

Oral History Center
The Bancroft Library

University of California
Berkeley, California

Sally Hibbard

*Sally Hibbard:
Forty Years of Change at the J. Paul Getty Museum*

Interviews conducted by
Amanda Tewes
in 2018

Interviews sponsored by the J. Paul Getty Trust

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Sally Hibbard at the Getty Villa, 2006

Sally Hibbard is the former chief registrar at the J. Paul Getty Museum. She grew up in San Diego, California, and studied art history at Occidental College in the 1960s and 1970s. Hibbard joined the Getty Museum in 1974 as the secretary to the curator of decorative arts, Gillian Wilson. She became the registrar at the Getty Museum in 1975, leading the Registrar's Department until her retirement in 2014. In this interview, Hibbard discusses her early life and education; joining the staff of the Getty Museum; becoming registrar at the Getty Museum, including duties, on-the-job training, and the impact of the death of J. Paul Getty; building the Registrar's Department, including developing collections management, rights and reproductions, and exhibitions teams; major exhibitions, including coordinating loans and couriers; participating in the development of emergency plans for the Getty and its collections; work-life balance at the Getty; digitizing registration records; creating organization-wide policies and procedures; coordinating the transfer of collections from the Getty Villa to the Getty Center in the mid-1990s; controversies regarding antiquities; contributing to the field of museum registration, including mentoring graduate students, attending and presenting at conferences, and teaching museum studies courses at University of Southern California and California State University Fullerton; and changes at the Getty, including finances, quality of collections, size of staff, sites of operation, and leadership.

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Interview 1: August 1, 2018

Tewes: This is an interview with Sally Hibbard for the Getty Trust Oral History Project, in association with the Oral History Center at UC Berkeley. The interview is being conducted by Amanda Tewes at Ms. Hibbard's home in Santa Monica, California, on August 1, 2018. So thank you very much for speaking with me today.

01-00:00:24

Hibbard: Thank you.

Tewes: I thought we'd start at the very beginning here. [both laugh] When and where were you born?

01-00:00:30

Hibbard: I was born in Glendale, California, but I didn't actually ever live there; it was only because my grandparents lived in Flintridge. My parents actually, at the time, lived on an avocado ranch in northeast San Diego County. So they came up there to have me, my mother did, and father. Then I actually grew up on an avocado ranch until I was eleven.

Tewes: Oh, interesting. They went up north to—

01-00:00:55

Hibbard: Yeah, well, it has a hospital. This place where we lived was very rural. The nearest doctor was a half an hour drive, and the hospital there wasn't very good. So they came up to have me there, and my sister, who came along two years later.

Tewes: And when was this?

01-00:01:14

Hibbard: 1950.

Tewes: 1950. So what was it like living in San Diego, in this rural part of San Diego?

01-00:01:22

Hibbard: Yeah. It's called Pauma Valley. It's on the slope of Palomar Mountain. It was magical. We had this little, tiny ranch house. My father managed all these avocado groves and we were surrounded by avocado groves. We played in them and we jumped from boulder to boulder and made forts in the trees. So it was a nice place to grow up. And it was a very nuclear family, because the four of us were just there. I had a few friends, but you couldn't walk to their houses or anything. There were no sidewalks; we were acres away from anybody else. But it was nice being outdoors all the time and being so close to my parents. So I liked it. And my sister, too.

Tewes: Was your sister older or younger?

01-00:02:20

Hibbard: Younger.

Tewes: Younger. When did your family move away from the avocado area?

01-00:02:29

Hibbard: When I was eleven, so '61. They moved to La Jolla. We all moved to La Jolla. Part of the reason was they wanted better schools for my sister and me to go to. There was a high school in Fallbrook, which is where—is that okay?
[equipment check]

Tewes: Yeah, it's fine.

01-00:02:48

Hibbard: Which is where I would've gone if we'd stayed, but they thought the school choices were better in La Jolla.

Tewes: What was the difference like for you, in terms of lifestyle?

01-00:03:02

Hibbard: Oh, I hated it. I didn't like moving. I wanted to be back in Pauma Valley. Not just because I had a few friends there, but also just I was more comfortable there. It was a hard adjustment. I started middle school. Well, actually, it wasn't even a separate middle school that I started. I went into seventh grade and it was a huge high school that had all through senior year. So I didn't like it at first. But by the time I got into high school, I liked living there. I really like the beach in the summer.

Tewes: I think for people who aren't familiar with San Diego, they don't understand that the geography is so different in the different areas. So yeah, you're going from the mountains to the beach very quickly.

01-00:03:50

Hibbard: Right, right, right. So yeah, it was—I had a nice childhood.

Tewes: You went to La Jolla High School?

01-00:04:00

Hibbard: Yes.

Tewes: I think UC [University of California] San Diego opened in 1964, thereabouts?

01-00:04:07

Hibbard: Right. Right. Well, I don't know if it was '64, but it was definitely open by the time I graduated in '67. One of my close friends went there. I went up to school in LA and to Occidental. But it was very interesting, the whole UC moving in. La Jolla's very conservative. Still is pretty much, except for the academic community. Herbert Marcuse was teaching at UCSD and of course, the La Jollans thought he was practically a communist and didn't like that. But

my friend who went there really enjoyed it. So I would hear about her classes and things.

Tewes: How did you see the introduction of a university affect this small community?

01-00:05:04

Hibbard: It was a little bit removed, because I don't know if you've been to La Jolla, but the university is up on a hill and La Jolla's down by the cove. So it wasn't a huge effect, as far as the construction going on. And then La Jolla remained pretty insular and they had all these restrictions on building and height limits and so forth. So even to this day, it's a low-rise village. It's mostly filled with tourists in the summer, much more so than when I lived there.

But then people were moving into the neighborhood. I was friends with a daughter of the chancellor of UCSD, [Herbert F. York], in high school and Bronowski. What was his first name? [Jacob] Bronowski, I think, who was a professor there. His daughter went to the high school in my class. And Jonathan Salk, [the son of Jonas Salk], went to high school in my class. So there were these people moving in, and I think it was overall a good thing because it brought a bit more political balance. There started to be people speaking up in world history courses from the other side of the political spectrum, from {inaudible}.

Tewes: Not to mention that there was an anti-Jewish housing covenant in La Jolla for a while.

01-00:06:43

Hibbard: Yes, that's right. Good research.

Tewes: [both laugh] Well, I'm just thinking of the way it changed.

01-00:06:48

Hibbard: Yes. So all these people were Jewish. And by the time UC had arrived it had changed, because they all lived not far from where I lived.

Tewes: Interesting. I want to speak a little bit more about your family. How did your parents end up on an avocado ranch in San Diego? Were they from the area?

01-00:07:13

Hibbard: No, they were from LA. They were both LA natives, although my mother spent a lot of time on the East Coast. Her father was wealthy, and after the war he had some money to invest and he—there was some tax break for land if you developed avocados. Lord knows why; it was kind of a luxury food. So he bought 9,000 acres in this valley, and then sold off 6,000, and then developed 3,000 into different ranches—avocado ranches, they're called; they're really orchards—and sold them to a lot of people he knew in Los Angeles. I guess they benefitted from the same tax breaks. So my dad and my uncle, his son and my mother's brother, ran the business for him and they learned how to—

my dad went to Cal Poly San Luis Obispo for a year to learn agriculture, and learned how to install irrigation pipeline and fertilize avocados, and became an avocado farmer. So that's why we ended up there.

