in high school again. It was not fun. It was just not what I expected of college.

Fiksdal: Just mostly requirements.

Hinkle: Yes, and it was really frustrating for me. Unfortunately, the drive from here to there, I think, is a terribly boring drive for some reason, so I was always falling asleep at the wheel. [laughing] It was not a great time.

Fiksdal: It is a boring drive.

Hinkle: That wasn't my favorite, so I took a break right away shortly after we got back from Korea, about four months later, before I started at Centralia, and just got on a Greyhound bus and went back to Kentucky, where three of the members of that folk group that I was in in Korea had been reassigned to Fort Knox in Kentucky. Two of them had gotten out in the Army and were working in Nashville, Tennessee.

I took the Greyhound and went back for a month. One of those friends was a recording studio engineer in Nashville and one was working in television. I told them I was going to major in music in college and they said, "If you ever decide to change your mind, think about media, because it goes well with music, and Bowling Green, Kentucky, has a great school for media studies." I was like, yeah, okay.

Fiksdal: Your first advice.

Hinkle: Yes, so that was from these friends.

Fiksdal: But people you knew well.

Hinkle: People that I knew well. Yeah, we'd traveled a lot and done all this singing, this music, together, and I liked them a lot. That was my attempt at getting my head back together again after the reentry difficulties. [laughing]

I came back to Washington and did Centralia at first. Decided I hated it. Then I went to Seattle Central Community College. I was determined to pay my own way through college, and the only way I could do that was community college.

I worked three jobs, and I went to Seattle Central. I had a teeny, tiny, one-bedroom apartment up on Capitol Hill where I shared a bathroom in the hallway and I had a hotplate, and I went to Seattle Central, which I loved. Seattle Central was a good school. And they didn't care if I matriculated, so I did not have to take all the prerequisites. I tested out of some. I just pretty much took what I wanted to. I took a lot of music. And they had very good music instruction, so I took baroque recorder, I took classical piano. I, of course, took voice. I was a voice major. It was a great experience for me, sometimes lonely because I had moved away from home. But I thought it was good for me.

I did finish what would have been considered an AA. I didn't care anything about an AA, but I went another year and a half there. I made good friends, and then had to reassess where I was at. I moved back here for a little while and decided that I wasn't cut out to be what I thought was the only career option that a music major would have, a teacher if you weren't famous, and I wasn't going to be famous. I didn't think I wanted to teach. I've always considered myself a very impatient person and didn't think that would suit well to teaching.

I had taught guitar lessons--enough to know that although I really enjoyed the co-learning experience, I don't like as much just dishing something out, and I don't like prep. I'm terrible at prep. So, I decided to follow the career advice that had been offered almost two years earlier.

By then, I'd had a couple of crummy, romantic, typical college romantic experiences that I thought were terrible. I decided I had horrible taste in men. And I thought I should just leave Washington. I needed to do something clean, so I applied at Bowling Green, Western Kentucky University, and got in. I had to declare a major. It was back to traditional education, really, so I majored in communications. It is a good school for communications in many ways.

I knew about Evergreen. I had known about Evergreen since tenth grade. It was being built when I was at North Thurston in tenth grade. I had a history teacher. I think his name was Mr. Brand—I can't swear to that—but he was young and extremely enthusiastic about Evergreen's teaching philosophy. He talked to us a lot about it, about interdisciplinary education. He was very excited. So, I'd heard of Evergreen. Didn't think much more about it.

When I had first moved back here, I had a very good friend who was going to Evergreen then. It had just opened in '71—I graduated in '71—so I would take Sam to campus with all the construction everywhere, and I'd just drop her off. At that point, I thought, I don't think that I could function in an

environment that doesn't have the incentive of grades. That is an open structure that way. In my mind, I required structure, so I went my own direction.

My complaint about where I ended up going to school is that it wasn't Evergreen. [laughter] For my selected field of study, I would have been much better off at Evergreen.

Fiksdal: Yeah. We certainly had all the equipment and the studios.

Hinkle: Exactly, and the difficulty where I went to school was that they also had all the equipment and the studios, and they parceled them out with an iron fist. My instructor had to clear studio days for us to be in the studio.

Fiksdal: Oh, my gosh.

Hinkle: We couldn't ever go into a studio on our own. My instructor told me at one point when I questioned him about it [that] the facilities were always paid by donations of a graduate who had made it big, so every studio was bought with that kind of money, and had a plaque above the door saying that, and they had to keep it in pristine shape for when that student showed up to tour the facility, so they couldn't have our grubby little mitts all over it.

Fiksdal: For heaven's sake.

Hinkle: That was my experience in studies. I got a great theoretical background, which I probably wouldn't have gotten as much at Evergreen. In the long run—in the long term—I'm grateful for that. I appreciate my theoretical background. It works for me. I like having the theory to build practice on. For me, that works.

I did finish there. Moved right back here. Came with a boyfriend, who then became my husband. Whole different story, not terribly material [to this oral history], but I started having kids right away. Once I got back here, I was lucky. It was a good time for media studies. People were starting to think differently about how media fits with it all.

I got hired immediately by Timberline High School. It was just so easy, it was remarkable. I went into the interview, and they said, "This will be your office." [laughing] It was like, yes, okay!

Fiksdal: What was your job? You didn't have a teaching certificate.

Hinkle: No, I was the A/V media coordinator in the library, so it was like, well, that was way too easy. It was fun for me because I had work/study students working for me, so that was the first time I'd done that. And it was a very tiny program. I got to get my feet wet. But they wanted students to produce a news show and things like that, so it was a really good venue for me.

Fiksdal: That sounds great.

Hinkle: The librarians that I worked with were wonderful. And I was having kids. I had my first son while I was working there and got pregnant with my second daughter. I worked there for about two years. One of the things that I did with my work/study students was I took them to Evergreen. By then, I had decided—pretty much right away—that I should have gone to Evergreen; that that would have been a better education for me, and that I didn't want my students to miss out on seeing if they had any interest in pursuing media.

I always took my students on a fieldtrip to Evergreen. Wyatt Case was there. He would be our guide. He would show them how to edit videotape. They had a lot more equipment than we had, so things were very exciting to the students. It was really fun.

Fiksdal: I didn't know Wyatt was hired so early.

Hinkle: Oh, yeah, Wyatt was there early. Pretty immediately, Evergreen became my dream job, and I recognized that right away. An opening came up in media alone when Peter was working there. He had recently become staff, and Karen—

Fiksdal: Peter . . . ?

Hinkle: Randlette.

Fiksdal: Oh, he was already there, too?

Hinkle: Yeah, he had been a student and went straight from student to staff. And Karen Huntsberger, who married Michael Huntsberger later, but she was Karen something else then.

I was offered the position, and I turned it down. My dream job. There were two things that happened. They offered the position to me and another woman with the idea that we could split the position. Right. I was willing to, because it was my dream job, and she wasn't.

My marriage was really rocky at that point. I had two kids, and my marriage was not good, so I decided not to do it. Which was tough for me, because it was my dream job, and at that point, after the birth of my second daughter, I quit at Timberline to work parttime after Rae Ann was born because we were having so much trouble, so I was working at a terrible job as a cook in a restaurant. Little interim thing.

