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University of California  
Berkeley, California

Robert Gibson:  
A Pioneering Career in Pharmacy at UCSF, 1950s-2000s

Interviews conducted by  
Neil Henry  
in 2015

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Robert Gibson receiving the Remington Honor Medal in 2006

**Robert Gibson** was born in Tacoma, Washington. He served in the US Army during World War II. In 1958 he was the first African American to receive a Pharm.D from the University of California, San Francisco. He then joined the faculty at UCSF where over the next 50 years he served in many capacities, including Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, Associate Dean for Professional Affairs in the School of Pharmacy, and as Director of the Pharmaceutical Technology Laboratory. In 2000 he was elected president of the American Pharmaceutical Association, and in 2006 he received the Remington Honor Medal. He lives in Petaluma with his wife Linda.

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Interview #1 September 21, 2015  
Audio File 1

01-00:00:08

Henry: Today is Monday, September 21, 2015. My name is Neil Henry, and I'm sitting with Dr. Robert 'Bob' Gibson at his home in Petaluma, California. Dr. Gibson has served in a number of capacities at the University of California San Francisco as associate vice-chancellor, registrar, an admissions officer and lecturer emeritus. He has also served as associate dean of both student and professional affairs and as director of the Pharmaceutical Technology Library in the School of Pharmacy at UCSF. He has also been a community and hospital practitioner and beloved mentor to many in the field of pharmacy. This is the first of several sessions with Dr. Gibson in which I will ask him to recollect his life and times. First off, thank you for having me. It's a pleasure to meet you.

01-00:01:00

Gibson: Okay. Let me correct you on one thing. It's Pharmaceutical Technology Laboratory.

01-00:01:07

Henry: I thought that's what I said. That's what I wrote.

01-00:01:08

Gibson: You said library.

01-00:01:09

Henry: Oh, laboratory, sorry. [laughter].

01-00:01:11

Gibson: Okay. [laughter].

01-00:01:12

Henry: Okay. I can't read. I'm in my old age. [laughter]. First off, can you tell me where and when you were born?

01-00:01:18

Gibson: Yeah. I was born in the state of Washington in a village so small it didn't have a village idiot. So my sister and I took turns.

01-00:01:33

Henry: [laughter]. What village was this?

01-00:01:34

Gibson: Tacoma, Washington.

01-00:01:36

Henry: Tacoma. How did your family end up in Tacoma?

01-00:01:40

Gibson:

Tell you the truth my dad was born in Tacoma. His grandparents were slaves and when they were relieved of that responsibility they migrated to the state of Washington and to Tacoma. I had a good life there. I was active in a lot of things. Very active in high school athletics. And then went to Oregon for my academic work, University of Oregon. I guess I just stayed there until I—well, I came down here and went to work. And then she got in my way and couldn't get her out of the way if I didn't marry her.

01-00:02:55

Linda:

Excuse me. Excuse me. That's right. I'm number three.

01-00:03:04

Gibson:

Okay.

01-00:03:05

Linda:

If I was in your way, I was far, far away.

01-00:03:09

Henry:

If we could go back to your parents. They must have been some of the earliest black pioneers to settle in the Pacific Northwest, right?

01-00:03:15

Gibson:

Yeah. Yeah. I had very few black friends as I grew up just because of the geography and the times.

01-00:03:29

Henry:

Yeah. Do you know where your parents originated from in the South?

01-00:03:33

Gibson:

No, I really don't. And I never have pursued it. It's not one of the things that interested me.

01-00:03:43

Henry:

Yeah. So I suppose you grew up in a—

01-00:03:46

Gibson:

My sister can tell you.

01-00:03:47

Henry:

Oh, yeah? [laughter]. I suppose you grew up in a neighborhood that was working class, lower class, middle class? What did your parents do for livings?

01-00:04:00

Gibson:

Well, my dad was a mechanic for Greyhound. Greyhound Bus Lines. And what was the other part of the question?

01-00:04:11

Linda:

What your parents—

01-00:04:10  
Henry: What did your mother do for a living? Did she work?

01-00:04:15  
Gibson: My mother died when I was a little boy.

01-00:04:16  
Henry: Oh.

01-00:04:18  
Gibson: And my dad stayed single. My sister's two years younger than I and my dad stayed single until my sister got married.

01-00:04:35  
Henry: Purposely?

01-00:04:35  
Gibson: Purposely.

01-00:04:36  
Henry: Why?

01-00:04:38  
Gibson: Protective, I guess. I don't know. Maybe couldn't run any faster. [laughter]  
Who knows. I don't.

01-00:04:47  
Henry: But he must have been a good father? A good, devoted father.

01-00:04:49  
Gibson: Yeah, he was always dependable, and there for you, and always looking out for you. And very, very protective of my sister. And very aggressive and pushing me to do things. I was a high school jock and he pushed that. And then I got good grades and so he pushed that. Yeah, he was a good dad and always looking out for us. Being very careful that we were in his view. Yeah, he lived to age seventy-seven. So he died some time ago. Yeah, because I'm what am I, ninety?

01-00:05:54  
Linda: You're ninety.

01-00:05:54  
Gibson: Ninety.

01-00:05:56  
Henry: Yeah, what year were you born?

01-00:05:57  
Gibson: Nineteen twenty-five.

01-00:05:59

Henry: Nineteen twenty-five, all right. So you were a Depression era child, right? Do you remember the Great Depression years?

01-00:06:05

Gibson: Not really. Well, my mother died when I was very young but while she was alive I must have frustrated them by wanting things that they couldn't provide. But that's the way it is with most parents anyhow.

01-00:06:31

Linda: And your grandmothers. They played a—

01-00:06:35

Gibson: Yeah, I was raised by my grandmothers. Both my grandmother on my mother's side, who was white incidentally, and my grandmother on my father's side. And they were very protective of both my sister and me.

01-00:06:58

Henry: Did they come out to Tacoma with your parents?

01-00:07:00

Gibson: They were there. Yes, they came out. My mother lived in Omaha. How my dad met her in Omaha and brought her to the northwest, I don't know. Again, my sister could tell you. I never was very aggressive in finding out all that stuff. I just assumed it was fact and anybody that wanted to know could chase it down, but I didn't pursue it.

01-00:07:40

Henry: Did your mother's mother have any objections to her marriage with your father?

01-00:07:45

Gibson: No, not that I recall. She and both my grandmothers were very attentive to my sister and I. My grandmother well, can I say that they were both very attentive, very protective. They saw to it that things that a mother would normally provide for the kids they took care of. My dad didn't have to worry about that. He was a working man. He had a good job. He was a mechanic for Greyhound back in the old days. So he was respected by the community. He was a good man. I just don't remember much about my mother. But my dad was, he was just my life, in my life.

01-00:09:04

Henry: Did you have any spiritual upbringing? Did you belong to a church coming up?

01-00:09:10

Gibson: Yeah, with my grandmothers, both of them.

01-00:09:11

Henry: Both of them. [laughter]

- 01-00:09:11  
Gibson: Once I got to be eighteen, bye-bye baby. [laughter] Yeah. I wasn't interested in that. Never was. Never have been.
- 01-00:09:28  
Henry: But your upbringing you would consider happy and with a devoted father and devoted grandparents?
- 01-00:09:34  
Gibson: Very, very. Yeah.
- 01-00:09:37  
Henry: And you had plenty of friends in the neighborhood and your school days?
- 01-00:09:41  
Gibson: Yeah. This sounds egotistic to say this but I was usually the one being sought to be a friend because I was doing so much in athletics as a young person. I didn't have any bad days as a kid that I remember except my mother's death and that was when I was young.
- 01-00:10:25  
Henry: But it was also true that you were an African-American kid growing up in a part of the world where there are very few African-Americans.
- 01-00:10:32  
Gibson: That's right.
- 01-00:10:32  
Henry: Was there any special feelings that went along with that? Did you encounter any bigotry, discrimination or name calling or anything?
- 01-00:10:44  
Gibson: No. When my friends referred to my grandmother they'd say my white grandmother or your dad's mother. That was just the way I grew up. As far as I know it didn't affect me one way or another. Who knows? Again, ask my sister.
- 01-00:11:12  
Henry: [laughter] So you went to Stadium High School in Tacoma?
- 01-00:11:17  
Gibson: Yeah.
- 01-00:11:18  
Henry: And this was a public school, correct?
- 01-00:11:20  
Gibson: Right.
- 01-00:11:20  
Henry: Were you a good student? What was it like to be a student there?

- 01-00:11:27  
Gibson: Well, I had a good role because I not only was a good student, but I was—a star is not the word, but I was very active athlete in all the sports.
- 01-00:11:42  
Henry: Baseball, football, basketball—
- 01-00:11:44  
Gibson: Yeah.
- 01-00:11:44  
Henry: —track and field?
- 01-00:11:45  
Gibson: Not track and field. I couldn't run worth a shit. Worth a dang, excuse me.  
[laughter]
- 01-00:11:55  
Henry: But you were a lineman? You're a big man. You were a lineman in football or a running back?
- 01-00:12:00  
Gibson: No. No, I was quarterback.
- 01-00:12:01  
Henry: You were a quarterback?
- 01-00:12:02  
Gibson: Yeah, biggest guy on the team usually.
- 01-00:12:05  
Henry: Oh, okay.
- 01-00:12:06  
Gibson: And that was in high school before guys started to spurt up over me. What else?
- 01-00:12:20  
Linda: In high school you were active in all of your sports. Had a few girlfriends.
- 01-00:12:32  
Gibson: I got involved in school plays. They didn't involve me very much in them. When you think about it, I don't know whether it was because I was black and stood out that way or whether I was just no good. Yeah. And I don't care either way.
- 01-00:13:02  
Henry: Did you have any influential teachers?

01-00:13:05  
Gibson: Yeah. One very influential. Two of them. One was my high school coach who coached all the sports. And shit, I forgot what I was going to say about teachers.

01-00:13:28  
Linda: A second teacher.

01-00:13:32  
Gibson: Hmm?

01-00:13:33  
Henry: Influential teachers. How were they influential? Did you have any influential teachers?

01-00:13:38  
Gibson: Oh, the other one was my algebra teacher.

01-00:13:42  
Henry: Algebra?

