

Nancy Allen
Interviewed by Nancy Taylor
The Evergreen State College oral history project
September 13, 2017, Part 4
FINAL

Taylor: It's Wednesday, September 13, 2017, and this is our third interview. I think we came to a point where we could move on to life after Evergreen, and sort of a retrospective look back. But there was one story I wanted you to tell, because I think it ought to be available, and that is the whole story of the Danforth—what was it called?—the Danforth Position?

Allen: The Danforth Visitor Program.

Taylor: Do you know how it started? And then, can you describe what you did?

Allen: Yes. The Danforth Visitor Program was the idea of Peter Elbow, who's a nationally known writing teacher. He's probably retired by now. I think, actually, he lives in Seattle. But he taught at Evergreen for, I don't know, five or six years? And while he was at Evergreen, he got a grant from the Danforth Foundation to do some faculty development work.

It was the simplest, and most elegant, idea imaginable, I think, anyway. I just think it was brilliant. The deal was that to do it, you needed one faculty salary—you needed enough money to pay one faculty to not teach for a quarter, but to get their salary—and that person would be the visitor. The main idea of the visiting program was to be able to have someone observing you in your seminars and your classroom situations who was not a faculty member on your team. So, it should be a way of getting observation by another trained teacher, and getting feedback about your teaching, and having it not be connected to the administration of the college in any way, and it wouldn't go into the evaluation system in any way, I guess, unless you chose to put some of it into your self-evaluation. But nobody would ever evaluate you on all this, and there wasn't anything written down.

Once a visitor was named—a person to be not teaching for a quarter, and visiting other faculty members—once that person was named—the first one was Peter Elbow himself—that person would work with 10 faculty members, because there are 10 weeks in a quarter. First, the group would meet and kind of discuss things, and discuss what they wanted to get out of it, and maybe—maybe—come to some common ideas about what they wanted to talk about in their meetings, or maybe not. It could be completely individual what you talked about when your visitor came.

What I remember is that before the start of the week when the visitor would be in your classroom—a given faculty member’s classroom—they would have the meeting, the visitor and the faculty member, and they would decide what part of the teaching needed feedback, and how the visitor was supposed to get that. Most commonly, people wanted feedback on their seminars, so the visitor would attend seminar and watch the seminar maybe twice, or three times, or however many times it happened. Also, you could have the visitor visit workshops, or come to lectures, critique lecturing, anything like that.

That would happen for a week, and at the end of the week, the visitor and you would sit down and talk about how things went, and you would get the feedback that you wanted, orally. Oh, yeah, and also there was—I don’t think I invented this, but I think I formalized it a little bit—the visitor could call together your students, and talk to your students about stuff they might be scared to put in evaluations. Because I think it is true that there’s a fair amount of intimidation that goes with having the power to be a faculty member and give credit, and students being completely honest with you in your evaluations. The visitor could get together with your students, and give them feedback—or, get feedback from them that he would then present to you without name, anonymously—“Well, some students said that they think this.” I made up a questionnaire that I would give the students to kind of get them thinking about what they might want to say about their faculty. That was the contribution I made.

Peter Elbow was the first visitor, and he visited 10 people, and it all worked really well. I don’t even remember who the administrators were who decided to perpetuate it, but since it was such a simple idea, and it only involved one faculty salary for one quarter, some of the deans just decided to perpetuate it. I think Bill Aldridge was the next visitor. I was visited by Bill Aldridge, and then I got to be a visitor, either the third year, or maybe the fourth year. When I was a visitor, I just loved it. [laughing] I just thought it was so much fun to observe other people teaching, and talk to them about their teaching.

I think that’s a wonderful program, and it helps faculty get to know each other. If you’re a visitor, you get to know 10 people’s teaching really quite closely over that quarter. I think the feedback the faculty got was very valuable, because they kept signing up for the program.

Taylor: Do you know how long it lasted?

Allen: No, I don’t.

Taylor: I was in the first group, with Peter, and it was wonderful. He came to everything. He even did a video recording, and then we talked about it, a seminar. But he was totally supportive, and it was one of

the best things that happened, in terms of my gaining confidence in being a teacher. Just no question about it. It mattered that it was absolutely voluntary, and it was—you're right—no report, so it was completely outside of the evaluation system. I think people accepted that, and lots of people wanted to do it.

Allen: Yeah, they did.

Taylor: It sort of depended on who was the visitor. You probably got people who wanted you, and Bill Aldridge would get people who wanted him, so it was people you trusted.

Allen: Mm-mm.

Taylor: But I don't think it lasted more than two or three years, at the most. Because it took a faculty line.

Allen: Yeah.

Taylor: Was it once a year for one quarter, or was it all year?

Allen: It was for one quarter.

Taylor: It was for one quarter each year for maybe three years or something. I think Llyn De Danaan did it once.

Allen: I think they kept it going for longer. I would say it couldn't possibly have been more than 10 years, but it might have been five or six years.

Taylor: Yeah. I think they got a grant for it, at the beginning.

Allen: Yeah, Peter Elbow got a grant for it.

Taylor: They continued it after the grant died.

Allen: Yeah.

Taylor: Because it was during that time there were lots of interesting faculty development happening. I remember, I think, Rob Knapp got a grant for Each One, Teach One. Do you remember that? It was the same time.

Allen: Did that happen during the summer? Yeah.

Taylor: It happened during the summer, and it was to learn a skill. I remember Kirk Thompson, as a photographer, worked with some mathematician, and they each taught each other some skill. It was Each One, Teach One, and you got paid for doing it.

Allen: Yeah.

Taylor: There was just so much more interest, it seemed, in helping faculty be better faculty. I don't know if that still goes on, but the interest in faculty development was stronger.

Allen: I know that nothing like the Danforth thing goes on, because when Michael Zimmerman was Provost, I tried to pitch this Danforth Visitor idea to him, because I thought it was a way to strengthen coordinated studies at the college. I told him about it, and I thought he might not have even heard of it; that it just went underground, and nobody even knew. I told him all about it, and he absolutely was not interested. He didn't tell me at the meeting we had, but somebody told me later that the reason he was absolutely against it was because it was paying faculty not to teach, and he didn't think there should ever be anything where faculty were paid for anything else but their classroom teaching.

Taylor: Did you ever have a stint in the Library?

Allen: No.

Taylor: Or an advising office?

Allen: No.

Taylor: Because there were two places where faculty served, and did really good things, by serving in the Library and serving as—

Allen: Yes.

Taylor: Maybe it's a luxury, but the faculty accepted it. It was a luxury, but it meant class load could be higher because you chose to do that. But the Danforth was paid for with the grant, originally. So, I don't know. I thought it was a great thing.

Allen: It was a great thing.