Then when we moved, that was also my grandfather who wanted to start—he wanted to move down from La Cañada Flintridge to La Jolla. We always went to La Jolla for vacations in the summer, so they liked it. They knew it and liked it. He wanted to go into real estate development. He started a family business. By that time, most of the groves were sold off. So he brought my dad and my uncle into business with him in La Jolla—San Diego, really. Also because of the schools. My uncle never moved; he kept his family out in Pauma Valley. But my mother and father just decided it would be better to move closer to work and to better schools.

Tewes: Out of curiosity, what was the name of that development company?

01-00:09:33

Hibbard: Barrett, Hibbard & Company. Barrett was my mother's maiden name. They bought and built apartments and rented them or sold the buildings.

Tewes: What values would you say you acquired from your family?

01-00:09:58

Hibbard: Definitely work ethic. They worked hard. They liked to play, too, but they worked hard. And saving money. Just pretty much the same, I think, as most people. Your parents want you to do well, they want you to get an education, they want you to—I have to say, they never—when I said I wanted to major in art history, they were supportive of that. They didn't say, "Oh, what are you going to do with it? Why don't you major in economics?" So they were good in that way. But they did value the ability to earn and to save money and to work hard.

Tewes: Do you remember when you first developed an interest in art history?

01-00:10:55

Hibbard: Yeah, I do. I had advanced world history in high school, and the teacher, who I became good friends with during high school and kept in touch with after, did a week on the Italian Renaissance, as a unit that he developed himself. I think he had slides. We had a slide test at the end and I got them all right, and I was glad that I could recognize all these styles from the Renaissance—or not all these styles, but the few styles he taught about. Then I think my mother sort of said, "Well, if you like that, maybe you should major in art history." So she kind of planted the seed, and then that's what I did.

Tewes: Did you visit any of the museums in San Diego or Los Angeles growing up?

01-00:11:52

Hibbard: Yes. Yeah. In fact, my grandfather was on the board of the San Diego Museum of Art, so I had kind of an in there. He was an architect, and very interested in art. He and my grandmother traveled a lot and collected. So that provided an impetus, as well.

Tewes: Yeah, it wasn't a foreign concept to you.

01-00:12:14

Hibbard: No, no, it wasn't. I wasn't an underprivileged child venturing into a new world; I sort of felt comfortable in it already.

Tewes: So I believe you graduated high school in 1967?

01-00:12:30

Hibbard: Right.

Tewes: Did you know at that point you wanted to attend college?

01-00:12:35

Hibbard: Yes, I had applied and been accepted to a couple schools and ended up going to Occidental.

Tewes: What was the draw for you to Occidental?

01-00:12:48

Hibbard: I liked that it was small, because one of my other choices was UCLA [University of California Los Angeles] and I didn't like that that was so big. Also having had both grandparents—my father's parents were still living there, were from La Cañada Flintridge. So I was sort of familiar with the area, because Eagle Rock's not too far from there. And Glendale—not that I knew Glendale at all. And then I really liked the campus. It's very picturesque. For that reason, it's featured in a lot of Hollywood movies about colleges. I liked the architecture and the plantings, and so that impressed me. Then I went up for—they invited me to come up for a weekend, where they kind of wined and dined—well, no wine, but they set up sort of events for prospective students that they were hoping would accept. So I liked that, too.

Tewes: Had you declared as an art history major going in?

01-00:14:03

Hibbard: I can't remember if I—I did it pretty soon, if I hadn't. I think I might've, but I really can't remember.

Tewes: Did you live on campus?

01-00:14:15

Hibbard: Yes, for two years; then in a rental house near the campus for the last two, with roommates.

Tewes: I'm interested in how art history was taught here in the late sixties, early seventies. Do you remember your classes or the coursework you needed to do?

01-00:14:41

Hibbard: Oh, yeah. I still have some of the texts. Yeah. There was a greater selection of Western art. I took one course in African art and I took one course in Asian art, but all the rest were Western European or contemporary American art. I don't know how it differs from how it's taught now. You looked at a lot of slides. We did go visit museums.

One thing that's funny, they never talked about working in a museum. It was always the idea: if you wanted to work in art history, you had go to on and get a PhD and become a professor. There was nothing about curators—which you really need a PhD for now, too—or conservation or registration or art handling or any of those things. So I think that's changed because, also, there weren't very many museum studies courses back in the seventies. There are a lot now. So there's more exposure to possibilities of working in museums, even though there's so few jobs.

Tewes: So if there wasn't an emphasis on how this could become a career, what did you think you were going to do after finishing school?

01-00:16:22

Hibbard: Well, the one thing I knew is I didn't want to become a scholar. I didn't think I had the patience for it, and I knew it was a long haul. So I thought I would just try and find a job I liked, and it didn't have to be related to art history. I would just [find a job] that would be something I would enjoy during my life. But no, I really didn't have any expectations of working in the field. So it was kind of fortuitous that I ended up doing it.

Tewes: Certainly. Did you have a particular concentration in art history?

01-00:17:05

Hibbard: Yeah. It was mid-century American. My advisor, that was her area. She did act as a curator in the summer. She would organize shows of contemporary California artists, and take them to Europe, take these shows to Europe. So she had some experience doing gallery work, museum work, but she never said, "And this is something you can do, too." So yeah.

That was actually kind of fun because at the Getty, towards the end of my tenure there, we had the first *Pacific Standard Time* initiative, and it was all about mid-century California artists. So it was sort of like coming home to these [artists]. I don't know if you know the artist Larry Bell, but one of the things we had to do at Oxy was go interview a contemporary artist, and I went and interviewed Larry Bell in his studio in Venice in the seventies. Then he's in this *Pacific Standard Time*—or not he, his art—and it's like, a Larry Bell box. So it's like going back to my childhood. So that was fun.

Tewes: Wow. Was he still around?

01-00:18:28

Hibbard: Yeah. Nice guy.

Tewes: Did you get to see him during the development of this exhibit?

01-00:18:33

Hibbard: Yeah. And I spoke with [him]. I never said, "I was that kid that came to see you," because he must've had—he became fairly famous and [there were] many, many who would've done that.

Tewes: That's so interesting. I like how you have a lot of circles in your life.

01-00:18:50

Hibbard: Yeah.

Tewes: You mentioned that your advisor was a woman who was also a curator. Were there a lot of other women in this field at this time?

01-00:19:03

Hibbard: Well, I think at Oxy the majority of the professors in art history were women. There was the Asian person, the African art person—who was not African—they were both women. The film person was a woman. I think there was only one man. He taught Renaissance and Medieval and ancient. He had a big purview. So yeah, there were plenty of women. Didn't feel like it was a field that belonged only to men.

Tewes: Interesting.

01-00:19:42

Hibbard: Although of course, in the museum world, all the directors—and still today—were men, are men. Most of them.

Tewes: I think that is true. Then in the summer of 1968, which—is that before your sophomore year?

01-00:20:03

Hibbard: Let's see. Yes, that would've been before the sophomore year.

Tewes: You attended the University of the Americas in Mexico City. Tell me about that summer program.