01-00:13:43  
Gibson: Yeah. And I guess the reason I got hooked onto that and a very, very good relationship. I was good at math, fortunately. But she also taught my dad. And the minute I walked into her class she looked at me and said, "Are you Ray Gibson's son?" And I said, "Oh, shit, what did I do?"

01-00:14:10  
Henry: Did you enjoy algebra more than any other subject?

01-00:14:15  
Gibson: No, I don't think so. I was just good in math.

01-00:14:21  
Henry: So you enjoyed history, chemistry, physics?

01-00:14:26  
Gibson: Yeah. I ended up being a chemist, but chemists really, basically because of pharmacy. God dammit, Linda, I lost my train of thought. I was thinking something else. Now I lost both of them.

01-00:14:53  
Henry: That's okay.

01-00:14:54  
Gibson: You have to put up with me.

01-00:14:55  
Henry: That's no problem. That's no problem.

01-00:14:57  
Gibson: When you get to be ninety years old that happens.

01-00:15:00

Henry: Did you have other activities besides sports when you were a child? Music for instance or any other activities?

01-00:15:06

Gibson: Oh, yeah, I had to play an instrument so I played saxophone. And when I was a teenager a few of us formed a little dance band, played on Saturday nights at the Elks Club. That sort of thing.

01-00:15:29

Henry: Well, that's great.

01-00:15:30

Gibson: But I was never involved with alcohol. My dad didn't drink. And as I said my mother died when I was a little boy. So we never had any alcohol around. So I was never out carousing around with my friends with alcohol. It just didn't turn me on.

01-00:15:49

Henry: Yeah. Yeah. In your discussions as a child around the kitchen table with your father, your sister and your grandmothers maybe, right, was race ever discussed? How central did race play a role in your world view of yourself and the world?

01-00:16:08

Gibson: Not much really. I had this influence of my white grandmother, my black grandmother, and my dad didn't care one way or another. He never expressed any interest. How he met my mother in Omaha, Nebraska and got her to come to the—

01-00:16:37

Henry: The end of the earth [laughter].

01-00:16:39

Gibson: Yeah. And how he married her and brought her to the northwest, I don't know. My sister could tell you all that. I just never did follow-up. Never had that interest in following it up.

01-00:17:02

Henry: And did you have neighborhood friends, school friends of all races and creeds?

01-00:17:07

Gibson: Yeah, but there weren't very many. There was only one other black person in my high school—

01-00:17:12

Henry: Oh, yeah?

01-00:17:12

Gibson:

—and that was my sister [laughter]. So gives you some sort of an idea of the environment I grew up in. It was all white. My grandmother, my dad's mother, would take me to church on Sundays until I got to be eighteen and say that's enough of that. And I didn't have any pressures. No pressures at all.

01-00:17:53

Linda:

You're still friends with your elementary school friends because you went through elementary and all through high school with them.

01-00:18:03

Gibson:

Yeah, I didn't have any trouble because I was a jock and a good student so I fit in almost everywhere. It didn't make any difference. At least it didn't make any difference to me that I was black. There weren't many around anyhow.

01-00:18:24

Henry:

Yeah. I grew up in Seattle.

01-00:18:26

Gibson:

Oh, did you?

01-00:18:26

Henry:

Yeah.

01-00:18:28

Gibson:

Wow.

01-00:18:28

Henry:

My father was the first African-American surgeon in the city's history. That was in 1958 and I grew up in the sixties in Seattle.

01-00:18:38

Gibson:

Oh.

01-00:18:38

Henry:

And whenever we went south to Tacoma and that smell of the pulp mills, I always wondered how people could survive in Tacoma. Did you get used to it or what?

01-00:18:47

Gibson:

Yeah, not really. God damn, that was terrible.

01-00:18:49

Henry:

It was awful.

01-00:18:52

Gibson:

Depended on which way the wind blew.

01-00:18:56

Henry:

Yeah [laughter]. It was so powerful.

01-00:18:59  
Gibson: Yeah.

01-00:19:00  
Henry: So you were in high school when Pearl Harbor happened, correct?

01-00:19:06  
Linda: Yes.

01-00:19:07  
Gibson: Yes.

01-00:19:09  
Henry: Do you remember where you were and what you were doing when you heard about Pearl Harbor?

01-00:19:14  
Linda: Yes. You were in the—

01-00:19:12  
Gibson: Remind me.

01-00:19:17  
Linda: You were in the auditorium.

01-00:19:20  
Gibson: Oh, in high school.

01-00:19:23  
Henry: Before we go on, could you introduce the other voice in the room who is occasionally going to be on the transcript?

01-00:19:30  
Gibson: Yeah, she's my historian. My hired historian.

01-00:19:36  
Henry: Her full name?

01-00:19:37  
Gibson: And her name is Linda, and she's my wife.

01-00:19:40  
Henry: Okay. Linda Gibson. All right.

01-00:19:43  
Gibson: Right.

01-00:19:43  
Henry: All right

01-00:19:43  
Linda: Thank you.

01-00:19:46  
Henry: Right. So you were where and doing what at Pearl Harbor.

01-00:19:49  
Linda: Auditorium.

01-00:19:51  
Gibson: In high school in an auditorium that they called all the kids together, high school kids into the room and announced it and listened to Roosevelt say, "This is a day of infamy," and that speech.

01-00:20:13  
Henry: Yeah. And did you realize that it would change your life?

01-00:20:19  
Gibson: No. Well, I knew shortly thereafter because I was drafted in the Army right away.

01-00:20:28  
Henry: You were drafted? It came in the form of a letter?

01-00:20:32  
Gibson: Yes. Draft board letter. Yeah. And they let me stay in school for one year because I was in college.

01-00:20:43  
Henry: Oh, you'd already gone to college?

01-00:20:44  
Gibson: Yeah, I was in college, first year. And they let me stay out of the Army for that one year. And then I was drafted and spent my Army years learning what the South was like.

01-00:21:07  
Henry: What an education that must have been. Walk me through that. Where did you go upon leaving? Where did you go for your basic training?

01-00:21:14  
Gibson: First to Camp Barkley, Texas—

01-00:21:18  
Henry: Aye yai yai.

01-00:21:18  
Gibson: —outside of Abilene, Texas. And then I went to—

01-00:21:23  
Henry: And you were placed with an all-black outfit?

01-00:21:25

Gibson:

Yes. The Army was segregated then. And so I was placed with them. I don't know if you remember the name, but Joe Black used to be a pitcher for the Brooklyn—

01-00:21:43

Henry:

For the Dodgers, yeah, sure.

01-00:21:45

Gibson:

He and I were buddies in the same outfit. And so we played ball together and he went on to play ball. And salaries weren't very good then and my dad persuaded me to go on with my education. So Joe's dead now, but we spent a lot of good times together. He was a very bright guy. He was big and hulky, but he was a good looking kid. Damn, he was sharp. He was no village idiot.

01-00:22:37

Henry:

Yeah. And this was your first experience with segregation, and your first experience with being around a lot of black people wasn't it?

01-00:22:43

Gibson:

Yes.

01-00:22:43

Henry:

What was that experience like?

01-00:22:45

Gibson:

Oh, well, not with hordes of black people. There were black people around. And went to a black church and that sort of thing. So I didn't have any trouble with that. I just wasn't used to them. When I went in the Army it was kind of eye-opening. Some of the guys were great guys, smart guys. And my best friend in the Army—oh, shit.

01-00:23:26

Linda:

Maxie?

01-00:23:29

Gibson:

No. No. Oh, he's dead now. Used to be a judge over in Oakland. If I called his name, you'd recall it. I mean you'd recognize it. Well, I don't know, let's not go on with that.

01-00:23:56

Linda:

What about the church?

01-00:23:59

Gibson:

What?

01-00:23:59

Linda:

Remember when you would go to certain places at the church and you would tell them it was your birthday? Every church or stop and you would say—

01-00:24:10

Gibson: Oh, you mean when I was in the Army?

01-00:24:11

Linda: In the Army.

01-00:24:13

Gibson: Yeah.

01-00:24:13

Linda: And you had a birthday cake. How often was that?

01-00:24:18

Gibson: But this wasn't a church, Linda. This was at the train stations when I was in the service going back and forth. I was up in Tacoma area, and most of my Army life was spent in the South. So I spent a lot of time on the train. Awful lot of time on trains going back and forth. Steam engine in those days. And I remember some of the people, some of the things. And you're going to have to forgive me. My memory just fades out every now and then. I bring up something I want to say and I forget it. And that's why I have my shadow around.

01-00:25:17

Henry: So when you encountered racial segregation in the Army, what forms did it take and how did it make you feel?

01-00:25:27

Gibson: Well, it was a segregated Army. So I spent all my time with blacks except for the officers. And they only had one black officer and he was a medical officer. That's the way it was.

01-00:25:50

Henry: Right. Did you ever have any encounters that were particularly galling or hurtful in dealing with white people or segregation?

01-00:26:01

Gibson: Yeah. I looked around with the guys I was with in the Army and most of them were from the South, not very well educated. I felt that I had the talents and the background to go on further. And so I went to the commanding officer, told him that he should know that I was a college student at the University of Oregon and that, "I want to go to officer's candidate school." And he essentially told me, "Get back in line." So I didn't worry about it after that. I just served my time. Went two years and got out.

01-00:27:02

Henry: And did you serve at bases in the South and what did you do? Were you building roads or what were you doing?

01-00:27:08

Gibson: No, the base was in the South and I was in the medical corps.

01-00:27:12  
Henry: Oh, you were?

01-00:27:13  
Gibson: Yeah. And that's what they did with the black guys mostly. Put them in the medics.

01-00:27:26  
Henry: Medics meaning picking up the wounded?

01-00:27:29  
Gibson: Yeah, just the medical corps rather than cavalry or—

01-00:27:34  
Henry: Fighting.

01-00:27:34  
Gibson: —fighting. Yeah.

01-00:27:35  
Henry: Right. Yeah.

01-00:27:41  
Gibson: So the Army was both a good and an unpleasant experience. But I certainly value it. I treasure it. I met some good friends.

01-00:28:02  
Linda: You helped a lot of the soldiers. You helped them.

01-00:28:10  
Gibson: Most of the guys I was with didn't want to be soldiers.

01-00:28:12  
Linda: They weren't educated either and you helped with their reading, those who were interested in that.

