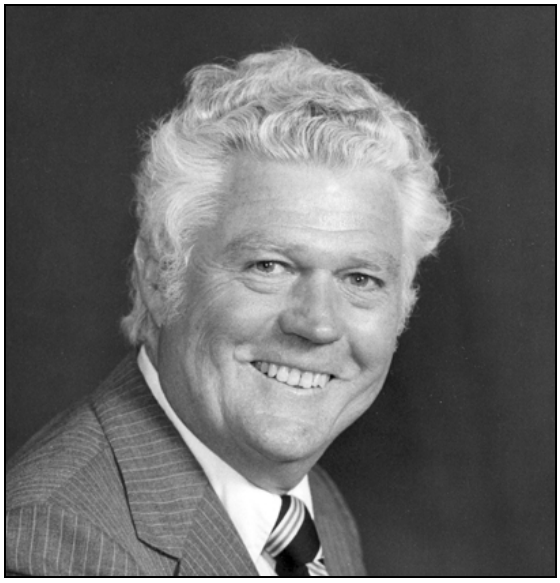

ROBERT W. OLIVER
(1922-1998)

INTERVIEWED BY
LOMA KARKLINS

August 9, 1988–August 16, 1990

ARCHIVES
CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
Pasadena, California

Subject area

Economics

Abstract

Interview in five sessions, 1988-1990, with Robert W. Oliver, professor of economics emeritus, who arrived at Caltech in 1959 as an assistant professor. His principal interest was in economic development, and during his years at Caltech he also worked as a consultant to the World Bank. He was also active in the city government of Pasadena. This wide-ranging interview begins with his recollections of his education at USC and war service in the South Pacific. He describes the makeup and character of the Humanities Division (then under the chairmanship of Hallett Smith) at the time of his arrival and its evolution into the Division of Humanities and Social Sciences. His interest in Africa, and the establishment of his Technical Cooperation Seminar in the early 1960s. Recollections of Smith's retirement as chairman in "palace revolution;" roles of Lance Davis, Roger Noll, and Rodman Paul; eventual succession of Robert Huttenback. His opposition to Huttenback's appointment and criticism of Huttenback's division chairmanship. The battle over granting tenure to literature professor Jenijoy La Belle. Discusses his work on various faculty committees and his tenure as master of student houses, and comments on presidential styles of Lee DuBridge, Harold Brown, Marvin [Murph] Goldberger, and Thomas Everhart.

Discusses the work of the World Bank, especially in the 1970s. Recalls his years on Pasadena's city board in the latter half of the 1960s, the struggles over variances and development projects, and his unsuccessful campaign for reelection to the board in 1973.

Administrative information

Access

The interview is unrestricted.

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Preferred citation

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Bob Oliver (left) sings the first verse of "The Richter Scale," with chorus of the Caltech Stock Company (from left), Dave Wood, Jim Knowles and Bill Corcoran. From the Lee A. DuBridge 20th anniversary show, *Lee and Sympathy*, 1966.

To listen to Bob Oliver sing "The Richter Scale," right click on the speaker and select 'play'

Charley Richter made a scale for calibrating earthquakes
Gives a true and lucid reading every time the earth shakes
Increments are exponential, numbers 0 to nine
When the first shock hit the seismo everything worked fine
It measured

One two on the Richter scale, a shabby little shiver
One two on the Richter scale, a queasy little quiver
Waves brushed the seismograph as if a fly had flicked her
One two on the Richter scale, it hardly woke up Richter

Music and lyrics by J. Kent Clark and Elliott Davis. Used by permission.
CD "Let's Advance On Science," with twelve songs by Clark and Davis available for purchase in Caltech Bookstore.

CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH ROBERT W. OLIVER

BY LOMA KARKLINS

PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

Caltech Archives, 1990

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CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interview with Robert W. Oliver

by Loma Karklins

Pasadena, California

Session	1	August 9, 1988
Session	2	August 10, 1988
Session	3	August 11, 1988
Session	4	August 12, 1988
Session	5	August 16, 1990

Begin Tape 1, Side 1

KARKLINS: Dr. Oliver, I would like you to begin by briefly talking about your childhood and early education, something about your family life.

OLIVER: I was born into a family of two children. I am the older by four-and-a-half years. My father was a reasonably distinguished educator. He was principal for many years of the Los Angeles High School. Before that, he graduated from UC Berkeley and went to the Philippines in 1900 to set up an educational system. He stayed there for eight years. He himself went to the Los Angeles High School; he played left halfback on the football team which defeated USC in 1893. He subsequently became a math teacher, head of the ROTC [Reserve Officer Training Corps] and baseball coach before he became vice principal in 1912, and then principal in 1925. He was born in California. I'm not sure of the exact date—I think 1876, something like that. My grandfather moved to California in 1871. After farming for a few years, he was elected county clerk for Lake County. He was on his way down to investigate the possibility of moving his family to Los Angeles in 1883—because he thought that the education was better down here—when he was involved in a terrible train wreck near Bakersfield and was killed. My father was, I think, only six at the time. My father had three elder sisters. My great grandfather, Warner Oliver, was a Methodist minister who came to California in 1850. He was one of

Abraham Lincoln's electors in 1864 and was an assemblyman from Stockton in 1866.

My father was relatively old when I was born; he was in his forties. My mother was at least thirty-one. She was a McConnell, one of three sisters. She met my father in Los Angeles when she was on a trip returning from Alaska. She was from Indiana. She stopped off to see her Uncle William McConnell. My father and mother fell in love. She went back to Indiana for a short time, he followed her, and they got married. I was born I think just about two years after their marriage, in 1922.

I went through the local school systems and wound up at the Los Angeles High School myself. So I was the principal's kid and had to mind my P's and Q's. I had a brother four-and-a-half years younger. I did reasonably well. I guess I graduated with all A's; I don't remember whether or not some favoritism was shown me. I was valedictorian and president of the senior class. But throughout high school, I had lots and lots of fun. I was on the baseball and debate teams. I sang in the *a cappella* choir. I was what they called an overachiever, but I went dancing quite a bit. So it was not a matter of just studying; it was a matter of going out Friday and Saturday nights and enjoying myself.

KARKLINS: When you were in high school, did you have some idea of what career you'd like to go into and what you'd want to major in?

OLIVER: I varied from time to time. At one time, I thought an acting career would be interesting. My father had always thought, or hoped, that I might be an attorney. I was interested in being an attorney, until I found out that they didn't spend most of their time in law courts, which I would like to have done; instead they spent most of their time doing research. That seemed rather dull. I guess I took a fancy to being a college professor when I was a senior in high school and began to think vaguely, at least, in terms of that as a career. I thought that I enjoyed public speaking—I was on the debate team at both LA High School and at the University of Southern California, where I subsequently went for my undergraduate degree. So I felt that public speaking was something that I would enjoy—lecturing. And I guess I've really chosen the perfect career, because I was able to combine elements of acting and elements of public speaking and elements of research. So it's all been, I think, for me a very happy life.

KARKLINS: Did you already have an idea that it would be in economics and international relations?

OLIVER: No, I certainly did not. I thought that international relations would be interesting. I thought that war was the thing that needed dealing with, in terms of finding a solution. So I directed my attention toward international relations, until I began to discover that all international relations was contemporary history—not very much analysis. I had no notion of what economics was when I left high school. But I took a course in economics from a very fine professor named Robert Pettingill, and subsequently took a course from Anatol Murad. Both of those gentlemen excited me a great deal.

At any rate, I began to find out what economics was, and I rather liked it, largely because it seemed to me that I could get ahold of something; I had a theory to hang my hat on, instead of just vague generalities, and that appealed to me. This was at a time, 1939, when a lot of talk was about the "have" and "have-not nations." You never hear anything about them anymore. But it was alleged that Japan was a have-not nation and Germany was a have-not nation, and there was some sympathy for both of those countries until 1939-1940, when we got involved in war with them.

KARKLINS: So, even with all the aggressive moves that Japan had made in the thirties, people still felt that it was a have-not nation?

OLIVER: Yes. Well, some people did, not everybody. It was alleged that Japan needed open markets in order to have fair markets. I think the British and the French, and even the Portuguese, were accused at that time of cutting off commerce unnaturally. At any rate, that was the motivation for my becoming interested in economics.

KARKLINS: How did you go about choosing USC for your education?

OLIVER: I had originally thought I would go to Pomona College, but USC offered me a scholarship. My father had gone to the University of California at Berkeley, and I used to sit beside him in football games and wince at the trouncing that USC was giving to Berkeley in

those days. So I grew up quite disliking USC. But when the scholarship came along, I decided that the better part of valor was to accept that. Also, of course, USC had a very fine reputation in debate—I think it's still the finest school for debate in the West—so I was induced on that account as well.

KARKLINS: Were you part of the V-l2 program at USC?

OLIVER: Yes, I was induced to volunteer in 1942, I guess, and then was made a part of the navy. I was in uniform on campus for six months and graduated under an accelerated program in just about three years, and then was sent off to midshipman school directly.

KARKLINS: When you volunteered in the V-l2 program, that meant that the armed services could use you for how long a period?

OLIVER: I think it was indefinite. I didn't get enough points to be discharged to inactive duty until June of 1946, after which very shortly I got married. I went to midshipman school at Columbia University, and that had an effect on my life. I suspect I would have just gone to USC and gotten my PhD if the war hadn't come along, but my eyes were opened, so to speak, to the opportunities on the East Coast. I fell in love with New York City. I subsequently was accepted into Harvard and Chicago; my acceptance into Princeton was delayed. I was, however, offered an instructorship and thought it would be fun to accept that and work full-time at teaching. I got halfway through the year when I got offered a chance to become a graduate student officially. So I settled down at Princeton for the duration of my work on the East Coast.

Going back to the war years, I was in midshipman school; then I went to the Small Craft Training Center in Miami, and then to the West Coast Sound School in San Diego; then back to a school in Boston, at which point I got mononucleosis and was in the hospital for nearly a month while they were trying to figure out what had caused it. Then I got sent back out to the West Coast Sound School again. And finally, as the war was almost over, I was sent to Camp Catlin, at Pearl Harbor, and then out to the Philippines, which was a center of activity involving the Admiralty Islands down in the South Pacific.

KARKLINS: Would this have been after the Philippines was retaken by the U.S.?

OLIVER: Yes, it was after that. The war was almost over. The war actually stopped when I was in the Admiralty Islands, serving off the coast of Manus, on a small island called Butjulow. I helped close the base there and then got sent back to Subic Bay in the Philippines. From there I went to Eniwetok [in the Marshall Islands].

My father had suffered a stroke. So I was given Red Cross emergency leave to come home in February 1946. I was never sent back out again. I was on duty for three months, just awaiting instruction as to what should happen to me, and living at home. But they didn't send me back out again at all.

I was an anti-submarine warfare instructor during the war. And then, when the war was over and anti-submarine warfare instructors were not very much in demand, I got assigned to various other duties. I wound up as a lieutenant, junior grade. I served in Eniwetok in charge of the typewriter repair shop, ice cream shop, the laundry, and the tailor shop, and just stood regular officer duty as was necessary. I played a lot of baseball at that time. My roommate, Bill Rosensohn, and I shared a tent, and our habit, when we were not on duty, was to sing to each other. I remember one of Bill's favorite songs was "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?" And one of my favorite songs was "I Get a Kick Out of You." We would stand on a box and pretend that we were on the stage and say something about the reason for the song, and then sing. That was great fun. We had a dog named Doppler, who was named because of the Doppler effect. We had great fun saying, "Up, Doppler," and "Down, Doppler."

KARKLINS: After the navy, I believe in July of 1946, you married your wife, Darlene. How did you meet her?

OLIVER: She was a student at USC—she was a freshman and I was a junior. I accelerated, as I said earlier, so I graduated in three years; she took four years. So she was just getting out in 1946.

KARKLINS: What had she majored in?

OLIVER: She majored in business—really in merchandising. She was even a better student than I was. I think she was straight A's at USC, except in physical education, and an absolutely charming person. We were very close. We met in a bowling alley, actually. She was in the bowling alley for a physical education class; she was making up a missed bowling lesson, and I was over there just practicing for the interfraternity bowling team. She was with a group of sorority sisters, the Kappa Alpha Thetas. I looked up at one point and said, "Gosh, who's that beautiful girl?" I got somebody to find out what her name was and then went over to see her at her sorority that night. She started down the stairs and didn't see anybody there but me, so she started back up again. And then I said, "Hey, I've come to see you." So she came down again. We had a courtship, which was interrupted a great deal by the war, but we became engaged before I went overseas. I used to send her a dozen yellow roses on the occasion of each full moon. So our courtship bloomed. She had a rival suitor, but I subsequently induced her to choose me. And we lived happily ever after.♣

KARKLINS: And you had two children.

OLIVER: That's right. Lesley Joanne Oliver—now Lesley Joanne Oliver McClelland—and Stewart Oliver, who is unmarried.

KARKLINS: Did you marry before you went back east to Princeton?

OLIVER: Yes. We married just two weeks after Darlene graduated from college. I went one year to USC to get a master's degree, and then we went back to Princeton in 1947 and stayed through 1950, just long enough for me to finish my prelims. I still had my dissertation to write, but I was offered a job at Pomona College and thought that getting back on the West Coast was a matter of some importance. I subsequently have questioned that; I think I should have stayed for a couple more years at Princeton.

KARKLINS: What pressed you to want to return to California?

♣ Darlene Oliver died March 27, 1987. There is a plaque in her memory to the east of Keck Laboratories on the Caltech campus.

OLIVER: Well, I was worried that I might not be able to return to Southern California, and the Pomona College job looked like a very good job. By that time, my father had died, and my mother was all alone. Darlene's mother was also alone. And I guess it never really occurred to us that we would do anything except come back to Southern California. Though, as I say, maybe it would have been better if I had stayed at Princeton for a couple more years, at the very least.

I was still writing the dissertation in 1954 when I went to the London School of Economics for a year off. And that was the time when I finished the bulk of the dissertation. I had been asked by my dissertation advisor, Professor Jacob Viner, to go way back into history and investigate World War I and what had happened in the interwar period. It never occurred to me to do that; I had thought I would probably start with an account of the Bretton Woods period. But that took a great deal of research, to dig out all the facts from the existing literature and from interviews with Lionel Robbins and James Meade, who were my professors at the London School of Economics. At any rate, the point is that I was still engaged in writing my dissertation some years later. I worked at Pomona College for two years, then was given an opportunity to move back to the University of Southern California as a visiting assistant professor. The "visiting" was dropped, I guess, a year later, and I became a full-fledged assistant professor and stayed there through 1957.

KARKLINS: During that time, did you also begin doing research for the Stanford Research Institute?

OLIVER: No, that was subsequent. I stopped the USC job altogether and went to work full-time for Stanford Research Institute.

KARKLINS: How did that come about?

OLIVER: I was not having much luck with my salary. I think I was making $3,300 a year, and we were just not able to make ends meet, what with two children. So I began casting around for alternatives. My friend Warren Christopher, who became deputy secretary of state under Jimmy Carter, suggested that I might go to Stanford Research Institute. He recommended me highly,

and I applied and got a job in the South Pasadena laboratories of Stanford Research Institute. My salary immediately doubled and went up fairly rapidly after that.

I did a number of projects. I think my most notable one was on the role of small-scale manufacturing in economic development. But I also participated in studies of the Minuteman Missile system, and California agriculture for the J. C. Boswell Company, and a number of other projects, the last one of which was a study of the economy of Pasadena. By chance, I was living in Pasadena at the time, though just beyond the border. But I found the study of Pasadena very fascinating. I got involved in economic base analysis and attempted really to measure what the economic base of Pasadena was.

KARKLINS: Was it also with the intent to project for the future?

OLIVER: Oh, yes. I strongly recommended setting up a redevelopment agency. Downtown Pasadena was in a state of semi-decay; some stores were closed altogether. The infamous old Mather Building in Pasadena had been closed for thirty years or so, and it greatly needed sprucing up. So I was able to recommend that kind of action.

KARKLINS: What were the reasons for the decline in Pasadena at that time?

OLIVER: Pasadena had been laid out for the purposes of walking along the boulevard, not driving. So it was out of date, obsolete, in terms of its physical layout. It didn't have enough parking; it needed revitalization in terms of new buildings. And I could not see any obvious way to accomplish that other than through the redevelopment process. For years, people in the Chamber of Commerce had been trying to put together a downtown hotel, but the town was so carved up in bits and pieces that they were never able to put together enough land at one time to make a hotel possible. So that was a major problem. And I just didn't see any way that it could be attacked, other than by the limited use of eminent domain.

KARKLINS: Did you enjoy pure research, or did you miss the opportunity to speak before a group of students?

OLIVER: Well, I enjoyed the pure research, yes. Many of the projects, I felt, were underfinanced, however, so that I was constantly scrambling, having to go into SRI on weekends and that sort of thing, in order to get accomplished what I thought needed to be accomplished. And then, after two and a half years or so of that, I just got kind of tired of it. Each individual project was fun in and of itself, but I began to hanker for the classroom, and more importantly, I think I began to hanker for the bigger picture in economics. These projects were pretty much special interest kinds of projects. So I began to long for real academia.

I happened to apply to Caltech because I lived in Pasadena and had written about Pasadena. And lo and behold, at that precise moment, Alan Sweezy found himself suddenly short a teacher, because Mel Brockie was on sabbatical leave. He looked into my credentials and found that they were not totally unacceptable, so he hired me for one year to replace Brockie. During that year, I also became interested in USC, again, and applied to USC and was offered a position—a tenured assistant professorship. Then I came back to Hallett Smith and asked what the possibilities were of staying on at Caltech, and frankly told him that I really preferred Caltech. He said that he would recommend my being kept on a second year, so I was sort of on pins and needles during that second year, though I still had the option of going back to USC. But then, as I recall, at the end of that second year he called a meeting of his committee and decided that he would offer me a tenured position. And I've been a tenured professor—first of all, an associate professor—thereafter.

KARKLINS: What was the appeal to teach at Caltech rather than at USC?

OLIVER: Classes were smaller and the honor system was enormously important to me. I had to proctor all of my exams at USC, and invariably one or two people I would find cheating—not cheating in a bad way, but looking over each other's shoulders trying to find out what the answer was.

KARKLINS: Besides the proctoring versus the honor system, what about the students per se? Did you find a difference in the quality of the students here versus those at USC?

OLIVER: Well, the quality of students at USC was a good deal lower than the quality of the

students at Caltech. The better students at USC were very, very stimulating. Indeed, I guess I would say that the very best students at USC were better than the students at Caltech. But you have to remember that the Caltech students' primary interest was science, not politics or economics. They tended always to put my classes toward the bottom of the list of things that they would study. But they came to class and they behaved very, very well.

KARKLINS: You never got the sense they were questioning why they must take your course?

OLIVER: A few did. One time I made a bargain with a student that if he would read a couple of books outside of class and just take a test on those books, he needn't come to class and he needn't study the precise textbook. That's about as far over as I've bent to satisfy the students. But I think, by and large, most of the students enjoyed my classes, and they not infrequently said so. I guess you know that I won a teaching award at some point, about five or six years ago, and I was a freshman advisor most of the time. I think my teaching was reasonably successful and I was happy in the enterprise. But I would not characterize the students at Caltech as having the breadth of understanding and the breadth of ability that the best students at USC had. There are an awful lot of poor students at USC also.

KARKLINS: To go back a bit, when did you learn about Caltech? What did you know of Caltech before you actually began to live in Pasadena?

OLIVER: Caltech was reasonably well known to me, because I lived in Pasadena, having moved here in 1952, seven years before I actually came to Caltech. I had occasion, also, when I was doing my economic survey of Pasadena, to come to the campus and ask a number of questions of Lee DuBridge and Charles Newton and others who were at that time in charge of things. I heard Lee DuBridge speak a couple of times and thought that he was marvelous. I didn't know a whole lot about the student body, but I knew that the students were good. I didn't know how intensively they were studying science. But I guess what it comes down to is that Caltech was the closest really good university that I could attach myself to. I didn't think of applying elsewhere generally—certainly not in the Middle West or East Coast. To the extent that I thought about it at all, I thought that Southern California was the place for me, and I fully

intended to stay here. I did not send out a general letter of request for a job. I could have stayed on at Stanford Research Institute; I was not terribly unhappy with my position there, and certainly not desperate.

KARKLINS: In 1961, at Caltech you began administering a student seminar on science and public affairs. How did that come about and how was it funded?

OLIVER: It was funded by the Carnegie Foundation. They funded work by David Elliot, as the seminar director, involving national security issues. And a couple of years later, they funded work by Ned Munger and me as leaders in the field of developing countries, but with particular application to science and technology. The issue was: What could be done by scientists to help out with the problem of war, on the one hand, and economic development, on the other hand?

KARKLINS: Was this a proposal that you put forth to the Carnegie Foundation, or did Carnegie show an interest in this and you tapped their sources?

OLIVER: Well, I think it was a little bit of both. I remember when I was in about my second year, Hallett Smith, returning from a meeting dealing with science and technology as it applied to less developed countries, said, "Where were you?" I indicated some surprise and said, "I had no idea I was invited." But that gave me an inkling that I probably should engage myself in a proposal of some kind on the subject of science and technology as they related to less developed countries. Ned Munger—who's been here almost as long as I have—was, I think, in his first year, and he said, "Bob, why don't we study southern Africa as a place, and we'll study economic development as a process." So we jointly put together a proposal dealing with what we called "Capricorn Africa."

