

Aubrey Wendling  
July 25, 1994  
interviewed by Lynn Olson  
for San Diego State University  
01:12:34 in length total

Part 1

LYNN OLSON (LO): Today is July 25, 1994. This is Lynn Olson. The following is an interview with Professor Aubrey Wendling, who was professor of sociology at San Diego State University from 1954 to 1982. This interview is supported by a mini-grant from the John Adams Humanities Mini-Grant Program, and the interview is being conducted in Special Collections at the SDSU Library.

Okay, let's start at the top: where and when were you born?

AUBRY WENDLING (AW): Probably can't remember now! In San Francisco in 1918.

LO: And you grew up in San Francisco?

AW: Pretty much, although we moved around the Bay Area, because my father worked for the railroad company. Seniority, you know, plays a role—or it used to play a role in where you worked. But in the main, I graduated from high school in San Francisco. Went to San Francisco State.

LO: Okay. Where did you get your college degrees then? You went to San Francisco State for your undergrad.

AW: Yeah. Then I went to several places. First I went down to Stanford for a short period of time, and then to Berkeley. I finally decided I was going to go in sociology. I graduated from San Francisco State with a major in speech and radio. So that's another story. And then from Berkeley, I went up to the

University of Washington, which was the only, really, university on the West Coast that had a decent sociology department, and so I decided to go up there.

~02:07 on audio counter

LO: Why did you decide to go into sociology?

AW: I was a speech and radio major, and then I got a little bit interested in speech correction, and took a number of classes in that, and I became aware that in order to do that well, you had to really have a strong background in psychology, because there's emotional kinds of things involved. So I went to Berkeley—that's why I went over to Berkeley—and I took some psych classes there, and in that process I took a social psych class from a very famous person, and then I took a couple sociology classes from Bob Nesbitt and from Robert Merton. Bob Merton is probably one of the most famous sociologists. He's out of Columbia, and was out here for the summer actually. And then he encouraged me to go on, and at that time I saw that I was really interested in sociology, or that general area of social psychology. That's why I went in sociology. Historically, when I was an undergraduate, I became close friends with a professor of sociology, and so I think Karl Lastrucci, who I still see to this day—as a matter of fact, we just spent a week with him up at their cabin there at Mount Lassen. So he was influential also.

LO: Lastrucci?

AW: Lastrucci, L-A-S-T-R-U-C-C-I.

LO: And so he probably was one of the biggest influences on you to go into sociology, do you think?

AW: Yeah, I think so. Plus, Bob Merton and Bob Nesbitt at the University of California. I think *those* experiences were exciting, and I think that gave me the kind of push to decide to do that.

~04:21 on audio counter

LO: When did you receive your Ph.D. then?

AW: In '54 [1954].

LO: And that's when you began working at San Diego State.

AW: Yeah.

LO: So you got your degree and immediately came to San Diego State, or was there something else [unclear]?

AW: Well, I had no intention of doing that. I had planned to go back to San Francisco State, and Lastrucci had worked it out so that I could come there and my appointment went through the department and the division/dean, and the president, at the end, decided to hire a friend from Stanford. So we had already—my wife came down and got a teaching job down the peninsula, and we were all ready to move, and then that happened. So they told me that I could stay as long.... I was teaching full-time at the University of Washington at that time, and they told me I could stay there as long as I wished, practically. (chuckles) I suppose there'd have been some stipulations later on.

LO: Read the fine print in there, it might have said something else, huh?

AW: And just for kicks, because I was at the end of this whole Ph.D. program, I sent some applications out. I'm not sure where I sent them, but one of them was to San Diego State, or whatever it was called then.

~05:54

LO: It was San Diego State College.

AW: Something like that. And I heard nothing from them, so this is about.... And I wasn't worried about it, because I already had a job for the next year, and I'd just wait. All of a sudden I got a telephone call from San Diego State in August, asking me if I was still available to take a job. The reason they had an opening was that Don Walker had moved from the department of sociology up to becoming dean of men, I guess they called it at that time, and so they had an opening and wanted to know if I'd come down. So I had never.... All they had was my vita and....

LO: Wanted to know if you'd come down for the job, or for an interview?

AW: For a job.

LO: For the job! They offered you the job.

AW: I was never interviewed. Dean Watson never had the opportunity to interview me. Not sure what he had done! (laughter)

LO: Why do you say you're not sure what he would have done?