01-00:28:20  
Gibson: Yeah. Carl Maxey wanted to be a lawyer, which he did become. Very, very successful lawyer in Spokane.

01-00:28:38  
Henry: So you appreciated the Army for the friends you met, maybe for the discipline it instilled, but you didn't like how it dehumanized you—

01-00:28:45  
Gibson: That's right.

01-00:28:45  
Henry: —degraded you?

01-00:28:46  
Gibson: Yeah, and I didn't like it, yeah, because it was segregated. Other than that I probably could have made a life in the Army.

01-00:29:00

Henry: Yeah. Were you in touch with the contradiction of that era which was this, that here the nation was at war to bring peace and freedom and individual rights to oppressed people overseas whereas as at home you didn't have that, the same freedoms.

01-00:29:18

Gibson: Believe me, I understood. Not much you could do about it. You just tried to stay out of trouble. If you objected too much, you got thrown in the brig for a while.

01-00:29:35

Henry: Did you know of men who that happened to?

01-00:29:36

Gibson: Oh, yeah, sure. I learned to keep my mouth shut and go with the flow and eventually I could accomplish more.

01-00:29:50

Henry: Right, yeah. And you also realized that your future wasn't in the American South?

01-00:29:56

Gibson: [laughter] I realized that quickly. What did the Australians say? Spot on [laughter]. Yeah.

01-00:30:10

Henry: So you got out of the Army in 1947, I guess, correct?

01-00:30:14

Gibson: Forty-six.

01-00:30:16

Henry: Forty-six. And you went back to the University of Oregon and what were you going to do at the University of Oregon?

01-00:30:21

Gibson: Well, I thought I was going to go to medical school. And I got back to Oregon. And when I left to go in the Army, Oregon was a small school and when I came back it was a huge school. And the possibility of me reaching my goals had diminished considerably.

01-00:30:48

Henry: Because of the size? The number of students?

01-00:30:49

Gibson: Yeah. Yeah.

01-00:30:50

Henry: And those returning soldiers mainly?

01-00:30:56  
Gibson: Yeah. What did I decide to do? I don't remember what I did when I first came back. I must have told you, Linda?

01-00:31:13  
Linda: Well, let's see. You went to school.

01-00:31:15  
Gibson: My memory card.

01-00:31:16  
Linda: You went to school.

01-00:31:18  
Gibson: Yeah, I guess that's it. I went back to the University of Oregon and spent four years and graduated.

01-00:31:29  
Linda: And met Helen.

01-00:31:32  
Gibson: And then I met my first wife in college.

01-00:31:39  
Linda: The mother of your children.

01-00:31:38  
Gibson: We got married, had three kids. And then we got a divorce.

01-00:31:48  
Linda: Well, before the divorce you were in Egypt. You had a Fulbright.

01-00:31:54  
Gibson: Oh, yeah. What, they designated me a Fulbright professor.

01-00:32:06  
Henry: A Fulbright professor upon graduation from college?

01-00:32:09  
Gibson: Huh-huh. No.

01-00:32:09  
Henry: Huh.

01-00:32:12  
Gibson: And I had a full family, three kids. So we lived for a year in Egypt with me fulfilling my role as a professor over there. Probably the best year of my life.

01-00:32:32  
Henry: Oh, yeah?

01-00:32:34  
Gibson: Outstanding. Well, it was so new and so different and the people were friendly. And I had no political differences and it was just great. It'd be fun to relive those years because we had such a good time.

01-00:32:55  
Henry: And your job was to do what?

01-00:32:58  
Gibson: What in the—

01-00:32:59  
Henry: As a Fulbright professor what were you doing? What were you teaching?

01-00:33:04  
Linda: English.

01-00:33:07  
Gibson: What was I teaching?

01-00:33:07  
Linda: English. Yeah.

01-00:33:10  
Gibson: Yeah, I guess just the basic—

01-00:33:15  
Henry: Right, basic curriculum.

01-00:33:16  
Gibson: Yeah, but I could only teach graduate students because they had to be taught in English, and undergraduate were all taught in Arabic and I didn't know any Arabic. But boy, that was a fabulous year in my life. Really was. I climbed the Great Pyramid, sat on top. The following weekend I took my three kids up. And my youngest was six. And the blocks were about three feet high.

01-00:33:51  
Henry: Wow, how about that.

01-00:33:53  
Gibson: Damn. When I got to the top I was pooped, but I didn't have any trouble convincing them to sit because there was a huge block on top for us to just sit and look around and relax. "Remember that you'll never get a chance to come up here again and these will be great stories to tell your friends when you get back home," and all that. So that was good.

01-00:34:26  
Henry: They say that few things expand the mind more than being overseas, being away what you're used to. Being overseas and—

01-00:34:33  
Gibson: Yeah.

- 01-00:34:33  
Henry: —yeah. Did you find that was true?
- 01-00:34:36  
Gibson: Yeah. That was one of them. What else, Linda? I guess that was it. That what?
- 01-00:34:50  
Linda: Oh, I have little side stories but I'm not sure—
- 01-00:34:54  
Gibson: What?
- 01-00:34:55  
Linda: I said there's a lot of wonderful stories you told me about Egypt and the family and the culture, your traveling experience.
- 01-00:35:08  
Gibson: We lived like kings in Egypt. With this Fulbright they gave me far more money than I needed. And so I did a lot of traveling around the Middle East. Been to places that obviously I would have never had the opportunity to go to otherwise. Egyptian families. I remember one time we were out with an Egyptian family and we were out in a field playing—what do they—it was like soccer only they didn't call it soccer. And the old man, the father of my friend who was out there playing with us, fell and broke his leg. And breaking a leg out there—
- 01-00:36:14  
Henry: Was serious business.
- 01-00:36:14  
Gibson: —was serious. Yeah. You didn't call an ambulance and all that stuff.
- 01-00:36:28  
Henry: Yeah. When you were at Oregon there weren't many black students when you went there, right?
- 01-00:36:33  
Gibson: No. Just one. As I arrived, Bobby Reynolds, and he was a star football player, a halfback, and he and I became good friends. But he didn't stay around for a full year. They drafted him. And they let me stay for a year before I got drafted.
- 01-00:37:03  
Henry: And when you came back and got your degree, what did you study? What did you major in?
- 01-00:37:07  
Gibson: Chemistry.
- 01-00:37:08  
Henry: Chemistry?

01-00:37:08  
Gibson: Yeah.

01-00:37:10  
Henry: And because you were still thinking about becoming a doctor, yeah?

01-00:37:12  
Gibson: Yeah.

01-00:37:13  
Henry: And why didn't you go on into the medical field?

01-00:37:18  
Gibson: I don't know. The closer I got to it the less charming it was when I heard stories about being a doctor and I didn't want to go through that training process, the long—

01-00:37:30  
Henry: The long—

01-00:37:31  
Gibson: Yeah, they spent more time, a couple more years. Yeah. I wasn't interested in doing that. I wanted to get back to living.

01-00:37:43  
Henry: Right. So how did you happen upon pharmacy as a field?

01-00:37:52  
Gibson: How did I—

01-00:37:53  
Linda: You were a lab tech at UC.

01-00:37:56  
Gibson: What?

01-00:37:55  
Linda: You were a lab tech at UC. You didn't like that. You met, was it Jere Goyan's brother?

01-00:38:07  
Gibson: You'll have to forgive me, the memory—

01-00:38:13  
Henry: I understand.

01-00:38:15  
Gibson: At ninety years I—it's embarrassing, but it's not embarrassing, it's just that that's the way it is.

01-00:38:22  
Linda: That's just the way—

01-00:38:22  
Henry: Exactly. Exactly right.

01-00:38:25  
Gibson: Yeah.

01-00:38:25  
Henry: Yeah.

01-00:38:28  
Gibson: But what were you saying, Linda?

01-00:38:28  
Linda: How you were a lab tech at UCSF and you didn't want to be a lab tech anymore and so you were talking to other people and I believe it was—not Jere Goyan? His brother? Anyway, your friend introduced you to him and then you decided to go to pharmacy school at UCSF and then you pursued it.

01-00:39:07  
Gibson: Yeah, because I didn't have to chase around. He said, "If you'll go to pharmacy school you're in right now." I was the only black around.

01-00:39:19  
Henry: And the origin of this was you got a job as a pharmacist at UCSF and you met a man named Uncle Frank, Frank Goyan?

01-00:39:29  
Gibson: Goyan.

01-00:39:30  
Henry: Goyan. Right. And he was instrumental in inspiring you to go to pharmacy school? Is that correct?

01-00:39:37  
Gibson: No.

01-00:39:38  
Henry: No?

01-00:39:35  
Linda: Then who opened the door there? Somebody opened the door to you to go to pharmacy school. You didn't apply. You didn't have to.

01-00:39:43  
Gibson: That's right.

01-00:39:45  
Linda: You were on your lunch hour when you went for the interview.

01-00:39:48  
Gibson: Because I had to work in the daytime. I couldn't go to his class in the daytime. So Frank Goyan, Uncle Frank held classes after nine o'clock for me.

01-00:40:15

Henry: Just for you?

01-00:40:16

Gibson: He says, "Can you make it at nine o'clock?" Yeah so we went and started at 9:00. Nine to midnight. And we'd have a break at 10:30 and he'd take me down the cafeteria, buy me ice cream and then we'd go back for the last hour. He was a good guy.

01-00:40:38

Henry: Why would he go through all of that for you?

01-00:40:42

Gibson: Oh, he liked me. I don't know why.

01-00:40:50

Linda: He was just that kind of a person.

01-00:40:53

Henry: That's great.

01-00:40:54

Gibson: Well, yeah and he knew that I couldn't make it in the daytime. And he was a very generous guy. He was the professor that would put a checkbook on his desk and just leave it there. And if you need money, write yourself a check.

01-00:41:14

Henry: Wow.

01-00:41:14

Gibson: He had signed checks in the checkbook.

01-00:41:16

Henry: Wow.

01-00:41:19

Gibson: And kids did it, but he claims he was never stiffed by anybody. They always paid him back.

01-00:41:26

Henry: Wow.

01-00:41:29

Gibson: I thought that was a neat thing. I'd like to be able to do that someday. But I was never in that kind of a position, I don't think. Anyhow, he was good.

01-00:41:43

Henry: How many years was the Pharm.D.?

