

Priscilla (Pris) Bowerman
Interviewed by Susan Fiksdal
The Evergreen State College oral history project
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FINAL

[Begin Part 1 of 2 of Pris Bowerman on May 18, 2023]

Fiksdal: This is Susan Fiksdal with Pris Bowerman. This is our second interview. This is May 18, 2023. We thought we'd start with a program we taught together, which was Modernization and the Individual, in 1978.

Bowerman: That's right. We had Max Smith as a colleague, and then Larry Smith from St. Martin's. Two Smiths. I didn't remember Larry Smith very well, and I still don't know him well, but when Susan mentioned him, "Oh, that's right. There was a fourth."

Fiksdal: No, I don't think we got to know him well. I think, though, that Matt was the coordinator.

Bowerman: I do, too, when I think back to it, which would make sense. It was not, from my point of view, totally different from teaching from what I'd already done at Evergreen. I'm not sure if I taught with Matt before. Let's see . . . no, I hadn't taught with Matt before, but we had both taught in the Political Economy area, so there were standard things we political economist types would do, and put Susan through, reading the texts of the origin of liberalism and where the central idea of the individual became so dominant in Western thought.

Fiksdal: But I really loved that because I had had Western Civ, but not taught in the way you and Matt were doing it. Matt explained to maybe just me, but maybe to Larry, too—maybe we were all present—that the whole point of Evergreen was not to use a textbook but to use the primary sources. Yeah, sometimes they were long, and sometimes they got hard, but that's what we were going to do.

Bowerman: Dear old John Locke. Did we do him in that program?

Fiksdal: We did John Locke. We did Adam Smith. We did all these people. But they're not hard to read, so that was very good. I knew something about them previously.

Bowerman: Yes, you did. As I recall, I thought you had a lot of background in European history that was deeper than mine.

Fiksdal: I did have that.

Bowerman: That was really helpful to me personally, and then to the program, I think. That was really good.

I remember Matt lecturing because his style was so different from anything I had seen before. It was—I don't know what words to use—casual. He liked to walk around, and we had a pretty big double classroom that we were in. Remember that?

Fiksdal: Oh, yes, in the library.

Bowerman: Exactly.

Fiksdal: It was in the basement. Not basement but—

Bowerman: Not basement, but there were no windows, that's for sure.

Fiksdal: Whatever floor that was. Yeah, no windows.

Bowerman: I thought he'd prepared, but he had no notes, and he had nothing to hand out to students, either, so it was much more like it was off the cuff. I don't think it really was off the cuff.

Fiksdal: I think that's so interesting. I don't remember in such detail about his lecturing, but I remember the first time he was to lecture. That's one of the things I really loved, because it was my first interdisciplinary program. I had been just teaching basically French language, fulltime, full bore. Every level, and I had tons of students. Sometimes I was able to squeeze in a literature book. There were plenty of students that were advanced, so that was good.

That first time he was to lecture, I think it was at 9:00, so I got there early, because I was always early. He came in the room and looked pretty bad. I said, "Are you okay?" He said, "It's my first lecture. I'm not a lecturer. I just threw up." [laughter]

Bowerman: I'm not surprised. He knew that, and he was nervous. I think some people had the impression that he was very laidback, and he was not at all laidback. And conscientious.

Fiksdal: He was.

Bowerman: And so were you.

Fiksdal: I'm sure you were, too. We all were doing our job.

Bowerman: Which was nice. But I knew very quickly—I don't remember having a question about it—that I could rely on you, and you never undermined me in any way.

Fiksdal: That's good. I just spent hours on prep.

Bowerman: I think we all did, or at least you and I both did, and probably Larry Smith, too. He was going "What are you doing?"

Fiksdal: Did you write out your lectures ahead of time?

Bowerman: I probably did back then.

Fiksdal: Yeah, I did.

Bowerman: I still kept notes right to the end. But sometimes I was teaching stuff I knew but I hadn't studied until I was getting ready to do a program again. What's the order to present it in so it's clear? That kind of thing.

Matt was my first really different lecturer. He was funny, which was good for everybody. And I learned some stuff from him, too. I really liked talking about teaching with him. I think you and I were in the same conversations about that.

Fiksdal: Yeah, that was a major focus, I remember, in those early years for me. What is this teaching supposed to be here?

Bowerman: That's right. It's interesting because you felt like a newcomer because it was the first time you were in coordinated studies. But when I was a newcomer the first year, the first scary thing was, oh, I have to lecture in front of other faculty.

Fiksdal: That's true.

Bowerman: I'd never done that. It was like going back to graduate school and lecturing in front of your faculty. [laughing] I learned and after a while, it was comfortable.

Fiksdal: They actually don't know everything in your discipline.

Bowerman: The interesting thing is they don't know your discipline, so they wouldn't know if you were making big mistakes. Most of the time, I taught with people like that. Occasionally, I taught with other economists, like Russ Lidman, but only very occasionally. Once that hit me, it was like, oh, they don't even know my discipline! [laughter] And when I did make a mistake, I always made a point at the next lecture of going back and correcting my errors. I got comfortable doing that.

Fiksdal: I did, too.

Bowerman: But I felt the same way. There was no guidance on how to teach. Our seminars, I think I explained last time, were we each chose a topic, and we advertised it to the students, and they could choose which one they wanted to do. That was completely off the cuff, too, in terms of teaching that material.

I also had the feeling that this institution had always been here. I had no idea. It was the third year of classes, or whatever year it was.

Fiksdal: You didn't know that?

Bowerman: I knew it, but it didn't feel that way. My dean was Charlie Teske, who would come by and talk, and it was history and these stories. Oh, there's this huge history behind us.

Fiksdal: There was, for him. It was a longer history.

Bowerman: He was a founding faculty member. Rudy Martin was my other dean, and he was also planning faculty. I thought later on, on reflection, oh, my lord. This school was so new. They couldn't talk about teaching because they didn't know either. [laughter]

That was a big part of my beginning, but also, I really liked team teaching very quickly. Part of what I liked about it was learning so much from other people, like being impressed with your knowledge of European history. My ears were wiggling. [laughing]

Fiksdal: I loved it, too. I took notes all the way through.

Bowerman: I did, too. I still have the better ones, the ones I remember being, oh! I don't want to ever forget that.

The other thing, I think, was the change in the curriculum; that you didn't teach the same thing year after year after year. I'd just done two years of teaching Basic Principles at Oregon State before I came. It was fine. I still had things to perfect, but I could see like, oh, my goodness. [laughing]

Fiksdal: You were near the end of your perfecting after two years.

Bowerman: Almost achieved perfection. [laughter]

Fiksdal: That's right. You and a lot of people had that experience of possibly having to teach the same courses for the rest of your life.

Bowerman: Over and over. That's right. The fun would come from research but not from teaching.

Fiksdal: Exactly.

Bowerman: Eventually, the best thing was the students. They were always good, but they were always more and more good, until eventually, it became the only thing that was really significant to me. Not to say the faculty weren't, and so on. But the faculty I taught with were faculty I'd taught with before, so there was a little less of the brand new in terms of how to teach and that kind of thing.

I loved that program, but right now, I can't remember. Was it two or three quarters?

Fiksdal: I think it was three.

Bowerman: I do, too, because I don't have anything marked down for spring.

Fiksdal: I think that's right.

Bowerman: It was good. We had the normal attrition that you have in programs. I don't think we knew if it was normal yet.

Fiksdal: Maybe Larry was only there two quarters.

Bowerman: He was, I'm pretty sure, even though I don't have a good memory of him.

Fiksdal: We were commenting before we started the official recording here that there wasn't so much of a worry about enrollment back then. In other words, it didn't come up at all while I was teaching at the beginning.

Bowerman: Right, it wasn't an issue.

Fiksdal: I just don't recall it in that program or in the '70s.

Bowerman: No, I don't think it was.

Fiksdal: In the '80s, I really remember low enrollment at the college, but I always had plenty of enrollment in my classes.

Bowerman: It also became a concern—which I think was coming from the State, more like the Council of Presidents or whatever, or maybe one of the departments that oversees higher ed—whether the students were in state or out of state.

Fiksdal: That's right.

Bowerman: We had to make a big push to get in-state students as well.

Fiksdal: Because we had plenty of out of state.

Bowerman: Yeah. And we were less comfortable then than I think we became about having few freshmen.

Fiksdal: That's right. As I recall, one story I heard in doing all these interviews is that at the very beginning, they were reaching out to just anyone. They had an enrollment, but it was kind of low. Nancy Taylor was working in Registration at that time, so she was asked to quickly go out and get a bunch of freshmen. She was working alone, and she had to figure out what to do and get out there. But she did it.

Bowerman: She did. She beat the bushes, went to high schools, things like that. Sometime, in the second or third year I was there, administration said something about the average age of our student body, so they were thinking about that. It was 27, and I realized that I was 28. [laughing]

Fiksdal: Exactly. I was young also.

Bowerman: I was glad I did not know that the first year. [laughing]

Fiksdal: I've forgotten what year you said you were born, but I think we're just a couple years apart, so, yeah. It was odd to be teaching sometimes people who were quite a lot older.

Bowerman: Oh, yeah. If they were really older, that was great. But if they were, oh, I thought they were younger, but guess what? Maybe they aren't.

Fiksdal: It sounds like you didn't have lunch in the hallway there. It was later called the "dinosaur table," but we used to go to lunch there.

Bowerman: Oh, yes, I wanted to bring that up. Yes, I did go to lunch there very regularly.

Fiksdal: That was really helpful, I think, for talking about teaching.

Bowerman: I loved that table because I taught with almost no one who was at that table. That's how we got to know each other.

One was Bob Sluss, and I taught with him very early on. We had so much fun because he was talking about demographics. The theory behind it, which he was really interested in, is identical to econ theory, except instead of using dollar signs, you used some other unit. We had loads of fun.

He was like, "Oh, no! That's the same thing!" [laughing] It was only one quarter, but just because he was at that table all the time, and I was there almost every day I was on campus . . .

Fiksdal: Ah, you created something together.