AW: I don't know, he had unusual criteria for hiring people, you know. I remember him one time saying he didn't like that guy because he had dirty fingernails—not that I had dirty fingernails.

LO: Well, I'll tell you, nowadays, sometimes that would make or break the job interview.

AW: Sure would. Sure would. No, he's a nice guy. Just I was never interviewed for the job.

LO: So you started teaching that fall?

~07:34

AW: Yes.

LO: Started teaching the end of August?

AW: Came down here, and they had a Santa Ana and it was awful.

LO: Had you been to San Diego before?

AW: Only once. If you live in Northern California, no one in their right mind goes south of Santa Barbara.

LO: Yeah, it's the desert down here.

AW: And so I'd only been once, when my brother was in the navy, and I came down to visit him. At that time, we just stayed downtown at the San Diego Hotel, I think it was.

LO: So when you moved to San Diego, were you kind of disappointed with the surroundings?

AW: Oh, it was terrible! We were up in a motel up on El Cajon, and they had a Santa Ana, and I love foggy weather. And the overcast, I'd lived seven years in Seattle and got used to that weather. And so they had this Santa Ana. I came back to the motel and I said, "We're leaving." A lot of jobs, I didn't have to worry about getting a job. "Let's go!" And my wife said, "Well look, I've already signed a contract for this next year to teach."

LO: She signed a contract down here?

AW: She signed a contract down here.

LO: Ah-ha. Where?

AW: With the city schools. And she got *that* right away, incidentally. So the employment market was quite different—you could get a job anyplace you wanted.

~09:02

LO: So it was her that made you stay?

AW: Yeah. I would have left.

LO: You didn't consider maybe having you staying at the university for a couple of years and then reevaluating your situation and moving on?

AW: Well, I didn't suggest that, but because of her statement I said, "Well, we'll stick it out for a year and see what it's like." So that's what we did.

LO: So that's what you did, and you stayed.

AW: So a hundred years later.... (laughs)

LO: Any remorse for having done so?

AW: No. It was, I think, a rewarding experience. I think there is some qualifications. If you'd been in a larger university at that time with the research and so forth that was going on, it would have been a little bit better. But I think sometimes you can do it in *spite* of the system, and I think it worked out that way. No, I'm pleased that we did it.

LO: That's good. It's a good university, and it's a beautiful city too.

AW: Yeah.

LO: Well, when you started here, let's get into some of the visualization now. What was it like when you first arrived on this campus? Where was your office? What did you teach?

~10:26

AW: I remember driving in, and I remember I checked in. I think I had to check in with the president at that time—or with somebody—and I drove right up to where the archway is there, and parked. I had an office in one of those Quonset huts.

LO: Oh, you had one of those, huh? Too bad.

AW: Yeah, down where the old library is over there, where the library was.

LO: Yeah, I heard that those were very hot.

AW: It was awful.

LO: It was like an oven in there.

AW: Yeah, ten or fifteen people.

LO: All sharing one open space?

AW: Yeah. We just had desks in there, and we all shared open space.

LO: I didn't realize that those Quonset huts were used for that. I thought that they were usually used just for teaching. And then, of course, there were the tea shacks. Did you ever have any classes in a tea shack or tea building?

AW: No, I think most of my classes, the soc office—you know where the quad is there?—the soc office was down at the end, underneath someplace, and we generally used those rooms along the side of the quad there. And I think those were the ones.... I don't remember being in a tea.

LO: Did you have fairly good classes? Did you have a decent load, not too many large classes?

AW: No, no big classes, but large classes at that time. I think they were around thirty—something in that neighborhood, twenty to thirty—because, remember, at

that time the enrollment was around 4,000-5,000, so things hadn't really taken quite off yet. And the department itself, there were only three people in it.

~12:26

LO: And who were those three people?

AW: David Milne, I think, was chair, and there was Kenneth Barnhardt, and Orrin Klapp [all phonetic spellings]. And at the same time that I came, before I ever came, they had hired one other person from the University of Washington, Bernard Kirby [phonetic].

LO: I don't know the Bernard Kirby name. Did Orrin Klapp go on to do something else? Was he principal of a....

AW: No, he was here for some time, and then I think in the seventies or something like that, he took off and went to a Canadian university, I think in London, Ontario.

LO: So he didn't retire [unclear].