The proposal was accepted by the Carnegie Foundation. We then proposed that we, in fact, go out and see southern Africa. I spent most of my time in Rhodesia, along with a gentleman named Robert Sigafoos. He was associated with Caltech; he came from Stanford Research Institute also. He was particularly good in tax policy. But he tired of the position in less than a year. I think he had too many irons in the fire—too many outside activities. And Ned and I were essentially left to carry on. My own teaching schedule was a very heavy one. And

while I worked at it as hard as I could, and wrote a paper about Rhodesia and southern Africa and the problems in southern Africa, it just didn't really catch on as much as the National Security Seminar under David Elliot did.

KARKLINS: It didn't catch on with Carnegie, or with Caltech? Where were you hoping that it would catch fire and go with its own momentum?

OLIVER: My recollection is that the funds were running out. Bob Huttenback, who was also a part of the Carnegie project, stayed in South Africa.

Begin Tape 1, Side 2

OLIVER: He then transferred his attention to Kanpur, in India, which had no relation to Africa—and no relation to economic development, either. I guess he insisted that we should not have a structured arrangement. I felt that we did need to pinpoint our attempts to analyze things. Ned was very interested in South Africa, which didn't seem to me to be an underdeveloped or a developing country. I was interested in Zambia—what was then Northern Rhodesia—and Zimbabwe (Southern Rhodesia). But I found that I was working all alone.

KARKLINS: I know Fred Lindvall also went as an engineer.

OLIVER: Fred Lindvall went as an engineer. He was chairman of the division [Division of Engineering and Applied Science], and he had his hands full being chairman of the division. I think he did what he could to make proposals for engineering education. I actually wrote up a proposal—and sent it to the White House on one occasion—that dealt with trying to put together an institute of some kind under the auspices of Caltech. But that proposal was not accepted.

KARKLINS: Would that have been funded by Carnegie as well?

OLIVER: No, the Carnegie funding really was running out, and we were asked to have it transferred just within our own shop.

KARKLINS: So did you approach Lee DuBridge with this idea?

OLIVER: I don't recall that Lee DuBridge had an awful lot to do with it. He, of course, had overall authority. And Bob Bacher, as provost, had a fair amount of authority in this. I guess I just felt that it petered out.

Simultaneously, I was being asked to devote more and more of my attention to problems of Pasadena. In 1963, I was invited to participate in the Pasadena Commission on Human Needs and Resources. And then in early '64, I was invited to become a member of the Human Relations Committee regarding minorities. I was induced to run for public office in 1965, and my interests really shifted away from Africa and towards Pasadena. But I think that it was largely because there just was a void.

KARKLINS: When I read about it, ideally it sounded like a very interesting project—the idea of bringing in people from different fields, trying to zero in on an area in its totality, and then maybe from that be able to gather information that could be of some value to the people and the development of the region. That's why I was wondering why it died on its own. Initially, it sounded very interesting.

OLIVER: Well, Fred Lindvall was not able to give a whole lot of attention to it, though he did what he could. Bob Huttenback was off working in India on a very different project.

KARKLINS: Did that sort of develop while he was interested in Africa? Because he was doing a study on Gandhi. Did he originally go to Africa with the intent to just study Gandhi? Or did that evolve while he was there?

OLIVER: My proposal was that economic development per se be studied. And as far as I was concerned, Huttenback's work on Gandhi really had nothing to do with economic development. And his work in Kanpur had nothing to do with economic development.

KARKLINS: But did he go there with that intent; did he leave with that in mind as his subject

matter? Or did that evolve?

OLIVER: I think that he came across a fair amount of material about Gandhi while he was in Natal and requested permission to stay on for six months. That's where a fair amount of the Carnegie money went.

Ned Munger really wasn't interested in economic development; he was interested in the politics of southern Africa. Robert Huttenback was not interested in economic development; he was interested in pursuing his work on Gandhi. Bob Sigafoos quit. Horace Gilbert was there for a short time, but he wasn't able to do any work on southern Africa or economic development per se. So really, I was the only person. I was trying to run a seminar that had to do with economic development. I have an article in *Engineering and Science* which describes the seminar during the one year in which it really was successful.

KARKLINS: I read the article, "Technical Cooperation," and found it quite interesting. You had some insightful comments on what some of the problems of the region are. For example, in Burma, where you had to find a Buddhist priest who would bless the rice so that you could replace the poor rice with the rice seed that could now double the quantity.

OLIVER: I think that has subsequently changed, due largely to the work of the World Bank. That kind of problem has diminished, except in Africa. I have to say Africa is still a continent that is looking for a solution to the economic development problem. But India is well on the way to solving it; its main problem is overpopulation. I just don't know very much about what's happened in Burma; but Malaysia has made substantial strides; Indonesia has made substantial strides toward economic development. And there's good reason for that. The economists have been out from the World Bank, mainly in the field, to give what I personally think is quite good advice on the subject of economic development.

I would like to relate one anecdote regarding Thayer Scudder. He came here in, perhaps, 1964, and I asked him to participate in what I called the Technical Cooperation Seminar. He declined and said that he didn't have time to do that—that he was only interested in research that had to do with his own thing. His own thing is displaced persons. He was very interested in helping with a study of the Kariba Dam and the populations that were displaced by

Kariba. But that, again, had very little to do with economic development. So I guess I just found myself isolated, alone. And try as I might, I didn't have the resources to pull things together. But it was a nice idea.

KARKLINS: How long were you personally in Africa?

OLIVER: Oh, six weeks to two months—I can't remember exactly. It was over the summer recess. I was also teaching things, aside from my Technical Cooperation Seminar, that had almost nothing to do with development economics. I was teaching microeconomic theory and macroeconomic theory, and problems of business cycles, and international economic theory. At that time, the number of hours of teaching were much greater than today. And I just found myself involved in going in too many different directions at once.

KARKLINS: So the Capricorn Project was above and beyond your normal duties. All of you who took part in it, on a volunteer basis, were still expected to continue as if you had nothing else to do but teach at Caltech.

OLIVER: Right. David Elliot had been given some time off—I think he'd been given half-time off from teaching history.

KARKLINS: Even though you researched quite a bit before you went to Africa, were there any great shocks when you arrived? Was it more primitive and more underdeveloped than you ever anticipated?

OLIVER: No, I wouldn't say that. I think it was, if anything, more promising in the way of development potential.

KARKLINS: Because this was at a time when Africa was awakening and more countries were becoming independent.

OLIVER: Yes. I was in Uganda the day that independence was declared, and the British flag was

hauled down and the Ugandan flag was raised. Ugandan soldiers who were lollying around, paying very little attention to much of anything, seemed to stand straighter and behave better, at least for a week or so after, with greater pride. I was very much concerned with sociology and social psychology at that time—not in a formal sense, but in a sense of feeling that this was the real underlying basis for behavior.

KARKLINS: Did you feel that the first necessary step towards development was to give these people a sense of independence and pride in their own country; and then, with that pride, they would want to develop?

OLIVER: Well, I think everybody is a human being and wants to succeed as he understands success. But I think nationhood adds a dimension that is quite important. I'm still very hopeful that agencies like the World Bank will continue to be helpful in India, Africa, and elsewhere, so as to continue the process of economic development.

KARKLINS: Of the countries that you visited at that time, were there any that seemed very hopeful to you?

OLIVER: Well, Rhodesia certainly seemed hopeful to me. I read a lot about the problems of getting the white settlers off the backs of the Africans, without at the same time scaring the white settlers totally away. Robert Mugabe, I think, has done a reasonably good job in this. I met Joshua Nkomo in Africa; I went to his headquarters, which was somewhat clandestine, though not officially illegal. It was then the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. I can't remember exactly when it became independent, but it was a long struggle even after independence, before something like one man, one vote was achieved. I guess that seemed more important to me than economic development at the time. Now that independence has been achieved, I guess I'm somewhat disappointed that the Africans haven't gotten on with things better than they have.

The education wasn't there at the time. As I recall, there were only two blacks in the whole of what is now Zambia—or Northern Rhodesia—who had received a college education. So I guess I think that education is a terribly necessary thing. I had thought originally that a technical education, involving getting Africans to Lusaka, was a matter of considerable

importance. And I'm very sorry that Fred Lindvall's proposals in this regard fell on deaf ears. The African system is still highly British oriented. And I guess I don't think that realistically we had a chance to effect that kind of a change in the direction of technical education. If I had been able to go out to Rhodesia with some frequency, I suppose that I might never have become interested in Pasadena and running for political office. But as I say, when the Carnegie funds ran out, I felt that I was all alone in pursuing economic development, and the better part of valor was to turn my attention elsewhere.

KARKLINS: At that time, were there any other universities or institutes in the United States that were putting together something similar to this project?

OLIVER: Yes. There was a fairly important program involving African studies out at UCLA, but I was never able to hook on to that.

KARKLINS: Was there ever a program put together that would have been between universities, working together, taking their specialists in African studies and pooling their efforts together as opposed to separate ones?

OLIVER: I found UCLA relatively insular. Or to put the matter another way, it has all the resources that it needs internally to do what needs to be done. And so there's relatively little attempt to cooperate.

KARKLINS: And what was the fate of that program?

OLIVER: Oh, it's still going on. There's an African studies program, just as there is an international political science program, that has dimensions of getting people together and comparing notes. But I think that notes aren't compared all that often.

KARKLINS: To digress just a bit, I also discovered that in the seventies you had requested a two-year leave of absence and would possibly be going to Tehran, Iran, to help the Harvard Institute put together a project. What happened with that?

OLIVER: I'd more or less forgotten about that. Well, it was turned down by the Iranians, and a good thing, too. I'm glad I didn't go.

KARKLINS: Was the idea initiated by Harvard, and did they propose it to Iran?

OLIVER: Yes. What specifically happened was that the Iranians turned me down in terms of directing the work there. I had just finished doing work at the World Bank for a year.

KARKLINS: When you say Iran turned you down, do you mean you personally?

OLIVER: Yes.

KARKLINS: They had no problem with having a director of such a project, but it was you they didn't want.

OLIVER: That's right. They decided that I didn't have enough practical experience, that I was too much of an academic. And I think they were probably right. They were looking for a particular individual who had been the head of the state redevelopment agency in New York City—though he didn't get that job either.

KARKLINS: Had you been accepted, it would have been a two-year term?

OLIVER: Yes. I went back to Harvard and met with the Harvard people, and it was agreed that I, in fact, would do the job.

KARKLINS: How had you learned about this? Had they sent out a notice to you?

OLIVER: I can't remember. It probably had to do with my association with the World Bank. I was in the World Bank for a year in 1970-71, and they probably learned about my possible availability at that time. I do remember Bob Huttenback calling Harvard to ask under what

circumstances I should go. And I never really learned the answer to that. I was myself kind of undecided as to whether or not I really wanted to go.

KARKLINS: What was your reason for indecision?

OLIVER: Well, my doubts had to do with my children, who were still in school, and the questionable desirability of being that far away from home. Also, I think this was the time period when my wife had just developed a malignant melanoma on her arm; and that was a cause of some holding back. I was very concerned that she would get adequate health care. And, indeed, it wasn't until a year later that I began to feel as though we were out of the woods. (As it subsequently developed, we were not out of the woods.) So I had some misgivings. I guess I would have gone if everything had been totally positive. The margin of indecision was such that I was not convinced that I should go. I guess, come to think of it, Harvard called me and said, "You have been turned down for the job. But if you want to fly out to Tehran, maybe you can convince them that they should take you." I just wasn't willing to do that. It would have involved a very long flight. I was teaching full time. It would have involved my being away from Caltech for the better part of a week. I certainly felt subsequently that I had made the right decision in not pressing terribly hard for the job.

Going back to the Capricorn Project, I'd like to summarize my thoughts on the dissolution of the Africa project, which had seemed very promising. The money was running out; Bob Huttenback was spending a large percentage of what money was left on his Gandhi studies, which had nothing to do with economic development. Ned Munger was studying politics in South Africa. Bob Sigafoos quit. Fred Lindvall didn't have time as the division chairman. Ted Scudder said that he was not really interested in pursuing economic development per se, but he wanted to do his own work on the Kariba Dam basin. Bob Huttenback went off, subsequently to study Kanpur. And I felt that I was all alone, confronted by a large teaching load, and was being asked to become more and more involved in Pasadena, even as early as 1963. And I just couldn't do all these things simultaneously.

ROBERT W. OLIVER

SESSION 2

August 10, 1988

Begin Tape 2, Side 1

KARKLINS: I would like to discuss aspects of the division—first as the Humanities Division, and then with the change, adding the social sciences. To begin with, when you first arrived at Caltech, how did you perceive the role of the Humanities Division in a school that is engineering- and science-based?

OLIVER: Teaching was a major component. I would have to say that when I arrived, it was *the* major component of activity at Caltech. Professors in literature, for example, didn't publish a great deal; they had very heavy teaching schedules, and most of the people in the literature department were very, very fine teachers.

Then there began to be a bit of a dichotomy between Rod [Rodman W.] Paul, on the one hand, who was head of the history department, and Hallett Smith, on the other hand, who was head of the literature department. Hallett felt that teaching was the most important thing. And while Rod did not put down teaching in any sense, he felt that publication was somewhat more important, and he tried very hard to get people who would publish, in addition to being good teachers. Bill Cozard comes to mind in the literature field as an example of a superb teacher who just didn't publish very much; and [J.] Morgan Kousser, for example, comes to mind as a person who is concerned a great deal with publication and not a whole lot with teaching.

KARKLINS: Did you agree with Smith or Paul?

OLIVER: I think there's something to be said for each of them. In my own case, Alan Sweezy was here when I arrived, and he and I assumed the nominal chairmanship of the social science department—it wasn't called social science at that time, of course. He and I were the full-time teachers. A man named Ray Untereiner was here; he had served on the Public Utilities Commission with distinction but was very near retirement and didn't pay a whole lot of attention

either to publication or to teaching. A man named Mel Brockie was here. He was a very fine teacher; he didn't publish very much. He sort of had a nervous breakdown and died early in my career at Caltech. So Alan Sweezy and I were really left with the total burden of teaching economics. There was one person in political science—Jim Davis. He was a pretty good teacher and published some but not a whole lot. Again, I have to remind you, as I've said before, that our teaching schedules were a great deal fuller and we were obliged to cover more and different subjects at the time I came than more recently. It was quite different in the sixties from what it was like in the eighties. Alan Sweezy did not publish at all, really. He had one article that was sort of a summary of the history of Harvard University and Keynesian economics in the mid-seventies; that was his only attempt at publication. So it was a quite different division.

I would say that Rod Paul won out, in a sense, in that behind the scenes he not only arranged to supplant Hallett Smith but he arranged to insert Bob Huttenback as Hallett Smith' s successor. When I came to Caltech, I was interested in two different lines of inquiry. One of them was city government and city politics. I wrote an article called "Our Changing Cities" for *Engineering and Science* in 1961. And then my other interest was that of the World Bank and economic development. I participated in a full summer's work in 1961 for the World Bank, doing their oral history program, and that became my other overriding interest. Simultaneously, as I said before, I was concerned with macroeconomic theory, microeconomic theory, business cycle theory, and international economic theory. Later, with urban problems. The work in economic development—or, as we called it, the Technical Cooperation Seminar—did continue on a smaller scale clear through the bulk of the l960s, but it was reduced substantially in scope for reasons that I mentioned at the close of our discussion yesterday. It had declined to being just an ordinary class, which was called Economics 126. At one point, I think it fell to five students, from a fairly large number. I was also dealing with urban problems, or city politics, in the late sixties. When I went off to the World Bank for a year, Harrison Brown took over work in what he called population studies, and that became the substitute for what remained of the Technical Cooperation Seminar.

Africa continued to be sort of a central theme, insofar as an area was concerned. We had Ted Scudder in anthropology, dealing largely with Africa. We had Ned Munger, who's a political geographer; he deals primarily with South Africa. We hired a political scientist named Bob Bates in the late sixties who studied Africa. Alan Sweezy participated to some extent in

these issues. Roger Noll, who came later, participated somewhat in these studies. But I guess the point I would make is that I alone was concerned with the economics of development. So the class did not coalesce in terms of a seminar. It became a single-purpose kind of enterprise, with the other people doing their various things.

Bob Huttenback, of course, was also interested in Africa, but his interest was much more in India than in Africa. And, of course, as you know, he wrote the biography of Gandhi in South Africa, which I think, in terms of development theory, didn't add very much.

KARKLINS: Going back to the question of the publish-or-perish issue, I assume that today anyone who would apply to a Caltech professorship in the Humanities and Social Sciences Division would be expected to publish as well as teach. At what point was the decision made that the Humanities and Social Sciences Division would be demanding that of its new faculty? Did that come under Hallett Smith, or did it come later under Huttenback?

OLIVER: Well, it certainly came under Huttenback later on. He put out memos to the effect that nobody could be expected to achieve tenure without publication. But I think that was generally understood in the sixties; it might not have been understood in the fifties. I came here in 1959, but I expected to publish and I expected to participate in scholarly activities.

KARKLINS: Did it evolve slowly?

OLIVER: Yes, it evolved slowly. I published a paper in the summer of '63 for the Western Economics Association. There was no doubt in my mind that publication was important. As between teaching and publication, I guess I would say that for some people who are not very good teachers, publication was more important, and for people who were quite good teachers publication was less important. But it was certainly not an either/or choice.

KARKLINS: Under which division chairman was the teaching load officially lessened so that you would have the opportunity to publish?

OLIVER: That occurred under Huttenback and with his edict that research and publication were

to be considered more important. Huttenback said over and over that "there is no dichotomy between teaching and research," which is nonsense. It is true that research reinforces subjects that a scholar is doing research about, but, like the guns-and-butter choice in economics, the more teaching a person does, the less time he has for research. Mind you, Rod Paul was a very fine teacher, and Hallett Smith was a very fine teacher. Rod Paul published a fair amount about the frontier and western history, and Hallett Smith continued to publish about Shakespeare. So in neither case was there an either/or kind of proposition. But I think, insofar as there was a dichotomy, Rod Paul was somewhat more concerned with publication and Hallett Smith was somewhat more concerned with teaching and, of course, administration.

KARKLINS: Who basically initiated, around 1965, the idea to begin offering majors options in English, economics, and history, which had not existed before at Caltech?

OLIVER: Well, we had been a Humanities Division before. I remember attending a meeting around 1965, at which time the division talked about whether or not we should add "Social Sciences" to the title. I spoke in favor of adding "Social Sciences." I simply made the point that it was easier for those of us who practiced social sciences to identify what we were doing than to go under the general rubric of humanities only; it was a descriptive addition. I later learned that Hallett Smith had really opposed this, though I didn't know it at the time. Had I known, I suppose I would have tempered my remarks somewhat.

KARKLINS: Do you have any idea why he opposed it?

OLIVER: Yes. I think he felt that the orientation of the division was toward philosophy, as an overall umbrella. It was not so much concerned with measurement. Insofar as we talked about the two cultures—science on the one hand, and humanities on the other hand—it seemed clear to me that Hallett Smith was more interested in the things that you cannot measure. I personally think that the people in social science have unfortunately become almost solely concerned with measurement, or the measurement of things that they are not capable of measuring but wish they could measure. That is to say, they're concerned with model building as distinct from nonquantitative reasoning. It's very hard to identify a clear-cut distinction between these areas.

But I think that Hallett felt that the Humanities Division was a better title overall and that people like Alan Sweezy, and David Elliot, and Rod Paul himself, were really better described as people involved in humanities than the opposite—which was to be called social science.

KARKLINS: Do you feel that because Caltech is a school of science and technology, there may have been a feeling that the division must legitimize itself more by claiming to be made up of social scientists?

OLIVER: Well, I suppose that's the case. I am told by people who were on the Aims and Goals Committee in the late l960s that they became more concerned with identifying a distinction between what is measurable and what is not measurable. And indeed, to some extent, it seems to me that the teaching at Caltech has been poisoned ever since, because of this overemphasis upon science. I do not believe that society is susceptible to the precision required by physicists. I believe that we should try to measure things as much as we can, but I do not believe that there are laws of economics that are anything like the quality of the generalizations that we deal with in science. Therefore, to some extent, I think that it was unwise of me, and perhaps others, to try and identify social science. It gave an opening to those who were concerned with overthrowing Hallett Smith.

KARKLINS: What do you feel was the reaction by the other divisions on campus when such a proposal was made, that the division would now be the Humanities and Social Sciences?

OLIVER: I didn't perceive immediately that there was any change at all; it seemed to me merely a descriptive term that fit the division better than just humanities by itself. But there began to be some agitation in the Aims and Goals Committee, amongst other places, to begin a graduate program which I thought badly of—and still think badly of.

KARKLINS: Why is that?