Taylor: Are there other stories of that sort, in reflection, that you want to make sure get known, get down in writing; reflections about things that you did at the college, or that happened at the college, that made it be the place that it was, that you were involved in?

Allen: Well, at some point [phone rings].

End Part 1 of 3 of Nancy Allen on 9-13-17

Begin Part 2 of 3 of Nancy Allen on 9-13-17

[Interview begins 00:00:48]

Taylor: You were going to talk about the college, and treatment of the retired.

Allen: Yeah, we'd just got done talking about something that the college did that was really, really good, but then let slide, actually, and this is something that I don't think the college has done, and I think the

college really needs to think about this. Although [chuckles] it's probably not the primary thing they need to think about right at this moment.

When I retired, I had a really, really, really difficult transition. I think it may have been more difficult for me than for lots of other people, because I don't have a family. I mean, I have some cats and dogs and stuff, but the college was my life. The people I saw—my students, the people in my seminar—were the people I thought about all the time. I'm sure that I worried about them something similar to the way parents worry about their children, but probably it was a lot less intense, because I wasn't a parent, and there were more of them. But it was incredibly involving for me. It was my life.

The other thing that I perceived as very important when it got taken away was that lots of people on campus cared about what I thought. Especially, the evaluation system certainly promoted that. Your students would definitely care what you thought, because they would want to learn from you, and they would want to know what you thought about them, and it would be part of their future academic career, too, what you thought.

When I first stopped teaching, I just didn't have any of that. It's like it was all gone, just completely gone. And nobody cared what I thought about anything. I was just another little old lady. Nobody ever asked me my opinion. Nobody ever listened if I expressed my opinion. [laughing] [sighs] That was very discouraging. And I didn't have a certain context around me that I had had before, where there were a lot of smart people that I met on a daily basis, and would talk to. I just didn't have any of that, and so it took me a very long time to get a life that was satisfying outside of Evergreen.

One of the first things that happened was I went through one fall quarter, the first fall quarter after I retired, I felt so awful, because everybody else was going back to school. I still had mostly Evergreen friends, and they were all going back to school, and I wasn't. I just felt so terrible, and so left out, and so homesick that I decided that I would have to start traveling more, so I would be getting some new experiences, and I wouldn't have to go through this all the time.

My first big trip—they weren't my biggest trips—I took a trip to Argentina in spring quarter after that. I just said, I have to start getting out of here. I have to start getting out of here. So, spring quarter, I went to Argentina. Then I started to travel a lot to Spain, which is a place I had lived before, when I would take Evergreen students abroad to a language school there.

I would tend to be spending spring quarter about every three years in Spain, and I got to know this one neighborhood in Granada really well, so I would go back there. I went for three or four years in a row, I think. I would stay at least three months, but one time, I stayed six months. The last time I went, I stayed nine months. It was really wonderful to live there. There are certain things I miss so

much from there, mainly the kind of social lives that people have, where they interact with each other so intensely, kind of all day long. I would get up in the morning, and I would go down, and I would have—everybody in Spain goes to breakfast in a café, nobody seems to ever have breakfast at home—a continental breakfast. I would go to the same café every day, and I would be having breakfast with the same group of people that were always having breakfast at that café. You could be private if you wanted, or you could start a conversation if you wanted. It was completely up to you. And it was a great place to observe what was going on in the town.

I did that, and then I would go and do my grocery shopping. If you go to open-air stands, you sort of have to talk to each grocery person about what the groceries are today, and what they're like, and which are best. I just loved that kind of social contact, which here, I hardly ever go out for breakfast, and if I do, I don't talk to anybody. And I don't ever talk to people when I'm shopping. I just go through the checkout counter once, and I don't have to communicate about every single product or anything. So, I loved that about Spain. I loved that about living there.

Taylor: Were you doing any research or work there, or were you just enjoying living there? And you had friends?

Allen: The first time I went, I was still thinking of myself as writing this book. [chuckles] I knew that writing was going to be involved in this conversation in some way, but . . . [sighs] . . . oh, dear. As I remember it, I started teaching Spanish again at Evergreen. I was a Spanish teacher before I came to Evergreen. There was no language program when I got there, so there was no way to be a Spanish teacher. And I was not about to start the whole language program by myself, so I didn't. I just taught literature in English with other people.

But, about eight years into Evergreen, I started teaching Spanish again, which, I guess, was like '79, or '78 maybe. First of all, it was just a four-quarter-hour beginning Spanish class. I just kind of got back into the classroom, and then I started to have ideas about a bigger program I would want to have, and how it would be. I ended up starting this program, which was originally called Spanish Forms in Life and Art, and then was called various different names, and included Latin America. But the first time I taught it, it was only about Spain.

I was really interested in St. Teresa. St. Teresa of Ávila was one of the people I thought I might want to do my doctorate about when I was in graduate school, but my faculty at Columbia did not want me to do my doctorate about St. Teresa of Ávila. [laughing] So I didn't get to do that. I wasn't a traditional scholar of St. Teresa, but I decided that I wanted to learn all about St. Teresa, because she

was the first woman writer in Spain, for sure, and is still the most important woman writer there ever has been in Spain, and probably wrote more than most Spanish writers have written.

So, I was studying St. Teresa of Ávila, but I was convinced that I was not going to be writing academic articles, because I don't—I'm not going to go into the whole history of what was going on in literature departments in those days, but it was supposed to be okay at Evergreen to not do scholarship. You didn't need to do that to be able to continue in your job. I thought that was so wonderful, because it meant that I did not have to write these tacky, dry, unreadable [laughter] articles that most people were writing in literature departments.

Taylor: Right.

Allen: So, I decided I needed to write something different. The kind of writing I admired, and really liked, was literature. So, I decided I would write a novel about St. Teresa of Ávila, and it would have two plots. It would have a historical plot about St. Teresa's life, and then it would have a contemporary detective plot. There would be these two women, in particular, who were trying to find out who stole St. Teresa's hand. St. Teresa's hand disappeared from the place that it is, where I have seen it, in Spain. It's in the cathedral in Seville, I think. Anyway, it's in some town in southern Spain, which is not Granada. It's in the cathedral, in a special little room, a special little reliquary room, where you can go in and pray, just because you were so bedazzled by the wonder of St. Teresa's hand, and it's her real bones.

Taylor: It's still there. It wasn't stolen, you were just going to have it stolen.

Allen: Yeah, I imagined that it was stolen, and one American woman and one Spanish woman were trying to find it. That was the detective plot.

So, I was working on that. Of course, because Evergreen teaching is incredibly consuming, I was not able to work on it when I was teaching, so I would work on it every summer. I would kind of get it out, and I would do something on it every summer. It was very unsatisfying, and it went on and on and on and on. I think I had been working on it for about 15 years, but about the 12th year that I was working on it was right when I retired. I was planning to do a bunch more on that, get that really up and running during the first time I went to Spain after retirement. Later, I dropped it entirely, but I went there to research and write that first time.

