Larry Eickstaedt

Interviewed by Sam Schrager

The Evergreen State College Oral History Project

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FINAL

Schrager: Here we are at Evergreen.

Eickstaedt: Here we are! First time in a long time. First time in a *very* long time to be up on the third floor. Where the power is. (laughs)

Schrager: Do you have a place you want to start or do you want me to?

Eickstaedt: One event I thought would be worthwhile talking a little bit about would be the very first meeting of the planning faculty with the new faculty to get ready for the first teaching year. After those new faculty were hired, then those of us who were coordinators of the first programs were in touch with people primarily by mail, then, some phone calls. But, the deans decided it would really be a good idea if we got together before the students arrived. So we had our get together up at Pack Forest, which is the University of Washington's forestry field camp. I don't know if they use it very much for that anymore, but in years back the forestry students would come there and spend I think the better part of a quarter and get hands-on experience with forestry. It's up near Eatonville in the forest. That's where we went, and it was in the spring of the year. Three, four days, maybe, we stayed right there, ate right there. During the day, each of the groups for the first programs got together to talk about plans. And then in the evening there was a lot of socializing going on and so forth, chance to get acquainted with people.

So I was in charge of the Environmental Design program. Phil Harding, Carolyn Dobbs, Chuck Nisbet, and I gathered each day. There was kind of a porch attached to the cottage, and it was open on the sides. There were screens, but you could look in. So we started. I went there without a set plan of exactly what we were going to do, more of an overall blueprint, and then just open it up. We started off with really good discussions before we even got down to deciding upon first books for the fall quarter and those sorts of things. And I think it might have been the second day. We were in the midst of our discussions, and Jean Tourtellotte, who was one of the first trustees, happened to come by, and she was standing on the outside of the cottage, kind of listening in, she was just curious what's going on, and so we invited her in. And pretty soon, why she was part of the discussion. We were asking her questions, she's asking us questions. And before we left for Pack Forest I had been talking with Dave Carnahan in

the library, and he came up with a brilliant suggestion. He said, "You know what you could do, you could record your discussions, have them on tape—cassettes, of course, back in those days—and then once the students sign up for the program, then you can send them a letter along with the cassette, so they can hear the four of us talking. So we did that, we recorded those conversations. I used to have several copies of the cassette. But a number of years ago I took one out and tried to play it, but it was more or less blank. Too old, I guess. I don't know if the library still has any of those.

So that was the start.

One of the interesting things about that retreat: Richard Jones had designed a program in human development. So when he and his team arrived at Pack Forrest and they had their first meeting he had everything laid out, the books that were going to be read, assignments, the whole thing. So they had a brief discussion, and the rest of the time people on his team were free to hang out, wander around, whatever. All the other groups were busy having discussions and we pretty much filled up our time there. Then the last night we were there, a whole bunch of the Evergreen folks—not only the faculty, but the early staff—came up to Pack Forest, and we had a party up there. I have seen some photographs from that in the archives. Charlie McCann was there the whole time, as I recall. So he would kind of wander around sit in on discussions, mainly just listen in. Then, of course, those new faculty hires went back to wherever they were, and then during the summer we continued to keep in touch and make plans. Then, as I've talked about before, when time came to start, the buildings weren't ready and we ended up at a Girl Scout camp for the first week or two. That was one big event. Very, very important. Lots of good memories.

Another thing I wanted to talk about was one of my more memorable teaching experiences. I had mentioned before about my colleague Beryl Crowe. The second teaching year he was in charge of a program called "Politics, Values and Social Change." One of the students in that program, her name was Sally Mendoza. In the spring of the year the students had to write a major paper. So she finished her paper, and I think Beryl was her seminar leader. He told her that her paper was excellent, but she really needed to flesh out the biological information, because, he told her, it would be a much stronger, well rounded paper. And he said, "You ought to go talk to Eickstaedt, and see if maybe you could work with him this summer." So she came to see me, and she told me what Beryl had said. I said, "Well, let me take a look at your paper." I did, and next time I saw her I said, "Yeah, let's do it. We'll do an individual contract." So maybe a week or so later, she came back to see me, and she said, "Well, I'm not going to be able to do it." She was going through a divorce, she didn't have the money for tuition, so she said, "I guess it's off."

I said, "I'll tell you what, it sounds interesting to me. How would it be if we do it unofficially? No contract, no credit. We'll just see what happens."

"Okay."

So, we decided to go ahead. In our first meeting, I took a sheet of paper, and I put one question in the middle of the paper—and I don't remember what it was, Sally still has the paper somewhere in her files. And then I said, "Well, to understand *that*, you're going to need to know *this*. And to know *that* you're going to have to know *this.* And then that's going to be connected to this." We ended up I had the paper filled with arrows going all over the place. And I said to her, "Well, that will be our curriculum this summer." (laughs) So, we just started in. So every week was different. Sometimes we were talking about fairly basic biology, and other times advanced topics in biology. I'd send her to the library to read research papers, and she was doing reading all over the map. We just had great discussions. Somewhere along the way she mentioned to me that she had spent two years at Washington State University, and she had flunked biology twice. But now she was really interested in biology. And so she had one more year left here at Evergreen and she said, "I really would like to pursue this, looking more broadly." It was basically cycle biology that she was interested in.

And that fall Ed Kormondy sent me to a conference in St. Louis. It was a group of science educators, I think. He thought it would be good for me to go there and spread the word about Evergreen, and if I had a chance, to talk about the college. Well, they had a couple of speakers, and one of them was from Stanford University. He was a psychologist; he worked in the medical school at Stanford. And he described their research. Well I came home, and I contacted Sally and I said, "I think I found a place for you." She said, "How would I ever get into Stanford?" "Well," I said, "you're going to have to do some very serious biology this next year. And the only way you're going to get in is if you go down to Stanford, meet with the people there." Because they had just started an interdisciplinary graduate program, a combination of biology, psychology, a number of different things. There might have been seven or eight faculty that were going to be the team. I told her, "What you need to do is go down there, meet with as many of those faculty as you can, take your paper with you." She decided, "Okay, I'm going to give it a try." She went down there. I can't remember how long she waited, but she got an acceptance letter. I found out later from talking to I think it was Don Kennedy, chairman of the biology department that I knew, he was part of the team. I guess when the team of faculty had their meeting to pick the first students, of course they went down the line, and they had applicants from Harvard and Berkeley, Yale, places like that. So they were just about to the end, and Don Kennedy said, "I think we've got a sleeper. It's that Mendoza gal from Evergreen." Levine in the medical school piped up, and he said,

“I agree, and I’ll take her in my lab.” So she got in, by the skin of her teeth. She came back and set up a contract with Willie Parsons, and Beryl and I were part of the team. And so for her senior year she was doing a lot of biology and so forth. We had weekly meetings, and they really turned into seminars. She went to Stanford and she had a really tough first quarter. Then things fell into place, and she ended up getting her Ph.D., and then she moved to U.C. Davis, and eventually she became chairman of the psychology department. And just a few years ago she retired. I think she’s my first student that got a Ph.D. and retired. Made me feel extra old. It was one of the highlights of my teaching! And she didn’t get any credit for that summer’s work, and I didn’t get any money, but it was terrific.

