

Dr. James Cobble
March 4, 2008
interviewed by Susan Resnik
for San Diego State University
129 minutes of recording

SUSAN RESNIK: Today is Tuesday, March 4, 2008. This is Susan Resnik. I am in the lovely home of Dr. James Cobble, which truly is like an oasis in the middle of La Jolla. I have come to conduct his oral history interview for a project associated with San Diego State University Special Collections. It's supported by the Adams Humanity Grant. Dr. Cobble served San Diego State University with distinction since he arrived in 1973. He is a chemist, a professor, a Guggenheim fellow, and he served as graduate dean and vice-president of the San Diego State University Foundation since 1975. He was appointed vice-president for research and dean of the graduate division in 1997.

Good morning, Dr. Cobble.

JAMES COBBLE: Good morning.

SR: Dr. Cobble, tell me about your early years. I'd like to know when you were born, where you were born....

JC: Oh, we're really going to go way back, are we? I was born March 15, 1926, back in the Midwest, in what was then a little city called Kansas City, Missouri. It sat on the Kansas-Missouri border. We were a poor family. My father and mother had come from a little town in Kansas, a hundred miles to the south, and took their savings and went to Kansas City to start a new life—my father didn't want to continue on the farm where he was born—and got there just at the time the [Great] Depression hit. He didn't have any particular skill, but he was very good

at what we'd call auto mechanics nowadays, and he went in with a car dealer, and he handled the used car part of the dealing. Well, after the recession and Depression in those days hit, and began to be felt even in the Midwest, no one was buying used cars, and nobody was buying *new* cars, so the place went out of business. And the man that owned the place went out to San Diego. And after he shortly got out here, he wrote a letter to my father and said, "Come out here to San Diego. I think there is some money to be made." But he didn't want to move his family out then, so my mother and I stayed in Kansas City and lived in a little tenement apartment on the fourth floor, and my father was in San Diego. So I was really raised from the time I can remember going to school, which is about four or five years old, until I came out to San Diego when I was about thirteen. Back there I had lots of relatives around, and while we were poor, we weren't as poor as some people. And so my mother was very clever at [not] letting me ever think that we were poor. We were just, she said, "lower middle class." In those days, people would talk in terms of classes.

So I had a very interesting life there. My mother encouraged me to read. We had little neighborhood schools I went to. I remember doing a lot of writing, directing a school play. I started this little school newspaper. I was interested in electronics and electrical things, and so I built kind of a home lab in my bedroom—came close to electrocuting myself a few times. [Today] they wouldn't allow anyone to do what I did then. And then I got interested in chemistry, particularly in the reaction of various chemicals and solutions and electricity.

SR: Was that in high school?

JC: No, that was all in grade school.

SR: Really?!

JC: Sure. Grade school. Now, I'm a little mixed up on the grading system, because it all keeps changing. You know, when I was a student, we had grade school, and then junior high school, and then high school. And so I *think* that the grade schools went through sixth grade back there. And then we had two years of junior high. And so I went to junior high. But because of peculiarities of when my birthday was, and because in small schools then the teachers kind of moved you around, I somehow skipped two grades. My memory of that has to do with where we lived at the time, because during the Depression years, after my dad lost his business, we went out to live with my uncle in kind of a semi-resort area. We lived [on] the borderline between Kansas City, Kansas, and Kansas City, Missouri. And it was a suburb of Kansas City, Kansas, and it was called Overland Park. It's now a big huge development. So we lived out there for a while, and that was a country school, and they didn't have kindergarten. And so I never did kindergarten, and I was young, and they started me in first grade when I was five. And then when I got back into the city again, to Kansas City, they decided that I ought to be in (unclear 05:22) grade, and I essentially skipped another grade. So I was always two years ahead of my age, which some people think, "Oh, isn't that wonderful?" Well, it really wasn't, because I was younger than my contemporaries, and I always felt at some disadvantage, being younger. Fortunately, I grew up fast so I could hold my own against the bullies. But

nevertheless, I just didn't feel the right age. And so I never thought it was a good idea to advance children. The idea that they get bored and so forth, I just didn't understand. That just means the parents have to spend more time, seeing that they *don't* get bored with their intellectual development. But that's kind of old-fashioned thinking, and it wouldn't probably work nowadays, I'm sure.

So anyway, there wasn't much discussed about Kansas City. I've been back there, I took my son. We went back there and visited my cousin, who took over from his father, who was my uncle, my mother's brother. He took over that property, and he went on to become the publisher for *The Kansas City Star*. And I and my son visited him back in Kansas City, where he retired, and lives now in a beautiful suburb of Kansas City. The reason I mention all this is because those few close relatives I had back in Kansas City were very important to me, and my mother worked day and night, and I was alone a lot, and so I just learned to kind of stand on my own two feet, and developed hobbies, and did reading. I had a bicycle, I went out by myself. My mother trusted me, she thought I was fully responsible. And I can't ever remember getting into any difficulties. Oh, I think the bike skidded a few times and I skinned my knees, but I never broke any bones. So I have mixed feelings about Kansas City. It was a place where I was on my own a lot, and could develop all my hobbies, and could develop friends of my own. But on the other hand, I didn't have the normal family life that many children have and enjoy, and I kind of missed that.

SR: Could you tell me the names of your parents?

JC: Yes, my mother's name was Crystal Cobble, and my father's name was Ray Cobble. They're both dead now. They lived into their nineties here in San Diego. That's part of the story coming up. They were divorced when we came out to California, and my father remarried. So I had a mother and a stepmother in the same city. That was a little awkward too.

SR: How old were you when you came to California?

JC: Well, when I first came to California, I'm not sure, but it was either I was twelve turning thirteen, or I was already thirteen. We lived in a duplex, a two-story duplex, on Ninth Avenue, very close to Ash. And if you remember your topography of San Diego, it's across 163 to San Diego High School. And so I had taken a year of junior high in Kansas City. When I came out here, they decided I should go right into [high school] as a freshman. By the way, a half a block from that duplex that we lived in, is where my daughter now has a townhouse, and she and her husband and my two grandsons live there—just a half a block away! The whole area has changed. But I found out the address by going down to the library and looking in the phone book, and there under my mother's name, gave the address.... At that time they used to put addresses in the phone book, you know, as well as phone number.

SR: That's right. So did you find a big difference, after being in the Midwest, coming to California, as far as the kids were concerned, or the type of school?

JC: Well, I thought it was going to be kind of fun to have a dad again, because I had missed one. You know, thirteen, I hadn't yet had a father, although I had an uncle and an older cousin—my mother's first cousin back there—and their family.

They were my substitute fathers. But anyway, when we came out, I was going to have a father again. And I had to leave all of my electronic and chemical stuff at home. Everything we had, we put in the car and moved out. So anyway, I got a job, had a bicycle, I could walk across 163—it was not very crowded, and they had a pedestrian walkway you could walk right across to San Diego High. I could hear the bell sounds for classes and rush out the door and be there in three minutes flat!

Now you see, when I got out here, it was in 1939. And San Diego High School to me was just a wonderful place. It was what they called the old gray castle in those days. It was made out of stone and *looked* like a castle.

SR: I've heard that, yeah.

JC: I went into the orchestra, because one of the things I took up was music when I was back in [Kansas City]. I took up piano lessons, and my piano teacher was the church organist, and so she gave me some organ lessons too. Then they had a person that would move around among the grade schools, and I learned how to play the violin, because I didn't own a violin, but they furnished a violin in the schools. And so I had lessons with three or four other young children there in the grade school, and learned to play the violin halfway decently.

So when I came to San Diego, San Diego High was well known for its orchestra. And so I interviewed, and the director of the orchestra, a very famous man in those days, known as Nino Marcelli. And older people in San Diego recognize his name. He started the first San Diego—I don't think he called it symphony—he called it San Diego's Orchestra. And the only auditorium we had

in town at that day was the Russ Auditorium on the San Diego High School campus. And so I got in the orchestra. He told me, "I don't need any more violinists, and you don't play that well anyway. But I *do* need a viola." And so he got me a viola and I learned to play the viola, which is much easier to play than a violin, and it rarely has any solos. And so I was happy then.

They had a *very* fine chemistry lab, and the chemistry course was wonderful. And the sciences were very strong at San Diego High. And I had a job in a bookstore down on Broadway, and I had my bicycle and I earned some money, and I worked part time in the library at the high school, and I was having a ball. And I met my wife-to-be in the orchestra. Her name was Margaret Ann, and she played the flute. Now she had had private lessons. She'd played the piano, too, and she'd had private lessons in flute, so she was very good at playing the flute. That's when I met her. And so the first thing I knew, we were going together and dating and went places together. Isn't that amazing, that I met my wife-to-be when I was thirteen years old.

SR: That's wonderful.

JC: And I blame it all on music.

SR: That's lovely.

JC: So, everything was going fine. The last year I was a graduate, started out in 1941, and then of course the end of the year is in '42. And you know what happened December '41.

SR: I certainly do.

JC: Pearl Harbor came along, and we were all, not scared, but wondering what it was going to mean, because rumors were flying around that the Japanese were going to invade Mexico and march up into San Diego. We'd be the first ones they would take over. We had this big naval port, and the submarines were first going to bombard us. And so I had grown up suddenly pretty well. By that time I was fifteen years old, and that was my senior year.

SR: You were young for a senior, that's right.

JC: Still young, but fortunately I had grown up. They asked me if I would volunteer to be an air raid warden, because I had the height for it, and I seemed like a nice guy, would follow instructions, and so the first thing I knew, I was an air raid warden. That was in January or February, I guess. It happened all pretty fast. Actually, San Diego didn't know much. Down around on Pacific Boulevard, they put up some netting and put camouflage over the top, so that the aircraft industry down there was camouflaged. And they made everyone drive—if you drove at night, the headlights on the car had to be run on dim, and you had to keep your blinds closed at night. I can't remember all the details. So I had my gas mask and my whistle (laughs) and my billy club. I don't know what the billy club was for.