It was a tough time—transitional—and then, a little bit later, my husband and I got back together for a while and the job opened again a year later. The guy that had taken the job had broken his leg and decided he didn't want to work anymore. I don't know, some strange story like that. So, they offered it to me again, and that time, I took it. I said, "If my marriage can't survive me working, then it's not meant to be."

Fiksdal: This was a fulltime job?

Hinkle: Yes, it was not offered as a split. I was hired as the front-desk coordinator at Media Loan, working directly with the students. In the end, I loved that job. It was so funny in the interview because it was a great, big panel—Evergreen interviews are always a big panel—and there were so many stress-related questions. Over and over again, they wanted to know how you deal with stress, how you deal with high volume, how you deal with—because Media Loan was considered one of those places. If you weren't careful, you could be a little intimidated by all that.

Turns out I just thrive in that environment. I like it. I like fast-paced. I don't like being bored. I like challenges. I loved the students.

Fiksdal: So, it continued to be your dream job.

Hinkle: It did continue to be. As far as I know, nobody has ever stayed at Media Loan longer than me. I was at Media Loan for 12 years, which is a really long time, apparently. I was maybe four or five years as the front desk supervisor and then I was the head of Media Loan the rest of the time for seven years, or whatever it was.

Fiksdal: Do you remember the date you were hired, the year?

Hinkle: I was hired in 1980. I had my third child. That was a wonderful experience to go from Timberline High School, where I had my first boy, and was told that I was not allowed to breastfeed my son, even in the nurse's office or my car in the parking lot. It was inappropriate for high school students to be around a breastfeeding mother. I did end up winning that battle by threatening the ACLU, but I just said, "I'm willing to fight this." It was the vice principal who didn't want me to do it, and who said flat out "You cannot breastfeed." It was like, what? [laughing]

Fiksdal: So odd to think about that now.

Hinkle: It is. I went from there to having a child while I was working at Evergreen at Media Loan, where they said, "Sure, you want to bring the baby to work so you can feed the baby at work? Fine. Put a bassinette in your office." So, as far as I know, I'm the first person who had a bassinette and baby in my office. Then Marge used it and Peter used it when they had children. Both of them had their babies there.

Fiksdal: I brought my baby in '81.

Hinkle: Oh, good.

Fiksdal: But not in a bassinette, but he was in my office with me. And, yes, I breastfed him.

Hinkle: It was a wonderful experience for me. I had very, very, very supportive staff and faculty and students and everybody around me. People would joke about checking out the kids.

A couple of my students were in long-term relationships and talking about the possibility of having kids. I would say, “No, you just need to check one of mine for a little bit. Get a taste first. You really need to check this out.” [laughter]

In the meantime, my husband and I divorced, and it was a great, solid spot for me to be in when all that happened, so Evergreen did continue to be my dream job. A big portion of that had to do with something that harkens back to my childhood. I was not enamored of commercial media per se. I was intrigued by critique of media—how they covered the Vietnam War; how is inherent bias intrinsic to the way commercial media is produced and driven? Things like that, I wrote about that in my theoretical studies at Western Kentucky and thought about a lot, and my conclusion was that I was just not a fan of typical commercial [media]; that it’s pablum fed to the masses, and often is promoting a message that I can’t be behind.

My family contributed to that as well because once us seven children started behaving like the Three Stooges, my mother quickly booted the television out of the house.

Fiksdal: Interesting.

Hinkle: The television was gone from our house before I finished third grade and was gone for the rest of the time I was at home. I grew up without a TV at that point, and when I had children, I decided I just didn’t really want a TV in the house, so once my husband and I were divorced, there was no more TV in my house. I’m just not a fan.

Evergreen suited that. None of the media studies programs were geared toward commercial media in any way, shape or form. It was all documentary, experimental, etc. The interdisciplinary idea was a big driver for me because I just didn’t understand why at my college only media students—you had to prove that you were a media student—could get access to equipment. That made no sense to me. I was a firm believer that media is media. Books are media. Our media was not different. It really is a form of expression and a form of communication—that’s all it is—and anybody who wants or needs to express themselves or use that, especially in a learning environment, should be allowed to do that, so I was happy as a clam there.

Fiksdal: Because your philosophy matched.

Hinkle: My philosophy matched. Oh, it was good for me. Then, of course, our entire work staff was students.

Fiksdal: That's true. It's always been that way.

Hinkle: All of us tended to sponsor contracts. We all had independent contract students. Marge and Peter always had lots. I was more hesitant about doing that at first, and then became more comfortable. Eventually, I ended up teaching an evening class. I think you probably know that. I taught the Introduction to Media course for a while that Wyatt used to teach.

One of the other things that I greatly appreciated about Evergreen was the cross-seeding between departments. We didn't have really true departments, but in my case, that played out—me working as a media consultant with the Computer Services staff—because computers and media became so intertwined.

Some of my most rewarding inter-staff experiences were teaching with a few staff, specifically in Computer Services. Susan Bustetter was my first, and we taught years and years together. We were teaching a lot of different kinds of software, not just straight media. Some of it was we were doing PowerPoint and things like that. But we were doing pretty intensive workshop instruction. Later, it was Amy Greene, which was wonderful, and that was-

Fiksdal: -She was just terrific.

Hinkle: Wonderful, wonderful people. We developed a close friendship. The three of us were good friends, and I really, really—that experience was so pleasurable for me because students did such great things with the little bit that I felt we gave them. They'd just take off running.

By then, I was already teaching pretty regularly an evening class, and I really enjoyed that as well. It was a wonderful experience, and students were always really positive. It was great for me. I probably taught the evening class maybe 10 years. I'm not sure how long.

Fiksdal: What were some of the components that you taught?

Hinkle: The students came from all disciplines. They were not typically media students. Our aim in that class—especially initially, in the first iteration that I was teaching that I took over from Wyatt—was to give students who wanted an alternative presentation style to cited paper, for instance; that we would give them enough base skills to be able to produce something of content, with good content.

We were teaching some basic equipment use skills, but more than that, we were teaching research, and how to build and support your ideas in a media structure. Students were scripting, coming up with scripts.

Then we were trying to get them to have a quality product, so we were trying to teach good audio recording skills. We taught some 8-track, 4-track recording studio stuff, so that they could do sound effects and good voice recordings, good narrative recordings.

We were initially requiring that they work only with still images because we did not want them to get locked into—it's sort of a trap to go right into moving images in some ways because you're not developing your script writing skills necessarily, especially if you're just interviewing people. We taught interviewing skills. We had a very specific component. You would first learn to do an outline of a project, and then we would do units on interviewing skills, how to structure the script then by collecting the basic data that you thought could form a beginning, middle and an end of your piece.

Then and only then would you start to think about how images could support your piece and not just duplicate it. A big part of what we were trying to teach was the big error that we see in widespread use of things like PowerPoint is that images are often only supporting the narrative. They're not expanding on it, which is what images should do. They should expand. Any narrative, any narration or audio track should be giving you something, and the visual track should be expanding it, or doing something different with it. One of our pet peeves, typically, was words on screen, and then the narrator says those words. Give your audience credit.

