



LEE F. BROWNE
(b. 1922)

INTERVIEWED BY
SHIRLEY K. COHEN

June 14, 1999

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Subject area

Administration, minorities, education, African-Americans

Abstract

Interview in one session, June 14, 1999, with Lee F. Browne, Lecturer in Education, emeritus. Browne served as Director of Secondary School Relations and Special Student Programs at Caltech from 1970 until 1990. The interview briefly covers Browne's youth in the 1920s in North Carolina, his natural curiosity, and the importance of his education to his family; his time at Storer College prep school in Harper's Ferry, West Virginia. Failure to be admitted to Duke University and lack of permission to live on campus at Michigan State for race reasons discourages him. He then applies to West Virginia State College, graduates in biology and chemistry. Details about service in World War II in desegregated division of the U.S. navy. He moves to Los Angeles as teaching assistant at UCLA, then eventually gets permanent job at Valley Junior College and buys house in Pasadena, then Altadena. Change to secondary school teaching in chemistry, first at Muir High School, then Blair High School in Pasadena. Remarks about bussing in Pasadena in the 1970s. Teaching the children of Caltech faculty. He tells about his recruitment to Caltech and a general mandate to get good students, beginning around 1970. Survey of the programs he started, including summer classes; problems of recruiting and funding good students from minority backgrounds. Comments on race relations on campus. Notes change in direction of minority recruitment activity during the late 1980s to 1990, leading to

his retirement. Concludes with an assessment of Caltech's success or lack thereof in getting and keeping African-American and Latino students.

Administrative information

Access

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Lee Brown with the Black Students Union of Caltech. From Caltech's *Big T*, 1975.

Left to right: Lorenzo Cotton, Robert Thornton (Co-Chairman), Lee Browne, Richard Eshun, and Gregory White

CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY ARCHIVES

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH LEE F. BROWNE

BY SHIRLEY K. COHEN

PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

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ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interview with Lee F. Browne
Pasadena, California

by Shirley K. Cohen
June 14, 1999

Begin Tape 1, Side 1

COHEN: It's good of you to be with us this June 14th, 1999.

BROWNE: Yes. It's warm out there.

COHEN: OK, Lee. I could call you Mr. Browne, but I feel too familiar to do that.

BROWNE: [Chuckle] That's all right.

COHEN: Tell us a little bit about your childhood and your family. Let's start there.

BROWNE: Well, my mother was about sixteen, but she was a mature sixteen. We lived in North Carolina. She was from Reedsville. And this young man came down from Nantucket. Where is that? In Massachusetts or somewhere like that?

COHEN: Massachusetts, yes.

BROWNE: And [he] met my mother and looked at her. I guess he liked her. She was one of these corn-fed women that became voluptuous when she was young.

COHEN: [Chuckle] Good. OK.

BROWNE: And then he went to the war.

COHEN: Now, that would have been—

BROWNE: World War I.

COHEN: World War I. OK. We're going back a long time.

BROWNE: Yes. See, I'm seventy-seven. [Chuckle]

COHEN: Ah, OK. [Chuckle]

BROWNE: So he went to World War I. And in the army he met my in-law uncles. My mother had two brothers, and then there was one man that my aunt had married, so that was three. So there were four of these men that went to the war together. So when he came back, my mother and he were married. And I was the product of that marriage.

COHEN: Are you a first child, or an only child?

BROWNE: First and only child.

COHEN: Ah, OK.

BROWNE: He was a blacksmith, and I used to spend time with him—as I can remember, [I was] about five or six years of age—looking at what he was doing and trying to understand why he was going through all of these machinations with heat and metals and all that stuff.

COHEN: I see. Introduction to science in a practical way.

BROWNE: Yes, that was my first meddling with that.

COHEN: Was this a small town, this Reedsville?

BROWNE: Oh, yes. But by then they had moved to High Point, which is a very large furniture-manufacturing center.

COHEN: OK.

BROWNE: You'll see many dressers and things were built there. But he worked as a blacksmith because they had a lot of horses and they did a lot of repairs on iron and all that business. But they didn't stay together, because he became involved with the New Jersey Stars or Giants or something. It was a black baseball team. And he played baseball. And he'd go all over the place.

COHEN: So he was on a professional team?

BROWNE: Yes, but it was not the majors. It was a black league.

COHEN: Which was separate.

BROWNE: Yes. You've heard of that business?

COHEN: Sure.

BROWNE: So my parents didn't make it too well. My grandmother meddled and broke up the marriage.

COHEN: OK.

BROWNE: And she forced him away. They wouldn't let him see me hardly. So my mother brought me up. And she had some very, very—what I call—old-fashioned ideas about how you bring up young folks. You know, you make them go to bed at night, you give them a place to study and you make them study, and you tell them they're going to starve to death if they don't learn this—"because you know how racist this society is." And she was really subject to that.

So I did most of what she wanted me to do. And then one time she let me spend a couple of years with a minister and his wife. Reverend Tipp.

COHEN: And you lived with them?

BROWNE: I lived with them. They lived in Badin, North Carolina. That's where Alcoa has a plant. That's where the first Alcoa plant was.

COHEN: Aluminum?

BROWNE: Yes. So I'd scout all around through that plant and spend time with him. His wife, though, was a very, very gifted woman.

COHEN: Now, how old were you?

BROWNE: Oh, I must have been about seven or eight.

COHEN: Oh, so you were still small.

BROWNE: Yes, I was small. But I had been exposed to all this stuff. In fact, I only went to school one year when I was with the Tipps. But Mrs. Tipp was gifted. She played the piano and led the choir in the church. And she entered me in contests, verbal contests: "What is the name of this animal?" And "Pronounce this word." And I was a kid of the minister, so I was a typical minister's kid—you know, knowledgeable, well-dressed, and all that sort of stuff. But finally [after] about two years of that my mother became jealous, and she wanted me back. [Chuckle] So I went back to High Point with her. And we took a house and we lived there, but she kept pushing me to do certain kinds of things about studying. Now, her mother was still living—the grandmother I was talking about. And she was a leader in the community for killing hogs. See, High Point was a city, but there were big fields. And there was a place where they had all these hogs that they fed and kept. They'd start off little—small animals—and then they'd get to be 400 and 500 pounds. And then she would take the men out there. And she was the leader of this

business of killing and curing the hogs. She'd say, "Don't do that, do this," and so forth. Let me give you some examples about that. She'd say, "All right. Now, John, I want you to take this ax and take the blunt end and hit this hog in the head." And then she'd hang the hog up by his Achilles tendon so all the blood would come out, and then they would skin the hog.