And so they would have drills. When they would have drills, I would walk up and down, about half a mile each direction from where we lived, and if I'd see lights, I'd knock on the door and tell 'em to turn their lights out. They would always smile. I never had any trouble, but I was scared to death. And I remember on part of the walk I took, I passed by some.... Now, this was getting to be in the springtime, and you know how all the flowers come out in bloom.

And I had never walked by a huge patch of jasmine. And it smelled just beautiful, but it smelled just exactly like one of the war gases that we had been told to smell. And we had this little kit, and you would open them up and sniff, and they'd tell you which war gas. And I was determined that someone had set off a war gas and was going to poison the whole neighborhood. So I ran home and told my mother and she said, "Well, let me come with you." She said "That's just jasmine!" I felt so stupid.

SR: Oh, that's funny. So the war survived without me. And that summer, I graduated. I'd just turned sixteen in March, and then graduated from San Diego High. Back in Missouri, we had no intentions to ever go to college. There was no college in Kansas City, and I couldn't by any chance afford to go away. And so I was interested in electronics. My mother thought I could be an apprentice to working in the radio repair shops. Or I was interested in chemistry, she thought I could be an apprentice pharmacist and get to be a pharmacist. Because in those days, you could be a lawyer [or] a pharmacist by being an apprentice and then passing examinations.

SR: Right.

JC: So that was what I was cut out to be, a pharmacist. Well, in high school, they talked to you and said, "What are you interested in?" "Chemistry." She said, "Well, you can go get your degree at San Diego State College." I said, "I don't think I'm going to college." And she said, "Why not?" And I said, "Well, we don't have the money." She said, "It's free at San Diego State." Well, it wasn't exactly free, it was thirty or forty dollars a semester. I went home and told my

mother, “I can go to college!” And she said, “Well, I’m sorry, Jim, but I don’t know what they’ve been telling you. We can’t afford it.” And I said, “It’s only thirty dollars a semester!” And we were both overjoyed. I said, “I’d better get started, with the war coming along.” So I started summer school, that first summer, when I’d just turned sixteen. I went out to State and started taking some courses and working part time. And that’s how I started San Diego State.

SR: That is wonderful.

JC: That was in 1942. 1942 I started San Diego State. So after I went to summer school at San Diego State, I started out with a bang in the fall. I took eighteen units and had an advisor who was wonderful. I had tested out of what we in those days called dumbbell English—much to the chagrin of my wife, who didn’t pay much attention to those college entrance exams, and she had to take dumbbell English. She was the one that was so literate and so interested in literature, and every once in a while I wanted to dig at her, and I said, “Okay, I never had dumbbell English, so I don’t know about things like that.”

And I took chemistry, and I absolutely fell in love with it. I just knew at that moment that my interest in chemistry was extremely high. I took biology the first year there, and I knew right off that I could never be a doctor or a physiologist. I could not stand to dissect frogs and all those things. And my wife used to make fun—I couldn’t even draw a decent picture of a bird. You couldn’t tell the difference between my birds and cats. So I knew I had, one, no artistic abilities; and two, I was not interested in biology.

But we got to chemistry and physics. That turned me on, and I really was interested—in spite of the fact that my chemistry teacher had his bachelor’s degree in Latin. He was a Latin teacher, and they didn’t need a Latin teacher, and his minor had been science, and so he got a good textbook and he just stayed ahead of us, and he was *wonderful*. He was really wonderful, because he expected us to know what was in the textbook, if you had a good textbook. And if we asked him a question, something he didn’t know the answer to it, he’d say, “I’ll let you know tomorrow,” and he would go look it up. Welstead was his name. I’ll never forget his name—Mr. Welstead.

And I already told you about the orchestra conductor’s name, Nino Marcelli.

SR: Yes.

JC: Then two other things that happened to me. There was a woman by the name of Perkins—I forget her first name—in high school, and she taught a course in public speaking, and I took that course and it was probably the most important course I ever had as a student anyplace. It taught me to speak, it taught me to think, it taught me to think on my feet. It taught me not to be afraid when I’d get to a class or before a group of people. And I look upon that course very highly. That’s probably considered too pedestrian a course to teach nowadays, but everyone ought to have to have a course in public speaking, in my opinion.

The second most important course I took back in Kansas City, in what was called junior high school, and that was a course in typing. And boy, now I can whiz around on the keyboards. My computer experts say, “Where did you learn

to do that?!” And I said, “Oh, more years ago than I care to recount, like sixty or sixty-five years ago,” and they all smile at me. It’s like riding a bicycle—once you learn to type, you’ll never forget it. You may get out of practice, but you never forget it.

So anyway, I reinforced my interest in chemistry. What was happening at the time was that all the faculty were disappearing. We had two wonderful chemistry professors at San Diego State then. One was named Dudley Robinson. (pause) Three, actually. One was—I don’t remember what his first name was—was Messmer, M-E-S-S-M-E-R. And the name of the third chemistry professor will come back to me in talking. I can’t think of it right now.

SR: That’s okay.

JC: But the two, Robinson and the other man, went off to work for the Navy laboratory here in town.

SR: Oh, that’s what happened, yeah.

JC: And a lot of the faculty were leaving. None of them were drafted, but they just, some of them enlisted. They felt they had a real job to do. But Messmer was very good. He taught me general chemistry, and I took general chemistry, analytical chemistry, and biochemistry, and organic chemistry in two years. I just crammed every course I could get my hands on. There were only really two faculty members. And there was a young man from USC, who about the year or two after I left, died of a heart attack. So he obviously wasn’t in the war for good reasons. But anyway, I got to do experiments of my own. They had little laboratories, small private laboratories off some professors’ offices, and

Mr. Messmer said, “Go in there and do any experiment you want.” So I had a ball in chemistry.

And then they made me, in my sophomore year, a student assistant with the general chemistry lab, which gave me a key to the stockroom. And if you’re interested in chemistry to the point I used to be, when you get your fingers on bottles, to go through a chemistry stockroom and see all the names of the bottles and chemicals that you had only heard of, and there they were! It was a real turn on. Every chemistry student should be allowed or forced to go through a chemistry stockroom and look at all of the chemicals and the names of things that were only formulas that you knew how to write down on a piece of paper. And there was potassium chlorate. There it is, right there! And here’s cesium [phonetic] iodide. I barely knew what cesium iodide was.

SR: That’s exciting!

JC: Yeah! And here was perchloric acid. I knew there was such a thing, there was a bottle of it! So it was a very interesting experience as I grew up. Again, I was kind of on my own. So anyway, I took—you can imagine—I took literature, I took history, I took chemistry—18 units a semester.

SR: Oh! a lot!

JC: And then during the spring, after my birthday, I think I was, by that time, seventeen. I knew as soon as I turned eighteen I was going to be drafted. And I didn’t have much interest in being in the Army. And it was a Navy town, I was kind of interested in the Navy, so we heard, by word of mouth, because it was on the college campus, recruiters to go in what was called the Navy V-12 program.

The Navy V-12 program was where you could sign up. They would let you go to college for so many years. Then they would send you as a midshipman to a midshipman's school, then commission you and put you in the war. Those were called the 90-day wonders, because midshipman's school was ninety days long. So I can remember—of course I was too young, and my mother had to sign the paper, and she was kind of horrified, but she did it. I said, "I've just got to do *something*. I can't just sit around and go to school while everybody else is off fighting the war." And so that's what I did. And my girlfriend had left. After the first year, Margaret Ann got a scholarship to Berkeley.

SR: Wow!

JC: I told you she was the smart one in the family! And so she went to Berkeley and graduated from there. I didn't see her for a long time after that. But anyway, I signed up for the Navy V-12 program. Had to get a special waiver because of my age. I should have been a year older, but they gave me the waiver, and they were fairly desperate in those days to get their hands on people. And so they allowed me to finish that spring semester, which was the second year. And then I got my orders in the summer to report to the V-12 program at what was then Arizona State University at Flagstaff, now Northern Arizona University. Lovely little mountain town sitting at the base of the San Francisco Peaks, where the Lowell Observatory [is]. This is where Pluto was discovered, as Harvard's observatory. And it was a small—like San Diego State—teachers' college that was turned into a college, and now turned into a university.

So they sent me to Flagstaff. And I spent three semesters at Flagstaff. That was hard work (chuckles) because we had to take some military courses, and we had to get up at six o'clock in the morning and do calisthenics and run around the circle there—Old Quad—with the snow on the ground, you know. We had to keep the dormitory rooms—taken over, the students gone. There would have been a V-12 program at San Diego State, but they had no dormitories, but Flagstaff had dormitories. And so they took over the dormitories.

I visited there not long ago, when I took my daughter and her family to a resort area in Arizona.

SR: Sedona?

JC: Sedona. And we took a drive up to Flagstaff, and I could find some of the old buildings, and some of the buildings were named after some faculty that are now dead, but [whose] names I remember.

And after a year [at Flagstaff], which included three semesters, I got orders to go to [midshipman's school at] Notre Dame, in Northern Indiana—at South Bend, actually, is the town. And so off to Notre Dame I go. That was for three months. That was the most intense, worrisome experience in my whole life. And the reason for it, by that time we had invested so much time and effort in learning Navy discipline and everything like that, and how to behave as an officer—we were going to be officers—but people would keep disappearing. They would disappear because their grades would be too low, and they would get sent in the Navy. Well, they had no Navy experience, so they were sent to what we called boot camp in those days, which you could go directly into, and not have

to go through all *this* business. I was very grateful to V-12, because I got to get quite a bit.... By this time I'd accumulated more than three years of college. So off to Notre Dame. It was very thrilling to think I was going to finally get into the war and be an officer and have a bed to sleep in at night, instead of having to sleep in a fox hole.