I think one other time I went, and I was going to write another book. I was sort of deciding, okay, that book's not going to work. Now, I'm going to write another one, and it's just going to be a contemporary mystery set in the Albaicin, and I'm going to work on that. [laughing] During that time,

those months I spent doing that, I discovered I just am terrible with plots. I couldn't think of anything that could happen. [laughter] St. Teresa gave me the first plot, but I'm not very good at plot.

So, there was some writing and some research sort of connected to it, but later—I think after the first two times—I sort of decided I'm just going to live there. I'm just going because I love to live there, and it's okay for me to just go and spend a few months in Spain. After I bought this house that I'm in right now, my house was always super easy to rent, and I could rent it to people who liked pets, and then I could give them a really good deal on the rent, and they would take care of my pets in return. That was all very nice, and it was a good way to travel and pretty much have my rent covered when I was in Spain, so that was good.

It got to the point where I had lots of friends in this little neighborhood. I was thinking, well, I really can't go and live in Spain for good, because I don't know what kind of volunteer work I can have. I know that I'm going to need some volunteer work, and I don't know what it could be in Spain. So, I decided that I would try teaching some *gitanos*, because there's a big—well, I guess I can call them Gypsies, because the Spanish Roma people really do like to be called *gitanos*, which is translated into English as Gypsy. In English, it's supposed to not be appropriate to call them Gypsies, but in Spain, they call themselves that. So, who knows?

I managed to get myself into a classroom in Granada in one of the very poorest neighborhoods in town, and I met this teacher who taught a class of *gitanos*. Basically, it was like a GED program, where they would take classes with her, and then they would get a certificate that said they had gotten their high school degree. Then they would be eligible for all sorts of jobs that they weren't otherwise eligible for.

There were quite a few women from early twenties to mid-thirties, I would say, or maybe early twenties to forties, who were in these types of classes, which were free, and which were taught in the community center. I met the woman who taught one of them, and she knew a little bit of English, but she didn't know much English, and she was very happy to have me teach English in her class. So, I did that, and I was there for nine months. Doing that taught me a lot. [laughing]

Meanwhile, while I'm teaching this, I'm making more friends. I made a friend of one local Gypsy woman, who lived on the next street to me. She was pushing me to come and live in Spain, and the teacher whose classroom I was in was pushing me to come and live in Spain, and they all wanted me to come and continue to teach *gitanos*, and continue to teach English. They said they were looking for an apartment for me. They were looking for a place I could afford, and maybe just rent continuously, like

maybe be renting it when I went home to the U.S., and just be able to go back there whenever I wanted to.

So, we were thinking about something like that, and I started to think, oh, my god, what if they find a place? [laughing] If they actually find a place, then I'm going to have to do this. Do I really want to do this, or is this just something I'm talking about? I realized that the English teaching was not really very productive, because I had to be a Spanish person's class. Therefore, I had to be teaching English the way they teach languages in Spain, which, in my view, is abysmal, and completely the wrong thing to do, because it's all based on grammar and workbooks, filling out sentences with blanks in them and stuff. I tried to introduce a little bit of talking into my English class with the *gitanos*, and a lot of the *gitanos* were not capable of speaking Spanish in public, not capable of participating in class in Spanish, and had never really been asked to do a bunch of talking in class in any language, and were just pretty freaked by the whole—and didn't have much self-esteem to begin with. I thought they were going to go nuts. They would clam up, and they would crawl into the corners practically.

It was just really that I couldn't do my own kind of language teaching. And I could tell that wasn't going to change, because in Spain, they are incredibly concerned about credentials, and I don't have any credentials that say I have training in teaching English, or anything like that. So, I could never get a classroom of my own. I would always have to be in somebody else's classroom, and I would have to use their methods. That just felt like kind of an endless cycle that wasn't going to be that satisfying, and I knew it would be different here.

The other thing was having friends in Spain, which is very much different from having friends here, because family is so much stronger in Spain. What would happen in Spain would be that when I became friends with somebody, I'd usually—I think I made a couple of male friends, but mostly I'd become friends with women. And when I became friends with like the mother of a family, her family would adopt me, essentially. I would be like "Aunt Tilly," and I would go to all the family dinners on holidays, and Sunday dinners and that kind of thing. I never could reciprocate the invitations because I couldn't invite the whole family. I would have a little apartment, and I didn't have space for the whole family.

Plus, it wasn't very interesting, because they would all talk about family stuff that had been going on for years, and I wouldn't know the context of things that were being talked about, and I couldn't get much out of those conversations.

I tried telling myself for a while that it would be different among different groups of people, but the last person I rented from was a college professor, and he told me about some other friends of his

who lived around the neighborhood. I met them, and they all conducted their lives exactly like the other people, in terms of family. So, I thought, okay, so I will have friends here, but I won't get to do anything fun with them, like we won't go on trips, we won't even go to the movies. They don't even go to the movies with their friends, they go to the movies with their family. I thought, well, that is not going to be very satisfying.

The next time I came home, after that time that I stayed nine months, I was thinking all of the above. I walked into this little restaurant downtown, and I saw Bine, who was also a retired Evergreen faculty member. She looked at me and she said, "You're not here." I said, "What do you mean I'm not here? I'm standing right in front of you." [laughter] She said, "You're not here, you're in Spain. You're supposed to be in Spain. Didn't you buy a house or something?" [laughing] I said, "No, not really. I've been thinking about moving there, but now I'm not even so sure I will."

All of a sudden, it just occurred to me, Nancy, you don't live in Olympia anymore. [laughing] I mean, nobody here knows that you live here. They all see you as being somebody different, and maybe it would be a good idea to inhabit your hometown for a little while, and see what that's like. So, I started doing that.

Along the way, when I decided to live in Olympia, I thought, okay, what am I going to do for entertainment around here? Well, there is a college that I used to teach at, and maybe I could take something at this college. So, I signed up for a drawing class, and I got to audit the drawing class. I got to do all the work, and the teacher critiqued me and everything, but she just didn't write me an evaluation. That was very good.

Taylor: Who was the teacher?

Allen: Judith Baumann. She was in charge of running the print lab, but I think she was only part-time. She was not permanent faculty. But she was very good, and I learned a lot about drawing. Then, I was wandering around thinking, okay, I have this little bit of drawing talent that I can now exercise, so what can I do? I saw a pastel class announced on a bulletin board downtown, so I thought, hmm, maybe I want to do pastels. Anyway, I got into this pastel class, and I started painting with pastels. Now, I've had a whole solo show. I guess maybe three or four years, I've done that.