01-00:20:14

Hibbard: Well, I had a friend—in fact, the same high school girlfriend who went to UCSD. I think she had gone to Mexico for a summer thing before. I can't remember who suggested it, whether she suggested it or I did, but, "What would you think about doing this?" She spoke better Spanish than I, and so that was comforting, to go with somebody who was really good at Spanish—although I was pretty good, and I became better down there. Anyway, it

sounded interesting and it sounded fun, and it would be good for my Spanish, and my parents were willing to foot the bill, so why not? And the course would transfer to—I was able to actually graduate a semester early, or a quarter early, because I had that course and some other—I think something from high school—that transferred.

Tewes: What kind of study did this entail? Was this classroom work or site visits or—

01-00:21:33

Hibbard: Both.

Tewes: Okay.

01-00:21:34

Hibbard: So lectures in school, more slide shows, and then fieldtrips to archaeological sites, to museums, to—it was right after this housing program by Luis Barragán had opened or had been completed. [Jardines del] Pedregal, it's called. Now you can't see the houses because it's so overgrown; but then you could go around in a bus and you could see all these modern, very modern, mid-century modern homes that were built in the area. I think it was on lava rocks, but—and a lot of cactus gardens and things. It was very contemporary architecture. Anyway, that was fun. I loved Tenochtitlán. The Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City, which is still today one of the best of its kind, had opened fairly recently, so we were able to go through that. And there was a museum of modern art that had opened. So it was a mix of classroom work and actually going and seeing objects.

Tewes: That's interesting. This was the summer before the Mexico City Olympics?

01-00:23:02

Hibbard: Right. So there was lots of sprucing up going on. There were construction projects, but they weren't [where we lived]. We were in the center of town, where we lived, just off the [Paseo de la] Reforma, which is kind of the main drag. Then we took a bus out to—I can't remember where the school was, but it was like a twenty-minute bus ride. So we weren't near any of the venues that were being finalized, approved, built for the Olympics, but we certainly saw—there was tons of graphic design and signs about it coming, and it was exciting. People were excited about it.

Tewes: Well, there was also a lot of protesting going on around this.

01-00:23:47

Hibbard: Yes. That's true, that's true. I think I told you on the phone, we were aware of it, but we didn't see it a lot in the areas we—I think it was more down by the university. We went and visited the university one day on a fieldtrip, but there wasn't any protesting going on then. But so I wouldn't say I was very politically aware of any—it would just be what we'd glean from the papers.

We didn't watch TV. It was all in Spanish and we didn't have access to one, so it would only be newspapers.

Tewes: That's interesting because 1968's a big year in American political history, too. Were you aware stateside of—

01-00:24:39
Hibbard: Of the Summer of Love?

Tewes: Sure. That was '67. I'm also thinking assassinations.

01-00:24:45
Hibbard: Right.

Tewes: Martin Luther King and Bobby [Robert F.] Kennedy.

01-00:24:48
Hibbard: Yeah, and the protests. Well, the whole time I was at Oxy, there were protests against the Vietnam War. There was a sit-in. Oxy had an ROTC recruiting office, which a lot of the students thought was immoral. There was a sit-in, and actually the students ended up getting suspended. But it was always nonviolent; it never devolved into violence the way it did at some other schools, because it's a small, private liberal arts college of 2,000 kids. But I certainly would go to protests. We would go to protests partly to protest, and partly because they were kind of fun. There'd be rock bands and Country Joe and the Fish and singing protest songs. At one point, I borrowed my parents' movie camera and brought that up to school, where I think I had it for a year, practically. I have a lot of videos of protests, just panning—around the Rose Bowl [where] they had a big protest and down at Downtown LA, in MacArthur Park. So yeah, it was an active time.

Tewes: Well, I should say, these political protests and happenings, do you think they affected you?

01-00:26:32
Hibbard: Oh, yeah. I became more liberal in college; I think most people do. Certainly, I ended up arguing with my parents a lot about politics. The lottery system was introduced for the draft. I think my boyfriend at the time, who became my first husband, was very lucky. He was like 364 or some—it was in the 300s. My current husband, my husband, [laughs] was number two. He was at UCLA. I didn't know him then. But it was very nervous-making. Nobody wanted to go. Nobody in *college* wanted to go and fight in Vietnam.

I remember when I got to the Getty and I became good friends with the grounds superintendent, who was from San Fernando, a Mexican American guy. He had enlisted. I said, "What? What do you mean?" Because in his family, that was a good thing to do: go fight. He went to Vietnam, was a tail—shot people from helicopters and was a war hero. This just didn't compute

because all these years, I've been associating with people who'd been in college and were opposed to the war and certainly didn't want to serve there.

Tewes: Do you think that was a socioeconomic divide?

01-00:28:16

Hibbard: Yeah. And education. For some people, the military, I guess, is an option. I can't imagine, but—

Tewes: Even during wartime.

01-00:28:30

Hibbard: Yeah.

Tewes: Wow. You said you met your first husband in school. Was he also in the art history program?

01-00:28:40

Hibbard: Yeah. Yes. He went on to graduate school. He went to UCLA. It was called arts administration. I don't know if the program still exists. But it was part of the business school and you got an MBA in arts administration. Actually, a few people at the Getty came out of that program, too.

So we married shortly after college. Let's see, we married in '72. We were married in Germany, because he was there doing an internship in Munich. I went over to see him. We were already engaged and so, "Why don't we just get married here?" My parents said, "Great. We'll just send you some money. Instead of having to spend it on a wedding, you have it to travel around Europe," after he finished up his internship. So that was fun. We went to Greece and Italy and France.

Then he came back and finished up his degree. I worked at some odd—I think some secretarial job. Then that's when he got the job in Wisconsin, so that would've been '73.

Tewes: Where was that?

01-00:30:12

Hibbard: Sheboygan. Yeah, I lived in Sheboygan, Wisconsin. It's on Lake Michigan, about an hour north of Milwaukee and three hours north of Chicago.

Tewes: What was that experience like, being a Southern California girl?

01-00:30:29

Hibbard: We enjoyed it. Made a nice group of friends there. It was different. It was fun seeing seasons. I have to say, we were there for a very mild winter, so that didn't bother me too much. There was a little beach on the lake, just not too far from where we lived, so in the summer we could go down there on the weekends. There were no waves, but—then we went to Chicago a lot. There's

more to do there than in Milwaukee, so we'd go down there for weekends and go to the Chicago Art Institute. So it was a good experience.

Tewes: Was there any sense that you would be staying there?

01-00:31:21

Hibbard: No, I think we both wanted to get back to California if we could. Then he was offered a job at LACMA in the Education Department, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. It was only about a year after we'd come there, so they were sort of disappointed in us. But it was a better job and it was in LA, and so we came back. So that was summer of '74.

Then once we got back, I started looking for a job. And in the fall, I landed at the Getty.

Tewes: Yeah. Had you heard of the Getty before applying?

01-00:31:59

Hibbard: I knew about it. The Villa had just opened that year I'd been away, so I hadn't seen it yet. The old Getty, which was just a couple galleries attached to the house, I'd never been there. I don't know why we didn't go when I was in college, but it was hard to go there. I think you had to reserve and it was only open a couple days a week. It was kind of the bare minimum to qualify as a tax exempt museum. So no, I hadn't been to the old one. So I came to the Villa when I found I had an interview. I said, "Well, I better go up there and see it," so we made a reservation and went to see it ahead of time. Thought it was beautiful.

Tewes: How did you hear about the job? Was this something from word-of-mouth or through the art history field?

01-00:33:00

Hibbard: Yeah, yeah. No, my husband and I had a friend from Oxy who worked as an administrator at LACMA, so he and my husband were there at the same time. The registrar at the Getty before me called him to see if he knew of anybody, and he passed my name on to her and passed her name on to me.