COHEN: I don't think we need all these details, Lee.

BROWNE: But these details are part of what it was about in my life, because I asked her a lot of questions like, "Why are you taking this fat out?" Because she'd take the fat out and put it in a big, old iron pot, boil it, burn leaves underneath the pot, put water on those leaves and branches, mash it up, and then put it all in the fat and stir it up. When you'd come down there the next day, it would be hard as a rock.

COHEN: She was making soap with lye.

BROWNE: That's right. But the bottom of it was glycerin. And she said, "Now, you can do certain things with this glycerin."

COHEN: So she was teaching you chemistry.

BROWNE: Yes. And I was asking her. She was motivating me to do that. So I'd say, "Why are you doing that?" And she'd say, "Well, if you really want to know, you've got to go to college. I don't know. I'm just doing something I learned from my folks." She'd cut the soap and put it in wax paper and have ten or fifteen bars from every pig, you see.

COHEN: So she really put the idea in your head already that you had to go to college.

BROWNE: Well, my father started telling me, "You have to learn how this is done. You can't learn it if you don't go to school somewhere." My grandmother showed me that you wouldn't know anything if you didn't go to school—"I don't know what I'm doing, but I'm doing it. I'm like an employer. I don't know why I'm doing this, but you can learn how to make this." And

then we'd make wine. We'd get dandelions and yeast and put them into a crock and then she'd put some hot water in there and she'd say, "Now, Lee Junior, put your feet in there. Put your feet down in there." I'd say, "What's that for?" "Well, you got some stuff between your toes that will make this stuff work." I'd say, "What do you mean 'work'?" She'd say, "Well, it's going to bubble." She meant "ferment."

COHEN: Of course, of course.

BROWNE: She was talking about the Krebs cycle, but she didn't know a thing about the Krebs cycle.

COHEN: But they did know to tell you that you had to go to college.

BROWNE: That's right. You had to go to college if you wanted to get answers to these questions.

COHEN: Yes.

BROWNE: Then after that, in about October or May, you'd hear something rattling in the back room. It would be the tops on those crocks where that wine was jumping up and down because the CO₂ was coming out. You'd get a toothache and she'd make you take a swallow and move it around in your mouth and then swallow it, and then you'd get drunk and you'd go to sleep.

[Laughter] So you had a toothache no more. There was just a whole series of things like that.

COHEN: But you were an only child all this time.

BROWNE: That's right, because my aunt had had two children that died. And therefore I was the center of attention for these adults as far as anybody growing up was concerned. The man she married would take me to the Welch Furniture Company, where he made dressers. You know, the dressers people dress in front of and put mirrors in?

COHEN: Yes.

BROWNE: Well, I watched him do that all the time. I'd say, "Why are you doing that? Why are you putting that stuff on the back?" [It was] glue. All kinds of stuff. So in effect I was learning. I was being motivated to try to understand the mechanisms of what—

COHEN: Now, did you go to regular school?

BROWNE: Oh, yes. But I was way in front of people. You see, the word picture that Mrs. Tipp had taught me about verbs and words and meanings and whatnot—

COHEN: So you were ahead of the class?

BROWNE: Yes. So I took chemistry first in the eighth grade.

COHEN: And this was still in this little town in North Carolina?

BROWNE: In this little town, yes. So finally what happened was that my mother met some person that told her, "You shouldn't be letting him go to lousy schools like that. Why don't we get him sent off to some prep school?" So they got together and they sent me to Storer College prep school.

COHEN: Storer...?

BROWNE: College. That's in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia. It started at the eighth grade and went through the fourteenth grade.

COHEN: I see. Now, was this a segregated school?

BROWNE: Yes. Listen.

COHEN: OK. [Chuckle]

BROWNE: All these schools were segregated—all of them.

COHEN: OK. It didn't matter.

BROWNE: It didn't matter where they were. Now, Storer College, on the other hand, had some Free-will Baptists who were white. Henry T. MacDonald was a white guy. He was kind of like a hippie for his time. His hair was long. And he moved into West Virginia to help some of these people find themselves. Now, remember, that's where John Brown had made his raid.

COHEN: Right.

BROWNE: I became very politicized at Storer College, because I had never thought about all of these racial problems in terms of revolution and other kinds of things like that. It had just been a way of life, see?

COHEN: Yes. And you had been quite comfortable with this?

BROWNE: Yes, [because] I had made it. But then some things began to happen. When I was in about twelfth grade, I decided I wanted to go to Duke.

COHEN: Duke University?

BROWNE: Yes. So I applied to Duke. You know, no one ever told me anything. I wrote my name down and sent it in. I guess my name is funny, so they sent me another application and I filled it all out. When I got it back, they said, "I'm sorry. At this time, we do not accept members of your race."

COHEN: At least they were honest.

BROWNE: Well, they said that. And that nearly broke my heart, because I had lived in High Point. Duke is in Durham, North Carolina. And I had constantly looked at the Duke pictures in the social pages and read about their football teams and their basketball teams and their scholars. It was a major institution; it's the Harvard of the South. Anyway, I got rejected. And that nearly broke my heart. Then Henry MacDonald told me, "Don't get carried away with that. You can find another school." But I never forgot that. It began to disturb me, along with all of the other things I was learning being in Harpers Ferry—you see, Harpers Ferry was a place where you had to face up to the social patterns in this country. You couldn't get on without facing those. [Chuckle] I became very, very, very motivated to learn all about the social problems. And that was capped off when Langston Hughes [American poet, 1902-67] came to Storer College once. You see, Bette Davis and Langston Hughes both came to Storer College once while I was there. And Langston had the most effect on me. He spent a lot of time with me, and I wondered about that. I later found out that there may have been some kind of—I don't want to say this in this thing, because it may do something wrong—but there may be some kind of deviation in Langston sexually.

COHEN: OK. We understand that. Right.

BROWNE: So I didn't get too close, but he spent a lot of time with me and a couple of other people. And he gave me a lot of understanding. He said, "Now, why aren't you a writer? Why do you want to get into science? Science's nothing. You ought to do something" So I paid a lot of attention to what Langston was telling me about this writing business. And, therefore, I began to spend more time on that. Consequently, I have big stacks of poems. In fact, I've had some published—back in New Jersey somewhere.

COHEN: Oh, good for you.

BROWNE: There are hundreds of them. Plus, just writing generally. So anyway, later, after Bette Davis came and Langston Hughes—

COHEN: But Bette Davis is not black.

BROWNE: No, no. Bette Davis was a white movie star.

COHEN: Yes, right.

BROWNE: She gave a lot of money to Storer College prep school.

COHEN: Now, why would that be?

