

Burt Guttman
Interviewed by Stephen Beck
The Evergreen State College oral history project
August 19, 2017
FINAL

Guttman: . . . and there was a job opening at Evergreen, and Don Humphrey brought me out. There was another college down in the Pomona area that I was looking at, and Don just arranged that I would visit that college first—and I gave the seminar down there—and then we would just tag on the visit to Evergreen. That’s when I came up, and met people like Byron Youtz, people who were around at that time.

Beck: I kind of got started on the interview just in the middle of what you were just saying there. But I just wanted to say that this is August 19, and this is Stephen Beck interviewing Burt Guttman in his living room here. But you were saying that you interviewed with Don Humphrey?

Guttman: Don was the one who arranged it. Don was the dean I was working with, so he was the one who arranged the trip. But then, when I got here, I met a few people. I met Charlie McCann and Byron Youtz, Betty Ruth Estes. Betty Kutter also. That was a real surprise that the college had hired two people whose research specialty was page T4. I don’t remember exactly what month that was, but it was not long after that that I got the formal offer, and came on.

Beck: So Betty Ruth Estes and Betty Kutter were already on the faculty. They were in the first teaching year?

Guttman: No, I don’t think they were in the first teaching. I just met them. I don’t know if they were coming to interview for the first time. I just remember them being among the people that I met at that time.

Beck: Okay. So, what was it like coming to Evergreen? You came in the fall of ’72.

Guttman: Yeah, it must have been the summer of ’72. I’m sure we were getting oriented. Goodness, what was it like? The place was beautiful. We had this lovely thousand-acre wooded area. I just gradually found myself being associated with a bunch of people who seemed to be thinking more or less the way I was thinking about education. That’s about the only way I can characterize it.

Beck: How were you thinking about education?

Guttman: The way it had been done traditionally was wrong. I know some of the people who came early on had already gotten into teaching mode, I think it was at Old Westbury. They’d already gotten

into this teaching mode of doing cross-disciplinary stuff. I hadn't done that, except that the last stuff that I taught at Kentucky was teaching general biology to the liberal art students. I was able to do it my way, but it was still pretty much general biology, it wasn't anything interdisciplinary.

Well, the first year, I wasn't really doing interdisciplinary stuff in what has become the traditional way at Evergreen either. I was simply put into the pool with a bunch of other guys, doing contracts. Then, we tended to start pooling our students, trying to get our students together to do similar things. For example, Mike Beug and I had offices right next to each other, I think. Mike is a chemist, but he was interested in botany, especially mushrooms. We had some students together who wanted to learn about botany, and so we put them together, and Mike and I taught that together as a course.

Beck: So you did a course on botany. Was that aimed at upper-division students?

Guttman: No, the students that I remember were not upper division. They were not particularly skilled or knowledgeable in anything, but for various reasons, they wanted to learn more about plants. So much of it I had forgotten, but I gather from reading stuff that I wrote at that time that that was the way I handled some other students, that is, that they were interested particular . . . what shall I call them . . . work of particular kinds. And they had managed to arrange with outside people to do sort of I guess what we would call an internship. But, as a support for them doing the internships, I got them to study some certain kinds of basic science. There was a young woman who . . . oh, I forget what she was doing outside . . . but I got her to study genetics, for example. That was something related to what she was doing.

And I see from those old notes that, I think it was the winter quarter, I got a little group of students together doing a thing I called Cell-Cell Interactions. It was just a put-together idea in biology, and I got them together and got them to do the work. They were actually going off and learning for themselves about particular aspects of cell biology, and then coming back and teaching the group.

It was sort of like what coordinated studies became, but it was something that was done spontaneously. I don't know, I think expressing the idea that students should do what they're interested in, but that they can be directed to become interested in various subjects that are related to one another, and make a good curriculum for themselves, something like that.

Beck: I want to make sure I understand. So, many of the students that you were working with—perhaps all of the students you were working with—came in to do individual contracts, and as a result of the kind of work they were doing, you and some other faculty, such as Mike, started to group these

students together, and to have them do various kinds of studies, sometimes working in a kind of what we might call a cluster contract these days.

Guttman: Yeah, that's right. Part of it, of course, was simply to ease the burden. Ideally, each of us would have been responsible for maybe 20 students or so, as things would average out. And to have 20 people doing entirely different things would be rather difficult. It would be hard to supervise them, hard to keep up with them. But it was just kind of a necessity that we found that by putting them together, by getting them to do studies on a common core subject, we were able to handle them.

Beck: These days, we tend to think about individual contracts as primarily for upper-division or advanced students. Would you say that that first group of students you were working with were working at the upper-division or advanced level?

Guttman: No, on the whole, they were not. I think that there was some of that. I mentioned one girl who was off doing sort of an internship, but needed to learn more about genetics. Well, genetics is the sort of thing you learn after a couple years. You're supposed to learn basic biology before you go off into genetics. So, there was some of that. But I think, for example, when Mike Beug and I had these students together learning botany, it was just very basic botany. So, it was the whole range of subjects, just whatever was suitable for each student.

Beck: Did you feel that your work with students that first year was pretty successful, or were there some significant frustrations around it? What was your general assessment?

Guttman: That's an interesting question. I think that on the whole, it was successful, yeah. But it wasn't—I mean, it was special and different. I think the college, I think, needed to simply have a bunch of us faculty doing contracts, because there hadn't been time for us to get together and get organized to do coordinated studies programs. If we had been all able to do coordinated studies, we probably would have taken a few students to do individual work on the side. But I think that there just wasn't time at the very beginning to get everybody doing that. Of course, a lot of people were doing coordinated studies the first year.

Beck: There wasn't time enough to get those of you faculty who had just been hired into coordinated studies?

Guttman: Yeah, I think it was like that. I don't know exactly how it was done. I think I mentioned talking to Dave Milne about his first couple of years experiences. He was doing really good coordinated studies programs, doing Human Ecology and Political Ecology; doing them with a bunch of Evergreen colleagues, really good people, who obviously really knew their fields very well. Primarily scientists, but I think some people in things like political science and economics. I think they had really good

experiences together, and I'm not sure exactly when they put all of us together. Of course, part of it was that they were teaching the first year, and I only came the second year. A whole bunch of us only came the second year, so I don't know exactly when—well, the people teaching first year must have simply arrived much earlier, so that they would have had time to put together a decent coordinated studies program. But, as you say, the rest of us simply hadn't had time to do anything like this. And, of course, we were in such diverse fields, I don't know if any of us could, on the whole, really put together any kind of a sensible program.

Beck: How about after that? Your second year at Evergreen, what were you doing?

Guttman: My second year was the Nature and Society program. That was with Jeanne Hahn and Richard Cellarius and Mark Papworth. That was a good program. It was very good. I'll tell you something [chuckles] about the seminar business. But aside from seminars, we simply organized ourselves to do little modules. Richard and Jeanne, the first year, had been teaching what they called Modular Science, where they divided science up into little topics. I think they taught those in pairs. So, they used the same model for Nature and Society. It was, on the whole, I think, quite a successful model.

Richard Cellarius and I did a program, a little unit we called Architecture of Matter. Jeanne and I, in winter quarter, did a thing together. I forget what we called it exactly. It was basically genetics, but the social impact of genetics. For one thing, it was just that the technology at that time was becoming such that genetics was really starting to have some other important social implications, because people were learning how to do recombinant DNA work. And, in principle, recombinant DNA work could have meant all kinds of genetic advances. But it was controversial.

So Jeanne and I—part of it was simply that we had the students learning about genetics and related matters, but we had them out searching for papers that they could bring to the group that we would assemble into what was kind of a book. It would be just a collection, an anthology, of papers having to do with genetics, and all the societal matters. For a time, at least, we were talking to a publisher's representative about actually having this book published. I don't remember what happened. We were doing the serious talking with at least one publisher's representative, and somehow or another, that fell apart.