That's been very satisfying, and I'm really glad that I finally realized that I'm not a writer, that I'm a painter instead. [laughing] I kind of wish I'd figured it out a lot earlier, but I didn't. But that's really great to do now, and it comes from having decided to live in Olympia for a while. So now, it's even kind of hard to go back to Spain because of all these people who were expecting me to go and live there, and tutor *gitanos*. But I decided not to do that.

So, I've come full circle back to Olympia, but not Evergreen. I still have lots of ideas about what should happen with retired people. [chuckles] I don't know if I'm the only person who thinks this, though, that's the problem. But what I think is that retired people should have some real authority and decision-making power—not all by ourselves, but in conjunction with the other people. I think maybe there should be something like a retired person on every DTF, or at least the opportunity for people to say if they wanted a retired person to be on their DTF. People like me are here, we don't have a lot to do. We've got all this free time we didn't used to have, and I think I know a lot that could be valuable to people at the college.

I also think that sometime before I retired, which was in 2006, there had been a period where the younger faculty resented the founding faculty, and didn't want to hear all these ideas about the way you were supposed to do things anymore. But my impression is that that period was over by the time I left, and that that kind of feeling is probably not terribly strong now. I'm not sure, but I hope there's not a lot of prejudice against retired people.

But what happened before, when I retired, was that there was only one thing that retired faculty were asked to do, and that was to go to tea, I guess, once a quarter. There was this woman in the Library who decided she wanted to set up a tea for retired faculty members. You could go one afternoon and have tea and cookies. [laughing] Eventually, she got a little smarter about it. If there was a retired person with a new book out or something like that, she would have them read, or she would have them give little talks about what they were doing. To me, that just felt condescending in some way.

Taylor: Did you attend the meeting that I think maybe Betsy organized? It was out at some—I don't remember, outside of the college somewhere.

Allen: Yes, I do.

Taylor: All the women. And it was to talk about . . .

Allen: . . . retirement.

Taylor: Talk about retirement.

Allen: Yeah, it was.

Taylor: Typically, it was the women who organized this, and it was all women who were there. There were all kinds of ideas of how retired women could be involved in the college. Nothing happened from it.

Allen: No. No, I know. One idea out of that meeting that I had was . . . [sighs] . . . it must have been before I got this house. I decided that I would like to get a house near campus, and that I would maybe

upon my death, I would donate this house to the college, and the college could use this house as a bed and breakfast for retired people who wanted to come to town to spend some time. They could come and live here. My house is probably about three and a half miles from campus, and there's a bus line a block and a half away, so it's really easy to get there.

I thought it would be a great place, though off campus, it's a great place to have a guesthouse for Evergreen people. But now, it just seems ridiculous to even think about it, because I know there would have to be something like a half-time staff person to be running it, and nobody would want it. What's been very sad for me is that neither has the college extended itself to ask for any more help—well, they now put on cocktail parties instead of teas. [laughing] Now, the Provost does a cocktail party for us every year.

Taylor: Yeah, that has happened the last couple years, I guess.

Allen: Michael Zimmerman started that, actually.

Taylor: But I always thought that it's a waste, too, because if they would reach out—now, I did hear a good thing recently. Do you remember Stone Thomas?

Allen: Yeah.

Taylor: He's been invited to come back to the college.

Allen: Wow.

Taylor: I think he was some high-level administrator in California. I think he's there now, as just an advisor/consultant.

Allen: Cool.

Taylor: I think he came to the college maybe the third or fourth year, and he stayed for a good long time.

Allen: Mm-mm, he did.

Taylor: He was a friend of Rudy Martin. He was very instrumental in kind of setting a mood or tone for the college. Maybe he can help get us back to that place.

Allen: That would be great.

Taylor: Yeah, that was good. Are there any other things that you want to talk about? When you were talking now, I was just thinking that we started this conversation with your waking up at night, and going out into your living room when you were four, and seeing your father reading, deciding that you wanted to learn to read right then, and making up your mind—probably about at that point—that you were made to be a teacher.

Allen: Well, it took till third grade. [laughing]

Taylor: Looking back on what you've done in your life, you knew, and you did.

Allen: Yeah.

Taylor: That strikes me that it worked out. You knew what you wanted to do, and you put yourself in a situation, and got recognized. You have never changed on that score. You knew. Even up to teaching the Gypsies in Spain, that was your instinct, to teach.

Allen: Yeah.

Taylor: That's who you are.

Allen: Yeah. In that regard, I guess that's the thing that I remember most about Evergreen, it's almost like it was some supernatural event that happened. There were really huge coincidences surrounding it. Like the fact that I had my first contact with Evergreen on the day I was fired from my previous job. [laughing] That was just incredible! Even though I knew I had submitted my application and everything, I had no idea that anything was going to come of it, and I certainly didn't expect it to be on the same day that I got fired—which I also didn't expect. That came out of the clear blue sky when I was teaching at this place in Virginia.

The whole way that Evergreen came into my life was just . . . the first person who said the name to me was one of my really good friends, who was the dean who had hired me at the last place I taught before Evergreen. He is the person who told me about it first. Certainly, I thought there were many drawbacks in the beginning, and I was mostly focused on the sexism of the place. But, as it worked out over the decades I taught there, it was really exactly what I needed to be doing in my life. I needed exactly to be team teaching, because I was really shy, it was hard for me to talk to people. I could do that much easier if I was around people I knew and saw all the time. That would have been much different from a regular college. My writing would have been completely different from a regular college, and I would not have been learning and teaching with people of different fields all the time. Those things were amazing for me. I'm really glad they happened.

And, I haven't stopped teaching. That's another thing. Here, there's a completely different environment than Spain about doing volunteer work. There's people who need my particular skills, and who want to be taught to talk, for example. I don't have to be in somebody else's classroom. I can just have individuals to tutor, or I can have my own classroom. I tutor Latina women, and my most recent students have been doing GED programs. That's very satisfying. I have lots of good friends because of that work. It's getting more difficult for those people because of Trump, so I'm going to stay involved with that community.

Taylor: Okay.

End Part 2 of 3 of Nancy Allen on 9-13-17

Begin Part 3 of 3 of Nancy Allen on 9-13-17

Taylor: It's still September 13, Wednesday afternoon, and Nancy Allen and I are here at Nancy's dining room table. We decided that we would just have a conversation, the two of us, rather than it being an interview, since we started at the college almost at the same time, and our experiences go together, and diverge in different ways. It'll be kind of fun to just talk about what our reactions were, rather than just asking questions of one person. This seems to work. We decided to start with the whole notion of, when we arrived at Evergreen—I arrived in 1970, you arrived in 1971, I think.

Allen: Yeah.