BROWNE: I don't know. I guess she was contacted. She may have been part of that Free-will Baptist bunch in her background, which nobody knows about.

COHEN: Yes.

BROWNE: But anyway, she came and spent time and was friendly with the students. There were a lot of gifted students at that school. They were the kind of people like me who were motivated to do things out of the ordinary. So Bette Davis was very, very, very good. Then after that, I wrote a letter to Michigan State. And I talked it over with Yak—Y-A-K, because of his hair.
[Chuckle]

COHEN: Yes. That's Henry MacDonald?

BROWNE: Yes. Henry T. MacDonald. If you know anything about a yak animal, he's got this furry mane.

COHEN: OK.

BROWNE: That's what he looked like. So he said, "Yes, that's a great idea. You'll like their school of science," because I was taking courses at some of the colleges. While I was still in high school I was taking some of the college courses, like AP [courses].

COHEN: Right.

BROWNE: So I wrote them. I have that letter somewhere in there or at home. The president wrote me back and said, “Well, wonderful. We’ve looked at your transcripts and we’ve looked at your background and we are happy to invite you to come. However, you cannot live on the campus.”

COHEN: What year was this?

BROWNE: This was in 1942 or ’43 or ’44.

COHEN: During the war—in there sometime.

BROWNE: He said, “You can’t live on the campus.” But Michigan State was in East Lansing. And he said, “We’re going to fix it so you can live in Lansing with a minister, because you know about ministers and you don’t seem to have any problem with it.” Anyway, that was the second big shock in my life that just de-motivated me. I felt like an idiot living in a country where we had stupid rules like that for people that were really interested in doing certain kinds of things and were told they couldn’t. That was one of the reasons I took the job at Caltech. I believed that anybody that wanted to do science and mathematics and engineering and other strange things should be able to go wherever they wanted to go to school.

COHEN: So did you go to Michigan then?

BROWNE: No, I didn’t. I simply would not go under those circumstances. I was very, very upset. In fact, I decided I was going to stay out a while, a year or so. But there’s a state college in West Virginia.

COHEN: Morgantown University?

BROWNE: No. It’s an institute. Anyway, I went to school there. And I joined the Kappa Psi fraternity. I got a degree in biology and chemistry and began to write a lot, because my minor

was in English. So I spent a lot of time [doing that]. Then, because I had the chemistry/biology background, I was deferred from the army, a 2-A deferment.

COHEN: OK.

BROWNE: I got a 2-A deferment. I didn't have to go right away. I didn't have to go until '44 or '45. And then I took the Eddy test. I got a ninety-nine on the Eddy test.

COHEN: Eddy test?

BROWNE: That was an electronics and electrical engineering program where they would check you out to see how you'd do in math and whether or not you knew anything about scientific notation and stuff like that.

COHEN: Yes.

BROWNE: So anyway, because of that I was bypassed by the army. And I went to the navy, who took me in, in the non-segregated branch. I was one of the first fifteen African Americans to ever go into the navy that was eligible to become an admiral. Most of them were cooks, bakers, and stewards. But I was in the admiral branch, which I thought was something at the time.

COHEN: Yes.

BROWNE: Anyway, I went on. And I took that test again, or some other test, and went to the navy V-7 Program, which was at the University of Pennsylvania. And I was very impressed with that, because here was a non-segregated school in its own right, but there were only two African Americans in that company of 1,500 people.

COHEN: Oh, wow.

BROWNE: In the V-7 Program.

COHEN: Yes.

BROWNE: And guess who the guy was that drilled all those men. Me!!

COHEN: Oh. [Chuckle]

BROWNE: I was the only one that had ever had any ROTC—at West Virginia State College. And I used to drill them up and down Woodbine Avenue. And black folks would come from South Philly and North Philly—

COHEN: To watch this?

BROWNE: To see this light—they called them “light”—African American dealing with these white boys.

COHEN: [Laughter]

BROWNE: That was a thrill to them. So we did that till I got out. And then I went on to—let’s see, I think I came to UCLA.

COHEN: So then you moved to Los Angeles?

BROWNE: Yes. About ’48, or something like that. My wife and I were married in ’48. And we still are married. But it was a whole series of events like that which were very contradictory to what all of the legal journals said and what the Constitution said and what the Bible said. It was very, very, very destructive to me. I had to really struggle with it to overcome it, because if you were a person who really thought you were an American and you really did all the things you were taught to do, you expected society to do all the things it was supposed to do. But this social environment has never done all it’s supposed to do for certain people.

COHEN: That’s true. So you came to Los Angeles.

BROWNE: Yes.

COHEN: So in a sense, that's out of the South. I mean, North Carolina's still the South.

BROWNE: Yes. But I had had a lot of experience by then having been in West Virginia. You see, West Virginia's kind of a funny state. Its motto over the West Virginia flag is "Mountaineers always free." Even though West Virginia was one of those funny border states, there was very little racial tension. You see, people worked in the mines together, they farmed together. So that was a carryover activity for me to see how people could really get along. And they really did get along. So then I went to West Virginia State. It was much the same way. So I had kind of gotten away from all of that racial stuff from North Carolina and the South. I had gotten kind of elevated a little bit. And when I came here, I was ready for it, because California at that time was much like West Virginia. That is—

COHEN: A border state.

BROWNE: That's right. It was a border state.

COHEN: Yes.

BROWNE: When I came to UCLA, though, I got to be a teaching assistant.

COHEN: So you went into graduate school at UCLA?

BROWNE: Yes.

COHEN: And you had the GI Bill, or the equivalent of that?

BROWNE: Yes, but I didn't use it, because they paid me for being a teaching assistant. You see?

COHEN: OK.

BROWNE: So I did that. And then I decided I wanted to try—Oh, I know what it was. In the navy they tried to get me to stay at the University of Pennsylvania after the war was over and go into some program, maybe into medical school. I said, “No. I want to go and become a teacher, I think.” And so when I came out here, at UCLA I did certain kinds of things. And then I tried to get a teaching job, and that was impossible. I qualified; I got a junior college credential; but I couldn’t get a job.

COHEN: In all of Los Angeles?

BROWNE: No. No where here. Finally, though, about two or three years later, they wrote me and told me they had a job for me. So I worked at Valley JC [Valley Junior College].

COHEN: So what did you do in the meanwhile, then?

BROWNE: Oh, I worked for welfare, probation, stuff like that.

COHEN: So you’d get jobs like that.

BROWNE: Yes. But that was shocking, too. Anyway, I finally did go to Valley Junior College.

COHEN: Oh, that’s Northridge probably.