I still have the collection somewhere downstairs, and it was good. The students had done a really good job of finding really interesting articles to explore the subject—a highly interdisciplinary subject—and it was a good learning experience for them all.

And then, I had forgotten, I did a little thing on geology, where I was, again, having the students teach one another. They were assigned topics, or they chose topics. Then each of them would go off and research his particular topic, and come back and teach the group. I think that was very successful.

Beck: What sort of topics? I'm imagining that they must have been fairly specific topics.

Guttman: Oh, yeah, they had to be. I must have somebody, for example, learning something about mineral structure; maybe a couple of people learning something about mineral structure. And somebody probably talking about the types of igneous rocks, and what are the mechanisms for formation of igneous rocks, and so on and so forth.

We probably had one or two meetings a week where we would get together and talk about all these things. And all of these really were quite successful. As I said, they were getting the students to do the work, and that in itself just has great benefits, I think. That was really good.

Let me say a word about seminars. During the first year, we didn't have any seminars, nothing to do in seminars. But seminars are, of course, fundamental to a good coordinated studies program. So, when I got into Nature and Society, I find myself with my seminar group of 20 students or so, and I made the naïve assumption that basically all we had to do was give them a book a week to read. I don't have the list right here, but we had really interesting books for them to read, books that would explore issues of science, and science and society. It was the philosophical aspects of science. All kinds of things that, to us as really mature intellectuals, were really exciting, really interesting. And I know that the faculty seminars we had with one another were really good. So, I just kind of assumed that the students would read a book, and they would come in, and they would be full of interesting thoughts about the book.

And it was nothing like that. I suddenly discovered that our students tended, during the early years especially, to not be directly out of high school. Some of them were, of course, but more of them had a few years of doing something else before they came back to college, which I think was one of their strengths. But they were all young students on the whole, and somehow or other, they had never really learned to read an interesting book, and to have serious thoughts about it, and to be able to come in and sit down with other people with serious thoughts, and exchange their ideas and so on. [chuckles]

And it was very surprising to me to find that they couldn't do it, and to wonder what the heck to do with them. They needed help. I think that I'd tried to push them in various ways to think seriously about the book that they had read, and to talk to one another about the ideas, and I think that they kind of rebelled against that. I was really having a very hard time in seminars.

My impression is that, at least at the very beginning of doing Evergreen-type work, just about everybody has a hard time in seminar, or had a hard time in seminars, as things were going. Well, you

referred to this in some of the questions you asked me there. At one point, I think it was toward the middle of the year, in my self-evaluation, I wrote about how I had made up a kind of a quiz for them. I asked my seminar students to do a multiple-choice test. It was to give the analogy seminar leader is to students as blank is to blank. The choices were as conductor is to orchestra, as coach is to team, as priest is to congregation, as leader is to jazz combo, or as king is to subjects. And they talked about it, and, by golly, they got the right answer. The answer that I had was as leader is to jazz combo. The reason I liked the analogy is that in the combo, the group can play on independently, and that occasionally, the leader gets to blow a few notes for himself. I still that's a good model, and I took a while to operate on it. But I think that was probably a good point to make.

Still, I think, in subsequent years, when getting into a new program every year with a new group of students, you still have to fight to do this, to help naïve students. If they come out of high school pretty directly, it doesn't make much difference, I suppose, what they might have been doing in between, because I don't think they were generally doing anything very seriously intellectually.

To be able to read a book, and to have thoughts about it, to get the ideas that the author is trying to get across, which are sometimes very complicated ideas—but, of course, that's what make the books interesting and valuable. That's why you want you to read the book. I realized, looking at the lists and some other things, the lists of books that we used for various programs, I see that, oh, yeah, those are books I got on my bookshelves downstairs. I'd forgotten that we had picked up that book as a book to use for Evergreen seminars. But, yeah, they are books that I read myself. It made me go back and read some of these things myself, because really good, bright people had put together a bunch of really important and interesting ideas. And it's really sort of pulling teeth to get students at first to see how to read a book like that, and to have an intelligent thought that they want to share with other students.

Obviously, some students were able to do it pretty well. They had thought about things on their own, and they read a book, and they really do get some interesting ideas. Or, they find some aspect of the book maybe that stimulates them that they want to bring up in a seminar. Fine, as long as one person brings up a point in seminar, other people can respond to it. And then, of course, you always have the students who are shy, or for some other reason perhaps, just don't want to say anything much. And you have to very gently try to bring them into the seminar.

Anyway, that was, I think, the major problem that I encountered teaching at Evergreen, and then the major problem that had to be overcome.

Beck: That first year that you were teaching the coordinated studies, or the second year, did you find that you were able to make some progress with students in seminar?

Guttman: Yeah. The thing that I was reading there was something that I think I wrote during the winter quarter. I don't know how things went during the fall. I was struggling with it, and the students were resistant, and they were having a very difficult time. So I'm just not sure how much they got out of the great reading list I'm sure we had for the seminar books in the fall. But by the winter, they were starting to come around, starting to get the idea. And I think my jazz analogy helped a little bit. [laughing] So later in the year, they must have gotten something important out of the seminar books.

Beck: Good, good.

Guttman: And, of course, having overcome that difficulty during the first year—at least learned something about seminar, about how to help the students, in subsequent years, it was much easier to do it. I knew the kinds of resistance I was going to get, the kinds of problems that various students had to overcome, whether it was shyness [laughing] or dumbness or something. I don't know.

Beck: Were there particular techniques that you developed for running seminar that seemed particularly effective?

Guttman: Oh, I don't know that I could say anything about a technique. It's all so . . . [sighs] . . . of course, you've run seminar yourself, and you know how subtle it is. I certainly wouldn't want to say anything about a technique. I don't think I developed a technique. [chuckles]

Beck: Maybe it was just a matter of anticipating the kinds of issues that come up at seminar, and having your attention attuned to particular students.

Guttman: Yeah.

Beck: That makes a lot of sense to me.

Guttman: Yeah, you can identify that Joe is a quiet guy, but he seems to have some thoughts. And Sam is a quiet guy who just seems to be kind of dumb, and doesn't know anything. [laughing] Yeah, you find the students are of certain types, and you develop ways of dealing with them, ways of helping them.

Beck: You did do a coordinated study your second year, but then, maybe by sometime that year, you might have started to think a little bit more about planning for the longer term? When did that sort of develop for you in terms of developing a sense of what kind of a curriculum there might be?

Guttman: Boy. I'm trying to think of responding to that question. When I look back over the things that I taught over 30 years, I didn't really have a curriculum. I taught all kinds of stuff. One of the reasons I enjoy being an intellectual [is] because I'm interested in so many different things. And Evergreen has been wonderful for me because it has allowed me to do a certain amount of teaching of just the hard-core science that I know, but then, every other year or so, working with really interesting people from other fields, and just being able to be stimulated by them, to have wonderful fun on my own.

I think that may be an important point. I wrote something to the faculty and staff in general a few months back about what I saw as what seemed to be a developing problems. And I reflected on at least one of the coordinated studies programs that I had done. And one of the points I made, which I think was very important, is that we faculty who did a coordinated studies program, I think, were thinking very largely of pleasing ourselves. Yeah, sure, we were going to do something, it would be interesting for students, and students would learn a lot by doing this, but just we ourselves were interested in the general question we were asking. And so that we intellectuals could get together for a year, and just have a wonderful time talking to one another, and sharing all this.

And, yeah, sure, we would have to do all kinds of basic teaching—help the students learn the sort of thing that we knew, we specialists—but the great reason for doing it, the great motivation for doing it, was that it was an interesting question, and we wanted to explore it.

May I say a little bit about the third year?

Beck: Please.

Guttman: The third year was the program called On Knowing. I felt very fortunate that Will Humphreys had been hired. And I think that Will had already—I think he was at Old Woodbury—was it Old Woodbury? Old Westport? [Transcriber note: Old Westbury was mentioned in other transcripts.] I've forgotten now. I think he was one of the people who had been there—I think that Merv Cadwallader had been there—and started to develop the idea of coordinated studies, interdisciplinary teaching, and so on.