01-00:41:47

Gibson: Well, I got a bachelor's degree in pharmacy. And then I went back for four more years and got the Pharm.D. And I was one of the first. Why did I do it?

01-00:42:01

Henry: Yeah.

01-00:42:01

Gibson: Because I thought I needed to. And I also thought it would give me an advantage since I would be the only black around with a Pharm.D., which I was for some time.

01-00:42:22

Henry: And when you envisioned yourself with this Pharm.D., did you envision yourself joining a faculty at a university or—

01-00:42:28

Gibson: Yes.

01-00:42:28

Henry: —owning a series of pharmacies or being an entrepreneur?

01-00:42:33

Gibson: Never. Never was interested in the practitioner side. I just wanted to just move on, that's all.

01-00:42:51

Henry: Right. Can you tell me the difference between pharmacology and pharmacy?

01-00:42:59

Gibson: Pharmacology is the study of a discipline.

01-00:43:02

Henry: Study of a discipline.

01-00:43:06

Gibson: Pharmacy is a practice more than a discipline.

01-00:43:16

Henry: Right. So when you got your Pharm.D., did UCSF come to you and ask you to join the faculty?

01-00:43:26

Gibson: Well, shit, I don't know what happened, I don't know. I just don't remember. I know they wanted me to stay. And the chief pharmacist, Jerry Yalon, who I wanted to work for at the hospital pharmacy took me up to see the dean. And we discussed what I wanted to do, and what I was capable of doing. And so he says, "Well, come on, we'll give you a try." And that was it. And then I went on, what, associate dean and everything else in the school. Just stuck around for years.

01-00:44:28

Henry: Yeah. And you lived in Novato at some point?

01-00:44:34

Gibson: Yeah. I lived in Mill Valley, and then in Novato, and then in Petaluma.

01-00:44:45  
Henry: So you've been a commuter for some time?

01-00:44:47  
Gibson: I've been what?

01-00:44:47  
Henry: A commuter.

01-00:44:49  
Gibson: Yeah. Only that was no problem.

01-00:44:53  
Henry: No?

01-00:44:53  
Gibson: The university had a commuter bus.

01-00:44:58  
Henry: Oh, okay.

01-00:44:59  
Gibson: So all I had to do was drive down to the highway and park my car and get on the bus.

01-00:45:05  
Henry: Right, okay. And Linda is your third wife. Who was your second wife and how long did that marriage last?

01-00:45:10  
Gibson: My second wife was a very fragile diabetic and she died from diabetes.

01-00:45:19  
Henry: Oh, that's a shame.

01-00:45:21  
Gibson: Yeah, and my first wife we got a divorce after three kids. After three kids and 20 years of marriage. But, like I tell people, that happens.

01-00:45:37  
Henry: Yeah. And what are your kids doing now?

01-00:45:41  
Gibson: Well, I have a son that worked for Comcast and he got fired and they gave him severance pay and then re-hired him. And right now he's in—

01-00:45:41  
Linda: Rome.

01-00:46:09  
Gibson: Huh?

01-00:46:09  
Linda: No, Barcelona. They're coming back. They've been traveling for six months.

01-00:46:17  
Henry: That's nice. That's a good deal.

01-00:46:19  
Gibson: Yeah, that was a good deal.

01-00:46:23  
Linda: And your other son?]

01-00:46:26  
Gibson: Huh?

01-00:44:29  
Henry: Your other children?

01-00:46:29  
Linda: Todd?

01-00:44:30  
Gibson: Oh, I have son, Todd, that lives out in Dominica, small island out in the Caribbean. And he's a Jehovah's Witness.

01-00:46:42  
Henry: Oh, okay.

01-00:46:43  
Gibson: And people ask me if I'm a Witness. I tell them hell no, I didn't even see the accident. I hope you're not a Witness.

01-00:46:57  
Linda: And if you are, please don't be offended.

01-00:46:55  
Henry: [laughter] Are the Jehovahs what brought him out to the Dominica?

01-00:47:04  
Linda: Yes.

01-00:47:05  
Gibson: Yes.

01-00:47:05  
Henry: Okay.

01-00:47:09  
Gibson: Yeah, he got hooked up with that. He and his brother, when my wife and I were having troubles and I went back to Washington, DC, and took a post for a year with the Feds. What happened when I came back?

01-00:47:35

Henry: They were born again, huh?

01-00:47:37

Linda: They were born again. Jehovah's Witnesses, the two boys. And Dana?

01-00:47:42

Gibson: Yeah. My daughter wasn't. My three kids; my daughter was the oldest, and then the two boys. My daughter never did become a Witness. My two boys became Witnesses, and the oldest of the two quit. And he's very negative about them. So he must have had a bad experience with them. And he's a bright kid.

01-00:48:16

Henry: Yeah. And Dana is your daughter?

01-00:48:20

Gibson: Yes.

01-00:48:21

Henry: And where is she now?

01-00:48:22

Gibson: She lives in here in Petaluma. And she works for the city of San Anselmo. I don't know. She is a city planner in recreation. Anyhow she's been working for them for some time.

01-00:48:43

Henry: Yeah. Yeah. When you think about all of the hats you have worn and the jobs you have done, from soldier, to student, to administrator, to teacher, to educator, to government worker, which one is the center of what you have been? An educator?

01-00:49:03

Gibson: Yeah, by far.

01-00:49:05

Henry: Yeah. What has been most fulfilling about your life as an educator?

01-00:49:10

Gibson: Being around students. It's always lively, always positive thoughts going on, inquiries, yeah. If students weren't a part of my life I don't think I'd have had nearly the treasure of a life as I've had. Just enjoyed it. Enjoyed them.

01-00:49:44

Henry: And when you look back and see your influence on them you must be very proud to see their success, yes?

01-00:49:49

Gibson: Yeah, but I don't look at it proudly. I think they took advantage of what I had to offer. Yeah, I'm pleased with the progress they've made. The advances that

they've made and all of that. And I've had a good life. I've been the top dog in my profession. That's something I know I will smile about, look back at.

01-00:50:29

Henry: You've also made it an important part of your mission as an educator as being the first African-American to earn the Pharm.D. at UCSF. You made it a point, a mission, to draw in more minority students. Why was this important to you?

01-00:50:47

Gibson: Because there weren't any around and I felt that if you wanted to enjoy the fruits of your—what's the word? Fruits of your—

01-00:51:04

Henry: Your labor?

01-00:51:05

Gibson: Yeah. I can't find the right word but, ah. Now I've forgotten what I was talking about.

01-00:51:23

Henry: You're talking about why it was so important to bring in minority students, to bring them into the academy as students and as professors to diversify the environment. Why was that critically important to you?

01-00:51:40

Gibson: Who used to say that? Because I always thought they needed a piece of the pie. And I always tried my best to make sure that somewhere along the line we got a piece of the pie. And I was known for that. Everybody in the profession and even when I got to the so-called top of the profession. Everybody recognized what I was trying to do and had done. Opened the door for an awful lot of people which I'm terribly proud of.

01-00:52:38

Henry: Where are some of your former students today? And what are they doing? Do you know?

01-00:52:43

Gibson: Well, where do I start, Linda?

01-00:52:47

Linda: Well, let's see.

01-00:52:50

Gibson: Huh?

01-00:52:50

Linda: Wilma? Was she one of your students?

- 01-00:52:54  
Gibson: Yeah. Oh, a lot of them have been in a very active in regional and state professional politics. A lot of them have been leaders.
- 01-00:53:14  
Henry: And you're not talking just pharmacy. You're going into social and political influence, right?
- 01-00:53:19  
Gibson: Yes, that's right. Yeah. Let's see. Who do I recognize, Linda that's—
- 01-00:52:33  
Linda: That's hard to—yeah.
- 01-00:52:33  
Gibson: —out there? Like LB?
- 01-00:53:40  
Linda: Yeah, LB Brown.
- 01-00:53:43  
Gibson: Lawrence Brown who is now—
- 01-00:53:46  
Linda: APhA president.
- 01-00:53:48  
Gibson: Teaches at—
- 01-00:53:50  
Linda: Irvine?
- 01-00:45:41  
Gibson: What?
- 01-00:53:52  
Linda: Irvine? Does he teach at Irvine?
- 01-00:53:55  
Gibson: No, not Irvine. That other school down there by San Luis Obispo. But anyhow, I think I've opened the door to an awful lot of students and I'm proud of that.
- 01-00:54:10  
Henry: Yeah. There's a man named Ted Tong who you consider your number one favorite student. Who was Ted Tong?
- 01-00:54:17  
Gibson: Just a delightful older man now. But as a young man he was not only what the most socially active and bright but academically probably the brightest student I ever had. And my best friend in pharmacy. Linda thinks a lot of him too.

01-00:54:57  
Linda: Yeah.

01-00:54:56  
Gibson: Is that right?

01-00:54:58  
Linda: He thinks a lot of you. Yeah. A lot of you.

01-00:55:04  
Henry: Where is he now?

01-00:55:09  
Linda: He still is in—

01-00:55:13  
Gibson: Damn, he's here in the Bay Area.

01-00:55:16  
Linda: Oh, is he?

01-00:55:15  
Gibson: No, he's not. He's at Arizona. Yeah. God, my memory. Yeah, he's associate dean at the University of Arizona, School of Pharmacy.

01-00:55:31  
Henry: I see.

01-00:55:32  
Gibson: So been there for years. Doesn't want to be dean. Likes what he's doing as the associate dean. He'd be a good dean, but I just don't think he wants the political headaches.

01-00:55:53  
Henry: Yeah, I know. I could understand that [laughter]. I can understand. And there was a man named Eddie Boyd at Michigan.

01-00:56:02  
Gibson: Yeah, Eddie Boyd was the first what, black student that I managed to open a door for, I guess. I was a good personal friend with the dean of pharmacy at the University of Michigan and I told him he ought to hire Eddie. Eddie was a black guy from the South. His diction wasn't very good. You recognize it, that's where he's from. But one of the brightest, smartest, likeable guys you ever want to know. So I told the dean at Michigan and he hired him. And Eddie I think just retired as a faculty member at Michigan. So it was a good relationship for both of them. Both for Eddie and for him, Ara Paul, the dean.

01-00:57:13  
Henry: Well, good. And there was a woman you hired or you recruited to come to UCSF named Sharon Youmans.