Another thing I jotted down was: Somewhere in those early years there was an opportunity to apply for a National Science Foundation grant. It was to support teaching, not just in science. There was a crew of faculty that got together and started to bat ideas around. We submitted a proposal for a summer program where faculty in the sciences would team up with a partner in social sciences, or humanities, or art, and it was an each-one-teach-one arrangement. And we got the money. I can’t remember how many teams there were. But I was paired up with Rainer Hasenstab. And so my job was to teach him ecology and natural history, and his job was to teach me more about architecture. So we met every week. Sometimes I’d send him to the library. I can remember one time he took me on a little field trip in the South Capitol neighborhood and the Capitol, to look at examples of different styles of architecture. The columns on the Temple of Justice and so forth: I’ve forgotten now, but they’re Corinthian and Ionian, how they’re not the same diameter all the way from top to bottom, but they’re purposely structured so to the eye they look like they’re straight but in reality they’re not quite. Then he took me past some Victorian homes, and he said that those homes came from Sears Roebuck. At that time Sears Roebuck had catalogs of different house designs, so you could pick a design and then all the materials would show up on a railcar, and then craftsmen here would put it together for a new house. But it was a completely prefabricated structure. I’m sure that now, when people drive around the South Capitol neighborhood and look at some of those beautiful old homes they think, “Ah, boy, there were some really great craftsmen here in Olympia.” But it was Sears Roebuck!

Schrager: Did you ever reach with Rainer then?

Eickstaedt: I never taught with Rainer, no, but I’m kind of responsible for him coming to Evergreen. During the planning year he was at the University of Washington teaching a class there, a large class in the School of Architecture. And he invited me to come up to talk about Evergreen and the plans for Evergreen. Then we kept in touch, and he applied. But at the same time he also applied to State University of New York at Buffalo. And he weighed the pros and cons and decided to go to Buffalo. Then

after he was there not too long, he'd realized he'd made a mistake. I don't remember what. I know that he and the chairman of the department there didn't get along. So then he reapplied to Evergreen, and then he came in the fifth or sixth year, and he found a house out on Gravelly Loop Road. And he's in Buffalo, so I actually went there when they were doing the inspection; I went out there another time to supervise some repair work for him. After he came we remained really good friends, but I never taught with him.

One of the things we did do together: Mary Hillaire, who was among the first new faculty hired, and she was at Pack Forrest for that meeting. She was planning to be here for the first teaching year. But then, during the summer, she was asked to come to Washington, D.C. for some government position. So she went there. I think she was there for maybe a year, and then came to Evergreen. Then after she was here for a few years—I can't remember if she made the offer to all the faculty, or whether it was by invitation—but anyway, Rainier and myself and few other people met with Mary, on a regular basis, and she would talk about Native American history and problems and so forth. So we were together in that. And then Rainier ended up spending a fair amount of his teaching career in the Native American program. I keep in touch with him not as often as I used to, he's up in Seattle, and he used to come down fairly often, but I haven't been up to Seattle and he hasn't been down here, so I haven't seen him for a couple years. Anyway, he's doing well.

I mentioned that I had served as academic advisor following Kirk Thompson, and that was the year we expanded to include all the faculty serve as faculty advisors. So I did one term, and then I was asked to come back to serve a second term. I think that's when we had real problems with enrollment. So the job of serving as academic advisor was a little more strenuous. Then I served two different times as the faculty librarian, I had a *great* time doing that. It was just such an eye opener to me.

Schrager: Can you talk about that?

Eickstaedt: Well, up until that time, I mean all of my interest in the library was focused on science and biology. Pat Matheny-White, Sarah Rideout, Ernestine Kimbro, Frank Motley, they trained me how to use the reference materials. Whoa, at first I was overwhelmed. I remember thinking, "Man, if a student comes in to ask a question about that, where will I go?" But I caught on finally, and was able to actually answer a lot of questions in other fields. I did the library exchange twice, and I think during the second one—I don't know if this is something that they ask all the faculty librarians to do—but they asked me to do some sort of a project while I was there. I'd always had a strong interest in nature writing, so I decided I'd tackle that and put together a bibliography of nature writing. When I wasn't at the desk, I had a little office there in the library, so I was working on that, tracking down leads and so forth. I

compiled a pretty lengthy bibliography. That introduced me to a tremendous amount of literature that I hadn't even been aware of. So somewhere in the library, I think there's still a copy floating around, I don't know. (laughs) But I had a great time. Then the reference librarians, one had to be there on the weekend. They finally agreed that I could handle it. Then I got to be the person that took my turn being there on the weekend, all by myself. It was a big challenge. Sometimes I'd have half a dozen students at the desk waiting to ask questions. I had a really good experience, and I formed a really tight relationship with Ernestine. She was *so* interested in teaching and exploring new ideas. So whenever she and I were at the desk together, and if there was a slack time, we were always talking stuff. Then after I went back to the faculty we'd get together fairly often and have breakfast or coffee and talk ideas, and she'd tell me about what she was teaching, and so forth. That continued right up to the very end. I was in the hospital when she passed away. That all started really from me being in the library and having that opportunity to get to know her.

Schrager: That's how I remember Ernestine. Great curiosity.

Eickstaedt: In many ways she should have been a full time faculty member, because she just loved doing programs and venturing into new areas. Very, very smart woman.

Schrager: My first DTF that I was on was for the library dean, and you chaired it.

Eickstaedt: That's right. That was an interesting experience, indeed. (laughs) I've often told Bill Bruner that I felt that that was one of the best decisions a DTF I had been on had made. When I was in the library serving on the reference desk, there was a lot of conflict and hard feelings among the library staff. I remember going to the meetings of the library staff, and there were a fair number of folks who wouldn't even attend, and the discussions often were very strained. But it wasn't long after Bill took over, I went back for some reason and sat in on a meeting for a while, and it was just completely different. Most everybody was there, happy, discussions were lively, got the work done. I think he was really a good choice.

But that kind of gets into another thing that I think is worth talking about. I think when Dave Marr, when he was interviewed, talked about this. That was the Olander presidency. I was rethinking that. I remember when the candidates for president that time, when they came around to do interviews and so forth: My first impression of him was that he was a phony, and I was flabbergasted when he was selected. But, I figured, well, you don't always get your first choice. As time went on things got worse. I can remember, mornings, we lived out on Madrona Beach at that time. My routine in the morning would be I'd get up, put the tea kettle on, walk out the lane to get the paper, come back in, make my tea and read the paper. It got to the point I was dreading going out to get the paper for fear that there'd be

another article about Evergreen and Olander. It was really awful. Fortunately, people like Dave Hitchens and Betty Estes were able to finally uncover the fact that he had plagiarized his dissertation. It wasn't too long after that that the Board of Trustees bought him out, and he went off. And then ended up at a small college in Iowa, not too far from where I grew up. I don't know the details, but I think that college eventually disappeared, went under. I don't know if it was because of him. I thought at the time, "I thought those Iowans had more sense than that." (laughs)

Schrager: Can you talk about what happened with him as the president? What he did in terms of the college that was wrong? How things changed?