By the way, and just going back just a little bit, when I was at Flagstaff, there was a physics professor there who was also an organist, and so we used to go down and play the organ in one of the churches there. And so I got very interested in playing the pipe organ again. And we got to Notre Dame. There wasn't much time to do anything, but we would have some—on Sunday, a weekend. So after church on Sunday, I would go down and play the pipe organ at the Baptist Church in South Bend. It was an old, old organ, but it was a lot of fun, and it took my mind off of things for a while.

My platoon—we were organized in platoons at Notre Dame, for marching purposes—had thirty in it. And we would wake up in the morning, and all of a sudden somebody would be missing at muster. And what they would do is, come in and tap them on the shoulder in the middle of the night, pack their gear, and ship them out to boot camp, so they were gone the next morning. And these people kept disappearing. So out of the thirty that started my platoon, only twenty finished. And so we were kept in terror all the time. Whatever exam, if you failed one exam, you could be pushed out. And so we never knew what was going to happen. If you got too many demerits, you were gone. Anything! And they said, “Well, that’s the way life is. It’s too bad.” I actually think the problem

was that they had found out they had let too many people in the V-12 program, and they had to start getting rid of some of them before they commissioned them!

So I finally got my commission, and I thought, “Well, it’s off to war.” And they said, “Well, not quite yet. We want to send you to advanced line officer school.” By the way, the Notre Dame campus is a beautiful campus. So that was my first touch of Indiana. I’d never known much about it. And it was up on the Great Lakes. There was a fair-sized—it was a patrol boat, I guess—and we would go out and go up and down Lake Michigan, shooting shells out in the lake, for gunnery practice.

So they sent me to advanced line officer school, which was essentially a merchant marine academy that had been taken over by the Navy, in Fort Schyler, New York. It’s out on the peninsula, a little between Long Island Sound and the Hudson River, I guess it is. A little peninsula out there, it was Fort Schyler, and we were already commissioned. So they were teaching us various things. Actually, it turned out it was a waiting place, because they didn’t know whether they should give us specialties that would be useful in the war in Europe, or specialties that were going to be useful in the war in the East. And so I think it was a waiting place. And they didn’t just want us to sit around, so they would [send us] there. And the ships were.... Of course by this time the Navy was *huge*. I forget how many ships they were turning out every week. And so the logistics of it were pretty terrific.

So after we’d been there a few weeks, they asked what we would like to do, what specialty we’d like to do. And one of the specialties was underwater

activities, such as demolition. I didn't want a submarine. I thought, "I just don't want to be cooped up with that many people." I'd been cooped up with people in dormitories that long. Underwater demolition seemed pretty [interesting], and they were going to send you to Florida and teach you to do tank work and all that, and to stay underwater for hours. I said, "Now *that* sounds really daring for a young man!"

Instead, I was at Fort Schyler, and they finally said, "Your term is going to be at a close. In a week, we're going to send you to Hawaii. But you've got a week, essentially, to fool around." And it turned out I was in downtown Manhattan the day that peace was declared on V-E Day—you know, with millions of people down at Times Square.

SR: That famous photo!

JC: I've seen pictures of it in history books. I was one of those heads around there! I'd never seen a city go wild. It just was beyond anything that I ever could imagine. And people were feeling so wonderful and so happy, you know. And to think that the war in Europe was over. They didn't realize what a job was ahead of everybody for the war in the Pacific.

So after saying goodbye to New York, I went to operas there, I went to symphonies, I went to restaurants. I got to taste New York, which has never quite gone away. My wife and I have visited there a number of times, and I have been there once or twice since. So I headed to San Francisco, tried to get down to San Diego, but didn't have a chance. Caught a plane to Hawaii, Honolulu, and was put up in some officers' temporary quarters there, which was pretty nice, actually.

And every day all I had to do was check in to see if I had transportation to find my ship. And I knew my ship I was going to go on was the *USS Delta*, and it was a big—it was not very exciting, it wasn't a war ship, but then I didn't have any skills as a warrior, I guess. It was a huge, huge ship that had everything on it that could repair the sides of destroyers and battleships. It had drop hammers and forges way down in the bowels of the ship. It had electronic shops, it had torpedo repair, radar repair. It had *everything*. It was a technical ship to repair fleet ships.

So all I had to do up in Honolulu was to show up once a morning, to see if I had transportation. And I'd show up, and after a week, I said, "I don't think they're *ever* going to get me out of here." And so by this time I'd made friends with some of the people, and there was a guy, and I said, "How long have you been here?" He said, "Oh, I think six weeks." And I said, "Well, have you been waiting for six weeks to get transportation?" He said, "I don't know, I only go about once a week." And I said, "Well, aren't they going to check up on you?" And he said, "Does it look like they're checking up on anybody?" So I wanted to get out of Hawaii. I mean, it was a lovely place, although it was not the kind of Hawaii that people know of now. It was on war alert, of course, and the bay was just awful with the debris of all the bombings and everything.

So I eventually caught another ship that was to take me to meet my ship in some islands in the South Pacific, one of which was called Mwog-mwog [phonetic]. I have no idea where it was, and I haven't bothered to look it up. It's in the South Pacific, where my ship was. I got to Mwog-mwog, and they said, "Oh yeah, your ship is over in Okinawa." Because at that time, the Marines had

stormed Okinawa, and were in the process of cleaning it up, and so “your ship is in the bay at Okinawa.” So I traveled over to Okinawa. I got there just in time before the big hurricane had hit, and my ship, like other ships, were sent out to sea to escape the hurricane. But here I was stuck. And so they gave me a tent and a kit that could purify the water, and some food and said, “I’d head to the hills and find myself a place to stay for the night, because it’s gonna rain pretty hard.”

And so there was another guy like me, trying to find *his* ship, and so we went up there, and we did everything right, we dug a trench so the water would run around the thing, and we got under some trees and put our tent, and hoped for the best. And it rained. I’d never been in a hurricane before, but I’d been in that one. And so when the heavy rains hit, which is after the eye passes over, I’ve learned since, a *torrent*.... We unfortunately picked out kind of a semi-valley, which hadn’t flooded for years and years, but it started to flood, and the water started coming up. So we had to grab our tent and head for the hills. We had a flashlight, and we saw kind of an opening in the rocks back there, and we went back in there, and it was dry. And when morning came, the sun came out and the air just looked beautiful. It was a burial cave that we had gotten ourselves into.

SR: Oh my!

JC: So we went back down to the base, and it was a mess. The LSTs and landing craft that couldn’t do anything on their own, the small boats that couldn’t have gotten away from the hurricane, were all over the beach. There was food and whatever. The ships were quickly coming back in, they were trying to clear the

harbor. We volunteered to help clear the debris up. And then spent most of the time wandering around Okinawa, eating sugar cane. It's a beautiful island.

So finally I got transportation that they thought was going to pick me up to take [me up to my ship]. They weren't exactly sure where it was. And then what happened, Japan sued for peace. The atomic bombs had dropped, you know, on Nagasaki and Hiroshima, and they had sued for peace. And my ship was to go, like most of the Navy, to Tokyo Bay. And so they said, "We can't get you to Tokyo Bay, but there's a ship going to the southern part of ..." whatever the island was that Tokyo was on—Honshu or something like that. I can't remember the name. And there I was to catch a train up to Tokyo. And then from Tokyo I was to go down to the port harbor officer and try to get a boat out to my ship, which was anchored in Tokyo Bay. And that all took place. I rode a fast Japanese train back into Tokyo, which the windows had all been broken out on it. And this was now—I forget when peace was declared—in the fall of the year, but it was kind of cold. I don't even remember the year, do you?

SR: 1945?

JC: 1945. And so I found my ship. I got on my ship, the *A. R. Delta*. What do you know?! I finally found it! And it was anchored in Tokyo Bay. It was anchored right next to the *Missouri*, where the peace was going to be signed. So we had our binoculars, and we were going to be able to watch the peace being signed on the.... We were a good-sized ship. So I was given my assignment. I had a very nice cabin with two bunks of wide, nice mattresses. I had the lower, and my

roommate, who was another 90-day wonder, had the one on top. And a porthole, and you know. It was luxury compared to what most people had to put up with.

So I was assigned officer-of-the-day duties. It turned out during the ceremonies I was officer of the day, which meant I was in charge of the whole ship, under the captain and the commander. And so I cannot think, maybe I used the wrong term. Maybe it was officer of the deck. I think it was officer of the deck, rather than officer of the day. I'm confused. So we were all on one side of the ship, looking at the *Missouri*, and we couldn't see well enough to see who the dignitary (unclear). You could see MacArthur. He was a very towering person, standing up there. And you could see the Japanese dignitaries. And it seemed to me we were getting closer and closer. And finally the captain turned to me and said, "Mr. Cobble, I think we're drifting into the *Missouri*. What are you going to do about it?" I looked, and not knowing anything about the ties, people tied the ship up to one buoy on the bow, but not on the stern. And so I panicked, went down and got the chief, they put it on the boat, put the line, put it in the boat, they pulled themselves in. Otherwise, I'd probably have ended up the rest of my days in Portsmouth, which is a naval prison, and had an infamous name among all officers. If anything terminal was going to happen to you, they're going to send you to Portsmouth Naval Prison.

SR: Oh my, that's quite a story!

JC: So that was my biggest saving thing I did during the war, was to keep us from drifting into the *Missouri* and causing an international incident.

SR: Well, that's a wonderful story.

JC: The captain admired me for my thinking fast. The commander, who'd been an old Navy man, thought I was so stupid I should spend the rest of my life in the brig for not checking that in the first place, as soon as I became officer of the deck. Well anyway, I can't tell you much [more] about the naval experience. It was pretty dull. We were anchored actually in Tokyo Bay, but it was off of another major city at the entrance of the bay, called Yokosuka. It's like the difference between.... I don't know. It's like.... I'm trying to think of a comparison. But it would be like the difference between being at Point Loma, and down at National City. So I got to learn a lot about Tokyo. They put shore patrol out in all the villages in Japan, for fear that there would be underground terrorists, whatever, plotting and things like that.