OLIVER: Well, because I think that unless we are prepared to take on a much larger program in the social sciences, we shouldn't try to offer a graduate degrees. I think the graduate program

today is very, very narrow, very, very specialized, and on the whole, not very good. There are several people who have come out of the social science program who are good, but that's due more to them and their inherent qualities than to the division as a whole. I guess I still think that the social science department, as a whole, is a bit of a farce, to this day. So I think that if it had been done, it ought to have been done in a big way, à la MIT, when it started its social science program, with big stars.

KARKLINS: I know that Dr. [Robert A.] Millikan's view of the Humanities Division was, more or less, to give a foundation of values and judgment to the young scientists, rather than just have them concentrate on pure sciences and math. Do you feel that might have been the better way to continue the Humanities and Social Sciences Division on this campus?

OLIVER: I surely do! I feel that very, very strongly. I think that we have gone in the wrong direction in terms of personnel—unless, as I said, it could have been done in a big, big way. Instead, just a few people were added here and there. I believe the value orientation was profoundly important. Now, that does not mean that we shouldn't teach economics or political science or psychology or anthropology. But those kinds of things should have been done in a value-oriented kind of way, rather than in this quantitative approach.

I might jump ahead a little bit and say that once Lance Davis became executive officer for the division, he controlled every single appointment that was made from that time on. Beginning in l970-'7l, I was systematically excluded from participation in the decision making about new faculty. A couple of years ago, Lance even tried to get rid of one of my courses—Ec. 15, Introduction to Macroeconomic Theory. It passed the Curriculum Committee without my knowledge. I had to appeal to the Faculty Board to get the decision reversed. If anything, Lance Davis is more underhanded than Bob Huttenback. That hurt me deeply.

I would like to read just one other thing into the record. I think that this is fairly significant. This is a note from Harold Brown [Caltech president 1969-1977], dated May 20, 1970. He writes to me, "Your concern has merit." My concern dealt with the issue of whether we should move ahead in the field of quantitative analysis or whether we should continue this value orientation. "To me, it requires communication both ways, though. The teacher of undergrads and practitioners of public policy (you) have to talk to and work with the model

builders. By themselves, the former have got us where we are;"—Ugh!—"by themselves, the latter haven't helped. Harold Brown."

I will say that the choice of Bob Huttenback and the movement towards social science—which turned out to mean quantitative, mathematical social science—proceeded apace and the rest of us were excluded from the process altogether. Alan Sweezy retired in the seventies; he continued to teach but he did not attend faculty meetings.

KARKLINS: Did you sense that Hallett Smith began to feel undermined as well? He resigned from his post as division chairman in 1970, yet he only retired from teaching in 1975.

OLIVER: Yes, I feel confident that Hallett would have preferred to have remained as chairman of the division until he retired. In a way, he was forced to retire. He had been chairman, however, for twenty years or more. Harold Brown instituted a policy that each division chairman should serve five years and then, after consultation with the faculty, he might serve an additional five years. I myself think that twenty years or more was too long; I do believe in change. But I'm pretty sure that Hallett Smith felt aggrieved at not being allowed to continue until 1975. There was a palace revolution of sorts that took place, aided and abetted by Rod Paul. He played a large role.

KARKLINS: But I don't sense that Rodman Paul was interested in taking over the division. He wanted Smith out, but not necessarily in order to take charge himself.

OLIVER: That's correct. I think he could not have adopted the position of an official adversary, and I don't think that the feeling between Hallett and Rod was anything like a confrontational spirit. But I think it also needs to be said that Rod and Hallett were friendly antagonists, and this distinction between publication and teaching was largely responsible for that. For a year or two, Rod did become acting chairman of the division, after Bob Huttenback moved to Santa Barbara. I think Rod rather expected to be allowed to continue and become permanent chairman, but he had difficulty, oddly enough, with the social scientists, whom he came to dislike somewhat.

KARKLINS: What would be the reasons for that?

OLIVER: Well, he was an historian. He was not so much concerned with cliometrics—that is to say, with the quantitative measurement of things in history—and I think that some of the practices of the social scientists just got under his skin. He was annoyed at the unnecessary running up of expenses. He was annoyed at the way people would be recruited in the social science part of the division. For example, people would go to the Athenaeum and order the most expensive bottles of wine and charge the institute. I was never a part of this. But the new social scientists who arrived between 1970 and '75 developed kind of a playboy approach to things. They did publish, to their credit. Though I have to say also that I don't think that they were very good teachers.

KARKLINS: Going back to Hallett Smith, what would you say were the good points and the bad points of the man as division chairman?

OLIVER: Hallett did not have aspirations for the Humanities Division that included the highest level of research. He was more oriented toward teaching. He was perfectly willing to accept somebody from UCLA, like Mel Brockie, for example, or Heinz Ellersieck in history. But the pressure that Rod Paul put younger faculty under was really quite severe, so that a number of teachers and researchers who I thought were very promising were let go.

KARKLINS: After Hallett Smith resigned, for a two-term period Robert Huttenback was acting chairman; Huttenback resigned to go to Santa Barbara. What were your feelings then about Huttenback taking charge? Also, were there any other individuals interested in the chairmanship, besides Huttenback?

OLIVER: In my opinion, if someone were to be hired from inside the division, it should have been David Elliot, Hallett's natural successor. Rod opposed David. There was a big, long search that was put on, ostensibly for the purpose of getting somebody from outside to make the department seem more distinguished and to avoid the internecine battles that were going on as part of the palace revolution. It was essentially a *coup d'etat.* I have to talk a little around this subject to deal with it.

When I was elected to the city council [of Pasadena], I tended to drop out of the division somewhat. It was certainly not by intention, but because of the pressure of work. I think, myself, that I should have been appointed to the Aims and Goals Committee, which met in 1967 or '68. Already Bob Bacher and Lee DuBridge were concerned with the direction that the division might take. There were meetings held at the Honker restaurant—the Honker was a precursor to The Chronicle restaurant—to talk about the direction that the division should go.

Huttenback—who had risen from soccer coach through the master of student houses and eventually to dean of students and was a part-time person in history, teaching primarily British imperialist history—because he was a part of the masters/deans position, he succeeded in getting himself inserted into the kinds of studies that were being conducted under the auspices of Bob Bacher, who was the provost. When an official Aims and Goals Committee was established, he succeeded in getting himself appointed to that, also. Rod Paul was also a member. I think that Thayer Scudder was a member. Lance Davis may have been a member, though I can't remember for sure. Neither Hallett Smith nor Alan Sweezy nor I participated in the Aims and Goals Committee. I guess I think that Rod Paul succeeded in gaining the upper hand over Hallett Smith. Again, I don't want to make it appear as though it's an antagonistic relationship, but insofar as there were differences, I think that that is what happened.

I thought I should have been a member of the Aims and Goals Committee. But the point is that when Harold Brown replaced Lee DuBridge in about 1968 or '69, and with the proposal from the Aims and Goals Committee that social science should be paid more attention to, the way was set in motion to oust Hallett Smith. Huttenback nominally served under Harold Brown, who convened the meetings to talk about a replacement for Hallett Smith. But, in fact, Huttenback chaired the meetings most of the time. I personally believe—though I was not a participant even in the committee chosen to put together a successor to Hallett Smith—that Huttenback, with the strong support of Lance Davis, saw to it that one person or another from outside was deemed inadequate for one reason or another. I myself, when I was on leave at the World Bank, strongly recommended by mail—Harold Brown was good enough to read my letter to the full committee—Andrew Kamarck as a possible person. Andrew Kamarck was, at that time, head of the economics department in the World Bank; he was a very prominent scholar who had been at Harvard and who had served as Regents' Professor for a year at UCLA. I thought that he would have been a splendid person, if we could get him. I had no idea, of course,

whether we could have persuaded him. In my opinion, he would have been vastly superior to Bob Huttenback.

KARKLINS: Do you know whether or not he was ever contacted by Caltech?

OLIVER: Harold Brown read my letter, but several people—including Thayer Scudder, actually—spoke against his possible appointment. He was never contacted to flush out his full curriculum vitae. And I guess I feel that many other people were treated in a similar vein. So that it was more or less inevitable that Huttenback would accede to the job of division chairman. That's a somewhat Machiavellian explanation. [Laughter]

I have to say one more thing. You may have noted from my earlier comments that I was not a strong fan of Bob Huttenback. I felt that he was duplicitous in a number of ways. For example, his getting the appointment to work on Gandhi in India, which was totally outside of the framework of what the Technical Cooperation Seminar was supposed to do. Then he got an appointment in Kanpur. Later on, he more or less embezzled funds from the Humanities Division in order to fund additional work in social science. He put an end to the American Universities Field Staff program in order to make more funds available for social science. He personally redirected a great deal of research money from other people—from the Humanities Division generally—towards his own work, with Lance Davis, in England. I am told that he has invented statistics in his book—which has been called a very important, a seminal, book on the one hand and panned politely by the British on the other hand; so it's a controversial book. But Huttenback has always been a controversial person.

KARKLINS: Besides yourself not being that happy with the man as the choice, were there others in the division who were of the same mind as you?

OLIVER: Yes, there surely were. My colleagues Kent Clark and David Elliot, to name two. I would have said the entire literature department was opposed to Huttenback's appointment. What happened was that once Lance Davis had come as sort of a joint appointment in history and economics, he was asked—when I was away on leave for a year at the World Bank—to become executive officer of the social sciences department. I was never consulted, or even made

aware of it. I became aware of it only when Lance called me on the telephone and asked me what I wanted to teach. I had supposed that Alan Sweezy would continue in the job of being "convenor," as we used to call it, of the social sciences department—at least until he retired. But with that event, he appointed two other people from Purdue—Jim Quirk and Charlie [Charles R.] Plott—who came to be labeled the Purdue Mafia. Then Roger Noll, who had come about a year before Lance Davis and had participated to some extent in what I call the palace revolution, succeeded in appointing people who were personal friends of his who had worked at the Council of Economic Advisors or the Brookings Institution, where he was off and on for a fair number of years in the later 1960s. I didn't know any of these people. Many of them were estimable, but the point is that the old guard—to use another picturesque phrase—consisting of the literature people were confronted, by and large, by the new guard, who were all appointed by Lance Davis and Roger Noll. And they participated overwhelmingly in the confrontation with Hallett that developed, and by and large were very supportive of Huttenback. They still are to this day. Letters are being written to the judge who is concerned with Huttenback's embezzlement case [in Santa Barbara] to try and get the judge to be lenient, or to perhaps not put him in jail at all. So, the division has been substantially bifurcated ever since that time.

Begin Tape 2, Side 2

KARKLINS: I take it once Huttenback became chairman, he depended on Lance Davis and Roger Noll for their opinion, in an advisory capacity?

OLIVER: Yes.

KARKLINS: So, would you say that the division was run by the three of them, in collusion together?

OLIVER: Yes, I certainly would say so. Lance Davis succeeded in appointing two other persons from Purdue who were not terribly distinguished in my judgment, and they, as I said earlier, came to be known as the Purdue Mafia. They were able to outvote Alan Sweezy and me. Roger Noll was a bit ambivalent on this subject, but I think he thought reasonably well of the new

appointees. When I succeeded in getting Will Jones appointed professor of philosophy, he defected to Huttenback's camp and joined forces with the Purdue Mafia and Roger Noll.

Roger Noll, it has to be said, got his undergraduate degree in mathematics at Caltech. So he was brought in largely in order to cover the gap that was noticeable in mathematical economics. But once he got here, he joined with Lance Davis in seeing to it that everybody in economics from then on was a mathematical economist.

KARKLINS: Since an uneasiness continued in the division throughout Huttenback's chairmanship, what do you think possessed Harold Brown to reappoint him as chairman when the five years were up?

OLIVER: Well, by 1975 or '76, I'm sure that the majority of people in the division favored Huttenback's reappointment. They liked his free-wheeling style; they liked the fact that he was giving a great deal of attention to social science, that he was finding money to finance research.

KARKLINS: Would you say even the literature people were in favor of him?

OLIVER: Oh, no. I don't think the literature people were, but they were outvoted. Huttenback succeeded in making himself chairman of the literature people and tended to speak for them in consultation with Lance Davis, and by this time Charlie Plott and Jim Quirk. Mo [Morris P.] Fiorina and John Ferejohn—who have subsequently left and I think were perhaps the best of the political scientists, with the possible exception of Bruce [E.] Cain, who is very good—were in the unfortunate position of being Johnny-come-lately's and not really understanding what the division had been like before. And I think they gave Huttenback nominal support; they didn't see any reason to try and cut back, as Rod Paul subsequently tried to do—and I would say fell flat on his face in the process. Then Rod was succeeded by Roger Noll, who left prematurely. And now we have David [M.] Grether, who is a statistician and a nice person but in my opinion is inadequate for the job.

But I would like to read to you what I had to say to Harold Brown about Huttenback. This is very, very strong language, I realize, but it's in black and white. "I am amazed that a great university could even consider reappointing a person such as Huttenback as chairman of a

community of scholars concerned in part with humanity." That is one line—I'll just read sort of at random. "With the right search committee, such a person could be found now. And I urge you to appoint such a committee, for excellence is not too much to expect of this division as part of Caltech. We need a scholar who's also a gentleman. We need someone who will listen to all who have something to say, someone who can heal the wounds by demonstrating fairness. We need someone who knows the humanities first hand, someone who also understands education and the management of sensitive human beings. We need a leader whose integrity is beyond question."

Here's the line: "Wholly apart from the merits of the case of Jenijoy La Belle, Huttenback has behaved outrageously towards her. Before the issue of her promotion ever arose as a formal matter, Huttenback said that he was going to get rid of her, and he then resorted to every stratagem he could conceive to accomplish this end. He is so dishonest, he doesn't even know he's dishonest."

KARKLINS: Would you be willing to discuss the La Belle case?

OLIVER: Sure. This is what I sent to Bob Huttenback. "I favor the promotion of Jenijoy La Belle. As you suggested, I have talked at some length with Will Jones. I believe we agree substantially about the kind of people we want in the division and about the ways and means of getting them. I'm not sure we agree about Jenijoy. Will seems to regard it as a fault in Jenijoy that he doesn't know her very well. I think there are other explanations. Will does not think particularly well of Jenijoy's short book on Blake's illustrations, and this strikes me as important, because I have great confidence in Will's judgment about literature and scholarship. But I also have great confidence in Hallett's and Kent's judgment about literature and scholarship. They both tell me in this regard that Jenijoy is first-rate, and they have read more of Jenijoy's output than Will has. So I am on the horns of an authoritative dilemma, where I would be in the absence of the seven letters from outside authorities, which letters I have read carefully together with two of Jenijoy's articles. The tenor of these outside reviews is clearly supportive of Jenijoy's promotion….Rod Paul's letter about Jenijoy is so full of inaccuracies—about which I could write you on another occasion—that his judgment should, in my opinion, be discounted. Indeed, I have the feeling that if Rod Paul and Lance Davis were replaced on the promotion

review committee by, say, Peter Fay and Lou [Louis] Breger, the committee would have ratified the unanimous recommendation of the tenured English faculty. I fear, in short, that Jenijoy is being subjected to the purge of those in the division who have preferred the style and integrity of the former chairman. I would rather have Jenijoy as a colleague than two of the young men whose virtues you extol in your letter to the Institute Administrative Council. She contributes more to Caltech life—outside the division, I might add—than any of the four. But the main point, I think, is that Jenijoy is supported by those who know her best—her teaching, her work, her policies. That satisfies me."

KARKLINS: The question was whether or not to give her tenure. Obviously, it wasn't a problem of her not publishing. So was it based on whether or not her published works were first-rate?

OLIVER: Yes. All of the letters that were solicited from the outside referees in the first instance were supportive and recommended that she be given tenure. What Huttenback did then—and I have already indicated that I thought he was dishonest in his approach to the promotion of Jenijoy—was to seek separate opinions. And while I'm not 100 percent sure about this, I'm 90 percent sure that he, first of all, found out what opinions the people had, and then he asked them to submit letters. He knew in advance what opinions he would get about her. And I think that that is absolutely dishonest.

KARKLINS: It seems there must have been a personality clash between Huttenback and Jenijoy La Belle.

OLIVER: Yes, and I can't really account for that, except that it's possible that Bob Huttenback was turned off by her personality and her good looks, and maybe by her sex. The Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee concluded that there had not been sexual discrimination in the case of Jenijoy. But I think it would be very, very hard to prove that one way or another. I personally believe that Huttenback was turned off by her good looks and her personality, and probably by her sex. He felt that a first-rate scholar could not come out of the kind of picture image he had of Jenijoy.

KARKLINS: Was she the first woman on campus to be given tenure?

OLIVER: She was the first who was proposed for tenure, yes. Eleanor Searle had been here earlier. She eventually came back as part of the Medieval Historical Program. She was given tenure straightaway, but that was after Jenijoy. After Jenijoy was let go and after she appealed, she was granted tenure unanimously.

KARKLINS: In short, were there any redeeming values to Huttenback as division chairman?

OLIVER: Oh, sure! He was nominally jolly. He behaved in a much more offhand kind of way than Hallett Smith did, and certainly than Rod Paul later did. He was a great strategist; he almost always won at a game called "Strategy," which involved the deliberate use of duplicity in accomplishing objectives. His record at the University of California at Santa Barbara certainly speaks in support of him, insofar as he was able to attract distinguished scholars to the campus. I think he was genuinely concerned with attracting distinguished scholars to Caltech in the Humanities Division.

KARKLINS: In light of the evidence regarding Huttenback's present court case involving possible embezzlement of UC Santa Barbara funds for personal use, are you surprised?

OLIVER: No, I'm not surprised at all. It seems to me that he should have been caught long ago. As I said, he was really guilty of embezzling funds from the humanities part of the division, which Kent Clark and David Smith and Chuck Newton had obtained as a grant for continuing the work in creative literature and directed toward an art history kind of program. He took it away from them and used it for his own personal research, and for the benefit of the social sciences department. Huttenback perceived at the outset that Harold Brown was interested in building up the social sciences department, and he took his cue from that. Before we had attempted to increase the size of the division by *all* of us participating in interviewing candidates and getting seminars presented—"all" includes Michael Dohan and Ken Frederick. Some distinguished people, like Lester Thurow, came through Caltech, invited by Alan Sweezy. That stopped when Lance Davis became executive officer [for the social sciences]. It was no longer totally open and

aboveboard. I personally think that was also Huttenback's style. While he succeeded in improving the division—I don't think that there are any questions that can be raised about that—I think he did it in too narrow a way. He was very good at raising funds, but it was all done in a slightly dishonest way.

KARKLINS: Do you feel it was just a sincere flaw on the part of his character, just a narrowness in his own mind, and that he never saw anything wrong with what he did? Or do you see something more sinister in his personality?

OLIVER: No, I think he's basically a jolly fellow. It's just a flaw in his character, that he doesn't see. That's why I used the words "He is so dishonest, he does not know he is dishonest." I fully believe that Bob Huttenback, to this very day, does not think he has done anything wrong.

KARKLINS: Did he know how you felt about him?

OLIVER: Yes.

KARKLINS: If he did know how you felt, did that cause any major frictions? Did he, then, put you on a blacklist and make your life more difficult?

OLIVER: Yes, I think he did. I have a memo here, to Professor David Wood from Robert Oliver, on the subject of being an ombudsman. I was trying very hard to get my salary increased. I have a memo here that goes back to 1977 from Huttenback that alleges that I had gone off to a conference in England without adequately telling anybody that I was going, which was absolutely not true. I wrote to Huttenback, "My secretary, Valera Hall, assures me that she provided your office with my full itinerary, including addresses, telephone numbers, and cable addresses, at or before the time I left for England. My students were informed of the class schedule at the beginning of the quarter, and the work was apportioned so that a full quarter's work was covered. I had two class sessions at my home to provide extra instruction. Colleagues with whom I work were fully informed of my plans." So I felt that Huttenback had become increasingly peevish as he detected my diversion away from his point of view.

KARKLINS: Since he was head of the division for many years, during that time did you ever think about leaving the campus because of this friction between you? Or did you enjoy Caltech enough so that you could ignore the politics?

OLIVER: I applied for a position as dean of the faculty at Occidental College, where I was one of the final two contestants, but the other candidate, Bill Gerberding, was chosen. This was in 1971, I believe. I was also considered for dean of the faculty at Pomona College, and I did not succeed in that. I didn't pursue anything any further than that. I guess I felt that, for one thing, I didn't want to leave Southern California. I had many, many friends, not only at Caltech, but outside of Caltech in the community. I really didn't want to leave my home, which I am very fond of. And therefore I felt that all I could really do was to put up with Huttenback.

KARKLINS: After that, Rodman Paul took over. Any comments on Paul as acting chairman?

OLIVER: He tried very hard to bring the division back to a straight and narrow path. He was spoken of with some derision as being too hard-nosed and too proper, so to speak. I myself applauded his efforts. But I think when the meeting took place between Rod and Marvin [Murph] Goldberger [Caltech president 1978-1987], who had arrived on the scene by then, it was fairly clear that Rod would not be asked to continue a second year.

KARKLINS: Roger Noll then took charge from 1978 to 1982. Any comments regarding the division under his chairmanship?