Bowerman: Yeah. We just continued on, and that was really nice. But then there were people—Beryl [Crowe], Sandra Simon, Pete Sinclair . . .

Fiksdal: Leo Daugherty, I remember.

Bowerman: Yeah. I was in a seminar later with Leo, but I never taught with him.

Fiksdal: I didn't either.

Bowerman: Sometimes, [David] Paulsen and Barbara Smith would come. Sometimes, Carolyn Dobbs came. But the others, I never taught with, and yet, I got-

Fiksdal: - It seems like mostly people in the humanities, if I'm thinking about it.

Bowerman: There were a lot. Charles, and also . . .

Fiksdal: . . . Richard Alexander. I felt very comfortable there, so I think it was humanities mostly.

Bowerman: Okay. There was Charlie McCann.

Fiksdal: I think a lot of the biologists were very broad at that time. There wasn't all that specialization yet.

Bowerman: No, Bob certainly was.

Fiksdal: Especially since a lot of them came when they were in their forties or later, so they were generalists, and it was easy to talk to them.

Bowerman: And many of them were planning faculty, so they had been attracted by the diversity the school was promising in terms of teaching.

The other thing I found interesting when I became dean, one of the things I was very aware of quickly—by the faculty that came in who asked to see me and talk—was that there was a generation that was 10 years older than us. They were partly planning faculty, but they were also others they had hired.

Then there was our generation, which was pretty big, too. I was in my forties and there was this group of 50 people, and they were looking ahead, and they came in to talk about what they wanted to teach before they retired.

Fiksdal: Oh, interesting.

Bowerman: Because as Curriculum Dean, they wanted to get the approval for that. I'm like, ugh.
[laughing]

Fiksdal: Do what you want. Why are you talking to me?

Bowerman: Yeah, exactly. Is there anything new here? I don't put you in a program. [laughter] Then I started bringing that up at the deans' meetings that we have to first recognize the hiring issue that this presents. They all start retiring, a whole cohort is going to retire within two or three years of each other.

Also, how do we support them between now and then? Because most of them were saying—and I thought that was interesting; it didn't happen to me later—they wanted to hone back in on their specialty that they'd done their graduate work in and their dissertations, and they wanted to teach more and more alone.

Fiksdal: I remember that. I remember old men teaching alone.

Bowerman: That's right.

Fiksdal: Who was on your deans' team? Do you remember? And do you remember the years at all?

Bowerman: Yeah, I have it written down.

Fiksdal: I shall call Pris out. She's got notes this time. It's great.

Bowerman: Yeah, here I am. '90 through the academic year '93-'94, so four years. Russ Lidman was the new provost. The team was Carolyn Dobbs, Mike Beug, Chuck Pailthorp, Jose Gomez, Les Wong, and Masao Sugiyama.

Masao and Les were new as deans that year when I became a dean for the first time, too. Mike had been there a long time and had moved into the Budget Dean position. Carolyn had been there a while. Chuck had been there at least a year, I think. Don't become a dean at an institution who just threw out their President. [laughing]

Fiksdal: Oh, gawd.

Bowerman: We had just gotten rid of Olander, and faculty were really angry.

Fiksdal: Yeah.

Bowerman: It was like now in terms of the whole society. They were angry about everything.
[laughing]

Fiksdal: Oh, interesting.

Bowerman: But mainly what they would bring to me would be academic things, but, oh, there was so much anger around. They were angry at each other. They were angry at students. I used to say, “Some faculty leaves my office, and I look down the hall and there’s another one coming in and they want to talk to me, and it’s another conflict.” That was how a lot of my days were the first year.

Fiksdal: Oh, that’s horrible, especially that first year. You’re trying to figure it out.

Bowerman: It trailed on, but less and less.

Fiksdal: You think it had to do with problems that were festering during Olander’s term?

Bowerman: I don’t know about the problems. People made such an effort on the faculty to show the board what was wrong, and it took them a couple of years to do that. That built up their frustration and their anger against Olander, I think, and the board. By then, they had won, but that anger was still there looking for a place to go.

Fiksdal: I really remember a faculty meeting where people talked about [Censuring President Joe Olander]. Several men got up to rant and rave. I remember most particularly Tom Rainey. It was pretty emotional. I was a little surprised. Then Marilyn Frasca got up, and she started pacing. We were in the lecture hall so there was this level part in between the two levels of risers. She put her hands behind her back and walked and talked. She was completely and absolutely rational, going over what arguments she could find in their talks, and she pointed that out, then moving on with them to move us to a better place. I thought it was calming and so useful. Plus, as a woman, I sat there thinking, Go, Marilyn!

Bowerman: That was before I was dean, but even when I was dean, she often played a role similar to that in faculty meetings. I know there was a lot of shouting—not real shouting, but . . .

Fiksdal: But almost.

Bowerman: . . . a lot of emotion, and she could bring it down, which was good. That was one characteristic of my time as dean. A lot of my time was spent quote “mediating”—not formal mediating, but pretty much just one on one with this upset faculty member, partly trying to get a clear picture of what was bothering them.

Fiksdal: You’d have to have them come back several times?

Bowerman: Some of them came back several times, some didn’t. And some turned into real issues when it was between them or another faculty, or them and a student, but that often left the dean’s hands and went upstairs to other places. Still, that was the mood.

Fiksdal: That must have been a tough time to be dean because I remember Russ Lidman firing people. He fired quite a few people.

Bowerman: I don't think he actually did. I know that that was the impression. I don't know. Do you think he fired a lot of people?

Fiksdal: Yeah, I used to know a few names, but I'd have to really think hard.

Bowerman: I know one person.

Fiksdal: Maybe he called people in.

Bowerman: He probably did. I'm sure that Russ did that. That was the thing was that Russ was not happily appointed either to his position. It was Olander who appointed him. The President we ousted appointed Russ.

Fiksdal: I remember there was some hostility.

Bowerman: I know that it was in people's minds as, oh, he's Olander's person.

Fiksdal: I think he ran against Duke Kuehn for that position.

Bowerman: He may have.

Fiksdal: That was very disappointing for Duke. I didn't know him very well. I got to know him later because I was doing the seminar study, so I recorded his seminar and talked to him a little bit. But he made himself happy by going to Tacoma and teaching there, so he was fine.

Bowerman: That's good. People who can take care of themselves like that, they're just fine.

Fiksdal: Yeah, there are people who . . . you know.

Bowerman: Russ and I spent a lot of hours talking, talking, talking, after work or on his balcony [outside his office]. It was good for him, I think. It was good for me, too. He had been at the research institute over those years. He came only a year after me. Chuck Nisbet was on leave the year I was interviewed. When he came back, we were the only two economists. The school agreed to hire a third and Russ was the third one hired.

But he always seemed more distant from the goings on in the school. Not that he really was, but he was in that institute, and he wasn't always teaching, so I think he had less history than some of us had who were always teaching.

Fiksdal: He was a social science research group funded by the State?

Bowerman: Yeah, a policy researcher. Whatever the official name was.

Fiksdal: I remember that.

Bowerman: Eventually, Greg took over.

Fiksdal: I remember Greg—[Greg Weeks]

Bowerman: When Russ became provost, he took over the institute.

Fiksdal: I really liked Greg.

Bowerman: Yeah.

Fiksdal: My office was up by their offices.

Bowerman: In the Lab. Right?

Fiksdal: Yeah, or wherever it was, so I talked to Greg a bit. I thought he was a really solid person.

Bowerman: And a very kind person.

Fiksdal: Yeah.

Bowerman: Russ, he's an Easterner, a New Yorker. Similar sense of humor, as I mentioned, with Alan. There were ties like that where I think we didn't have to translate things very much. Not that I translated with a lot of people, but I think that he gets misunderstood really quickly because there's an edge to it. [laughing]

Fiksdal: I remember he's a little bit abrupt, but he didn't threaten me, so I was never worried about him. But I can understand what you're saying.

Bowerman: That didn't help it to be a calm and peaceful time.

Fiksdal: Exactly. You were a dean for how long?

Bowerman: Four years. Just the one term. I was tired of it. At the end, I did not want to stay with that.

Fiksdal: Why did you become a dean?

Bowerman: I don't know. I really don't. People ask you that question. They ask you that when you're applying, and, of course, you say something. I was just interested in knowing about administration at that level, so it was kind of—once again—let me learn something I don't know.

I had been invited by the faculty of MPA to become the director of that four or five years earlier. I'd only taught one quarter in MPA before that, and it was during that quarter I was invited. Barbara Smith was the one who said, "By the way, would you like to be interested in the MPA Director?"

Fiksdal: Because it was a disaster from the very beginning.

Bowerman: She offered to drive me up to the retreat. That's when she said, "We'll talk about it tomorrow on our drive to the retreat." So, she had me in the car. [laughing]

Fiksdal: Yeah, there you go.

Bowerman: I didn't think of it that way at the time. She said, "That's coming from the faculty because they're at odds. They've been that way for a while, and they cannot work together." Somebody brought up my name as a possible new director. They all said, "Yes, that would be fine." I think the people perceived that I could make peace among other people, not that I always did that. [laughing]

Fiksdal: But you must have done pretty well.

Bowerman: Enough, over the years. They picked that up. That was also a part of my wanting to be dean because I knew that the deans handled a lot of issues like that, and I thought, I have that strength. Plus, a lot of history at the institution.

Also, Barbara would sometimes approach me about, “We have a new faculty member. Would it be all right if I assign them to your team? Because you’re such a good mentor.” She did that with Lucia and me, too. We did that, and we were good at that.

When John Parker came on as a new—not part of the faculty—leader of the teaching master’s program, Barbara came to me and said, “He’s got no real way to introduce himself to this, so would you mind having lunch with him occasionally?” So, I did, and we’d just talk about administration and things like that, not to any great depth.

Fiksdal: But it gave him someone to talk to, a friendly person.

Bowerman: That’s right. We met quite often.

Fiksdal: When he didn’t know.

Bowerman: Then, when he got very sick, Russ and I drove up to see him. He was a very sweet man, and his wife was a sweet woman.