AW: And he stayed there for some time—actually retired from here and then went there, and has a retirement.

LO: Do you have any comments about any of these men that you started teaching with here at San Diego State?

AW: I think all three of them were from the University of Chicago. And I think Barnhardt was here first, and then he hired Milne, and then they hired Orrin Klapp, all from the University of Chicago.

LO: I've noticed how that works. The faculty members in specific departments, they have their colleagues out there that they went to school with, and they suggest that those people be hired.

~14:09

AW: Yeah.

LO: Same thing.

AW: Yeah. And they had a particular orientation about sociology. It was more kind of social-work oriented. They grew up in that Chicago school that emphasized community studies and concern about crime and delinquency and that sort of thing. So they had quite a different orientation.

LO: And what was *your* orientation?

AW: Well, I went to the University of Washington primarily. At that period of time, there was a big conflict about whether we could quantify social data. And so mathematics and statistics became more important, research techniques became important. And so at the University of Washington they hired George Lumberg and Stuart Carter Dodd [both phonetic spellings], a number of other outstanding people that were oriented toward quantitative treatment of [unclear]. So I grew up, I graduated, in that atmosphere. So I came here with that orientation, that I wanted to do research, and it became [unclear].

LO: And you did?

AW: I did.

LO: You *did* go on to do research, but you didn't find any resistance to what you wanted to do?

AW: No, that's why I stayed, as a matter of fact, because shortly after I was here, they built what we used to call the social science building, and I was given the opportunity to design a whole new research laboratory.

~15:50

LO: Yeah, it was in 1958, the Social Science Research Center.

AW: Yes.

LO: Did that become the Social Science Research Lab, is that the same thing?

AW: Yeah. They eventually took it away and brought them all together under one....

LO: Took it out of the department of sociology.

AW: Yeah.

LO: And you were director for all those twenty years?

AW: Yeah.

LO: Wow, that's quite a long time. So you were the one that pushed to establish that research center. It was not a difficult thing to do?

AW: No.

LO: Did you receive funding from the university?

AW: Yeah.

LO: Outside funding?

AW: Well, you see, when they originally planned the building itself, you have a different kind of opportunity to build something like that into a new building, than you have trying to collect money to build it later. I guess it comes from a different fund—I don't really understand all that. I think if you plan it in an initial thing.... So I had the opportunity to plan the whole thing as I wanted it. And then getting the equipment later on that we wanted in there became another problem, but I was treated very well.

LO: Well, you designed the facility as to how you wanted it, but how about staffing for your center? Did you have a regular staff that worked there?

~17:17

AW: We had a full-time.... Doug Coe [phonetic]—I don't know if you know Doug.

LO: I know that name, uh-huh.

AW: I hired Doug Coe and he was the assistant or the person in charge of the lab on a day-to-day basis. And at that time we did a lot of population studies, and he handled all the cartography. It was pre-computers, really, although we had the only keypunch and the only card sorter on campus at that time.

LO: Really. Wow.

AW: It was a challenging thing, how you could try to get these things.

LO: So how did you quantify your.... Well, you had keypunch.

AW: Yeah.

LO: It must have been a very heavily-used keypunch machine.

AW: Yeah. We'd loan it to other departments. And then eventually, things developed.

LO: So do you think that the Social Science Research Center and your own research then attracted more people to this campus to continue?

AW: [unclear] What happened after I came and after we started that, the research center, we were hiring a lot of people, maybe three or four people in a given year. So the department began to grow. The four people that were originally here just kind of gave me a free hand. And so as a consequence, I suppose I did the same thing they did, I brought in a lot of people who were quantitatively oriented, and research oriented. But it was different in that we took the point of view that we

didn't want somebody to come and necessarily stay here forever, because the job market was such that you could move around. So as a consequence, we hired very, very good people for only three or four years, and then they would move on.

~19:38

LO: Did you have a contract? How did you get them to move on? Did you have [unclear] contract.

AW: Well, they *wanted* to move on. See, they didn't *have* to stay here, and so they just took jobs someplace else.

LO: But what attracted them to come here for a short period of time? Were the research facilities available?

AW: Part of that is that as we.... I suppose we hired some people on the basis of my knowing them, and that I brought some people in, and they knew other people, or had contacts. And so we started adding people who were publishing, and people who were doing research, and that was exciting. And so that subsequently attracted other people to [us]. So we got some awfully good.... We had one of the best departments on the coast for a long period of time. It was exciting. And there was all kinds of research going on, and the research center was the focal point for all that.