OLIVER: Yes. I think Roger tried very hard to be fair, much more fair than Huttenback. But he did have the unfortunate background of having studied mathematics at Caltech, and therefore, it seemed to me, he tended to bend over backwards to promote the mathematical point of view in the social sciences department. He also tried, however, in the literature department, to induce the promotion to tenure of Annette Smith, which was a signal achievement. David Smith and Annette Smith are colleagues of mine. They're both marvelous people. David Smith was for a long time in charge of the [Baxter] art gallery, in addition to other things. He served as master of

student houses for about six years. And Annette Smith, his wife, was an already well-published scholar, but at that time we had the tradition of never appointing people in foreign languages to a tenured position. So that was a breakthrough. I don't remember, but I think it was under Roger that David Smith also succeeded in getting promotion to full professor with tenure. Roger tried to pay more attention to the humanities part of the division than Huttenback had done.

KARKLINS: So Roger Noll was liked and respected by the majority within the division?

OLIVER: I think so, yes. He had the unfortunate habit of speaking too loudly and of laughing too loudly, so that one tended to try to get under a bed or something like that. He was rather like a bull in a china shop. But his intentions, I think, were quite honorable.

KARKLINS: I believe Marvin Goldberger was quite enamored by the man, as well. At one point, he was interested in possibly making him provost. Do you know anything about that?

OLIVER: I heard the rumor that Goldberger was considering making him provost, but I really can't comment about it. I think that Roger Noll really always had his heart set on going to Stanford. He wanted an appointment in economics, however, rather than in business, and he finally succeeded in getting appointed in economics. As far as I know, he is division chairman now.

KARKLINS: Did he leave Caltech on a bad note?

OLIVER: Oh, no, he didn't leave on a bad note. He spent a fair amount of time away from campus. He was at the Brookings Institution for a year or two, and he was on the Council of Economic Advisors for a year or two. So one saw him and then one didn't see him, so to speak. But once he was appointed division chairman, he stayed around. And I think that was partly responsible for his getting itchy feet and wanting to move on to greener pastures.

KARKLINS: And now, for a short term, Caltech has had David Grether. Any comments there?

OLIVER: Well, I don't think that he's a strong person. After Roger left, David Grether was just sort of appointed by default. We'd looked around enough, I guess, in trying to find somebody from outside. I still would have preferred somebody from outside. But I think that Goldberger felt that the division was really not strong enough, in terms of scholarship and publications, to warrant somebody being brought in from the outside at a very high level. And I agreed with that.

KARKLINS: What do you think the future holds for the division?

OLIVER: Well, John Sutherland is a person who's been newly appointed within the last three years. He's from England. He, in fact, is retired already, but has been brought back to preside over the humanities part of the division. He's a very good person; I like John a great deal. So I think that that part of the division is in good hands—at least, again, as far as teaching. To this very day, the dichotomy between publication on the one hand and teaching on the other hand has tended to remain. Up until this year, I was the only person who had ever received a teaching award in social science. Bruce Cain and Thayer Scudder have now, this last year, been given good teaching awards. But people in the humanities part of the division have been thought of as good teachers for quite a while. I guess I don't think of it as being a really distinguished division—either in social science or in humanities—as far as publication is concerned.

KARKLINS: So neither one has overshadowed the other?

OLIVER: Well, again, the social scientists have tended to publish, I would guess, somewhat more. One of the results about all of this, however, is that our attention has been directed rather more towards publication and rather less to teaching. And so we've sort of fallen into the habit nowadays—and I'm speaking about the last ten years or more—of shunning our teaching jobs and trying very hard to get back to publish, which I personally think is too bad.

KARKLINS: And you don't see the pendulum swinging back in the near future?

OLIVER: No. I think that we will just continue pretty much as we have been, with no significant increase in appointments and with very good but not marvelous work in publishing—and very

good but probably not marvelous teaching, either.

KARKLINS: And as far as the graduate program in the division, do you think it's going to grow?

OLIVER: I doubt it very seriously, because the graduate program is much too narrow to attract students. Louis Wilde, I should mention, is the executive officer now in the social science part of the division. And I'm sure that he is going to work very hard at improving things, but he is hamstrung, somewhat, by the lack of ability to make new appointments. More than anything else, however, he is confined within the relatively narrow scope of the social science program, as I see it.

KARKLINS: Do you find that those students who go into the graduate programs—are they possibly students who started out in the sciences at Caltech and then switched?

OLIVER: Frequently they are, because they have a fair amount of work behind them in mathematics, so that the mathematics training stands them in good stead. I don't think that there are very many exceptions to the rule that Caltech's undergraduate students don't go on to do graduate work [here]—I can think of one, a man named Josh Forman. But other than that, I can't think of any exceptions to the rule that graduate students come from other universities. But to tell you the truth, I just don't know that much about the graduate program. I have confined my teaching to undergraduate students. Bruce Cain, also, likes to deal almost solely with undergraduate students. He is a very popular teacher; he has, I think, upwards of a hundred now in his class.

KARKLINS: Over the years, you've also seen changes in the administration—first with DuBridge, then Harold Brown, Marvin Goldberger, and now Tom [Thomas E.] Everhart. How has the division and the campus been affected by these different personalities?

OLIVER: Lee DuBridge was a superlative administrator, a careful person, who consulted before he made up his mind about things—sort of a kitchen cabinet type of proposition. He was accessible to both faculty and students. He spent a fair amount of time in Washington, to be

sure, but he was always available. I never felt that I had any trouble walking into Lee DuBridge's office and making a comment about something or other. That has changed. Harold Brown instituted a more austere kind of approach. He was in Washington a great deal. It is supposed that he was, quote, "running" for the job of secretary of defense the whole time Richard Nixon was in office. He spent a fair amount of time with the Trilateral Commission. He was a very, very bright person, but he was not a warm person. Ever since Lee DuBridge, we've been trying to get back to getting the kind of person who Lee DuBridge was. Maybe we've succeeded with Tom Everhart—it's clearly too early to tell.

Marvin Goldberger was very impetuous. He would tend to make up his mind based sometimes upon inadequate evidence. The two biggest gaffes, that I'm aware of, were his closing down of the Baxter Art Gallery program—simply cutting it off totally. Perhaps an even bigger gaffe, because it aroused the faculty, was his starting the Arroyo Center, which brought down the wrath of the faculty. It happened partly because it was argued that the people who were going into the Arroyo Center were not really qualified to do the same high-level kind of work that the scientists were doing and partly because, I think, he chose the wrong kind of people. This was about the time when he was relying heavily upon Roger Noll, for example, for advice. Roger tried to support the Arroyo Center. My own personal choice would have been David Elliot. I think David Elliot would have been much more careful in selecting candidates, and that the Arroyo Center could have succeeded had it been a different choice of personnel. Roger was almost given carte blanche to choose people; he made some good selections and some very indifferent ones.

KARKLINS: But I take it that, overall, you feel that Goldberger never really met with a larger group of people on campus when he made a decision.

OLIVER: Well, I wouldn't say never. He was subjected to all kinds of faculty meetings and advice in faculty meetings. He was picking his way carefully through the minefields, but he did have the capacity to act with considerable impetuousness and against the advice of his provost. Robbie [Rochus E.] Vogt, it must be said, was probably as difficult a person to get along with as anybody could have been. Robbie had great visions for the campus and wanted very, very much to make Caltech better. But he almost never showed up in the Athenaeum, for example; he ate

lunch in his office. And he shielded himself—as it seems, to me, very inappropriate for a provost to do—from varying kinds of opinions. I liked Robbie and felt that his heart was in the right place, and particularly in the right place when it came to my own division. But Goldberger and Robbie Vogt, from the word go, didn't really see eye-to-eye and eventually came to a confrontation. I think this also explains why Goldberger was not asked to stay on for a longer period of time. I think that the trustees had decided that Goldberger probably should be succeeded when he became sixty-five and did not invite him to stay on longer. And I think the same thing was felt about Robbie Vogt. So they both came a cropper at a very high level. [Laughter]

KARKLINS: Do you think Goldberger could have been a good president at all? Did he have it in his personality to run a better presidency?

OLIVER: Yes, I think so. He had come to the institute from having been chairman of the department of physics at Princeton. Maybe he needed a little bit more seasoning before he took on the job of being president of Caltech. He was marvelous on the subject of arms control; he spent a fair amount of time traveling in the United States and speaking on behalf of arms control. He was strongly opposed to Star Wars.

KARKLINS: Of course, that made him very controversial, too. Even though he made it very clear he was not necessarily representing Caltech in his comments and, rather, that they were personal comments, nevertheless there were many people who felt he should not speak out, because that was a very powerful position and title that he carried with him.

OLIVER: Yes. Well, Edward Teller similarly speaks out from time to time. And they have divergent points of view.

KARKLINS: Do you think there was a political reason why Everhart, an engineer, was chosen as president? Caltech's previous presidents were all physicists.

OLIVER: Well, Everhart has an undergraduate degree in physics, I think. So his orientation is

largely in the direction of physics—maybe not at as high a theoretical level as others. But I think that what was more important was that the advisory committee was anxious to avoid the difficulties—although I don't think they were substantial difficulties—on the part of either Harold Brown or Marvin Goldberger. But the difficulties are not being close enough to the faculty and not staying home enough and minding the store enough. Tom Everhart strikes me as a person who is able to know a lot of people in depth, including students. He's more accessible, more down-to-earth. And I guess I think that he probably will work out to be a very outstanding president. I think we need an administrator more, rather than a star who is at the top level of physics.

ROBERT W. OLIVER

SESSION 3

August 11, 1988

Begin Tape 3, Side 1

KARKLINS: Dr. Oliver, over the years you've been a member of many Caltech committees. Would you like to reflect on specific ones that may be memorable to you?

OLIVER: A moderately funny thing happened when I was chairman of the now defunct Graduate Housing Committee. A student came in to complain that an air conditioner had been hooked up in such a way that air was simply going around and around inside two rooms and wasn't accomplishing anything at all. Physical Plant had mistakenly thought that by emptying the exhaust into another room that something would happen, but it was just circulating, not cooling. That's the only thing I really remember about that committee. I didn't serve on that committee very long. This was quite early on. I was chairman of that committee, but it was very small.

I was on the Undergraduate Admissions Committee for four or five years and I was called back as a substitute a couple of times. I served first in the Harbor area with Price Walker, a marvelous black student. Then I served the area around Washington, D.C., and finally the area around New York City. I found I got the best students. I would always ask them if they really wanted to come to Caltech.

I guess the next major committee I served on was the Curriculum Committee. I was a member of [that committee] in the late sixties, but I don't remember anything particularly noteworthy, except that Hallett Smith appeared in person sometimes to present suggested course changes for the Humanities Division. I served next on the Faculty Committee on Programs, which was just lots and lots of fun. I served for three years; I had served a previous year as an apprentice to Kent Clark, so to speak, getting accustomed to the operations of the committee. It was a very, very hard-working committee. I attended all of the programs that were put on in either Beckman or Ramo auditoriums. I proofread all the copy that was sent to the press. I met almost daily with Jerry Willis, who, incidentally, is a marvelous person. I had a secretary all to myself, because the work was sufficiently extensive. That was the committee that determined

what productions would be presented at Beckman and Ramo. It was a very, very important committee. I personally think that Jerry Willis is not given nearly enough credit for the work that he does. He runs a quite large shop and he does it marvelously.

There was one controversy, I remember, that came up. Some of the graduate students felt that the committee should put on performances free of charge, and also that the graduate students should have a greater say as to what kinds of programming there'd be. This was around '72 to '75—I came on the committee very shortly after I got back from my year's leave in Washington D.C. The graduate students were invited to meet with the undergraduate students to work out some sort of a proposal for an "improvement" in the way programming was being done. They did recommend that a number of seats should be held until the last minute—a fairly small number—and that very substantial discounts should be given for programs that required an admission charge. But it didn't really change the kinds of programming that was being done. I think it should be said that a major problem of Beckman Auditorium is that it seats only 1,200 persons and that puts an upper limit on the amount that the program committee is allowed to charge. We can't hire artists that charge very much. We can get individual soloists and a few concert pianists—that sort of thing. But even they are likely to charge $5,000 to $6,000 a crack, and we can't even come close to breaking even with the prices we think we can charge. So we have to use the Vienna Choirboys one night and the Preservation Jazz Band another night. And that taxes both the facility and the payback. I don't know how much the committee is allowed to subsidize programs in general now. In those days, we were allowed to go in the hole to the extent of $36,000. And that could have put a drain on the programs in a couple of nights, really. So I must say, I admire Jerry Willis very much for his ability to continue to put on fairly fresh programs each year—there are a fair number of repeats—and keeping it interesting and yet stay within budget.

KARKLINS: Actually, it was Willis who would initiate contact with individuals or groups to perform, and then he would propose these people to the committee.

OLIVER: That's right. I had occasion to go to New York once—it was on some other business—and I met with an agent who frequently dealt with the kinds of programs that Jerry Willis was interested in. We went to lunch, where we had a long discussion about programs. That was fun!

I felt as though I was an impresario, deciding on important artists and programs.

I made suggestions of my own. I pressed for more big-band activity, for example. I'm very, very fond of the big band era and have a very large collection of recordings. So I was very partial to the big band era and fortunately the big bands fell within what we could afford to pay. They filled the house, in any event.

KARKLINS: Do you have any reflections on the Undergraduate Academic Standards and Honors Committee, which you were a member of?

OLIVER: Yes, I have many reflections about it. I was still on that, up until the time I became master of student houses [1987], and had been on it, I guess, three years. Indeed, I was asked to be chairman of that committee but turned it down on the grounds that I thought a younger person would be more satisfactory in that position. That's kind of a sad committee, because the people we deal with—except for the honors part—are people who are flunking out. Sometimes we'd go for two or three days of meetings at the beginning of each term and again at the end of the school year, to review cases of people flunking out. We tried very hard to give a person a second chance, sometimes even a third chance, if we felt that this was the right place for him and that the student was capable of succeeding. If he had a one-term lapse in his grades and no more than that—probably for psychological reasons, certainly in the case of illness—we bent over backwards to be accommodating. So if we thought that the student was capable of graduating, we gave him second and third chances.

On the other hand, we're terribly anxious to avoid putting people in the position of flunking. If they have gone beyond their sophomore year and have had a series of poor semesters, they are "flunking in" the system. They really can't go anywhere else very good. They might go to a city college or something like that and try and make up the work, or part of the work. At the freshman and sophomore levels, we try to assure ourselves as best we can that this is the place where they should be. We sometimes do our best to convince them that it is not the place they should be. Sometimes we suggest that they try another school and come back if they think that they're succeeding. That's the nature of the committee. The committee hears all appeals beyond the dean's first hearing, which is sort of the first chance at an appeal—and which is almost always granted, but with some stern talking to.

KARKLINS: Over the years, does it seem there are more such cases coming forward?

OLIVER: No, I would guess it's about the same, year in and year out. Just a fair number of students—like twenty, at most thirty—find themselves in difficulty with academic standards. They're flunking and they have to appeal, after this first perfunctory appeal in the dean's office, to the Undergraduate Academic Standards and Honors Committee.

KARKLINS: You were also a member of the board of directors of the Caltech Y.

OLIVER: Yes. I was president of the board for a couple of years, back in the seventies. This was at a time when lots of memos were written about Wes Hershey's successor. Wes Hershey had been director of the Caltech Y for thirty years or so, and Wes was considering stepping down and looking for ways to get a successor appointed. That was kind of a difficult period. We were not so much concerned with programming as we were concerned with Wes's successor. But in general I think the Caltech Y has had a marvelous history of being helpful to the institute. It started Freshmen Camp; it started the student/faculty discussions. It has been a lightning rod for whatever agitation existed on campus. There's not a whole lot of agitation on campus, but occasionally there is.

I remember one occasion when the students at Kent State had been shot and the flag was put to half-mast for that occasion. And then the students at Jackson State were shot. Inadvertently, the administration didn't lower the flag to half-mast on that occasion. So the students circled the flagpole and demanded to see Harold Brown. Harold Brown—to his discredit, in my opinion—didn't meet with them. He came into his office by a back entrance, and the students presently dispersed without seeing him.

Anyway, the point of the story is that it was the Caltech Y which really instigated the kind of demonstration that it was. There were only about 100 people; it was not a big demonstration. But that was the closest we ever came to having a riot on campus. [Laughter]

I am on the Y board at the moment. I came back on three years ago, and I guess will serve another three years. I like to stay in touch with students in this way.

KARKLINS: What prompted you to accept the master of student houses position?

OLIVER: I accepted it on the basis that I would serve probably only one year, two years at most. I accepted it partly on the grounds that a good friend of mine on the faculty came to me and said, "Bob, you should do this, because there's probably no other faculty person at this moment who's willing to do it, and we do not want to have this position fall out of the hands of the faculty." And that, to me, was a very forceful argument. My fear now, as well, is it will fall into the hands of a nonfaculty administrator.

I have to say about my own experience that I found it very difficult to obtain what I felt was the necessary authority for dealing with the students. Student affairs, under the general rubric of a vice president for student affairs, has become so attenuated in authority that I found it difficult to do the things that it seemed I needed to do and wanted to do. The whole basement of the South Hall complex, which is a brand-new complex that is put together around a coffeehouse and various meeting rooms, was not under my control. The whole housing situation was not under my control; Nancy Carlton was the person who reports to Jim Minges in the Business Affairs Office, rather than to me. The whole food committee operation was taken away ambiguously from my jurisdiction. That is also in Jim Minges's shop.

KARKLINS: Do you know why the power has been split?

OLIVER: I don't know. I think it was a combination of factors. Dave Morrisroe, I think, became more powerful over the years, somewhat at the expense of both the master and the dean of students. Jim Minges was his appointed subordinate, so to speak, and, in turn, Nancy Carlton reports to Jim Minges. I had a situation where we hired a new associate master, a brand-new position. And that freed me from having to get up so much at night to take care of emergencies. That was a good thing. But it was a bad thing at the same time, because I wasn't totally aware of all the things that were going on on campus. I happened to have recommended hiring a person who was, I think, very charming, but he didn't volunteer ery much information, so I had to get most of what I needed to know by kind of dragging it out of him. He was also doing a dissertation at Syracuse in psychology. Therefore he took on the job of counseling and made it more important—which probably is a good thing. But I think he was much too secretive about

the operations. Indeed, I am told that he asked the people he was counseling not to divulge information about what was going on in their counseling sessions. That was a bad thing.

The assistant to the master, who was a lady, had served for three years under my predecessor, a very charming gentleman named Chris Brennen—and a very marvelous person, too. But I think she had gotten it into her head that she had to do everything exactly the way Chris Brennen did. That deprived me of an opportunity to innovate.

I went to Jim Morgan [vice president for student affairs] at one point and asked him if I could talk to the president about the possibility of increasing the budget, because I had a program which involved meeting with fifteen to twenty students once a week for dinner in the Athenaeum at the expense of the budget of the master's office. Jim Morgan increased my budget a little bit, but he denied me the opportunity to talk directly to the president. He just said that they couldn't break the budget at this time. So there were a fair number of frustrations in the master's job.

I didn't live in the master's house [Steele House], which was probably a mistake, though I made it a condition of my accepting the position that I would not live in the master's house. The master's house went through a very thorough renovation, to the cost of about $40,000. I'm very hopeful that I can restore the organ that is in the master's house to its former grandeur. I'm hopeful at this point that I will succeed in getting a grant for $48,000 just to repair the organ. I worked very hard at furnishing in a minimal sort of way the master's house, including lots of hi-fi equipment and very good television equipment. I can't imagine what will now happen if the master chooses to live in the master's house and brings his own furniture with him, because that's going to be some difficulty.

Also I have to say that I found the students to be, not exactly rude, but they were not as polite as it seems to me they might have been. They adopted the practice, for example, of pounding on the tables when they wanted to applaud things. I got to the point where I almost shuddered at the prospect of having another meal in one of the student houses, probably because I'm too old and not sufficiently attuned to the students.

KARKLINS: Do you feel the students have changed over the past twenty or thirty years?

OLIVER: I think that they have become less polite. They used to put on—at least in Fleming House—once a week a candlelight dinner and would dress in coats and ties. I guess I think that

to some extent the advent of women students has been detrimental. It has its positive aspects, but in this sense it's detrimental, because I think the male students tend to show off with the female students around. The way they tend to show off is by being more vulgar and noisy than they might otherwise be. It's a problem that I hope to write to the president about at some point and make some suggestions.

But on the whole I think it has to be said—and this is the positive side of it—I certainly enjoyed my experience of being master of the student houses very much. I would not give that up for anything in the world, now that I know what it's like and have had the opportunity of working with the students. Some of them are genuinely grateful.

KARKLINS: Regarding the students, do you agree with the expansion that has taken place on this campus? It's a much larger student body, and many have questioned whether the institute has expanded to its limits or whether it should be allowed to grow even larger.