And so within a 100-mile radius of Tokyo, I would get in a Jeep once a week and go out with my overcoat on and my revolver strapped to my side, and my official-looking hat, and stand out in the center of one village after the other, watching the Japanese go by as they did their business. And particularly in the snow time, their shoes were in terrible shape, their little buses ran on charcoal, people looked cold and hungry. And they smiled and nodded to me as they went by, and there I stood, along with the town statue, whatever it was, out in the center of this little town. So we did that for about nine months, and then, of course, the war was over, and they started to say "we're going to send you home." And to make a long story short, they sent me home. In the meantime, my high school girlfriend....

SR: I was just going to say, where was Margaret Ann?

JC: Well, there was something in the newspaper that said, “James Cobble is now stationed with the occupation forces in Japan, and he can be contacted ...” and they gave my Navy P.O. address, and she wrote me a letter. And so I wrote her back, and we started getting back in correspondence with each other again.

SR: Had she graduated from Berkeley?

JC: Not yet. She didn’t rush through college. She had to work in the summer, so she only took the regular load for a year. And she had been deficient in some courses for Berkeley that she didn’t get in high school because she hadn’t *planned* to go to Berkeley in high school—she had planned to go to San Diego State. And so anyway, I got shipped home, as I remember, in San Francisco, and mustered out in San Francisco, and came back to San Diego, and all my family were happy to see me again. And so much for my naval experience. But to my surprise, they gave me credit for all my service time, including the time they had sent me to college. And so I used the G.I. Bill to go to graduate school, and I went to USC.

When I was in graduate school, I used to commute on the wonderful trains we had going back and forth between USC and San Diego, and began to date Margaret Ann, as well as you can long distance, that way. And we got married.

SR: When did you get married?

JC: I was afraid you were going to ask me that. But it was in 1945.

SR: Where did you get married?

JC: In Margaret Ann’s home here in San Diego. She lived over on Pershing Drive. Pershing is just off of University, three or four blocks off University, as you’re heading into North Park.

So my major professor for my master's degree at USC, his major professor where he had gotten his doctorate, was a man named George Boyd. I'll never forget him. George Boyd, University of Chicago, and he had been sent.... He had left the University of Chicago, where they had the world's first nuclear reactor, in the stands under the bleachers at Chicago. And he went down to Oak Ridge, Tennessee, which was the big atomic energy plant/town. Of all the places, that I can remember, was Oak Ridge and Los Alamos and Hanford. Those were the three big atomic energy towns. And Hanford is where they made plutonium. At Oak Ridge they did the basic research. And at Los Alamos, they did the research on the bomb. A lot have opened up since then, but that's how it was then.

So he got me a job at Oak Ridge. And so the first of the year, we end up at Oak Ridge, staying in a little duplex. Government town, had just opened up, on the side of a *beautiful* hill, green all around it, the forests and so forth. Two rooms and a bathroom and a kitchen, on the first level. And Margaret Ann was thrilled. And that's the furniture I was pointing out to you (unclear).

SR: I was going to ask you about that beautiful furniture.

JC: I remember the salary, \$325 a month. But the rent was \$19.95, including all utilities. And so we bought some furniture and went in the hole for it, but I think the furniture payments were \$25 a month, and so we both felt pretty lucky about the whole thing.

But as time wore on, neither Margaret Ann nor I wanted to spend the rest of our lives in Tennessee. It's a lovely place in the fall. It's modest in the

winter—they're not bad winters. The summer's almost unbearable, and we couldn't afford an air conditioner, and we used to go to the same movie twice in some weeks, just to cool off. At night it was so hot and humid it was awful. Fortunately, the lab was air conditioned.

SR: What was your work like, what were you doing?

JC: Oh, *wonderful* research. They had some of the best research labs at the time in chemistry that you could imagine. And so I worked with George Boyd, and I did a various number of things: effects of radiation on materials.

But the interesting thing about it was that a bunch of southern universities had gotten together and formed in the town of Oak Ridge a consortium called the Oak Ridge Institute of Nuclear Studies. And they started giving graduate classes there, and so I started taking graduate classes at night.

And finally one of the professors said—and George Boyd himself asked me—“Why don't you work on your doctorate?” That had never occurred to me. I knew to get ahead, by that time, to get *really* ahead in chemistry, you needed a doctorate, but I didn't know whether I wanted to teach or go into industry. And if you went into industry in those days, you didn't necessarily have to have a doctorate.

But I started taking some classes, because I hadn't had anything on radiation or nuclear chemistry or anything like that. And I did fairly well. And so the local university.... I could have picked out a whole choice, but I knew I was going to have to take more classes. And so I went to the University of Tennessee and asked to apply to their graduate school. To make a long story short, I got in.

And then they had.... The chemistry department at Tennessee was the outstanding research laboratory in chemistry on the chemical rhenium, which is a rare element. It's not a rare earth, but it's a rare element, not much is known about it. And they studied it. Not only did they study it, but they had the flue dust shipped from some copper mines in Arizona, which is rich in rhenium. And they were sent by railroad cars to the basement of the chemistry laboratory there, in Dabney Hall, University of Tennessee campus. They would take that flue dust, extract out the rhenium, let the flue dust dry again, and ship it back to Arizona. They only had to pay for what they lost, and the transportation costs. And so they actually manufactured rhenium. And it was a very expensive element at the time. It cost, I don't know, \$50 a gram. It was more expensive than platinum or gold. And it was used for a number of different things. People used to alloy it with various metals for ball point pens, and for contacts—it didn't corrode.

And so there was an element very closely related in the periodic table with it, right above it in the periodic table—Element 43, which doesn't occur in nature, except for the fact that there have been nuclear processes going on, on the earth, that might have distributed some radioactive.... But Element 43 was the one that was left out, along with some other elements on the periodic table. But it was available as a fission product in the fission products. Technetium was its name. It was named technetium after the man who finally discovered it, Segré, who was a professor of physics at Berkeley. And he discovered it by making it on the cyclotron out of molybdenum on the Berkeley campus.

So George Boyd said, “Jim, there is probably a gram of technetium in 500 gallons of fission product waste that we can have. Otherwise, they’re going to send it to the long-term tank farms. We couldn’t get it again. If you can [celebrate?] and get that gram out, you can do chemistry research on technetium, and maybe then Tennessee will accept that for a doctoral dissertation.” And Tennessee was overjoyed. So Rich Higher [phonetic], one of the professors, who was very well known in rhenium research, [had] come out as a consultant to them. And so he and George Boyd were co-major professors for me to study with the gram, which was considered a *lot* in those days—but for me, infinitesimal. A gram of technetium. And so I did everything with a gram of technetium, with all the facilities of the Oak Ridge National Laboratory behind me, that you could think to do.

SR: Oh my!

JC: But I made new compounds, I determined its atomic weight. I determined what’s in the chemistry cone, the chemical thermodynamics of technetium, and so its oxidation states. And delineated carefully the differences between rhenium and technetium. And so the university was overjoyed. I was able to write a dissertation for an element [most people] had never heard about. I used to kid people [by] saying, “Well, it may not have to be a very good dissertation, but it’s probably one of the most expensive ones in the world.” Because [a gram of] technetium nowadays would sell for about a million dollars.

So after I was finished, by the way, we didn’t have a gram left, but we had most of a gram left. They gave it to Segré on one of this birthday parties, one of

his birthday celebrations. And I met Segré later. We had interesting conversations about it.

And so as I was finishing my dissertation, all of a sudden, what are we going to do? And so I had a chance, they would like me to stay at the laboratory. And I was feeling pretty important those days, because here I'd gotten a dissertation, we published five papers out of it, they were taken in the journal, and people were inviting me. And George, to his credit, he was actually over on a Fulbright scholarship, so he said, "Jim, you get as much publicity out of it as you can. You go to every paper you can give a talk on."

SR: That's where public speaking came in.

JC: That's where public speaking.... I had never given a paper in my life in public.

SR: That's great.

JC: But what was I going to do? Meanwhile, in industry, I was sure I could get a decent job in industry. There were various possibilities through this Oak Ridge Consortium of various southern universities, to go get an assistant professorship someplace. But George Boyd said, "Jim, if I were you, I would go to finishing school." And I said, "Back to school again?!" He said, "No, get a postdoc." And I said, "Where?" And he said, "I was talking to Glenn Seaborg about you," who was a Nobel laureate and very famous nuclear chemist at Berkeley, and he said, "Why don't you send him a letter and see if there's a possibility that you could do a postdoc out at Berkeley?" I did, and they offered me the job, and so we went back to Berkeley, and Margaret Ann was *thrilled*. By the way, they offered me a very good job to stay in Tennessee, but we had seen enough of the South, I guess,

for us. And Margaret Ann loved it back in Berkeley, and we both loved—’til the day she died, and I still do—love the San Francisco area. It’s just quite unique in the world. New York may have bigger buildings and things like that, but San Francisco—even the world’s best symphony and ballet—but the San Francisco Opera and the San Francisco Ballet and the San Francisco Symphony are very, very good.

And in those days—now, this was in, when I graduated, was in 1949. Got my Ph.D. in ’49. So we headed out with a new baby.

SR: Oh, tell me about that.

JC: Well, that’s where Catherine [phonetic] was born, in Tennessee. She was born in Knoxville. I think they call it the.... I don’t know. It was one of the hospitals that sat right there on the Tennessee River. It was not an easy birth—no birth is easy—but she was only in labor for a few hours. She had taken all the exercise and things you’re supposed to do. So we had a baby.