Fiksdal: They can read.

Hinkle: They can read, yeah. And we wanted people not to follow given formats. I saw some just amazingly incredible pieces that delved deep into a personal experience. I'll never forget a piece that a student of mine did about childhood rape. She was a survivor, and it was so . . . her images were things like a bush in a typical evergreen forest setting with a doll hanging from it. It's hard. Very poignant.

My experience with students was amazing, and I sponsored lots of contracts that became a little more sophisticated as time went on. My husband, who was just walking through here, was a contract student of mine in his senior year and did a wonderful piece on legislative process for passing laws and did a film project. I was his camera person.

My experience with the students at Evergreen—Evergreen, for me, never stopped being my dream job. I struggled. That doesn't mean I didn't have struggles. I did. My biggest struggle was when, through the process of the years, I went from being the front desk supervisor to the head of Media Loan for some years, and then I was head of Instructional Media, which was probably my happiest place. I really loved that job. That was a lot of workshops, and a lot of working with students, and really great experiences working with faculty, trying to coordinate workshops for faculty. I enjoyed that job a lot. Then I became the manager of Media Services, which oversees both Media Loan and Media Services.

Fiksdal: What year are we talking about?

Hinkle: I became the manager around '95. It could have been '96. Somewhere in that period after Judith Espinoza left, maybe after Karen left even. When Karen Klein moved onto the faculty, I think that's when I became [manager].

I wasn't sure about that. It was all a little complicated. It was mostly internal candidates. [whispering] I think it was all internal candidates at that point. Peter Randlette wanted to split that job with me, which would have been an absolute nightmare, but it was pretty much a nightmare anyway. The managerial position was really tough for me, partly because it was internal. That's an awkward position to be in with your coworkers.

Fiksdal: Because you know everybody.

Hinkle: You know everybody.

Fiksdal: And suddenly, you are managing them.

Hinkle: Right, and Media Services is a bunch of very independent souls, which is a good and a bad thing. This is true in many areas at Evergreen. We hire people with firm self-determination and a firm idea of how they think things should be run, and for the most part, if the Hiring Committee did a good job, that's a really great thing.

Fiksdal: In your case, you're all under the library dean.

Hinkle: Yeah.

Fiksdal: The library has lots and lots of staff to do all kinds of things, so that's another complicating issue, I think.

Hinkle: Right, it is. Bottom line is handling the personnel issues is not really my bag. I was raised military. Remember that part.

Fiksdal: You should be able to tell people what to do and they do it.

Hinkle: I thought that you could hold people to their work hours, and it turns out you can't at Evergreen. You actually can't. I was told [that] unless you could prove that they were somewhere specifically else, some bar drinking a beer, you can do nothing. You can't tell this person that they need to be at work by 9:00 at the latest. I assume we were all working 8:00 to 5:00. [laughing]

Fiksdal: I'm surprised about that, too.

Hinkle: No, no, you can't. Maybe this person is helping students in the evening. You don't know.

Fiksdal: Yeah, true.

Hinkle: It was a hard road for me.

Fiksdal: That sounds horrible.

Hinkle: Yeah, it was awful for me, and I didn't have the contact with students that I'd had before. Then the part that feeds you is gone.

Fiksdal: I will interject here. I remember in 1990, that's when I started my work videotaping seminars. I came to you and talked to you about, how could I do this without students just staring at a camera? Wouldn't it freak them out? And how can I get naturally occurring seminar talk captured on tape?

You came up with a solution. You probably don't remember this. The first time, we did a horseshoe, with the camera at the end of the horseshoe. That obviously was terrible. Didn't work. I think after that, I came to you, and I said, "We've got to think of something here." Your idea was that I would have the camera on a tripod, of course. This is a video, an old camcorder. Really big.

Hinkle: Those were the days. Oh, yes, I do remember.

Fiksdal: Then you showed me how to hook it up to a tiny TV—really small—and I put it in front of me, turned away from the group. Not completely. I could turn my head slightly just to see, because I needed to move the camera when someone new started speaking. This was so hard. Then I would stare at the screen sometimes to make sure I was moving the camera to whoever was speaking, as well as who was listening. This was all really hard. I couldn't capture all of it.

Then I put a magazine or something in my lap and pretended to be reading. [laughter] You set me up with all this equipment, and all these cords that did or did not work. You remember those days.

Hinkle: Yeah.

Fiksdal: Back then, you're borrowing things from Media Loan. No one tells you if it doesn't work or something.

Hinkle: No, no, you have to test it.

Fiksdal: You're just testing. This was just exhausting. I would be running back and forth.

Hinkle: Yeah, it's tough.

Fiksdal: I couldn't hardly even set up the tripod to work correctly so it would be smooth, so sometimes some videos would be—

Hinkle: Oh, yeah, even the tripod adjustments are challenging.

Fiksdal: All of it was really hard. There were like three I had to make. You say you're impatient. You had infinite patience, and you would listen every time.

Hinkle: Thank you. I did learn patience.

Fiksdal: Your name is in the acknowledgments of everything I've ever published.

Hinkle: Thank you!

Fiksdal: That was crucial.

Hinkle: I did learn that I did have patience in the right setting. It's funny. When you started describing the scenario, I thought, well, what would I have done? Because the only thing I remember talking to somebody about—but that was a student—was that you start our way before you want anything, and you put the camera in front of people, and you don't hook up anything to it and they just get used to it and they stop paying attention.

Fiksdal: The students got a little too smart. They started to notice that there was a red button that came on.

Hinkle: Yeah, the record light is a giveaway. [laughing]

Fiksdal: You had taught too many of them how to use a video camera.

Hinkle: Yeah, that's a problem.

Fiksdal: Word gets around. They did get to sit with their backs to the camera if they felt particularly scared or worried about it.

Hinkle: Right, which is good. Only makes sense.

Fiksdal: Now, looking back—I worked with those for so long—the recordings were never all that good. It was a long time ago.

Hinkle: Oh, yeah, the quality wasn't very good.

Fiksdal: Then, as you recall, students could change day by day. They would look completely different. You didn't even recognize them sometimes, so I doubt anyone would be worried.

Hinkle: Right, I don't think so. But we did gradually learn about consent forms and all that stuff, and about a human subjects review board.

Fiksdal: I was on that. Directed it for a while.

Hinkle: Yeah, that's fun. I've talked a little bit about collaborations with staff, and certainly, with students. I had some amazing student projects that I had felt I had been just blessed with the opportunity to even participate because I found them so incredible.

I have formed deep friendships with a number of those students. There's a limit to people, but I feel very closely attached to a number of those students still, and through the power of social media, we can still stay in touch.

Fiksdal: That's terrific.

Hinkle: I just heard from Melissa Moore, who was a student who worked for me. She lives in Scotland now with her husband. She married a Scottish man. She was talking about moving back to the area because she wants to be closer to family, so they're talking about a move. It's just nice to be able to keep in touch with these people.