OLIVER: I don't think the student body has expanded very much. I will say that the undergraduate student body has not expanded by more than fifty, if that. We try to admit something on the order of 210 to 220 undergraduate students each year. That has been going on since I was on the Admissions Committee some years ago. So I would be surprised if the undergraduate student body has expanded by more than fifty at the most. It is true that more students stay on for a fifth year, and that presents housing problems, since there are more people in attendance at any given moment in time. But it's because they're stretching out their program. The present student-body president is a case in point. He just decided it was too much work to do all the things he wanted to do and get good grades. So he decided to reduce his load to a minimum amount. In fact, he didn't take any courses at all this past spring. He could have finished, but chose not to. I guess he just likes to be around. And that's been true of a fair number of other students. I think the housing problems also were due to the fact that more doubles have been made into singles, more rooms have simply been lost to expansion; for example, one room was lost to the master's office when we hired an associate master. And rooms have been lost for other reasons. For example, a computing room was set up. So we have had to expand more and more off campus. But I think it is not true that the size of the student body has grown more than marginally. The graduate student body has grown from something

like 750 to over 900. But I think that's healthy, and it's because bigger teams are needed to engage in the research that is being attempted.

KARKLINS: Would you like to reflect on any other committees you've served?

OLIVER: Well, I enjoyed my work on the Admissions Committee a great deal. For a year, my beat was in Long Beach/San Pedro—in other words, quite close to home. And I took a couple of black students with me to meet the students. We had a wonderful experience when we were at Centinela High School. When the counselor was invited to suggest names of additional students who might apply to Caltech—Centinela High School is almost totally black and is in a very poor part of the Central Avenue area—she just put her head out the window and yelled, because classes had been dismissed, "Derwin!" And Derwin said, "Yeah." And she said, "Why don't you come in here a minute. Mr. Oliver would like to talk to you." So Derwin came in. He had been offered a scholarship to Duke University. She asked him if he had some interest in Caltech, and he said, "What's Caltech?" And to make a long story short, he decided that he would in fact come to Caltech instead of Duke. The counselor didn't really know anything very much about Caltech. Derwin came; Derwin did well. I think he graduated. Throughout his experience, however—and I do not have any idea of what's become of him—he was a little morose about things. I used to go over to Dabney House fairly regularly to talk to black students primarily, because more black students were in Dabney House than other houses at that time. He said, "I don't really dig this place. I'm lost here. Down there on Central Avenue, I was a big person. I'm doing all right here but I don't really get kicks out of being up here. And I'd just as soon be back on Central Avenue, where I was somebody, instead of being here." And I thought a lot about that story. It turns out that Lee Browne has put together a special admit program. But as I gather through the grapevine, he has recently gotten only four people, two of whom are Caucasians and two of whom are Asians—no black students at all. We tried very hard through the admissions process and through getting special admit students, but I think that by and large we have failed to interest black students in science and a career in science.

My regular beat was in Washington, D.C. and its environs, but when Sterling Huntley came and insisted upon taking over Washington, D.C., I got moved northward to New York, New Jersey, and environs. I served, I believe, four or five, maybe even six years on the

Admissions Committee. I looked forward to it very, very much. It was great fun to look at the student records and to participate in traveling for two, sometimes two-and-a-half weeks, out to the outer reaches. I guess I also did one stint in the Wisconsin and St. Louis areas and another stint in the Pittsburgh and Buffalo area, western New York, by and large. When Peter Miller was asked to leave—I think in a very improper way, because I think he was basically doing a very good job; Neil [Cornelius J.] Pings was the person who had it in for Peter Miller and wanted to put his own man in—when that happened, I was asked to chair an ad-hoc committee to look into the admissions process and to make recommendations and also to find a faculty person who would be in charge of the faculty committee instead of having Peter Miller be in charge of the faculty committee, per se. I found Fred [Frederick H.] Shair. It didn't take a whole lot of work to find him. He was very enthusiastic and did a marvelous job. So that's a little bit of the ins and outs of the Admissions Committee.

There was another committee, which I didn't chair, but I would like to think that I was instrumental in dealing with one problem of it. That was the Academic Policies Committee, where I was a member for three years in the early seventies. I had a hand in drafting proposals for a grievance procedure for faculty. I do not know that it has even been employed, but a major question that came up was what to do in the case of a grievance that had been taken to the division chairman and agreement had not been reached: Should it go to some subcommittee of the board of trustees and therefore around Harold Brown, who happened to be the president? Or should it go to Harold Brown? In the end, it was decided that it would go to Harold Brown. I was suspicious of Harold Brown for other reasons and felt that Harold Brown might not be the best possible arbitrator, and that probably it should go directly to some subcommittee of the board of trustees. But I lost on that.

The issue also came up as to whether or not the dean of students, per se, should try to take on the business of investigating to some extent the curriculum across the board. Out of that work was born the Faculty/Student Conference, which now is allowed to bring things up directly, sort of face-to-face, with administrators, and to some extent faculty also. But in those days it was suggested that the dean of students should be asked to investigate the curriculum to the extent that he could make recommendations—for example, about teaching performance, or if the curriculum seemed not to hang together in its various components. A lot of work has been done about this in the last ten years. But I think that I was in on the beginning of this kind of

procedure.

Don Cohen was chairman of the Academic Policies Committee at the time, and Don Cohen and I have always been very good friends, partly because we worked together on that committee.

I have also served as chairman of the Nominations Committee of the Faculty Board, and I still serve on the Convocations Committee, which I chaired for three years in the late seventies and early eighties. I also served on the board of directors of the Baxter Art Gallery and am an honorary alumnus of Caltech, though I don't have any stories to tell about those groups.

KARKLINS: Going back to the grievance procedure, wouldn't the logical administrator to whom something like that would have been submitted—would that not have been the provost?

OLIVER: I did not think of the provost, I guess, as having been different enough from the division chairman to be an outside arbitrator. It seems to me that the provost by and large tends to back his division chairmen.

KARKLINS: So the provost wouldn't be impartial enough?

OLIVER: I think it would depend upon the kind of grievance that might have been brought. As I say, I'm not aware of any grievance that ever has been brought officially in a confrontational sort of way. We try and work things out through the ombudsman system and in other ways, short of appealing to the president, let alone to the board of trustees. We spent many hours talking about this kind of thing, however.

KARKLINS: On the lighter side, regarding your life here at Caltech, in the early sixties you and Jack Richards and Harold Wayland created some type of gourmet dining group. How did that evolve?

OLIVER: Yes. Well, that was great fun. We were all on the House Committee [of the Athenaeum] together in the early sixties. And we decided that a fellow by the name of Camille Jaget, who was himself a marvelous chef, was being wasted, in part because he was asked to

manage the Athenaeum. The Athenaeum was nowhere nearly as much used back then.

Begin Tape 3, Side 2

OLIVER: So Harold Wayland, Jack Richards, and I thought that it would be fun to get together, maybe as often as once a month, for a real gourmet dinner whose menu we would propose in consultation with Camille Jaget. The Athenaeum was almost not used on Friday night at all, at least by the faculty. There was some activity downstairs in the basement, but it was pretty much confined to just drinking. And we thought it was important to try and get representatives from all of the various disciplines—and, of course, representatives who were congenial. We started with about ten to twelve couples. I think it has expanded to maybe fifteen couples, something like this. Originally it was just a faculty enterprise; now there are two or three people from outside.

KARKLINS: So this group still exists?

OLIVER: Oh, yes, it still exists. We had two marvelous dinners this last spring. Harold Wayland and Jack Richards and Bob Oliver are all members in good standing of the group. It's called the Apicians. The reason for it, of course, has long since disappeared. We had really hoped to get dinner at slightly below full cost and did in fact succeed in doing that for a number of years. In the words of the economist, we felt that all that was necessary was to cover the marginal costs, the out-of-pocket costs. In the sense the waiters were there already and had to be in place, we didn't feel that it was necessary to cover all the costs of their labor. We had some marvelous dinners, including one soufflé Grand Marnier, which I can still taste in memory. And I think Monsieur Jaget was amongst the very, very few who could do a big soufflé. The Athenaeum people can't possibly do it now.

We also had the practice, of course, of buying wine and storing it in our cellars. We would buy wine for under $10, more likely $5 or $6—even today that's true. But we would keep it under proper storage facilities at our various homes. Originally we got imported French wines that were quite new, and we would keep them for five to ten years, so that their value was substantially greater. But of course we only charged the cost of the wine initially; we didn't

charge anything for the cellars.

We've had some marvelous dinners over the years. I think that we celebrated the hundredth Apician dinner a couple of years ago. The composition of the membership has changed a little bit over the years. Just to name some of the people who have been members: the Ward Whalings, Norman Horowitz, the Noel Corngolds, Murray Gell-Mann.

KARKLINS: Was it by invitation that these people would be allowed to join the Apician group?

OLIVER: Oh, yes, by invitation. Indeed, we had the practice of sometimes inviting a person and if any one of us thought he wasn't compatible in some sense, we would just say so. That is a very cliquish approach, I realize.

KARKLINS: But you haven't had any repercussions of people complaining about that?

OLIVER: No. May I also recount the story of how the Athenaeum got its liquor license? I was on the House Committee then, too. We had been asking the firm of O'Melveny and Myers if we could serve alcoholic beverages in the dining room, and O'Melveny kept telling us about all the reasons why we probably could not. Finally I said, "Why don't we ask a different law firm how we could get a liquor license?" We consulted with the Pasadena firm of Hahn and Hahn, if I remember correctly, and they said that if the Athenaeum were a private club and no money ever was used, we could serve alcohol. So we did. Hallett Smith was chairman of the board of governors at the time, and he helped. Incidentally, Darlene was elected to the House Committee a little later. She was chairman of the Food Committee. Bob Ireland was a member. She succeeded in starting the salad and soup bar, which has become so popular.

KARKLINS: You've also been quite interested in the music aspects of this campus. You've taken part—and may still be taking part—in the Stock Company. Are you one of the original members?

OLIVER: Yes. The Caltech Stock Company performed for the [Caltech] Associates, just about six weeks ago. We got out an old thing that was done back in 1966 for the Caltech Y on the

occasion of Wes Hershey's twenty-fifth anniversary. It was a spoof about Caltech men not remembering what women looked like, and contained a memorable song, "Down at the Burbank."

KARKLINS: Was this one of Kent Clark's?

OLIVER: Well, they were all Kent Clark lyrics. He is an absolute genius with lyrics. I'm sure that he could have made a lot more money if he had gone into some other field, like advertising, or being a playwright. But he chose academia and has stayed with that all of his life. Kent invited me to be a member of the so-called Caltech Stock Company in 1960. Except for the Bacher show, when I was away in Washington, D.C., I have been in all of the shows since. It's great fun to ham it up, so to speak. I suppose my best number was "The Richter Scale," in which I sang the first verse. I was joined by David Wood, Jim Knowles, and, in the first iteration, by, I believe, Bill Corcoran. I also sang and danced in "The Fantasticks," under Don Caldwell, and in "Bye Bye, Birdie" under Shirley Marneus. I had a cameo role in "Oliver." I have also been active in the Playreaders' Group in the Women's Club. My favorite role was as Elwood P. Dowd, in "Harvey."

KARKLINS: I understand that in the summer of 1961 you worked for the Brookings Institution and did oral history interviews for the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. How did that come about?

OLIVER: Yes, that's the World Bank. I participated during that summer in Washington, D.C. I have transcripts of all of the interviews that I did at that time. They were classified for a long time, but now they've been made available, and I have made them available in a special collection in the humanities library.

That was a very exciting year for me. In 1960, I spent the summer traveling in Europe. In 1961, I spent the summer in Washington, D.C., working for the Brookings Institution. In 1962, I was in Africa for the greater part of the summer. And in 1963, I was home during the summer for the first time. The Technical Cooperation Seminar had declined in importance by 1965. But the point is that it was because of my oral history work with the World Bank that it

was supposed that I would have something to offer in terms of economic development at all.

I have since taken up interviewing again. For the past three years I've interviewed somewhere between seventy-five and eighty people in the World Bank altogether, in considerable depth.

I always have had two threads, maybe three threads, in my academic background: urban studies, including my work in Pasadena; the World Bank and economic development; and macroeconomic theory. And I can't seem to choose amongst them, as to which I want to settle down with. Now that I'm retired, I'm going to try very hard to spend most of my time working on the World Bank project until I get it finished. I'm trying to write a book about George Woods, who was the fourth president of the World Bank, and about the World Bank itself. I will include a couple of chapters about Woods before he became president of the World Bank, and at least one chapter about Woods after he left the World Bank. He continued to have an illustrious career after he left.

KARKLINS: Do you feel that he has been the best president?

OLIVER: No, I don't think he's been the best president. Each president had something to be said for himself, in turn. I really can't tell you who I think was the best president. I guess I was partial to Eugene Black, who was the third president and served for quite a long period. He left the organization in its infancy, and it had to be added to. It was added to a great deal by Robert McNamara. I personally think McNamara added too much. He increased the size of the staff too much and went into fields that were better left undealt with.

KARKLINS: Do you feel he may have hurt the World Bank on an international scale? It has its critics.

OLIVER: McNamara may have paid too much attention to alleviating poverty rather than to financing growth, but I guess I don't agree with these critics of the World Bank. I think the World Bank, by and large, has done a good job. There may have been an individual project here or there, out of hundreds of projects, that turned out not to be useful, not well thought out. I think it is almost entirely in the environmental field, however, that it has received substantial

criticism, and I just don't know what's to be said about that. I know Thayer Scudder, for example, has injected notes of disagreement with the World Bank process. But in a low-income country, I just don't see any way in which substantial progress is going to be made if the same high-level environmental concerns are exhibited as in the United States. And goodness knows, the United States itself is subject to a substantial amount of criticism on environmental grounds. Occasionally projects have not turned out to have done what they thought they were going to do. But the basic problem, it seems to me, is the problem of overpopulation, about which the World Bank tries to do something, but it can't go beyond what the government of the individual host country is willing and able to do in conjunction with the World Bank. It can't initiate a program that is beyond the scope of what the member governments are able and willing to do. After all, the World Bank is a creature of the governments of the world. I think 151 governments belong now to the World Bank—almost all of the civilized nations, except for the Soviet Union and a very few others, are included at the present time.

KARKLINS: Even those countries that have been historically known as neutrals, such as Sweden and Switzerland?

OLIVER: Sweden is quite a substantial member and supporter of the World Bank. There was time when meetings were held in Copenhagen, and Swedes came through Copenhagen and were very irritated with the World Bank, complaining about one thing or another, including the way in which the World Bank was using leverage to try and accomplish its objectives. But that criticism, I think, has died down. And the World Bank is the only organization that I know of which really tries very hard to look into the future to guess how a project might be accepted and used. So I think, on balance, the World Bank is a very good idea. I guess Switzerland is not a member, but many World Bank bonds have been sold in Switzerland.

KARKLINS: When looking at different projects, deciding where to fund and where to help, there must be a question at some point as to how honest will the host government be. Because that's been a criticism of the World Bank as well. Ideally, the ideas are fine; but in practice, quite often the money is siphoned off into private funds for individuals in the government, and it's the dishonesty of the governments themselves that eventually harm the countries asking for such aid.

OLIVER: Well, I'll tell you a story in that regard. This was a story recounted by Irving Friedman about Thailand. During the Vietnam War, Thailand was earning a lot more foreign exchange than it has since the war ended. Indeed, it was not short of foreign exchange at all. So the World Bank had suggested to Thailand that Thailand really didn't need to borrow foreign currency. But Thailand replied—this was through a lady minister—that if it were not for the World Bank, the degree of corruption in Thailand would be a great deal greater than it was. She asked the World Bank, as I recall, to make a loan to Thailand, which would be immediately offset by the purchase of Bank bonds by the Thais, precisely so that the World Bank would have a hand in overseeing operations in Thailand—to set an example in Thailand for the way things really ought to be done. nd I must say that I think that is much more the situation than the opposite. ven the United States has some degree of corruption, influence peddling, and military rake-offs. But the United States, by and large, is pretty honest. Unfortunately, sociologically, the situation in so much of the world—like Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines, for example—is a situation in which people pay a great deal more attention to loyalty to the family than loyalty to the nation or even to a way of life, so to speak. Thus, the natural instinct in a fair amount of the world is to get as much as one can for one's family, as distinct from other entities. I think this is enormously important in understanding the world. It is my impression that by and large the World Bank has had a very, very salutary effect on cutting down on the amount of funds that might be siphoned off in corruption or bribery. And I think the record of the World Bank is very good in this regard. It's certainly not perfect, but I think that the mistakes that have been made are more due to the fact that it is not possible to foresee the future than to outright corruption or bribery or something of that sort.

KARKLINS: Besides the money aspect, it sounds as though just the presence of the World Bank in a host country has its value in intimidating the government to try to be more honest, because of its being a watchdog, so to speak.

OLIVER: I think that's absolutely right. Of course, it's impaled on the horns of a dilemma, because the World Bank is sometimes accused of exerting more control over individual governments and countries than it should. This was the suggestion made by the Swedes, who

resented the fact that the World Bank was trying to make the countries do one thing or another. Brazil, for example, was in the doghouse for many years—and maybe it should be again. George Woods was one of the people who got Brazil out of the doghouse and induced the Brazilians to behave with less corruption and with more of a push towards real economic development. He did it simply by going to a conference in Brazil. The Brazilians paid him a great deal of attention because of the fact that the World Bank was there; therefore, they paid attention to what the World Bank had to say. So many countries have felt that they are a world unto themselves, and they've been disabused of that notion. It is true that the World Bank increasingly takes stands about budgets and about projects and about structural adjustments, in which they really tell the country, "Either you behave in this way, or you don't get any more loans." Of course, the great bulk of the lending in the last twenty years has been commercial bank lending rather than World Bank lending. I think the credits of the World Bank are on the order of $30 to $40 billion, as compared with well over $1 trillion of commercial bank loans. The commercial banks, I think, are to blame for being slipshod and not paying nearly enough attention to how their money is being spent.

KARKLINS: In 1970 and '71, you took a leave from Caltech to work in Washington, D.C., for the World Bank. Did that also include missions to Jakarta and Taipei? And if so, how did that all come about?

OLIVER: Yes. Well, my friend Andrew Kamarck, who was head of the economics department at the World Bank, was at UCLA on a leave as a Regents' Professor for a year around 1965 or '66.

KARKLINS: How had you originally met him?

OLIVER: I had met him through the interviews I did for the World Bank in 1961. He was a very prominent person at that time; he was an economic advisor to Africa, and he subsequently was brought into the economics department. He was on leave from the economics department when I saw him in about '66. So I knew him. I didn't know him terribly well, but my association with Africa and my association with economic development was a natural bringing together of interests.

So he extended me a blanket invitation and said, "As long as I am here, you can come to the World Bank anytime you want—for a year or more leave of absence from Caltech." As it turned out, I worked in the department called the Economics of Urbanization Department, which brought together at least two strands of my interest—urban economics and politics on the one hand, and the World Bank and technical assistance on the other hand.

If I might digress for a minute, I was put on the horns of a great dilemma in 1969, in that I was just finishing my first term on the Pasadena city council and was being asked to run again for reelection. As far as I could tell, I would have been elected without anybody running against me. A person who has done moderately well usually gets elected in the second term. It was very inviting; I would have become mayor of Pasadena. But I also knew that Andrew Kamarck was in some danger of being moved, and Friedman was being succeeded by a man named Hollis Chenery. This was all part of the McNamara kind of reorganization—that I will eventually write a book about.

This was the dilemma I faced in 1969. I chose to decline to run for reelection and to wait a year and then accept Andy Kamarck's invitation to go back to the World Bank and work in the Economics of Urbanization division. I worked as a straight economist, going out to Jakarta and Taiwan.

KARKLINS: Were those your choices?

OLIVER: No. Other things being equal, I guess I would have rather gone back to Africa, but I didn't have that opportunity. The Jakarta offer came in the fall, before I was really ready to go out, because I didn't feel I knew enough about what to do. And the Taiwan offer came in the spring. They both were absolutely fascinating experiences. I fell into a mass of statistics, which I had to get translated from Indonesian into English. But I made good use of those. At any rate, it was a fascinating year.

KARKLINS: In 1974-75, you published a study on Bretton Woods.

OLIVER: Yes. I had done my dissertation on the subject of the World Bank. Subsequently it became a book, *International Economic Cooperation and the World Bank*. It took me a long

time to revise it. I originally had a commitment from Oxford Press around 1959 to publish it. Unfortunately, a fair amount of time elapsed while I was doing these other things, and I really didn't get back to it until P. J. Spicer of Oxford University Press had left. During my stint in the World Bank, after considerable revision, it then got published by MacMillan, but it was substantially based upon my dissertation. So I knew a lot about these events. Indeed, I would argue that I probably know more about the events of the l920s and 1930s, and Bretton Woods itself, than anybody in the world. Many of the people who participated at Bretton Woods have now died. And it is arguable, at least, that I am the person who knows best about these events of the pre-Bretton Woods years.

KARKLINS: How long did it take you to write the book?

OLIVER: Well, off and on, about twenty years. But I worked on it very hard for the dissertation. Then I just put it aside when I felt that I couldn't spend time on it. I was working at SRI and Caltech and doing other things. Though the other things were tangentially related to the World Bank, they were still not the same thing. Then I came back to it in 1971 and worked on it to revise it, adding a couple of chapters, bringing it up-to-date.

KARKLINS: Going back to the World Bank, how has it changed since its original inception?