Tewes: Do you remember what the interview process was like?

01-00:33:30

Hibbard: It was pretty brief, because I was interviewing for a job as a secretary to the curator of decorative arts. But yeah, I remember going to her office—it was like maybe a half-hour interview—and filling out an application and handing her my résumé. Then she called me and said, "We'd like to hire you."

Tewes: Well, that's pretty good, not too stressful. Who was the curator of decorative arts at the time?

01-00:34:01

Hibbard: Gillian Wilson.

Tewes: What were your duties as her secretary?

01-00:34:11

Hibbard: I think she had a typewriter, so she would type up things and pass them to me, and then I'd type them up better on a Selectric. It was before word processing, of course. And answering her phone, taking messages, filing, copying, just typical secretarial stuff. They also tapped me to do a few kind of administrative things. Because my office wasn't near hers; it was down near the director's office. There was kind of a group of us: the secretary for the director, the secretary for the curator of paintings, the registrar, me, and somebody else I can't remember. But so we'd cover for each other and we'd do things like get the mail and sort the mail. Yeah, well, it was a while ago.

Tewes: That's fine. Was there any expectation that you would be assisting Gillian with the curatorial work at all?

01-00:35:44

Hibbard: No, because there wasn't a whole lot back then. We didn't do exhibitions at the time. Mr. Getty was still buying, and so she would go to Europe once a year and look for things for him to buy. And then she'd go to Sutton Place and tell him about it, and then when she came back, there'd be a flurry of activity, contacting dealers and telling them to ship the stuff. Six months later, I did all that stuff, but right then I was just helping her with correspondence and—I don't think she was even writing anything then. I don't remember typing—typing labels when something new would go on display. But she never asked me to do any research. There was a little library there, but—and there was no Internet, so it was more difficult doing research. If I'd gone downstairs to do research in this small library, I wouldn't have been able to answer her phone. So no, I didn't really help her with curatorial work, and didn't expect to. Then it was such a brief time, so—

I have to say, I got along really well with her. People all said, "Oh, she's so difficult; you'll have a hard time." But we got on fine. She was kind of a character. *Is* kind of a character; she's still living.

Tewes: In what way?

01-00:37:31

Hibbard: Oh, she was very opinionated. She was kind of a wild child. She became much more socially conservative in her old age, but she was kind of a child of the sixties and Carnaby Street and all that. She was English, is English. And self-taught. She never went to university. She learned this field on her own and was good at it.

Tewes: That is impressive. Do you remember how many people were on staff at that time, in late '74?

01-00:38:08

Hibbard: The number [was] forty or forty-five. But half of those were security, so it was tiny. There might've been a dozen or maybe twenty professional staff, curators and assistants, and there were two conservators. And oh, there was a photographer to photograph the objects. There was a head of sort of PR. This woman was actually brought in to set up the reservation system because when they first opened, they didn't have one. Immediately, the neighborhood around the Villa—it was Coastline Drive neighborhood—started getting flooded with cars parking on the streets and people walking in, because they didn't have enough parking for everybody who wanted to come. The neighbors put up a fuss. I started in November, and the Villa, I think, opened in February or March. So by the time I got there, they had—they weren't even open on the weekends; this was just during the week. That changed later. But by the time I got there, they had instituted this reservation system and said you couldn't get in, you couldn't walk in, unless you had proof that you came by bus, which was a little pass the bus driver gave you, or bicycle. Because they were trying to stop people from parking in the neighborhood. So I think it was apocryphal, but there was some story about how the traffic was backed up from the Villa, which is north of Sunset, all the way to the McClure Tunnel, which is in Santa Monica. It's about five miles. I can't imagine that's true, but something like that. There were traffic snarls as a result of it opening.

Tewes: Was this concern on behalf of the Malibu community something you saw continue over the years?

01-00:40:18

Hibbard: Oh, yeah. It was always a fight. Not only was the Villa located in a residential neighborhood, but then when they bought the Getty Center, that's all surrounded by residential neighborhoods, so they had—besides, now today, I think people are more aware of when they're building some huge building in their midst. Even the Academy Museum [of Motion Pictures] down by LACMA, which is in a pretty urban area, but there are some residences, houses and apartments around, and they had to negotiate with the neighbors on things like hours and events and stuff like that. But yeah, the Getty, it's been a constant battle at the Getty to deal with the neighbors. Although I think they're in a pretty good state now, both sites.

Tewes: I think when you came onboard Stephen Garrett was the deputy director of the Museum.

01-00:41:26

Hibbard: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

Tewes: Did you have any interaction with him?

01-00:41:30

Hibbard:

Oh yeah, I worked very closely—because once I became registrar, I reported to him. Then he kept giving me these little side things to do, like start a Volunteer Program, start a, I guess—what did we call it—a review process, a staff review process. I can't remember other things I did. But so I was doing a variety of kind of administrative things that weren't registration, and then I was doing registration. And those all came from him, and so I worked with him very closely.

Tewes:

So eventually, he was your direct supervisor?

01-00:42:26

Hibbard:

Yeah, he was after the first six months, until he left.

Tewes:

We'll get there in a minute. I want to know what you thought were the challenges the Museum faced when you started in late '74.

01-00:42:48

Hibbard:

Well, there was definitely dealing with the crowds and the traffic. There was also concern about funding and was Mr. Getty going to continue acquiring? Because he always would threaten, "I'm not going to acquire anymore." It was only two years before he died. There was concern about what would happen when he did die. He never said he was going to leave all this money. I think they just assumed there'd be a modest endowment that would allow the Museum to continue functioning as it did. His man on the ground in Los Angeles was a guy named Norris Bramlett, who was his accountant and actually was the one who had the idea to start the Getty Museum back in the fifties. Because he said, "Why give your things away to other museums? You can just set up your own museum in your name and get your tax write offs." Because it was all about taxes. Getty was frugal—some would say penurious—and Norris was the same way. I think he came by it naturally, and also wanted to please his boss. So there was always the battle for funds for things, for buying library books or travel or equipment, anything that you needed that was not already in the small operating budget. So that was concerning.

Tewes:

Did that feel limiting, the budget?

01-00:44:39

Hibbard:

Well, I was so new at it. I just couldn't believe my luck that I landed in a place where I could work with art. So I didn't feel limited. I think the curators probably felt limited, because they couldn't just go buy anything they wanted to, as far as art. I didn't feel like I was stifled. I had plenty to do just to keep up with what I was doing. It certainly didn't seem like it was going to be a place that would grow a lot back then.

Tewes:

So you didn't see this as a long-term proposition for yourself?

01-00:45:23

Hibbard: I didn't really know. I thought, well, this is good while it lasts, and we'll see where it goes. Of course, that all changed when they read the will. I just was thinking of something to say along those lines.

Tewes: Further challenges perhaps? No?

01-00:45:48

Hibbard: Oh, no, I was thinking of the story of the electric pencil sharpener. Have you heard this?

Tewes: Do tell.