Taylor: It was an interesting time, in terms of women, and Nancy's first response was she was absolutely flabbergasted that she came to such a sexist institution. I don't know that I had that same reaction. I guess I want to know what you meant by that. You might have to repeat it, but you might say something about the macho Willi Unsoeld's style, but I don't know that that was going on.

Allen: Oh, of course it wasn't all.

Taylor: I mean, that was sexist. It was just one part.

Allen: Okay, how many parts can I think of? [chuckles] The part that affected me the most, I do think that a considerable amount of machismo that went on at the college had to do with outdoor stuff—climbing Mount Everest, rescuing people from mountains, things like that—and that that was promoted by Willi Unsoeld. It's what he wanted to be doing in his programs, and he, I think, was instrumental in hiring several other people of this type, who were interested in the same kind of things. That's a particular kind of macho, though. That's not just sexism in itself. That's some kind of outdoor heroism idea, which I think was prevalent. Or, at least I felt like it was prevalent, because when I came to Olympia for the first time to go to the first meeting of all the new faculty that had been hired with the old faculty, I had heard so much about Willi Unsoeld making people repel off cliffs that I expected I was going to have to repel off a cliff probably, and I was scared to death about that.

That, I think, is one of the casts that there was to the sexism, but the part of the sexism that really influenced me was that I just wasn't taken seriously as a teacher. I remember being quite mouthy about this. Richard Jones, who was the coordinator of my first program, had some ideas about authority. He would be kind of telling us about these ideas, as if he's encouraging us to be this way, and have this kind of authority.

I said to him at some point, “Well, Richard, where does this authority come from? Is it just born into you, or where does it come from?” He said, “Authority comes from the father.” [laughing] I said, “Well, Richard, I’m never going to be a father, so does that mean I can never have authority?” He said, “I don’t know.” [laughing] He really wouldn’t discuss it with me, and he was just completely uninterested.

So, I went through a whole lot of struggles about whether I had authority; whether I could have authority; how you went about having authority. Did I have to act more masculine? Could I be an authority as a woman? If I was an authority as a woman, did that mean I was a mother? [laughing]

Taylor: Did you have conversations with other faculty that first year? I think there were eight women hired the first year. I don’t know if you call it sexism, it was just, to me, the beginning was the men seemed oblivious to think that they would start a college with 17 planning faculty, and not a single woman.

Allen: Exactly! Somebody from outside would have to tell them this.

Taylor: Yeah. But there was a recognition that they needed to hire women, and so they hired eight the first year. I remember Jolene Unsoeld saying, very publicly—I don’t know if you remember this story?

Allen: No. I think I probably heard it.

Taylor: She was very public. It was the planning year, before you came, and when we were having people come in for interviews. She said, “What Evergreen needs is we don’t need to hire women—you don’t need to hire women—you need to hire men with strong wives.” [laughter] That was her sentence.

Allen: Yeah, okay!

Taylor: That was where the college—well, not where the college was, but where she was. So then, there were these eight women, and I know that I got hired, not as a faculty, but as an admissions person, because Joe Shoben, who was the Vice President for everything but academics, whatever that would have been.

Allen: Business . . .

Taylor: . . . admissions and registration and financial aid and student services. He went through applications looking for women, and found my application. It was just a written application, and he was looking to hire women. So, he was aware.

Allen: That’s interesting.

Taylor: The other person who was aware was Larry Stenberg. But that was on the student services side, it wasn't on the faculty side. I don't know whether Evergreen just was out of it, and behind the times, or whether—this was 1970—were we a backwater? I don't know.

Allen: First of all, whoever hired the planning faculty was able to hire a group of all men without questioning it, and wasn't looking for any women. That would suggest that consciousness hasn't risen very far about this issue in the early 1970s, maybe anywhere, except that I was already teaching women's studies at my former institution. That was Virginia, so you would definitely not expect Virginia to be that far advanced in any way. But I hadn't gotten those ideas in Virginia, I had taken them there.

Taylor: The planning faculty was made up of cliques, of friends of friends, almost all. But why they didn't . . .

Allen: That's what I think is the main explanation. First of all, those guys had been given complete freedom, and they had hired in ways that would never be acceptable now. They had just hired their friends.

Taylor: Right.

Allen: Here's this whole group of guys on this campus, which isn't quite built yet, having theoretical discussions about what kind of a college they want, and not noticing they have no women until women tell them this. [laughing] I think it was just that they were probably really wildly excited, and had no idea what they were doing, and were just sort of muddling around.

Taylor: Actually, the same thing was not just with women, but with people of color. Rudy was hired.

Allen: And Gil Saucedo.

Taylor: He wasn't in the planning. Only Rudy.

Allen: I thought there was a Native American guy.

Taylor: No. Mary Hillaire was hired, but she didn't come for the first year.

Allen: That's right.

Taylor: But Rudy, the planning faculty were planning the curriculum for whatever for the opening year. At the very end, Rudy said, "We've got to have some acknowledgment of students of color." So, he designed a program—it was real last minute—it was called Contemporary American Minorities, and he hired two people, Merdardo Delgado and Darrell Phare. So, there was a Native American, there was a Hispanic, and Rudy. Three men. But that's the only reason they had that program. It was just right at the very beginning.

I think it was both the planning faculty was cliques of friends, and they were interested in pedagogy, or innovation having to do with curriculum, but they weren't interested in social issues, or any of that, it seemed like. Later on, there was a lot of talk about social justice, but there wasn't at the beginning.

Allen: No, yeah.

Taylor: There was educational conflicts, but women were just afterthoughts.

Allen: Yes.

Taylor: I don't know when it changed, but it changed dramatically. By the time Barbara Smith came, or Jane Jervis came, women were running the place.

Allen: That's what it felt like.

Taylor: I don't know. Did it become less sexist? Did it become more welcoming? Did it change its attitude? I don't know.

Allen: No, I don't think it was anything organized at all, but I think that women caused it, having more women. I'm sure that after the first year, when there were eight, the second year there would have been more, and the third year there would have been more. I don't have the statistics about how quickly that went up, but what I remember very clearly about when I stopped thinking that it was terribly sexist, and started thinking that, although nothing was official and recognized and written down, that we were okay, and that women were running the place. [laughing] This is a step on the way to that. When there was a big enough critical mass of women on the faculty that a lot of women started deciding that they wanted to teach with other women, and there were all these all-women teams. The deans got very concerned about it, because the sexes were not teaching together. Surprise, surprise.

They tried some programs where there was a consistent effort to make sure the faculty team was gender balanced, and women didn't always like those programs very much. [laughing] But it was very clear that women preferred to work with women a lot, and I'm not sure that that's ever changed, actually.

Taylor: That changed for me. For the longest time, I didn't teach with women, and then at some point, I switched, and I only taught with women. Maybe that was true of a lot. I don't know when that happened, but my last teaching was almost all with women.