But I wanted to mention that one of the things that I find striking about Evergreen, or did—I don't know if it's the same way because I've been gone a long time—was my feeling of collaboration with faculty; that I rarely, if ever, felt that I was not part of the creative process. Faculty would talk openly—I'm sure lots of them didn't approach me, but the ones who did approach me about workshops, usually it was very collaborative. What do you think we need to use? What kinds of skills workshops do you think would work well with these students? How can we do this in the limited time that we've got?

That feeling only grew over the years, to the point where when Sally Cloninger finally got time in her personal schedule, for instance, to really focus on one of her film projects, I got to be part of those. I shot a film with Sally in Germany, which was a marvelous experience. Sally once in a while will call me now. A couple of years back she called me and we went to Gail Tremblay and videotaped an interview with Gail.

Fiksdal: Oh, I'm glad to hear that.

Hinkle: Yeah, you should ask Sally about that. It was good. I've had some wonderful collaborative experiences with various faculty where I got to—I never felt individually creative that way, but I love being engaged in the creative process with someone else as a support person. I don't think I could have gotten that anywhere else.

I also collaborated with big slideshow projects, for instance, for convocation. We did big projects for convocation a couple of times. Sid White's memorial service, I worked with Pat Matheny-White for a long time trying to put together a pretty dang complicated slideshow that she was doing about Sid's years at Evergreen for that part.

It was very fun for me. Those relationships continue. I feel very close to Sally. We play tennis together. She gave me a mandolin when I was trying to learn mandolin. Well, I am trying to learn mandolin. We're just good friends.

Fiksdal: What about other kinds of faculty that weren't in film?

Hinkle: That was really important to me. I worked with a few of the psychology faculty. We started integrating on a pretty regular basis. It's not biofeedback, but they wanted to incorporate a better mode of providing student feedback for counseling skills. They were teaching the students to videotape

themselves with another student in the counseling program and critique that. Very straightforward supportive stuff.

Working in the sciences was always really great, trying to figure out what to do with the scanning electron microscope to film what was going on under that. Marty Beagle working with the staff in Lab Stores. They had some of their own equipment and things like that.

The media faculty were almost always teaching in cross-disciplinary teams. As manager, I was always going to the faculty retreat with Sarah Pedersen, who was then the Dean of the Library. Sarah and I would go and talk to faculty during the planning phases at the retreats about possible integration of media, specifically looking for cross-disciplinary opportunities.

The media faculty already got hold of us all the time because we worked with them all the time, so that wasn't our goal. Our goal was to reach out over cross-disciplinary lines and to see how media could be used to support what they were teaching. Those experiences were wonderful for me. And the majority of our Computer Center workshops were cross-disciplinary.

Fiksdal: It's interesting, because you really got to know everyone on campus.

Hinkle: Yeah. In 2001, my husband moved to Amsterdam, and at that point, I had to figure out what to do about that, so I took a 14-month leave from my managerial position. Wyatt then took over for me. I still worked on the Evergreen Web page. The college was amazingly flexible. I was only working one day a week on doing Web page stuff, but it was enough to keep my sick leave—I was required to have a proof of health insurance in Holland—and it was enough to keep me vested in my retirement program. It was a fun job for me.

I did that for the first 14 months while I was gone. Then I came back, and the requirement of taking a leave of absence says you have to come back for nine months, so I came back and worked for nine months back in my position, or I might have done Wyatt's position. I can't even remember just where it fit.

Then I asked for a second leave and got five months again. Went back to Amsterdam. Came back and worked nine months. They couldn't at that point give me another leave, which made total sense by then. My husband was still there, so I quit Evergreen for two years.

Fiksdal: What was your husband doing in Amsterdam?

Hinkle: My husband was a photographer here downtown. He had graduated with media studies here and had always been a photographer, so he was a photographer. He had a photography studio in Holland as well, but he also grew pot for one of the coffeeshops, the legal coffeeshops. They had asked

him to come. Now, he's just retired from the State of Washington pot grower business. His business is still going but he's retired.

I quit my job, moved there for two years, and then was within reach of—I was a PERS 1 state retirement plan.

Fiksdal: Thank goodness.

Hinkle: So, I was within reach of PERS 1. It was two years before I turned 55, so I could retire at 55 with 25 years. If I went back to Evergreen and worked those last two years, then I could retire if David was still in Holland, and if not, I wouldn't retire.

I came back. Took the classroom tech position in the new Sem II Building, at the time, which I loved. I got to go out of Evergreen back to my roots in tech support, which I loved.

Fiksdal: But that was a lower-level job.

Hinkle: Oh, yeah, it was a lower-level job. I was perfectly happy to take lower level, lower stress. No more managerial mess. And that was a very autonomous position as well, so I was delighted. I pretty much had to take any job that was open in Media Services, and it worked out really well for me. My retirement was just based on my highest two years of pay, whenever they occurred. The two highest. That would have been when I was teaching evenings and being a manager.

David was still in Holland. I had a big retirement party in 2008, and I've been happily retired for how many years is that? [laughing]

Fiksdal: Amazing to retire so young.

Hinkle: I've been retired for 14 years. Evergreen continues to pay me to work at the Co-op is how I figure it. [laughing]

Fiksdal: You work at the Food Co-op?

Hinkle: I work at the Food Co-op. I love that job.

Fiksdal: Which, for the recording, has nothing to do with Evergreen, except that it's staffed by a lot of people from there.

Hinkle: Right. Many, many of the staff.

Fiksdal: And many of us go there.

Hinkle: Right. Now I'm back working with Hugh Lentz, who I worked with before, but in a very different setting.

Fiksdal: He works there?

Hinkle: He works there. He is staff now. This is recent that he became staff. And Pat Maley, who was a former audio recording student of mine at Evergreen. Pat Maley has worked there for many years. So, the Co-op feels very much like a second home to me. I've always wanted to volunteer. I had volunteered off and on, but I had three kids. I didn't really have much time.

I also volunteered for all of Trump's term at the Food Bank downtown, the Thurston County Food Bank, which I loved. There was a change of staff a few months before I left that I wasn't very happy with. Then Covid hit and the staff's response to Covid was not good. At that point, I dropped out. The Co-op was the only place I continued to feel safe. The Co-op Covid guidelines have always suited me.

Fiksdal: They were just amazing.

Hinkle: They were proactive.

Fiksdal: Customers had to wait a while but it really wasn't bad.

Hinkle: No, the Co-op has been good and continues to be good, so I just stayed with that. I enjoyed my time at the Food Bank. I felt like it was valuable for me, and I wish I could continue, but I need a better work environment. The job that you do matters, but you have to have a connect with the people that you work with.

Fiksdal: Of course. You have to enjoy it.

Hinkle: You have to enjoy it, and I certainly did at Evergreen, and I certainly do at the Co-op. I do remember very fondly, in the earlier days, one of the things that changed over the years—I saw that at your document at some point—that I was sorry to see go was the first maybe 10 years, we still made a concerted effort as a campus to do things that were fun together—faculty, staff. Mostly faculty and staff because students were always organizing things—dances and things—and faculty and staff could go to those, or concerts or whatever, but we were still working at having at faculty-staff parties.