LO: It really grew and grew, didn't it?

AW: Yeah.

LO: It really did. Were you chair of the sociology department ever? I can imagine that you probably were.

AW: Yeah, a couple of times, yes.

~20:55

LO: Do you recall any major happenings or goings-on when you were chair?

AW: Yeah, I suppose. I would say the outstanding problem that we had is that some people that we hired, we felt that was a mistake, and we wanted to get rid of them. And it became very, very difficult to get rid of some of the people. At some time the department had made a mistake and given a person tenure. I remember one person they gave tenure, and then immediately after that, they decided that was a mistake and they would like him to go. So they called him in and said, "We'd prefer you to leave."

LO: They actually said that?

AW: Yeah. And he said sure, he'd do that. And then he went home and thought about it for a moment, and he came back and said, "Go to hell!"

LO: He had been given tenure. You know, he has a perfect right to say that.

AW: Right.

LO: So what happened?

AW: Well, he stayed, eventually became chairman of the department. (laughs)

LO: That worked out okay, I hope.

AW: Yeah, it was okay. It was okay. But you make mistakes within departments, and I think that was the negative part about being chair, is that some people that you'd like to get rid of, had a difficult time doing it, and it became a big hassle in order to do it.

LO: Yeah, I definitely think that is a major problem in any university setting like this. Faculty members frequently are evaluated on their research [unclear] and how well they get along with their colleagues.

~22:51

AW: That's right.

LO: Teaching may take a back seat. They may not.... I'll keep my mouth closed.

AW: I don't know what my image was in the other parts of campus at that time, because I was doing those things, and people just didn't—you didn't can people.

LO: You *couldn't* can people. You just can't do that.

AW: No.

LO: Well, aside from your and the department's image elsewhere on the campus when it comes to making these decisions about faculty members who should be let go, how about the department's image on campus when it comes to the research that you were doing, and the money that you were bringing in? I would imagine you probably had to pursue some grant funding to support some of the projects that you did. Do you think that any of the other departments viewed you differently? Or maybe negatively? Or jealous? Or wonderful?

AW: Yeah, I think there's a certain amount of animosity because Dil Elliott [phonetic] who came here also from the University of Washington at a later time, we got the first million-dollar grant that ever came to San Diego State, and that was out of the.... All of these things were housed within the Social Research Center. Now when research is going on, of course you buy up time, teaching time, so that generally, for instance, I only taught half-time for a number of years because I

was involved in various kinds of research projects. I think there's resentment about that. I think sometime they make a conflict between teaching and research, which is unfortunate.

~24:55

LO: You taught part-time, but you held a full-time faculty position.

AW: That's right.

LO: Does that mean that they couldn't hire somebody else to do your teaching?

AW: Yeah, they hired a person. They have a half-time position to hire somebody. And the money's figured right in the project, so when you submit a project proposal, that's all part of that.

LO: Right—what the department is going to have to reimburse, to get somebody to teach those classes that you cannot teach. Right.

Well, which of your research projects that Sue Ernest [phonetic] listed in this Mortar Board nomination here, which of these research projects did you find most interesting to yourself, the most stimulating? Let me give this to you.

AW: Oh, I think that grant that I just told you about.

LO: The one-million-dollar one?

AW: See if that works. I'm having a hard time hearing it.

LO: What is that?

AW: These electronic things, you can adjust the hearing aid by pressing.

LO: That's great. Well I'll speak up also.

AW: Okay. I think the project on school dropouts and delinquency was probably the most interesting one. But it became interesting because the time that we did

that— I think we did our work on that in the sixties, if I recall correctly—and it was at that time that within San Diego there's a John Birch Society. I don't know if you've ever heard of the John Birch Society.

~27:03

LO: Oh yes, uh-huh.