I remember telling him—and I don’t know if he’s the first—a number of new people, especially if they were in administration, “If you talk to five different faculty members about that issue, you’ll hear at least six opinions.” They would understand eventually. [laughing] It wasn’t like you were misunderstanding, necessarily. “Just go back and ask them, ‘Did I get that right?’”

That was another thing disconcerting about being a dean. They would come into my office. They’d ask for time. “C’mon in and talk.” I often didn’t know what the issue was, but it would be an issue about the school, not in their team. I had those, too.

There’s something that the faculty was going to address in faculty meetings in the future. They had a strong opinion one way or another, and we would talk about it. Sometimes the opinion would get modulated.

Then the faculty meeting would happen, and they’d get up to talk, and they had a totally different [point] than either of the two in the meeting. That happened so often, it was like, why am I bothering to be in this position?

Fiksdal: I often wondered why I was bothering to be there [in faculty meetings], because people were derailing committee work. It just seemed like, yeah, you could endlessly pull up new questions, and new comments, new things that they had to address. Let’s just address it.

Bowerman: “What do you want to do?” “Oh, well . . . “ Then they’re not sure.

Fiksdal: Exactly. It’s not like they have an opinion.

Bowerman: That, and this anger that was there in the beginning, and then that switching of public presentation of your preferences was like, I don’t want to deal with this. This is ridiculous.

Fiksdal: Did you get to deal with the curriculum very much?

Bowerman: Not all that much because we were so tied up in these feuds that were going on in the faculty. Yeah, we did the standard curriculum stuff, but it wasn’t very different. We did start a discussion about changing specialty area definitions. We did that mainly through committee meetings on the topic. But the years before, I’d done a few DTFs. We did a lot more there in the DTFs.

Fiksdal: Interesting. But I think you let it be ground-up. We talked in our specialty areas.

Bowerman: Oh, yeah.

Fiksdal: That’s really the mark of good deans, I think.

Bowerman: When I wrote my application, that’s what I said. I want to be able to walk the campus and meet a lot of faculty. That was a highlight, the faculty evaluations. We had a couple—Jose was an assistant dean, so he didn’t do evaluations. I think we had one-fifth of the faculty, each of us.

Also at that time, I was over the part-time faculty, and we went through evaluations. I did evaluations on them, too, so I did manage to go to the classroom of every full-time faculty member.

Fiksdal: That’s great. Like in the old days. Were we still on the three-year contracts schedule?

Bowerman: No, because just before I was dean, I was head of the DTF on faculty evaluations, and that changed everything to the eight-year contract. It was just about a year or two before we switched to the eight-year. And tenure. Everyone had tenure if they were hired on a full-time contract. But we always did, we just didn’t know it.

Fiksdal: Yeah.

Bowerman: What are you telling me? [laughing]

Fiksdal: Something I never really worried about, though, getting fired.

Bowerman: In the very beginning, I did.

Fiksdal: Yeah, at the very beginning, it seemed a little scary, but then, it wasn’t. Even though I had some very strange dean comments, someone wrote this very strange evaluation of me. I couldn’t understand it. Then I decided that if I can’t understand it, so it’s not about me and my teaching apparently. If I don’t understand it, then no one will, and I’m not going to get fired, so I just let it go.

Bowerman: I remember, I think it was Leo Daugherty, he was interim dean for a while, and I was in his group. My evaluation was maybe two paragraphs. “Dear Pris, I have read your portfolio. It is very nice.

I'm recommending you for re-appointment. Have a good summer." [laughing] I thought, "That's the way to be efficient!"

Fiksdal: He was always writing things, but whenever I saw his writing, it was like that. He dealt with everything official that he had to in a very brief manner. No beautiful words. No beautifully crafted sentences.

Bowerman: You didn't even know if he'd read your portfolio, except he said he did.

Fiksdal: Exactly. Probably not. He was sort of towards his ending years.

Bowerman: Yes, he was. He was in that group that was maturing out.

Fiksdal: Maturing out.

Bowerman: What was the last thing?

Fiksdal: The eight-year contract. I forget why I brought it up. Oh, you were happy in the deans' area because you got to go to everyone's classes.

Bowerman: Yeah, and I ended up having people like Doranne Crable and Marilyn Frasca—people of the arts—and we all knew each other, but I'd never taught with them, and I didn't really know what was going on in much of that curriculum at that time, so it was wonderful. It was eye-opening.

I just wanted to know how you teach something like the theory of dance. Not dance, but the theory of dance. How do you teach painting? With Marilyn's, it was for students [who] had a project they are bringing in their work. She recommended that I come to this one. They discuss each other's work. They put it up around the room.

I think I went back for a second session of that, but it was so interesting. I didn't know about that. Later, I taught with Lucia. We did that in our programs, so at least I'd seen it before. I think the artists stood out most to me because it was the area I knew least about how to teach.

I do remember a few of the scientists, and I remember having a few faculty who I knew—I think everyone knew who they were—but who didn't seem to have a reputation. Obviously, they weren't bad. Most of them kept very good portfolios, so I really read the portfolios. This one person, he just turned up, extraordinarily modest about his abilities. I wrote a really detailed evaluation based on his portfolio. I said, "These are your strengths. The students picked them out all the time. You're doing just fine. Don't retire early."

Fiksdal: That's great. Encouraging. I agree. When I was a dean, I loved also—it's like spying—you get to observe someone's class, and they don't pay attention to you because they're teaching, and you get to be in the classes, watch the students and see how it all works.

We were endlessly fascinated by that because that was the one bad design of programs, I think, that we had seminars all at the same time, so we couldn't observe each other's seminar to get tips.

Bowerman: Yes. We did get to do one program early on. It was the CISCA program that I couldn't remember what it stood for, so I looked it up. Culture, Ideology and Social Change in America. That's why it was called CISCA.

Fiksdal: Imagine trying to teach that now.

Bowerman: I know. That would be fantastic, but you'd need six quarters. It was Charlie Teske, David Marr, Eric Larson, and myself. We wanted to be able to attend each other's seminars, so we had different times. I remember in one—because I just looked it up when I was looking up the title—that David and I went to each other's seminars three times in the winter quarter or whatever quarter it was. We did the same thing in other quarters, and I did see Charlie and Eric, too.

We learned interesting things. It wasn't necessarily something you were going to do in your seminar, because I think it has a lot to do with personality and how you think. But I was like, oh, how interesting. He just sits back and the students go "Oh!" [laughter] I think if I'd just sat back, no, that wouldn't happen. [laughing] We did manage it, but it was a scheduling issue about how you make it all happen. I think that's the only time that we did that.

Another program, we tried the fishbowl seminar. I never liked the idea because I thought we were performing.

Fiksdal: Do you want to describe a fishbowl?

Bowerman: A fishbowl is when the faculty hold their faculty seminar in front of the students. You're in a large enough area that if the students want to attend, they can come and sit down and listen. Our rules were "You don't talk. This is the faculty seminar." It just struck me that a lot of it was performance. I didn't enjoy it, and I didn't think I got much out of it, except, oh, yeah, that's the way he performs. [laughing]

Fiksdal: That happened to me, too. I didn't really find it useful.

Bowerman: We didn't do it very often. I think to have questions from your colleagues at a lecture—after the lecture, that's what we usually did—is really useful, both to students and you, as long as they're not trying to put you—

Fiksdal: No one was antagonistic.

Bowerman: Yeah, they weren't purposely trying to get you. They were genuinely asking a question and you might or might not have the answer.

Fiksdal: I don't really remember that happening.

Bowerman: I did that a lot.

Fiksdal: I think that would be great.

Bowerman: I don't think we did that early on.

Fiksdal: No.

Bowerman: I think you have to get a certain degree of confidence, both in yourself and your colleagues.

Fiksdal: For me, that was my first program. I think I would have been a little thrown, unless it was right in my area, and I knew it. If asked to extrapolate or to link it something we were talking about in the program, I would have had to think.

Bowerman: We did that a lot in Rights and Wrongs, which was mainly about First Amendment rights and lawsuits. Jose was one of the three faculty so he would bring in the Supreme Court decisions, and sometimes they were several of them on one issue because they changed their mind over time.

It was a program built on dispute and students had to take a side on some issue and get up there in front of the classroom and argue it against the others. It was okay, but, again, it wasn't really antagonistic afterwards, but we could do a lot of clarifying, or we could say, "How about?"

Fiksdal: In a way, you're acting like attorneys would.

Bowerman: Yes, that's right. It was appropriate and good. Was there a general theme we're working on?

Fiksdal: This was good. It laid the groundwork. I wanted to ask about your most memorable programs, and/or the most memorable people you taught with, and people that you remember, good or bad. Maybe start with the good.

Bowerman: Of course. [laughing]

Fiksdal: As we all do.

Bowerman: Like when you write comments on a student's paper.

Fiksdal: I thought of the exact same thing.

Bowerman: "It's really wonderful, except, except . . ." [laughing] Memorable programs. I've obviously talked about Rights and Wrongs a lot, and that was one.

The Philosophy of Religion was another because the topic, I had things to contribute, but I was taking what Alan was presenting and applying it to other things. But I learned so much because it was an area that was fairly new to me. There were parts of it that weren't, but the philosophy part of it was, so it was a great learning thing. The students were very enthusiastic, and they were among some that came back more often than not.

Then there was—I'm just pulling this out of my head right now—the original Introduction to Political Economy program, which was only a quarter long, so you had to pack a whole lot in there. We taught micro and macro in one quarter. Usually, you take one quarter for one, one quarter for the other. The self-appointed Marxist or Socialist would present the Marxist framework, and then there would be a historian or political scientist who would present history.

Again, it was set up as an antagonistic thing between the conventional economist and the socialist economist. It was fun. I learned a lot. I had studied Marx intensely as an undergraduate, so a lot of that wasn't new, but the way in which they would present it was different. And to actually counter it against a conventional [economic view], I began to see more and more similarities not differences.

Fiksdal: Oh, wow.

Bowerman: The basic premise is different, but beyond that, there were a lot of similarities. That was good. I think that first one was Jeanne Hahn and Alan. I think Alan was a new prof at that time. He came in '77, '78.