Fiksdal: Yes, and having a community.

Hinkle: And having a community. Those were healthy. I still remember those very fondly and they almost seem like, was that a dream? Did I make that up? Because they were really fun, and they were a big deal to me because I was a single parent of three kids, so for me, my community was huge. The people that helped me the most with my children were staff and students from Evergreen. They were my support system.

Marge Brown and her partner, Helen Thornton, helped me so much with my kids. A number of my student workers were amazing. Just liked my kids. So, my support community was there. That changed over the years.

Fiksdal: Yeah, that did.

Hinkle: It did change.

Fiksdal: In your position, we needed instructional staff, but a lot of other people who used to have contracts no longer did them. We started as a real learning community. Then that changed.

Hinkle: That was discouraging.

Fiksdal: We grew.

Hinkle: I could have used that kind of support system when I was a manager, in particular, because that would have helped a lot, I think, that same kind of camaraderie. Because it was camaraderie. It was really good. It's good to see people out of their academic environment for a minute, just for a minute.

Fiksdal: When you were a manager, you were probably pretty busy in meetings.

Hinkle: I did have a lot more administrative duties.

Fiksdal: Those were with library staff and deans?

Hinkle: There were a lot of library meetings, but I had monthly meetings with Don Bantz, (Budget Dean) who I see now once in a while at the Co-op since he came back from Alaska or wherever he was.

Fiksdal: That's right.

Hinkle: I did meet with Don Bantz. That was enjoyable. Once Lee Lyttle moved out of the library dean position and he was in one of the academic dean positions—then he was meeting with me and other managerial positions from around the campus or computer services.

I did those meetings. I did a lot of budget meetings. Anytime we were going through the budget process—which was an annual event every two years, and painful, and always involved discussions of RIFFs and all that stuff—I was always involved in those meetings.

Fiksdal: How many library deans do you remember? Was Jovana Brown there?

Hinkle: I was hired when Jovana had just died. That's when I came. I came in '80. She had just died. It was Susan Smith, and then Bill Bruner. Then Sarah Pedersen, I think, was next. Lee Lyttle. And then . . . my order is not that great. After Lee . . .

Fiksdal: It was someone who was there a very brief time. Jeff Antonelis-Lapp.

Hinkle: Yes, and I don't even remember him. I can't even recall his face.

Fiksdal: I think he was only there less than a year. It just didn't work out for him. Then I think Greg Mullins.

Hinkle: Yes. I was there briefly with Greg, but during the time when I was doing the back-and-forth to Amsterdam, as I recall. So, I went through a few deans.

Fiksdal: Yeah, pretty much all of them.

Hinkle: Yeah, I did go through a few. But I felt like I always had good relationship with the dean. I liked our deans.

Fiksdal: They were all good.

Hinkle: Susan was great. I'll never forget—because I was pretty new, I was pretty young, I started at Evergreen when, I think, I was 28, maybe 27—I remember Susan telling me—because I never used sick leave. I just never got sick. I'm still that way. I just have that kind of healthy constitution, so I never used sick leave. I'll never forget Susan telling me, "You know, Ally, sick leave also means mental health leave." [laughter]

Fiksdal: Everybody was concerned about your stress except for you.

Hinkle: Yes! At that point, I was concerned about my stress. It might have been my divorce or something. I don't know what was happening. Susan finally convinced me that it was actually okay to take a day off and that was all right.

I liked working. People would say, "How can you?" My mother would say that even, because I wasn't being the kind of parent I had always idealized. It never works quite that way. Mom would say, "I don't know how you're working fulltime."

Fiksdal: Because she was a stay-at-home mom.

Hinkle: She was. She had seven kids. That's what I would say. I'd say, "Mom, you had seven kids!" And she would say, "Yeah, but I didn't have to work." I was like "Mom, I get away from the kids when I go to work. I need to go to work."

Fiksdal: Yeah, my mother was a little—it was hard to convince her, too. Well, not very hard. I just said, "This is what I'm doing."

Hinkle: Mom believed in it. She was so supportive.

Fiksdal: But it's a different life.

Hinkle: Yeah, a different life. She just couldn't immediately identify that it wasn't just all toil and trouble.

Fiksdal: Let's get back to your music. You said you were learning the mandolin. I know you play guitar.

Hinkle: I've always played guitar. And I play piano. I play recorder. I'm in a recorder quintet, including my mother. We have a bass, alto, tenor. I play soprano and alto. Well, I play all of them, but primarily in the quintet, I play alto and soprano.

Fiksdal: Are you in any other groups?

Hinkle: I used to be in an Irish group. I was for a couple years. We performed periodically. It was really fun for me, and I'd always wanted to learn more Irish music. I'd always been a big fan of Irish music and I wanted to learn more. But I didn't feel like I contributed as much as the other members. They'd been playing all their lives just Irish music. Ultimately, I thought, you guys don't really need another guitar. At this point, you need a mandolin player. I wasn't playing mandolin at that point.

They ended up getting a mandolin player, so I got out of the group. I was busy anyway because I was, by then, babysitting too many grandchildren. I have 10 of those guys.

Fiksdal: Of course you do.

Hinkle: Of course I do. But I was in a band years ago with my husband in the late '90s, while I was still at Evergreen. We were in a band together, a little rock band. We played down at the Eastside Club and things like that. That was really fun, and there were ex-Greeners also in that band. Sue Patton, who had worked for me at Media Loan 100 years ago. Great blues singer.

I have dabbled in groups here and there, but since Covid, we're much more serious, David and I. For the last few years, I've been playing with a hippie/Baby Boomer—we all knew the same kind of music, and we just get together informally, and there's a banjo player. It's fun—nice group of people—but since Covid, we're not doing that.

David, who had given up music for the last 20 years—the whole time that he was in Amsterdam and when he moved back—at the beginning of Covid or a little bit before that, he took up guitar again. Practices hours a day, and we play together frequently, and a friend of ours is over now. And I'm learning mandolin because there are too many guitars in the world. I'm enjoying mandolin a lot. Takes me back to my Irish music because now I'm playing more melodic lines because the mandolin plays basically fiddle tunes. That's what the mandolin plays. And I'm quite enjoying it. It's really been fun for me.

Oh, and I play ukulele. I was playing ukulele with that configuration, just to not have another guitar. But it's not as flexible as the mandolin. It doesn't have the range, so I decided to go with mandolin. That's when Sally loaned me hers—gave me hers—and I just bought a new one. It's great. Music is way fun.

Fiksdal: I think I should just refer all new retirees to you, and you can help them. [laughter]

Hinkle: I tell you, there is never a dull moment. I do give out free advice at the Co-op. When people tell me they're about to retire, I'm like, ooh, oh, boy, do I have some ideas.

Fiksdal: You can't imagine how helpful that is, even if they don't tell you right away.

Hinkle: People do tell me that they're worried.

Fiksdal: Yeah, people do worry. They can't imagine a different life.