Eickstaedt: One of the things that happened was that when he took over there were several people that got fired from the administrative staff. One of them being my good friend Larry Stenberg, who lost his job. From my perspective, some of the people that he brought in were simply "yes" men, and didn't work out very well. That was one of the problems. I never really got the impression that he was primarily interested in Evergreen, more interested in advancing himself. I remember him pulling stunts: like I remember, one time, when they went down to the legislature, to the budget meeting, he had himself, and I forget how many of the staff, dressed up as gangsters. They went down to the meeting and walked in as if they were Al Capone and the mob from Chicago. I guess it caused lots of laughs and so forth. But there were things like that that happened. I remember him bragging one time in a speech that he gave maybe to the faculty that one of the big decisions he had made was—the drinking fountain outside the president's office was set that the water was too strong and that it went on the floor—well, he got that corrected so that water fountain ran correctly now, you know. It was kind of a joke. But, I don't know.

And then the various things that he did filtered down, and it caused a lot of problems among the faculty. Because there were a sizeable number of faculty that were growing more and more dismayed at what he was doing. There was a small group of defenders, and they attacked the folks that were raising questions, and then they attacked back, so it turned into kind of a big argument back and forth. But I think it was really one of the lowest points for the college while he was here. It was really quite a sad time.

Schrager: So the talk about shutting the college down, which was, as you said earlier, was part of the pressure in the early years. In the face of that, it wasn't as bad for the faculty in a way as Olander was. You talk about your work as student advisor the second time it being more pressured. That was tied to the enrollment?

Eickstaedt: That was the primary issue, we were just having difficulties getting enough students, so it was really critical to enhance the advising all the way around and help students make good first choices,

and then be there to help them each step along the way. It did begin to turn around during that time, but that was a big worry.

Schrager: So it's something that I've heard from faculty about faculty over the years, that sense of maybe there was a misfit between what the college offered, what kind of education we give, and the students that were drawn to the college. I don't know how you thought about it then or now. Sometimes it seems like it was an elite kind of concern. If we had more better prepared students like the private liberal arts colleges, that that would be better for the college.

Eickstaedt: Right.

Schrager: And the other side: that we can educate anybody who is interested in this kind of an education. What about that? Did you see that as an issue here in the way faculty approached their teaching?

Eickstaedt: Yeah, I did, because that did come up from time to time, faculty members saying just exactly what you said. Well, we have to beef up our admission requirements, we're getting too many poor students, and we can't teach them, or they don't want to learn, those sorts of things. I think as I mentioned in one of the previous talks we had, was that my philosophy was, that if Evergreen's philosophy was going to work, it wouldn't be hard to do that with an elite group of students. The real challenge would be if you could take students from where *they're* at and turn them into scholars. But there were other folks that wanted to start with a big advantage: let's get those top ranked students, and then my problems will be less as a faculty member, and the college will be better off. Well, I've never bought that.

But one of the things that has cropped up recently in my talks with some faculty is the concern about the preparation of students. That they can't write very well, they're not really committed to getting an education in some cases. I don't know exactly what's happening now at the college in the way of helping students with basic skills. But, my thought is, that if you're going to accept students that have deficiencies, I think you're morally obligated to help them out with skill development, which means that there have to be people outside the faculty to work with the faculty with that, with reading and writing skills and other types of skills. It is a tremendous job for a faculty member that's got 20-some students in a seminar, and if you've got a student that's very deficient in writing how are you going to find enough time to really help them out? You can try as much as you can, but I think the college probably needs to devote more resources and attention, for more backup. I've also picked up from talking not just to some faculty here, just keeping track of what's going on nationally, that it seems to be a problem that's fairly

widespread, that even at the elite institutions, they're having the same type of problems. That's kind of where my thinking is right now. It's easy being an outsider now and making recommendations.

Last time we were together, as we were wrapping things up, you mentioned maybe it would be good to talk about my farming experience. So, after growing up on a farm in Iowa, that's, as they say, "You can take the boy off the farm, but you can't take the farm out of the boy," well, that's very true with me. When we first came to Evergreen, we lived in a small house on the Westside near L.P Brown School. During the summer between the first and second teaching year, we found a little farm up by Shelton, a 13-acre farm, and decided to move there. It was an old farm. The house had originally been a log house, that had been remodeled, so there was siding on the outside and sheetrock on the inside. So the walls were almost a foot thick. Had a wood burning furnace in the basement, two good size garages, what became a chicken house, another shed, an old barn, pasture. But it was pretty run down. So I went to work and started being a farmer again. (laughs) Put in a great big garden. Then after a few years I built a treehouse for the kids, next to a big fir tree. We had cattle on the pasture, hogs, chickens. We even had pet goats. Geese. So anyway the farming was great. I was able to buy an old tractor, an International Harvester, small tractor with some implements, a plow, and disk, and mower. The farming part was great, and it was like two different worlds: coming to work, and then when I drove home it was going back to a different world. Oftentimes people would ask me, "How many miles is it that you drive each day?" I never could tell them because I always forgot to check the odometer. On the way home I was thinking about what I'm gonna do at home, and on the way to school I was thinking about what I'm gonna do at school.

But, the other good thing about living up there was that I got to be close friends with loggers. My neighbor across the road worked for Simpson Timber Company, and he worked with the lowland road building crew. He ran a Caterpillar. His family, my family, we would go out, we'd usually start in the spring of the year, and he knew all these places where they were putting new roads in where there was a really good stand of alder. So we would just drive out with our pickups and cut down the trees, drop them right across the road, buck them up. Let's see, sometimes we split them there, sometimes we brought them home and split them. That's how we got our firewood. We probably burned around five cords of wood each winter. And then his father was vice president for Simpson Timber Company. And his father was an old time logger. He had gone to the University of Washington, actually, and played football. But he was a big guy, and his son Mark was a big guy, about 6 foot 8. Mark's dad, Max—I'm trying to think now, it may have been his dad or his father-in-law—was the superintendent of Camp Grisdale, which became the last operating logging camp in the United States. He had so many terrific

stories to tell about the old days of logging. He would go out with us sometimes when we cut our firewood. Then when he came along it was a three-way proposition—took wood to his place as well. But through that, then I got acquainted with quite a few other loggers in the area, as well as other folks that lived in Shelton and outside of Shelton. I just consider it part of my education, to be able to do that. So I wasn't living in town and hanging out with the same sorts of folks every day. Of course I got lots of questions about Evergreen, and had to justify what we were doing, explain what we were doing, why it was different, why we did things so differently, and all of that. But that was good. Sometimes there were still questions on their faces when I got through, but that was okay.

Schrager: So the kids grew up there. And your first wife was from a farm?

Eickstaedt: Yeah, she was from a farm family back in Iowa. She was an elementary teacher. Actually, when we were first out there on the farm, she and a couple of other women decided they wanted to start a preschool. And they ended up at the original Squaxin Island headquarters, which was where the casino is now. There had been a public school there, but it closed. So there was a gymnasium and some other buildings. The tribe had their offices there, and then they would hold meetings in the gym. They had powwows there, invite other tribes. But my former wife, they were able to get a space there to start the preschool. They did that for a couple of years, and then she got a teaching job in Shelton, elementary school, and taught there for the rest of her career. Because of that, I got introduced to lots of the teachers in the school system and other people. All three of my kids went through the Shelton schools. So, it was an interesting community in many ways. It was a very interesting place to live.