Oh, I forgot to tell you—I just now remembered—that we had another opportunity, and that was to go to Cambridge. One of the professors—and to be a professor at Cambridge is something—had come to Oak Ridge to give a series of lectures. His name is Emalayus [phonetic]. And Emalayus invited me. He said, “If you’re going to be the world’s expert on technetium, we’d like to have you come and work for me at Cambridge. If you can stay out of jail and stay there for two years, we’ll give you a doctorate from Cambridge.” There’s nothing better in the world than having a doctorate from Cambridge. And so I thanked him, and we were tempted, because Margaret Ann [said], “This is probably the only chance

we'll ever get to go to England.” The England she knew was from reading in story books. We talked to someone who had been to England. They said, “Well, if you like to do your dishes and do your washing in the bathtub, and if you like to put quarters in [the room heater] and sit there and shiver in a little tenement flat....” Because no one lives very well, unless you're a professor at Cambridge. Now, that turned out not to be true, but it was likely true for someone like us. The salary wasn't all that great. So we thanked them and decided to go to Berkeley instead. I never regret that decision.

We got to Berkeley, we lived in a little falling-apart redwood cottage on the side of the Berkeley Hills, so we could look out on the San Francisco Bay.

SR: How nice.

JC: It was absolutely gorgeous. There was a rose garden. We rented it, and Margaret Ann got to take care of the roses. That's where Catherine was raised. I went back and visited that area. That little cottage is still there.

SR: It's so beautiful there. I love it there.

JC: It's on Euclid Avenue, which is just north of the campus about a mile. And I could walk down to work. When I was there, Seaborg said, “Well, you've made a good enough reputation. They'd like for you to do some teaching on the campus. Would you like to be a part-time instructor as well as a part-time postdoc?” They didn't call me a postdoc—it was a government lab, I had some name like Chemist 1, or something like that. “Yes.” So I did some teaching on the Berkeley campus, general chemistry, and got to know a number of the faculty down there. In this country, I believe, there was no more exciting place to be in

chemistry—full of ferment and intellectual people, and visiting people—than UC-Berkeley, the chemistry department. It was a dynamic, interesting place; all kinds of wonderful, clever people there. It was a lot of fun working with Seaborg, and he gave me a lot of independence. And after a while, he assigned three or four of his own doctoral students to work with me, which gave me a lot of experience, and we could do almost anything that we wanted. He had some things he wanted to be done, and I had some things I wanted to do, and so it was wonderful. And he was very wonderful to me.

And after the two years we had agreed to stay was up—and by this time it was 1949, '50, '51, coming close to '52—I said, “My contract’s up, Glenn, what am I going to do now?” And he said, “Do you want to stay here permanently?” And that kind of shook me up. And by this time I had given a paper or two at a national symposium and talked on technetium. Berkeley paid my way to go, even though I did this work at Oak Ridge, and so I got to take Margaret Ann. And a man by the name of Earl McBee, M-c-B-E-E, who turned out to be the head of the department of chemistry at Purdue University, was in the audience. And Seaborg was chairing the symposium. And Margaret Ann, I remember, was sitting down on the front row, and I was scared to death, but I got up and just did my best. They asked me questions, and I sat down, and Seaborg said, “You did very well.”

And after, I was walking out, this man came up and talked to me. He said, “My name is Earl McBee. I’d like to meet you.” And I talked to him for a few minutes, and he said, “Would you like to be a professor at Purdue University?”

SR: Oh, my!

JC: In those days, they didn't.... Well, actually, I've never applied for a job in my whole life.

SR: That's nice!

JC: My major professor at USC got me my job at Oak Ridge. My major professor at Oak Ridge got me the job with Seaborg. Seaborg got me the job as.... Well, Earl McBee got me the job, if I wanted to come to Purdue. So I said, "Well, let me think about it." "Okay." And so I went back and I told Glenn I'd been offered this job. And Glenn said, "Well, I'll offer you a job here. You can stay here on a permanent basis." Now, that was a great honor. Not very many people are asked to stay permanently in the chemistry division, the radiation laboratory up on the hill—maybe a half a dozen—and they had maybe a hundred in the chemistry division. But I was intrigued with the idea of being a professor, do what *I* wanted to do, rather than to work on what Seaborg wanted to do.

And so [I] discussed it with Margaret Ann, and she said, "Well, what do you think is best?" It was a hard decision. We both wanted to live in Berkeley. It was getting to take a lot of money to live in Berkeley in those days, and I knew we wouldn't be able to live very well in Berkeley. If you'd been a professor or moved up [over] twenty years, maybe. Or we could go to San Francisco, back and forth, and have a nice home in the Berkeley Hills. That was way beyond what we could do. And we had seen some of the places where the younger people lived. Some of them were new assistant professors, and some of them were one or two of the people (unclear) the hill. And most of them didn't live in Berkeley.

They lived either in Oakland or through the hills back into Lafayette. And that didn't seem so much fun. And we didn't know, of course, what was in Purdue.

So anyway, I went back and talked to them, and I saw a place they were developing up in a place called Happy Hollow Heights, which was a forest on the edge of a park, that Purdue owned. And to make a long story short, we went back to West Lafayette, Indiana, bought that piece of property for \$1,500. I got an acre of forest land at the edge of a developed street. That started my experience with Purdue, and I stayed there until 1973. That's where Richard was born and raised, in West Lafayette. That's where we raised our children up through high school age.

SR: So you have the two children?

JC: Yes, I have a son Richard, and my oldest child—*child* (chuckles)—is Catherine. She was my oldest. So there we were at Purdue, starting out as an assistant professor. Margaret Ann was a little dismayed. (chuckles) We came into there New Year's Day in 19.... I'm a little off my timing now. It was '55, New Year's Day of '55, yeah. And so we showed up on New Year's Day in the middle of a semester, I remember—middle of the academic year—and they said they'd try to find an apartment for us. And the apartment they found for us was some basement apartment, across the river over in Lafayette, which was damp and dirty and ugly. And it was in the wintertime, it was cold, and Margaret Ann thought all the trees looked dead. Now, she knew in her mind that they had just lost their leaves. And I said, "We can't live here. I'm not going to bring a family to this. We'll go back. I'm sure they'll give [me] a job. We'll go back to Berkeley." In

fact, I was going to call him. And I said, “As a matter of courtesy, I’d better go tell McBee what I’m doing.” And so I looked up in the phone book his number, and I called him up and he said, “Come over to the house.” I went over to his house, and I told him the problem. He got on the phone, and the first thing I know, he said, “In two weeks I can have you in one of the little cottages out on the golf course.” And he went out and showed them to me, and I said, “Well, okay.”

Meanwhile, Margaret Ann said, “We can’t stay in a hotel forever.” So I took her back to visit her sister and her husband, who were in Sharon, Pennsylvania. She learned not to want to be in a coal-mining town, which is what Sharon was. And so that was just a brief incident. But it’s the first time I came close to getting killed—the only reason I mention it. I was driving the highways, not terribly used to driving on.... I had been in Tennessee, the highways never got very slick or icy. If the snow came down, it would be melted (unclear 75:05). And of course I didn’t have to put up with it in Berkeley, and knew nothing about it in California. But I drove them back to Sharon, and then drove back, and then went to get them after we had our little house. And the roads were slick and it was snowing. I was driving along at a modest rate, and all of a sudden the car just began to shift, and it was taking me over in front of a big, huge truck, that couldn’t have been more than a hundred feet away, barreling down on me at, I thought, a hundred miles an hour. I don’t think he was going but ten miles an hour. I knew at that minute—there comes a time in life, you know, your whole life goes.... I knew I was going to be mangled in front of that big truck. But I

kept on going, and went down into the ravine. It wasn't a very deep one. As the truck went by, I bounced, I got the wheels spinning and bounced out, and came up and got back on the same side. And then the whole thing was over in thirty seconds. I was back on the road, going very slowly. The truck had gone by, honking his horn, and I had passed through that "valley of the shadow of death" in thirty seconds.

SR: What an experience! Though you'll always remember it, it's so scary.

JC: I'll always remember it in my mind. Anyway, I picked up Margaret Ann and the two children—no, then just Cathy. Yeah, just Cathy, she was the only one. Richard was born in West Lafayette. We went back to West Lafayette and settled in that little cottage. It was a lovely little cottage. The rent was, again, \$19 a month. They were thousand-dollar houses on million-dollar views. Purdue maintained some beautiful golf courses, and they were just on the edge of the golf course, in what was called David Ross Row. David Ross was a great benefactor of Purdue University.

So anyway, spring came, and I bought a window air conditioner this time, because I knew summer in Indiana was kind of hot. But there on the golf course, with the grass so green and the trees were coming out, and Margaret Ann thought that was a nice way to get started. Richard was born that summer on August 20th. They wanted you then to locate something permanent and not stay there too long. But anyway, that's a separate story. Two stories: one was how we're getting along in our housing situation. Two was how I was doing at the university. But

the housing situation essentially solved. The university sold us lot up in Happy Hollow Heights.

SR: I love that, Happy Hollow Heights.

JC: Well, there was a city park down below, filled with trees. It was kind of a big, huge ravine—I mean, quite a distance apart. Up at the top there, the university just bought this land and developed the roads into it. No sewers, but electricity. No gas. But water and land and the electricity. And the gas and sewers came later. And we had this beautiful house in West Lafayette. We got an architect from the University of Illinois who came over and built. After he listened to me, he said [to Margaret Ann], “What your husband wants is an Indiana Park style building: high, big-beamed ceiling and so forth.” But Margaret Ann said, “He’ll stay out of it.” So she and he designed a beautiful home back there. It did have high, beamed ceilings—forty-foot-high ceilings in the living room, with big, huge beams and all glass on one side. So it was a beautiful home. So the housing part went okay, that wasn’t a problem.

I should tell you one of the important milestones for me in Berkeley was besides Seaborg I met a lot of other fascinating faculty, and one of them was named Ken Pitzer. He was head of the department at that time. He eventually left to become president of Rice University, and then president of Stanford, and then came back. We kind of worked in—our fields of interest overlapped. He had been consulting for a firm called U.S. Rubber. They made Uniroyal tires back in New York. And so when he became head of the department of chemistry, for various reasons, he just didn’t think he could continue to go back to New York.