Hinkle: I loved my life at Evergreen, and I love my retirement life. Now, I can't imagine going back. When I first got back to the States from Holland, I applied again at Evergreen for a part-time position in Computer Services working because I had so much fun with that staff and Rip Heminway was still the head of Computer Services then, and I loved Rip. I was hired, and then the President of the college said under the rules, for some obscure reason, I was not allowed to come back to work. It didn't make any sense. None of it computed with me. But I let it go remarkably easily because I was like maybe I don't really want to work. Maybe this is all okay.

Fiksdal: That's just so different from my experience. I didn't retire until I was 67. Then I took the post-retirement contract, which is available to faculty, but I knew I didn't want to keep teaching because it was just so much work.

Hinkle: It is so much work. I don't know how you guys did it.

Fiksdal: I don't know either. Then, I think the very next year, I got called back because one of my friends was ill. We had just taught together, so she knew I knew everything that she would teach. I did learn from her. When you teach with someone, you learn a different discipline, but that's okay. So, I filled in for her.

Then deans kept thinking up things—project work. It wasn't fulltime.

Hinkle: It is hard to let go of things that you love.

Fiksdal: Very hard.

Hinkle: I was helped, because I did love Evergreen, and I was helped to let go by the fascination of living in Europe. And love. I had gone a very long period without a relationship like that, so for me, that was special. It was pretty wonderful, and it was a great experience for me.

Fiksdal: And you weren't afraid. You'd already lived in South Korea.

Hinkle: Yeah, I had lived overseas. At least I had that. That was a really great experience for me, and what a way to transition. Coming back here, I'm overrun with grandchildren, which are a delight as well.

Fiksdal: They all live here?

Hinkle: Eight of the 10 live in Olympia. My step-granddaughter, who's the oldest, lives just in Tacoma. My youngest granddaughter, who is only three, lives just outside of SeaTac. I see her tomorrow.

Fiksdal: That's so great.

Hinkle: Yeah, it's wonderful. I've got it made. I really do.

Fiksdal: And your mother is still alive.

Hinkle: My mother is still alive, still living in the house that I grew up in on the east side of Olympia on South Bay Road. My youngest sister and husband live with Mom. My mom is still sharp as a tack, 91, and still can do for herself easily, but she's just slower.

Fiksdal: That's wonderful she made it through Covid. I'm glad.

Hinkle: Oh, yeah, she's wonderful.

Fiksdal: Now I'm going to look to see if we've covered most everything. The Tacoma Campus.

Hinkle: Oh, yeah. Over my years at Evergreen, I got to work some—a little bit—with Maxine Mimms, not a lot. But I worked a lot with Joye Hardiman for a shorter period. Then I worked quite a bit with Gilda Sheppard, because Gilda was doing projects with Sally that they were involved in.

I would see Tacoma faculty as a group at the Tacoma faculty planning sessions. I started participating, especially when I was manager. But prior to becoming manager, even when I was still at Media Loan, which was still pretty early—I left Media Loan in '92—I was personally going to the Tacoma Campus to teach workshops, primarily for Gilda, but I did do some videorecording workshops for science faculty there.

Fiksdal: Did you have to haul equipment?

Hinkle: Yes, I hauled equipment.

Fiksdal: This is what everyone did. It's just amazing.

Hinkle: I hauled a lot of equipment. Eventually, they did end up buying some, and eventually, they ended up with their Computer Lab. That was helpful. I did go up in the later periods and teach some of the video software in the Computer Lab.

We did talk a lot about what was going on at the campus and how to best support that, and what kind of staff they would need, and how we could advocate for that. We tried to coordinate some of it, with some success. I don't feel like any of the success was attributable to me, but I was happy to have been part of the process.

Fiksdal: But your openness . . .

Hinkle: I felt good about being part of that process. I enjoyed the Tacoma Campus a lot. Very different style of student learning there, and very different kinds of students. A lot of them were working parents.

Fiksdal: Exactly.

Hinkle: That was very interesting.

Fiksdal: And they had the afternoon and evening classes.

Hinkle: That's right, they had the two, and that was a bit of a challenge.

Fiksdal: That was hard.

Hinkle: That was pretty tough because when I was doing workshops, I did have to come and do evening workshops, and that was a little bit tough. But still, I didn't have to do it all the time, and Gilda did some things herself as well. It was a good experience for me, and I was happy to be able to support that. I wish I could remember the name of the faculty member that I ended up working with the most with the Native American program.

Fiksdal: That wasn't Jeff Antonelis-Lapp, then?

Hinkle: It was Jeff. Thank you. I just couldn't remember.

Fiksdal: Because he was there for quite a while.

Hinkle: Thank you. Good. He was great. I really enjoyed him. I went out to a couple of different reservation sites. Now, I'm not even sure where. One was in Grays Harbor somewhere and one was more like up towards Tacoma. It's so funny because I didn't really know—and I was in a tribal building of some kind teaching a video workshop.

Fiksdal: You must have been in Chehalis for that.

Hinkle: Oh, perhaps.

Fiksdal: It's not in Chehalis. It's in the rural area there.

Hinkle: I was in a place that I did not recognize.

Fiksdal: It had to be the Chehalis Tribe. Then Tacoma . . .

Hinkle: It wasn't in Tacoma, but it was in that area.

Fiksdal: There's the Puyallup, but I don't know if we worked with Puyallup. I'll have to think about it a little bit.

Hinkle: I can't remember exactly where I was. But then, he started bringing students to Evergreen.

Fiksdal: Yes, they used to come once a month, I think.

Hinkle: Right. He started like on a Saturday.

Fiksdal: That's right. Not a workday.

Hinkle: Not a workday, but I came to those. That was great. That was fine. I would come there, and those students were so—the thing that struck me about the students that I got to work with as a part of that program was how grateful they were. They were so grateful for the pitiful, in some ways, bit that we were able to offer of our services, compared to what other—

Fiksdal: They were just up against so many odds, so rural, and located far from any campus.

Hinkle: Right.

Fiksdal: I'm just remarking to myself right now how your job was never a 40-hour-a-week job.

Hinkle: Well, no. In some ways it wasn't, but in the ways that mattered to me in terms of my kids, it was. In the daily workaday, I always went to work at 8:00. I always came, Monday through Friday, at 8:00. And I always left either 4:30 or 5:00, depending on whether I played racquetball at lunch. The periodic Saturdays or the periodic evenings were really special occasions. Icing on the cake.

Fiksdal: That's a nice way to put it.

Hinkle: That's how they felt to me, because they didn't happen all the time, and they were special. There was always something that set them apart. I was working with students who were really grateful that I was there. I was working with students who had a clear goal of how they were going to use whatever I was helping them to learn to further their career and make a better living for their family. This was a very different group—adults.

Fiksdal: Serious students are wonderful to work with.

Hinkle: Yes, quite wonderful. I didn't have to do that all the time. That would have been a little harder, with raising the kids, so when I got to do it, I felt generally like I get to do this. For me, it was never a burden. Perhaps it should have been because it would have meant they were getting more support from main campus, but it wasn't.

Fiksdal: But there wasn't the support for that at any level at the college, unfortunately.