BROWNE: No. It’s still there. It’s still Valley Junior College, in the San Fernando Valley. It’s a big junior college.

COHEN: Oh, OK.

BROWNE: Of course, we lived right here, where the Avery label company is. It’s now on Kensington Place in Pasadena.

COHEN: Right here in Pasadena?

BROWNE: Yes. We had a house there.

COHEN: What made you do that? How did you happen to come to Pasadena?

BROWNE: Well, when we came through here, my wife and I, she said, "I like this town."

COHEN: [Laughter] Good. OK.

BROWNE: We were going down the street, and so we stopped. And I made arrangements for this house. But anyway, that was torn down so that they could build the Avery labels office, and we moved into Altadena where we live now. We didn't move a lot.

COHEN: Yes.

BROWNE: Most people moved out from where I lived, oh, east and north and all that—we stayed right there in the house. Anyway, so then the guy that was the personnel director [for the college] in Pasadena said, "Maybe you should come to work at our junior college."

COHEN: That would have been PCC [Pasadena Community College].

BROWNE: Yes. So I said, "I don't think I want to work at a junior college. I'm not satisfied with the students I get. These are not virgin students. These are mis-educated students when I get them at the junior college. You have to go back and really do a lot of stuff over." So then they put me at Muir.

COHEN: So you came here to Pasadena.

BROWNE: Yes. I went to Muir. I had a great deal of success.

COHEN: It was a very good high school at that time.

BROWNE: Yes. It was one of the five best high schools. But I had an unusual amount of success with students. I thought I wouldn't, because they were very middle class, mostly from La Cañada. There were 1,000 La Cañada kids that went to Muir, and I'd guess 800 of them went to college somewhere. A lot of them—200 a year—would go to Stanford. And I thought I would have trouble, but they were one of the best supporters I ever had at Muir. And that's why, when I fell out with the principal at Muir, I was sent to Blair.

COHEN: That's when Blair first opened up.

BROWNE: Yes. I was sent to Blair. I was the department chairman, and all that sort of stuff.

COHEN: And that's when I met you.

BROWNE: Yes.

COHEN: All those years ago.

BROWNE: That was a long time ago. The problem was that there were certain kinds of social rules in this town at that time that were very, very strange—very strange.

COHEN: Like what? Tell me, Lee.

BROWNE: Well, for instance, when they wanted to start busing in Pasadena—

COHEN: OK. That would have been in 1970, or something like that.

BROWNE: No. It started long before then.

COHEN: Long before then, OK.

BROWNE: Yes. It started bubbling up. I took the position that I didn't know whether I liked busing or not, unless you were going to make sure the classrooms were integrated. You see, people don't want to be bused just to be social. [Chuckle] I think I taught five black kids at Muir in eight or ten years.

COHEN: They weren't there? Where were they?

BROWNE: Well, eighteen percent of them on the campus were black, but they didn't take the prerequisites to take chemistry. That was when I first realized that they were mis- and under-educating many of the kids in our society—sometimes along gender rules or racial rules, and sometimes along other rules. And that stuck with me. You cannot mis- and under-educate kids. You don't ever know what you're going to get, or what you're missing.

COHEN: Yes.

BROWNE: So I was first aware of that—the fact that I taught maybe five or six kids, and these kids all went to medical school or somewhere like that. They did well, but there weren't many of them. And when I got to Blair I tried to do more about that, and it was very tough. You couldn't get counselors to cooperate. You couldn't get principals [to cooperate]. John Muir had a principal named John Venable who fired one of the best social science teachers there for having a beard. His name was Paul Finot; he had a beard.

COHEN: I remember that.

BROWNE: And I said, “Well, why are you doing that? The man's beard is neat and clean.” Well, I had been one of his supporters. And he said, “Oh, well, but some of these black kids will mimic him and have beards.” And then he said [that] he didn't say that. So the faculty split. And I was the leader of the anti-Venable faction. He said [that] he didn't say that. Walter Shatford was then on the school board, and he called me at home one night and said, “In the *Times* and in the *Star News* tomorrow there will be a statement of Venable's deposition, in which

he said that he didn't want this man teaching because he had a beard and the black students would mimic him." So we had a meeting that next morning, and he stood up there in front of the faculty—there were 180 faculty people at that point—and I got up and lost my temper and said, "You're telling a G. D. lie. You know you said it, and I'm going to read it out of these two papers." And so some people said, "Sit down! Sit down!" Others said, "No, let him read!" And I read out of both papers what he said. That's what it said in the paper.

COHEN: And then what happened to you? You went to Blair High School?

BROWNE: Well, at the end of that year, they sent me to Blair. And that's how I wound up at Blair. But I still had the problems with some of the social issues in town, because people were fundamentally dishonest. Let me give you a good example. One of my best friends was John [F.] Benton. John Benton was a professor at Caltech. And we finally got busing through, even though I said, "I'm very, very reluctant about busing, because unless you're going to integrate classrooms and give everybody a shot at having some future by teaching them certain prerequisite courses so they can go from one level to the next, busing doesn't mean anything to me." Anyway, so it came to my attention that they were going to bus but they were going to send all of the young African American kids over to Sierra Madre, like they were shipping them out. And then the older kids [would] come here. And they wanted to keep the parents from integrating. That's what happens when you do things like that. And I told Benton about it. I said, "Look, this is no way to run an elementary school. If you're going to try to integrate classes, don't you have to have some kind of place where the parents can get together?" Well, Benton and I finally fell out, because he didn't agree with me. I said, "Look, you can't do that. You've got to let parents go ahead [and integrate]. You're not going to have a whole lot of that, but whatever comes up naturally ought to come up. Because otherwise you are going to just be having another form of segregation." Well, anyway, we fell out. When he died, we were still not speaking. He was a good man, but he didn't understand the real anatomy of racism in this country. You see, this is an inbred thing. Just like a termite kisses its young so they can have the bacteria to eat wood [chuckle], some of these parents kiss these kids and put that stuff into them, you see. So we fell out.

COHEN: Of course, you were right. It didn't integrate the classrooms.

BROWNE: No, of course not. And I told him that. I said, "They'll run away. People will run." For a while, when I was at Caltech, I worked at the Chandler School in the morning. I taught an integrated class. Do you know Chandler?

COHEN: The private school, yes.

BROWNE: And for that reason. So my life after about, oh, the Storer College years, when I was about sixteen or so, has just been frothed with these social issues against learning. I still was involved in chemistry and in molecular biology and in learning the math that makes that possible, but some of these social issues were more burning. And that's what motivated me after Caltech investigated me for three years at Blair.

COHEN: Did you know that they were doing that?