Schrager: Does that have to do with how you met Joan, through teaching?

Eickstaedt: No, the way I met Joan, my wife now—Joan had moved up here from California. Her first husband passed away. Joan had two young daughters, and during a span of a little over a year—this was down in San Jose—her husband passed away, one of the grandpas passed away, there were several people passed away. And she just felt she needed to find a new place, especially for her girls. It had a big impact, especially on her oldest daughter. And she was friends with Sandy Nisbet. They had been students together at San Jose State, in the drama department. And then Joan got to know Chuck, of course, and Joan would come up here once in a while for a visit. She let them know she was thinking about moving, and Chuck found a place on Madrona Beach Road that she might be interested in. She ended up buying the house and moving up here with no job and no real plan at that time of how she was going to survive. But she did have enough money from the sale of the house in San Jose to do that.

So I was a bachelor. My first wife and I were divorced, I was living by myself. And one Saturday I got a call from Sandy Nisbet. She said that Peter Robinson was in town. Well Peter Robinson had been

on the faculty for maybe three years in the early days. He was an Englishman: red hair, very jolly guy, a lot of fun. She said he was back in town and they were going to have a little get together at their house, and Peter asked Sandy to make sure I'd be there. So I went over there that evening, and it was all Evergreen folks, and all the talk was Evergreen business. Well, Joan was there. They'd always invite Joan to come over any time they had a gathering. And Joan and I started talking. And we talked for quite a while. That's how a new romance got started. It was because of Sandy Nisbet. And Joan and I got married on their deck, later on. So I'm always indebted to Sandy Nisbet.

Schrager: We touched a bit on women faculty at Evergreen. The program you taught the second year, Sex Roles was it?

Eickstaedt: "Sex Roles in Society" was the title.

Schrager: That program and then what it was like for women joining the faculty in the beginning.

Eickstaedt: Of course when we as the planning faculty were looking at files for doing the hires for the new teaching faculty to join us, we had a very clear message that we had to search for some good women (chuckles), since there were all men on the planning faculty. So for the first teaching year, I can't remember exactly how many women were part of that crew, but a good percentage were women. Once we started with the first students, why the women had a very significant impact right away. One of the new women that came, Llyn De Danaan—at that time she was Lynn Patterson—background in anthropology: they selected her to be the coordinator of one of the very first programs, Human Behavior program, that she taught with Richard Alexander, Steve Herman, Ted Gerstle, might have been somebody else. That was a good indication, I think, of what was going to happen, that a woman took over as a coordinator that first year. I think it was in the spring of that year, some of the women organized a conference here at Evergreen. It was oriented toward women. I decided to go to it. I was one of the only men who showed up. But there were women that came from many other places, a fairly large gathering.

So during the first teaching year, we had to get busy right away and plan programs for the next year. I mean it was unbelievable that we could pull it off, really. And it was critical that we did that fairly quickly to get the catalog out, because all of the programs were going to be brand new programs. So Nancy Allen started planning a program that eventually became called "Sex Roles in Society" or "Female/Male Roles in Society"—went by both titles—and I decided to join her. It was a challenging program in many ways, because that was in the very early days of the strong women's movement. I don't remember the percentage, but I would say that it was more than 50 percent young women in the program. And we were talking about all of the issues, many of the same issues that are still being

debated today and talked about. Well, somewhere along the line, the title Founding Fathers: I don't know if it was first used in a positive sense, but the women very quickly said it in a negative sense, "Well the *founding fathers*, said this, or the *founding fathers* did this." It always caused laughter and so forth. But we had to grin and bear it because a lot of it was true. We needed to have the women's perspectives on a lot of those issues, and they brought it to the forefront.

Schrager: Do you think that at least some number of the male faculty were shaped by the male oriented reality of higher education coming in, to have a negative view of what women as faculty could offer?

Eickstaedt: Very much so. When we did that program, Sex Roles and Society, I took a fair amount of flak from my male colleagues. First of all, for me making the decision to even do the program. And then, all sorts of snide comments about, "What are you going to study?" Then there would be a joke attached to it. Or, "That's not really legitimate stuff." Anyway, there was a fair amount of resistance. I'm sure some of the faculty might have wished that we had never even done that program, that, I don't know, it might reflect badly on the college, or what. But there was a fair amount of resistance and some outright hostility. I know some of the women in that program, why they caught a fair amount of flack. "Women's rights, what are you going to do, burn bras in that program?" Those sorts of things. But, yeah, I think all of us males were shaped by our own experience. A large part we were taught by male faculty members, the last time we had a female teacher was probably in grade school. All of us had a lot of learning to do in reorienting our ideas.

Schrager: Do you think there's a parallel with gender and race in that way? It seems like when Rudy was teaching, that his first multicultural program, that also there wasn't maybe the kind of readiness for other faculty to take it as important kind of work.

Eickstaedt: Very much so. And looking back on it, during the discussions the planning faculty had about what are we going to offer the first year to our students, there was *no* talk about women's issues. And it was kind of at the last minute—Rudy was the only minority member of the planning faculty—really it was kind of a last minute thing that somebody said, "Hey, wait a minute, what are we going to do for minority students?" So Rudy was put in charge of planning a program, Contemporary American Minorities. But I think part of the attitude was, "Well, okay, so the minority students are going to be in that program, so that takes care of it. We don't have to worry. *We* have *a* program for *you*." I mean Rudy really bore the brunt of it. But some of those students then the next year joined other programs, and many of them were outstanding students and really started, what would you say—Well, then I think people started to realize, "Hey, wait a minute, if we're going to do things in political economy or whatever, we got to think about these issues. We can't just depend on Rudy to do it." I remember early

on, I can't remember which year, but we had some sessions on racial sensitivity. I can remember when those were being planned, some of the faculty said, "Why are we going to hire some outsiders to come in? Rudy can lead the discussions." (laughs) "We have our own man here!" Looking back at the planning year, both of those issues, the minority students and the female students—well, not female students, but female issues—were really not considered. And today, gosh, I don't know, I'd probably have to say that the racial issues are still neglected. I'm not sure about the women's issues; I think they're more fully integrated. And the young women now I don't think they'd stand for a lot of the stuff that went on in the '70s or '80s. You couldn't get away with it.

Schrager: You mean for women students in terms of what's taught in the curriculum?

Eickstaedt: I think so. Yeah, what's taught and how's it's taught. How much sensitivity male faculty have to women's issues. I'm thinking back to Sally Mendoza. When she was at Washington State University, when she went there she wanted to major in mathematics. She was *very* good at mathematics. But while she was there in either her first or second year, one of the faculty members told her, "You know you're very good at mathematics, but you have to think about your career. There aren't going to be any job openings for you in mathematics." This was around 1970. That wouldn't happen these days, I hope, that somebody would tell a young woman that you can't find a job doing what you really want to do.

Schrager: So did you have much sense of how the young women as students fared at Evergreen in those first years in relation to the young men? In seminar and then their intellectual and social relations?

Eickstaedt: I'll have to think a little bit about that. Off the top of my head I would say that the young women who came to Evergreen in those first years were in a sense pioneers. They were risk takers. I think in terms of treatment, I think it was more or less equal. Those young women were very outspoken, many of them, very tough, so I don't think the young guys could have got away with derogatory comments in seminars. I mean if the faculty member didn't catch it, those young women would. And they were well aware what was happening nationally in terms of the women's movement and so forth. And I think a lot of them had read some of the early literature that was coming out. So I don't think that was a big issue. At least I never sensed it.