Hinkle: No. I honestly quite appreciated my time with both of those programs. I was grateful.

Fiksdal: The only thing we haven't addressed is, I'm just wondering about issues of equity, pluralism, diversity. Were you able to hire, were you able to suggest candidates that should be given a chance, even if they didn't look the same on paper as someone else?

Hinkle: Hiring was an interesting exercise that I went through often. Especially in the earlier years at Evergreen, it was challenging and frustrating because of our relative lack of diversity, much as it has

been a challenge for Olympia and Thurston County. I'm so grateful that the demographics in Thurston County have shifted as much as they have. It has a long way to go, but it has shifted dramatically.

It was always a bit of an issue for us because our candidate pool was often not particularly representative of a wider range of diversity. The only diversity we had was age. We always had older students as well as younger students, or older applicants as well as younger applicants for staff positions, so we always had plenty of age diversity, which was great. There are things about youth that are marvelous and there are things about age and experience that are really marvelous. For me, that was exciting.

But in terms of ethnic diversity, background diversity, we could pay attention to background, and that was good. We had lots of conversations with the Dean of the Library and with Human Resources. Human Resources I did not find particularly helpful because really, they're just interpreting rules for you, and rules weren't going to help us a lot in terms of what we were struggling with.

I think that over the years, ultimately, we did end being able to pay more and more attention to diversity because we started getting broader pools, and that was a relief. I do feel like there was always a very active and in-front-of-you presence. There was always a concern that was voiced. It was not hinted at, it was not under the radar in any way, shape or form. There was always a concern about diversity in hiring, reaching the right pool, where to advertise. Often, we were guided in the direction of advertising in professional journals that were known to reach a more diverse audience, and that was good for us.

Ultimately, in terms of Media Services staff, which is what I was hiring for, we did end up over the years with a growing diversity in our staff, and that was great. Student-wise, I didn't see so much of it because I think it really has been the last 20 years where I have been primarily absent. I've been retired for 14 years. It seems to me that the student population didn't change dramatically in the time that I was there. I saw some.

Fiksdal: No, at the Olympia Campus, it was hard to attract a lot of people of color.

Hinkle: That's another reason why working at the Tacoma Campus, which demographically is much, much more representative, and the Native American program, which is a specific population. That was always another aspect of the whole thing that was very exciting for me, and fun. But I think it's been a struggle for Evergreen for all these years. I hope that's getting better, but I don't really know.

Fiksdal: I don't know now either. Just one last question. Your own professional development. You mentioned that you were glad for your foundation in theory. Then it sounds like your professional development really occurred with your collaborations on films and other work.

Hinkle: I would say so, yeah. I think that through that process of collaboration, I learned the things that really excited me. It was funny because early on in my career at Evergreen, I seriously considered for a while going back for a master's in library science just because that seemed like academically the logical place to go. I'd always worked in libraries and blah blah blah. I realized that just has nothing to do with what excites me, so I didn't do that. Besides, I would have had to go to UW for that, and I was never a fan of large universities.

Especially my professional collaborations with other staff, and particularly faculty—my student collaborations were huge to me as well, but I learned the most in my collaborations with faculty and staff. What I discovered is that I am a good co-learner. I love learning something along with other people. I'm happy to contribute my theoretical knowledge and that has always come in handy, for instance, because a lot of the staff people that I worked with at Evergreen didn't have the theoretical basis to start with. They were Evergreen graduates. They had really solid practical applications that I did not have, but they didn't have the background theoretically, so my contribution was valuable. That was great.

And I found such a supportive—for instance, with Raoul Berman, one of my favorite Media Services staff, Mr. Under-the-Radar, and whenever he can, he would love to be invisible, but he is the most amazingly patient fount of knowledge of all things technical. I have never met anybody quite like him. This is a guy who never makes anybody feel stupid for asking a question. This is somebody who can always answer in a way that you can understand, unlike many others, honestly.

I absolutely loved working with him. I could go to him with any question. I never felt stupid. I could say, "Can you please tell me what's going on in the most iteration of this Movie or this program?" Whatever.

Fiksdal: He was in Computer Services, right?

Hinkle: No, Raoul worked in Media Services. He's the head of the television studio. He's just always been pretty much a genius when it comes to computers. Anything technical. He knows all about this technical stuff. He's just such a smart man.

Fiksdal: I'm trying to picture him. I know about him, but he's very good at remaining under-the-radar.

Hinkle: Oh, he does not like to be seen.

Fiksdal: But I was haunting the halls when I was a dean.

Hinkle: He's a wonderful, wonderful guy. We used to go for bagels and tea almost every break before I became gluten intolerant. I don't know if you remember this, but back in the early days of computer

programming—when we started at Evergreen, we were barely even on personal computers of any kind. It was a different time. I don't know if you remember this. It was the beginnings of the Internet. The Internet was starting, and we were using on campus something called LINKS, and it was really weird and convoluted, and you had to know some programming to even make it work. It was driving me crazy. I don't have that kind of mind, so Raoul and I had LINKS teas where we would just sit there and talk about my latest question with this stupid program.

Fiksdal: I think that I had to do something, because I really remember we had to sit there and write code.

Hinkle: Exactly.

Fiksdal: They would explain, "No, you missed that. That's wrong." And I'd say, "I don't think I have the patience to do this."

Hinkle: No, it was crazy making.

Fiksdal: Every little thing had to be exactly so, so I didn't continue that training.

Hinkle: No, it was terribly difficult.

Fiksdal: I was a dropout. [laughing]

Hinkle: I was, pretty much. But fortunately, it didn't last very long. It moved on pretty quickly to something else and I could breathe a sign of relief because that was more approachable. It became more and more user friendly, thank God. My staff collaborations were critical in terms of keeping up with technology, which was always difficult.

Fiksdal: Yes, and it's changing now as well.

Hinkle: And coming up with better ideas about teaching students how to use this and that. I was good at that. I really wanted students to get it with equipment, so I loved teaching student workshops. That was really fun. But we would work together and come up with strategies for that.

But with faculty, faculty were willing to push me into the creative process, which was not in my comfort zone. And yet, I found it very exciting. As long as I had their guidance for when an idea just wasn't going to come to me, it was a relatively comfortable place for me, and I was able to grow.

The unfortunate thing about my particular career was that I really grew nicely through head of Instructional Media. That was a good progression for me. I started at Media Loan. I took more and more responsibility for helping staff get trained adequately to meet their goals, and working a lot with students, and doing all that, and decided that I was more and more interested in what students were

doing specifically. And then, head of Instructional Media was doing a lot with that and working much more with faculty.

The good thing about the managerial position is I did get to continue that slope in terms of working with faculty, because managerially speaking, I did still work a lot with faculty. I still went to area meetings, faculty meetings, trying to hear what you were going to need from Media Services and things like that.

That part was good. But, as I said earlier, I lost my connection with the students, and that was not a good trajectory for my career. So, going back into the tech position at the end, where I was working directly in the classroom with faculty and with students, that was really comfortable for me. That's why I was so delighted with the way I ended.

Fiksdal: That makes sense.