You know, a day to go back, and a day to get here, and then a day there. And so when [he] was there, he said, “You ought to talk to Jim Cobble, because he’s got an interest in radiation. He’s got an interest in physical chemistry, and he’s a very good inorganic chemist. You ought to talk to him.” And so to make a long story short, they talked to me, and offered me a consultantship. Because I was going to be in Indiana, it’s a lot easier to get to New York from Indiana. And so (laughs) we had a big rubber plant in our new home in West Lafayette, and that was the house that U.S. Rubber built, because I couldn’t have built it on a professor’s salary, but we could build it with the consultant income.

SR: That’s wonderful. That *is* a milestone.

JC: That was kind of a milestone. And so I went to New York a hundred times—once a month for over ten years.

SR: Where was this located in New York?

JC: Well, actually, it wasn’t. U.S. Rubber was located in the RCA Building, in the top stories down at the RCA Center. Their laboratories were across the river in New Jersey.

SR: That’s what I thought.

JC: Yeah. But I’d come into there, and then they would send a chauffeured car to take me over to New Jersey, to the lab, and then bring me back. And I stayed in New York. And then it eventually got from one day to two days—two days a month. And they treated me like royalty. They put me up at the Plaza Hotel. They would have Margaret Ann come on an expense-paid trip back once a year at Christmas time, because they wanted to do a lot of work before the first of the

year, because they shut the lab down for a couple weeks, and they wanted to do a lot before the first of the year, and that's just when you wanted to be home. So they said, "Well, bring Margaret Ann with you." So once a year, for seven or eight years, we had this Christmas trip to New York.

SR: Oh, how wonderful!

JC: So I rediscovered Macy's and Gimball's and the Plaza Hotel. I discovered Riverside Church.

SR: Oh yes, with the music.

JC: And so every time I would come by myself, I would come into New York on Sunday morning, check into the hotel, take a taxi out to the Riverside Church. And so I went there about a hundred times.

SR: Beautiful church.

JC: Beautiful church—inside and out. And I went there so often they thought that I was a member! They would escort me down, sitting in front. But the most important thing I want to tell you about this, the organist at that church was the world famous Vergil Fox, who was probably at that time during his lifetime, I think, the world's greatest performing organist. I have so many of his recordings. He has stimulated my interest in organ again. And so I kept that in my mind. I had kept active in the piano, and Catharine took piano lessons when she was in West Lafayette. That's when we got that piano. And so I had to help her practice, and it was kind of fun, and so I kept.... And we moved the piano out here after Catharine had stopped playing. She decided she didn't want to be a concert pianist. And so I kept up my piano music all the years.

SR: How wonderful.

JC: And that was a very important part of my nonuniversity life.

SR: Lovely.

JC: So anyway, what happened with Purdue? Well, I was a successful researcher, but more important, I guess I had the gift for gab for teaching, and so I taught the big class in general chemistry. And I figured I taught more than 20,000 students in my life, in general chemistry. And I enjoyed it.

SR: My! How wonderful.

JC: And I'm not bragging or anything, but because I did a good job teaching general chemistry, and I had a lot of assistants, lots of T.A.s, another assistant professor was given the job of.... Not an assistant professor, but a permanent lecturer, was given the job of keeping the laboratories going. So it was just a big business I ran for the chemistry department, because I'd say more than half the students at Purdue had to take general chemistry. And so that occupied all my time in the fall, but in the spring, I only had one graduate class to teach, so I had a lot of time to spend with my graduate students.

SR: Sounds wonderful.

JC: It was a *very* nice opportunity. They were very good to me at Purdue—*very* good—the department, the faculty, the administration. I can't think of anything any better. I was able to get money from the government, contracts and grants, some few millions of dollars when I was there. With my last doctoral student, which I finished here, I mentored fifty doctoral students in my career.

SR: That's great.

JC: And I kind of got active in the senate back there, which is where I met Brage Golding. And so Brage and I used to have a lot of discussions about senate meetings. And so I can't think of a nicer situation. We had very good friends back there. I had, by that time, a nice air conditioned office. I had very good students. I had money for my research. I loved to teach. It was an ideal situation. Margaret Ann and I look back on it as one of the nicest times in our careers.

After eighteen years back there, I got this call from Brage Golding. Well, before that happened, I should go back just a second. I began to worry. I had seen what happened to faculty who had stayed too long at the same institution. And I was afraid I was going to become, as I say, part of the woodwork. We had some older professors there, and it's true, they hadn't kept on research, but their teaching had got out of date, and they had lost interest in their jobs. The enthusiasm seemed to wane, and I figured they had been in the same place too long. Now, eighteen years is a long time for an active researcher to be at one institution. And Margaret Ann and I got to do some traveling. We got bit by the traveling bug. And even then, the salaries for full professors were not all that great, and the living expenses were not very high there. But, you know, the kids were graduating, they were going to go to school. We had Margaret Ann's parents out here getting older; and my parents were out here, and they were getting older. And we found out every time we'd go on vacation, we'd come out here to kind of look after them. And so it just became obvious to me that we probably ought to make a change, we ought to go to California. I've always wanted to get back to California. Margaret Ann had been raised out here, and she

loved the small-town atmosphere back in West Lafayette, but.... So we thought we'd try.

By this time, Seaborg had asked me if I wanted to come to Berkeley. And so I had an opportunity to go to Berkeley. While he wanted me there, the faculty thought I overlapped their faculty too much. And they would do it, if he insisted. And I told him I didn't want to come [under those circumstances]. He was chancellor by that time. I didn't want to come when the chancellor put me in. And he said, "I want you to come as vice-chancellor of research." And I said, "But the faculty doesn't want me, Glenn, and you don't want somebody that isn't an active researcher being your vice-chancellor of research." And so I didn't.

Well, then I got this phone call from Brage Golding. Oh no, before that, the chemistry department asked me if I wanted to come out to....

SR: San Diego State?

JC: No, I had a lecture.... (recording paused) One of the jobs that I had at Purdue, which was very nice, because I could travel out to the West, was to visit some of the universities on the West Coast and give lectures about my research and talk about the university. And I used to start at San Diego State—it's where I had contacts—at Long Beach State, USC, Berkeley, and University of Washington. And I wouldn't catch them all every year, but I would do them. And I'd try to do San Diego each year. And I got my way paid out here so I could stop and see folks and relatives in San Diego. And one of the times out here, I was asked, when I was lecturing at.... Oh, to back up a little bit, they had asked me at San Diego State, on one of my lecture tours at San Diego, when I gave lectures, if I'd

be interested in coming out to San Diego State as chair of the department. Well, I didn't think so, and I said, "I don't think so." And [they] said, "Well, why don't you think about it and you can talk to us later." I said, "You can find somebody, I think. I'm not coming out here to be a chemist. If I were to come, I wouldn't want to come to be a chemist. And that's what you'd want me to do, is do chemistry, and I don't think I want to be a department chair."

And so the next time I came out.... And I have to think very carefully about the sequence. Before I came the next time, I had gotten a call from Brage Golding, saying, "Jim, I'd like you to come out and be my graduate dean." And I said, "I don't know what a graduate dean is like." Although I had been on the graduate council at Purdue, and I knew the graduate dean at Purdue. And in fact, I had an opportunity to get in that path of administration at Purdue. And I had turned it down. I thought, "I've been at Purdue. I'm doing very well as a teacher and researcher, and I don't necessarily have to take on administrative duties." But I knew in the back of my mind we were going to have to probably go out to California one way or somehow. So I just said, "Well, let me think it over." And when Brage Golding called me, I said, "Well, I'll think it over, Brage." And then I said, "Let me know more about it." And he said, "Well, this is my first year here, and I've got all these positions to fill. I'll get in contact with you."

In the meantime, in the fall, I started my regular recruiting trip. This was in the fall of '72, and I started at San Diego State, and I gave my lecture, and they said, "Well, you know, one of the important chemists was on the selection committee for one of the administrative positions," because Brage Golding had

inherited a group of acting administrators. The main reason for that, Malcolm Love, who had been the much beloved president before him, wanted to retire, and the faculty kept saying, “No, no, you can’t retire.” And so as administrative positions fell vacant, he just didn’t fill them with permanent people—he put acting in. So what Brage inherited was a group of acting administrators, and he thought that was a bad idea. So apparently the chemist got in contact with him, and the first thing I knew, I was over in Brage’s office. And we agreed I would come out on a formal visit in the spring. And I said, “Fine, we’ll do that,” and I went back home. And I said, “You know, Brage Golding seems to have some interest in me. I don’t know whether we want to go back to San Diego or not.” And Margaret Ann was noncommittal.

But that spring I got another call from him and he said, “I want you to come out to interview to be the graduate dean.” So I said, “Well, I have to bring Margaret Ann.” And so we flew out here, and I went for a *long* day visit and talked to various people. And at the time, the graduate dean was more of a housekeeping job. He saw that the students filled out the forms, that they went into various procedures the right way. He presided at the graduate council. He sat on the senate, but he didn’t seem to be very influential. And the senate had essentially taken over and worked directly with the president, leaving out the graduate dean and the graduate council, which I hadn’t been used to. And the research function is different from the graduate function. And you know at Purdue they were intimately tied up together. And Brage said, “Well, the research function is largely under the auspices of the San Diego State University

Foundation. So if you want to do that, I'm thinking about a change in leadership over there, so I'll make you the vice-president of the foundation. And what you can accomplish with the graduate council and the senate, you'll have to figure that out for yourself." So after a long day, he essentially offered me the job. It's funny, after I accepted and came out, I had to fill out an application form to keep the books clean. So I said, "Well, I'll think about it Brage." And I went back and we had a family meeting in West Lafayette, sitting around the dinner table one night, and I said, "Well, what shall we do?" The children would have preferred that we stayed in West Lafayette, where all their friends were.

SR: Right, that's usual.