But at least Will was there. And Will was committed to doing that kind of teaching, but he was a serious intellectual himself. He was a philosopher of science. He was a student of, oh, N. R. Hanson—I should have looked up the book—who was a really fine philosopher of science, who died rather suddenly, and Will then took on the job of editing his major book. So Will had all the right papers to be able to say that he was a serious philosopher of science.

I think I already said before that at Minnesota, one of the important things I had done was to learn about philosophy of science, and it's always been one of my major interests. So I thought it would be really neat to put together a program where we would simply examine the general question of knowing. So I showed my proposal to Will, and he liked it.

The two of us got excited about the idea, and we wanted to extend the idea. We extended the idea, at least, to looking at linguistics as another related topic. Jack Webb was on the faculty at the time, and Jack was the guy who was interested in English, English writing. He was interested in

computerized analysis of language, and he was interested in linguistics. So we got together with Jack and made him a third member of the group.

And then, somehow or another, we got together with a woman named Carol Olexa. I don't know whether Carol Olexa had any kind of a specialty, but she was certainly not really interested in the—I didn't know it at the time, but she was not seriously interested in the ideas of knowing, certainly as Will and I were interested in it. But somehow or the other—it may have just been something that the deans decided to do—they got Carol Olexa into our group.

We started off doing very well. It was really serious, tough study. We were reading [Irving M.] Copi's book on logic. Will was having them doing logic exercises every week, and Will was giving lectures on philosophy of science, or basic philosophy, philosophical analysis, and I was giving talks about similar kinds of things. I don't have a list of the books we were reading, but we were reading interesting books, but we were having difficulties.

It finally developed—I found a paper that Will had written to Carol and Jack sometime in the middle of the year, sometime in the winter—in which he was simply telling them the truth, the story that he and I had put together the idea of a program, we were committed to it, and he was simply accusing Jack and Carol of having contributed little or nothing to the program, and having not seriously being committed to it. He essentially said that unless they were going to join in and really contribute to the program, he was just going to go off and do his own thing with his own group of students. The program kind of fell apart.

I guess I've never told anybody about some of these things [chuckles], but I think I should record them just for posterity, because there were some really difficult and even crazy things going on. Part of it was—actually, I had gotten divorced from Shelly not too long before, so I was going through my own certain amount of turmoil. Jack's problem was that his wife was seriously ill. His wife had, I think, a brain tumor. She had to have a series of operations, and that took Jack's energy and effort away from the program.

I'll tell you about this really strange business surrounding Carol Olexa. Carol was a very pretty woman. Very nice woman. I'm not sure exactly what her specialty was. Some kind of sociological stuff. But somehow or other, at the time—this was around mid-'70s, this was '75-'76, I think—and somehow, there was somebody in the larger society, a guy who was, I guess, known or thought to be a serial murderer. I've forgotten his name. I was talking about this to Dave. Dave remembered his name. But somehow or other, Carol felt threatened by this societal threat by this guy. I think that he was a guy

whose victims, or apparent victims, were all women of a certain look, and Carol had that look. So, we were distracted. We were worried that Carol was really being threatened by this serial killer.

So there was one night—looking back, I can hardly imagine that I did this, or that we did this, but we did. We arranged one night for Carol to sleep somewhere else, to leave her house. Dave Hitchens—and I have no idea how Dave Hitchens got involved in this—Dave Hitchens decided that we were going to go and try to [chuckles] get to the heart of the matter. Dave Hitchens went to her house—it was sort of the early evening—and Dave had a gun, and he was serious about this.

I arrived at Carol's house a little bit later. Dave came out of the front door, and was on the stoop with this gun in his hand, calling, "Burt?" I said, "Yeah, it's me." He said, "Okay, come on in." And I went in, and Dave and I just sat there. I don't know what we expected to happen, but we were ready in case anything happened. We just sat there for a long time. The house was absolutely dark, and we were sort of semi-expecting this serial killer to come looking for Carol. Well, eventually, after a while, David Powell showed up. And David Powell nicely explained to us that what we were doing was crazy, and dangerous, and that we should not be doing anything like this. And we finally agreed that Dave was right, and so we all three left, locked the door, locked the house, and left.

I say that [laughing] feeling that it was something crazy that should be recorded for posterity [laughter] as something that actually did happen. But also, as an illustration of the fact that there were all these crazy things unrelated to Evergreen business that were going on. And in one of the little things that I had written, where I had mentioned something about both Will and Jack having some problems. I don't know what Will's problems may have been, but Will was basically quite functional. But, in any case, the program just sort of fell apart. I think that Carol went off doing her own unscientific, illogical—I can't think of any better term for it, all the things that she was interested in doing. Anyway, the program essentially fell apart.

But that was unusual. I want to sort of record all of this stuff, because I think—somebody told me after a while that a lot of people had bad feelings about the On Knowing program, and that we had failed in some way. I wanted to say a little bit about it [chuckles] just to leave this record for posterity of it having been a difficult time.

But, having said that, it was really unusual. Because now, particularly when I look back at my portfolio, through all the things I did, and all the evaluations that I wrote for me and for my colleagues, and that they wrote for me, on the whole, we had a wonderful time. All the following years, where I did all kinds of really fascinating programs with really fascinating people, really interesting people, they, on the whole, were just wonderful times. Some of it was teaching straight science. For example, there

were programs in Introduction to Natural Science, which I taught with my fellow scientists. And a part of what we were doing was just straight teaching science, but teaching science very well, and teaching science in an interesting and humane fashion.

My job in some of these programs often—we all had to have the students learning better math, learning math, so we would divide them into different groups on the basis of how much they already knew. I've always enjoyed, I suppose, the challenge of helping people to learn the most basic math. So I had several times, I think, the experience of working with students who had just had a hell of a bad time with math in high school, who hadn't been able to get it, hadn't been able to get very far. And now, a few years later, they came to college because they wanted to do something in particular, they wanted to do something that required the science, and required a certain amount of math. And now, they were much more highly motivated. It was sort of, "Well, I didn't do it the last time when I was in high school. I didn't do it then, but now, by God, I'm going to get it. I'm going to really learn this math stuff."

It was really a pleasure working with them, and I found that I had the ability to do it. We were basically just going through basic math books, but it was really a pleasure to do it. And it was a pleasure to see that these people who had had such a hard time with math before now were able to get it, and that was very rewarding for them.

Beck: Did you have students who said things like "Well, I'm just not good at math. I can't do math"? Did you have that sort of thing?

Guttman: Well, I don't know. I don't remember that particular thing. I think that they had said to themselves, "I just haven't been able to get it in the past." But now, with a little bit of help, they were able to get it, and they were able to get a decent way through college algebra, at least, and off into other interesting subjects. So that was really very rewarding. That was really very good.

Beck: Were there ways of teaching math that seemed to emerge as you were doing it that seemed to work particularly well?

Guttman: No, it was just a matter of doing it carefully and slowly, and being able to—a group of 10, 15 students maybe, where we had the time so that I could talk to each of them individually, and find out what kind of a hang-up they might have been having, and help to explain it so that they really could understand [it totally? 00:45:52] this time. That was all very nice.

Beck: That matches my experience teaching symbolic logic, which, of course, is different, but it may have some of the similar kinds of challenges for students.

Guttman: Oh, yeah. Yeah, exactly.

Beck: Having that time to work with students one on one, and help them get over a particular block that they have, is really invaluable.

Guttman: It is. But, as I say, at the same time, I was working with really neat, interesting people. One of the questions you had on your sheet here was something about what I had learned, and what I might have learned from other faculty.

Beck: Right, yes.