Then we did more IPEs, Introduction to Political Economy—sometimes two quarters, sometimes one—a few more times. I think the specialty area did it quite often, but I only did it a couple more times.

Fiksdal: Because you got involved in the MPA?

Bowerman: Yeah, that was eight or 10 years later. Then you put in your time. You do MPI. Management and the Public Interest was not my favorite program because I didn't think it was integrated; that it was really an interdisciplinary study. Each faculty member taught their unit, and the students took them all, but where did they put them together?

Fiksdal: Oh, there was no place in the program for people to match?

Bowerman: No, to put them together. I think that that changed in later years, but that's the way it was then.

We had a faculty seminar, but what are we going to talk about, because I don't know what they're doing?

Fiksdal: Oh, right.

Bowerman: They were business meetings.

Fiksdal: Wait a minute. You didn't go to each other's classes?

Bowerman: You mean lectures? No, not as I recall. Maybe there was one a week, very thin.

Fiksdal: Then the seminars were all based on your own material.

Bowerman: Yeah, I taught principles in political economy. Another faculty member was Niels Skov, who taught something about business. I think Guy Adams was in that one. I'm not sure. I just remember Niels Skov, but I know there were more than that.

Fiksdal: I remember I did a program like that, maybe two, where what I taught was separate from the other two faculty. But we would bring elements of what we were teaching into—of course, our lectures. Otherwise, why lecture?

Bowerman: Yeah, I think we only had one a week maybe. I'd have to look it up.

Fiksdal: But I remember they were very tightly tied together.

Bowerman: I taught in Tacoma. I really liked that. It was like, I don't know what this is going to be. Maxine was the coordinator up there still at that time. She was like, "Do your thing." [laughing] Oh, I'll go do my thing twice a week. Okay.

Fiksdal: Did you have to teach during the day and at night?

Bowerman: No, just during the day. I don't know if I did anything else at the same time.

Fiksdal: It changed in its organization over time.

Bowerman: Oh, huge.

Fiksdal: Maybe at that time, it was just during the day.

Bowerman: I think there were evening courses, but I didn't have one. This was '81-'82, the first time I was up there. I was up there again in '83-'84.

She really did want the students to have economics, so I did macro economics mainly with them. The second time, we did micro and macro. I loved it because most of the students were worldly-conversant, middle-aged men who were facing retirement. Many of them were military. Many of them were African American. They'd had all this experience with money, exchange rates, what happens when you go over to Japan.

Fiksdal: They'd been all over the world.

Bowerman: They'd been everywhere, and they had dealt with money and issues like that. That's exactly what econ is about—not only, but to a great extent—so they knew this stuff. What I always tell students, even American 18-year-olds, "You actually know this because it's in the culture and you've been brought up with it, but you are not used to thinking about it, or thinking it out in a logical way as the profession does, and that's what you're learning here."

It was just like teaching a vocabulary, and then, okay, this is the way you make the argument. They were really open to it, and they were really enthusiastic.

Fiksdal: You saw a lot of "aha" moments?

Bowerman: Oh, yes, so many of them. Then they gave me “aha” moments. “When I was in So-and-So, this happened . . .” “Oh, yeah, that’s what I’m talking about.” [laughing] That was really fun. The environment was very friendly so that was nice, too.

I did that one quarter in the winter. Yeah, I had a leave in the fall and did that in the winter. A year later, I went back for two quarters.

Fiksdal: That sounds like a really good experience.

Bowerman: Yes, it was. Shortly after that, Patrick Hill was provost. He called me up—and I’d never talked to Patrick before that—and he said, “We’re forming this Tacoma Study Group, and we want to look at the program, and we want to see what goes on in the program, and we want to see if it needs to be changed or anything like that, so I’m thinking of having you chair it.”

He asked me to go over to his office, and I did. He said, “We really don’t know each other at all, but all the deans tell me you’re the person to chair this group.”

Fiksdal: You’d really built a reputation by then. [laughter]

Bowerman: He said, “I am taking a risk, but are you interested?” I said I was. It was another translation in languages because I was familiar enough with the way Maxine talked about the Tacoma program from having taught there almost a year or a year altogether. Of course, I knew the Olympia Campus. “You don’t have seminars in Tacoma.” “Yes, we have seminars in Tacoma.”

Fiksdal: People would just say things. They didn’t know really what it was about.

Bowerman: Or they would not think that what they were doing was a seminar, so I would have them talk it out. “What do you do?” “What do you do?” “Oh, we’re amazingly alike!” [laughing] So, we could agree on a new vocabulary that everybody could share. That was a large part of what it was. It took a whole year. It was a long report. It was almost totally favorable. There were some recommendations.

Fiksdal: That’s so affirming, too, I think, for Maxine and everyone who was working up there.

Bowerman: Oh, yes. Joye [Hardiman] was on the DTF, too. Maybe I’m wrong, but it wasn’t evenly split. The faculty up there were still small in number.

I think everyone who was on the DTF from the main campus learned a lot from listening to the Tacoma people. “Oh-h-h.” [laughing]

Fiksdal: My next question would be about governance because you’re talked a lot about it so far.

Maybe that’s the end of it, but before we do that, I’m going to go back and remind you: good teaching partners and teaching partners that you wish you didn’t have, or who were more difficult.

Bowerman: Well, you get rid of the few, but they’re retired by now.

Fiksdal: But clearly, you knew how to get along with people or you could respect them.

Bowerman: Yeah, respect. I'll start backwards, I guess. Lucia and I taught three years after I left the deanery.

Fiksdal: Three years?

Bowerman: Two years in a row, then a skip of a year, and then another year. It was the same program, but it changed names, and the third person changed each time on the team. The first time, I think it was called Search for Meaning. Terrible name. [laughing] It could mean anything.

Fiksdal: I taught in a program called Search for Meaning. That program name got used a lot after I taught in it.

Bowerman: These were all freshmen programs. That was one of the things when I was a dean that I was interested in getting back into teaching freshmen. Beforehand, I'd been teaching graduate students or whatever.

It combined art—she participated mainly as an artist in that program. The third person the first year was Earle McNeil and he was a year away from retiring, but he added his particular strengths to that. The second year, I think he had retired, and Barbara asked us to take on Michael Vavrus, who was brand new. He was going to be the head of the teaching program [Master in Teaching], but they wanted him to have a year of undergraduate coordinated studies teaching. That was fun.

Michael was very willing to ask questions and to show you that he was totally surprised. I remember his coming into my office one day and saying, "When does the grass turn brown around here?" [laughter] I said, "Well, never."

Fiksdal: Yeah, where did you come from? The desert? [laughter]

Bowerman: That was fun. And he was very open to learning stuff about how Evergreen operated and what a coordinated studies was like.

By then, Lucia had been Director of the MPA program—she followed me—so we both were administrators, and we knew he was heading for an administrative position, so we would throw tips at him [laughing] or say, "Oh, you're going to love it."

Fiksdal: You can't tell them too much.

Bowerman: That was a good experience and a good program. When we came back the third time with a year between the second and third, we just taught alone. I think I was getting on, was ready not to complicate things. We were very comfortable.

We called it Ordinary People, Extraordinary Lives. We changed some of the structure of it, and we cut it to two quarters. And then we were done. [laughing]

Fiksdal: That sounds very good. A nice experiment.

Bowerman: Yeah, it was. I really liked teaching freshmen at that point. I remember in college a prof saying when I was a senior, “You can’t believe the changes we see from freshman year to senior year.” I always wondered, had it anything to do with college, or was it just four years of being older at that time? [laughter] When you have a lot of juniors coming in because of the transfer students, you don’t see as much, but it’s there. But freshman to senior year is -woah!

Fiksdal: It’s huge.

Bowerman: You see some of these people later and go, “Whoa!”

Fiksdal: Any other great teaching experiences?

Bowerman: When I was in Political Economy the second and third time, we started having students from the year before act as tutors in the principles part that I taught. They were great. One of them was Tom Womeldorff.

Fiksdal: Oh, you’re kidding.

Bowerman: . . . who came back. I just saw him the other day—we were both at the fish store—and he retired this year.

Fiksdal: That’s right. I ran into him, and he told me that, so he’s next on my list.

Bowerman: Yes, he said that you were talking to him. I told him he should do it.

Fiksdal: The minute I heard. First of all, I was so surprised because I always thought of him as so young.

Bowerman: I know. He still looks young.

Fiksdal: Yeah, and I think he is young. I don’t know how old he is. I knew that he had been a student, but I never interacted with him. This is great.

Bowerman: We interacted a lot because he was one of the three tutors. We met once a week as a group.

Fiksdal: Was he a good tutor?

Bowerman: Yeah, he was a good tutor. All of them turned out to be good tutors. Earlier in the year, I had tutors again. One was Tom Richardson, one was Tom Morrow. I used to put Tom—

Fiksdal: Must have been only Toms can apply.

Bowerman: Only Toms were allowed. There was another one. They were good tutors, but those two, I remember. I think Tom Womeldorff knew them. He must have been younger by several years. Because he would tell me he heard—or someone would tell me they heard—from Tom Richardson who was back East—what he was up to and that kind of thing.

Fiksdal: Is he famous now or something?

Bowerman: He went on for a doctorate, I think in econ. I think he got it from American University. Then he went on to teach and probably research. I don't know. A lot of them did go on like that.

I had a group contract in Intermediate Economics fairly early on. I think it was two quarters. It was just a group contract, so there were 16 to 20 students in there. They were the most hardworking bunch of students.

Fiksdal: I think you told me that they requested it. Is that right?

Bowerman: No, that was the studies in Capitalism.

Fiksdal: Oh, that's a different thing.

Bowerman: Yeah. This was a few years later and Dave Pavelchek was in there. Because that part of econ is totally logical exercises. There's graphing going on, too, but you have to understand the shape of this curve and what that means. But they were really into it. [laughing]

Occasionally, because of snow or whatever, I'd be late. I'd come into the class 20 minutes late and they were up there on the blackboard, because they always had assignments.