BROWNE: Well, I knew it after about a year. The reason they were doing that was because I taught many of their sons and daughters and grandchildren.

COHEN: And at that time they had already decided to have some kind of program?

BROWNE: No.

COHEN: I mean, what was going on?

BROWNE: They were investigating me because their kids would come home and say, "Daddy, you were wrong. That's not what Mr. Browne said at all. And then I looked it up in the book, and here it is." You know, many professors took courses long ago, and they forget all of the changes that have been made.

COHEN: Sure, sure.

BROWNE: You see? And I had been going back to the National Science Foundation meeting with Harry Gray and Linus Pauling—you know, learning new stuff. And I would bring that. They'd say, "You don't know what you're talking about. This man knows all of that stuff. He doesn't even have to look in the book sometimes."

COHEN: [Chuckle]

BROWNE: So then they started sending people to look. And guys would be in the meetings and whatnot—

COHEN: So you could really say that your first introduction to Caltech was through students of professors?

BROWNE: Yes. Well, it was through the kids who had Caltech fathers or administrators who became motivated to see who this guy was. I'll give you a good example. Do you know [Arie] Haagen-Smit?

COHEN: Sure.

BROWNE: Haagen-Smit's daughter went home one night and they fell out about something.

COHEN: Joanna? What was her name? Joanna?

BROWNE: Yes. She never told me that, but he sent word that he wanted to meet with me. So he had a little shack right in the middle of the campus near the humanities building.

COHEN: Yes.

BROWNE: So I went and sat down in that room and waited for him. And he kept coming out of his office, looking around, and going back, then coming out [again] and looking around. So

finally he said, “Have you seen a man who has come in here looking for me?” And I said, “What was his name?” And he said, “Lee Browne.” I said, “That’s me.”

COHEN: [Chuckle]

BROWNE: He didn’t know I was an African-American. Joanna never told him. Of course, she would tell him, “You don’t know what you’re talking about, and this man does.” [Laughter] So he said, “Oh, my, I messed up this time.” It was about 5:30 then. I was supposed to be there at a quarter to five, or something. So he said, “Well, come on in here and let’s talk. I can’t stay long.” So we finally left at 9:45 that night. [Chuckle] He and I talked a long time. He was not an American, you know.

COHEN: No, he was Dutch.

BROWNE: Yes. He was a Dutch man, or Swedish or something.

COHEN: Dutch.

BROWNE: He said, “My, I’ve never heard anything like that in all my life.” Anyway, that’s just how much of it worked. Like Waser had a daughter—a man named Jürg Waser. He may have been gone when you came. And they wanted to give an award to somebody that taught chemistry. So they gave it to a guy in Arcadia. But he told me one day, “You were their choice, until they found out who you were.” I never believed him, but that’s what he told me. They gave it to some guy out there. But I quit letting any of that bother me, because I felt that people have training, and they’ve been kissed by their parents with this stuff, and you can’t change them, so I can’t fight that. So finally they told me they wanted me to come to work at Caltech. And they offered me a lot of money, maybe twice as much money as I was making in the schools. I said, “I don’t really need all that money, because I’ve made an adjustment to live a certain way. So I’m not coming to work at Caltech for money. If I come to work at Caltech, it will be because I feel that we haven’t been doing the kinds of things in the minority community”—well, I don’t like to use the word “minority,” but in the black and other non-white

communities—“...that we should have been doing. And I would be trying to let those people have a shot at a place like Caltech.”

COHEN: What did they want you to do here?

BROWNE: Well, they wanted me to—

COHEN: When you say “they,” is there a person in particular that approached you?

BROWNE: Well, there was Lyman Bonner. He played some role, but not a leadership role. See, I don't think Lyman Bonner was a full faculty member in the same sense. But what-was-his-name was president? DuBridge.

COHEN: Yes.

BROWNE: Lee DuBridge. And there were some others. Robert Leighton.

COHEN: OK.

BROWNE: Yes.

COHEN: So they were anxious for you to come to Caltech to do what?

BROWNE: They wanted me to see if I could get them some good students.

COHEN: Minority students?

BROWNE: No. Good students. They knew my students at Blair and Muir had won all the five-county chemistry tests. [Chuckle] They figured I knew more about selecting students than the admissions office did.

COHEN: I see. So you were just offered something to come and to attract good students.

BROWNE: Yes.

COHEN: Not particularly minority students?

BROWNE: Yes. But they expected that.

COHEN: Ah, that was sort of unsaid?

BROWNE: Yes, yes. They said, "We'd like to have a representative crowd, so you can help us get some non-represented crowds. But you know more about getting kids generally." See? Because the kids I taught at Muir used to win the ACS chemistry test. And also at Blair. So these were all white kids.

COHEN: And they wanted them, too.

BROWNE: They wanted them, too.

COHEN: So they just wanted good students.

BROWNE: Right, right. They wanted them, too. So when Harold Brown finally got there, he said, "I'm not trying to get you to get anybody in particular. Just get all the best students you can get. They have to be able to do chemistry and physics, and they need to know math. And we want somebody to help us search them out. We're still getting some white kids that can't stay here more than a month before they flunk out. We need kids who really are motivated to do this work."

COHEN: So you decided to take this job?

BROWNE: Yes. Well, the second time they offered it to me I decided to take it.

COHEN: And what was it called? I know you have to have a name of a position.

BROWNE: Well, at that time it was called the Director of Secondary School Relations.

COHEN: I see. The Director of Secondary School Relations.

BROWNE: Yes. It did not have the minority title it's got now.

COHEN: OK. It just was Director of Secondary School Relations.

BROWNE: Director of Secondary School Relations. And then later—oh, what's his name? The guy from Wales. He used to be the vice-president. Ray Owen.

COHEN: Ray Owen.

BROWNE: When Ray Owen took it up, he changed it. It was Director of Secondary School Relations and Special Student Programs, because I ran a lot of programs for all kinds of people that wanted to do stuff in the summer, who wanted to work with professors—

COHEN: So when you came here, you sort of had a blank sheet?

BROWNE: Yes.

COHEN: They didn't say to you, "We'd like this program or that program"?

BROWNE: They said, "Whatever you want to try to do, go ahead and do it. And if we can't deal with it, somebody will tell you."

COHEN: OK.

BROWNE: So I just ran all kinds of programs.

COHEN: OK. Do you want to describe it? This was really a big change, I know, going from a high school to a place like Caltech.