Guttman: On the whole, I think what I got from other faculty was just a kind of general intellectual stimulation. But I'm sure that—for example, in the On Knowing program, listening to Wilhelm Freeh's lectures, I'm sure I got a better grasp of philosophical ideas that I already pretty much understood. And there were not individual faculty that I worked with that I feel where I particularly learned their discipline. It was just the intellectual mix, on the whole. The being able to share ideas, to have discussions with really bright people who had other specialties, who knew other things.

One person whose name comes to mind is Peter Elbow. It was a program I did. We called it Humanism and Science, I think. Anyway, I did it with Peter Elbow and Betty Ruth Estes. And that was a neat program, and I found Peter Elbow to be one of the most fascinating guys I've worked with at Evergreen. His specialty was writing—English major type—and he wrote some very good books. He wrote this book *Writing Without Teachers*, I think it was called.

From Peter, I think I got, first of all, some particular insights into some matters of English literature, the development of English literature. I was trying to remember exactly what they were. I think, going back to some of the things Peter taught about the development of English, the development of theater and drama, I think back to some of the things I believe he was telling us about the development of theater in Elizabethan times, in Shakespeare's time.

But perhaps more than anything else, I learned his ways of helping people write. Part of it was simply a matter of getting people to write something—anything—and then sit down with other students and share that. Part of the rule was that you couldn't say anything negative about somebody else's writing. You had to say something positive, an encouragement, and that what I got out of the thing you just wrote is this. Here's a point that I got out of your writing, and maybe you should develop that idea more. Something of that kind.

But, in any case, just his, I think of it as gentle ways of teaching writing. Because so often, students seem to come to their college work with a feeling like, oh my god, I've got to do this. I've got to write this crap, and with little—what should I say?—little positive feedback for their writing, little real help and real encouragement to do good writing. But somehow, Peter's method of helping people to

learn to write did have that. It was a very positive element that, I think, made the students all feel good about the kind of thing they were writing, and to motivate them to go on, and to take the best aspects of their writing and develop them. Because, of course, that's an important part of what good writing is all about.

So, certainly Peter was one of the people that I admired for his skill, for his particular abilities.

But just in general, I did Molecule to Organism programs, advanced biology, with people like Clyde Barlow and Jeff Kelly. They were teaching largely organic chemistry, and biochemistry and so on. And I admired them so much, and I had such a wonderful time listening to them, and learning a little bit more from them. They were all such wonderful colleagues. And that was just generally true of all the people that I worked with. It's just been a wonderful experience.

Beck: Let me follow up a little bit on what you were talking about regarding Peter Elbow, specifically with respect to the way that he taught writing. Did you find that you later incorporated some of his ways of teaching writing into the way that you taught writing?

Guttman: Yeah, I think so. I'm trying to remember this. The only place for teaching writing really was in our seminars. Of course, we generally required the students to write a certain amount regarding the books we were reading, and, yeah, I think, at least in some of the seminars that we did, I was able to take Peter's methods and use them. That was very valuable.

But you just reminded me of one of the other things that was extremely important, and that was Don Finkel. I first met Don the first year we came to Evergreen was in what we called Life and Health. I was teaching with Sig Kutter and Mark Papworth again, and with Don. Don introduced the general idea of the workshop. I remember I was trying to get across some basic ideas of metabolism and biochemistry, and Don invited me to sit down with him and develop a workshop to do this.

I went over to his house one day, and we sat there, and he helped me. He taught me generally how to do this, to think of questions that I could pose to the students that would help them; by having them work in little groups, working on a series of questions . . . yeah, let's say questions . . . that they could talk about, that they could share; having them develop the ideas for themselves point by point. And that was wonderful. I think that Don Finkel's method of doing this was one of the most important things that has ever been brought to Evergreen.

He wrote this book. I think it came out just after he died. I'm trying to remember the name.

Beck: *Writing With Your Mouth Shut?*

Guttman: *Teaching With Your Mouth Shut.* That's what it is. [chuckles] And that's exactly what he was doing. Boy, I really hope that other people have picked up his method. I remember we had a kind of a

general set of discussions and seminars with people after they read his book. But I kept using Don's method again and again, particularly for teaching science. Because it's really so easy, once you get the general idea. It's really so easy to pose a set of questions and problems.

I remember using this particularly when I was teaching genetics. Genetics can be taught well by giving people a bunch of problems to solve. That's essentially what I did. I would have my weekly sessions with the students, getting them into little groups—four or five people at most—and giving them a series of questions and problems, and so they could work their way through that. Then, of course, the faculty member—me—was going from group to group and kibitzing a little bit, and listening to what they're saying, and occasionally giving them a little bit of help, but generally seeing that things are going along well. So, they're teaching themselves, and they're teaching themselves . . . well, that's the point, they're teaching themselves, and they're empowering themselves. They're learning how to think about the subject.

So, that was a very important part of my learning about how to teach.

Beck: Let me ask about that. Some folks would say that, well, the students need to have some basic information, or they need to have some basic theories explained to them, or some core processes, and they're not going to just be able to figure that out on their own. Would you agree with that? If so, what would you say about the relation between workshops and other modes of teaching?

Guttman: Of course. But they've always had something to read. They've always had a textbook. And occasionally [chuckles], it's been my textbook. But they're supposed to read the book, they're supposed to read the chapter in the book. And they probably come out of it with a certain amount of understanding, but certainly not the degree of understanding that I'm looking for. But if they have even a little bit of understanding, and if I've done my workshop well, they can begin with the first question, the first problem, and that gets them to—it should be something simple that they can work through. And that gets them to enlarge their understanding a little bit. Then they go on to the next question or problem, and they have to challenge themselves, and work it out a little bit. They're getting into it a little bit deeper.

I think that one of the important things is they're working in little groups where they have to talk about the idea. They have to talk about it, and if one of them just doesn't quite get it, the others in the group who do get it can explain that to that person. And that kind of peer learning, peer teaching, I think, is very valuable. At least a lot of students are probably more prone to learn from their fellow students, just speaking to them at the right level, than they are to learn from my lecture. I mean, if I get up and I talk for an hour, I'm going to be covering a whole range of ideas. And if I lose them in the first

10 minutes, they're going to be lost for the rest of the lecture. But with the workshop method, ideally everybody is coming along at more or less the same pace, and they're developing this; and by the end of the hour or a couple of hours of workshop, they should have a pretty decent understanding of the topic.

Beck: And, if they all get lost, then you're there to notice that, and to help them along.

Guttman: Yeah.

Beck: Good. There was something else I wanted to ask about. You mentioned Peter Elbow was one person that you learned from with respect to the way that he taught writing. And you mentioned working with Clyde Barlow and Jeff Kelly around upper-level science.

Guttman: Right.

Beck: Were there other people that you seemed to learn—of course, Don Finkel, you learned a fair bit about teaching from Don.

Guttman: Oh, yeah.

Beck: Were there other people that stand out to you as folks who taught you some important things about teaching?

Guttman: Boy. I don't know. I mean, all . . . it's hard to say. All the way through—I haven't had a chance to read all of the evaluations that I wrote for other people—there's just a ton of them here—but over the years, I see myself saying to my colleagues that "I really enjoyed your lectures." And I think we got a bunch of faculty members who simply were very good at understanding ideas, and explaining them well. I have that memory of it. We almost always attended one another's lectures in every program. It was just, on the whole, a pleasure to hear one of my colleagues giving a well-constructed lecture, developing some really interesting, some fascinating ideas, and being kind of entertained intellectually like that.

But no, I don't think that I—oh, I don't know. It's hard to say. I might have picked up a gesture or two, or some subtle thing that I do, from somebody else. I can't remember actually doing it, but I think that listening to other people give good lectures gives you probably more of a basis for giving your own good lectures. Something like that.

Beck: Okay. You mentioned that you taught Introduction to Natural Science and Molecule to Organism. Those are two programs that I think of outside the sciences, but I think of those as being kind of flagship programs within the natural science curriculum.

Guttman: Yeah, they are.