01-00:45:58

Hibbard: We bought an electric pencil sharpener for this kind of central—this group of work stations, I guess, in an office near the director's, with a few other offices nearby. So there were about ten people who would come and use this electric pencil sharpener, instead of the old hand ones or thing at your desk. Somehow Mr. Getty saw this invoice and had a fit. He said, "Why do you need an electric—" well, he didn't tell us; he talked to Norris Bramlett and Norris wrote this memo to Stephen: "Why do you need an electric pencil sharpener?" So there was this constant monitoring of expenses, even tiny ones. On the other hand, he spent a fortune on the Villa. Marble bathroom stalls. It was sort of penny wise and pound foolish. Anyway, that was always kind of [a concern]: would there be enough money to buy supplies, equipment, things you needed to do to operate? Plus things for programming.

Tewes: That's interesting. [laughs] Well, I guess in terms of the finances and the fact that there wasn't an expectation that the Museum would have a large endowment, how do you think recruitment went, in terms of getting people to fill these important positions like curator and conservator?

01-00:47:35

Hibbard: Well, there was very little turnover because people liked working there, even if the salaries were really low. It was a group of young people who had either art degrees or art history degrees, and we all got along well. Somebody'd have a birthday and we'd have a party. We'd buy the food and drinks ourselves, but we'd have a party after work. So there was a lot of socializing amongst the staff. Or somebody would have a party at their home and invite people. So it was a nice place to work. It was busy, it was always busy. Just dealing with that new building and with the crowds was a challenge for people who had worked there before.

It was when new positions opened up that maybe we didn't get the best people applying for them, because it was kind of a quiet, little place. But that all changed after '76. So that's like two years later. Then I was fortunate when I started hiring people that I could hire people with experience who had degrees in museum studies, because it became a very desirable place to work.

But yeah, I don't know. One telling thing is that the people who were most excited about the news about the will, Stephen Garrett and Burton Fredericksen—Burton was the curator of paintings and Stephen was the—well, he was called director, but he was really the deputy director—they went around to all the museums in LA and said, “Tell us what you think the Getty should do,” getting ideas, because there was going to be this big influx of money, and because of the way the tax code's written, it had to be spent, a certain percentage of it had to be spent. They were the two people who ultimately—well, let's see. Well, Stephen was let go or asked to resign. And Burton stayed on for many years, but he was moved out of the curator of paintings job to run the Provenance Index. This is the guy who wrote that book.

Tewes: *The Burdens of Wealth: [Paul Getty and His Museum]?*

01-00:50:44

Hibbard: Yeah. So it was kind of a double-edged sword because you think, oh, great, we're going to have lots of money, we're going to be able to do all these things. But the other side of it was, yeah, and they can afford to hire PhDs from other museums.

Tewes: So maybe there wasn't as much freedom in operating?

01-00:51:06

Hibbard: No, I don't think they saw it coming. How's this going to affect me? Like Stephen. He was an architect who did remodels and didn't have a PhD in art history, never worked in a museum. So when the money came in and they said, “Well, we've got to get a professional museum director in here.” Stephen [had] just ended up here. My job was lower down. So I wasn't affected in that way, but if you were a director or a curator, they'd start thinking about your credentials. So it wasn't a given that you'd end up staying there.

Tewes: Interesting.

01-00:52:06

Hibbard: Because they can get the best of the best.

Tewes: Can now afford to.

01-00:52:12

Hibbard: Mm-hm.

Tewes: Well, yeah, let's jump ahead to that, then, since we're on the topic. How did you become aware of the fact that Mr. Getty had allotted this endowment to the Museum?

01-00:52:28

Hibbard: I think we all learned about it from the news, because he didn't tell [us]. I think Norris Bramlett knew. He was still on the board. I can remember Burton

walking into the office that morning after it'd been announced on the news with a big smile on his face. It was like, yippee! So everybody was very excited and thought wonderful things were going to happen. Which they did, but it took a long time. We were pretty quickly disillusioned from the idea that a lorry was going to come driving up the drive with sacks of money, because there were all these lawsuits. It took a long time for the estate to settle.

Tewes: So did anything change in the meantime, in 1976?

01-00:53:35

Hibbard:

Not immediately, but the trustees kind of sat up and took notice, and they started meeting about what will the future be like for the Getty Museum. I can't remember; I think they brought new board members on. Then they hired Franklin Murphy, who was the chancellor of UCLA—had been—to conduct a search for a president; [they] decided to form the Trust and decided to [have Franklin Murphy] conduct a search for a president.

Before that, we did have a retreat. We went on a retreat with trustees and staff, which were mainly the curators, conservators, Stephen—well, by that time, we had a deputy director, I think, [in addition to Stephen]—to Scottsdale, Arizona, to this—in fact, that was one thing I had to do. I had to go check out this place—which we knew about because Getty Oil executives had used it; it was a place for these kinds of meetings—and reserve it and make all the arrangements. That was before Harold Williams came, so it would've been sometime in the early eighties. Staff spoke, made presentations about what they thought the Museum should do in the future, and it was pretty much what the Getty Trust ended up doing. They talked about conservation, that there should be a big commitment to conservation; research, a big commitment to art historical research, enlarge the library; and then acquisitions and exhibitions, to start having special exhibitions and to really make a fierce foray into buying art to improve the collections. Because well, the areas where the Getty collected, the art was disappearing because it was old art, and other collectors were out there buying things. So if you were going to have a hope of finding works in private hands, especially paintings, you had to get started.

Tewes: When you say disappearing, do you mean into private collections?

01-00:56:20

Hibbard:

No. [Into museums.] Private collectors would sell them to museums. Once they're in museums, it's pretty hard to buy them, buy something good. Museums do deaccession in this country, but they don't usually deaccession their best things. And that's what the trustees and the staff aspired to.

Tewes: Okay. Do you remember if *you* had a particular vision for the future of the Museum at that time?

01-00:57:00

Hibbard:

Well, no. I think I just agreed with the curators and the conservators that those were the three areas that made the most sense to focus the money. It was before I started thinking of digitization. But at that time, we were still doing everything with typewriters and 3x5 cards. So no, I can't say that I had any different ideas. I just thought those were great and I supported them. I'd sort of learned about the field of conservation after I came to the Getty and I really liked that whole—the idea of conservation and preserving the past. So I was interested in that, but so was everyone else, so I wasn't alone.

Tewes:

So there was institutional agreement at least.

01-00:58:12

Hibbard:

Mm-hm.

Tewes:

Well, backing up. This was 1976, while the Scottsdale retreat, you thought, maybe was a little later?

01-00:58:24

Hibbard:

Yeah, maybe around 1980.

Tewes:

Okay. But in 1975, I believe, six months after you started at the Getty, you had a shift in position.

01-00:58:35

Hibbard:

Right.

Tewes:

Tell me about that.

01-00:58:38

Hibbard:

Well, the previous registrar left, [Pamela Wiget], and said that she thought that I could do that job. Which I didn't know much about it because I'd been doing other—working for Gillian. But I figured, well, I can learn it. Again, because they were trying to save money. I'm not sure if it was Getty or Norris Bramlett that said, "Well, she can have that job, but let's not change her title. Let's not call her a registrar. She can be the registrar, but don't call her a registrar and don't give her a raise." Maybe we should pause. [break in audio]

Tewes:

Okay, we are back from a break with Sally. And we were just talking about how you became the registrar in name only, but you didn't get a raise, or really, the title.

01-00:59:42

Hibbard:

No title change, no raise, but it was new work and that was attractive to me. I wasn't in a position to negotiate, because well, I'd only been there six months, I was fairly inexperienced, and it wouldn't have worked anyway. It was sort of like, you can do this or not. So the fact that I would be learning about a new field, an area of museum work that I just had a little bit of familiarity [with]

from the previous six months, was attractive to me. So I said, "Okay, I'll do it." And then I learned the job.