BROWNE: No, no. No, no, no. On the contrary. First of all, I was not frightened by Caltech. And still I'm not. You see? Because [Richard P.] Feynman and I used to have debates all the time. You know, other people would say, "You can't talk to him like that." I'd say, "Shut up. I'm talking to him." [Chuckle] We'd be sitting down arguing in the dining room. There was a pretense that because of who he was he needed some special attention. But he only needed special attention in physics. Do you understand?

COHEN: Oh. [Chuckle]

BROWNE: There were some things about life in America which he didn't know anything about.

COHEN: Well, I'd believe that.

BROWNE: Do you understand?

COHEN: Yes.

BROWNE: So I didn't give anybody any special respect because they were a professor at Caltech; I waited till I heard where they were coming from. Jerry [Jerome] Pine, for instance, was a good friend of mine. He was with Benton. But then, after I was working about four years, he just disappeared. Do you know Jerome Pine?

COHEN: Yes. He's doing all these secondary school things now.

BROWNE: Yes. Some people were just doing stuff for notoriety or to get funds or other kinds of things. They weren't motivated in the same way I was.

COHEN: So you came in about 1970?

BROWNE: No. I started in '68.

COHEN: '68, OK.

BROWNE: I was part-time.

COHEN: OK.

BROWNE: Yes, I'm sure it was '68.

COHEN: OK.

BROWNE: But I came to work full time in '70, but I'd already been working many, many years.

COHEN: Already doing programs, yes.

BROWNE: Yes. So anything I'd think of doing I'd try to do. I had a lecture series for kids. There'd be hundreds of kids there. I'd have maybe 500 kids in the summer. There were twelve classes you could take in the summer: three biology classes, three chemistry classes, three physics classes, and three math classes.

COHEN: Now, were you getting minority students in these things?

BROWNE: Yes. There were maybe thirty or so kids—well, more than that; there would be maybe forty kids—on campus in those various and sundry classes. But it was hard to get kids who wanted to do that amount of work in the summers.

COHEN: Yes.

BROWNE: There would be quite a few who'd start out on Saturdays, but then it would become boring. You remember that math and science and stuff like that are very, very difficult for kids who don't hear it at home. Well, for any kid, not just minority kids—any kid who doesn't hear it at home.

COHEN: That isn't getting at least some help in sitting down and doing it.

BROWNE: Right. But I tried to motivate the kids. I had a lecture series, the classes in the summer, the classes on Saturdays, Thursday classes at Washington Junior High School—

COHEN: And whatever you decided to do Caltech really supported?

BROWNE: Yes. There was no problem with it because I started raising money on my own to pay for a lot of things. When I left here, I left \$190,000 in my accounts.

COHEN: Who did you get money from?

BROWNE: Oh, let's see. There were people like, say, Xerox. There were certain Caltech alumni who were interested that gave money. I left \$190,000 here.

COHEN: And for the programs you ran, actually, you used graduate students as volunteers?

BROWNE: Or I paid them in the summer.

COHEN: In summer you paid them.

BROWNE: Yes.

COHEN: Now, how successful, in some sense, was this? How many of these students then really went on to Caltech?

BROWNE: A large number of kids came here from out of that program.

COHEN: They did?

BROWNE: Yes. [Tape Ends]

Begin Tape 1, Side 2

COHEN: When was this?

BROWNE: It seemed to me that I started teaching a class in 1978 maybe, or something like that—maybe '80.

COHEN: Well, I have here that you taught philosophy of education in February, 1972.

BROWNE: Well, that's right. That's when it started. So that's how long it was. I had forgotten.

COHEN: OK. You had fourteen students, and you had them design a model school.

BROWNE: That's right.

COHEN: OK. And then I also have a very nice picture of you and Bob Walker running a summer course for entering freshmen.

BROWNE: Freshmen, yes, yes.

COHEN: So they asked you to do that, too.

BROWNE: Yes. I used to go out to the freshman camp on Catalina. But this was prior to that. We would get some kids together who had an interest in Caltech and we would talk to them about what it is you can do here. We'd ask, "What is it you want to do?" A kid might say, "Well, I want to be an engineer." So we'd say, "Well, have you really thought about what

engineers do? Do you know what kinds of courses you have to take in order to be an engineer? Do you know how much mathematics you need?" If you want to be a chemical engineer, "Do you know what kind of chemistry you are going to take?"

COHEN: So you were part of the recruiting team in some sense.

BROWNE: That's right; but also a subject-matter specialist. When a kid would ask me a question about so-and-so and so-and-so, if I couldn't answer it, I'd answer the next time I saw him. You know, we'd get the information.

COHEN: So in some sense they were already admitting students that maybe didn't really come up to the qualifications.

BROWNE: That didn't belong.

COHEN: So you were trying to establish something—

BROWNE: Trying to clean that up.

COHEN: Yes. And was that successful, Lee?

BROWNE: Yes. The graduation rate among minority students went to fifty-two or -three percent.

COHEN: Of the ones that started?

BROWNE: Yes. Which is pretty high for Caltech. For other students it went to seventy-some percent.

COHEN: Now, these were kids that had poor education up to that point.

BROWNE: Yes. So there was a lot of success with those programs.

COHEN: Were you having fun? Did you enjoy it?

BROWNE: Oh, yes, I enjoyed it. I enjoyed it because I thought I was doing the kind of thing that I was motivated to try to correct. And I thought I was being fairly successful with that, and I had a lot of success with the parents. You see, I couldn't get many minority students because their parents thought they should have had all of their fees paid. If the kid was very bright, then they wanted you to pay the whole fee. I'd say, "Well, that's not what people do at this place." And they had difficulty seeing that. They would be struggling middle-class parents. But they thought that because they had struggled and put all this work into their kids that they should be paid—or that their kid should be paid—for that. I'd say, "Well, we'll try to get him half of it."

COHEN: Did you actually lose kids because of this?

BROWNE: Oh, yes. For instance, Adam Clayton Powell III wanted to come here. He was in Milpitas. And I finally talked him into applying and got him admitted. And I'm going to say something about a faculty member now. And this stuff goes on still on the faculty. This particular faculty member—I don't want to name his name—

COHEN: Whatever you want.

BROWNE: Chris Brennen. Have you ever heard of him?

COHEN: Oh, yes.

BROWNE: That was his territory.

COHEN: Yes.

BROWNE: So I told Chris, "Look, this boy is in mathematics and is a good kid. He does physics and chemistry. And he wants to come to Caltech. All he needs to do is to have somebody come by there and tell him he's going to live in a regular dormitory and he's going to get twenty-five

percent of his fees paid. Now, when you go up there, if you do that, I think we can get him.” Chris said, “That’s wonderful,” and he never did go to see him. He called him and said that he couldn’t make it.