Schrager: Should we take a little break?

Eickstaedt: Okay. I wonder where the closest—maybe Joe Olander's fountain is still working and I can go get a drink.

[End of Part 1]

[Start of Part 2]

Schrager: I mentioned to you that when Pete Sinclair and I were planning Restorying the West, I was asking about Western literature and he said, "You know, really, you should ask Larry about this." So I did, and you sent me a list of Western literature, some of the titles of which we used. The whole list really impressed me with how broad your knowledge of Western literature—nature writing, fiction, essays—is. I'm curious about how you acquired this depth of knowledge, and how that affects your outlook as a biologist. What you've become is a thinker about nature and the West.

Eickstaedt: As I said previously, my interest in nature started first growing up on a farm. Then, when I was in second grade, Miss Gleason: I told the stories about her impact on me. Then when I was in graduate school at the University of Iowa in the Department of Zoology, I spent two summers at a freshwater biological station that was run jointly by the three universities in Iowa. It's a small station up in northwest Iowa on a *beautiful* lake, called Lake Okoboji, Native American name. The station, Lakeside Lab, is right on the edge of the lake. There's a dock, and we had a boat, and we'd go out on the lake if that was part of what you were studying. But it was quite a large camp, really, I can't remember how many acres. Trees. Most of the buildings were built during the Depression by Civilian Conservation Corps workers. And they were built out of cobblestone from that surrounding area. So the walls were big, thick walls, and even in the midst of an Iowa summer it was always cool in those buildings because the walls were so thick. So that's where the various classes were, in these buildings. Of course we all ate together in the mess hall. It was, for me, just a wonderful change from being at the university, to be out there just surrounded by nature. And we went on lots of field trips around the area. And then when I went to Stanford I spent almost all of my time there at the Hopkins Marine Station, once again a relatively small place right on the border between Pacific Grove, Monterey, on the edge of Cannery Row. We were right on the water, so you were just surrounded by the ocean every day. All of those of those things contributed to a very strong love of nature.

I really ended up with a strong emphasis in marine biology and ecology. When I was at the University of Iowa I took an ecology course. It was the only ecology course offered in the entire university, and it was just one course for one semester, and there may be 12 students, that was it. Nobody thought much about ecology then. There was one textbook we used. But that was about it in the way of textbooks. I took that class in 1965 or '66. Then '69 was the first Earth Day. So between that time when I took the ecology class and Earth Day, the interest in ecology and environmental problems just mushroomed. So then everybody was interested in ecology. And quite a few people that had backgrounds in other areas, all of a sudden they were giving lectures listing themselves as an ecologist. And I knew for a fact that many of them had never had an ecology course in their life! But it was a

popular thing to do, and it attracted crowds. Paul Ehrlich was at Stanford; he published *The Population Bomb* in the '60s. He ended up on the Johnny Carson show, traveling all around the country giving lectures, for *big* money. I don't know how much he got, but it was a lot of money, talking about gloom and doom, basically.

In terms of my teaching, the longer I was at Evergreen the more I moved away from strict biology and strict ecology towards natural history. And part of that was because of my *own* interest, but also, in the context of providing a liberal arts education, I felt that everybody with a liberal arts education should be exposed to natural history. Because I thought, no matter what they ended up doing in terms of career, they always have access to nature, and they can take advantage of it, they can interact with nature in a more intelligent way. Rather than just going for a walk or a hike, they can pay attention to their surroundings and maybe even identify some plants, or identify some birds, or pay attention to behavior—whatever.

So, with those things in mind, I started to drift more and more to paying attention to nature writing. Not just natural history. I mean there were a lot of books that you could find on the natural history of the wasp, or the natural history of the bumble bee, things like that. Which is great, it's great reading—but I was interested in the type of literature that was more accessible to a wider range of people. I remember somewhere, it may have been somebody like Robert Michael Pyle, who's the great naturalist, wonderful writer. Somebody said, "How can you expect people to protect nature if they don't have a love for nature?" In reading strict natural history, you can learn a lot about, let's say, a wasp, and it's very fascinating. But, doesn't necessarily mean that you'll love nature. More like: it's interesting to learn how a wasp makes its living. But, writers—well, Aldo Leopold. His background was in wildlife biology, and he taught one of the early courses in wildlife biology at the University of Wisconsin. But when he wrote *Sand County Almanac*, there's hardly any technical information in there. There's great stories about nature, but when you're reading *Sand County Almanac*, I think if you're paying attention, pretty soon your interest goes up, and if you kind of take advantage of what Leopold is saying, maybe the love of nature will come through. That book is, I think, one of the most influential books in terms of environmental literature in turning things around.

You can preach all you want to about environmental problems, but after a while, talking about *problems* can get pretty depressing. And I found that true when I was teaching at Evergreen because I was part of the environmental faculty, that specialty area. So there was an expectation on a regular basis I would teach in that area. But for the most part a lot of it was just gloom and doom, and it was very depressing. But when I read nature writing it was uplifting. It was almost day and night feeling. It's

the same feeling I get when I go to McLane Creek Nature Trail. I do that regularly. When I go there and just sit, and watch, and listen, I'm not thinking about the world's problems, I'm not thinking about environmental problems, I'm just there to appreciate nature and there's a real love there. I always come home uplifted from that experience.

So anyway, as I started to do more and more reading in nature writing, from that I started to pay more attention to Western literature, and people like Wallace Stegner, who, once again, was not an ecologist, not a scientist at all, but one of the great Western writers, very much grounded in a respect for nature, a love for nature and protecting what we have.

Another thing I started doing was going to Seattle to Elliot Bay Book Company. I would pay attention to the writers that were coming there. Before the traffic got so bad, I probably averaged almost once a month I went to Elliot Bay to hear a writer. So that's where I first heard Barry Lopez. One time there was a group from the University of Montana that was coming to Elliot Bay, William Kittredge was one of them. They had published an anthology of literature from Montana. I remember getting there, this is in the old Elliot Bay downstairs where they held the readings. And the table was set up with a little lectern, and sitting on the table were these books that looked like a bunch of Bibles. I was shocked when I looked at it and thought, "Is that just for show?" The literature from Montana—not in that book! Well, it turned out it was! A lot of it is Native American literature stories, they went way back and started there. There was Kittredge there, Annick Smith was there, and then there were other folks not at the University of Montana but who had been there or had connections. Boy, it was a wonderful evening.

And then I got well acquainted with Rick Sieverson, I think. He was an early Evergreen student; he studied with Sandra Simon, with Josie Reed. He was up in Seattle after he graduated, and as I remember the story, he just happened past when they were just getting Elliot Bay started. They were looking for people. He ended up getting a job there, and then he ended up being the guy who organized all the readings. I didn't know him when he was a student here, but after a number of visits up there, why, we chatted and found out we had Evergreen in common. He must have a terrific memory. I remember one time I showed up there, not for a reading, it was in the daytime. I was just scanning the books, and he saw me, and he came over and said, "Larry, I've got a book for you. I know you'll love it." It was Terry Tempest Williams' *Refuge*. I mean, how did that guy remember all that, you know? But he hit the nail on the head. And I heard Terry Tempest Williams there for the first time at Elliot Bay. Well, with Lopez and people like Terry Tempest Williams, there were others: very quickly my interest in Western literature just mushroomed, I started following those leads. So that's how I ended up doing

that bibliography when I was in the library. So, when you asked me for recommendations, they were close at hand. (chuckles)

Schrager: So, you left as a pretty young man, relatively speaking. Most people hit their early 60s. But's it's hard, the work. What was it?