Tewes: What was the state of [the] Registrar's Department—or not even the department; department of one—when you took this on?

01-01:00:40

Hibbard: Well, so there was just me. There was a system, beginnings of the system, rudimentary system, set up by the previous registrar that involved 3x5 cards to track locations of objects. Because one of the things registrars did was keep track of where the objects moved to. If they were in the galleries all the time, that was easy. But oftentimes objects moved, either out of the Museum on loan or within the Museum: from the storeroom to photography, to photo services to be photographed; from the galleries to the conservation studios to be worked on; from the storeroom to a conference room to be studied by a visiting scholar or curator. So the objects moved around fairly regularly, and I had to keep track of where they were. That's sort of registration 101. Then when they did go out on loan on occasion, we had outgoing loan agreements; and when we borrowed things—which we borrowed a lot for acquisition consideration, because they were trying to build up the collections. We had a very acquisitive curator of antiquities named Jiří Frel, who was able to get many, many donations of little pieces of antiquities, little fragments. So those were all coming in; they had to be registered and tracked. So that took a lot of time. Then we had a program of doing conservation. Our conservators would do conservation for other museums, for collectors. It was a revenue source, and so there were contracts for that. That was something I had to manage, as well as doing the billings and collecting the payments.

Tewes: Did the previous registrar give you any training in this before she left?

01-01:03:15

Hibbard: She left pretty quickly. I think she gave two weeks. A little bit in her systems for tracking things. She had files: a file on each object or group of objects, if they were bought together; and she had this card file that you would go in and note in pencil the location. Then when that filled up, add a new one. And then a little bit on shipping. We had a customs broker in Los Angeles who would receive the objects that came in from Europe, and then I would talk to him and get them delivered up to the Museum. I think we started doing the outside conservation work after she left, so that was something I had to figure out on my own. There was a law firm associated with the Museum—Musick, Peeler, & Garrett—and so I was able to get help from them with contracts, because that was an area [I needed help with]. I eventually learned so much about contracts, but when I first started, I didn't know very much about it.

Tewes: Yeah, that's interesting. Do you remember specifically what you were needing help with in those early years?

01-01:04:45

Hibbard:

Well, loan agreements were constantly being modified, which I guess in legal terms, is a bailor/bailee agreement. So a lot of the same concepts apply. This [was for] loans of art objects. [For] the conservation agreements, they wanted to make sure that the Museum wouldn't be sued if a conservator made a mistake. So in all the agreements, all the liabilities [were] on the borrower, the lender, or the owner who's requesting conservation services. That was the lawyers' primary goal. Over the years, that had to change because some people—we'd send a loan agreement to the Louvre and they'd say, "Are you kidding me?" "No." So it became more balanced as time went on, where some of the liability, it wasn't totally on the person we wanted something from to assume all the liability and indemnify the Museum. As our curator of antiquities, Jiří Frel said, "And they want you to give them your first-born son." It was that kind of language.

Tewes:

Certainly, this was about trying to protect the Museum. I wonder if you also learned sort of this, I don't know, legalese, for lack of a better word, from professional sources outside, at other museums.

01-01:06:31

Hibbard:

Oh, yeah. Yeah. So the registrar at LACMA was very helpful and she would give me all their forms. Registrars were generally pretty helpful to each other, so I could call around the country, if I wanted to. But the registrar at LACMA was close, so I relied on her a lot.

And then right around this time, too, was when the Registrars Committee of the American Association of Museums was formed. They started immediately pooling knowledge in the form of newsletters, a forms clearinghouse, where you could write and ask for copies of things or submit your forms there so that others could use them.

Then along the same lines, there were conferences. There were already annual conferences and regional conferences of museum staffs, but with the formation of the Registrars Committee, there would always be a couple sessions at each conference. That really started right around the time I became the registrar. So if it was local, it was pretty easy for me to go to, because Stephen supported it and liked the idea of it. If it was farther away, it was a little bit hard to come up with the travel funds. But after a couple of years, I think I was able to go to at least two conferences a year: the national one and the local one.

Also, I don't know when it started, but there was an annual conference called the ALI-ABA [American Law Institute/American Bar Association] Conference, which was [formally called] Legal Problems of Museum Administration [currently called Legal Issues of Museums Administration]. It was started by the Smithsonian, [which] had a large group of in-house lawyers, even back then. I think I went to the first one in the eighties. They would

organize an annual conference and go over all the legal pitfalls of museums. Some of them were things I wasn't particularly interested in, like events and what if somebody trips and falls at an event, what's your liability? Personnel, legal issues connected to personnel; sexual harassment, later. But the sessions that were helpful to me were on loans and acquisitions and exhibitions and contracts and the US federal indemnity program. They would publish; people would give papers, and the copies of the papers would be in these books, and then if you went conference, you got the book. So I would try to go to one of those every maybe four years. Because the case law moves so slowly, you didn't have to go every year to be up on what was the latest trial result. But if you went every three or four years, you were pretty aware of legal issues in museums.

Tewes: Can you tell me what federal indemnity means?

01-01:10:07

Hibbard: It's a fantastic program. It means that if the US government, in the form of the indemnity administrator, approves of your application—in which you have to detail all your precautions on shipping and packing and security and your facilities and your air conditioning—that the US government will underwrite the value of the object. So that if there's any damage, instead of having to pay a huge insurance premium for insurance to cover it, you would go to the government and say, "There was this damage and this owner, this lender, the Louvre, wants their money," and they would make good on it. It was such a laborious application process and you had to have so much documentation that they had very few losses. I'm not sure if this is the case when it started, but towards the end, you had to have hosted a major exhibition. So your first exhibition couldn't be indemnified. You had to have some experience under your belt before they'd consider you. And the applications just got more and more complicated over the time we were applying for indemnity. But it made it possible to have all these fantastic exhibitions. I think *King Tut* was indemnified. There was a van Gogh show at LACMA during the Olympics called *A Day in the Country*; that was indemnified. Or not van Gogh, Impressionism. There was a van Gogh show later there that was indemnified. When you're talking about a single loan that's worth \$10 million and there's fifty of them, the cost of insurance would be prohibitive and they wouldn't be able to have the exhibition. So it's been a very successful program.

Tewes: So it's a program really to ensure that Americans get to see the art.

01-01:12:28

Hibbard: Yeah, the top-flight exhibitions.

Tewes: Interesting. As we're talking about how you learned this job, I'm interested: did you have anyone you felt was a mentor to you?

01-01:12:47

Hibbard:

No. I mean, the registrar at LACMA was very helpful, but I didn't meet with her enough to have her—I didn't work with her enough to have her be what I'd call a mentor. No. I certainly learned as I went along from people I reported to. My writing got a lot better, just because I would draft things for somebody like John Walsh, and they'd come back with his edits and I'd say, "Oh yeah, that's a much better way to say that." So I learned a lot, but there was not really a person there that I would go to and say, "So how do you think I should do this?" I was largely left on my own to devise policies and procedures that had to do with collections. I had to have them sign off on them, and sometimes they'd make changes, but no, I can't really say I had somebody I would call a mentor. I think that happens more if you're an assistant curator in a Curatorial Department, and your mentor would be the chief curator or the curator of the Department. I think I did mentor people when I started being able to hire assistants. There were people I mentored, but I think that the situation of my position being kind of a one-person band and nobody—the curators and conservators, they weren't really interested in my work because my work was kind of restrictive to them. They had to follow rules and procedures that I set up. So they were never coming to me and saying, "Oh, you should tighten up on this. Here's a better way to do it; what do you think?"