Fiksdal: Heaven!

Bowerman: Yeah, that was such a wonderful group of students.

Fiksdal: Were they mostly all male?

Bowerman: Mostly, but there were definitely women, which was really good.

Fiksdal: That's good. I just needed to hear that.

Bowerman: Maybe 15 years ago, they did a study and there were fewer PhDs in econ who were women than in the hard sciences. They just don't attract them.

When I went to graduate school, there were five women in a class of roughly 30 students. Secretaries were so delighted because they hadn't had a woman in five years as a group of students. But I don't think it's stayed that way. [laughing]

I have this list of students.

Fiksdal: It's fine to talk about students that you admired or who did well.

Bowerman: Dale Favier was in Power and Personal Vulnerability. I haven't mentioned that. That was a program with Dave Marr and Rudy Martin. It was kind of fun because a lot of the structure of the program was to take pairs of terms that might be regarded as opposites.

The one I remember most was Authority and Responsibility. I remember that one because I didn't understand why those were opposites, but David was sure and it was all right with Rudy and then, it became clear to me along the way. Near the end of fall quarter, the students were getting really lax

and it got on David's nerves. He sent out this memo over Christmas vacation to all the students, gently blasting them, talking about Authority and Responsibility. [laughing]

Fiksdal: And you hadn't reviewed it first?

Bowerman: No. We knew he felt that way and he did tell us he was going to write something, so we said, "Go ahead." It just made me howl because it was taking one of our examples and applying it to them. He set new rules, and I think they were just for his seminar, but Rudy and I complied with them. Two absences. You lose all credit. Things like that.

Fiksdal: He was famous for that. You could lose all your credit in a David Marr program. I didn't know what the conditions were, but I heard from students stories of different faculty and how hard or good or bad they were.

Bowerman: That's right, but he really laid the law down. Boy! Those students were at their desks, sitting up straight.

Fiksdal: That's great.

Bowerman: It was funny. And then, one of the opposites was something like Autonomy and Responsibility. When you're sitting there sitting up straight, we didn't ask them this, but "Are you practicing autonomy?" [laughter] Some of them got that and they started struggling with it, about how they had reacted to being told.

Fiksdal: That's very interesting.

Bowerman: It was a wonderful program intellectually as well as a source of fun.

Yeah, we had some really good students. Later on, though, what I should have talked about that I haven't added.

In Rights and Wrongs in one of those years, I had a student—you might know him—Phil Owen. After he graduated, he started Sidewalk, which is a homelessness program downtown.

Fiksdal: Oh, right. It's still in existence.

Bowerman: Yeah, it still exists. He left it maybe a year or year and a half ago and he went back East. But he was a student who I think was in my seminar, but he made a point to come up to me at one point and say, "You've changed my life." I've had very few students tell me that. [laughing]

Fiksdal: Yeah, really.

Bowerman: I asked him what he meant, and he said, "You may not know this, but when I came into the program, I was really conservative—a real conservative—and you changed me around completely." I wasn't the most radical of the faculty.

Fiksdal: No, I can think of a lot of others. [laughter]

Bowerman: I said, “How did I do that?” He said, “There was a lecture you gave and it was about”—again, the same theme you’re familiar with in teaching with me; I started with the view that we all call an entirely autonomous individual and then I said, “That’s a pack of lies that we are sold. You all know it, I would say to them, because there’s one relationship most of you have had, which completely belies that, and that’s your family relationship. When a mother says, ‘I would rather cross the street and get hit by a car than little Johnny,’ she means it, and she will do it if it’s necessary.”

He said, “That just blew me away. I thought, oh, you’re right. We are inherently—or maybe equally—social beings who feel that we have a responsibility towards other people. That completely shattered everything [I believed] before.”

Fiksdal: He was a deep thinker, also.

Bowerman: He was a thinker, and that was obvious all along. I was like, whoa!

Fiksdal: That’s fabulous. Look how far he took responsibility.

Bowerman: I know. He really did. He told me some personal stories that explain part of it, too. It wasn’t just the education.

Fiksdal: I recently read a news article about Sidewalk, and it’s been quite successful in moving people out of homelessness.

Bowerman: Yes, it has a particular model that he liked. His mother was a doctor, or is a doctor, and she had worked with people, I don’t think they were homeless, but people who are unfortunate in their life situation. She had certain models that she used in medicine, and he adopted this from something in there, as I understand it.

Then there was Steve Buxbaum. You probably don’t know him, but he was in one of the other programs. He was a somewhat older student. My daughter-in-law, Whitney, is very much into working with homeless people. She went to a fundraiser for Sidewalk. You get a table of eight and you pay a certain amount, so she invited me to be with them, and I was.

Steve was Mayor of Olympia at that time.

Fiksdal: That’s why I know his name.

Bowerman: That’s why you know his name. Phil was there because he was the head of Sidewalk. I saw Steve and I thought, oh, he doesn’t even recognize me. I went up and I introduced myself. “Ah!” He got up and it was just so, so very nice. There was obviously a very positive feeling on both sides.

So, to have Steve there and Phil there, they’re running the city, you know? [laughter] [Pam McEwan was a former student. That was really a nice thing.

Fiksdal: And they stayed local.

Bowerman: Yeah, they all stayed.

Fiksdal: And made it a better place.

Bowerman: That's right.

Fiksdal: A lot of students did.

Bowerman: Yep, they did. You see them around a lot. That's another great thing about Evergreen. When you're with other people of our own generation and they see someone walk by with green hair, and they're like "Oh!" And I'm going like, "Huh? What is it?" It's all these things you're just used to, and I think that was a wonderful side effect of teaching at Evergreen.

Fiksdal: There was amazing diversity.

Bowerman: Yes, and you just get used to it.

Fiksdal: That's right.

Bowerman: You don't judge people on that anymore. They have green hair and she has brown hair.
[laughing]

Fiksdal: Yeah, it doesn't real matter.

Bowerman: My granddaughters for a while went through a phase—and I think the younger one still does it—where they dye their hair purple and blue. It starts purple and ends up blue, but only half. "I like that. It looks good on you." [laughter]

Fiksdal: You're much more open.

Bowerman: It keeps you young.

Fiksdal: I think that's right. I think Evergreen keeps you in the know for longer about young people. That's a hopeful thing. We need to remember that young people are hopeful, in the main, and that they have amazing ideas.

Bowerman: And the energy is just wonderful, which they use fruitfully. Sometimes they're searching for how to use it, but they're still not wasting time with their lives.

Fiksdal: So, you've talked not maybe completely, and if someone else pops in your mind, mention them. But what about some experiences with faculty or students that were difficult?

Bowerman: I don't really want to talk about the ones that are difficult.

Fiksdal: You don't have to, although it's okay.

Bowerman: There weren't too many that were really down-to-earth difficult, but there were some, and it wasn't in teaching that I can recall, but in administrative work.

I have a couple of personal stories about faculty or administrative types I'd like to share. I was a single mom with two boys, and never had brothers, so it was like a strange, new world. But I had kids

who were really nice and good, and also knew how long to keep things from Mom, until I found out later.

Luke, the younger one, got into bicycling. After school—this is middle school so he’s still fairly young—he would hit the road and go 25, 30 miles. We had these fights about “You have to carry a quarter,” because there were no cellphones. Can you imagine you have to carry a quarter?

Fiksdal: No, that’s funny. You’d better say why right now. Whoever’s reading this may not—

Bowerman: If you can find a telephone just with a slot. “Operator!”

Fiksdal: A public telephone. A booth.

Bowerman: I did have to pick him up twice out in the county. Often, he did ride with an older friend, but sometimes—

Fiksdal: Flat tires, all kinds of things happen.

Bowerman: Yeah. Anyway, he got very interested in the mechanics of bicycles and he wanted to know something about them, I don’t know what. So, I called Tom Grissom, a physicist, and I said, “Tom, can you help me?” He came over sometime the next week and he spent 45 minutes with bicycle wheels, explaining the forces and all that stuff [to Luke].

Fiksdal: Oh, my goodness.

Bowerman: I was so [appreciative]. I never taught with Tom. He was at the dinosaur table. But it was just so very generous. That was really nice.

Jude was a musician and he decided when he was 13 or 14 that one of the great stars—I don’t remember which—learned to play guitar by hanging the guitar around his neck and never taking it off except when he went to sleep [laughing] and playing all the time. He did that for two years, not at school but when he was home.

Fiksdal: I’m imagining the background for you.

Bowerman: It was an electric guitar, and it wasn’t hooked up when he went to bed. When he was in his room, he had to use earphones, so it didn’t bother us, but there were certain rules. He didn’t think he could sing, and I said, “Jude, a lot of these singers who are famous, they can’t sing either, but they have personality, and they can put a song over.” That did not hit him.

I guess I was a dean at the time. Les Purce comes by, and he says, “How are things going?” I said, “I have this problem at home. I have a son who thinks he can’t sing, and I told him nobody can sing that way, or lots of people can’t.” He says, “Yeah, they get hung up about that.”

Fiksdal: Let’s just mention that Les Purce was a fabulous singer, and guitarist [and president of Evergreen].

Bowerman: Yes, so it was not inappropriate to mention it to him. The next Saturday—we were living in a duplex; it was after my divorce and between the old house and the new one I bought—my doorbell rings. I open it up and there’s Les, and he’s got a guitar case in his hand. He says, “Jude home?”

Fiksdal: For heaven’s sakes.

Bowerman: I said, “Yes.” He said, “Hey, Jude!” He calls him downstairs, and they spent an hour, hour and a half, playing guitar together. Les would start singing and he said, “C’mon, Jude. Join in.” Jude got to like one note by the end of the hour and a half. [laughing] Next weekend, the doorbell rings.

Fiksdal: He came back?

Bowerman: He came back maybe three maybe four times. By the end, Jude was singing. I thought, oh, my gawd. I’ve told a few faculty this and they’re just wowed by that. He’s so kind and so thoughtful.

Fiksdal: That’s an incredible story.

Bowerman: Later, they played together at Super Saturday and things like that. If Les showed up at one of Jude’s shows, he’d come on up and do a number.