Beck: And that the sciences, in general, at Evergreen seem to develop what appears to be a fairly coherent curriculum for pursuing natural science.

Guttman: Oh, yes.

Beck: How did that come to be?

Guttman: We're just all smart people. [laughter]

Beck: That's a given. But what was it that, I mean, do you remember anything about how you came about developing a clear curriculum, for instance?

Guttman: No, I don't. I mean, we all have our little faculty groups that the—I forget what everything is called now.

Beck: There were specialty areas.

Guttman: Specialty areas. We had one that they called Science, Technology and Health for a while. And at times, I was the coordinator of some of those things. We simply got together once a year at least, and we wrote out a curriculum on the board, and said, "Who's teaching this, and who's teaching that?"

I think that there's probably something about the nature of science that makes it different from humanities and social sciences, in that, right offhand—it's interesting to think about this—right offhand, I don't think of anything in the humanities—for example, in literature—that you have to learn before you can learn some other aspect of literature. And to me, it all comes together. You're learning the literature of different people at different times for different purposes. But it's all the development of human ideas, and expression of emotions, and wild adventures, and soaring ideas and so on, all expressed in wonderful language. Yeah, you learn about, I don't know, nineteenth century British literature one year, and you learn about European literature some other year and so on, but I don't know that you have to learn one thing before another. Whereas in the sciences, you do have to learn things in a certain order.

So I think it's simply natural that we've had to see to it every year that somebody was teaching a program something like Introduction to Natural Science. Very often, of course, at the same time, we would have a program like Life and Health, or Human Health and Behavior, and so on, where people were learning a certain amount of biology, connected with—well, with what? With health, for example.

Beck: Perhaps psychology?

Guttman: Psychology, things of that kind. That would always help. I mean, it would help a student who had gone through a program like that may have learned enough biology to be able to go on to a more advanced biology program.

But, at least for the science faculty, we always made sure that there was at least one of those introductory programs, and that there was always a program of the Molecules to Organism type, so that people could go on to learn biochemistry and cell biology, and things of that kind.

That always turned out to be delightful, on the whole. We generally were able, in the year, in the more advanced program, to get the students to the point where a lot of them were doing their own lab work, doing their own experiments, and really probing into molecular biology or something of that kind, in a useful way. But I think it was just the nature of science that you have to do that kind of thing.

Beck: It really has to be sequential, to a certain degree.

Guttman: You have to be sequential, to a degree, at least. Yeah, I could say, okay, fine, maybe you don't have to really understand cell metabolism before you can learn genetics. But you have to have some kind of basic foundation in biology before genetics makes a lot of sense. So there's a certain amount of sequencing like that.

Beck: Right. That's good, because that has been one of the ongoing, well, differences between the natural sciences at Evergreen and the humanities at Evergreen.

Guttman: Yeah.

Beck: The humanities has not had any kind of sequencing. And it's an interesting question as to what extent that's something that's forced by the material, or to what extent it's a choice that people have made in humanities.

Guttman: Yeah, well, I think that when it comes to sciences, it's something that, to a degree, is forced by the material. It's not just a matter of tradition. You really do have to know these things in some kind of an order.

Beck: Right. So, I'd like to go on a little bit to think about—you've talked a little about the first three years of your teaching at Evergreen. You said that the On Knowing program kind of fell apart. What did you do once it fell apart? Did you have kind of a group contract with some of the students?

Guttman: You know, I can't even remember. And I don't have papers that remind me.

Beck: Okay.

Guttman: That's a very good question. And I've been going back through archives, and finding whatever papers I can. And I found a whole bunch of papers regarding the On Knowing program, but I really can't remind myself of what I did at the time.

Beck: I was just going to say that it's not that unusual of a story, as far as I know, about early Evergreen programs. I've been interviewing Tom Rainey, for example.

Guttman: Oh, yes.

Beck: He's mentioned that his first program had some rockiness to it.

Guttman: Yeah, right.

Beck: And I know, from my dad, his first program also had some tough times.

Guttman: Yeah, I'm sure.

Beck: A number of programs did have that kind of—what's your general impression about how Evergreen developed after those first few years, say, over the next first 10 years of the college? Was there a kind of a settling out that you noticed?

Guttman: Part of it may have been a lack of knowledge on my part. At least in the early years, we would hear about programs having difficulties. We would hear that Dean So-and-So was getting together with the faculty of this program, and that they were trying to work out their difficulties, personal difficulties or whatever it was.

I think I just heard less and less of that as time went on. Maybe we just generally figured out how to do things better. Part of it may have been personality conflicts, in the early years. Certainly, in On Knowing, there were personality conflicts. We just didn't fit together well. But it may have been that, after a while, people came to appreciate that not only did you have to have a group of faculty whose disciplines, whose specialties, whose interests were compatible. And not just compatible, but would fit together to make a coherent, interesting program. Not just that, but that their personalities had to fit. And so they were all really committed to doing it, and that they wouldn't allow personal difficulties to get in the way. I think perhaps it took a little while for people to appreciate that aspect of it.

I had said earlier that I think that one of the things that made for real success in our programs was when we faculty agreed that we wanted to discuss a topic, wanted to explore a theme, and we just had a hell of a good time doing it. Perhaps maybe even just in preliminary talks that we had with one another, we figured out that, yeah, we're compatible. We like each other well enough that we can get along, and we can do this. And perhaps a part of that being we all agree that we're going to commit ourselves to really working at it. We're not going to allow our little egos and quirks to get in the way, but we'll set those things aside, and we will really pursue this topic wholeheartedly. Yeah, commit ourselves to it. Because I don't know how things really are these days, but I think you're indicating that there is little, or at least less, programs falling apart than they used to be.

Beck: I've heard of a few stories here and there, but it's not something that seems to be very common. Every now and then, you'll hear something, but I've never been in a program that's fallen apart. I won't

say that all of my programs have sailed smoothly, without difficulties, but when there have been difficulties, we've been able to resolve them within the team. That strikes me as the best way to go.

Guttman: Yes.

Beck: Just if you can figure out a way to go forward with the material, so that students will be able to learn something important, and you can continue to work together as a team, even if there are ongoing disagreements.

Guttman: Yes.

Beck: But generally, apart from thinking about how the programs and faculty seem to figure out how to teach together, were there other things that happened in the first decade or so that seemed to indicate a general, I don't know, a kind of a trend, or a direction of change, that you noticed as you were teaching?

Guttman: Boy, I can't think of anything like that, no.

Beck: How did the college seem to change over the first decade or so?

Guttman: Yeah, I know you've got that on your list of topics, and I don't know, except what we were just talking about, about people being able to get along better, and do more successful programs because they didn't have the conflicts. That perhaps is the major thing.

I don't know how anybody feels about how well the range of topics of programs being offered fits with the range of possible topics. I mean, are we—I think it would be very unlikely that we would be narrowing our range of subjects that we're exploring in coordinated studies. I don't know.

Beck: Okay. Maybe we could talk about something a little different about your work at Evergreen. I think I mentioned we talked a little bit about this last time, but you were very involved in ongoing research in the phage lab.

Guttman: Yeah.

Beck: You mentioned that Betty brought a grant, and was continuing—brought her research ongoing.

Guttman: Betty was always much more committed to doing research in molecular biology than I was. I felt very fortunate that she was hired at the same time I was. It was a real coincidence to have two biologists hired who both had been doing research on phage T4.

But Betty was really committed to doing that. First of all, of course, she came with a grant, so that she had the money to open a lab, and get the lab running. And I was really of secondary importance in that. I mean, I welcomed having a lab where I could continue to be associated with basic research, but the particular topic that Betty's research was aimed at was her particular thing. I had started to do some research. It could have gone in an interesting direction, but it wasn't really going

very far. So I just sort of tagged on to helping Betty and the other people in the lab to do the kind of work that she was interested in.