Allen: Yeah, right. Mine, too. Part of that was that I was teaching in core programs. The last three years that I taught before retirement, when I only taught one quarter a year, I would always teach fall

quarter, and I would always teach a core program, and there would always be some new faculty in it. Every time, I think, those were women. I don't think they put any male new faculty [chuckles] into my teams. I liked doing that, because it meant I had friends among the younger women when I left.

Taylor: By now, I think it's almost 50-50, so there's a lot more opportunity to teach with women.

Allen: Yeah.

Taylor: And women got stronger, and took a stronger leadership role in the college. When we had the meetings at your house for LLyn De Danaan, that was when LLyn said something like "Nobody's taking me seriously, and unless I get support, I'm quitting." That was the first, I think, acknowledgment that maybe there was something. But once Barbara was hired, I don't think people talked that way anymore. I don't know.

Allen: Well, probably not in groups where Barbara was. [laughter]

Taylor: I mean in terms of hiring, I don't know if women were privileged, where women would be more likely to be hired than men at some point, but we certainly did hire a lot more women starting about 1979-80.

Allen: Yeah, I think we did.

Taylor: I don't know now if there's an underground affirmative action about hiring women and minorities or not.

Allen: I don't know either. Now is quite different, because now there's a question about whether it's even legal to have affirmative action.

Taylor: But now, there's a lot of pressure to hire. We used to have, in hiring, this thing called a multicultural statement, which I thought was kind of a worthwhile exercise to go through, but I don't know if it made any difference. There's talk now about making that have more teeth in it, and whether it means that you have to have had experience, or whether you have to be a person of color to get hired. I don't know. That's one of the threats that people are saying is happening.

Allen: Wow.

Taylor: I don't know if that's true or not. I have another sort of question that doesn't have to do with sexism, doesn't have to do with social justice or any of these things.

Allen: Oh, wait. I just wanted to say one more thing about the sexism. The mountaineering stuff, the not taking women seriously at all stuff, and then the other thing was a huge amount of sexual harassment.

Taylor: That's right.

Allen: What we would now call sexual harassment, like many male faculty who were carrying on with students, so many who had married successive students. [chuckles] It was pretty clear that male faculty saw women who happened to be around them on their job as sex objects a lot of the time.

Taylor: Do you remember when we had the really long faculty meeting discussions about sexual harassment?

Allen: I do.

Taylor: It just went on and on, because it the men didn't get it.

Allen: Yeah, they didn't get it at all.

Taylor: They didn't get it. I think it finally did get passed.

Allen: I remember Mark Levinsky standing up and saying that we were trying to deny that education was an erotic activity, and it always would be, and it was just silly to try to stand in its way. [laughter]

Taylor: That was the same time when Joe Olander was President, and no women—I certainly wouldn't, but I think no woman would get in an elevator with him by himself.

Allen: Oh, my god! [laughing]

Taylor: I sure wouldn't. He was blatant.

Allen: Wow.

Taylor: That was another case.

Allen: I thought it was only about Asian women. [laughing]

Taylor: No, it was about any woman.

Allen: Wow. Yeah, I remember a story. Susan Perry was the head Librarian. She had to bend over for some reason to get something off of the floor, and he was peering down her shirt. [laughing]

Taylor: That was 10 years in, at least.

Allen: Oh, yeah.

Taylor: But you're right. The sexual harassment, the education that had to go on. They were men of a certain age that just didn't get it. I don't know if that's still known or not.

Allen: But I interrupted you.

Taylor: I was just going on a whole different track. There are whole lot of things about the college that, I think, you and I hold dear, and think without these things, it isn't the college we know. I just wonder, when you think back on it, which ones are really important, and which ones would you go to bat for, and which ones do you think are threatened? It's all about keeping us from going to Brand X. It's everything from no departments, no grades, interdisciplinary study, team teaching, full-time teaching, no breadth-depth requirements, no hierarchy of faculty—no professor, full professor, whatever. There's a bunch more even. It used to be credit/no credit in the sense of all-or-no-credit.

Allen: I remember.

Taylor: The kind of community. You said earlier, you could be coordinator of a program, right at the very beginning, with faculty that had a lot more experience that would have been full professors somewhere else. But at Evergreen, it was whoever did the organizing was the coordinator. It wasn't a place of hierarchy and status. Faculty salaries were equal. That's something that Susan Fiksdal said that when she was hired, she was flabbergasted that she got paid the same as the men, because she had friends at UPS or PLU that weren't, and we were paid the same.

So, all of those things that equalized things, which ones of those are most important to you, and if we lost them, the college would be lost? Or maybe they're kind of all of a piece.

Allen: Yeah, they are. It wouldn't be too hard for me to pick out my least important. But my most important, I have this very clear memory of one faculty meeting, when we were debating getting rid of evaluations, and going to some kind of grades. I sat there, and I thought, if they do this, I am leaving. [chuckles] I just felt it that strongly. I feel like the evaluation system is such an important part of the college. Yes, it's a lot of work to write that many evaluations, but it also really helps you to know your students better, and it makes sure that you keep good records on them during the quarter. And getting evaluations from them is important, even if they don't always tell you everything they think.

I almost would say that's more important than coordinated studies. Interdisciplinary team teaching would be the one I would put second. Maybe salary equality according to years of experience, too.

Taylor: All three of those have been threatened. They're still there, but they've been threatened in the sense, well, if you want to get computer scientists, you're going to have to pay them more. Now, I don't know if they've compromised on that or not, but that's one place. We said earlier that women weren't respected as much, but we were at least paid the same.

Allen: Yeah, except our experience years might have been counted a little bit differently sometimes.

Taylor: I don't think so.

Allen: That's great.

Taylor: It might have been different early on, but when I was dean, actually, in some ways, women benefited, because what was counted as experience was everything. If you had taught preschool, that counted as experience.

Allen: Oh, yeah.

Taylor: So, as long as you did that. Otherwise it would have probably gone against women, because they had different kinds of experience. High school teaching counted, any kind of experience. So, I think that was okay. They might not have been respected, but they were paid the same. [laughter]

Allen: That's very significant!

Taylor: The team teaching has been threatened a lot.

Allen: I think it's been threatened the most.

Taylor: I think the narrative evaluations, as a system, hasn't been threatened, but the quality and time spent on evaluations, people just aren't doing it.

Allen: Yeah, I know. When I left, there were lots of faculty who basically had templates. They would have blanks you could fill in with adjectives or something.

Taylor: Sort of saying, "This is a B- student," and that's what you'd fill in. I knew one guy who didn't even change the pronouns.

Allen: Oh, my goodness.

Taylor: Now they have special things about pronouns.