COHEN: That’s bad. So you didn’t get him?

BROWNE: We had a lot of “bad” [faculty members]. I just happened to mention that one, because that’s a key name. You see, that would have been a good kid here on campus. Certain kinds of kids draw other kids.

COHEN: Of course.

BROWNE: That’s why I’m using him [as an example]. But there were other faculty that did much the same thing. There were many faculty here who didn’t want any students like that here.

COHEN: They got bit with the racism bug is what you’re saying?

BROWNE: I don’t quite know whether it was racism or whether it was something else. It wasn’t always racism. Some of it was, but some of it was just that “certain people don’t belong in these fields.” And that’s independent of race or sex. But they just felt that there were certain things the person would be better off doing.

COHEN: I see. If they weren’t really tops in the science, “Let him do something else that would be better for him.”

BROWNE: Yes.

COHEN: OK. I know what you’re saying.

BROWNE: I brought another boy here who was the top student at the Little Red Schoolhouse in New York.

COHEN: OK.

BROWNE: And I negotiated a full scholarship for him from the Carnation Company. And I was told by the Carnation Company—one of those companies who gave money—that they didn't want this kid to ever fail anything and if he did they'd pull the money. So he was doing great in everything, but he was flunking chemistry. I called him into my office one day and said, "What's happening with you?" He said, "Nothing. I'm doing good." I said, "In everything?" He said, "Yes. I'm a little behind in chemistry, but I'll catch up." I said, "Well, that's why I'm calling you, because I understand you're flunking chemistry." He said, "What are you doing meddling in my business?"

COHEN: Did you tell him you had to?

BROWNE: No. He told me, "I don't want you meddling in my business. You don't have nothing to do with me." This was typical of many African American parents. I used to have a six-week program prior to school opening to help them get broken in, and they'd say, "I don't want my kid in that program." And to some of them I'd say, "Well, you can still come in September. You don't have to come to that program." Kids that didn't come to that six-week program would flunk out, because they didn't know what the volume of work was or the intensity of the work. So they were just shocked and they would flunk out.

COHEN: Sure.

BROWNE: And many parents were upset.

COHEN: They just didn't want their child treated any differently.

BROWNE: That's right. And I'd say, "This is not different treatment, because I'm not going to let him take any watered-down courses when he's a freshman. That's one thing we don't do in this program. We may do something in that first six weeks in the summer, but not after school

starts.” Anyway, this kid got so angry with me. He said, “I don’t want you to ever do anything for me.” And I said, “You mean again, because I’m the one that got you the Carnation scholarship.” And then he just went to pieces. He went on to flunk the course and left.

COHEN: Can people giving a scholarship put that kind of—

BROWNE: Yes. They can do anything they want to. There was a black lady here who was the financial aid director. I’ve forgotten what her name was. She showed me a letter once. This was not going against Caltech’s wishes or business, because I was involved with her in getting students and helping and making recommendations about students. She showed me a letter where this white guy had given \$700,000, but in the letter [he stated that] he didn’t want any of it given to non-white students.

COHEN: Can they do that?

BROWNE: So she wouldn’t sign off on it, and they fired her.

COHEN: Because of that?

BROWNE: Yes. Because they can do that.

COHEN: Because it’s a private school?

BROWNE: Yes.

COHEN: But they do take federal money.

BROWNE: Not much, not much. For instance, the IRS used to come to me and say, “Now, tell me something about these programs. Are you sure that they’re doing what they’re supposed to do for all of the citizens?” And many, many times I saved Caltech by saying, “Look, half of the kids that I recommend for admission here are admitted, independent of their sex or their race or

their nationality. So I'm certain that they are doing that now." And four or five years I saved them from the IRS, because the IRS inspected them.

COHEN: I see. So tell me, Lee, you went on with these programs, which you feel were quite successful.

BROWNE: Yes.

COHEN: I'm assuming that most of the time you must have liked being here and liked the people you were dealing with.

BROWNE: Yes. Well, I didn't have a problem with Caltech types, because I first came here in 1948 when I was a graduate student at UCLA. And I was treated all right then, and I was treated all right by Lee DuBridge. [As an example,] when I was at Blair they sent me a letter saying, "We are going to pay your salary for a month so you can come to our seventy-fifth celebration." You know, stuff like that.

COHEN: So they were nice.

BROWNE: They were nice, yes.

COHEN: So then, you eventually retired from this program.

BROWNE: Yes, yes.

COHEN: And was that because you felt it was time to retire already?

BROWNE: No. I think that Everhart had some other plan.

COHEN: So when Everhart came in, they said, "We want to go in a different direction"?

BROWNE: They didn't want me in the direction. You see, I had become kind of outspoken on certain questions. Well, I was always outspoken. But I think that Everhart and them decided that they did not want to make any special efforts to do anything, except for the people they wanted.

COHEN: You mean not a program beforehand to set students up?

BROWNE: That kind of thing. Also, there were some politics, like the UCLA politics, where certain alumni could get their kids in when others couldn't who were better qualified. Things like that. They wanted it to be kind of an "old-boys" school again. And remember, Caltech was set up basically for Caucasian male students. [Chuckle]

COHEN: That's correct. That seems out of sync with the times.

BROWNE: It seems out of sync, but that's the way I think it was with Everhart.

COHEN: Did someone actually say to you, "We want the program to go in a different direction"?

BROWNE: They said things like, "Well, we have some other things in mind," which I thought, based on who they hired to try to take my place—they hired two Mexican Americans.

COHEN: So you think they decided that they had to go more into the Latino society?

BROWNE: Yes, yes, yes, yes. And I think that was a serious mistake, because that kind of background—there are so many more things open to Latinos in the state and in Texas and other places than there are to African Americans. But then, I was as useful to Latinos as anybody they could have ever gotten, because I didn't have a reaction to them. But that was kind of the feeling I got. And that's why they hired—the first guy they hired, theoretically, did something with money. And the next guy just got lost.

COHEN: But now, I'm trying to think, because there were some other programs going on at this time already for the high schools, weren't there? Now, who was managing some of these other programs?

BROWNE: I was dealing with all those.

COHEN: All those programs.

BROWNE: I visited schools and set up programs and did all that. Now, about a year before I left—

COHEN: What year was that?

BROWNE: That was in 1989. Jerry Pine and them got some money and were going to do something with those kids and schools, but, you see, they can't do anything with schools, because they have never worked in those schools and they don't know what the politics are.

COHEN: Yes. Well, Jerry Pine was doing something else. He was developing a science program for elementary schools.

BROWNE: Yes. Well, that's part of what it was. And then that young man he brought with him, [James M.] Bower.