I felt that the important thing was that we did have basic research going on at Evergreen. I think that's been the real importance. I mean, the particular topic that Betty was concerned about primarily, at first, was having—phage T4 has an unusual base in its DNA, and her research was primarily concerned with, what are the consequences of having that unusual base in the DNA, and what happens if you make a mutant that doesn't have that particular base? All of those questions.

I just kind of went along with that, helping out to do that as much as I could, because I thought that the experience of doing research was important for students. And I'm really delighted that other people—I think of Clyde and Jeff and other people—who've really continued to have research labs, and make the research experience really available to Evergreen students.

But as far as—well, Betty and I wrote a couple of things together. I got together—this is just sort of my way of doing things—I got together a big map, showing phage T4, and where all the genes are, and the developmental pathway and so on. That was sort of my contribution to phage biology, because it became the kind of map that everybody had—at least Betty told me that everybody had—up in their labs wherever they were. So that was my little contribution to it, but it was not a contribution of doing original research, it was a contribution of getting everything together in a coherent way, which is what I have always been trying to do with my books.

Beck: That's what I was just thinking, that that's what you're doing in your texts.

Guttman: Yeah, I've been trying—well, I've done it—to put biology together as a coherent science. So, that was my contribution to phage biology.

Beck: And you published one text before you came to Evergreen, I believe?

Guttman: Yeah, I had written *Biological Principles*.

Beck: And then *Understanding Biology* came out while you were at Evergreen, and that was with Johns Hopkins [III].

Guttman: Yes, right.

Beck: And that was sometime in the '80s.

Guttman: Yeah, mid-'80s, '82, '83. I'd have to go back and look. It was sometime around in there.

Beck: Then you worked on the revision on that.

Guttman: Well, we tried to do a revision. It was difficult. It's been kind of a sad story. It's been a combination of some people reviewing my books and saying, "Boy, this is terrific." I've got a review I could show you from the Journal, what was it, *Journal of South African Biology*, or *Journal of Biology*

published in South Africa, which is a wonderful encomiastic review of the book, saying it's the best biology book that has ever been written. And there were a few other reviews saying, "Oh, this is terrific," and so on.

But it never became economically popular. It never became a book that everybody adopted. And the same thing was true of the last book. We went with a different publisher, but my biology book that came out in '99, again, it had a lot of people saying all kinds of great things about the book, and how good it is, but hardly anybody adopting it. I think it was just, I don't know, too different or something. They adopted it at the University of Washington for one year, but then apparently it was just not their style of teaching, and so they dropped it.

So, that's been my difficulty. I've been happy to, well, I've enjoyed putting biology together, but I haven't enjoyed not receiving the wider approval of what I've done.

Beck: The audience.

Guttman: Yeah.

Beck: That is something that I recall, when the book came out in '99, that at first, there were pretty high hopes.

Guttman: Yeah.

Beck: And there were a lot of really good reviews.

Guttman: Yeah.

Beck: But then, for whatever reason, something about the way the different biology departments go about adopting textbooks or something seemed not to work.

Guttman: Yeah, I don't know what the trouble was, but McGraw-Hill dropped it. I should have fought harder. I should have fought it, and tried to make them keep it on, but they didn't.

Beck: I wonder if it's something about the way that biology is taught at Evergreen, and how you've taught biology at Evergreen, as opposed to the way that it's often taught at other colleges and universities. I wonder if that had something to do with it.

Guttman: I don't know. I really wonder what it is that—there have been a few biology books written by other people that have become very popular. And as far as I can see, the only thing that's really good about them is that they do everything. Everything is there. But it was never put together with the coherence of my books. I have a particular basic understanding of what an organism is, what a living organism is, and it's a fundamentally genetic understanding, because organisms are genetic systems. That's what I've tried to get across as kind of a unifying theme throughout. But a lot of people, I don't

know, either they don't understand that, they don't see that there can be a unifying theme to biology, and I just don't know. It's very hard to know. It's hard to talk about it.

Beck: Right, we can move on.

Guttman: Yeah.

Beck: But you've done other writing through your career.

Guttman: Oh, yeah. And I'm still trying to do it, but my current writing, nobody wants to buy it yet. It's basically about the problems of our society, well, the problems of human society. I've put together a manuscript. Hold on a second. It took a while to get myself together. I put together a manuscript called *Too Big for Our Niches*. And Erica's husband, Mike, wanted to set up a, what do you call it? A thing on the Internet?

Beck: A Web site?

Guttman: A Web site where I can do this, because it seems—

Beck: Is this Mike Melton?

Guttman: Yeah, Mike Melton. Because he and other people are saying that the way to publish your ideas these days is to have a Web site, and get it out that way. And then, maybe a book emerges from that. I haven't gone to the Web site idea, but I've tried several times to sell this book to other people, and nobody's buying it yet.

But you can see for yourself that the Earth is in terrible trouble, and it's because of all of the stupid things that humans do. We have a stupid economic system. We have an economic system that allows a tiny fraction of the population to be incredibly rich, and makes everybody else miserable and unhappy. And they system is one that's destroying the world, destroying the Earth. And I've tried to make this clear, and it is clear to anybody who thinks about it, but [sighs] I haven't been able to sell the book to anybody. So it's difficult.

Beck: Let's talk more about your experience at Evergreen.

Guttman: Oh, yeah.

Beck: Thinking about how Evergreen changed from the early years to the time in your mid-career, to the time that you retired, what's your sense of how Evergreen developed and changed over that time?

Guttman: I don't know about Evergreen as a whole. I served on a series of DTFs where we tried to address various little problems, various difficulties. For example, I was early on the rotation of deans DTF. We wanted to get away from what is virtually universal, I guess, that the few people become deans, and they become separated from the faculty; they become administrators who have their own

ways of thinking. We wanted Evergreen to be a place where everybody shares in all of the work more or less equally.

So we wanted it to have people rotate into positions of leadership for a while, and to know that they were going to go back to being faculty members, just ordinary faculty members teaching their programs, and to do only the kinds of things that would really be good for teaching for continuing the Evergreen mission, and not get involved in the various kinds of organizational things that I think traditional colleges do. That was one good thing to do.

But, I don't know. At the time that Dan Evans was President, I remember being on various DTFs, various committees, where we were trying to promote the kind of changes. I can't say what kinds of changes. Dan was a good leader, he was a good President. And he was able to see that the college needed certain kinds of organizational changes, and we worked to promote those. But I don't think that we did anything to change the basic structure of the college. The basic idea of Evergreen is so educationally right, and so educationally good, that I don't think you want to change it.

Beck: Right. So in terms of the structure of teaching—team teaching and coordinated studies programs—that seems to be something that has been pretty stable through most of your career.

Guttman: Yeah.

Beck: What about the culture at Evergreen? Would you say that there's been a change? Was there a change from the time that you arrived to the time that you left, in terms of culture among the faculty, or connection with the students?

Guttman: I don't think so. Has anybody else that you've talked to said that they felt that there was a significant change?

Beck: I haven't. It's something that I've heard that people have talked about. Well, you know how it is. People will sometimes talk about how Evergreen was in the beginning, and how we have either drifted away from the good old days, or we've gotten rid of some of the terrible things from the bad old days, depending on how you look at things. I don't want to go beyond those generalities, because I don't want to prejudice you in any particular way.

Guttman: No, no.

Beck: But I'm interested in what your impressions are about whether there has been any changes along the way.

Guttman: But you mentioned getting away from the bad old days. I think that the idea . . . how can I put this . . . I've talked about some of the difficulties that we've had during the first few years, where we were learning how to do it. And then, my impression is only that we gradually learned how to do it, and

so if things were going along more or less the way they were in shall I call them the middle years? After we got over the initial difficulties, if things were going along how they did in the middle years, that's great, and I don't think that anything has to be changed. I'm certainly not aware of any changes.

I mentioned that I had sent out this note to faculty's email, to faculty and staff, a few months ago. And I sent that out, in part, because I kept hearing all of these things from old Evergreen both faculty and staff indicating that some things are falling apart, that things were not going well. And I saw—there was a report, I don't know if it came from the Provost or the President—something about large numbers of students leaving programs after their first year, and other difficulties.