Allen: There's a lot of issues about pronouns! [laughing]

Taylor: He wrote the same evaluation for everybody. It was identical.

Allen: Oh, my god. Who is that?

Taylor: Oh, I shouldn't say. But that's the only thing I didn't like about being dean is you found out things about people that you really didn't want to know. But, there were grievances about whether people did evaluations, and whether people teach on teams.

Allen: Right.

Taylor: I think they still have that rule that you have to teach on teams, but it doesn't look like they're teams. I'm such a purist on it, and when you teach on a team, you teach on a team. You don't have five people teaching who are under the umbrella of a team.

Allen: Yes, right. You meet with each other, and you go to each other's lectures, and you have a seminar once a week.

Taylor: Faculty seminar in that first thing that we had was a joke.

Allen: Yes. [laughing]

Taylor: For me, faculty seminar was the only reason I could teach. The faculty seminar was sacred. It wasn't to talk about how to teach it, it was to feel confident enough that when we were reading *Don Quixote* that I understood what in the world was important, and had a chance to talk about it.

Allen: Right.

Taylor: My best memories are from faculty seminar, so that's another one of those sacred ones. But I suspect that if we talked to faculty today, they wouldn't have the same feelings we do, certainly about team teaching, and about interdisciplinary focus.

Allen: Mm-mm.

Taylor: I don't know what they would value the most.

Allen: I just don't know what's different about Evergreen, if anything is anymore. Maybe it just is Brand X, only it thinks it's different in some way, or it has a different history or aura or something. [chuckles] But I really don't know how different it is. Student talking might have something to do with it. I bet students still have seminar more than they do in other places.

Taylor: Yeah. I still think the faculty-student relationship is significantly different from other places, the ones I know of. I think you and I are not unique, although we both had the same approach. We knew our students really well, I did and you did.

Allen: Yeah.

Taylor: When we wrote evaluations, it wasn't boilerplate, because we knew, and the students say that about us. We invested our lives in those students.

Allen: Mm-mm.

Taylor: When I talk to my relatives, who are now freshmen in college, they talk about faculty as "Oh, that's a good one," or, "That's a good one." But it's not because they know them. It's because they're

learning something. Just like my connections with faculty from my own experience, not a single one would recognize me if they saw me on the street, and I probably have a thousand students who would recognize me if they saw me on the street.

Allen: Yeah.

Taylor: I've run into people. "Didn't I know you at Evergreen?" they'd say, and find them in Anacortes or somewhere.

Allen: I've had people I don't even recognize come up and say, "I went to Spain with you." [laughing]

Taylor: I think that still is the case.

Allen: Yeah, that's good.

Taylor: I hope so, but I think that still is fundamental.

Allen: Even Michael Zimmerman, of not very great fame in this discussion, I was talking to him about what I thought was the nature of the college these days, and he just blew. He said that he thought it had less community than any other campus he'd ever been on; that the faculty knew each other less, and were less friendly, and had less to do with each other. I was quite amazed by that.

Taylor: I wonder if that's true now.

Allen: I don't know. He said it was. He said it absolutely blew him away; that he'd been on lots of other campuses that weren't like this.

Taylor: But maybe it has something to do with him.

Allen: Well, I don't know.

Taylor: Joe Olander used to say that, too.

Allen: He did?

Taylor: He said, "Nobody ever invited me to dinner."

Allen: Oh, well, this wasn't like that. These people don't invite each other to dinner.

Taylor: I don't know. Eventually, there were cliquish groups, but early on in the college, I think we had a lot of friends in the college.

Allen: Yeah.

Taylor: Back to the sexism thing, I think the women bonded.

Allen: Yeah, I think so, too.

Taylor: We can name people, a lot of people that left, but a lot of people stayed for their whole career.

Allen: Yeah, they did. I wonder if they still do, though.

Taylor: Maybe we're nostalgic because we were so much part of the beginning.

Allen: Yeah, and we loved it so much.

Taylor: I'm just like you. It was pretty much my life. Even when I got married, the thought that I would live in Seattle didn't enter my mind. There were people that commuted from Seattle.

Allen: A lot of people.

Taylor: That's not the kind of relationship I wanted with the college. I couldn't punch the clock.

Allen: Yeah.

Taylor: I don't know if there are people like that now or not, and I don't know if that's more women than men.

Allen: I don't know. I just feel really out of it. I'm very ignorant about what's going on. Oh, I was involved in one thing that the college asked retired faculty to. There's two things. Since Ernestine had the teas, there have been two things. One is that we're invited to read scholarships.

Taylor: Oh, yeah, and I do that.

Allen: I do that every year. The other one is that they asked me last year to go to a writing workshop that was being held for students who wanted to apply for scholarships. There was a writing workshop about how to write your letter of application, and explain how wonderful you were, and why you deserved this scholarship. So, I went. It was supposed to have a breakout period, where we could take some students and advise them on their own. They wanted a bunch of people there to do it, and they never broke up, so I never did talk to just students.

Taylor: Would that have been something good? Would you go back to do that if they did it right?

Allen: Yeah, I kind of thought it was useful, because I thought that my take on how to do the workshop [laughing] was much better than the instructor's. There were some student interns from the writing center who were doing the workshop. It was all nuts and bolts. It was all about how you've got to have an introduction and a body and conclusion. [chuckles]

I put up my hand at the end, when we were sort of debriefing, and I said, "You know, if you're trying to convince me about a scholarship, I want you to knock my socks off in some way. I'm not going to comb over it and see if you have an introduction, a body and a conclusion. I want you to really

impress the hell out of me. I want you to tell me a story. I want you to tell me something about you and your involvement with whatever you want to study that's really impressive."

I would have had everybody writing stories about the best thing they ever did in school. I don't know.

Taylor: If they asked you to do that again, would you do it?

Allen: Yeah, probably. I love reading the scholarship applications, actually.

Taylor: I do, too. You always want to give them all, because they are people who have nothing, and need help and deserve the help.

Allen: Yeah.

Taylor: I wonder if it would be a good idea, or even an idea worth pursuing, if a bunch of us went and talked to the new Provost.

Allen: Yeah. I'm going to go talk to the new Provost, but I think a group would be even better. I don't know who else should be on it.

Taylor: I don't either. And it's not only about offering to help, offering to be involved in some way with the college that we were part of for so long. It's genuinely helping, genuinely giving some advice about what it ought to be.

Allen: Yeah, like do they accept our authority at all anymore? [chuckles]

Taylor: Or, what advice would we give them that might improve things? Because the college is in trouble.

Allen: Yeah.

Taylor: It's in trouble in lots of ways. It's in trouble in enrollment, it's in trouble with retention, it's in trouble with curriculum.

Allen: What's the retention? It seems to me that the thing to look at the most would be the retention. Right now, there's a clear and obvious reason that you might have retention problems, after this incident.