Hinkle: Career-wise, I wasn't thinking hard about my career. I was doing something that I loved, and it was a great—I'm a security hound, so working under a state umbrella for me was always a pleasure, because I knew what insurance me and my kids were covered by, I knew my retirement was covered. I didn't have to plan for that. That was huge for me because I wasn't capable at that point.

I wasn't ever driven by specific career goals. I knew that I liked what I did. I liked working with communication studies and with the students, specifically in an academic environment. The fun thing about all this was that near the end, when I was hopping back and forth from Europe to Evergreen, Sean Williams said, "You know, Ally, at this point, you really should consider working a Semester at Sea." Did you ever hear about that? She had done it. She had taught for a semester at Semester at Sea.

Fiksdal: I didn't remember that.

Hinkle: They hire faculty or staff or whatever for just the semester. So, when I retired in 2008, I applied at Semester at Sea, and I sailed around the world on that for one semester. Very difficult experience in many ways, way different, but it brought all of my Evergreen perks—the things that I'd learned from Evergreen were critically essential to me there because I was just thrown into an environment with this crazy hodgepodge of equipment that did or didn't work, and nobody to teach you. The guy that was supposed to teach me to use anything was Russian and didn't speak English really. All of the crew was from other countries besides the US. There were no US employees. Fortunately, there were a couple of Dutch, and by then, I spoke Dutch, so that was really fun.

The equipment was not my biggest hurdle because I certainly knew how to use equipment and I could figure it out by then. But the best part of my Evergreen experience there was the ability to work

with faculty because that's what I had to do. These faculty were new on the ship as well, because you're only hired for one semester.

Fiksdal: Oh, they never keep them?

Hinkle: No, there's no carryover.

Fiksdal: It's complete turnover all the time?

Hinkle: Complete turnover all the time. In that way, you're all in it together at least, but you've got to figure out things quickly. It was really good for me, and it was a fascinating experience because we went to, I don't know, 11 different countries. A lot.

Fiksdal: Were the students serious?

Hinkle: Oh, yeah, very much so. It's quite expensive. It's sponsored by the University of Virginia. They've done it for a long time. There were 600 students on board. The total number of people on board was about 900 with staff and faculty and crew. All the time that we're under sail—even though there's no sail involved; this was a cruise ship converted to a floating university—all the time that we're on the water, students were in class. Saturdays, Sundays, holidays, it doesn't matter. Students were in class all the time, and the difficult part of my job was classes run from 8:00 in the morning till 10:00 at night because there were always evening things as well. As soon as you get into port, you go apply what you learned. I was off when we were in port. But hard job, and my hours were bad. There was a lot of stress early on. It got better, of course.

They were studying kind of interdisciplinary studies because they were trying to take a destination and study issues related to that—psychology, health, history, language—so all of that came into play. It was fun. It was a nice way to use all those great years.

Fiksdal: It helped you realize, too, I've got all these skills.

Hinkle: I've got to say thanks again to Sean at some point. I've spoken to her. I have told her that it was a good experience for me, but it was pretty amazing, really. So, yeah, there is life after Evergreen. There's a lot of life after Evergreen. Faculty should consider doing that, too.

Fiksdal: Very good point. Sounds hard.

Hinkle: Yeah, but you're just teaching a course.

Fiksdal: Thank you, Ally.

Hinkle: You're welcome.

Fiksdal: This has been fun. It's fun knowing more about your life at Evergreen and your life in general. It's good to just chat for a little while.

Hinkle: It's nice to talk to you, too. It's funny, all those years at Evergreen together. I always enjoyed our time, actually. The whole French thing. I loved that. I still love languages. That's my other driving interest. Ever since Covid, I study every single day either French, German, Dutch or Spanish.

Fiksdal: Good for you.

Hinkle: I love it. I just think it's fun.

Fiksdal: Are you on Netflix? There are just tons of movies.

Hinkle: There are. I watch all the Dutch.

Fiksdal: It doesn't matter how stupid they are, I watch them.

Hinkle: Oh, yeah, some of them are very stupid.

Fiksdal: But it's very good for colloquial language.

Hinkle: Right. Some of the stupidest ones have the most colloquial language. Sometimes I turn the Dutch subtitles on for those. I'm much better at following French if it's news or something straight. The more colloquial it gets, it is tough, and I do turn on the subtitles. All those years of French and I still—I can speak Dutch, and French, I can get by, but I can't converse.

Fiksdal: But I lived there. You lived there.

Hinkle: I did, and it is different.

Fiksdal: And you had to deal with every kind of situation. That makes you learn. That's the best thing.

Hinkle: It is the best way to do it. But I just like languages. I think that music and language have a relationship.

Fiksdal: I think so, too. I studied piano and I think that helped me with learning language. There's a discipline involved, and you've got to hear the musicality of it.

Hinkle: I think it's very similar that I hear a phrase, I hear a cadence, and when I'm listening to the languages, I'm hearing the cadence. Sometimes I find that I can disengage that hardworking part of my brain. And if I can lock into the cadence, I don't even have any trouble. I can understand German ever since learning Dutch, even though some of the words are *faux amis*.

Fiksdal: There's a lot of similarity, though.

Hinkle: There is a lot of similarity. Then I just get into the cadence of it and I can understand it. If I hear Frau Merkel, I can understand her very well. She speaks very clearly, so that's nice. Do you still do anything with your French?

Fiksdal: Yeah, I taught my grandkids French while they were stuck at home for two years. I have four grandkids, and then two grandnieces wanted to join, so they did, too.

Hinkle: How fun! Did you do it on Zoom then?

Fiksdal: We did it on Zoom. We did it twice a week. Some of them could only come once a week, but it was often. And they were just amazing learners.

Hinkle: Yeah, my older sister and I have both been working on French, and her grandson, who is now 17 and is in UW—he's really smart—we were Zooming in French, and he was amazing. He would correct our French all the time. [laughing] It was great. We were having fun with that.

My younger sister has been learning Spanish, and I've always wanted to learn Spanish, and I like Spanish. It's a lot easier than French. So, Laura and I were Zooming for a while just to practice. Zoom has been great, so my sisters and I still exercise together. Oh, I'm supposed to lead exercises tonight. I keep forgetting. Ever since I went away on a month-long camping trip, I've been out of the loop. Tonight, I'm leading arms. We exercise three times a week together on Zoom. It's great.

Fiksdal: I think, little by little, we have to figure out new routines.

Hinkle: I think this has been good for us in many ways.

Fiksdal: Yeah, it has.

Hinkle: We don't have to do things the way we've always done them.

Fiksdal: And we can still enjoy life. I think Covid has taught us a lot, and it's been very terrible.

Hinkle: It's been really, really, really devastating in many ways, but we can take some good out of this. I'm convinced. It's been nice having none of my grandchildren get a flu or cold for two years.

Fiksdal: They have their healthy constitution.

Hinkle: When they were masked. Pre-masking, they were getting sick all the time, but I didn't. That's why I was the perfect babysitter because I never get sick. They get sick and I can still take care of them. The school won't let them come. [laughing] But I'm just fine.