AW: Well, our research project involved taking a cohort—actually, we're taking all the students in a given grade in San Diego—ninth graders—and then surviving them right through graduation. We did a lot of things with the parents, and we interviewed 'em every year and so forth. So it necessitated our going into the classroom and giving a questionnaire to these students. I think we had 3,000 or something like that. The John Birch Society heard.... And then rumors started to fly around that we were asking all sorts of personal questions, like sexual behavior. All these rumors! Nothing like that was *ever* in this. The school system didn't back us up, and we had a lot of meetings with them. I even got in touch with the persons who headed up the Birch Society and asked them to come out and meet with us and go over the questionnaire, "Because I want you to see what we're doing." I remember the day, about three hours, just going over it and saying why we asked this question, what did it mean, and so forth. And when they got through, one of the ladies said, "Well, I'd let my daughter take that. There's nothing wrong with that." Then they left and we were delighted that we had made it. (LO: That's good. Cleared the air.) Two or three days later, they were back at it again. I phoned them up and I said, "Why are you upset about

this?" They said, "Well, you showed us that, and you can't trust sociologists and researchers, and you probably didn't show us the one that you're using."

~29:02

LO: (laughs) Can't please everybody all the time, you know.

AW: At this point, there were a lot of activities politically. Our project was turned over to the grand jury, so we had a grand jury investigation.

LO: The project, or the eventually *outcome* of your project?

AW: Well, at this point we were stalemated, we couldn't continue with our project, and we'd just started. And the school system finally kicked us out. In the meantime, I had tried to protect ourselves in case this happened, and I had contact with people in the Sweetwater School District, and we used that, and they were very cooperative, understanding, and understood what was going on. But we lost our black population that we normally had in San Diego at that time. I had some other contacts up in the Bay Area by Palo Alto, and we eventually used East Palo Alto. I don't know if you've heard about East Palo Alto, but it's a predominantly black community. And so we had two research sites now.

LO: I see, instead of just one, center of San Diego, you had two.

AW: So we had to travel back and forth from here to San Francisco. And that went on successfully and we finally finished it. It was a longitudinal study, went on for five years. So that was exciting.

LO: And you came to some conclusions about what might cause children to drop out, and what might cause children to stay in school all the way through?

AW: Yeah. You know, we did a lot of publications from it.

~30:55

LO: National Institutes of Mental Health, 1963-68. That must have been very frustrating, trying to get that thing off the ground with everybody standing in your way.

AW: Yeah, just trying to get it started, terribly frustrating.

LO: You are obviously environmentally concerned. You've even written a book on mountaineering.

AW: Oh yes.

LO: I believe I saw your book in the library's computer catalog.

AW: Is that right?

LO: Yeah, I checked the PAC [phonetic] to make sure [unclear].

AW: Yeah, actually I did that with Henry Mandall [phonetic]. He came up with things you wanted included, and then I wrote that book.

LO: You wrote the text?

AW: Yeah.

[31:48-31:53, silence, probably change from original Tape 1, Side A to Side B]

AW: When I first went to Seattle, I was upset by the weather, and I complained about it, and someone suggested that if I didn't like it, why didn't I go back to San Francisco? And so Lucille, my wife, and I, decided to see what all this outdoor business was about, because I was a city boy. I learned how to ride on the bumpers of streetcars and stuff like that, you know. So we went out and we did some backpacking. It was a very humorous thing, because we didn't have the equipment or anything like that. We eventually got interested in the

mountaineers [or is that Mountainaires? (Tr.)], and took their basic mountaineering course, and eventually climbed most of the major peaks in the United States. We learned snow and ice by mountain.

~32:55

LO: Lucille too?

AW: Yeah.

LO: Did she go along with you on all those climbs?

AW: Yeah, we did.

LO: That's great.

AW: So that was fun stuff. And I was in charge of the lectures of the mountaineering course eventually. And so when I came down here, I had all that material, and that was the basis for the basic mountaineering book.

LO: Oh! so you already had it all written already, huh?

AW: Practically.

LO: That's great. And you also served two terms as president for the San Diego Chapter of the Sierra Club. I'm not going to get into too much of this stuff, because it's not directly related to SDSU.

AW: That's true.

LO: Are you still involved in the Sierra Club?

AW: No.

LO: No longer, huh? Did you ever take any environmental issues here at San Diego State? I'm thinking about.... There was so much open space around here, and

now there is none. I have talked to other retired faculty members who wish that some space had been set aside. Did you ever think of that?

~34:02

AW: It never became an issue. I suppose we didn't see how much it was going to grow and what was going to happen, I think. I think it was a mistake. People who have been real active environmentally—Phil Pride [phonetic] in geography, and some of the other people who are....

LO: I don't know if he would have been around long enough to see....

AW: Even Jim Crouch [phonetic], you know, was involved with the Audubon Society for years.