Taylor: Yeah, I think a number of people aren't coming back. But also, I don't think the faculty is very together about . . .

Allen: . . . pushing for anything.

Taylor: . . . about what the college is, and why people should come.

Allen: Exactly.

Taylor: I think they have lost community.

Allen: The main thing I would want to say to the faculty is “This is an innovative institution. You don’t have to have the innovation that we did, but you need to have an innovation. What’s your innovation?”

Taylor: I thought that, too. We were in a time when it was an educational organization and principles that were threatened, I mean, relevance and change and all that. We responded to that, and I think you still should respond to that. But there’s different pressures now. If they would dream up a college that somehow served people whose parents had never gone to college—there’s this whole population—and if they decide that, okay, this is who we’re going to serve, and we’re going to figure out the best way to serve them, and we’re going to be known for doing something special. That’s just one example.

Allen: Yeah. I told Helena Knapp this story that I got from a Return to Evergreen. I went to Return to Evergreen maybe four years ago, and it’s the first time I’d ever gone.

Taylor: I’ve never been.

Allen: But it was very interesting. One thing they have at Return to Evergreen is they have scholarship students who are graduating speak to you, and tell you what it meant to get this scholarship at Evergreen that they got. There are only three or four of them, and they speak for 10 minutes apiece or something. But this one guy, there wasn’t a dry eye in the room when this guy was talking. We were all just weeping, because he was a black guy, and he had been in prison. He had been in prison one weekend before starting Evergreen. When he was in prison, he had finished up his high school work, and took his GED, and got everything together. He was very good. He was very bright, and he was determined to be very bright by the people that were teaching him in the prison. [chuckles] So, he got out of prison, and he had one weekend at home, and then he went to Evergreen for his first day.

He was in Matt Smith’s seminar, and he went out of Matt Smith’s seminar for the first seminar of the year, I guess, and he came out and thought, I can’t do this. This is just awful. I can’t be with these people, I can’t do this. He was sitting up on the grassy knoll, thinking about how he was going to leave, and Matt comes walking by. Matt says, “Hey, come talk to me a little bit.” So, the guy goes down and talks to Matt, and Matt says, “What are you thinking?” He says, “Oh, I just can’t stand it. I just can’t stand it. It’s just too different. I can’t get along with people like this. I just can’t do it.” Matt says, “Yes, you can. You’re going to be great. Show up tomorrow, and bring you’re A-game.” [laughter]

That's all he said, and the guy did. From then on, he was hooked, just because the teacher encouraged him to stay. That's just such an amazing story. And he was graduating and heading for Eastern, or I don't remember what other college. Maybe WSU. He was going and study biology.

Taylor: But he did it.

Allen: Yeah, and he was great.

Taylor: It was just that little acknowledgment.

Allen: Yeah, and a little personal contact with your teacher, which doesn't happen.

Taylor: I think that's the same thing with Trelton. "Are you in college, or aren't you?"

Allen: Yeah, that's exactly what it is.

Taylor: It's just that same. Make contact. "I care about you. You can do it, just give yourself a chance. We'll be here for you."

Allen: Yeah. I told that story to Helena, and Helena said, "You know what? I actually think that Evergreen does its best with students like that, with students who are untraditional students in most colleges, and couldn't get through. But you can't exactly advertise. [laughing] "Send us all your ex-cons." [laughter]

Taylor: But it's true. I guess a student that's going to do well no matter what does well, and you don't hear their story because they do well.

Allen: Yeah.

Taylor: It's true that, at least any student that I had as a freshman, there's no way in the world they couldn't have talked with the faculty. We had conferences all the time.

Allen: Right.

Taylor: You didn't have to be brave and say, "Okay, I'll go talk to the faculty at office hours." That was not an option. That's another thing, it seems to me, if they did program planning—I don't know if they do program planning anymore—but faculty teams that are relatively new, or people that could ask for a retired faculty to be a consultant.

Allen: Yeah. Like we could be the visitors.

Taylor: Yeah, we could be the visitors. We even could be the visitors in the regular Danforth way. But just in team planning. We used to have those Washington Center meetings, where they had a kibitzer. Do you know that term?

Allen: Yeah, I know the term.

Taylor: Yeah, they had teams from all the different community colleges that were planning—

Allen: Pat Labine used to use that term.

Taylor: They would have maybe 10 people from Evergreen that would go off on these retreats, and you would be a kibitzer in a community college team, just because we have had a lot of experience. If they're receptive to that, they don't have to reinvent the wheel. Just the idea of having a conference with every student within the first couple weeks for 10 minutes. I don't know when I hooked onto that, but I did that almost always, and it just started people off.

Allen: That's about small student-faculty ratio, and it's requiring students to talk—so, having seminar, so you can pick up something about what's going on with them in other ways than their writing. Yeah, those are good things.

Taylor: Because, in the end, it's about motivation to learn. If they feel that you're invested in them, it works. That's one, and the other side of it is the program has to be well designed. There has to be something that's worthy of being taught.

Allen: It has to be coherent, and if it's a team, the faculty need to really be a team.

Taylor: Yep, and I always said—I learned this from Hiro Kawasaki. Did you ever teach with Hiro?

Allen: No.

Taylor: Hiro is wonderful to teach with. Hiro was the one that would dream up programs. He genuinely believed in having a question that he didn't know the answer to that was really substantive, and that didn't have an answer, but had an answer that had to be worked on for a year.

Allen: Wow.

Taylor: And it had to have input from lots of different disciplines in order to get at it.

Allen: Can you give me an example of such a question?

Taylor: The one that I taught with him was: Can Japan be modern without being Western? It was a content question.

Allen: Yeah, that's really good.

Taylor: It was puzzling to people. It meant that we learned Japanese, we did Japanese literature, we did history, we did all this stuff, and he kept asking. The question was genuine to him. He came to it

genuinely wanting to know. Can a country be modern in this day and age without being Western, or are they synonymous? It worked for a whole year.

I also taught with him in a program that wasn't quite as good, but it was: What is the relationship between love and work?

Allen: That's a little more obvious. It's a little bit like Freud and Marx or something.

Taylor: Yeah. I ended up not liking programs that had "and," and you talk in glowing terms about when you learned Islam.

Allen: Crescent, Cross and Cupola. [laughter]

Taylor: That was an "and" with three things connect. But three things connected, or two things connected, don't bring a question.

Allen: That's true.

Taylor: You need a question rather than just a topic.

Allen: Yes.

Taylor: I think it matters to have a theme that is intriguing, and that works.

Allen: Yes, and that is relevant to . . .

Taylor: So I'm going to turn this off. I think we're finished, don't you?

Allen: Yeah.

End Part 3 of 3 of Nancy Allen on 9-13-17