OLIVER: I think it has changed a great deal. The World Bank, at its inception, tended to sit back and wait for loan proposals to come in. It had trouble raising money. It had to raise money in the bond market, because it was put together in a very peculiar way. Very few funds are actually paid into the bank by governments; but the bank stands behind, and is prepared to guarantee, any defaults that have occurred. No defaults have ever occurred, as it turns out. But the money had to be raised in the bond markets. We talk about World Bank bonds that are out in the market. That's the way the funds are raised, for the most part—through the sale of bonds. In the early days, the bank had some difficulty selling bonds; much of Eugene Black's presidency was concerned with the sale of bonds and with being very, very circumspect, so that the outstanding portfolio was very small.

Today the World Bank is much more actively involved in telling countries what they

should do. It can't make them do it, of course, but it can make very strong recommendations, including going so far as to cut off loans to a government that says that it wants to do something that in the World Bank's eyes would be detrimental to economic development.

KARKLINS: Instead of waiting to be invited, does the World Bank also invite itself upon governments and say, "You need help, and we're willing to come and help you"?

OLIVER: Oh, yes. It is much more assertive.

KARKLINS: Do you believe the assertiveness is desirable?

OLIVER: Well, on balance I guess it is. I'm sort of torn over that question. It seems to me that the bank probably has been too assertive, but it's certainly in a good cause. You see, the World Bank has increased, in terms of staff, from a few hundred people in the 1960s to 6,000 people. And many of them are in the field doing econometric and other kinds of studies. They are much more inclined to make detailed recommendations as to what they think should be done. This goes back to a mission of Bernard Bell's in the 1960s, which I will relate in some detail in my book. When he was invited to go out to Jakarta and stay full-time—he was there for three or four years, with a five- or six-person staff—he worked very, very closely with the Indonesian government and with a particular group called Babinas. It was sort of a council of economic advisors, sometimes referred to as the Berkeley Mafia, because most of the people had attended the University of California at Berkeley. Bernard Bell was masterful at working with the Indonesians, inviting them to make suggestions, never pressuring them unduly. He developed the confidence of the Indonesian government in such a way so that virtually all the proposals that came out were proposals that either he or they had initiated but which all fell into place in terms of development. That is a somewhat similar story to what has happened in India, though Bernard Bell was not quite as successful in being assertive in India as he was in Indonesia. He worked in a number of African countries also, but not with as great a success. Africa as a whole has just never been the success story that India and other Asian countries have.

ROBERT W. OLIVER

SESSION 4

August 12, 1988

Begin Tape 4, Side 1

KARKLINS: Before we begin, you mentioned a desire to talk a little bit about the California Seminar and your participation in that.

OLIVER: Yes. The California Seminar was really a major undertaking for me. I was chairman of the student working group of the California Seminar on International Security and Foreign Policy for eleven years. When I was an undergraduate at USC, I started out by majoring in international relations and shifted only in my senior year to economics. As a result, I graduated with a double major in international relations and economics. And while my interests clearly shifted more towards economics, I maintained an interest in international politics. And I had an opportunity, through the California Seminar, to pay some attention to this aspect of my existence also. The California Seminar met four or five times a year. It was composed of students representing the major universities in Southern California: Caltech, Occidental College, Pomona College, Claremont Graduate School, RAND Graduate School, UCLA Graduate School, and USC Graduate School. A few folks showed up from Pepperdine and from UC Irvine. It operated under the general leadership of David Elliot, who, along with Charlie Wolf of RAND, was the overall cochairman of the total seminar. It consisted of five separate seminars that dealt with, for example, Europe or technology, that sort of thing. Only one of the seminars, however, was concerned with students. And I must say, I think that that was the best seminar that we had. The students would present well-thought-out papers in a very formal sense. They were roughly forty to sixty pages. Frequently they had been in the works for six months or so. The papers would be sent out two or three weeks in advance, so that all of the participants of the seminar could read them, and then the seminar itself was confined to a fifteen- or twenty-minute summary of the material, plus a critique by another student—usually a critique by a more senior person who presumably was even more familiar with the field than the student. In my opinion, they were very high-quality discussion sessions. I suppose that as many as ten Caltech students,

almost entirely undergraduates—but not necessarily limited to undergraduate students—participated, and roughly similar numbers from the other campuses.

KARKLINS: Was this funded by the member universities?

OLIVER: It was funded in the first instance by the Ford Foundation. And as the Ford Foundation backed away slightly, other major corporations were asked. I do not even know which major corporations. I think that Atlantic Richfield—ARCO—participated, but I don't really know exactly where the funding came from. Jim Digby was its overall executive director. He attended every single session, not only of the student working group but of all the senior working groups, too. So he was very, very busy.

I read every single paper that was submitted by the students, whether it was used or not. And Jim Digby, similarly, read every single paper that was proposed to be presented. The seminar was a dinner seminar. The dinner was free of charge to the students, as it was to the senior persons also. The formal presentations were followed by discussions of about two hours. I sought to direct each discussion in such a way so that we might deal with a topic, and then, having worn that out, we would then move on to another topic. I tried to develop a sense of order, rather than a randomness. And I think the discussions were improved on that account. We weren't excluded from going back and talking about a previously talked about point, but we did try and move sequentially.

Simultaneously I was a member of the International Institute for Strategic Studies, which was a major international group centered in London but participated in heavily by Americans, Germans, French, Japanese, and others in the international community. It was a closed corporation, so to speak, in that one had to apply for membership, and if the membership lists were full, then we would simply have to wait our turn. I attended several sessions of the International Institute for Strategic Studies, which had its annual meetings in late August or early September—almost always in Europe, though there have been one or two sessions in the United States, one at Caltech. It was a small session done in the early sixties—I think maybe '62, something like that. It was by invitation only and a relatively high-level discourse that covered three days.

At any rate, the work of the California Seminar in International Security was, on a small

scale, what the International Institute for Strategic Studies was doing internationally and was a source of considerable satisfaction to me, I must say.

KARKLINS: What happened with the California Seminar?

OLIVER: Well, it is still going. I retired a year ago, and Larry Caldwell, my colleague from Occidental College in political science, has assumed the directorship of the student working group. Jim Digby is similarly retired and has been succeeded by Bob Perry, who is at both UCLA and RAND. So the seminar continues but with new faces. We have invited Dan Kevles to submit names of Caltech students who participated this last year in his course in international security. He has done so, and while I don't know any of the students now who are expected to participate, I think that the high-level tradition will continue. I hope so.

KARKLINS: Shall we move on to the city of Pasadena? You served on the board of directors between 1965 and 1969. What possessed you to run for election?

OLIVER: May I back up a little bit? You will recall that I had written a document for Stanford Research Institute called "An Economic Survey of Pasadena," published in 1959. And that attracted a considerable amount of interest. I paid relatively little attention to Pasadena after the 1959 report, however, until 1963, when I was asked to participate in the Commission on Human Needs and Opportunities—the local poverty panel—which was being set up under Lyndon Johnson's overall poverty program. It raised a question as to what was to be done about poverty. I remember at one point I had the temerity to say that I thought that before we started adopting programs, we ought to inquire as to the reasons why poverty existed. And I was hooted down by the people who were involved. In effect, they said, "We know why people are in poverty. They don't have enough money." But I was anxious to inquire as to whether or not it was as a result of discrimination, or of inadequate education and technical training, or to training that wasn't available anywhere, or whether it was a result of indolence. In other words, what were the various causes? But that didn't go over very well. And I found myself in sort of a minority position and looked at as something of an egghead. I was clearly not in the center of that activity, though I had occasion to write a paper that made recommendations about salary scales.

The salaries that were being proposed, for example, for staff persons, were so large that virtually all that might have been available for use for other purposes, including work in the community, would have been used up. And it seemed to me that the salaries were much too high. I remember getting into some trouble with a friend named John Buggs, who was black. He accused me of trying to keep salaries low and not give the staff adequate compensation. Whereas my major concern was in doing things for the people more generally in the poverty-stricken community. I have to say that the poverty panel really came a cropper on an issue similar to this. The salaries that were being paid were so high and were kept so much within the staff that the community as a whole did not benefit very much. But this didn't happen for nearly ten years, I guess, and the poverty program was subsequently stopped.

KARKLINS: The money that came from the Johnson Administration—was it sent in a lump sum for the program, without delineating what percent had to go into the community and what percent would go into salaries? In other words, was it determined how the money would be spent on site?

OLIVER: That's right. I did think that the basic notion that people who were poverty-stricken in the community should be encouraged to participate, and that the city government, for example, should not have any direct say in how the funds were being used. But I just disagreed somewhat with the use of the funds that were proposed.

That was my introduction into Pasadena bureaucracy.

KARKLINS: It obviously didn't discourage you.

OLIVER: No. And part of the reason for that was that Lee DuBridge would from time to time ask me, since he knew of my interest in Pasadena, if I would participate in things that came along. And the next thing that came along was the Human Relations Committee, which was city-sponsored in 1964. We were appointed by various city councilmen to serve on the Human Relations Committee. It was a consequence of a speech made by John F. Kennedy two years earlier, in which he had urged the setting up of human relations committees or commissions by city governments.

I worked very hard on the Human Relations Committee. We met once a month, but we met two or three times in between, in small committee sessions. I became head of the housing task force. We were concerned with discrimination in housing, which at that time in Pasadena, was fairly standard. Indeed, I might hand you this. It's called "Million Dollar Improvement for Pasadena." This goes back to 1940; it was sponsored at the time by the Pasadena Chamber of Commerce, the Pasadena Junior Chamber of Commerce, the Pasadena Merchants Association, and various other organizations. And what it tended to do was to see to it that blacks were kept out of Pasadena. Indeed, a person was employed to go around, door-to-door—I think he was paid fifty cents for each signature he got—in order to get on the ballot a statement that housing covenants which included provisions that blacks could not move into existing tracts should be honored; and if a covenant did not exist, then this organization was there to put a covenant in. That was in 1940. My adventure into politics was in 1960 and thereafter, but the situation really hadn't changed a whole lot. The most blatant example of nonsense was that once a week the Pasadena swimming pool was drained thoroughly, just after black people had been allowed to swim in the pool one day a week. And then the pool was filled again, so that white people could swim.

Well, my introduction to the Human Relations Committee in 1964 occurred at about the same time that a particular state proposition was on the ballot which would have prevented the state legislature—as, for example, under the Unruh Act—from passing any legislation concerning housing at all. That ballot proposition passed, but two years later it was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court of the United States. During that whole two-year period, all redevelopment projects in Pasadena stood still and could not be funded, because it was before the courts. The roofs of the people who were involved in the Pepper Redevelopment Project couldn't even be mended, so things were in a terrible state of affairs. The Pepper Project was one that was specifically in the works at the time. Very little good is to be said, I think, about the Pepper Project.

KARKLINS: What was the Pepper Project?

OLIVER: The Pepper Project was a project roughly at the corner of Washington and Fair Oaks, but extending out a number of blocks west and south. The result was that eventually many

houses were torn down and replaced by quite inferior institutional housing. Many homeowners were displaced from that particular area; and really nothing of that scale has ever taken place again in Pasadena. The institutional housing has now become a center for the drug traffic.

I need to come back to the reasons for my running in the first place. I think it is fair to say that because of my work on the Human Relations Committee, I learned more about the plight of blacks, in particular, in Pasadena—the attempts to segregate Pasadena. My studies had shown that there is a very, very heavy concentration of blacks to the west of Los Robles and to the east of Fair Oaks and all along the corridor that runs northward from Colorado. In an interview I had done earlier with the city manager of Pasadena, he had made it very clear that the freeway on- and off-ramps were going to be strictly limited in that section of Pasadena, so that it would be difficult for blacks to get on and off, and to spread out, so to speak, in the rest of the community. The Pasadena Board of Realtors in 1964 openly advocated discrimination to prevent blacks from moving out of given areas.

KARKLINS: How would they accomplish this, given that in the 1960s the civil rights movement was so strong?

OLIVER: Well, it would have to be done in an undercover manner. But I suspect that discrimination still goes on, in that two offers that are made on exactly parallel terms would be taken account of by the white offerer and not by the black offerer.

KARKLINS: Or possibly, if you're a realtor, let's say when you're showing the homes to a prospective customer, if it's a black customer, you might not necessarily show homes in a particular area, even though it might be within that person's price range—in other words, just say, "Well, there's really nothing available over there; let me take you over here." And innocently, the person assumes the realtor is showing everything they have.

OLIVER: Yes, that's quite right. My wife was heavily involved in the real estate business for fifteen years before she died. And sometimes she would bring home stories about the way in which other people in her office dealt with this. But I think that there was much more discrimination in other offices than in the particular office where she worked.

The point of the story is that I came to realize a good deal more about what blacks were up against in dealing with open housing. The state legislature was proscribed officially from making any legislation in housing. I wrote, from the human relations perspective, a statement which made newspaper headlines, which recommended voting against the Proposition 14, which would have prevented acts like the Unruh Act from being passed in the first place at all. And that got me into some trouble with voters. Nonetheless, the central issue of my campaign did not have anything to do with black people and housing; it had to do with the freeway system and the issue of high-rise.

Two years earlier, a colleague of mine on the city board named Richard Jencks had succeeded in running successfully for election. He was opposed by a man named Grant Changstrom, who was an incumbent. Richard Jencks prevailed almost solely because of the high-rise issue. Now, the high-rise issue involved a proposal to change the zoning, to grant a zoning variance, and allowed the erection at Number One Orange Grove of a high-rise building. I don't know how high the building would have been, but it would have been well more than two stories. The zoning variance was granted by the then existing city council, with Grant Changstrom voting in favor of it. And the people on the west side of Pasadena rose up in arms as an almost totally united opposition.

Richard Jencks was an attorney with CBS and worked outside the community. He had no real interest in local politics at all until the high-rise issue arose, and he then flung himself into the political campaign. He got through a vote on the issue to try and prevent the high-rise, and that vote won by a very, very narrow margin. And he subsequently was then induced to run for political office himself. Had Richard Jencks not run for election, I never would have run for election. But Dick Jencks, trying to get additional support for his position in the community, suggested to me that I might run two years later. And given the fact that he was on the city council, I decided to give it a try. I had a built-in public relations team ready to go. It was composed of townspeople, people who previously had had relatively little interest in politics. And we were collectively running against what I would call loosely the Establishment, which, for better identification, was composed of many downtown business people, members of the Chamber of Commerce, the Tournament of Roses, and others. It was a curious campaign in that I had many supporters from the Chamber of Commerce since my earlier work on the economic survey of Pasadena had been done for the Pasadena Chamber of Commerce. But I also had

many supporters amongst the townspeople.

The issue was not only high-rise but the location of the north-south leg of the Long Beach Freeway. There were three alternative routes that could be taken. My supporters and I preferred the most easterly route, which would have brought it essentially down Fair Oaks and would have come close to a convention center. I had proposed a convention center of sorts as an adjunct to the civic auditorium. The civic auditorium was buried amongst a bunch of nondescript buildings, and I guess I feel that one of my most successful efforts was to have the convention center built with the park on either side. I was in favor of that project. And the north-south freeway could have been brought along below level, in such a way so that people could have driven directly into the parking facility of the convention center and the civic auditorium. Other people favored a more westerly route.

A route had already been established, so to speak, by a vote of the council and of the state commission that dealt with freeways, but Dick Jencks and I sought to upset this, to reverse the process and to continue to try and get the so-called Green Route selected. That's a very long story. I can summarize it by saying that we somewhat failed. We got it moved a little bit eastward, but not as far eastward as I thought it should be moved. And of course it stands to this day as a stark reminder of the dagger pointed toward South Pasadena. South Pasadena has succeeded in blocking the freeway, but just barely.

So there were two main issues in my campaign: One was the high-rise issue, which seemed, for the moment, to have been won; and the other was the freeway issue. There were peripheral issues. I was attacked for being a college professor—I was labeled "too hot to handle." [Laughter] I was also attacked on the human relations issue by people who were worried about what my stand would be on housing discrimination.

KARKLINS: You seem to be quite a bit the liberal in a very conservative town.

OLIVER: That's right. I'm not all that liberal, in point of fact. I am a card-carrying Democrat, but I do not consider myself terribly liberal. But in comparison with others on the city council, I was a raging liberal.

The composition of the city council, it has to be said, has changed somewhat, and for the better, so that people who are conservative and people who are liberal are about evenly balanced.

In those days, elections were citywide for all candidates. A candidate had to reside in the district from which he was running, but the vote was citywide. And that tended to cause the same majority to succeed in electing all seven persons on the city council. That's how the city council existed through the fifties and well into the sixties, until Richard Jencks ran for election and then I ran for election. Politics have never been the same in Pasadena since. A fellow named Tim Matthews ran and succeeded and a fellow named Robert White ran and succeeded, both of whom are Democrats. I supposed at the time that the city politics were supposed to be strictly nonpartisan, but my political party came subsequently to be attacked openly in 1973, when I foolishly ran again for election and was defeated.

But the point of the story is, I was elected to the city council. I spent many, many hours in meetings. I think I made some good suggestions along the lines of the convention center, and they were suggestions that were eventually used. The whole business of what exists to the east and to the west of the civic auditorium, I think, was a result of my proposals. In general, I supported redevelopment in other areas, such as the triangle area that is very close to downtown Pasadena between Orange Grove Avenue, Walnut, and Rosemont.

The major redevelopment program that I opposed was the Pasadena Plaza. I felt that Pasadena was in danger of devoting too much land to retail trade and that Lake Avenue would suffer as a consequence. Lake Avenue, more and more, is becoming office buildings rather than small stores catering to the immediate community. I also opposed the plaza on the grounds that I thought it was built in the wrong place; even if it were to be built, it should be built somewhere else.

KARKLINS: It seems as though it would have injured Colorado Boulevard as well, because it's really a self-enclosed entity; it doesn't encourage anyone to walk to any other stores on Colorado.

OLIVER: Yes, I agree. I was mildly annoyed at the Broadway for its action in getting a major subsidy from the city in the form of a very low rental for its brand-new building. And, of course, it insisted that it would not join in the project unless it were given a subsidy. That is to say, the square footage space at the Broadway is much, much lower than the square footage elsewhere. That's also true of the May Company; they got a subsidy also.

KARKLINS: Would you have liked to have seen something like the Pasadena Plaza built somewhere else in the city?

OLIVER: Well, that was not totally clear to me. I guess I probably would have opposed it somewhere else, too, unless it had been joined somewhere along Lake Avenue, so that we complemented the total Lake Avenue development rather than putting one competing facility here and another competing facility there.

Begin Tape 4, Side 2

OLIVER: It was much later that I opposed the Plaza Pasadena. That was after I was off the city board.

KARKLINS: But weren't you on the Planning Commission at that time?
OLIVER: Yes. I was actually on the Planning Commission, and I battled the Plaza Pasadena as best I could.

Shortly after I was elected to the city council, or shortly before, I gave the very first demonstration lecture in Beckman Auditorium in which I tried to outline my views about how I thought Pasadena should develop. It certainly did not involve interposing a shopping mall between the civic auditorium and the public library. Instead, I wanted to leave a large open space in front of the civic auditorium. I wanted to get the main post office building, the YWCA and the YMCA and the Southern California Gas Company buildings removed so as to create a huge open plaza, perhaps with apartments to the west on Marengo. I wanted to supplement the entertainment facilities of the civic auditorium by putting an art museum nearby instead of way down on Colorado Boulevard where the Norton Simon is today. When that idea failed after I was on the council, I sought a Museum of Living Science as a substitute. That idea failed, too. I wanted a restaurant in close proximity, a new hotel and possibly a new Pasadena Playhouse. Some of these ideas failed. I got a new Holiday Inn, a conference center, an underground parking structure, and small plazas to the east and west of the civic auditorium, but I also got the Plaza Pasadena, which I opposed as vigorously as I could. I even helped to start an organization

called Pasadenans for Responsible Planning whose main function was to oppose the Plaza. I have written an analysis of why I thought the Plaza was a poor idea, which is included with my other papers about Pasadena. Incidentally, on one occasion when Hillis Bedell and I were in Washington, we called on the post office department to inquire about getting a new post office building to be located elsewhere which could be substituted for the main old post office building on Colorado Boulevard at Garfield. When the postal employee told us that we were on the list for a new post office, I had visions of my dreams coming true. But when we returned to Pasadena and told the city council about our apparent success, Mayor Welin dashed cold water on the idea and that plan failed, too.

KARKLINS: Briefly, going back to the city council, when you ran and you felt that Jencks was a man you respected and wanted to work with, did you find on the seven-member board that you were the only two; or were there others of the same mind, so that at least when you voted a decision, there was a better balance?

OLIVER: Well, of course, the high-rise was by that time quiescent, and the freeway issue got decided within the first six months of my term on the city council. So it was time to move on to new issues.

Dick Jencks remained on the city council for only an additional year—in fact, I think he resigned during the first year, after I was on the city council. I don't want to give you the impression that I was a lone voice. I succeeded, I think, in accomplishing most of what I set out to accomplish in other areas. I guess I was presumptuous at first, and maybe talked a little bit too much. I quickly learned that it was best for me to talk last, if I talked at all. And my colleagues were very pleasant with me. There was certainly no animosity.