01-00:57:21  
Gibson: Yeah.

01-00:57:21  
Henry: And she became the vice dean of the School of Pharmacy?

01-00:57:25  
Gibson: She's there now.

01-00:57:25  
Henry: She's there now. Yeah.

01-00:57:30  
Gibson: Yeah, she was wondering out there with a bachelor's degree and didn't know what to do. I don't remember how I first—it'll come to me later, I'm sure—how I first met her. Do you remember?

01-00:57:48  
Linda: No.

01-00:57:50  
Gibson: No. Not really.

01-00:57:52  
Linda: Sorry.

01-00:57:52  
Gibson: I just liked her personality and I thought she was a bright young lady, and that she's going somewhere and if she's going to go somewhere she's going to need some help. So let's give her a hand. She's good. She's now a vice dean at the school.

01-00:58:19  
Henry: So your legacy lives on.

01-00:58:21  
Gibson: Yeah. My legacy, yeah.

01-00:58:24  
Henry: Well, that's great. That's great. When you first became a teacher, was it a difficult thing for you to learn how to be a good teacher?

01-00:58:34  
Gibson: No.

01-00:58:34  
Henry: It came naturally?

01-00:58:36  
Gibson: I guess. I didn't have any trouble. Oh, it took me awhile to make notes so that when it came around again I wouldn't have to start from scratch. Not only has

it been fun, it's been the soul of my life really. Forgive me, my dear but I'm speaking academically.

01-00:59:10

Linda: Of course.

01-00:59:12

Henry: And where did you two meet?

01-00:59:18

Gibson: She followed me. Jesus I couldn't get rid of her.

01-00:59:20

Linda: He left the crackers and I just started following him. We both worked for the university at the time and Bob was at the Alumni House. You were giving a little talk.

01-00:59:27

Gibson: Yeah, I was giving a speech from a podium. And she walked into the back of the back of the room and she had long black hair and had on a red suit and when she walked in I lost my place. And so I finally got somebody to introduce us. And once we were introduced, I couldn't get rid of her.

01-01:00:13

Henry: And this was twenty years ago?

01-01:00:13

Linda: Twenty-six years ago.

01-01:00:16

Henry: Twenty-six years ago. Twenty-six.

01-01:00:21

Linda: The longest run, huh? I said am I the longest run in wives? The second wife was thirteen years? Aurora? You and Aurora were married thirteen years before she was—

01-01:00:33

Gibson: Yeah, she passed away. My first wife was 20 years.

01-01:00:38

Linda: Yeah. See, look it there.

01-01:00:41

Gibson: And then you. And we've married how long?

01-01:00:46

Linda: We've been married twenty-two years. We've been a couple twenty-six years.

01-01:00:50

Gibson: If you add that up you understand why I'm ninety.

01-01:00:54  
Henry: That's right. [laughter]

01-01:00:58  
Linda: And you have two other girls from your second marriage. And one daughter from me. So you have—

01-01:01:09  
Gibson: Six kids.

01-01:01:09  
Henry: You have six kids. I thought it was just three? What about the other three?

01-01:01:13  
Gibson: Three original.

01-01:01:14  
Henry: Oh, okay.

01-01:01:15  
Linda: Three original.

01-01:01:15  
Gibson: And then three more by marriage.

01-01:01:19  
Henry: Oh, okay. All right. What is your stepdaughter doing?

01-01:01:24  
Linda: Cassandra was working for Medtronics, administrator something or another. Medtronics. And Kim, she works for UCSF in pharmacy. And Debbie, she lives in Bend, Oregon and she is an autistic teacher.

01-01:01:48  
Gibson: Autistic.

01-01:01:46  
Linda: Autistic, yeah.

01-01:01:47  
Gibson: She's in some program where she teaches kids with autism.

01-01:01:56  
Henry: Okay, if we can get back to teaching. There was an anecdote I heard about with a man named Bob Day. You were teaching a class together. What happened?

01-01:02:04  
Gibson: [laughter] When sex education first came out—

01-01:02:15  
Henry: And this is at UCSF?

01-01:02:17  
Gibson: Yeah. So he taught the first and probably well, at least the only class of that kind since then. So what Bob did was get all the students in the class, and he'd get in front of them and take off all his clothes.

01-01:02:42  
Henry: He'd take off all his clothes?

01-01:02:42  
Linda: He taught in the nude.

01-01:02:44  
Gibson: Yeah.

01-01:02:45  
Henry: He taught sex education in the nude?

01-01:02:47  
Gibson: That's right.

01-01:02:48  
Henry: And you co-taught this class?

01-01:02:49  
Gibson: Yeah [laughter].

01-01:02:51  
Henry: So what did you do? Were you surprised?

01-01:02:55  
Gibson: I was beside him with my clothes on. [laughter] Yeah, I didn't want to do that. But he's a very innovative guy, very bright guy, smart guy. You know Bob Day?

01-01:03:08  
Henry: No.

01-01:03:09  
Gibson: Never heard? One of the brightest guys you'll ever meet, wants to have fun.

01-01:03:20  
Henry: Well, I suspect it was a popular class?

01-01:03:23  
Gibson: Pardon?

01-01:03:23  
Henry: I suspect it was a popular class, the sex ed class?

01-01:03:25  
Gibson: [laughter] With the males.

01-01:03:31  
Henry: And then there was a man named Milt Nenneman.

01-01:03:37  
Gibson: Oh, yeah. That was my old buddy from pharmacy school. We met first year, first day and became good friends. He had an airplane and so he says, "You can use my plane to learn to fly if you buy half of it after you get your license." Oh, I said, "Okay." So I learned to fly and bought half the airplane and Milt got sick and decided he wasn't going to fly anymore. And he died shortly after but he gave me the airplane and I had that airplane for, Jesus, a long time. Flew it all over the United States. Flying, that's something I miss.

01-01:04:41  
Henry: Was it a Cessna?

01-01:04:44  
Gibson: Yeah, single-engine, four—

01-01:04:45  
Henry: Single-engine Cessna.

01-01:04:45  
Gibson: —passenger—

01-01:04:48  
Henry: Wow.

01-01:04:48  
Gibson: —182.

01-01:04:49  
Henry: Huh. And what was this flying pharmacist?

01-01:04:55  
Gibson: We had a club of pharmacists who were pilots. So we formed a club and had meetings somewhere to take care of your what, your CE, continuing education responsibilities, and a chance to fly somewhere, some destination. And just meet and shoot the breeze and have dinner and stay overnight and fly back out the next morning.

01-01:05:33  
Henry: So it wasn't like a going to Africa and treating the poor? It was a club. A club pharmacist?

01-01:05:40  
Gibson: Yeah, that's right. Yeah.

01-01:15:42  
Henry: Yeah. Huh. And Troy Daniels?

01-01:05:50  
Gibson: He was the dean.

01-01:05:51  
Henry: The dean of the school of pharmacy?

01-01:05:53  
Gibson: Yeah.

01-01:05:53  
Henry: Okay.

01-01:05:57  
Gibson: And he wasn't a pharmacist. He was a PhD. And really, really was a highly recognized academician and promoter of pharmacy. He was a good guy. Okay what else have I left out?

01-01:06:29  
Linda: Oh, well, there's so many stories. We're going to have to—

01-01:06:34  
Gibson: What's that?

01-01:06:34  
Linda: I said there's so many wonderful stories of your life.

01-01:06:39  
Gibson: Oh.

01-01:06:40  
Henry: Yeah, and we can pick it up again next time because we've gone over an hour now.

01-01:06:44  
Gibson: Oh, okay.

01-01:06:46  
Henry: This was very good. This was very good. And we'll pick it up next time with your years at UCSF as an educator and an administrator, and your travels overseas to give papers.

01-01:06:59  
Gibson: Okay.

01-01:07:00  
Henry: Okay?

01-01:07:01  
Gibson: Absolutely, okay. Yeah, I'm enjoying this.

01-01:07:05  
Henry: Good, I'm glad.

01-01:07:06  
Gibson: It brings back memories.

01-01:07:13

Henry: Good, thank you. Thank you very much.

01-01:07:14

Gibson: Oh, no, thank you.

[End Audio File 1]

Interview #2 October 12, 2015  
Audio File 2

02-00:00:28

Henry: Today is Monday, October 12, 2015. My name is Neil Henry, and I'm sitting with Dr. Robert 'Bob' Gibson at his home in Petaluma, California. Dr. Gibson has served in a number of capacities at the University of California San Francisco, as associate vice-chancellor, registrar, an admissions officer and lecturer emeritus. He has also served as associate dean of both student and professional affairs, and as director Pharmaceutical Technology Laboratory in the School of Pharmacy at UCSF [University of California, San Francisco]. He has also been a community and hospital practitioner. This is the second of two sessions with Dr. Gibson in which I will ask him to recollect his life and times.

Last time, we discussed your upbringing in the Pacific Northwest in Tacoma and the influence of your father and grandmothers on your early life, your education in the Tacoma public schools, and your service in the Army during World War II where in Texas you first encountered hardcore racial segregation. We also touched on your entry into pharmacy as a field of study and your experiences as a teacher at UCSF. I'd like to continue with education as a theme today along with your passion for diversity as a mission in your life, your challenges as an educational administrator and how deeply you have valued your life as a teacher.

First of all, could you please elaborate on the kinds of joys you've gotten from teaching, and recall some of your favorite students over the years?

02-00:01:52

Gibson: That's easy. My favorite student over the years and by far an outstanding student in the pharmacy program was Ted Tong, Dr. Ted Tong. Ted has gone on. No, he's associate dean at the University of Arizona, School of Pharmacy. Ted's a magnificent, I would say young man yet and really a fellow that I'm extremely fond of.

02-00:02:32

Henry: Did he come from the Bay Area, do you know?

02-00:02:34

Gibson: Yes.

02-00:02:33

Henry: He did?

02-00:02:34

Gibson: He was a former student of mine in the school and he is a native San Franciscan.

02-00:02:45  
Henry: Native San Franciscan?

02-00:02:46  
Gibson: A native San Franciscan.

02-00:02:49  
Henry: Is he Asian?

02-00:02:50  
Gibson: Yes.

02-00:02:52  
Henry: Did he grow up in San Francisco, do you know?

02-00:02:54  
Gibson: I believe he did, yeah.