Fiksdal: How long was Jude a professional musician?

Bowerman: About 10 years. He went to college, and when he graduated, he had a band. They went on the road, and they toured between the West Coast and the Mississippi basically—occasionally, the other side. He had a manager, and she would get gigs for them.

It was touring in a big van with three or four guys in there. They would sleep in there, too. It was hard. A lot of mediation between people who weren’t getting along. Finally, he said, “Mom, I’m making enough money for myself, but I can’t afford a family with this, so I’m going to go and look for a job.”

Fiksdal: What was the name of his band?

Bowerman: It started out something-or-another Blues, because it was blues and funk. I loved the music. I was dancing all the time. [laughing] Oh, and they practiced in my garage, talking about loudness.

Then I got a phone call. A very kind person saying, “Are you the mother of Jude?” I said, “Yes.” She said, “Well, we have trademarked the name of their band several years ago for our business, so we don’t want to sue him for trademark infringement, but we’d like him to change the name of his band.”

Jude understood that right away, but he didn’t know what to call it, so I said, “Call it the Jude Bowerman Band. There probably won’t be another one.” [laughing]

Yeah, he had a big following. Even when I moved here [Panorama], one of the counselors came up to me and said, "Are you related to Jude Bowerman?" "He's my son." "Ah!!! Is he playing anymore?" "No."

Fiksdal: Star power.

Bowerman: That's right. I remember he was playing once downtown on Arts Walk. They closed Washington Street and he was assigned there for his band. I'm standing by these women who are maybe 10 years younger than me and they're drooling. I go, "That's my son. Don't do that! He's much too young for you." [laughter] It was funny.

But he would not have been singing without Les Purce, I don't think.

Fiksdal: But he did go to college first.

Bowerman: Yes, he did. He was in a band. Someone else had a band. It was a local band, and he auditioned before he was 16. They were looking for a lead guitarist. They had a bass and a drummer. The lead was a singer with a harmonica. They had lost their lead guitarist, so he went and auditioned.

Later, we heard the story. The lead said to his wife, who eventually became Jude's agent, "Well, we found our player, but the trouble is, he's too young to play in bars!" [laughter] But it turns out that if you're a professional group like that, you can have one member who is below age go into bars with you. They're not allowed to drink but they can be there, so it went okay.

That was before he was 16. He also was in the jazz band with his guitar at the high school. He played a clarinet before that, so he was in band with that, but then, jazz band.

Fiksdal: What high school?

Bowerman: Capitol High. They had a foreign exchange student that was playing, who was also a guitarist, so they were great friends and they visited each other subsequently.

I never questioned that he would go to college. My children go to college. [laughter] But he applied to several Washington State schools. He got into Western and he got into the U. I don't remember where else. I think he got into everything he applied for. His grade point average was wonderful because he had three music courses.

He chose to go to Western, and a lot of the other kids he knew from Capitol went to Western, so that was a nice aspect to it. He decided he wanted to major in African American studies, but Western didn't offer that. They offered ethnic studies but not that, so he switched in his junior year to the UW and had that as his major.

Fiksdal: Wow.

Bowerman: He finished there. He had parts of a band from his high school days. They reassembled themselves and went on the road.

Fiksdal: Isn't that great. So, neither of your boys went to Evergreen?

Bowerman: Luke took eight credits—four in one summer and four in another—in computer language. Luke did not go to college. The only college he went to was Evergreen for eight credits in summer school.

Fiksdal: That sounds hard for you.

Bowerman: Is this appropriate to talk about this?

Fiksdal: We can turn it off.

[End Part 1 of 2 of Pris Bowerman on May 18, 2023]

[Begin Part 2 of 2 of Pris Bowerman on May 18, 2023]

Bowerman: I just want to mention Lucia again. We can certainly talk together about it, but we were very compatible. Obviously, we knew each other from MPA. She became the Director more or less at the time that I became Dean. I sat over the graduate program, so we did have some interaction then.

Fiksdal: I'll bet it was very helpful to have a dean who knew something about the program.

Bowerman: I think so. I think all the graduate programs appreciated that.

Fiksdal: When I was a dean, nobody wanted to deal with the graduate programs since no one understood them and they seemed to have a lot of problems.

Bowerman: Yeah. Some of them, like the teaching program, went through huge revolutions in terms of who they wanted to attract and what they taught. I just know that something like that happened, but I wasn't part of that.

I meet a lot of MPA grads. They're in the community, for sure.

Fiksdal: There sure are.

Bowerman: Because they came in a people who were already employed and had a bachelor's. Most of them were happy with their experience and what it gave them in their positions.

Also, I should mention Patrick Hill because he was provost when I started doing a lot of the DTF work—the Tacoma group first—and then he asked me to chair the evaluation DTF, which was a two-, two-and-a-half-year thing. We worked really closely with that.

I became MPA Director, and he was very, very supportive in a personal way. He'd send me flowers. I'm sure he didn't do that to the male faculty.

Fiksdal: Oh, my goodness, no.

Bowerman: He'd hear something great happened, and all of a sudden, there were flowers on my desk.

Fiksdal: How sweet.

Bowerman: It was really nice. I realize now he kind of mentored me, pushed me, so that was nice. We had some really big differences in opinion on some matters. He loved John Dewey, and I only read some John Dewey in graduate school and as an undergraduate, but I can't stand John Dewey. [laughing] I don't think he had ever run into anyone who felt that way. But that was okay. It's stimulating in its own way, so it didn't turn into anything.

Fiksdal: He really liked conversations like that.

Bowerman: Oh, gawd, yes. Charlie Teske and Patrick must be terrible together.

Fiksdal: I think they were brilliant together. Of course, Sean Williams taught with them in the Ireland program.

Bowerman: Oh, yes.

Fiksdal: She said it was tough to get a word in, even in the program. She would lecture, and they'd interrupt, and tell stories.

Bowerman: Yeah, I would not have been a good partner in a teaching relationship. Very different way of teaching.

Fiksdal: He was such an interesting person. He had a long background in experimental education.

Bowerman: Yes, he did.

Fiksdal: But he didn't come in [to Evergreen] promoting himself. I think people knew, but he didn't try to push us. Well, maybe there was a little nudge here and there when we were adopting an actual requirement for graduation, which was writing the essay.

Bowerman: He wrote professional papers. He shared some with me and I think he probably shared them with a lot of other faculty. More quickly than with me. It was about teaching, of pedagogy. And John Dewey! [laughing]

Fiksdal: I didn't read any John Dewey. All I know is his decimal system. I did learn that.

Bowerman: He actually has ideas that are not very un-Evergreen-ish, but I think it's more his style that grated on me.

Fiksdal: It was sad when he died. It was sad.

Bowerman: Oh, so sad.

Fiksdal: He didn't tell anyone how sick he was. I remember seeing him, and after he died, I realized that was his goodbye to me, and I wish I could have said more to him about how valuable he was as a person at Evergreen, and just as a person.

Bowerman: As a person, yeah.

Fiksdal: I didn't know him well, but I thought he steered things just expertly. And he didn't seem to have this big ego that got in the way, which was unusual the whole time I was at Evergreen [laughing] with men, male faculty.

Bowerman: I did visit him when I heard he was dying at his home. I had met his wife occasionally before, maybe once or twice, and she was there. But there were also a couple of other faculty there. I didn't know what to say particularly, so I felt awkward, but I was glad I [went].

Fiksdal: I think the fact that you were there is meaningful.

Bowerman: I think that made a big difference. I remember once—I must have been dean, I guess, I don't know—I innocently planned—this was after I was separated, but I was still in the big house that I had been living in with my kids and husband—and I decided I'm going to have some dinners and have friends over.

I invited Patrick and his wife, of course, and the Marrs, and one or two other people. I heard later— I mean Patrick came, and there was no hesitation, "That's really unusual. Patrick doesn't accept invitations to faculty's homes."

Fiksdal: Oh, because he was provost at the time?

Bowerman: Yeah, he was provost.

Fiksdal: He had his own moral code of some sort.

Bowerman: Yeah, I think he had his own code. So whoever told me said I should feel very gratified by Patrick. [laughter] Okay. I didn't know he had that code, and I've not known if it's really true.

Fiksdal: That's interesting. Let's make sure you've said everything you want to say.

Bowerman: Because otherwise you'll have to come back. [laughter]

Fiksdal: If you think of more stories or people, you get to add those in. This will move to a transcript, and then you read the transcript, and you can take out anything you want. You can add. You can just do brackets to add, or you can do end notes and tell a longer story. This is how I envision it in my mind. You do it however you want. But it's your transcript.

Bowerman: Okay, that's cool. I can just go back through my notes later and if someone wasn't mentioned—

Fiksdal: Things might pop up. One of the things we do at this point is try to move to your retirement. Of course, you were ill, and that's one of the reasons you retired, so there was a chunk of time there—

Bowerman: It was about five years earlier than I would have retired.

Fiksdal: You don't really want to talk about that.

Bowerman: I do want to mention Jerry Lassen because he was another economist, and he was part of Political Economy. He was kind of involved in Academic Advising when I was dean. I think maybe the first year, he was the Academic Advisor.

We taught together one time for almost a year, near the end. His method of lecturing—if you want to talk about Max Smith—was just amazing to me. He would bring an outline, which he would hand out to all the students. It was a very basic outline—A, B, C, 1, 2, a, b. Then he would read the outline.

Fiksdal: That was the lecture?

Bowerman: That was the lecture. It was like, wait a minute, Jerry. We're just so different, it was interesting. But the students didn't seem to mind.

Fiksdal: There might have been some cognitive decline, however.

Bowerman: I hadn't thought of that.

Fiksdal: Because that did come.

Bowerman: That's true. But what he did know that amazed me all the time—it was in '99-2000 when we taught—was he knew American economic statistics. He could go as far back as you wanted. "What was the interest rate in 1937?" "What was the policy of that President, or the Federal Reserve Board?"