Bud Welin subsequently resigned when he was within two or three months of the end of his term as mayor. He resigned on purpose so that somebody could stand for election in his place as an incumbent. That particular controversy went on for nearly six months, unresolved, with three votes in favor of a man named Bill Roddiger and three votes in favor of Joe Messler. John Adams, who had succeeded to Dick Jencks's seat after Hillis Bedell had served as an interim appointment, finally broke the tie by deciding to vote in favor of Joe Messler. I was very upset, for the reason that that small group of people had been asked by Bud Welin to name his

successor to the city council. It consisted of the powerful downtown lawyers and businessmen. Just the notion that a group would be appointed to deal with this kind of event was upsetting to me. I went and told Hillis Bedell, and he desisted. But Joe Messler's name was already before the group. In fact, in one of the sessions, he appeared in closed session, or executive session, to be interviewed, and he said, "I thought this had already been decided." I didn't oppose Joe Messler as a person, but I opposed him on the grounds that he was brought into the community in a very undemocratic way.

KARKLINS: I read your article in the December 1967 issue of *Engineering and Science*, "A Perspective on Southern California." Correct me if I'm wrong, but I got the feeling that you were basically saying that federal programs had probably been more influential in taking care of local needs than state or local governments themselves. Do you feel that is still the case?

OLIVER: Yes, I think that's the case. I guess I should back up and say that I think the Reagan Administration has not done much of anything to encourage modification at the local level. I think that cities have been allowed to go on pretty much as they have been. At the time I wrote that article, what I was referring to was that the discrimination practiced locally could really only be handled by federal legislation; it certainly couldn't be handled by local legislation. It might have been handled by state legislation. Attempts to bring money into the community from outside really required the federal government or state government. Redevelopment agencies didn't make it possible to bring money through sequestering tax revenue at the local level over long periods of time. But that could not have been done except for the state. UDAG [Urban Development Action Grant] is a program of the federal government, which has continued under Reagan, and it brings money to the community from the outside.

I think the basic proposition is this: Property taxes are the major taxes that are available for use at the local level, and property tax is inherently a regressive tax; therefore ways are needed to be found for substituting a progressive tax system for a regressive tax system. It is all right to fund the local police force, let's say, and the local fire department through property taxes. But I think education needs to be funded from some source other than or in addition to property taxes. And certainly major programs, such as providing more funds per capita for poor people rather than wealthy people, really require a progressive form of taxation. And that is

basically only available to the federal government. Therefore major new shifts in the direction of property management, major land use, can only be accomplished by federal legislation. At least that's what I was arguing at the time.

KARKLINS: Looking at Pasadena today and the development that's going on, are you happy with what you see or do you think it's going in the wrong direction?

OLIVER: Well, I'm still sensitive to high-rise; I don't really like all the tall buildings that are going up on Lake Avenue. I think they're too tall. I think that a slow-growth initiative of some kind should be passed to limit the rate at which growth in Pasadena can occur.

KARKLINS: How did you feel about the local proposition of finally creating an elected mayor, as opposed to having the city council choose amongst themsevles a mayor?

OLIVER: I was very strongly opposed to an elected mayor system. I do not think that Pasadena is large enough to warrant that. I still believe that Pasadena can manage its affairs with a strong city manager and a relatively weak city council system. So I have opposed an elected mayor. I don't think it's compatible with a strong city manager system. The city manager would have become, for all practical purposes, simply an administrator rather than a true executive.

KARKLINS: And the developments in the Old Town section of Pasadena?

OLIVER: Well, insofar as I'm aware of them, I'm in favor of those developments.

KARKLINS: Was something like that ever brought up during the time that you served the city?

OLIVER: Yes. Well, one of the adventures I had, before I even ran for election, was to serve as chairman of the so-called Downtown Improvement Bond Committee. In 1964, a group of citizens were appointed by the city council to talk about a bond issue. We talked for a long time. We met weekly and talked well into the night about parking improvements. We did recommend, finally, that several million dollars be set aside for new parking structures, but it would have

been limited to parking. I think that the present city council has gone well beyond that just simply dealing with parking, which was very important. I also favored a bond issue to finance a detailed architectural plan for the downtown area.

Pasadena is laid out in a long, walking-type area. It was intended that people would walk in the twenties, up and down the boulevard. By the l950s, Pasadena had evolved to the point where people wanted to be able to drive their cars and park at a particular location and then drive away. So the department stores became more important, and street shopping became less important. And that's part of the reason why obsolescence set in.

KARKLINS: Do you feel confident that the future development of Pasadena is pretty sound, well organized?

OLIVER: It certainly will not be ridiculous. I guess I am a little worried about the increased traffic which is being generated in the city. Already, between 4:30 and 6:00 o'clock, the freeways are absolutely jammed. Most people in Pasadena in the l950s lived and worked in the city. There was some commuting from outside the city to jobs inside the city, and there was some outward commuting simultaneously, but now it's more commuting into the city and then back out again. I think the city is in some danger; maybe it already has lost its identity. Pasadena in the 1920s was a very special place. It won the award by an outside commentator, I think a college professor at Columbia University, as being the city where, as he put it, "the goodness of living was the greatest" in all of the United States. It had a reputation of being a rather bookish community; more books were taken out of the public library on a per capita basis than anywhere else. Pasadena is basically a beautiful city. Its residential areas have been maintained quite well. It has more restaurants and entertainment facilities. But Pasadena is changing, and probably for the worse in the long run. Let's just say that it's becoming more like a standard Southern California community.

I think we could have planned better. Towns have to be renewed; they can't stand still. And it's very, very difficult to figure ways in which they can be renewed and remain exactly as they are. Clearly there had to be new investment brought into the community. But whether or not it has been necessary to increase the density simultaneously with improving the community is not clear to me. I would have thought that low-density living could have been continued in

Pasadena. I fault the planning commission and the planning activities of the city board somewhat in this regard, though I must say it seems to me that on the whole the planning commission and the city board have acted responsibly. It's not totally clear to me what I would have changed about what is happening. I guess the thing that was wrong at the outset of the Plaza Pasadena was just that the Plaza Pasadena got built at all. That induced the feeling that the lid was off, so to speak, and that we were going to grow substantially. The planning commission, to its credit, has tried very hard to down-zone various areas in Pasadena. If Pasadena were built to the maximum density that is permitted by law, it would be a city of over 200,000. The planning commission has done its best to down-zone areas that would permit it. I am not totally familiar with the slow-growth initiative that seems to be springing up and don't quite understand how that jives with zoning. I need to be instructed about that. But I gather that there are ways and means of inducing slower growth and not permitting, let's say, building permits to rise above a certain dollar value in any given time period, so that growth will be slower.

KARKLINS: Looking back, are there any regrets over the time spent?

OLIVER: Well, I did feel that it was a difficult job. And I suppose it's fair to say that my colleagues at Caltech were concerned that Bob Oliver was spending too much time working on city affairs. When I was at city hall, I was spoken of as a member of the Caltech community, but when I was at Caltech I was more often spoken of as representing city hall. [Laughter]

KARKLINS: Not to be trusted on either side. [Laughter]

OLIVER: That's right. But I do feel that I did contribute to the city in a positive sort of way. I won more battles than I lost in the city council. So I'm certainly glad to have had the experience. But it took its toll along the way.

ROBERT W. OLIVER

SESSION 5

August 16, 1990

Begin Tape 5, Side 1

KARKLINS: After reviewing what you had said in your past interview, and in going over some of the materials you gave me, I got the impression that you really began your interest, and possibly your career, in Pasadena politics thanks to Richard Jencks.

OLIVER: Well, I think it goes back farther than that. I did a study for the Stanford Research Institute in 1959, entitled "An Economic Survey of Pasadena." I think it was a very good study. I was invited to come to Caltech after I did that study.

You may recall from the past interview that I came to Caltech on a one-year appointment. I was made a tenured associate professor something like three years later. I didn't have anything to do about the Stanford Report of 1959 until about 1963. I was doing other things like being involved in the Technical Cooperation Seminar. I was doing my oral history work at the World Bank. I was out in the field in Africa. But in 1963 I began to participate in city affairs to some extent. I was invited by Lee DuBridge to be a member of the Commission on Human Needs and Opportunities, for example.

I gave a talk in the Athenaeum which was sort of tongue-in-cheek. I titled it "The Seven Deadly Sins of Pasadena," in which I parodied what was happening in Pasadena. I invited a fair number of people who were important in Pasadena to that talk. In those days, I would like to say, parenthetically, we used to have talks in the Athenaeum every two or three weeks. Because of my background of having done the Stanford Report, I was invited to give a talk about Pasadena. That was about the same time that I went on the Commission on Human Needs and Opportunities. In 1964, I became a member of the Human Relations Committee of the city. That was after Dick Jencks came on the city board. I'm sure he had a hand in my appointment to that commission. I became chairman of the housing task force and served on that committee for at least a year. Concurrently, I served on the Human Relations Committee of the Pasadena

Chamber of Commerce. I was also a member of the Community Planning Council, which is an adjunct of the United Way. United Way is a fund-gathering organization; the community Planning Council helps the United Way decide how to spend the money.

So by 1963 I was involved in more and more that had to do with the city. Then Dick Jencks suggested that it might not be inappropriate for me to run for the Pasadena board of directors. I ran against a man named Clarence Oakley. I had nothing in particular against Clarence Oakley. He had been mayor one year. I believe he had served two terms on the city board. He was not enormously popular, particularly with a man named Warren Dorn, who was a supervisor for Pasadena and much of the surrounding area. Clarence Oakley had had the temerity to run against Warren Dorn for office. Warren Dorn defeated Clarence Oakley handily, but in the process Clarence Oakley made Warren Dorn cross. Amongst other resources that I had when I ran for the city board was the brain trust of Warren Darn's office. I had lots of things going for me. I was reasonably well liked by the Chamber of Commerce, since I had written my report for the Pasadena Chamber of Commerce. I was reasonably well thought of by people who were on the Human Relations Committee because I was chairman of the housing task force.

More particularly, I was liked because I was prepared to support the Green Route through Pasadena, which was the route of the Long Beach or north-south freeway, which would have paralleled Fair Oaks and probably gone on the east side of Fair Oaks. We eventually wound up with a variation of the Red Route, so I lost on that one. But various forces were opposed to Clarence Oakley, even though he was an incumbent.

KARKLINS: In your previous interview, you mentioned that you felt that your campaign basically was built around two main issues, the freeway issue and the high-rise question. Were there any other issues? You also mentioned in your previous interview that you sensed from some segments of the Pasadena population that you might be a bit too liberal because of your feelings regarding housing discrimination.

OLIVER: Yes. Well, I was on record as being opposed to discrimination in housing. I think I mentioned in a previous interview that Clarence Oakley put out a sheet that claimed that I was "too hot to handle." He also tried to make an issue of the fact that I was not a businessman, that I had never met a payroll in my life. But I think it was mainly on the housing issue and

discrimination that he felt that I was much too liberal.

There were some of my supporters—Mrs. Alice [Daniel] Frost, in particular—who once told me that they felt that the homeowner had the right to sell to anybody he wanted to and that the state of California should not have a hand in deciding that if you put a house up for sale, if the terms are met, it has to be sold to whoever the person is. But Mrs. Frost supported me all the same.

I should also mention that I was a fairly prominent member on the board of the Pasadena Beautiful Foundation. That began around 1961 or '62; I later became president of that organization f or two years in 1972 and '73. Indeed, I participated in the Athenaeum's getting an award from the Pasadena Beautiful Foundation. It was a very proud moment when I was able to cite the Athenaeum for its architectural excellence. I don't think it would have happened if I had not been on the board of the Pasadena Beautiful Foundation.

I guess a fairly minor campaign issue was the fact that we had housing inspections in Pasadena. A person could be told that he had to bring his house up to code. Then a man named Walter Hastings ran against a man named Boyd Welin. Welin won; he was an incumbent. But Walter Hastings did raise quite a fuss about housing and housing inspections. I myself favored housing inspections. I favored bringing housing up to code. But I suggested that a person should not be taxed more when he brought his house up to code. As it turns out, however, that's a state of California prerogative; it's not a local prerogative.

A fellow by the name of Stanley Steele went out of his way to support me. He had been a housing inspector. And a man named George Knox Roth, who's the father of Dana Roth, head of the chemistry library at Caltech, supported me. He took the heat off of me, so to speak, on the housing issue.

I supported housing codes; Walter Hastings didn't. But I think I was able to deal adequately with that issue.

Clarence Oakley had a record of being in favor of some housing codes, but he was very wishy-washy overall on the subject. He tried very much to pretend that he was opposed to any kind of federal subsidies and housing controls, but this didn't really wash; he was on record as being in favor of some codes. One thing I think I learned from the campaign was that you can't be wishy-washy about a major proposition. You have to take a stand. And I may have taken some stands after I got elected which went farther than I really intended.

KARKLINS: Regarding the high-rise issue, I assume that in the early and mid-sixties there was a boom in Pasadena. Consequently there were some people standing on the side of building more skyscrapers?

OLIVER: I think quite the contrary. One of the problems of Pasadena at that time was that there was very little new construction intended. One of the places where it was intended was at Number One Orange Grove, but that is on the west side, which was not zoned for high-rise at all. That caused the residents to come out overwhelmingly and vote in favor of Dick Jencks and his initiative to reverse the decision of the city board to grant a variance. Other than that, I think there was really nothing that was planned in the way of high-rise.

I subsequently supported high-rise buildings myself, but I tried to insist that they be in a particular location in the center of town, where high-rise would otherwise make sense. I think that high-rise buildings had been allowed to stray too far outside of the zone that I had thought desirable. I'm not very much in favor of the tall buildings that have been built right along the freeway, for example. I think that they should be more nearly in the center of town. I also happen to be in favor of the new slow-growth initiative, which came about two years ago. But I was not opposed to high-rise per se.

KARKLINS: I understand you were in favor of the Parsons Project.

OLIVER: Yes, I was very much in favor of what they used to call "Technology Square." This was after I was on the city board. I was helping to direct the Community Redevelopment Agency in a project that would encourage locating smokeless manufacturing in an area that would extend from something like Del Mar out to probably Walnut, west of Fair Oaks. At any rate, the point is that the Parsons company offered to come in through the Redevelopment process. They were heavily subsidized, but I have always regarded the Parsons Project as a good idea.

I was also in favor of taller buildings closer to the civic center, though not in the civic center. If you remember, I was very much opposed to the Plaza Pasadena, though I was much in favor of trying to get a high-grade retail trade center, like Saks Fifth Avenue, for example, to

come in on Lake Street north of Colorado Boulevard.

I would like to tell one story about the process of running for the city board. I had a lot of support. I guess I raised more money than had been raised up until that time. I had over 500 different contributors to my campaign fund. That was a lot more than had been put together by anybody else up until that time. Of course, the total amount of money involved in a campaign has been exceeded since by quite a bit.

I discovered something that I hadn't perceived might happen: To wit, I was not my own boss totally. I had led in the primary election and we were getting ready for the run-off election. These elections were both citywide totally. But people began to tell me that I should take one stand or another, and for the first time I felt compromised. I perceived that I was not totally my own man. I had to do some of the things that some of my supporters were suggesting that I do, even if I thought that I shouldn't. More specifically, they wanted me to be harsher in my criticism of Clarence Oakley. I didn't have anything against Clarence Oakley. By and large, I feel that I got through the campaign without saying unkind things about Clarence Oakley. But some of the people wanted me to say almost vicious things about him, and it made me very, very uncomfortable.

KARKLINS: When you were finally elected to the board, were there any surprises as to how it operates?

OLIVER: I learned a great deal over the course of four years. I'm afraid I arrived on the city board as a very brash young man.

KARKLINS: Would you characterize yourself as idealistic also?

OLIVER: Oh, yes. I felt that I was idealistic. I had this whole Stanford Research Institute study only six years before, on which to hang my hat, so to speak. The city board six years earlier had passed the Community Redevelopment Agency law, so we were into redevelopment. I had been attending meetings of the Chamber of Commerce most of the time between '59 and '65. I knew that the Chamber felt that they needed a new downtown hotel, which we eventually got in the form of the Pasadena Hilton on Los Robles. In my campaign, I had suggested that we needed a

very hard look at the civic center. I was terribly anxious to keep the opening between the civic auditorium and the library to the north. Indeed, as I mentioned before, I was anxious to have some of the buildings in that space taken away, so that we could have a bigger open space. I think I had in mind something along the lines of the Grand Place in Brussels, which, if you've ever seen it, is a marvelous open space.

I remember that my friend Claude Braden, who was really the main person who got Pasadena Beautiful started in 1959 or thereabouts, once said that I was very unrealistic to support more open space in Pasadena. I reminded him that we still had Central Park in New York City, and that anybody who wanted to build in Central Park would undoubtedly be voted down. He was rather taken aback by that reply. Zoning can be very important, and I succeeded in getting the civic center zone established, and it's still in existence. Unfortunately, they've filled it up with more than I would have preferred.

But we were talking about what I think I have learned during the four years that I was on the city board. I started out badly, I think, by making a short speech, talking about what I hoped to accomplish. I don't think that went over terribly well with my colleagues on the city board. They were a good deal more low-key than I was in the beginning. I began to discover that if I offered a motion to do something, I would not get a second except to the most perfunctory motions.

KARKLINS: Was this unique to you?

OLIVER: I think it was unique to me. They were startled by the fact that I came from Caltech. Except for Jencks, they had all been together for at least eight years, and they were just going to teach me a lesson. It would have taken a person who was himself kind of flamboyant to have seconded my motion.

Now, after four years on the city board, particularly after I had announced in December that I was not going to seek reelection (I served for four more months) and I was *never* on the losing side of any motion that I made. And indeed, I think a number of motions that I made, including one to establish a housing committee officially in the city of Pasadena, would never have succeeded at the beginning of my time on the city board. It passed unanimously.

KARKLINS: Now, was that partly because the board members changed within the four-year period? Or was it that they had gained a respect for you?

OLIVER: Well, Dick Jencks occasionally seconded my motions. But he went off the city board within about three months, because he had commitments in New York. He moved to New York as chief legal counsel for CBS. He had a rather distinguished career in New York City. But he was the only one who would second my motions.

I finally decided that the thing to do was to speak last rather than first. I sometimes had a habit of getting excited and would want to raise my hand and say something. And I found that didn't sit very well with the others. I found that if I didn't talk at all about relatively minor issues, that was a very good thing.

Incidentally, nine-tenths of the motions that are made on the city board pass unanimously, because they're really noncontroversial. I occasionally would say, "Well, if nobody else wants to make that motion, I'll make the motion." It would pass. I gradually discovered how I should handle things. If I really felt strongly about something, then I would call somebody up on the telephone who I thought was a likely candidate to second my motion. But instead of my making the motion, I would say, "Why don't you make the motion and I will second it." So, many, many motions I got accepted by getting somebody else to offer the motion.

I also discovered that I could almost certainly get an idea accepted if I asked the city manager to make a report about it, because nobody would oppose asking the city manager to report on a particular subject. If the city manager made a report that was anything like the sort of thing that I wanted to support, I would make the motion or I would get somebody else to make the motion.

I started out with the proposition that I was going to oppose virtually all variances, including variances on sign ordinances. Sometimes merchants would ask to have even a bigger sign put up. I would be invariably opposed to that. I opposed virtually all variances that I was aware of, whether I voted alone or not.

I strongly supported virtually all kinds of planning. We did not have a general plan at the time I went on the city board. Paul Shaffer, who was the director of planning, had to work on Saturdays to put together the semblance of a general plan. I came to support virtually all kinds

of planning, and most of the time I supported whatever had been recommended by the planning commission. I supported a new hotel in any way I could. Indeed, that's one of the proposals that I made for improving the civic center. And, of course, we now have not only the Pasadena Hilton but the Holiday Inn directly behind the civic auditorium.

I guess the thing that I supported the most was the whole civic center development. I wanted to have a convention center. I wanted to have a brand-new playhouse. I wanted to have underground parking for at least a thousand cars. I supported minority groups because of my experience on the Human Relations Committee. Of course, I had to resign the Human Relations Committee when I went on the city board. I had already become a member of a nine-tenths all-black organization called the Men of Tomorrow. I made some very marvelous black friends through that organization. I would tell people who raised an eyebrow that the reason I wanted to be a member of the Men of Tomorrow was because I lived way over in the lily-white neighborhood of East San Pasqual and I just didn't know anything that was going on in the northwest section of Pasadena. I enjoyed the Men of Tomorrow. I don't think they meet anymore. Quentin Mason and George Jones and Bob Williams were three of the closest friends that I had in Pasadena. But the point is that I supported their endeavors. I supported the Jackie Robinson Center. Indeed, I proposed that there be some sort of community center quite near the Pepper Project, which is near the corner of Fair Oaks and Pepper Street, just a block south of Washington. There was put up some institutional housing called King's Row. We've had trouble with it ever since, largely because the poor people who live in that housing are supposed to have drug problems. I supported the community center, and I supported the idea that it should be named after Jackie Robinson.

KARKLINS: Would you say that during the time that you were on the board, that you were probably the only member who spoke for the black minority's plight in Pasadena?

OLIVER: Oh, no, I wouldn't say that. My friend Louis Edwards had great rapport with the black community. It was in his district that most of the black community existed.

KARKLINS: You were also instrumental in expanding and reorganizing the police department.