02-00:02:55  
Henry: Okay. But he was a responsive student and you had a really good working relationship with him?

02-00:03:02  
Gibson: Yes, I was very fond of Ted. He was bright, articulate, passionate and sensitive. I don't know what else I can say except I love him.

02-00:03:17  
Henry: Yeah. And the joys of teaching. What joys from teaching did you get as a field, as a career? What specific joys was involved in teaching?

02-00:03:25  
Gibson: Well, just being in contact with the younger people I think helped make me feel younger, stay younger. Oh, Ted was a great part of that. Another good friend of mine that I should mention was Dennis Adair. And Dennis and I are old friends from way back and is a pharmacist. He went on and got a PhD, as well. And his wife is a PhD as well but not from UCSF.

02-00:04:10  
Henry: Right. What did your students go into when they got their degrees in pharmacy? Did they all go into education or—

02-00:04:18  
Gibson: No.

02-00:04:18  
Henry: —did they go into other things?

02-00:04:18  
Gibson: Early ages when I was teaching they went into practice.

02-00:04:26  
Henry: They became pharmacists?

02-00:04:26  
Gibson: Yes. And a lot of them just didn't want the Pharm.D. degree. They didn't sign up for that. They had a choice at the beginning.

02-00:04:38  
Henry: What were the choices? Pharm.D. and what?

02-00:04:39  
Gibson: And a bachelors.

02-00:04:41  
Henry: And a bachelors. And with the bachelors they could practice?

02-00:04:43  
Gibson: Yeah.

02-00:04:44  
Henry: I see.

02-00:04:45  
Gibson: Bachelor's was the old standard—

02-00:04:47  
Henry: I see.

02-00:04:47  
Gibson: —access to pharmacy.

02-00:04:51  
Henry: And Pharm.D. meant that they were essentially doctorates of their field, right?

02-00:04:56  
Gibson: Yeah. The program changed. The academic program changed and at the end of that academic program you received the doctor of pharmacy.

02-00:05:07  
Henry: I see. And how big of a graduating class was it at its height, the program? How many did you graduate every year?

02-00:05:16  
Gibson: Around seventy.

02-00:05:18  
Henry: Seventy. That's pretty good.

02-00:05:21  
Gibson: Yeah.

02-00:05:23  
Henry: And some of them became entrepreneurs of their own—

02-00:05:25  
Gibson: Oh, yeah.

02-00:05:25

Henry: —of their own careers, yeah?

02-00:05:26

Gibson: Yep. And some of them became administrators, hospital administrators, pharmacy program administrator. The field just opened up wide once you get the degree.

02-00:05:41

Henry: Yeah. Did you ever have the experience of being in the middle of nowhere or somewhere in the world and you encountered your student behind the counter of a pharmacy, or anything like that?

02-00:05:49

Gibson: No. No. I do remember as a practitioner I was in Sausalito working at the pharmacy downtown on the main drag and somebody walked up to me and said, "Hi." And it was a very close high school friend [laughter].

02-00:06:21

Henry: From Tacoma?

02-00:06:21

Gibson: Yeah.

02-00:06:23

Henry: That's great.

02-00:06:25

Gibson: I was really surprised. That was fun.

02-00:06:26

Henry: Yeah, that's great. I always love that when it happens. Did you have any role models in your career as an educator? Any role models whose paths you admired and you wanted to follow?

02-00:06:38

Gibson: Very much so. One was the dean of the school, Jere Goyan. Not only was he a bright guy and an articulate guy and a very, very, very smart guy, he was also passionate in my mind about enlarging the diversity of the profession. He worked on me hard to help him do that. He died. Unfortunately, poor Jere died of Alzheimer's. He didn't know what was going on the last few days of his life unfortunately, because he was such a bright, smart guy.

02-00:07:31

Henry: And he was dean back in the sixties?

02-00:07:34

Gibson: Yes.

02-00:07:35  
Henry: In the early sixties, right. So he was ahead of his time as far as being on the diversity bandwagon.

02-00:07:42  
Gibson: Oh, yeah, he was way ahead of the game. And he was looked up to as the number one dean in the country. And that's because not only was he bright and articulate, but he was very passionate and he let people know exactly how he felt about anything. And that's refreshing, really.

02-00:08:06  
Henry: Yeah, yeah. You don't find that a lot in the field?

02-00:08:11  
Gibson: No.

02-00:08:11  
Henry: What specific courses did you specialize in in your teaching?

02-00:08:17  
Gibson: I don't know, I can't find the word for it. It was the pharmaceutical technology. The making of drugs and that was my interest. Far more than the practice and how it effects people. It was a—

02-00:08:45  
Henry: Oops.

02-00:08:47  
Gibson: —technology of being there.

02-00:08:51  
Henry: You got it? Here, I'll fix the microphone. You're missing the collar. That ought to work. Okay.

02-00:09:10  
Gibson: I'll try to avoid trying to stroke my chin like—

02-00:09:14  
Henry: [laughter] Like the wise man.

02-00:09:19  
Gibson: —the sage. Yeah.

02-00:09:21  
Henry: So the technology of pharmacy. That must have changed during your career, yeah?

02-00:09:22  
Gibson: Yeah.

02-00:09:28  
Henry: The technology. How did you keep pace with the changing technology?

02-00:09:29  
Gibson: Damn if I know. It just fascinated me. It interested me. And so I tried to stay on top of it. And I had a laboratory of my own that I ran and it was a technology laboratory.

02-00:09:51  
Henry: You pulled the microphone off again. I wonder if there's somewhere else I can put it.

02-00:10:05  
Gibson: Yeah, down there?

02-00:10:09  
Henry: There you go. You had a lab, huh?

02-00:10:11  
Gibson: Yeah.

02-00:10:11  
Henry: Try not to pull on the cord.

02-00:10:14  
Gibson: Okay. Yeah, I had a pharmaceutical technology laboratory. It was a laboratory to assist the school in a lot of ways in addition to teaching.

02-00:10:31  
Henry: I see. Yeah. There's a lot of talk these days about the costs of drugs and how hard it is to maintain pace for the American consumer with the cost of drugs skyrocketing. Do you have any observations about that?

02-00:10:46  
Gibson: Yeah, I do but I don't know exactly how to express it. The cost of drugs are just, that's the marketing people that have taken over that part of the—

02-00:11:12  
Henry: Right. Exactly. Yeah.

02-00:11:12  
Gibson: And drugs for the most part are not difficult to make but not easy. And you really have to have a clue to what you want to do and find a proper—what chemical item that would fit that, then build that into a drug. I'm sorry, I lost track. What were you saying?

02-00:11:56  
Henry: That's okay. We were talking about the price of drugs.

02-00:11:59  
Gibson: Oh.

02-00:00:00

Henry: And how difficult it is for the American consumer to keep pace with the skyrocketing costs of drugs. But you sort of answered it. You said it's just sort of the marketers have taken over.

02-00:12:11

Gibson: That's right. Yeah, no doubt about that in my mind. When you've been in the business of making drugs for a long time you know what the costs are.

02-00:12:30

Henry: The challenges of being an administrator I suspect are different from your role as an educator? What skills does it take to be an effective and productive administrator and do you recall any specific challengers you've faced in your time as vice chancellor, associate dean, and director?

02-00:12:48

Gibson: Not really. The administration above me and below me were really quite cooperative. If I said something and I could make a substantial argument for that and people would accept it and challenge it in their own right and see if they could personally agree with me. So I had an excellent, excellent group of people surrounding me to help me think and most of them are the students more so than the faculty. It still seemed to always be out front on the cutting edge anyhow.

02-00:13:48

Henry: So did the school experience any turmoil in the sixties like campuses everywhere else in the country? Protesting this and that or was it pretty quiet at the School of Pharmacy?

02-00:13:59

Gibson: It was pretty quiet. It's a professional school and the goals are really solid out there once you get to it. You don't want to mess up the path to that goal.

02-00:14:15

Henry: Yeah. Did the number of African American students ever grow to a sufficient cadre where they were able to form a student union or a student group of any kind?

02-00:14:26

Gibson: No, I was the one that was the recruiter for African Americans. And if we got seven or eight in a class that was pretty—

02-00:14:38

Henry: That was good, huh?

02-00:14:39

Gibson: Yeah, that was substantial. And you look around and see, back then see the diversity in the profession and you knew something had to be done. And thank God Jere Goyan, who was the dean, recognized that and he tried to do something both nationally and internationally. He was a leader. He was

considered the number one dean in the country by all the other deans. So anything he did the others quickly followed. And I was the first black to be appointed a dean in any of the schools anywhere. And it wasn't long after that you saw some others being appointed in the other schools.

02-00:15:34

Henry: Yeah, yeah. I suspect one of the challenges with trying to recruit students to the School of Pharmacy was that if you're a black kid who's talented, say growing up in the inner city and had a bright head on his or her shoulders and wants a career in something, pharmacy isn't the first thing that comes to mind.

02-00:15:51

Gibson: That's right.

02-00:15:51

Henry: It's probably law or education or—

02-00:15:54

Gibson: Medicine.

02-00:15:54

Henry: —medicine, right?

02-00:15:55

Gibson: Yeah.

02-00:15:55

Henry: So it took some education into the minds of students who are approaching applying to pharmacy to get them interested, yeah?

02-00:16:04

Gibson: Yeah. And a lot of them had interests in pharmacy by having had jobs working in pharmacies as kids as they went through school. And that's mostly what turned most of them on into the profession, what they wanted to do, was the experience they had as an employee in somebody's store.

02-00:16:32

Henry: Right, exactly. Yeah. And do you have any favorite African American students or any successful African American students? Do you know what they're doing today?

02-00:16:40

Gibson: Oh, sure. Eddie Boyd was the first and immediately when he graduated he was signed as a faculty member at the University of Michigan. And the dean at the University of Michigan and I were good friends and I told him about Eddie Boyd and he signed him right away and then it began to happen at all the schools.

02-00:17:22

Henry: Is Eddie Boyd still at Michigan?

02-00:17:24  
Gibson: He's retired now, yeah.

02-00:17:26  
Henry: Oh, okay. Yeah.

Well, that's good. That's great. Were there other African Americans?

02-00:17:58  
Gibson: Oh, yeah. A lot of them along the way. But there were a lot of Asians, as well. So unless I became a very close friend to a student for whatever reason, life just went on. But I did become close to several. And Ted Tong was one. Eddie Boyd.