LO: Yeah. But I never asked him the question about how he felt about preserving any of the space around here at San Diego State. I think by the time Pride came on board, Adobe Falls was no more.

AW: Yeah, that's right.

LO: Which is really too bad. I think I'll skip over that one a little bit. Now let's get back a little bit to the department and university administration. When you came here in 1954, President Love was around.

AW: Yeah, he'd just been here a year or two.

LO: What did you think of President Love and the administration?

AW: President Love I had really good relationships with. I think he was a great president. I think he's the best president they've ever had. And he was the type of person that could say he was wrong and apologize for it, which is unusual.

The other person that was really important at that time was Dean Watson, of course, who was dean of instruction, I guess.

LO: Yeah. I always get Watson and Walker mixed up.

~35:51

AW: I remember the first year I was here, I had done my Ph.D. dissertation on suicide in the San Francisco Bay area, and they were holding the American Association for the Advancement of Science at Berkeley that year. So I had come here in the fall, and my paper had been selected for distribution to the media. So I had to turn in fifty copies. I went over to someplace—they had a mimeograph center, I think, at that time—and I went over there and I said, “I’d like fifty copies of this,” which you’re used to doing at a university. And they said that would be impossible. They said, “Is it instructionally related?” And I said, “Well, I don’t think so. It’s been selected for this. I think it’s important.” And they said, “Well, no, we can’t do that.” So I went to Dean Watson and I said, “Look, I’d like to get fifty copies of this, and they wouldn’t do it. Can you do it?” Now it’s true I’d only been here six months, and they didn’t know me from Adam, but he said he was sorry, he couldn’t help out. So I remember going up, there was a place up on El Cajon Boulevard, and paying for it myself, and getting the fifty copies. Well, so they were distributed to the news media in San Francisco, and we came out of the meeting when I gave the paper, it had made the headlines of the *San Francisco News* or the *Call Bulletin* or the *Chronicle*—whatever it was. There happened to be a couple of people from San Diego State that I didn’t know, at those meetings. I guess somebody from physical. When I came back, Watson

called me in and apologized for not doing it, and I could mimeograph anything I damned well pleased [after that]. Those were fun.... I can understand. You see, that's kind of what happened.

When I came in '54, there was this small cohesive group of professors and social groups. A number of them had known one another for many, many years; they went to high school together; and they got teaching credentials and were teaching in the public schools; and then they were hired here as professors, you see, without Ph.D.s—some of them didn't even have M.A.s. They eventually got an M.A. So there was that cohesive kind of group that was here. And there was no pretense or no effort to bring any of the new people into that group at all. But the school grew fast enough so that we formed our own group and had our own parties and that sort of thing.

~39:07

LO: You mean the new faculty members did?

AW: Yeah.

LO: I didn't realize that there was kind of a split between the old school and the new school, pre-fifties and fifties onward. Hm.

AW: In fact, Lucille and I would, I would think every other weekend we'd go up to Los Angeles, and that was quite a drive in those days. Because there were the people that we knew. I'd been active in professional associations, so I knew a lot of people around. And we knew people there, and we'd stay the weekend. These were people we could talk to.

LO: Why up in L.A.? I don't understand why L.A.

AW: Well, because there's UCLA, and there were people I just knew—but there are no schools here. In other words, nobody in sociology.

LO: That you knew, and knew as a friend.

~39:58

AW: Yeah. Well, within the department there wasn't any. I had outside-of-friendship kind of things with the people there.

LO: Well obviously things have changed a little bit for you now, because of this retirement association, you were instrumental in getting that going. So you have a feeling about those people now—that's my impression. [unclear] good friends?

AW: Well, an interesting thing happened.... *Very*, very good friends, a lot of these people who were here then. I didn't know them. I didn't know them, actually, until after I'd retired. We used to have faculty meetings in which everybody went to the faculty meeting. But I just....

LO: But it was not easy to socialize with these people?

AW: No. We were pretty well excluded from them.

LO: Yeah. Well, you were possibly separated into your own office area, your own department.

AW: I remember having a lot of inter-departmental things, particularly with psychology and history and that sort of thing. We'd have the cocktail parties and that sort of thing, but none of the old guard....

LO: Would show?

AW: Well, I'm sure they probably weren't invited.

LO: Oh, that's unfortunate.

AW: Yeah.