I noticed in the latest Provost's memo having to do with anticipated hires for the years, it says that the number of anticipated students is down. This is not good. This is lousy. So I'm concerned about whether some things have been happening the last few years, where current faculty members are simply not doing things right, or something is being lost. I'm wondering whether something is being lost that was keeping Evergreen as good as it has been for a long time.

It's something I'd like to look into. I mean, yeah, okay, I'd like to look into it, and yet, it isn't really something for us old-timers to look into, in a way. I think that if some of us were to go back and say, "You guys seem to be doing something wrong," it would be resented. So, I don't know, I would like us to be able to look at Evergreen, and see whether there is something wrong, whether some things are not being done well, and try to figure out what can be done to correct that.

Beck: Right. Well, you know, I do want to say that, while there's a part of your reticence that's well founded, that the attempt by old-timers to come in and scold the faculty today, would be resented. Because it is really a matter of the current cohort of faculty to make arrangements to teach as well as they can, and to coordinate their programs as best they can. That's their responsibility—our responsibility.

Guttman: Yeah.

Beck: But at the same time, there's a real hunger, I would say, among at least many faculty at Evergreen now—the current cohort—to listen and to learn from our elders, and to find out what it is that you all learned, and figured out how to do well, that, while we might not be able to do it exactly that way, due to various differences of time and culture and so forth. But nevertheless, there's something that we can all learn from you.

That's one of the reasons, for instance, that I'm interested, and why I'm pursuing this project of doing the oral histories, that I want to learn from folks who have retired, or quite late in their careers, to find out what you were able to do well, what worked well, and what you learned not to do so well.

[laughing] Or, what you'd learned not to do because it didn't work so well. So I would encourage you to offer your perspective on what it was that you experienced.

Guttman: Yeah.

Beck: So I guess, with that, I'd like to see whether there's anything more you'd have to say about what you found to be particularly effective in your teaching, or in the way that Evergreen teaching went generally, and whether there's are areas that seemed to be really ineffective ways of teaching that you experienced at Evergreen. Or, ways in which Evergreen seemed to be frustrating to you in certain respects that seemed to get in the way of good teaching.

Guttman: Yeah, I see what you're asking. And I can't be very specific. Every one of my good experiences was really different. I suppose, sure, that if I did Molecule to Organism one time with Clyde and another time with both Clyde and Jeff, they were pretty much the same thing.

I wonder if the main thing that I was emphasizing was about this is that I said that we faculty, we got together and did programs, where the topic was of interest to us. I wonder if that isn't an important key. Part of it was simply the obligation to do a certain amount of basic teaching. A program like Introduction to Natural Science. Fine, you got people to understand basic physics and chemistry and biology, and a certain amount of math. Okay. But for other things, I did quite a few really interdisciplinary programs, largely humanities-based or based on ideas really thoroughly combining matters of social science, and humanities, and natural science.

The really good times, I think, were those where the central question was of real significance to us as faculty, as intellectuals. And I wonder if that isn't one really important key. I would ask, are some people putting together a program where they're saying, "Well, let's just do some of this, and do some of that. That should make a pretty good mix." But where they're not saying, "Boy, we'll do this around a central question that we really want to explore for ourselves." I would ask about something like that.

Beck: Having that central interest in a particular topic, or having a question, or an issue, or something of that sort is really fundamental.

Guttman: I think so. I think so. And that would be one of the first questions I would ask of contemporary faculty. Are you putting together programs like that, or are you simply putting together a few things that you think might work well?

Beck: Right. Just to jump back to some issues of governance and college issues, you mentioned that you were involved early on in a DTF around deans' rotations. Were there other areas of governance that really stand out that you're particularly—with interesting work for you to do in terms of governance—

Guttman: Oh, I don't know. I'd have to look back. Right offhand, I'd say no. [laughter] Yeah, right offhand, I would say that we had—there was work to be done. There were little things that maybe weren't working so well, and we had to do a little bit of fixing or something. But right offhand, I do not think of anything that was particularly stimulating.

Beck: Okay. Well, if it doesn't stand out to you, then there's probably not much point of working back through and consulting your—

Guttman: No, I wouldn't do that. I was just trying to think. I have this list of things, including DTFs I've served on. But right offhand, I can't think of any DTFs that I did that were particularly interesting.

Beck: Okay. Let me ask about something about the history of Evergreen generally. Evergreen has been through some pretty rough times from time to time.

Guttman: Yeah.

Beck: Early on, there were some concerns about Evergreen being closed due to low enrollment. And then, there was the controversy around Joe Olander's presidency and his reign.

Guttman: Oh, yeah.

Beck: Do you have any particular recollections of any of those times where there was some turmoil at Evergreen that you were had some pretty strong thoughts about?

Guttman: I don't have any particularly strong thoughts. I was trying to go back. I really can't do it much. I was trying to go back to the time when Joe Olander, because [sighs] I don't know exactly what it was that Joe did that got so many people irritated. But I know that there were a few of us—and I was sort of at the periphery of the group. I wasn't strongly emotionally involved in it. I think it was primarily Dave Hitchens and . . . oh, I can see his face but I can't remember his face. It'll come back. Anyway, there was a small group of faculty who were particularly incensed by what Olander was doing, and I can't remember exactly what we were doing to fight it. I'd have to go back and look at I don't know what. But I haven't been able to find any papers from that time.

It was a difficult time, and I don't even know exactly why he left, but he did leave and the college got back to normal. Yeah, I'd have to go back and try to dig through archives, and see if I could find anything good.

Beck: Okay. You retired in . . .

Guttman: . . . 2002.

Beck: . . . 2002, right. And usually, when faculty retire, they have the opportunity to say something to the Board of Trustees.

Guttman: I did, and I don't remember what I said to them. I remember people were sitting there sort of nodding their heads in agreement. But I had some wise words, and I don't remember what my wise words were. It's remarkable to me, because I taught there for 30 years, which is a long time. And on the whole, I have a good memory for things, but . . . maybe that there were just so many things happening. There was so much that I could remember. Now, when I go back and I look at papers from that time, I remember, oh, yeah, I did that or said that or something. And I'm rather amazed at some of the things that I have on paper.

Beck: A couple of other questions that I wanted to bring up. One is, what interests have you pursued outside of Evergreen, not strictly associated with your academic career?

Guttman: Well, I've done a certain amount of associating with Audubon Society, with birding and birdwatching. One of my books, of course, was *The Introduction to Birdwatching*. I did that. That was always important.

Beck: You've been active with the Audubon Society since you retired?

Guttman: Oh, yeah. Well, off and on, and leading field trips and so on. Currently, I'm the editor of the *Echo*, I'm the editor of our little bimonthly bulletin.

Beck: That's the bimonthly bulletin of the local Audubon Society?

Guttman: Local Audubon Society. Black Hills Audubon. The other thing I've been so involved in is theater. I know you mentioned that. I've always—I can't say I've always loved theater. For the most part, I grew up knowing nothing about theater. I remember some time when I was back in grade school, back in Minneapolis, at the University of Minnesota, they put on a production of *The Comedy of Errors*, and they took kids to see that. That was the first play I had ever seen, and I guess it impressed, being kind of fun. It was only really when I got into graduate school, the first year that I was at Johns Hopkins in Baltimore, and lived with a group of guys in a house there, and we went to see at least one play in downtown Baltimore, and I really liked it. [laughing] And I'd never known anything, never thought at all about theater until that point. And then after that, I got to get really interested in theater, and got to really liking it.

So, I guess it was primarily in the early '80s—part of it was when Erica was growing up, Erica got interested in theater and in music. You remember, she took piano lessons, and she took voice lessons. And then she got into Jim This and Vern Eckard, every summer they would do at least one production, a musical, and she got into the chorus of some of those things.