JC: "Oh," I said, "yeah, but you guys are going to go to college, and you'll leave home, and there are no jobs here in West Lafayette, so you'll have to leave us. Eventually you won't be here." But they were thinking in the more immediate time.

SR: Right, and that's very usual.

JC: In the meantime, Margaret Ann's father had had a heart attack, and their health was beginning to deteriorate. She was the last child, and they were much older than she was. I mean, there was a generation and a half between her parents' age and her age. And so we finally decided we ought to take the job. But I talked to Brage and asked him, one, could I keep up my consulting? Yes. Two, could I keep up my research? And three, could I try to make something out of the job? And he said, "Yes, you can do all those things." So I took the job in September.

That was in, oh, I would say in '73, that must have been in June that all that came to a head.

Well, we had to sell the house. And so in the meantime, back at West Lafayette, I had had the opportunity to take my summers off, because Purdue had put me on a twelve-month salary but didn't expect me to do anything during the summer, except to do my research. And so it was kind of the custom for many of the faculty at Purdue to go someplace during the summer, and many of them would head north into Michigan, where it was cooler on the lakes. But we had learned about Lake Tahoe a long time ago. And so I said, "Why don't we go out to Lake Tahoe and"—I had gotten some money, some various awards and so forth—"and see if we can buy a little place up at Lake Tahoe?" You know, for like \$3,000-\$4,000, right on the lake, a nice beautiful cabin. (laughs) Well, we talked to a real estate agent up there and we found a beautiful, furnished, architect home not *on* the lake, but up. And there was a drive around, so there was the lake, and there were some houses, and we were one level above that. Furnished, on a tax sale, which I think we bought for \$30,000. And we made the down payment, so we owned that property up at Lake Tahoe. And so we had been coming out there in the summers, and the children got used to it. So when we became....

We moved, we packed all of our stuff, we sent the movers out, and it had to be put in storage, and we told them that we would take everything out around the first of September. And we drove out here. We had two cars by then, and a four-driver family, and we drove to San Diego and stayed with my mother on

West Robinson Street. And the children were anxious to get up to Lake Tahoe, and we wanted to buy a house, so we gave ourselves a week. (laughs) A stupid thing to do! Everyone told us where we should live. Margaret Ann's parents thought, being very practical minded, we ought to live out by the university, Del Cerro. They said that was a pretty place to live. Margaret Ann and I wanted to live out in La Jolla. I had courted her here, we had come here. Her mother thought it was just damp out here, "Why do you want to live in a beach town? It's damp out here." Margaret Ann had friends who said, "Point Loma is a beautiful place." And other people said.... I forget the area but if you go west from Hillcrest, you run into Mission Hills, and that's a very pretty place.

But we held out for La Jolla, so we came out here and we had the sale for our check in hand, you know. [i.e., We had the check in hand from the sale of our house in West Lafayette.] I put it in the local bank and I said, "We want to buy a house. We want to buy in a hurry. I can't pay more than about \$80,000 for it," which seemed to me a reasonable price. And so we spent a week, we went to one agent, it didn't work; and then we went and got the present agent, Dorothea Rodaman. She was our agent, and she found the house on the corner here. As we parked in front of this house and walked down here, Margaret Ann saw that gate and she looked in, she said, "That's the kind of house I want." And so she said to me, "Go talk to the lady." It was on the market and taken off, and so she went in and talked to Mrs. Paul. This was the Paul residence.

SR: Isn't that something?

JC: Dr. Paul was one of the founding physicians of Scripps Medical Institute, which became Scripps Hospital. And so within a day or two, we closed the deal. And what helped close it is that we were willing to let her continue to occupy the house—or put another way, the escrow wasn't effective until that first week in September, so she could stay here, and yet she knew the house was sold. And then we went to Lake Tahoe, and we dreamed about what we could do. We came down, the furniture was shipped over, we moved in the house, and that was our move.

SR: Terrific!

JC: So Margaret Ann was busy trying to arrange the house with some of the Lafayette furniture, and of course we didn't have a lot, and people started to give us things. And over the years we've added various things.

SR: It's beautiful.

JC: The house came with the carpets all in it, and it came with drapes—although we've changed them since. And so everything that you see was around the basic plan. And Margaret Ann was the gardener, she got busy and started redoing the outside. She was a very *good* gardener, and she had to have some help, some tree trimmers and so forth. But anyway, that's the end of the house.

Meanwhile, I was out to the university—and a university I didn't know very much about, except I had been out there to San Diego State. It was never a sleepy place, and the fact that we were always very [akeltive?], but it was a small place. And so the nature had changed a great deal. It was no longer a small college. And the year I got there, they had changed the name officially from San

Diego State.... Well, it had changed some years ago from San Diego State College, to California State College at San Diego, but they prevailed on the legislature to write into law that its name was San Diego State College, because it was here before the system was here. And then they wanted to get the name changed, and so the system was proceeding to change its name. It was to become the California State Colleges and University—CSU. And to make a long story short, the faculty, the students, and the local politicians changed our name to San Diego State University, and there it's been ever since.

SR: Right.

JC: *It was* a university, there was no doubt about it. Because it turned out a wide range of bachelor degree programs. By the time I get here, more and more the professional schools, it turned out you had to have a master's degree in order to advance in their area. And so they started giving master's degrees some time ago. So all my job was, was to try to get a functioning graduate council, and to try to learn something about what was going on in the departments. So I talked the senate and the deans' administration into doing—we set up the academic review process, wherein you bring in a team of outside visitors, and these visitors tell you what they think about the department in a written report, and then the department responds to it. That gives the senate and the administration some insight as to whether the department should add graduate degrees. Every department thought they ought to have graduate degrees as a status symbol—and that turned out, I think, to be a mistake. And particularly because more departments wanted doctoral programs, joint doctoral programs now, and those take a lot of money,

and at the time you had to go to the legislature and get special funding for them. So I worked out the academic review process, and we put it into place, and the senate agreed to it, and the president agreed to it, and it started the fall of '74.

In the meantime, I had to do something about a graduate council that was ineffective. There was a curriculum committee of the senate, and whatever the graduate council did, they would send it to the curriculum committee of the senate. Then the curriculum committee could do what they want and send it to the senate. And so the graduate council had very little influence on it. It was just another layer of bureaucracy. And so I appointed a committee. By that time I had learned who the key faculty members were, and they were all active in research and graduate affairs.

And I talked to the chair of the senate, and so it was a lot of help. The chair of that committee was a very, very influential, and one of the finest faculty members I've ever known here—Harriet Kapp is her name. And Harriet was chair of the speech pathology and audiology department, and she had come from Columbia out here, and wanted to get away from New York, and was modernizing the department. And so she agreed to chair the committee made up of leading faculty and scientists and scholars from the university, and they proposed, at the end of the first year I was here, in 1973, a new charter for the graduate council.

In the new charter, they would essentially take over final approval for all curriculum and course work and things like that, from the senate, subject only to review by the senate. And if they did that, the president agreed to give up the

appointment of the graduate council, and they would have to be elected by the senate as a major committee. And it was some struggle to get it through, but we finally got it through. And so by the beginning of my second year, we had in place two major things to do.

I won't go into all the details, but the fact of the matter is, the university was growing very quickly, we didn't have the resources to grow, we had to depend a lot on the faculty bringing in outside money through contracts and grants—and they did. During my tenure there, they brought in over a billion dollars. And that's money we had, that a lot of other schools didn't have. And it was [through] the hard work of the faculty. They just were marvelous, they just were marvelous.

And I was influential in getting the graduate students' salaries raised for T.A.s and graduate assistants, so they could offer financial assistance to better graduate students. I made it my job to learn about the graduate deans of some of the other universities where our faculty had contacts, for joint doctoral programs. And we finally had twelve or more when I left, and now they're up to fourteen, fifteen, sixteen—I have no idea—they're going to add quite a few more.

We survived the budget crisis of the nineties. Brage Golding then made me vice-president of the foundation.

SR: Yeah, what about that?

JC: Which is kind of his representative at the foundation, and I was the presiding officer. And I hired a new general manager for the foundation, who turned out to be really, really, very, very good.

SR: Who was that?

JC: His name was Harry Albers. And Harry Albers assembled a staff and knew how to manage. He was well liked and respected, particularly by the deans and the faculty and the president. It was kind of interesting—when I first came with Brage Golding, he said, “Now, I want you to stay at least five years. I can’t force you to, I want you to stay at least five years. You can’t accomplish anything [in less time].” He inferred I was a well sought after property. He didn’t know I wanted to stay in San Diego. A well sought after property. “So,” he said, “I want you to stay a while—not just come and move on.”

I had been chair of what’s essentially a department at Purdue, but I hadn’t been a dean, and I hadn’t been a vice-president or anything, and here I suddenly found myself on the president’s cabinet, giving policy direction to the foundation. And three years after I had been there, the rumor went around that Brage Golding was looking for another job. And it kind of unnerved me a little bit, but Brage was a very independent, wonderful person. He fought hard for the university, he would try to keep the chancellor from making us do things we didn’t want to do. And he was a good representative up in the legislature. But it wore him down, because he had to meet up there every month, and I went up there to one of the meetings one time, and he did not like the leadership in the chancellor’s office of the day. And so in five years they called him back, they called him to Ohio. Before he came here, he had helped found the university back there which was....

SR: Wright University?

JC: Wright University. And when Kent State got in all the problems, the trustees of the Ohio system asked him to come back to be president of Kent State to try to solve the problem they were having, which was the student riots. Do you remember they wanted to build a gymnasium on the spot where the students were killed, and the students wanted some memorial built there to the students. And he said, after giving it some thought, "We'll build a memorial gymnasium, so we can have a gymnasium and honor the students as well." And after that, things settled down at Kent State. He was very good at that. He *really* was very good at that. I remember the first year he was here, student riots were going on, and liberal professors were leading them, and he met and talked with the students outside the administration building.