02-00:18:34  
Henry: There were a lot?

02-00:18:34  
Gibson: Huh?

02-00:18:34  
Henry: There were a lot?

02-00:18:34  
Gibson: Yeah.

02-00:18:37  
Henry: Yeah. I expect that you recall Eugene Jorgensen. Were you close to him and what do you remember about the circumstances of his death?

02-00:18:45  
Gibson: Gene Jorgensen was going through a divorce and moved in. And I was a single man at the time. And he moved in with me.

02-00:18:56  
Henry: Oh, so you were close to him?

02-00:18:58  
Gibson: Yeah. He was sleeping in one day, not late, but I had gotten up to leave to go do my thing, my work, and somebody came in and shot him in bed.

02-00:19:22  
Henry: In your house? Where were you living at the time?

02-00:19:27  
Gibson: Corte Madera. Was it Corte Madera? Novato. Novato, I think. Yeah. Jesus, memories, trying to put it together. Yeah, Gene and I were good friends. Close friends.

02-00:19:48  
Henry: And he was an administrator at the school, yeah?

02-00:19:51  
Gibson: Yeah. I was convinced in my mind that Gene Jorgensen was on his way to becoming a Nobel laureate. He was that bright and the program that he supported and pushed, developed, would put him in that category I thought.

02-00:20:19  
Henry: Wow.

02-00:20:20  
Gibson: And then he was shot.

02-00:20:27  
Henry: Did you discover it or were the police on scene before you arrived or how were you made aware of his shooting?

02-00:20:35  
Gibson: I don't remember for sure. But I wasn't there. I was out. I was gone. No, no, I wasn't there. He had already gone home. He'd left. I said, "Gene, don't go. Stay here. You're safe here." He said, "No problem."

02-00:20:59  
Henry: He was going to go back to his wife?

02-00:21:03  
Gibson: He says, "We'll work it out." Shit. He was dead in twelve hours.

02-00:21:09  
Henry: So it happened at his house then with his wife there?

02-00:21:15  
Gibson: Yeah.

02-00:21:15  
Henry: I see.

02-00:21:15  
Gibson: She wasn't in the house, so she says.

02-00:21:19  
Henry: Yeah, yeah.

02-00:21:19  
Gibson: So. Who knows?

02-00:21:21  
Henry: Huh, it must have been a big loss for the school.

02-00:21:23  
Gibson: Oh, tremendous loss. Yeah. Tremendous loss to the profession. Tremendous loss to academia. He was recognized as a—

02-00:21:44  
Henry: As a leading mind in the field.

02-00:21:47  
Gibson: Yeah.

02-00:21:50  
Henry: Yeah. Back in the early days when you first arrived on campus both as a student and later as a teacher did you experience any bigotry or shall we say backwards attitudes among your colleagues or within the culture of the campus?

02-00:22:05  
Gibson: I was already on the campus as a pharmacist and the chief pharmacist said, "You ought to go onto academia," and he took me up to introduce me to the dean. And it was Troy Daniels. I don't know if you remember that word. And Troy Daniels didn't spend more than three minutes with me and asked me if I'd accept an offer as a faculty member.

02-00:22:43  
Henry: Is that right?

02-00:22:43  
Gibson: Yeah.

02-00:22:46  
Henry: Wow.

02-00:22:46  
Gibson: Well, Troy was interested in diversity. He wanted to expand it. And there weren't many guys like me around in all the schools. They were at the black schools. But there were four black schools of pharmacy.

02-00:23:05  
Henry: There were four black schools of pharmacy in the country?

02-00:23:07  
Gibson: Yeah.

02-00:23:09  
Henry: Howard was one, probably.

02-00:23:10  
Gibson: Yeah, Florida A&M.

02-00:23:13  
Henry: Florida A&M.

02-00:23:13  
Gibson: Texas Southern.

02-00:23:15  
Henry: Texas Southern.

02-00:23:17  
Gibson: And Xavier.

02-00:23:19  
Henry: Xavier in New Orleans, yeah. How about that. And who was this pharmacist who you were working for who introduced you to the dean? Do you remember?

02-00:23:27  
Gibson: Yeah. Jerry Yalon?

02-00:23:31  
Henry: That was a very good deed he did, huh?

02-00:23:34  
Gibson: The pharmacist that introduced me was the chief pharmacist in the hospital pharmacy. And who was it? Troy Daniels was a dean for a while. Oh, I don't know, several good people have come down the pike.

02-00:24:10  
Henry: You never encountered much discrimination on campus at all, yeah? No, it was the opposite. You were pushed toward opportunity?

02-00:24:17  
Gibson: Yeah. I may have faced discrimination on occasion but I've forgotten it. I just— That's part of life [laughter] when you're black and so I didn't make a big deal out of it.

02-00:24:45  
Henry: Yeah, my parents always said it's like water off a duck's back. You just got to get rid of it.

02-00:24:48  
Gibson: Yeah.

02-00:24:49  
Henry: And move on, right?

02-00:24:51  
Gibson: Right.

02-00:24:53  
Henry: Yeah, as opposed to what you encountered at Texas which was hardcore and in your face segregation and there was nothing that you could do about it except endure it, right?

02-00:24:59  
Gibson: That's right.

02-00:25:01  
Henry: Yeah. So diversity is critical to your view of the world and your passion for your career and your field. How has diversity at UCSF and pharmaceutical

field in particular improved over the past say thirty or forty years? Has it improved?

02-00:25:23

Gibson:

Oh, it has improved tremendously. I won't say there weren't any. There were very few blacks practicing outside of the four schools. As I said, I was one of the first hired by Jere Goyan as a dean, a faculty member. And since he was a leader in the country a lot of schools just fell right in line and started to do the same thing.

02-00:26:06

Henry:

And your passion for diversity. What are the benefits of diversity? I mean we can talk about theoretically what the benefits are. What are the real benefits of diversifying a field?

02-00:26:18

Gibson:

Well, just making sure that everybody in our society gets the opportunity to—how do I want to say it? Has the opportunity to—let me start that over again. Ask me the question once more, will you? I had something in my mind and I lost it.

02-00:26:47

Henry:

Diversity as a concept. We understand it. What are the benefits of diversity overall? Why should we embrace diversity? What are the benefits of it?

02-00:26:57

Gibson:

Because it improves welfare of society as a whole, and it doesn't leave anybody out.

02-00:27:06

Henry:

Right. Exactly.

02-00:27:08

Gibson:

And society fully started. Even when we were young, about it being left out, you had to fight to be included.

02-00:27:17

Henry:

Right. Exactly.

02-00:27:21

Gibson:

And I was always part of that. I just didn't tolerate. Didn't want to have somebody tell me where the hell I was to go and how I was to get there.

02-00:27:32

Henry:

Right. Or worse still somebody holding up his hand and saying, "No, you can't go there. No you can't."

02-00:27:37

Gibson:

Yeah, that's right.

- 02-00:27:42  
Henry: So you consider yourself a pioneer, yes? Because you are a pioneer.
- 02-00:27:46  
Gibson: Well, yeah. I guess so. Yeah, in terms of diversifying the profession. Yeah.
- 02-00:27:53  
Henry: And helping others come along.
- 02-00:27:56  
Gibson: Yeah, I think I'm recognized in that nationally, that I was a pioneer.
- 02-00:28:01  
Henry: Right. Speaking of recognition, you've won many awards in your career, including the Fulbright award starting early in your career, an honorary doctorate from Xavier University, many leadership awards, and a number of visiting professorships and fellowships. But I suspect none ranks higher than the Remington Honor Medal which is said to be the equivalent of the Nobel Prize for your field. It was established in 1918 to recognize distinguished service on behalf of American pharmacy. You won it in 2006. From what I can tell, and unless I'm mistaken, you were the first and still the only African American recipient of that award. Do you recall the circumstances of the honor? What you were doing when you heard that you won it? How it made you feel and how and where it was celebrated?
- 02-00:28:52  
Gibson: Well, it made me feel good, proud to be recognized. How did I find out? Jere Goyan told me, who was the dean. And he was close to being a leader in all the professional activities. And so he told me. I was surprised. I was pleased and deeply, sincerely honored. I just couldn't believe it. And I looked around, they got the wrong guy [laughter]. Yeah.
- 02-00:29:45  
Henry: Are you nominated and then a group of people elect you? How does it work? Do you know?
- 02-00:29:53  
Gibson: Yeah. A committee puts together the people that they think are candidates for such an award. And then the committee gets together, makes the selection, and then they confirm that selection through a communication process with the deans and that's it.
- 02-00:30:23  
Henry: And where was it celebrated? Where were you given the award? What was the context? Do you remember?
- 02-00:30:29  
Gibson: Good Lord, Linda would have to help me there.
- 02-00:30:32  
Henry: Was that a hotel in San Francisco or did you travel out of town to receive it?

02-00:30:36

Gibson: I think it was at a hotel in San Fran—yes, it was. At the Palace Hotel, and it was just in consonance with an annual meeting.

02-00:30:46

Henry: Oh, that must have been doubly pleasurable?

02-00:30:47

Gibson: Yeah, it was.

02-00:30:49

Henry: That's nice. So it was in recognition of your contributions. I guess the single contribution were your efforts toward diversity.

02-00:30:58

Gibson: Yeah.

02-00:30:58

Henry: Is that correct?

02-00:30:59

Gibson: Right.

02-00:31:00

Henry: That's really terrific. And you had a speech which is one, two, three, four, five, six pages long.

02-00:31:06

Gibson: I just gave it to you to read it. That's not worth—

02-00:31:09

Henry: That we are going to proudly include with the transcript of this oral history. And I'm going to read just the first and last paragraph of it.

The first paragraph says, "I stand before you tonight both humbled and honored because in truth I never expected to be standing here. The fact is that several years ago I tried to discourage my nominators, admittedly not very hard, because I sincerely believed it was not in my future, especially when I compared myself to my predecessor medalists. From this experience however, I have learned an unforgettable lesson in humility and that is that there are times when it is best that people do not heed your advice. Mary Anne Koda-Kimble and Bob Day, thank you for ignoring my protestations."