He just had this memory. He studied it at some time, or read it, and he had this memory for that stuff. It was wonderful. You really need that or else you have to go research it every time. And there wasn't Google at the time. [laughing]

He was really interesting to talk to about stuff—policy stuff, actually—and in the MPA, he was good at policy. He had been working with the State before we hired him in the policy areas.

Fiksdal: He was more of a people person.

Bowerman: He was very—

Fiksdal: You mentioned Advising. I didn't remember that. I might have known it at the time, but when I was dean, I was trying to hire people in all kinds of different disciplines, so I would call on my colleagues to come and help me. I just wanted one other person to help me interview. It didn't have to be this big process, because these were adjunct faculty.

Jerry would come every time. He was so generous with his time, and really helpful in listening. Even if it wasn't quite his discipline, he was there.

Bowerman: That's right. He was very attentive

Fiksdal: I tried it once, I think, for someone, and then I couldn't get the people I thought I should have, so I just called him up again, and he said, "I'll come. It'll be fine." Read the application and then sat and talked. Asked some really good questions that I wouldn't have thought of.

Bowerman: Talking about people who helped in a personal way, I should mention shortly after I was separated, I was visiting Jeanne Hahn. I had a little 10-year-old VW Rabbit, and as I'm coming out of Cooper Point, the engine just dies. I was able to coast it over to the side of the road and walked down to Safeway. How am I going to get home?

I don't know if I got home by calling Rudy Martin, but I called him later. I think probably Rudy picked me up and drove me home. I was living on the West Side. Within a few hours, I got a call from the police. I had called the police earlier to tell them the car was parked there and would be there till the next morning when the tow trucks could come. They called me back in a couple of hours and said, "Do you have a little yellow Rabbit?" "Yes." They said, "Was it dented?" "No."

Fiksdal: Oh, no.

Bowerman: Yeah. "We'd like you to come out and identify it as yours and take it away." So, I called Rudy again [laughing] and he came. Yes, it was my Rabbit. It was opposite 14th Avenue. They said, "All these teenagers probably joyride." They went smack right into the side of it, and it was totaled. It was 10 years old anyway.

So, Rudy towed that car to my place. The next day, the insurance agent could come and looked at it. I mean, really.

Fiksdal: Above and beyond.

Bowerman: Then I had to buy a new car. I'd never bought one alone before, and it still was a very male world, and you still had to bargain with the dealer, so I think I talked four different male faculty into play a role.

There was one who loved to talk about kinds of cars, so we talked about what kind of car would be good for me. There was one who loved to dispute with dealers, and he came with me on that one. [laughing] It was really fun. [laughing] But it was really very, very helpful, too, that people did that.

Then with Jerry one time when I was with the boys alone living on the West Side, I had some kind of medical issue. My heart was racing like crazy. I woke up in the middle of the night. I had a 14-year-old and an eight-year-old. I called an ambulance, and then I woke Jude up and I said, "Mom's going to go to the hospital. I want you to call Dad early in the morning and tell him what's going on, and I'll get in touch when I can."

I get to the hospital, and I'm there a few hours, and they said, "Okay, you're fine. You can go." It's 3:00 in the morning [laughing] and I hadn't come by car, so I found one of these cots that sits in the hallway, and I just laid down on it. Some nice, nice janitor-type came, and he gave me a blanket and a pillow. Then, at 6:00 in the morning, I woke, and I couldn't settle anymore. I used the phone. Who can I call? Jerry had told me he got up early, so I called Jerry, and he came and picked me up.

Fiksdal: This is reminding me of something that I thought was hysterically funny at the time. I was teaching with Rachel Hastings, who is also a linguist, and we were having a great, great program. We ran into Brian Walter, who is a mathematician, and of course Rachel is also a mathematician.

They both said, "Hi," and then she said, "Oh, I can't talk to you right now. I'm married to Susan." [laughter] Because we were in a conversation and we needed to continue it. Brian was my friend, too. I thought, oh, poor Brian! Oh, we're married! [laughter]

In a way, you are. There's this connection with your colleagues that's quite strong and deep. You might not keep it, but during that program, you've got to know a lot about that person, like do they get up early? You learn whether you want to or not sometimes. You have to know certain things that will bother them or not bother them.

Like you said, "David could just send out this memo to the students," when you hadn't even looked at it. That's a lot of trust, and I have to say that I never have that level.

Bowerman: Though they did tell us he was going to do it.

Fiksdal: But even still, I would have wanted to see the draft. Not that I would have maybe made suggestions.

Bowerman: Most people would have, too. “Don’t you dare send that!” [laughing]

Fiksdal: We know a lot about each other in those programs.

Bowerman: I found that was my social life. You and I were both in a situation where we were parents with young kids for a long time and I didn’t have a lot of time to do beyond childcare and teaching. But the social life was absolutely in your program. Then it was so sad because the next fall, you had a new group.

Fiksdal: Yes, and you had to drop the old group. That’s right.

Bowerman: There was a party at the college to say goodbye to Les Purce when he was retiring. Russ Lidman got up to give a talk. The first thing he said was, “Don’t expect any phone calls. You won’t hear from anybody anymore.” [laughter] How right you are it’s not just my experience. Evergreen was very much your social life as well as your [workplace].

Fiksdal: Very intense. That’s true. You didn’t have too much time otherwise.

Bowerman: No.

Fiksdal: Although I did have friends outside.

Bowerman: I did, too, and those are the ones I see most now. I got to know them real well on sabbatical, when you had your own schedule.

Fiksdal: That’s right. Thinking about retirement, we’re sitting here in Panorama.

There are other faculty here, and staff, whom I’ve interviewed—not all of them. How are you feeling about life after retirement?

Bowerman: I really have been having a good time. Initially, as you know—I’ve told you already—I was sick, so I was just recuperating. Then I was trying to decide where I wanted to be, basically. My children were off on their own lives.

I lived in a little place on a cul-de-sac, 12 houses, off French Road. Most of the people there were 10 years younger, or younger yet, and they had little kids. But, as the kids grew up, they moved away, and then there were more new people with little kids.

I didn’t know half of them by the time I was retiring. I thought, there’s no social life here either and there’s no security in any sense. Those were the two reasons I chose to live here. There would be a lot of things to do, people to meet. Also, there was some backup for medical issues.

I came here in 2009. I retired in 2005 but it took me a couple of years to get well again. I had been volunteering before I got here. One of my close non-Evergreen friends had been a neighbor in my house. They moved two miles away, so we were still close.

She had started doing hospice, and she loved it, so I thought, I’ll try it, and I liked it a whole lot, too. Then the hospital started a new program. They go to the people who had just been admitted to

their rooms upstairs and let them know some of the services that were available at the hospital and try to get them to talk about how they were feeling, or whatever. That worked out really well. But since only two of us trainees stayed with the program, a new director cancelled it.

Then the hospital introduced a program called “No One Dies Alone,” which is copied after, I think, a Salem, Oregon, hospital. Basically, they said, “We have a number of patients who die here absolutely alone. They have no family, no friends, or they’re not nearby and they can’t be here. It really bothered the nurses a lot, and it bothered the doctors who were attending them. Most of them were being attended by palliative care doctors, all two of them at St. Peter’s.

I went through the training for that. Basically, what you do is when they know that the person is within a day or two of dying, you spend four hours at their bedside. You can talk. You can play music. You can do nothing. But you’re there. We took shifts of four hours. I really liked doing that. It was very strange yet meaningful.

But then, when Covid came along—when I came here, I was doing all three of those things. I had a hospice patient. You got one hospice patient. You saw them for four hours a week. They could be anywhere in the area. They could be anywhere in the county, but I never went beyond Lacey, Tumwater, Olympia.

That ended with hospice because of Covid. The “No One Dies Alone” program ended for the same reason. The other program, when they only had two of us, was dissolved.

Fiksdal: It was dangerous to be in the hospital.

Bowerman: Yes, it was. It made infinite sense, it was just . . .

Fiksdal: . . . hard.

Bowerman: And a lot of things closed up here. I’d been in a yoga class, and I’d been using the pool a lot. They shut the pool down for a while. Things like that. You became very isolated during that time.

I ultimately decided, okay, how do I keep my mind sane? Also, my kids were being very respectful in staying away. [laughter] In the earlier years—

Fiksdal: Oh, yeah, because you were an elder.

Bowerman: That’s right. “Mom, are you staying home?” My two granddaughters, from the time they were two—maybe the little one was younger—they would spend a day with me each week. Two different days, not together. I never had two boys together. They were six years apart. [laughing] I’m not going to start now.

That was really nice. When the older one started to go to all-day school, it did cut out, though, because on the days that they got early, I would pick them up from school and bring them here. But with Covid [sighs] just flat. That was out, too.

I thought, how can I stay sane otherwise? Well, I’d always been in school, so I said, okay, choose some things you want to really read about, learn about. I chose three things and I started to do an hour a day on each of those things. That would take care of most of the day, as we were saying. Then, you’d have lunch. [laughing] So, I did that for a long time.

I have gone back into hospice. I'm not visiting yet. Only a few people are visiting at this point who are volunteers. But I call hospice patients' principal caregivers Tuesday mornings and Wednesday mornings. It strikes me it has a lot to do with kind of what I did in school. You listen to people. You try to give a seminar. You try to get them to express how they're feeling or thinking.

Fiksdal: That's a lot of compassion on your part.

Bowerman: Yes.

Fiksdal: I don't think I would.

Bowerman: A lot of people say, "Oh, I could never do that."

People say, "I couldn't do it," but what I found—and I mentioned this to one of the people who is on staff at hospice, and I remember that—was the people who are dying are living, and they really try to relate to you, just like they were living, most of them.

Fiksdal: I think I could do it. I could make anyone talk, I think. [laughter]

Bowerman: It's not that different. It doesn't necessarily cross over to someone you know who is dying.

Fiksdal: But they die, and then it's sad, isn't it? I guess you know.

Bowerman: Hospice staff call hopefully before you try to visit a patient. They leave you a message. "Your patient So-and-So died this morning." It feels very cold. But a lot of them, you haven't seen that long.