Eickstaedt: A couple major events. In the fall of 1994, I was all set to teach a program with Pete Taylor on salmon. Starting in the summer time I just wasn't felling up to snuff. I had a number of doctor's visits, and they couldn't find anything wrong. Finally, early in the fall, my doctor's nurse suggested, "I wonder if maybe we should do a CAT scan?" so they sent me up to Tacoma, I had an ultrasound and a CAT scan, and it turned out they saw something in my kidney. They said, "Well, it just might be a cyst." Well, it turned out it was cancer, and so I had to have my right kidney removed. I had to take a leave, I wasn't teaching in the fall. In addition to being a real wakeup call, it was also additionally tough because my wife had had breast cancer twice, so we had gone through that already, and then here I am with cancer. Fortunately they removed my kidney, and since then I haven't had any problems. In fact the surgeon that operated on me, we would have regular meetings. At first it was like every three months, and then every six months, and I had to do a CAT scan again. But when I went to see him, each time he would greet me, *"How you doing professor?!"* And I'd say, *"How you doing doc?!"* And then we'd sit down and tell stories and jokes, you name it. Then finally he would say, "Well, I guess I better check your blood chemistry results." And he'd go down the line, "Boring, boring, boring, boring, boring. Everything's okay. CAT scan's okay." Then finally after oh I don't know how many years of seeing him, finally one time he said, "Well, I really enjoy visiting with you each time you come in. But something else is going to get you besides another cancer of the kidney. So," he said, "I guess we'll have to call it quits."

After my kidney cancer I lost my good friend Beryl and Sandra Simon. There were some other events that took place. I came back teaching, and in the fall of 1995 I was getting set to teach a really exciting program with Matt Smith. It was on the Pacific Northwest. It was really going to be a lot of fun. Once again I was just not feeling very good. Turned out by that time my doctor was an Evergreen graduate, and she was a student that I had the first year of Evergreen. So she knew me very well. And I met with her, and after talking she said, "I'm going to recommend that you see a psychiatrist." I did, and well it turned out I was suffering from clinical depression. It was really a black, dark period for me. I took a leave of absence. But I came back to teach in the spring, that was the spring of 1996. I was still doing the same routine: I'd get up in the morning, put the tea kettle on, go out get the paper, come back, drink my tea, read the paper. And one morning I came back with the paper and I was just standing by the stove. I was waiting for the tea kettle to boil, and it came to me that I had all of these ideas and projects

that I wanted to do someday, but I was putting them on the back burner, and I thought to myself, "The damn stove is overflowing with ideas, and I may never get to them." It was not much longer I decided I'm just going to retire early. And I didn't have a real plan. But I did that, I retired spring of 1996.

Since that time I got involved with a couple of things that I had *no* intention of ever doing. One of them was, I saw a little announcement in the local paper about a stone sculpture class that was going to be offered, a six-week class one night a week. So I checked it out and signed up. I'd always enjoyed working with my hands and working with tools, but I had no background, really, in art. But after the first night I was hooked. I just fell into it, I just loved chiseling stone and working in three-dimensions. And that opened up a whole new hobby, or almost a career, of doing stone sculpture. I joined the Northwest Stone Sculptors Association shortly after that. Turned out to be one of the most interesting and generous groups of people that I've ever been with. Many of these folks in the association were professional sculptors. Some of them had been doing it for 25, 30 years. They would share every bit of knowledge they had with a newcomer like me. Nothing held back. We still have two major symposia each year. At first I would go to both of them, the one in the summer, the one in the spring. The one in the spring was strictly for hand sculpture; the one in the summer was a combination, some people doing by hand, other people using power tools. But these symposia were just a wonderful time to learn new stuff, meet new people, to get acquainted with new types of rock, try out new tools. We were at a camp up near Mt. Vernon, out in the country. We were there for a week, we ate together, partied together, spent the whole day working on stone, making dust. I've continued doing stone sculpture since then.

Another thing that happened was, I got acquainted with a couple of homeless people downtown Olympia after I retired. I kind of got in the habit of spending time at various coffee shops. Well, there weren't that many back then, there are a lot more now. I got acquainted with what was happening downtown during the day. One of the homeless people I got acquainted with was a veteran from Vietnam. I can't remember if he was part Native American, or perhaps Filipino, but he was a sniper during the war. And he was an alcoholic. But he would spend time sitting on the street outside of the old Batdorf & Bronson, and while he was sitting there he was sketching, just using typewriter paper, and he made these beautiful drawings. Some of them were war related; others were really mostly about nature. And I got to be fairly good friends with him. I would stop and chat with him. He always had these laying out on the sidewalk around him. So, I asked him, "How much do you charge?" He said, "I don't sell them. If you'd like one take it. If you want to leave a little bit, that's fine." So I bought some of his drawings. And then every once and a while I'd get an extra coffee at Batdorf & Bronson and bring it out to him. He lived underneath the dock down by the waterfront with a couple of other guys. His

appearance put off a lot of people. He smelled, of course. I don't know where he got showers. Everybody called him "Sarge." That's what he called himself, "Sarge," he'd introduce himself.

Then there was a black woman. First encounter with her: I went down to the Spar to have breakfast with a couple of friends. When I was approaching the Spar, there was a woman with a shopping cart, and the cart was piled high with her stuff. I went in and had breakfast, and when I came out the cart had moved down the street about a half a block, and there was this *big* mound over the top of the cart. And I looked and I thought, "Well where did she go?" And then I looked closer and I saw two legs. Here she was, bent over with blankets and a sleeping bag over the top of her, and she was sleeping on top of the cart, leaned over. And she would do that for hours at a time. And then at night she would find a store front, and she'd spend the night sleeping that way, standing. But anyway, I got acquainted with her. She was hard to talk to. She had, obvious, some psychological problems and so forth. I never did quite get a clear answer as to what her name was.

Those two people caused me to sit at Batdorf & Bronson one day, and I was feeling very emotional. I always had my little notebook with me. And I started to scribble a poem. And for some reason I decided, well, maybe I'll try some more of this, and I did. I think it might have been Kate Crowe, I was talking to her, and she said, "Do you know about Centrum up at Fort Worden? They have a writer's workshop up there. Maybe you ought to check into it." So I did, and I ended up going up there. Signed up for a—well, I wanted to get into the beginning poetry workshop but it was filled. Then there was another one for advanced poets, and it was being taught by a woman by the name of Emily Warren. And I knew Emily because, several years before that, she and I taught together as part of a joint Washington Humanities Commission and the Arts Commission. They had a program where they would match up a scholar with a poet to teach in rural schools. I was the scholar. We taught one year in Twisp and Winthrop for a week, and then we went over to way up northeast Washington and taught for a week at Metaline Falls and Ione with grade school kids. I did some natural history with them, and then Emily got them to write poems. And then another time we went to the little town of Dixie over by Walla Walla. The school was, I think, kindergarten through sixth grade, and it was in an old schoolhouse that had been the high school. So these little kids, the classes were small but they had that big old building, and we spent a week there with those kids.