And the last paragraph of this speech in acceptance of the Remington Medal says, "And so I end this note of thanks to you and to the profession for enabling me to fulfill my dreams. I thank the profession for recognizing and working to remedy the lack of diversity in its professional ranks beginning with the early 1960s. I thank it also for this medal that I may never take off. Thank you my friends and dear ones for your love, friendship and guidance

over the years. I thank all of you for honoring me tonight and allowing me to share with you how exquisitely brilliant this moment is for me.”

Sounds like somebody was very proud and happy that night, yeah?

02-00:32:31

Gibson: Yeah. [laughter]. Yeah, I really was.

02-00:32:35

Henry: That was good, and it was a recognition of the value of your work over many years in this particular area.

02-00:32:44

Gibson: Yeah, I recognized that and I was just so pleased.

02-00:32:51

Henry: Yeah. Well, that’s great. We read a great deal about inequities in the American healthcare system. Have you seen any improvements in the inequities in the pharmacy field and in the delivery of healthcare in particular to the black community? Have we seen improvements over the last forty years or so—

02-00:33:10

Gibson: Oh, yeah.

02-00:33:11

Henry: —in those areas?

02-00:33:13

Gibson: Tremendous improvements since the time I was a student.

02-00:33:17

Henry: Oh, yeah?

02-00:33:15

Gibson: I think so. Yeah.

02-00:33:16

Henry: How so?

02-00:00:23

Gibson: Well, just access for blacks to the advantages of some of what I said, not very well used assets in healthcare. My guess would be that if you went to anyone on the street and asked who is your healthcare provider, most of them would talk about the pharmacist rather than the doctor.

02-00:34:05

Henry: That’s probably true.

02-00:34:06

Gibson: Yeah.

02-00:34:06  
Henry: Yeah. Yeah.

02-00:34:12  
Gibson: Yeah, you recognize that yourself, I think?

02-00:34:12  
Henry: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

02-00:34:17  
Gibson: Yeah. You have to help me every now and then. I lose track of what I'm talking about.

02-00:34:21  
Henry: No, you're doing great, Bob. You're doing great.

02-00:34:26  
Gibson: Being ninety years old takes—

02-00:34:29  
Henry: You're doing wonderfully.

02-00:34:31  
Gibson: —some of the sharpness away.

02-00:34:34  
Henry: You've been a member of the American Pharmaceutical Association for many years and in 2000 you were elected president of the organization. What duties does the president have and what did you hope to accomplish in the position when you started out?

02-00:34:48  
Gibson: Well, you just create more of an awareness of the need to improve diversity. And this last sentence or the last paragraph, my recognizing that the diversity has increased makes me very proud because I think I am a part of that. What else was I going to say?

02-00:35:25  
Henry: What did you hope to accomplish in the position as president of the APhA? During the time you were president what did you hope to accomplish and were you successful?

02-00:35:35  
Gibson: Oh, I don't think I hoped to accomplish much except to—

02-00:35:41  
Henry: Increase awareness?

02-00:35:41  
Gibson: Yeah, increase awareness. There's not much you can do as president of a national association. There's somebody, a board behind—

02-00:35:51  
Henry: Exactly.

02-00:35:51  
Gibson: —making all the decisions.

02-00:35:55  
Henry: Yeah, yeah. I suspect you traveled a great deal in that job, yeah?

02-00:35:58  
Gibson: Yeah.

02-00:35:59  
Henry: And saw places you never thought you'd expect to see?

02-00:36:01  
Gibson: Well, I did a lot of traveling anyhow. I'm not saying this as boastful but I've been everywhere in the world. And the choices of where I was going were usually mine. And they were mine because of a position I held in the profession. So I got around an awful lot, been everywhere. Just been fortunate. Came along at the right time and knew how to play the game, which you have to do sometimes.

02-00:35:52  
Henry: So I suspect you've seen a great deal, a wide range of how pharmacy is approached in the world, yeah? How backward is it in the developed world for instance? Do you know? Is there lack of education opportunities for pharmacy? Is there a lack of supplies?

02-00:37:08  
Gibson: No, no, no. The Europeans have a better respect for pharmacy than do the Americans. And I don't know if it's a time honored thing or what, but pharmacists are way up on the healthcare ladder. In my view they don't demand as much respect or command as much respect—

02-00:37:44  
Henry: In the United States.

02-00:37:46  
Gibson: —in the United States.

02-00:37:46  
Henry: Why do you think that is?

02-00:37:51  
Gibson: Well, the medical profession. The dominance of the medical profession and doing all that it can to keep itself up and not allow others to surface.

02-00:38:06  
Henry: Right. I see. Yeah. Yeah, I guess that's probably true. Did you travel to Africa and witness the state of pharmacy there?

02-00:38:15

Gibson: Yeah, I lived in Africa for a year. I had a Fulbright and taught at Cairo University.

02-00:38:22

Henry: In Cairo, yes, in the Middle East.

02-00:38:23

Gibson: And got around Africa a lot. I was invited to speak in many, many, many countries. Once I was at Cairo I received lots of invitations. To have an American teaching over in a foreign school was unusual. Everybody wanted me to come speak to them about pharmacy and what's it like and how do they change their profession in their country so they can more closely emulate what's happening here. So you tell them the good news, not the bad.

02-00:39:12

Henry: And you try to inspire.

02-00:39:14

Gibson: Yeah.

02-00:39:14

Henry: Right. Well, we're coming up toward the end of the interview and I just have a couple more questions for you.

02-00:39:22

Gibson: Shoot. You have my deepest sympathy. I'm not a good interview.

02-00:39:27

Henry: No, you're an excellent interview, Bob, you are.

02-00:39:29

Gibson: No. Yeah.

02-00:39:31

Henry: In 2009, in an edition of the UCSF Pharmacy Association newsletter, recipients of the distinguished alumni award, of which you are one, were asked to submit notices updating members about their lives. You wrote the following for the issue, which I found.

“Howdy, y'all. To bring you up to date on my activities, wild stratagems, tactics, and maneuverings, I recently had cataracts removed and can see more clearly despite the opinions my Republican friends promulgate. I continue to grace homecoming events with my presence, bug our professional associations with inane comments and suggestions, take naps, travel internationally as much as the budget will allow and oftentimes do as my wife requests. Our health is still good despite my being serviced by a cardiac pacemaker. Our sunset years have been radiant and I fully expect them to remain so. My question to you is this, what is the secret to a long, productive, and happy life?”, which certainly seems to describe yours.

02-00:40:34

Gibson:

A partner in life who is very, very supportive. Yeah. I think my partner in life is not only supportive, she is so proud that I have achieved the things that I've achieved and that I keep thinking ahead, trying to make things better. Yeah, I was lucky when she asked me to be her husband [laughter].

02-00:41:15

Henry:

She asked you?

02-00:41:18

Gibson:

Yeah. Better take that off the tape. Yeah, no.

02-00:41:26

Henry:

That's delightful.

02-00:41:31

Gibson:

Anybody that achieves any kind of success has to have a partner. Doesn't have to, but usually has a partner along the way that has helped to smooth the road when it's gotten rough.

02-00:41:49

Henry:

Right, yeah.

02-00:41:51

Gibson:

She's every bit a good supporter and a loving wife.

02-00:41:57

Henry:

Well, you're a lucky man. Do you have any final comments you'd like to make?

02-00:42:05

Gibson:

Well, I'm a lucky man, yeah. Well, she's my third wife. My first one, we divorced. My second one was a very fragile diabetic and she died from diabetes. And then along came Linda, after about six or seven years of being a single man, that I woke up and saw this lovely lady who had all the potential for long life, for sharing a long life with. You should get to know her. I hope you get to know her sometime. She's a marvelous woman. Absolutely marvelous.

02-00:43:12

Henry:

And she worked at UCSF, where you met her?

02-00:43:14

Gibson:

That's where I met her. We used to have a bus that came through Sonoma County and Marin County into the school. And she got on the bus, oh, what's the name the town ahead of me?

02-00:43:37

Henry:

Novato?

02-00:43:38  
Gibson: No, the town ahead of Novato.

02-00:43:44  
Henry: I can't remember.

02-00:43:45  
Gibson: I can't either now. It's not quite Santa Rosa or Rohnert Park.

02-00:43:55  
Henry: San Rafael?

02-00:43:56  
Gibson: No, north of San Rafael.

02-00:43:57  
Henry: North of San Rafael.

02-00:43:57  
Gibson: Yeah.

02-00:43:59  
Henry: Okay.

02-00:43:59  
Gibson: Yeah, Rohnert Park, Santa Rosa area.

02-00:44:02  
Henry: Right, Okay. And she got on there?

02-00:44:06  
Gibson: Yeah, that's where she lived, up here. And I didn't. I lived down the road so finally I got my chance to meet her. I tell people about me. I was an emcee at some event on campus and she walked in the backdoor while I was at the podium and she had on a red dress and at the time she had long black hair. I proceeded to lose my place [laughter].

02-00:44:50  
Henry: [laughter] What is Linda's background? Where is she from?

02-00:44:56  
Gibson: San Francisco.

02-00:44:58  
Henry: She grew up in San Francisco?

02-00:44:59  
Gibson: Yeah. Yeah. She's a native born San Franciscan. I don't know, you'd have to ask her how she left San Francisco and moved out over here.

02-00:45:25  
Henry: Do you recall what her parents did?

02-00:45:28  
Gibson: What?

02-00:45:28  
Henry: What her parents did?

02-00:45:31  
Gibson: I don't think she ever knew her mother. Her mother was dead—

02-00:45:36  
Henry: Oh.

02-00:45:36  
Gibson: —a long time ago. But her dad, what did he do? Good Lord.

02-00:45:48  
Henry: Sounds like they were an early San Francisco African American family?

02-00:45:51  
Gibson: Yeah, only not African American. She's Filipino.

02-00:45:54  
Henry: Oh, Okay. All right [laughter].

02-00:45:58  
Gibson: Yeah.

02-00:46:01  
Henry: I see.

02-00:46:01  
Gibson: You'd never know it. Being with me, you'd think she's African American. She looks like it. Yeah. Boy, she's been a real asset to me to tell you the truth. And everybody will agree. She's just a lovely woman. Really is. Okay, Bill what can I do for you now?

02-00:46:32  
Henry: Well, we're done now. Thank you very much. I appreciate it. This was a very lovely interview.

02-00:46:37  
Gibson: Oh, well you're being—

[End of Interview]