LO: That's really too bad. That's not a good way to create good will among department members. You should include everybody, it seems.

~41:29

AW: Yeah. So I think as you talk to other people, they said, "Well, I didn't really know Aubrey until ten years ago."

LO: Until after you retired! (laughter) Well, since I mentioned the retirement association, let me ask you about that. Whose idea was it to start the retirement association? And can you tell me how it went?

AW: How it started? Yeah. I'll have to give you a little history from the University of Washington. Years ago they had an awful time up there. They had situations in which the retired professors weren't getting any money, some of the widows were on welfare—it was an *awful* situation. A very good friend of mine who was a faculty member there decided to do something about it and changed the whole retirement system up to the University of Washington. In the process of doing that, they established a retirement association. So I had a lot of contact on the standing of what took place there. It was a faculty-staff kind of a retirement association.

LO: As opposed to just faculty only?

AW: Yes. So I mentioned this down here, and then about that same time, Sue Ernest, who was involved with the statewide association, called a bunch of people together and said, "What do you think about having a retirement association of faculty people? And she went on to elaborate about what it should be, and we

thought it was a good idea. And at that point they asked me if I would do that. Of course I was already ready to do it in the first place.

LO: But a little more extensively, though—not just [unclear] faculty. It sounds like Sue Ernest had the idea that it should be faculty.

~43:34

AW: She was vehement about it. It caused a lot of problems, arguing that it should be only faculty, and we should sit around having great thoughts, along this kind of thing. But I brought a group of people together and we met for a whole year, just discussing, drawing up the bylaws and so forth, and that was one of the big issues.

LO: Personnel services had to be drawn into this as well, to figuring out what the retirement association could do. I mean, we're not talking just about a social group—we're talking about something that's going to benefit the retirees. (AW: Yes.) And of course the people from personnel services are not necessarily faculty members. I'm thinking of Norma Summersgill [phonetic]. Wasn't she instrumental in the retirement association?

AW: One of the first ones. She was on that original committee. So when I formed that committee, I was very careful to balance it between the staff people and faculty people. And that's when it got a little embarrassing a couple of times when Sue Ernest was so vehement and outspoken about how we shouldn't have any staff people in it. And some of the people—one of the persons—got mad and was offended by it and got off the committee because of that. But people have opinions like that, and to Sue's credit, she's one of the persons who's the most enthusiastic about having a faculty-staff [unclear].

LO: Yeah, that's what I figured [unclear] this document here. (AW: Yeah.) The way she wrote it, it sounds like she loves it, it's a great idea. Well now there are a number of active members in that retirement association. Most of them are faculty, however, are they not? I don't hear of very many active staff.

~45:43

AW: Grant Nielsen [phonetic] is a staff....

LO: Oh, excuse me. Aside from Grant Nielsen.

AW: I think Aviva Link [phonetic] has been active—a whole bunch of people I'm trying to think of. I think it's kind of a balance. It's a balance on the board.

LO: Scanning through the directory, I see a lot of faculty names, not very many.... I don't mean to harp on the staff thing. It's just a fluttering thought.

AW: I think I've counted 'em all, and there are more faculty than there are staff.

LO: What kind of activities do you do in the retirement association?

AW: It's just a wide range of things from social activities over the months. I guess on Saturday we went up to the Laguna Art Festival. That was fun. I hadn't been up there for ten years, and that was fun to do that again. So a lot of activities of that nature, a wide range of things. I think the thing that *I* feel stronger about is some of the other things that we've done with the Mortar Board. That thing, we were involved in that award. We were involved in having an emeritus faculty member give a speech once a year. And most important of all, my little baby is the scholarships. This year we actually gave three \$1,000 scholarships.

LO: That's wonderful!

AW: So that's exciting, and that's growing. Hopefully we get enough money to have that self-perpetuating.

LO: That's great. Now these scholarships are supported by endowments?

~47:56

AW: Yeah, of people who have donated, and we've had projects, we've sold Entertainment '90 books, and whatever proceeds we got from that went into it. Sometimes in having trips and activities, there'll be a surplus from there, and we'll put it in. Hopefully we can get somebody to give us a lot of money sometime.

LO: Yeah. You need a benefactor, huh, to give you lots and lots of money.

AW: Yeah.

LO: And then you put it away in an endowment account and live off the interest. That's the way to go.

AW: That's what we're trying to do.