Well, turned out Emily was teaching the advanced poetry class there at Fort Worden. So I contacted her, and I told her that I was more than a rookie—an ultra-rookie. And she said, "Don't worry about it. Sign up for my workshop." So I did. There were 16 women and myself in this workshop. And it was a week. And at the end of that week I was hooked. I had a great time, and did some fairly decent

writing there, learned a lot. And then I went back two more times to the writer's workshop. That got me started doing poetry, and I'm still doing poetry. When I look back at it, I can see definite roots from Evergreen. I think I mentioned before that I never had a chance to teach a full program with Marilyn Frasca or Susan Aurand, but some of their influence definitely rubbed off on me, and I think that helped me move towards stone sculpture. And then, in terms of the poetry, once again that kind of grew out of the interest in natural history and nature writing, because my early attempts at writing poetry were more along that line of reflections on nature and so forth. There were a few times while I was teaching at Evergreen that we included some poetry as part of the reading. I remember one of the books that had a big impression on me when I was teaching the program Reflections of Nature with Rob Knapp, Thad Kurtz, and Hiro Kawasaki. And Hiro had us read a book by Basho, *High Roads to the Interior*, combination of haiku and kind of a journal of his trip in Japan. The idea of haiku: it's a very economical way to say a lot with a few words. There were definite influences from Evergreen that helped me with writing poetry. But looking back on it, when I retired I never would have envisioned that I'd be doing those two things.

Then I've had other things. I've served on the board of the Kitchen Garden Project, which was the early version of Grub. Then later I was on the board of Grub, and during that time we raised over $750,000 to buy the garden and to erect a new farmhouse that Grub now has. I was on the board of Homes First for a while. I was on the board of Friends of the Farmer's Market. Done those sorts of things.

Another important thing that I've been doing regularly is spending time at coffee shops. It started with Batdorf & Bronson, and then the Bread Peddler, then Olympia Coffee when Olympia Coffee was just a small little coffee shop. And then, for the last about five years, Bar Francis has been my coffee shop. And Bar Francis was started by a guy who had worked for Batdorf & Bronson, he had worked for Olympia Coffee, had a lot of experience, but he always thought he'd like to have his own little business. So he built himself a coffee cart. It's just a beautiful piece of work. So now he's in a small, kind of a funky space between Dumpster Values and Old School Pizza on Franklin Street. So, in addition to having my coffee, it's really kept me in touch with young people. There aren't very many old timers that show up there. So when I'm there, I don't spend my time talking about various people's laments, comparing notes on your last colonoscopy or blood pressure readings. It's mostly young people, and I've made lots of good friends with these young folks. I'm always learning new stuff from them. I don't know, they probably think of me as kind of a grandpa figure, but we get along just fine. Then from time to time, if there's a slow period maybe I'll draft a poem while I'm there. Or I read, do a lot of reading.

Then to cap it off: I got acquainted with a fellow here in Olympia. He had run restaurants in the past, he's designed restaurants for other folks, he's an artist, he's a builder. I first met him at the new Blue Heron Bakery. He was responsible for making the tables and the counters there, just beautiful work. We got to be friends, and he did some small projects at our house. And then probably last spring, I mentioned to him one time that I had had a platform in a tree when I was a kid on the farm in Iowa. And then I had built a treehouse for my kids when we had the little farm up by Shelton. But I told him that I have a garden shed in the back of our property, an old garden shed, and I said, "You know I've thought a little bit about trying to build a treehouse above the garden shed." And his eyes lit up. And so right away we're making sketches. And then he drew up a formal drawing. We went ahead with the project. About a month ago we completed a treehouse. And it's 9x12, it's got a deck on two sides, a stairway leading up to it. That's going to be my place for reading and writing. If the grandkids want to, there's a place for them to sleep up there. But primarily it's going to be my place to hide out and think, and read and write. As I have been doing that project, constantly thinking about Phil Harding, because Phil would have just loved to see this treehouse. Of course, if he had gotten involved during the design process it probably would have had three stories, and a balcony, and a crow's nest, and a greenhouse, and who knows what. But we kept it under control, it's just the treehouse.

Schrager: What's your friend's name?

Eickstaedt: His name is Dennis Lyon. Oh, and he also teaches tennis. We worked very well together, back and forth on the design. We made changes as we were working on building it. But he was largely responsible for the final design, and it turned out to be quite a nice structure. So anyway, that's about where we are, and that's where I am. 77 years old this summer, and now I have my own treehouse. (laughs)

Schrager: I was wondering if you could describe one of the sculptures, one of your favorites and how you went about doing it?

Eickstaedt: Let me think. I think one of my favorites, and one of the more interesting ones, was one I did a few years ago. I have a friend, another sculptor that lives down outside of Eugene, Oregon, and he's been a longtime member of the Northwest Stone Sculptors Association. Maybe four or five years ago he bought several limestone fence posts that came from Kansas. I decided to buy one of those. I actually bought half of a fence post, so it was about four foot long and roughly eight inches square. And these fence posts came as I said from Kansas. When the farmers first arrived in Kansas in that area, there were hardly any trees, but fortunately there were limestone deposits right close to the surface. So they ended up quarrying the limestone and creating posts out of limestone, and that's what they did to

fence in their farms. Well, then as the farms got bigger why there was no need for all of those fences, and so they tore out the fence posts, and there were just piles of these around, down there in Kansas. Pretty soon some of the sculptors looked at those and thought, hmm, another stone, maybe we can… Anyway, I ended up with this half chunk of limestone, and I had no idea what I was going to use it for. And then a few years ago I was at Harbor Days. And one of the booths was a wildlife photographer, and one of his photographs was a photograph of a pelican. It was a tall, fairly narrow photograph. And I looked at that, hmm, I thought, hmm, maybe. Well, fortunately, he had cards as well, so I didn't have to buy the whole photograph. I bought a card, I came home, and I did the measurements. Then I measured the limestone fence post, and the dimensions were okay, there'd be room. So I carved a pelican into that fence post. And when I first started in, when I just started to break the surface of the stone with the chisel, there was an aroma that came out of the stone that smelled very organic. The only explanation that I could come up with was that the limestone was created, I forget how many million years ago, when the interior of the United States was covered in sea water. And the planktonic organisms had calcareous skeletons, and as they died and drifted toward the bottom they piled up on the bottom, and then, under pressure, created limestone. And then several million years later, why these farmers dug them up and made fence posts. That aroma came out, and I ascribe it to the possibility that there's organic matter as part of the stone. And another thing that was interesting was when you strike it, it just rings like a bell, the stone. It's almost like a bell. Then as it turned out, as I worked on it, fossils started to show up. So that was really interesting. I was able to leave one of the fossils—it was a fossil clam shell—as part of the sculpture. It's at the lower part of the sculpture where I carved some feathers. But anyway, I carved it. I had been working with the stone flat on my carving table. And then one day I stood it up, and it turned out that it was plumb one way—right and left, it was plumb—but fore and aft it was leaning little bit. Huh. So I got out my old handsaw that I think came from my grandfather, and I cut a small wedge off the bottom of the stone, so that the stone would sit perfectly plumb. Well, when I carved off that wedge, it's roughly 6x8, and looked at it, you can see the various strata in the stone—different colors. Whoa, I thought, that's interesting. So I polished one side. And it's like an abstract painting. It reminds me a little bit of some of the paintings that Marilyn Frasca did way back of the Nisqually, where they were just kinds of bands of colors. Very definite different shades of color. I mean there's a real history just in that little piece of stone. I haven't done it yet, but I'm going to frame it, and hang it on the wall. It's a beautiful piece of art just that way. It's art that hasn't been created by an artist. It's created by nature.