Tewes:

Was that daunting, to be thrown into this position that you hadn't been formally trained in?

01-01:15:06

Hibbard:

Yeah, a little bit at first. I remember one preparator coming up to me—somebody was late or a delivery was late—and this preparator, art handler person came up to me and said, "Well, that wouldn't have happened with Pamela," who was the registrar before me, who had kind of a reputation of kind of being really—could get really nasty. Then this friend of mine who was a conservator was there, he said to the guy, "Yes, Steve, but nobody liked Pamela." But I was definitely a little bit green when I started and became more competent and sure of myself. By the time I left, people were much more—was it respectful? No. They tended to agree that what I thought was probably the best thing.

Tewes:

Well, I think it bears repeating that I think you were twenty-five when you took on this position.

01-01:16:20

Hibbard:

Yeah. Yeah, I was very young.

Tewes:

Sort of thrown into the deep end, with some of these—

01-01:16:28

Hibbard:

But that was the great thing because the Getty was pretty young, too. Even though it'd been around for, what, twenty years at that point, it still had been a

sleepy little museum attached to someone's house. Then they had this new building and some new staff, but I sort of grew with it. So it grew, I grew professionally, so—

Tewes: I like that. You grew with it.

01-01:16:55

Hibbard: Yeah. It was nice. It was fortunate for me. I had a good ride.

Tewes: So you mentioned to me earlier that in addition to being the registrar, you had these other duties, including a Volunteer Program and performance review. Can you tell me a little bit about that?

01-01:17:24

Hibbard: Yeah. Well, the Volunteer Program was kind of a no-brainer, because all museums have volunteers. So Stephen said to me, "Well, I think we should get volunteers for putting flowers in the galleries and—" I can't remember what other kinds of jobs they did, but stuff like that. Or helping a department with filing or—[it did not include docents. They were] called gallery guides. [The Volunteer Program] didn't include them; [the gallery guides] were paid. I can't remember who hired them. But [volunteers were people] who would work for free. Later on, we had a volunteer who was a potter, who also was a calligrapher. We had to write accession numbers on pieces of pottery, these little fragments, to try and keep track of them. She would come and do that, because she was very good at it. She was better than any of the conservators, or me, for that matter. It was a way of getting free labor. I think we even had volunteers in the conservation labs, because they were both single-person labs in the beginning. So if they had somebody with a degree in art and who was crafty, they would have them come work on—glue fragments together. Not so much in paintings; I think this was mainly in the objects lab. So I got ahold of, I think, probably LACMA's form that they used to sign up volunteers and—there was no database back then; started to keep a list in a file. The people who wanted to volunteer were directed to me and came, and I met with them and had them fill out the forms and gave them the little orientation, and then they went off to the department they were volunteering in to work.

Tewes: So did you oversee them after?

01-01:19:43

Hibbard: No. Well, I did have a volunteer once in my own department who did filing. I guess I would oversee her. But no, they went on to another department. When they went to other departments, then they were supervised by the head of that department.

[Regarding] the performance reviews, I think at one point, we finally [hired some consultants]. This happened four or five times while I was there. Periodically, there would be an outside accounting firm [to consult on personnel matters].

Oh, that's another thing that I had to do, [coordinate] audits of the collection with another outside accounting firm. I think it was Arthur Andersen who audited stuff for [J. Paul] Getty, for his business, so they [also] audited stuff at the Museum. But every so often, there would be a salary review and they would bring in an outside accounting firm to do that and compare our salaries to other museums. That was after Getty died. It wouldn't have happened before because he didn't care what other museums paid. So maybe '79 or '80 we had an outside accounting firm [to prepare the first salary review], and I worked with them. Then they said, "Well, then you have to—" we wrote job descriptions for everybody. People contributed their own job descriptions and they got edited by this outside firm, and I helped coordinate it. Then they said, "Well, now you have to start doing annual performance reviews." So that process I had to coordinate, too. I'm talking about sending out a schedule to all the people who had people reporting to them, sending out the form to write the reviews on. It was all done manually back then. But so that went on for a couple years.

Tewes: Do you know why you were chosen to take on these extra responsibilities?

01-01:22:01

Hibbard: Well, I was an organized person. That's why this job was perfect for me, because I like to organize things. Yeah, I'm an organized person, so I like to organize things and I think I have a knack for it. When they figured that out, when Stephen figured that out, he just decided to use me to organize things.

Tewes: Like, congratulations, here's some more work for you. [both laugh]

01-01:22:36

Hibbard: Yeah. Yeah. We weren't doing special exhibitions then. We were doing *a few*. Well, this was later in the eighties, I guess. As the exhibition programs, loans, acquisitions—especially after John Walsh came—increased, I couldn't do that stuff anymore. That was fine, because by that time, the staff had increased. And he said, "Oh, well, yeah, volunteers should really be managed by this office, so you don't have to do that anymore." And then at one point, they gave me rights and reproductions to manage. So I was still taking on things, but they were more in the area of object collections management, and not these kind of extraneous things in personnel.

Tewes: Skipping forward to 1976 again, how did Mr. Getty's passing and the changes the Museum was looking at, how did that specifically affect your department?

01-01:23:55

Hibbard: Well, not very much at first, because as I said, the money was tied up. There was some point where the trustees agreed, I think, to dip into the endowment that was already there to buy acquisitions, so they wouldn't miss an opportunity. But then they got very nervous because there was a lot of stuff going on with suits between Getty's son and—he sued Getty Oil and the Museum. Then there was this whole thing with—no, that came later. So the

money was not being released from the estate. I don't think it was released until maybe four years after he died. So the first four years, there really wasn't much difference.

People were planning more, so I think that's probably when I—I think it was in the early eighties when I said, "Well, we need to computerize the collections. We need to have a database, a computer database on the collections." I guess computers started creeping in in the form of word processors. That made some of the tracking easier of the collections.

But '76, '77, '78—oh, I know. There was one thing that changed, which was the art from Sutton Place, Mr. Getty's home in England. He had a lot of art in his home. The curators all got to go through this and say, "Yes, we want this. This is museum-collection-worthy and we want it to come here." So there were quite a few art shipments that we had to make from England to bring it all over. There were paintings, there was furniture. There was a set of English silver, which we acquired and then subsequently deaccessioned, because it didn't fit in with the French decorative arts. There was a set of gold—silver tableware: flatware and goblets and things. So there was a lot of energy in dealing with all that. Took time. And coordinating the lists and getting the stuff shipped and—

Tewes: Were you in charge of coordinating that?

01-01:27:00

Hibbard: Mm-hm, mm-hm. Once the curators decided what they wanted, yes.

Tewes: What was that like, in the seventies, when it's a little bit more difficult to do a transatlantic shipment?

01-01:27:14

Hibbard: Well, even then there was air freight. I tried to do everything by air freight. I think before I came, there had been some paneled rooms that had been shipped by boat overseas, because they were just too big to get on a plane. They weren't whole rooms, but they were these tall panels, and a lot of them. But I think we were able to do everything by air. That was much better because it's faster. Because what you're worried about when you're shipping art is that it's out of a controlled climate. So the sooner you can get it into the Museum and back into climate control, the better. Actually, what was tricky at the Villa was the damned driveway, because it was steep and they had no loading dock; they do now, but back then they didn't. So the trucks would have to pull up by the side of the Villa. Have you ever been there?