At the time, I would take her to rehearsals, and then I got to know Jim This better. And Jim was the one who was always responsible for making sets. And so I got to helping him out a little bit, doing

sets—I've always been kind of handy with woodwork and so on—and I really enjoyed it. And so for several years, primarily in the early to mid-'80s, I think, I got really involved in local theater, and did a number of sets for a number of productions, and really had a great time.

I can say I probably would have accomplished more, for example, oh, as a molecular biologist, or as a writer or biology books and so on if I had just concentrated on one thing in my life. And I've never been able to do that. I've always been interested in a whole bunch of stuff. That's why I was good for Evergreen perhaps. [laughter]

I had a wonderful time being involved in theater. Of course, that's the way I met Lois, and actually re-met Lois when we were doing the program [that] we called *The Good Life*. One of our requirements was, in the spring quarter, all the students had to get out and do some kind of community involvement. I had a couple of students who were interested in theater. Lois's daughter, Tracy, was teaching high school at the time, and she put on a production of *The King and I*. You remember, Erica had been in *The King and I*. She had been Princess Ying Yaowalak. So I wanted to see what my students had been doing, so I went and saw the production of *The King and I*, and that's where I re-met Lois. That was the beginning of our getting together.

Beck: Was that in the mid-'90s?

Guttman: Yeah, mid-'90s. We got married in '98, I think. And since then, particularly, theater has been a very important part of my life, of our lives. When we took a trip through China a few years back, we saw Chinese theater. And we've gone several times to England and seen Shakespearean theater and modern theater in London and so on. So it's really been very important to us. And now, we have the theater downtown. We have this Seattle Rep Theatre, we go to the 5th Avenue Theatre, and once a year, we go to the Shakespearean Festival down in Ashland. It's really a very important part of our lives.

Beck: You brought theater into your teaching from time to time, didn't you?

Guttman: Yeah, I did. The year I taught this really, in retrospect, kind of a terrible program—Ways of Knowing—I did it with [Laverne King and Margaret Gribskov—yeah, I brought theater into teaching. I was doing a certain amount during the day, but mostly I had a section of older students in the evening. That was very nice. I did a general introduction primarily to musical theater.

Got myself into great trouble with them and didn't handle it as well as I could have, because I wanted to everybody to read a play, and the most easily available play was . . . oh god, I know the play, and suddenly I've got to go back and remember the title . . . oh god . . .

Beck: Is it a musical?

Guttman: Yeah, a musical. The boy, the girl, living in neighborhoods. Their fathers are gardeners.

Beck: Oh, *The Fantasticks*!

Guttman: *The Fantasticks*. Thank you. [chuckles] *The Fantasticks*.

Beck: “Buy a radish. Get a radish.”

Guttman: Yes, right. So I had everybody buy a copy of *The Fantasticks*. And the big event that comes into it is rape, where rape is not meant to be sexual assault of a young woman, it’s meant to be abduction. And there’s a song about rape, and my teaching colleagues got all angry and upset over that, would not listen to any reason. Half the students were young women who got irate over having to read about rape and all of that stuff. So, it was difficult.

But, yeah, I brought that in there. And here and there in a few other places, I’ve brought theater into teaching.

Beck: Right. That connects up with just general issues of politics, and social justice, and so forth, as it developed at Evergreen.

Guttman: Yeah.

Beck: I remember hearing something about that incident. And I think this was well before the current language would come in, but these days, people would talk about that song as being “triggering.” Right? That they would be triggered. But what was your—was that part of what was going on with respect to the controversy over that incident, over having to read about the song “Rape Ballet”? That there was a fair bit of politics involved?

Guttman: Well, yeah, there was political stuff. I mean, they—I don’t know about Margaret, but Laverne was a strong feminist—I mean, they were both strong feminists, I suppose. Laverne was strong, and not very logical, and not very willing to listen to reason.

Will Humphreys, I tried to talk to Will at one point, when I was at kind of a low point and wondering what to do. And Will Humphreys wrote me a note that I have somewhere. It was basically saying, “Look at what Laverne and Margaret are like; that they have essentially no intellectual background. They have very weak academic backgrounds, and you couldn’t really expect them to respond more intelligently, more rationally to what you were trying to get across, to what you were trying to teach.” It was just unfortunate that that had to happen.

I should have known. I should have thought about the word “rape” being used there. And I should have thought—tried to find some other play for people to read. So, it was an unfortunate episode. It didn’t really affect us strongly, but for a while, it was very disruptive.

Beck: Right. Just thinking about the politics at Evergreen, were there other incidents that you can recall where there were political controversies or political issues that seemed to emerge as central, in relationship to any of your work?

Guttman: I don't think so. No, I was teaching things that were pretty—well, I don't want to say all was neutral politically. I mean, for example, the program that I mentioned before, The Good Life, was really premised on the idea that we humans should be having a good life, enjoying nature and enjoying all the beauties of the world. But we're making a terrible mistake by ruining the world that we're trying to live in, and we've got to stop doing all of that so that we can really enjoy a good life for everybody. That's the only really political thing that I can think of offhand.

Beck: Right. Well, that's one of the oldest questions in philosophy: whether the good life is the ethical life.

Guttman: Oh.

Beck: The optimistic view, of course, is that it is.

Guttman: Well, yeah. To me, if we had an economic structure for Earth essentially for everybody, if we had an economic structure that was equitable, where essentially everybody could share in all of the good things of the world, and we're not so terribly tilted in favor of a very few, then we would be living in an ecologically sound way. We would be limiting our population, and we would have food for all, and everybody, in my view, would basically be having the good life. And people would be living an ethical life. There wouldn't be such terrible ethical problems. But, no, we don't have that. We have an economic system that is screwing everything up.

Beck: I'm wondering whether there are any final thoughts that you'd like to share with respect to your teaching at Evergreen, your career at Evergreen.

Guttman: Oh, god.

Beck: Any lasting memories?

Guttman: It's been a wonderful life, on the whole. I can't think of any place I could have been teaching that would have been better. As I say, if I had devoted myself almost strictly to becoming a fine molecular biologist, and pursuing my research, then, yeah, I probably could have gone to someplace like Caltech, Harvard, god knows where. And could have had that kind of a life. But it would be very restricted, and somehow, I was just born [laughing] being the kind of guy who's not restricted. I'm born being interested in all kinds of stuff. And Evergreen has been exactly the right place for me. So, except for a few incidents of the kind we mentioned, it was 30 years of just a very good life.

Beck: Good. Are there other topics that you were hoping to talk about?

Guttman: No, no.

Beck: Is there anything else that stands out?

Guttman: Oh, no. We've covered everything. We've been talking for a long time.

Beck: Okay. Well, maybe we should stop.

Guttman: Yeah.

Beck: But I do want to thank you so much for agreeing to do this again.

Guttman: I'm happy to do this. It's been interesting to look back. I may actually spend some time down in archives, aside from this; spend some time organizing a bunch of the stuff that I've given Randy over the years. And, as I do that, I may learn some more [laughing] about what my life was like at Evergreen, get some more insight into interesting things.

Beck: If you have the time, and if I have the time, maybe we might meet again and talk if there's anything else that comes up that you'd like to pursue.

Guttman: Yeah, sure.

Beck: The one thing that stands out to me is that I think you've done a lot of very interesting work that [are] probably things that we could talk more about, if you have more time. For instance, you mentioned that you're the editor of the local Audubon bulletin.

Guttman: Yeah.

Beck: Which, I think, stands out as an ongoing, significant, local contribution.

Guttman: It is, yeah.

Beck: But not something that gets you notoriety in academic circles, perhaps.

Guttman: Yeah, of course.

Beck: But I think it's still an important contribution to our community.

Guttman: Yeah, I've had an interesting life. I'm glad it's not quite over yet. Yeah, indeed.

Beck: Let's end now, but thanks again, and we'll talk again soon, I hope.

Guttman: Okay, good.