Well, then I got curious about pelicans. So I did some research. It turns out that the direct ancestors of the pelicans that we have here today go back far enough that it's possible that one of the ancestors of today's pelican was feeding on those organisms in that inland sea that created the limestone in the first place. It's something like 160 million years ago or something. (laughing) So, there's all these stories connected with the stone, let alone with the sculpture itself.

Schrager: Wow. Let me turn from 150 million years to 50 years, here, and ask you to reflect a bit on what's happened here, the Evergreen story. When you look at what Evergreen is now compared to the aspirations of what the faculty, the presidents, the community were for the college, can you talk about this? The values that the college had in its formation and how you think they've fared between then and now? What's continued in a strong way, what seem attenuated, what's in question?

Eickstaedt: Well, let's see. I maybe touched on some of this previously. I think I mentioned that it still amazes me today that some of the key principles that we started with still hold true today. The fact that interdisciplinary studies is still really the centerpiece. We still have not gone to departments. We still do narrative evaluations. We still do not have majors. Those are some of the key things that I think are still with us today. And it does amaze me, because there was so much pressure to give up the ghost and go back to just being a traditional college. That has been the case for many, many of the new programs and colleges that were started about the time Evergreen started. I know at some of the colleges and universities where they did start interdisciplinary programs, one of the administrative issues that led to part of their downfall was faculty argued about who gets the credit for these students? Does the biology department get this percentage, does the English department get this percentage? How about the pay for the faculty, how is that going to work? There were all sorts of issues that went back to the departments, and they still in one way or another had their fingers in the pie. So there were many exciting interdisciplinary programs that were started that withered on the vine, I think not because they didn't have good ideas, but the administrative structure was wrong. So here at Evergreen we had a big advantage that we didn't start with all of that, and we didn't have to worry about arguments about who got a hundred dollar raise and who didn't, and that sort of thing, and who's going to advance to associate, and who gets to be a full professor, a lot of those issues. And the evaluation system: there were lots of early programs and even colleges that started with some form of a narrative evaluation, and gradually that gave way and they went back to letter grades again.

I was pretty familiar with the University of California at Santa Cruz, because I was at Hopkins Marine Station when Santa Cruz was just starting. And I knew some of the early faculty. Of course they set things up differently; they had different colleges as part of the university, and each college would

have a different emphasis, but there would be a strong interdisciplinary focus with each of these colleges, and they would use narrative evaluations. But then, one of the things they did, they had boards of study, so that, like the biologists that I knew that went there, whichever college they were a part of, they were also be part of the biology board of study. Well, over time, those boards got more and more powerful. And then also the narrative evaluations kind of withered away, and people gave up on that. I don't know about Santa Cruz now, but my impression is that they've gone back, pretty much, to a disciplinary form of organization. So those early pioneers, I mean the guys that I knew that went there, they were very optimistic and gung-ho. "We're going to do something new." Well, it didn't happen the way they had hoped.

So anyway, by and large I'm surprised at how well Evergreen has stayed close to the original principles. In terms of the commitment to those principles, my impression is that the level of faculty commitment is not as high as it used to be. Some folks are pretty much just doing their own thing in their own field. Whereas in the early days, the programs that we designed were truly interdisciplinary. They not only cut across separate disciplines like biology and chemistry, I mean they were across divisions. I mean they were the humanities, the arts, social sciences, natural sciences. They were really interdisciplinary in the best sense of the word. Now, when I hear about the programs, seems like quite often there are programs taught by maybe only two people, and these are first year programs for beginning students that are very narrow in their scope. Not really interdisciplinary at all. So that's not very heartening to see that. I know there's various reasons for why that may have happened—student interest, maintaining enrollment in these big programs, and so forth—but it has moved in the opposite direction.

Let's see. For an individual thing, I mean, I'm really pleased that I was asked to do this interview. I really am, because for the most part I've… Well, I remember several years ago I crossed paths with Patrick Hill when he was provost here. I had retired already. I think I crossed paths with him at a Grub fundraiser, and we were chatting, and he says to me, "Larry, how does it feel now that you're retired? Do you kind of feel like a pair of old shoes that's just been cast aside?" And I had to admit, yeah, that's the way I feel. So, I'm very appreciative to have a chance to talk about the early days of Evergreen and all that, because I've had very, very little in the way of interest on the part of anybody here of finding anything out. And now that we're down to just a few original planning faculty, it's amazing to me that that's happened. And same way with the early faculty, I'm sure they might feel the same way—that you're just kind of put out to pasture. What I've done since I've retired, I mean I'm having a great time, I'm happy and so forth, but it's not really what I envisioned. I thought that part of being a colleague and

collegiality would have meant that when a person retires they're still part of the group, you know, and you'd be invited back to join discussions, and people could pick your brains, and you could ask questions, and still be somewhat a part of the community. But that certainly hasn't been the case.

Schrager: Maybe that's part of the challenge that the college has faced, and not so well: How do you understand what these practices have meant, and what can you learn from them for your own work and how you think about coordinated studies. Not turning to experienced faculty for that kind of knowledge, experience. There's a gap that we thought wouldn't occur because we trusted that that the older faculty would socialize the newer faculty that worked together. That's how I learned.

Eickstaedt: Right.

Schrager: Put too much faith in that as the way that the values would be transmitted.

Eickstaedt: Yeah, it's one thing to read. If you read the catalog, why certainly you can get a feeling that, well, this is what Evergreen stands for, but like so many things, it's a whole different matter if you talk directly to somebody who was *there*. I mean it makes all the sense in the world. If you're going to write a book about the history of John F. Kennedy's administration, well, you go back and talk to the people that were there and can tell the stories. You don't depend upon folks that have come much later, that can read all the accolades about John F. Kennedy, to tell you the real story. No. No. It goes back to farming, you know. If you're going to be a farmer you better pay attention to what the old farmers can tell you. You may have new fancy equipment and air conditioned cabs on your tractor and everything, but if you don't pay attention to what the old farmers say, you're not going to make it. Or an old craftsman. Even though the tools have gotten more and more fancy, if you're going to be fine woodworker you better find a craftsman to work with. Better yet you better apprentice yourself to an old seasoned craftsman.

Schrager: I'm really grateful to you that you took the time to do this.

Eickstaedt: It's been a great experience. Remember all this stuff, and I thank you very much.

Schrager: Thank you, Larry.

Eickstaedt: Alright, puush, almost three hours again! Wow!

End of Interview

—Transcribed by Lori Larson