And he was a no-nonsense person, but [persons?] believed him. He was a man of high integrity, and he was very smart. And so he got along well here. The faculty liked him, he had brought in quite a few change of administrators. He'd brought in an academic vice-president, Trevor Colburn, who turned out to be a wonderful vice-president. And he brought in a lot of different people. Some of them went on to be presidents and vice-presidents on their own.

So I owe what success I have in administration, to Brage giving me this opportunity. In '78, Tom Day came. Brage retired. Now, let's see, he retired for five years, so it was not in '78. In '78 we had an acting president. Trevor Colburn became acting president, and it was '79, I think, when Tom Day came. Do I have my dates right?

SR: I think Tom Day came in '78, actually.

JC: Well, then it was in '77 he left.

SR: And Brage Golding finished in.... No, no, he didn't. But I think it was '78.

JC: I'm not so sure about the dates. And Day was an entirely different kind of administrator. He was very smart, he knew how to deal with faculty, he liked the administration he'd inherited, he supported the foundation, and he supported research. He was a no-nonsense administrator and used to scare us half to death most of the time. His bark was louder than his bite, because I don't remember him ever firing anybody. When he snarled at you sometimes, you might think. I came to admire his administration.

He never got along with the faculty as well as Brage Golding, and one of the first things that hit him, of course, in the nineties, was this terrible budget crisis when they literally pulled 30% or 40% of the money out in one year. And so he said, "We're going to have to let people go. I'm not just going to cut everybody across the board." And so he gave, I think, ninety or a hundred faculty people who held tenure as faculty, including me, notices of termination. And I was safe because I was an administrator, but I had faculty tenure. That's something Brage Golding agreed to, that he would not hire any administrators that didn't have faculty tenure—which was a good idea. So that all ended in a turmoil, which I'm the least qualified to talk about. But it did not interrupt the major function of the university, which is (unclear).

As soon as the budget was restored, we were able to hire good faculty, the student enrollment grew, we got new programs, and I think largely due to his forceful leadership. To me, Brage Golding amplified on the path that [Love?] had

laid out, and said, “We’re going to be a real university now. And we’re going to have doctoral programs and research.” Day took that up and made it the centerpiece of his administration. And when he retired, we had a new president who came in that said, “That and more so.” And so each one has built on the other one, and I’ve been privileged to watch that.

SR: Clearly you were doing more than watching, because they all appreciate what *you* were doing.

JC: They had four different chances to fire me along the way, because each new president that came in [could have] said, “I want my own man.”

SR: How did the foundation change over the years?

JC: Well, the foundation just became.... In two or three ways, it became larger, because as the faculty got more and more contract and grant money, you have to have more administrators to handle it. People think you just write a letter to Washington and say, “Send me some money.” And of course it’s a *very* complicated job. Right now it has to be all done on computer in a certain format and other things like that. But I think that the foundation was able to expand. But the *main* thing the foundation did during *my* tenure was we ran out of room. Faculty had these ideas, and they could get more research money—we had no space. The university was largely built, we thought, in those days, and we had no space. So the foundation had to start accumulating property. And the first thing they did was get the property down by Eldorado Hospital, down there along the Eldorado Road. And we bought buildings down there, and we moved researchers

in there, and clinics in there. We had one of the best speech and audiology clinics probably in the world, down there. I can't tell you all the details.

And then it turned out that the public health people needed space. And so we would rent here, and we went.... We needed facilities for rehabilitation and counseling, which took work rooms where you train people how to train disabled people how to work with machinery and stuff like that. We've been all over town. And that took the.... The foundation could borrow money and then pay it off, while the federal government would not pay money to build physical facilities, so we'd just take it out of our indirect and turn around and use it for that. And what was left over, we could put the indirect back in university sponsored research. While if we had given it to the university in those days, we couldn't have spent it for capital. It would have had to gone through the part of the budget that goes through Sacramento. So we were able to keep it separate, and President Day fought tooth and toenail to keep it that way. And it still is that way, by the way.

But the property (unclear), some people began to think it was the tail wagging the dog. The foundation, over the years, had bought pieces of property that came available right north of the campus. And so one time [I?] thought that maybe the way to do is try to make some *big* money to help the university, because the demands by the faculty—legitimate demands—were getting larger and larger and larger. And so Mr. Albers, who was the general manager of the foundation, came up with a plan where we would (unclear) property development, putting up resident apartments and business places, and rent that out. We'd

borrow money and rent it out, and what excess was left over we would then use for the university—including what he used to say, “theaters and bowling alleys and liquor stores.” Well, no liquor stores, and we didn’t really want a bowling alley. But many universities have had property developed around their edges, and some have been quite successful.

Well, when Tom Day retired, President Webber came in. He actually came a few months before Tom retired, just while they were building a new administration building, which is now called Manchester Hall. We used to call it Centennial Hall, because we dedicated it [on] our centennial. And he had a card table in a big empty room otherwise. (laughs) With no phone! And that was his office. And so we had a lot of discussions about the direction of the university, where it should go. And I agreed with that, and he agreed how we were doing things. And so lo and behold, he made me a vice-president of research. I was the fifth vice-president the university had then. That was the highlight of my career. And in the meantime over the years, my salary had been going up very nicely, so I could afford the houses that I had.

So to cap it all off, what a wonderful life I’ve had at the university, due to three things: my understanding wife, because I was working hard when she was here at home; an understanding faculty who was able to give [me] what leadership skills I had; and a wonderful set of presidents. And you know, for someone in my business, you look back, it can’t be any better than that.

SR: Isn’t that lovely?

JC: Can’t be any better than that.

SR: Yeah, but clearly it's what *you* bring to the situation.

JC: Well, we're synergistic, I guess. Yeah, we work back and forth. But I was a faculty member, and I always believe the strength of a university is in the faculty. And so I always thought that was the important thing—I was there to serve the faculty. Now, that doesn't mean individual faculty, so that means you have to work with the faculty in their committees. But even individual faculty, I tried to help. Every once in a while a faculty member would lose their grant, and I'd find them money to carry them over until their grant became active. One of our best-known researchers was going to get out of it—two or three of them—and I kept them going, and one of them brought in \$3 million after that. She was really, really, very, very good.

But the whole university was filled with good faculty. And the academic review process let the faculty themselves know, and the administration, how they were doing with their resources, and where they needed key resources, and what faculty they needed, and were they promoting, recommending promotions for people too fast. And the faculty, it caused them some effort and work to do it, but in some cases we were able to move significantly with reason. Otherwise, the budget process was just kind of divvy it up and everybody gets a chunk of it, kind of based on history. And the administrators now don't do that. It depends on what you produce and what you can get by with. So that review process took a lot of my time and my staff's time. I would say a third of my time went into that review process and interpreting, and working with the senate and the faculty; a

third of my time being a graduate dean; and a third of my time overseeing the foundation.

SR: What about the student body over that time?

JC: Well, one of the things.... Of course my own research then slowly died. I brought out a group of four or five people. I've never had more than one postdoc ever since then, and I finished my fiftieth Ph.D. student a year after I retired—and that's it. So my own research suffered, but I didn't come out here to be a researcher, primarily, I came out here to help the university. Being a researcher might have helped myself, but it soon became clear I didn't have time to be active at the same level, and still do what the presidents wanted me to do at the university. And I liked administration, I threw myself into it, and I liked it. The problem with it, of course, is like being a faculty member—it never ends. There's always something to do.

In the meantime, my wife managed our home, and what a beautiful home she has made out of it.

SR: And it's so beautiful.

JC: And we've been able to help our children, and they've got good starts now. And interesting, how things come around. Catherine is now a permanent lecturer out of San Diego State in rhetoric and writing. And she's written four or five textbooks.

SR: How wonderful!

JC: *Wonderful*. Her husband is a professor at Mesa College. My son and his wife are in the foundation—they work in the foundation.

SR: Oh, my!

JC: He's a computer guru, and she's one of the people who help the faculty get their proposals ready, because it is very complicated, and the budgeting questions. And she can say, "I wouldn't try the National Science Foundation. They won't give you money for that. But what you could do is ..." do this or this, and maybe get the university to help this. I mean, she puts together those packages for the faculty.

SR: That's terrific.

JC: That's invaluable. Nobody at Purdue ever showed me how to do that. I learned the hard way.

SR: Yeah, I can appreciate that.

JC: And so she is very, very good at that.

SR: Terrific.

JC: And my son is very, very good at that—particularly when something happens to my computer. He's good enough, he can tell me on the phone what to do, doesn't even have to come over here.

SR: That's terrific. And do you have grandchildren?

JC: I have two grandsons and two stepgranddaughters. My son married a woman that already had two daughters, and so when he married he got a family quick, he didn't have to go through all the diapers and everything. And they're *all* very, very dear people. We get together on holidays, all together. Last Christmas we were down at the Valencia Hotel, sitting there, looking out, having Christmas dinner, over the whole bay. I thought, "How lucky can a man be?" And the only

bad thing that ever happened in my life was that my wife died prematurely. She died at seventy-five. We had been married almost fifty years, and it's hard to function after that. But you know, her spirit's still here, and every time I look at something, I can think of where she bought that, where she got that.

SR: It's so beautiful. I was thinking that I love doing oral histories, but at this moment I wish I were doing a video history, because it's just so beautiful, being surrounded by all of this.

This has been so interesting, and it's great to get your perspective on the years that you described. Sitting here in this beautiful setting, of course, has enhanced the situation for me. I'm so appreciative and honored that you have granted this interview, and I know that it will be a very important addition to the oral history collection at San Diego State University. Thank you so much.

JC: Well, thank *you*, Susan. It's been my privilege to talk to you. People who are listening to this should understand, it's just my point of view, and I was just one of a number of people who were here doing, I would say, probably the greatest change in the university that's taken place in most institutions. And so it's been a privilege to be a part of that, and I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to say something about it.

[END OF INTERVIEW]