COHEN: Bower, yes.

BROWNE: Well, see, the intellectualism that's useful at Caltech is not useful in the public schools. And they would make mistakes. And I don't think the programs are working.

COHEN: Well, I think some of it's been successful.

BROWNE: Well, they are touching on some things.

COHEN: But, I mean, this is not the same thing you were doing. They are not looking for students to go to Caltech; they are just trying to raise the level of the sciences.

BROWNE: They are just trying to raise the level. And I don't think the level can be raised unless you really get involved with parents and you spend a lot of time with kids.

COHEN: Yes.

BROWNE: You have to spend a lot of time. So they started that in '89, or something like that.

COHEN: So they felt that Caltech felt they were going to go in a different direction?

BROWNE: Yes. But I think that direction was, "Let's not be recruiting students that we don't want."

COHEN: So you mean, first do the recruiting; and then if you have to bring them up to snuff—

BROWNE: That's something else.

COHEN: Work with them then.

BROWNE: Yes.

COHEN: I see. So that was the direction that Everhart wanted.

BROWNE: Yes. And I think they wanted to make sure that they could leave space open for people they wanted to have in the college.

COHEN: So at least that's the feeling you have from what you were hearing.

BROWNE: Yes. That's the feeling I had based on some of the things that subsequently happened.

COHEN: Can you tell me?

BROWNE: Well, there were two kids I know of who were twins and their parents didn't want them to do certain things. They lived in Orange County and stuff like that and they [Caltech] let them in. Of course, they couldn't make it.

COHEN: Now, these were not minority students?

BROWNE: Yes.

COHEN: Oh, they *were* minority students.

BROWNE: Yes. There was no one that could talk to them. You see, most Caltech professors don't talk bluntly to kids or ask blunt questions or penetrating questions.

COHEN: You mean before they are students?

BROWNE: Yes. You have to ask certain kinds [of questions]. For instance, I would ask a kid things like, "What if you were in this physics class and everybody passed the test but you? How would you feel and what would you do?" And I would base my determination on admitting that student on his answer. For instance, if he said, "Man, I would really be upset and I'd go home and I'd redo that test fifteen times and I would just dig and dig and dig and try to understand why I didn't understand it before," I'd say, "Well, that's pretty good." And another kid might say, "Oh, man, I just would give up. I wouldn't know what to do." I wouldn't care what his record looked like; he couldn't come here. See? Because there's a certain mentality you have to have to come to a place like Caltech. You have to be really motivated to succeed—at any cost. Stay up all night. Redo it fifty times. [Chuckle]

COHEN: [Chuckle]

BROWNE: You can't just sit back and wait.

COHEN: Yes.

BROWNE: You see, I used to send kids to school here from Blair and Muir. And they would come to me and say, "Listen, Mr. Browne. Can you show me what the hell this guy was talking about? I'm lost." And I'd say, "Well, here's the key to this. And if you'd redo that, you might understand that." And then he'd call me up and say, "I got it." So you have to really—

COHEN: Dig. You have to know how to dig.

BROWNE: You've got to really dig.

COHEN: OK. So you really were here for a long time.

BROWNE: Twenty-something years.

COHEN: And you ran good programs.

BROWNE: Well, made money.

COHEN: And then things changed, because people wanted to do it differently.

BROWNE: Well, yes. And I never argued with them. I mean, you don't ever see me hanging around Caltech. I'm not a Caltech hanger-on. [Chuckle] That is, I never went to see—what's her name that went to the minority office? Cheryl Hawthorne. I never have met her.

COHEN: So there's been a succession of people, but the programs have been different?

BROWNE: Yes.

COHEN: There are still some outreach programs where kids come, but they are done in different ways?

BROWNE: Yes. The first guy thought that by buying them pizzas and having parties they'd like him and do what they had to do. And I thought [that] if I could get them to go to tutors... [Chuckle] Do you understand?

COHEN: Yes, yes.

BROWNE: Because that's what Caltech is all about. It's not about social life.

COHEN: That's right.

BROWNE: Caltech pretends that it's about social life, but it's not about social life. It's about working yourself to death.

COHEN: Yes. So there aren't a lot of minority students here anymore.

BROWNE: Of course not.

COHEN: Unless you want to figure in Asians, of which there are many.

BROWNE: No, no. But that's not—

COHEN: That's different.

BROWNE: That's different. You can't have minority students here if you don't have someone—you see, I used to go to all of these—I'd visit 200 high schools a year.

COHEN: Yes.

BROWNE: And I would talk to kids. I would go to LA schools and go to the physics class and the chemistry classes and the math classes. Me. I'd go there and talk to the kids. And I would talk to certain kinds of counselors. See, counselors don't make the decisions about a place like Caltech.

COHEN: So Lee, you think that they don't do this anymore. And I don't know how successful [they are] in getting very many minority students. But you don't think times have changed so that this is not the thing to do? Do you think it's still the thing to do?

BROWNE: No. I think that's still the thing to do, because there are kids out there who are motivated to do this in the same way I was.

COHEN: But they need someone to tell them.

BROWNE: They need somebody to encourage them and point them to certain kinds of places where they can do more of it and whatnot. But it requires a lot of time. And I spent money, but I raised most of that money.

COHEN: Well, I guess different people come in. I suppose Baltimore's come in and he'll have some ideas, too.

BROWNE: Maybe, maybe. He seems to be very busy doing what he's doing. [Laughter] You see, this is a full-time job. And you can't effectively use people like Cheryll. She's a nice lady, I think, but she has a young daughter. You see, you have to have the freedom to go on trips, to go places and make visits, to stop young people and talk to them.

COHEN: Well, they are doing things quite differently now. Whether it's better or worse, or who knows what.

BROWNE: No. You can't evaluate it until some time passes.

COHEN: But you certainly ran a good program for many years.

BROWNE: Well, it was fun.

COHEN: And you enjoyed it?

BROWNE: Yes. But, I mean, it was time for me to go. Let me see. When did I leave? In '90? Yes. How old was I then? I must have been about sixty-seven or sixty-nine. I'll be seventy-seven this year.

COHEN: Well, maybe it really was time to do something else.

BROWNE: Well, I went through two peripheral bypass operations.

COHEN: [Chuckle]

BROWNE: You know? See right there?

COHEN: Yes.

BROWNE: Where they had to put [unclear] there. This one was last month, in February.

COHEN: Yes. Well, OK, Lee. Is there any comment you would like to make, or anything?

BROWNE: No. I'm just glad that you invited me down.

COHEN: OK. Well, it's been a good interview.

BROWNE: Thank you. [Tape is turned off.]