There was a guy here I visited. He was over 100 when I started visiting him, but he lived in a place like this. He was in independent living. He had a caregiver who lived in, but a lot of hospices, you're with that person who's dying in order to relieve the family or the caregivers, so they have four hours a week. That's what we were doing.

Oh, my lord! He had such a different life than I did. He loved to talk, and I learned so much. His family was from California, but his father wanted to [have a] ranch. Now I'm forgetting exactly, but on some federal program, they went to southern New Mexico and got land to ranch. They were homesteaders.

He was in school. He went to school in Phoenix, so he wasn't at home. His father stayed in Phoenix with him, so his mother was left alone down there to take care of the animals. [laughing] Guess who decided they'd had enough?

Fiksdal: That sounds like a horror.

Bowerman: I didn't know anything about that. You read about it in history, but here is a person that lived some of it. He lived close to another year and a half, and I saw him every week. I really missed him when he died.

Fiksdal: There, you made a friend.

Bowerman: Yes, and there was another--a woman. She lived in Lacey, too. Totally different class. Poor. Not well off at all. But she had a really close friend who lived next door and I got see to both of

them. Things like that. Again, it was long enough, and she opened up enough that you felt a real attachment to them.

My friend who introduced me to the whole thing started doing only people with Alzheimer's. I couldn't do that. She had such patience, but it did burn her out.

Fiksdal: That would be very, very hard.

Bowerman: Now, the girls are older, and I'm seeing them about once a week, even though they're in school. Jude had boys and they're much younger. They're six and four. We know each other real well on the telephone. [laughing]

Fiksdal: Where do they live?

Bowerman: They live in Seattle in Ballard. So, that's it.

Fiksdal: This has been a real pleasure talking to you, Pris. As always, I learned a lot more about you than I had known previously. It sounds like you had a lot of good teaching experiences and good relationships at Evergreen, and you contributed hugely.

Bowerman: Thank you. So did you.

Fiksdal: Both in DTFs and as a dean, and in the MPA program. Those are all difficult. They can be rewarding, too, but they are difficult things to do. Especially because your DTFs were longterm. I think I was only on one that was super long. Maybe two years.

Bowerman: And then the faculty gets to read the report.

Fiksdal: Then they didn't like it and it didn't pass. It was pretty sad.

Bowerman: You put in your time in it.

Fiksdal: We were trying to introduce a requirement for study abroad, but it could be study anywhere. It could be study in Tacoma in an urban area.

Bowerman: Not your usual sphere.

Fiksdal: Yeah, just some different place than maybe where you grew up. If you grew up in Yelm, going to Tacoma downtown or the Hilltop, that would be big. But people just tore away at it. It's really too bad.

Bowerman: That's sad. In the program that Lucia and I did three times, there was a component—they were freshmen. We took them downtown and introduced them to the city. It was downtown, but we thought college students would like to know about and might not find out about in the dorms.

Then they had an assignment that they had to complete the fall, by the end of fall. They had to choose a non-profit and arrange to work three or four hours a week during winter quarter. We had one student who proposed that instead of working for a non-profit, she would just talk to the homeless on the streets. I think this was a young woman. She was little. She had the nerve, and she had the interest, and she did a wonderful job. Her report was fantastic.

Fiksdal: I bet those people were so happy, instead of being ignored . . .

Bowerman: Yeah, it's like, what? I say hospice isn't hard to do. And that was her attitude. Why don't you just walk up and start talking to them and they talk back.

We had Long-Haired Dave in there in one year of that. He was very interesting and very good. He wasn't a great writer, but he was a great thinker, and he was a good reader.

Fiksdal: He was homeless?

Bowerman: He wasn't at the time, but he was an advocate for the homeless downtown. He had very long hair. Even *The Olympian* would call him Long-Haired Dave. He was one of them, in a sense.

He started the needle program in downtown Olympia. That was his baby. He did a lot of that stuff. A lot of people would take one look at him and say, "He's not coming into my class." Again, Lucia and I were approached. I think it was by . . .

Fiksdal: A dean?

Bowerman: No, the student advisor.

Fiksdal: Kitty Parker?

Bowerman: Kitty Parker. Would we take Long-Haired Dave into our program? She thought he'd get along with us and we'd get along with him. And he was great.

Fiksdal: She was fabulous, Kitty was. She really knew a lot of the faculty and worked closely with us.

Bowerman: Yes, she did. I worked with her a fair amount during deaning. And Arnaldo [Rodriguez], the first couple of years, then I think he went elsewhere at that time.

Fiksdal: I think when I was dean, it was Doug Scrima in Admissions.

Bowerman: Yes, I think we switched while I was dean.

Fiksdal: I should know all about it exactly because I interviewed Doug, but I can't remember the years. He worked for Arnaldo, and then he left and worked for the State, and then came back, I think, after Arnaldo. He worked with Steve Hunter.

Bowerman: Steve Hunter, yeah, he was there, too, the staff person.

Fiksdal: He was always there, wasn't he?

Bowerman: Yes. Tom Womeldorff was the student advisor near the end of when I was dean.

Fiksdal: Oh, he was?

Bowerman: We understood each other. The economics concerns. [laughing]

Fiksdal: I don't think they have any economists now at the college. I don't think they could ever hire another one. They won't come because economists are too expensive. You can get a job anywhere at any price. Why would you come to Evergreen where the salaries are bad?

Bowerman: You have to be committed to teaching to do it because you can make so much better money.

Fiksdal: That's right. And everything has become more specialized now, too, so it's a little different game. When you think of all the things you did, I can't imagine hiring someone who could do that range. They could if they wanted to and tried.

Bowerman: But would there be opportunities now? I don't know.

Fiksdal: I don't know. The college has changed a lot.

Bowerman: I know. Even when I was dean, the sciences were locking down into here's the pathway for the biology people and the psychology people.

Fiksdal: That's true, they do have pathways now. But I think you can teach outside the pathways.

Bowerman: That's good.

Fiksdal: I have no idea, actually, but you should be able to.

Bowerman: But all the specialty areas are trying to do that.

Fiksdal: Yeah, they are.

Bowerman: They were very successful because they were following a long-established professional line.

Fiksdal: Do you want to be a chemist? Here's how you do it.

Bowerman: I was like, oh, I hope that doesn't spread.

Fiksdal: Yeah, but all our sciences, for all our time there, it was different, because there is a certain body of knowledge you must have to go on.

Bowerman: Yeah, but that's the same thing you could say about French.

Fiksdal: That's certainly true of French.

Bowerman: Fluency.

Fiksdal: And we never solved it. I taught in the French program only every other year because I had to have a life and teach other people and teach with other faculty.

Bowerman: You also wanted to keep the French language program going.

Fiksdal: Exactly, and when I went away to do my linguistics degree, then I wanted to teach that. It's hard at Evergreen to have something that's step-by-step learning like sciences or language or math.

Bowerman: But it's how you look at it, too. When you have a Health and Human Behavior program, it's a whole year. What student who goes to the U has a whole year in their major? That's what they have. They never have another year. One quarter of their credits? But here they want to add a second one in order that you really be educated properly in that science.

Fiksdal: Oh, so you don't think they really needed that extra?

Bowerman: The faculty did in the area, and I'm going like, how many credits?

Fiksdal: I never questioned it, but I just remember they always needed anatomy, and they always needed chemists in the Evening and Weekend Studies.

Bowerman: To teach the course that they didn't want to teach.

Fiksdal: Yeah, exactly. That's what I confronted them with, and art theory among the artists.

Bowerman: Instead of integrating it into the—

Fiksdal: So, we hired halftime regular faculty in art history. That was our contribution to the whole college.

Bowerman: That was one of the hangups I had with art history before you. Ron Hinson would teach it and they would always say, "We can't do it in the program," and I thought, what is it that you include in art studies?

Fiksdal: They could have. Absolutely, they could have. Both Bob Haft and Hiro Kawasaki could teach it, and did teach it, in their programs. The other artists, maybe they weren't trained in it, but how hard could it be? You could do some chunks of it here and there.

Bowerman: Get a good book and do it repeatedly.

Fiksdal: Exactly. You don't have to do the whole thing from Medieval to—but anyway, I knew a lot about art because I had studied in France, so I felt like if I could do all that and recognize these memes of movements, and describe them to students, then other people—

Bowerman: That was part of the fun of teaching at Evergreen was learning and getting it down well enough.

Fiksdal: If there's no one else, and you can't hire someone—that was usually our problem in the French program. They never wanted to give us a visitor. It was really hard to get a visitor. It was only if I wasn't there. Then they would hire someone. It was really something. They just expected that you would carry on somehow.

Bowerman: But also, teach with other people.

Fiksdal: And then you want your discipline to be present in the curriculum. Students should be able to study languages. It shouldn't just be . . . anyway, it was hard. It was fraught. Not with economics. Clearly, in the way you taught it, it was all over the curriculum, which was great.

Bowerman: In that area, there was a problem about anything beyond the beginning level.

Fiksdal: I'm wondering now, as I think back about the people you taught with, I'm not sure about philosophy. I always thought philosophy was in the humanities, but do you think you were cross-disciplinary pretty much all the time?

Bowerman: Yeah, that's why I say social sciences, or other times, it was humanities. Kind of went back and forth.

Fiksdal: You didn't teach with a scientist?

Bowerman: We had a Political Ecology program early on with Bob Sluss, and one other version with . . . he was a chemist . . . Jeff Kelly. One quarter, right? But I think those were the only scientists I taught with.

Fiksdal: Yeah, but you did, so that's great, and with an artist.

Bowerman: Betty Estes, too.

Fiksdal: She was History of Science.

Bowerman: Yeah, so that would work into Political Economy really well in terms of the Industrial Revolution into the Industrial Age. She'd be good now with all the technology that we're developing.

Fiksdal: Yes, except she died. Really sad to see all these people go.

Bowerman: I know. So many of them.

Fiksdal: So many. Still, you're glad you went to Evergreen, that you taught there, and you made it your life.

Bowerman: Oh, yes. Definitely. It was good.

Fiksdal: Let's end on that note.

[End Part 2 of 2 of Pris Bowerman on May 18, 2023]