OLIVER: I supported the expansion of the police department, but only to the extent of asking that the police department could have one or two more cars in their five- to ten-man contingent. Sam Addis, at that time the chief of police, recommended through the city manager that the police force be expanded. The custom, up until the time that I got on the city board, was to accept whatever the city manager recommended. I raised the question, "Shouldn't we have a bigger police department?" I remember that raised several eyebrows around the table. People said, "You're not supposed to do this. You're supposed to agree with whatever the city manager has recommended. You're not supposed to try and go around him in any way." But I succeeded in getting Sam Addis in to talk to the city board and make his presentation. I offered a motion to expand the police department. It lost, but at the next budget session the police department was expanded. I stood in strong support of the police department.

I supported the library in every way I could. I supported the new Brookside Clubhouse, which incidentally was the brainchild of Clarence Oakley, though I got credit for it. My name is on the plaque just outside the clubhouse, but that was Clarence Oakley's initiative, not mine.

I supported a change in the election system. I wanted to go from citywide elections to a compromise by which we nominated people at the district level. If a person didn't receive sixty percent or more of the vote, we would have two people running on the ballot citywide. We are now back to the point of having district-only primary and run-off elections. I have never been able to decide whether that's really a good thing or not. I liked the compromise.

Begin Tape 5, Side 2

OLIVER: Incidentally, it was my friend George Knox Roth who first suggested the compromise election system. It was in operation in San Diego at that time.

I not only supported the Brookside Clubhouse but also the use of alcoholic beverages, even though, in a public hearing on the subject, almost all of the speakers were very much opposed to allowing the use of alcoholic beverages in the Brookside Clubhouse, or indeed anywhere else in a public building in Pasadena. They never used the word "drunkenness," but they just thought it would be immoral. I remember at one of these sessions where most of the city board members were quite intimidated, I made a relatively strong statement in support of alcoholic beverages in the clubhouse. Olly Prickett said later that it looked to him like Billy

Sunday was going to march down the aisle of City Hall and demand that liquor not be made available at the Brookside Clubhouse.

I supported a small tax—I think it was a two-percent tax—on utility bills, which would be used to put utilities wires underground. The very first street on which that was done was Del Mar when it was widened. But it passed by only four to three votes as I recall. Floyd Gwinn strongly supported me, and Mr. Cooper, who was also a member of the Pasadena Beautiful Foundation, supported me. I think that was early enough that Richard Jencks supported me, too. The others took the view that they didn't want any new taxes of any kind. I think Pasadena suffered before from this antitax syndrome. After the passage of Proposition 13, however, Pasadena has had an even more irrational tax policy. An enormous premium was put upon raising sales tax revenue, and quite a premium was also put upon raising funds through building new buildings. It has meant more change and more retail trade in Pasadena than in my judgment has been warranted.

Now, I have to say a little bit about the Symphony Association. I'm not sure that this was a good stand for me to have taken. I got onto this stand because $9,000 was being sought by the Tournament of Roses Association to advertise the Tournament's participation in the Portland Rose Festival, for example. Dick Jencks had opposed this $9,000 subsidy; and so I started opposing it, too. Once I got started opposing it, I decided that the only consistent thing for me to do was to oppose subsidies to the Pasadena Symphony Association, the Pasadena Playhouse, and quite a host of other cultural organizations.

I finally succeeded in getting the people who wanted support to appear before the city board and explain why they thought it was a good idea for the city to subsidize them. I think that took some of the sting out of my opposition. Initially, I was the lone dissenter on motions to, let's say, give $20,000 to the Pasadena Symphony Association. One of the consequences of that, however, was that it made Maudie Cooper—the wife of C. Bernard Cooper, who later became mayor—very, very cross. In my second election attempt, she was very vociferous in her opposition to me. I'm sure that that came mainly from my having originally opposed the subsidies to these various cultural organizations.

They gave $100,000 to the Chamber of Commerce, ostensibly for the purposes of advertising Pasadena. The argument was that the Chamber of Commerce was better suited to advertise Pasadena than an in-house organization. I was always uneasy about that, too. There is

an exchange of correspondence between me and John Reagan, the director of the Chamber of Commerce. He took great exception to my suggestion that the Chamber of Commerce should even appear before the city board and explain why the Chamber of Commerce should receive this grant, or subsidy.

In general, I have been very hard-nosed on the subject of subsidies. One of the reasons that I opposed the Plaza Pasadena was because it would involve an enormous subsidy to the businesses in the Plaza. I have a memo on that subject. I opposed it even after I was off the city board and was a member of the planning commission.

I was very much in favor of civic center planning. I made the motion to look into the question of whether or not we could get a Museum of Science in Pasadena. I made that motion on November 1, 1966, and it was reiterated on February 7, 1967. That was partly because we had lost the Pasadena Art Museum to the far end of Colorado Boulevard. I had an idea that if we could get the Pasadena Art Museum to be very close to the civic auditorium, they would complement each other; we would have more customers for both. But it had already been decided that the small golf course at the end of Colorado Boulevard was to be the site of the new art museum. Plans had really already been drawn. It was too late for me to suggest that the art museum be made contiguous with the civic auditorium.

But I then started a search for some alternative, and hit upon an idea that goes back before I was on the city board—to have a museum of science which would not be owned but would be participated in by Caltech. I wanted that to take the place of the art museum. The idea of a museum of science went through many incarnations. I have to say I finally got rather disgusted with it after various other people got involved.

KARKLINS: When you say various incarnations, this means there was some interest?

OLIVER: Oh, a lot of interest. But it was eventually decided that the Plaza Pasadena should take precedence over the museum of science, and therefore it could not be located near the civic center or anywhere in the civic center. Then they talked about putting the museum of science out on the edge of Brookside Park. And of course all the people who were in favor of maintaining the Brookside Park rose up in opposition. It would have been on the Linda Vista side. Bill Pickering still has an interest in the museum of science. But Vic [Henry Victor] Neher, a

Caltech physicist who was a staunch supporter, moved up to Watsonville, so he is out of the picture. Ted Combs was a staunch supporter.

I was also very much in favor of getting the eastern boundary of Pasadena moved as far east as Rosemead. We had a county committee that dealt with that issue. I felt that Arcadia and Pasadena should be contiguous and that little strip of county territory called Michillinda Park, in which I once lived for nine years, should be made part of a city. Rosemead was the natural boundary.

Mr. [Don] Yokaitis, who was elected after I declined to serve in '69, to my annoyance, took credit for the idea of incorporating Fedco in the city limits. I had proposed a lot more than that. The other members of the city board, while they supported me, they didn't support me very hard. The people of the Michillinda area were opposed. I don't really know quite why they were opposed. It seems to me much better for people to be in one city or another.

KARKLINS: Reading the paper that you presented to the YMCA, "Is Local Government Representative?" in the spring of 1970, you said that part of your frustration with the city board was that you felt that there seemed to be a "shadow government," which sort of "exerted considerable power behind the scenes in influencing public decisions." There had been a long tradition of "home rule," and that home rule basically included particular groups, such as the Tournament of Roses Association, the Overland Club, the Chamber of Commerce, and the University Club. Do you feel that it has always been so, and possibly continues to be so?

OLIVER: Yes, I think so. But I think that it is a good deal less true now than it was then, because the residential groups have become a great deal more active. After all, all governments are a function of pressure groups. I guess I was a little too hard on pressure groups. I gave a speech in which I identified TOCU—the Tournament of Roses, the Overland Club, the Chamber of Commerce, and the University Club—as a sort of the shadow government. That has been modified somewhat, because we have gone to district-only elections. But in the days when I was on the city board and we all ran for the whole city, it was relatively easy for these pressure groups to elect everybody. I remember once in talking to Dick Schuster, when I was running for the city board. I said, "At this very moment, people in the University Club are deciding who will be the next representative of District Five on the city board."

KARKLINS: Of these four groups, which did you feel was the more determined to make sure that what they wanted came to pass?

OLIVER: Well, they substantially overlapped. Members of the Tournament of Roses Association, who were prominent, were, at least in the olden days, also members of the Overland Club—that was a drinking club right in the center of town. I don't even know if it still exists. The Chamber of Commerce of course, still exists. I would guess that the Chamber of Commerce has become relatively more important and the Tournament has become a little bit less important. Those groups overlapped very substantially. So a person who was a prominent member of the Tournament would certainly be a member of the University Club, would also probably be a member of the Chamber of Commerce, and probably of the Overland Club as well. So I felt that there was a shadow government.

I offered a motion once to make a $25,000 advance to the Pasadena Playhouse, under the conditions that the Playhouse open for a new season. That implied that the Playhouse would be able to pay back the $25,000. I was much in favor of helping the Pasadena Playhouse. I've always loved the theatre, and I've always loved the symphony. So I sort of got caught on the wrong side of that issue.

In the days when I was on the city board, we always adjourned for lunch at 12:30 approximately, and resumed meetings at about 2:30. We went off to the Huntington Hotel and sat at the bar for half an hour or so. And then we went in and had lunch. People couldn't be stopped from talking with each other at the bar, thereby contravening somewhat the Brown Act. But when we had our official lunches, the city attorney would blow the whistle if ever we got to talking about something that had to do with policy. Wendell Thompson was the attorney at the time I was on the board. A lot of goodwill was exhibited during the luncheon periods.

The board met every week. We got paid ten dollars a meeting. But the real perks were not the ten dollars a meeting. It was the power that went with the office. It was the lunches that we had on Tuesdays that were paid for by the city. More particularly, I would have to say, it was the trips that we took at public expense to the National League of Cities. I remember one great National League of Cities meeting in Detroit, where I bought a 1965 Corvair—at my expense, of course—which I still own. I recall a marvelous meeting that everybody went to in Hawaii—the

United States Conference of Mayors.

They were very important meetings, it seemed to me, because the programs were very good. We got to compare notes with other councilmen from other areas and find out what was going on. It turned out that the big-city mayors—like New York, Detroit, Milwaukee—were all Democrats. I'm a Democrat; and all of my colleagues on the board, except for Dick Jencks, were Republicans. So it was like a breath of fresh air to get back and hear what was going on in the rest of the country at the city level. I think it influenced the board of directors to hear what's happening elsewhere, so I think it was a very, very important outcome of the meetings.

Regarding public transportation, I supported it as best as I could, including what I thought was basically a hare-brained idea of Mayor Welin, to buy up all the defunct railroad routes and fund a public transportation system. It turned out not to be totally irrational, because there has been started a route that begins in Long Beach and goes to the center of Los Angeles. So maybe that was an idea before its time.

I remember one coup that I succeeded in making. There was the concept of an automobile center that raised its head several times. And I was basically opposed to the automobile center. Director Floyd Gwinn and I went out to see the Riverside automobile center. We thought well of it, but I felt that the price of land in Pasadena was much too high—that a real automobile center had to be out beyond Monrovia somewhere, where the price of land was a good deal lower. In the process of talking about it, however, I agreed with Floyd Gwinn that I would support the concept of an automobile center if he would support the idea of a housing committee. I succeeded in getting the housing committee appointed and into existence, in spite of the fact that I don't think very many people were much in favor of it. We didn't get the automobile center, because it was decided that it couldn't be put together in one place. I felt that was a great coup.

The reason for having a housing committee at all was to look into the question of leased housing—whether or not houses could be subsidized by the federal government. I was all in favor of subsidies coming from outside of Pasadena. But there was this concept of a leased housing program, and I succeeded in getting that through. I not only succeeded in getting it through but I succeeded in getting all the five members of the housing agency appointed essentially by me.

Indeed, one of the things that I kept in mind during the four years I was on the board was

to get people who had supported me in my campaign put on a committee. At one point, somebody said something like, "Can't we do something to stop Oliver from getting all of his people appointed?"

I took a really strong stand in favor of gun control. I asked the city attorney to make a report on this subject. He came back with the position that that issue had been usurped by the state. I don't think that's actually correct, because San Francisco had a local law which required the registration of guns. All of this came up at the time of the Robert Kennedy's assassination. All of us were shocked, and I didn't have any great trouble getting the city attorney to report back.

Toward the end of the period, I could just ask if anybody had any objections to the city manager or city attorney making a report, and I could get it done that way. I once asked the city manager if he would look into the question of whether or not we should establish a private company instead of the Public Utility of Pasadena—in other words, sell the utility to the Southern California Edison Company. The city manager came back with a recommendation that this not be done. His main reason was he didn't know how we would invest the money to get the same rate of return. He was afraid that we would find some way of frittering it away. I think that was a good objection. I accepted that.

When I was on the Utility Advisory Committee a few years ago, I became a very staunch supporter of the utility, because I really think the utility is run about as efficiently as the Edison Company could possibly run it, and their salaries are a good deal lower. So I think the utility does a good job, but I didn't know that at the time. And I guess I was trying to, in a way, goad the city board into agreeing that private enterprise was better than public enterprise.

I think I've given you a fairly good idea of my experiences on the city board during the years 1965 to 1969. I made the mistake in 1973 of running again. I think I was ill-advised. I was running against the incumbent mayor. I thought he was even less popular than he was.

KARKLINS: May I ask what enticed you to run in '73?

OLIVER: I was influenced by a number of things. The Firemen and Policemen Association came to me and asked me if I would run. They felt that Yokaitis had betrayed them. He had been their lawyer, so to speak, and he had turned against them. I was also sort of nostalgic for the city

board. I left the city board not exactly in a huff, but I certainly was tired of being on the city board. You may remember that I described what happened when Mayor Welin resigned in order to get Joe Messler on the city board. I had supported Bill Roddiger myself. Had Bill Roddiger been appointed to the city board, I would have had four votes for almost everything. With Joe Messler, I didn't feel that I had four votes.

Anyway, I had decided really by the summer of 1968 that I would not run again. At that time, I was already negotiating with my friend Andrew Kamarck in Washington, D.C. to go and work at the World Bank for at least a year. It was the hardest choice I ever made in my life. What with my being put out to pasture by Bob Huttenback, and all the things that happened during the four years—one year when I was in Washington and the three successive years when I was back here—with Bob Huttenback and Lance Davis in control.

I guess I have to say that I kind of entertained thoughts that I might conceivably try to run for Congress. When I was back in Washington, there were people who knew about my experiences on the city board and asked why didn't I run for Congress. I thought maybe if I could get elected a second time, that the public opinion in Pasadena and even Glendale would shift enough so that it wasn't a totally impossible idea. I've never thought all that seriously about it, but once I was defeated in my attempt in '73, I abandoned all thoughts of a political career.

KARKLINS: Was the campaign of '73 more diabolical than it had been in '65?

OLIVER: Oh, yes, a great deal more diabolical. Recently, my friend Tim Matthews called me to talk about a new organization called Pasadena Advocates.

Begin Tape 6, Side 1

OLIVER: In the process of that conversation with Tim Matthews, who had been a mayor of Pasadena after I had been on the city board, he characterized the campaign between Yokaitis and me as the dirtiest campaign that he had ever seen in Pasadena. I thought it was very dirty. Whereas I wound up my campaign against Clarence Oakley on very good terms—I went over to congratulate him and shake his hand, and Clarence and I became quite good friends after that—I

had run against Clarence Oakley without there being any bitterness. Yokaitis and I, to this very day, just can't stand each other.

KARKLINS: It seemed that, first of all, there was a tendency for Mr. Yokaitis to misinform the public and make it sound as though it was a partisan campaign on your part, that you were a Democrat, and that you had Democratic support. With that label, not only were you very active against policies of discrimination but also seen as possibly supporting busing, and in that way Yokaitis was trying to sway public opinion against you.

OLIVER: Yes, I stand behind those words. I guess the thing that annoyed me the most was that the [Pasadena] *Star-News* went out of its way to introduce the busing question into the campaign. Yokaitis in his public ads spoke of me as a supporter of busing. The person who interviewed me on the *Star-News* immediately jumped on the question: "How do you stand on busing?" and "Who are your supporters?" She tried to make it appear as though I was the creature of black people. I had had a history of supporting black people, but I felt that was totally irrelevant. What set me off basically was that after the vote had pretty well come in the night that I ran—I had been at home—I had decided that I should go up to the civic auditorium where the vote was being counted at the time and offer my congratulations to Mr. Yokaitis. Unfortunately, I got there after Yokaitis had left—I guess he had already started his victory celebration. One of the few people who was still sitting around watching the ballots being counted was Charles Cherniss, editor of the *Star-News* at that time. I approached Cherniss and said something to the effect, "I won't forget the way you have treated me in this campaign." Cherniss rose to his feet and said something to the effect, "We don't want to hear anymore from you, Oliver." And we stood toe to toe, both of us looking darts at each other.

After a short time, I left altogether. I didn't find Yokaitis there. But I subsequently discovered that Cherniss had gone over to the Yokaitis headquarters and had actually made the charge that I had tried to hit him. That was totally unfounded. My friend Tom Smith, who was sitting about two seats away from the two of us when Cherniss jumped to his feet, said that nothing like my taking a swing at him ever occurred. But I'm afraid most of the people at the Yokaitis headquarters believed Cherniss. It eventually got back to Harold Brown. There was no way I could really stop the rumor. It did me a great deal of harm. That's, I guess, when I

decided that that was the dirtiest campaign that the *Star-News* had ever run.

There were other repercussions from the election. This was the only time in history, as far as I'm aware of, where several of the directors actually took out an ad opposing me.

KARKLINS: Those that did, had they been members of the board at the time you were on the board?

OLIVER: Yes. One of the unwritten rules about Pasadena politics is that nobody who's on the board takes an official position of any kind in favor of or opposed to any candidate. I guess they were basically afraid of the busing issue. The busing issue was very, very important at that time. And a great majority was opposed to busing.

KARKLINS: So you feel that's what inspired them to do something contrary to policy?

OLIVER: Yes. I felt that the *Star-News* in particular had slanted things so badly—through the interview, through the ad placement in the paper. They supported Yokaitis editorially, which is all right. But the sports editor even found a way of talking about Yokaitis. He had never done that before.

KARKLINS: What was Yokaitis's draw that would make people decide to support him?

OLIVER: Well, he favored downtown development. I was more reserved about downtown development.

KARKLINS: He definitely did take a lot of credit for supposedly bringing to Pasadena the telephone company, the BankAmericard Center, Parsons, Fedco, a convention hotel.

OLIVER: None of which he had very much to do with, actually. He had been on the board for four years, of course, and through a curious circumstance he had become mayor in three years. I would have been mayor in seven years if I had run successfully for reelection.

KARKLINS: After that election, from 1972 to 1975, you were a member of the Pasadena Planning Commission. Were you on board when a plan for the city was developing?

OLIVER: Yes, but I should go back to the time when I was chairman of the Citizens' Committee for Downtown Improvement, a bond committee in 1964, which recommended, amongst other things, that there actually be a bond sold to the public. It was passed by just less than sixty-six percent; more than sixty percent voted in favor of the idea of having a detailed plan drawn on what the center of the city should look like. I've always supported that. But a general plan, which Paul Shaffer drew up, was sort of an attempt to deal with that kind of an issue. It didn't deal with it in enough detail in the center of the city. I kept pushing to try and get some support. I kept pushing to get started a detailed, architectural plan for the center of the city. What we got instead was sort of a compromise. We did development on the telephone company, and we did development on the BankAmericard Center. And that was all being accomplished at about the time I went off the city board. It had been decided officially that we would do lease-back financing for the modification of the convention center and civic auditorium. That had already been decided. Negotiations were already under way for a new hotel—eventually the Holiday Inn. So that was all happening at least six months before I went off the board.

It certainly burned me up to have Yokaitis taking credit for these things. But what burned me up even more was that Yokaitis insisted upon trying to inject the school board campaign. I tried very hard to keep my hands off of any kind of a statement dealing with busing, because I just didn't think it was relevant. I felt that if I had had an opinion about busing, I would have run for the school board.

Yokaitis was personally very unpleasant to me. Once he arranged to have a supporter come up and talk to him so loudly that while I was talking before an audience, he drowned me out. He was the epitome of discourteousness.

Yokaitis was elected two more times to the city board. He has since moved away from Pasadena. He was a strong person in the sense that he got pretty much what he wanted to get done. He betrayed the policemen and firemen, and he did a number of other sleazy things, in my view. He was involved in a number of variance decisions where he supported improperly the use of eminent domain. So I think he's generally a bad person.

The city was on the move during the early and mid-sixties, but a great deal of the activity

was in the hands of Assistant City Manager, Don Pollard and the Pasadena Redevelopment Agency rather than the planning commission. By the time the planning commission got into the act, we were told it was too late. That's when I got steamed up about the Plaza Pasadena, about which I had a lot to say, most of which is in the Archives. Suffice to say, I had a number of debates about the Plaza Pasadena with my friend and Caltech colleague Neil Pings. I had endorsed the idea of a redevelopment agency in my SRI report, but by the late seventies the agency had become too powerful. It was out of control and had to be stopped. I helped to stop it.

On the whole, the experience on the city board was fascinating to me. I'm certainly glad I did it. As I think back on it, regarding my extracurricular activities, I feel that it is probably the most important thing I've ever done, even including my work on the World Bank. I was more in charge of things rather than just a bit player, as I was in the World Bank. I would like to think that I am a born teacher—or at least I tried very hard, and worked very, very hard. I guess I feel that my being on the city board was second only to teaching as the most important thing I did.