Tewes: No.

01-01:28:24

Hibbard: Well, so there's this long peristyle pool above you, and the parking's underneath, the public parking. So these art vans would pull up this little, tiny

fake cobblestone road that didn't have much clearance. They'd pull up next to the building, and then they'd have to back in. Hopefully, they had an electronic liftgate on it that would lower it down, so you didn't have to get—sometimes we'd have all our art handlers and still need to ask all the gardeners to come help muscle some of these big crates off trucks. So that was challenging, delivery to the Villa.

But London to LA, there were already these 747s that you could put quite a big crate on, so that wasn't such a problem.

Tewes: That's interesting. Now, you've mentioned that early on, one of your duties was to start creating some policies and procedures for the Registrar's [Office] and for the Museum in how you were handling art. I'm wondering first, can you explain, I don't know, I guess the substantive difference between a policy and procedure?

01-01:29:56

Hibbard:

Well, the policies are the broad strokes. Actually, most of the policies that I drafted would then have to be approved by the director and then the board, like the acquisitions policy. Which I didn't get involved in early on; that was pretty much handled by the board. But the first deaccessioning policy I drafted and the director—by that time was John Walsh—corrected it and then the board had to approve it. The lawyers would get in on it, too. Then procedures are kind of the nuts and bolts of how you follow the policy. So for example, if the acquisitions policy says that we will only buy objects that have provenance post-1970-whatever—I think it was 1970 or '73, the date of the UNESCO [United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization] convention—then the procedure said what that provenance had to consist of—publication, some of the documentation—gave examples. Or let's see, what would be an example of the deaccessioning procedure? The curator who's proposing the deaccessioning has to give an estimated value of the object to be sold or given away or whatever. But if the curator doesn't have expertise in that field, they have to get that outside expertise. So then the procedure would say, you should call the auction house, you should call a dealer in the field to get estimates, that kind of thing. So policies are broad strokes and procedures are nuts and bolts.

Tewes: That's a good explanation.

01-01:32:08

Hibbard:

And also, the trustees didn't really care about the procedures. They relied on the staff to carry out their policies. Some policies didn't go to the trustees, but certainly acquisitions and deaccessioning did. Some policies were just approved by the director.

Tewes: Well, yeah, that begs the question of how closely you worked with the board of trustees, I suppose after Getty's death.

01-01:32:38

Hibbard: Yes. Well, I guess pretty soon after, they decided—because they were trying to increase the collections, they decided they should have an Acquisitions Committee of the board, which many museums do. So they formed that committee, which I think was—

Tewes: You started in 1983, but I don't know if that's when it was formed.

01-01:33:08

Hibbard: With the Acquisitions Committee?

Tewes: Mm-hm.

01-01:33:16

Hibbard: I'll have to look at my—I have a list of approval levels that—

Tewes: Oh, that would be helpful.

01-01:33:25

Hibbard: Yeah. No, the Acquisitions Committee was formed in '79.

Tewes: Okay.

01-01:33:32

Hibbard: But maybe when I became secretary of it was—yeah, I think Stephen actually [was the secretary first]. That's right, that's right. [I became the secretary in 1983.]

Tewes: Okay.

01-01:33:46

Hibbard: Oh, so even from the time it was formed, I would coordinate all the gathering of the acquisition proposals and Xeroxing them or—yeah, I think we were up to—when I first started, they had this awful machine called a Gestetner. But I think by '79, there were copiers. I would go to the meetings and distribute them and I would show the slides. Then after the meetings, I would—those first few years, Stephen Garrett wrote the minutes, and I would distribute the minutes and keep the files on the meetings.

Anyway, just by virtue of being there, I got to know these guys. They were all men. Otto Wittmann was—I think he was called chief curator then, too. He was the director emeritus of the Toledo Museum. He was brought in as a consultant. I can't remember by whom. He'd worked as a consultant at LACMA; I think that's how they knew about him. Then our board brought him over to the Getty to kind of—I think they thought they needed help with acquisitions, that they didn't have enough expertise on the board. They knew Stephen wasn't an art historian. So he would run these meetings. Yes, he was given a position of—I can't remember what the title was, but it was like chief curator. This was before John Walsh came, so there were a couple years when

Stephen and Otto were both there, and there were these Acquisition Committee meetings. So I would just get to know [board members] by seeing them at the meetings.

Then some of the things had to go to the full board, but did they all? Yes, from 1979 to 1984, everything was approved by the Acquisitions Committee, but everything still had to be approved by the board. So then I would go to the board meetings—which were sometimes at the Villa, and after Harold Williams came, were often in Century City, where his offices were—and I would show the slides there. John Walsh, by then, would talk about them or the curators; sometimes the curators would come to the meetings to propose acquisitions. It was very interesting.

I got to see the board in action in, well, it's sort of middle-school years, I guess, because there had been a board since the Museum had been founded. Then after Getty died, the board started expanding a little bit. It's still a pretty small board. [Later], women were put on it and it became more diverse. It's still predominantly white.

Tewes: When you were saying that the board didn't feel they had the expertise in art, I'm reminded that many of these were legitimately businessmen that worked with Getty.

01-01:37:44
Hibbard:

Right. Right. The chairman was somebody named Harold Berg, who was the head of Getty Oil. There was a Getty lawyer, Stuart Peeler, who was then replaced by Patrick Whaley. There was Norris Bramlett for a long time, the CPA. They did ask an art historian a little bit later, Federico Zeri, who was an Italian art historian/consultant. He had advised Getty on a lot of paintings. He's discussed a lot in Burton's book, *The Burdens of Wealth*. So that was another voice they listened to, as far as deciding about acquisitions.

I stopped [coordinating acquisition proposals for the board] in Brentwood, after we moved over to Brentwood. Then Debbie [Deborah] Gribbon's assistant took it on. Because of the move of the collections, I had to stop doing that; it was too—when we moved the collections from the Villa to Brentwood, that was a very intense year. So Debbie Gribbon's assistant took it on, and then afterwards, we agreed that it just made sense for her to keep it. So that would've been [1997]. So I did it from—or I attended those meetings—from 1979 to 1997. Sorry, 1996, yeah.

Tewes: Wow.

01-01:39:52
Hibbard:

So I saw a lot of changes on the board, could listen to what was said during the acquisitions part, which is what I was most interested in. It was very helpful, actually, for—when we subsequently had to update our acquisitions policy, I had some knowledge. I remembered hearing these discussions and

then the board members were [asking], “Should we buy American art?” And, “Well, no, maybe not, because we don’t have that expertise and there’s other institutions already doing it.” It was helpful.

Tewes: In the structure of the Getty, was the Acquisitions Committee taking a hint from the mission of the organization or vice versa?

01-01:40:43

Hibbard: Yes. Well, they were supposed to stay within the guidelines of the acquisitions policy, which was refined every now and then. So I think the first one that was written after Getty died said that they might make occasional forays into American art, because Harold Berg really liked American art. I think Western art, like [Charles Marion] Russell and [Frederic] Remington. Then subsequently it was redone and they took that out, because John Walsh had been there a number of years and said, “Look, it really doesn’t make sense to make a foray into American art. We’d have to hire a whole new Curatorial Department and we’ve got the start of, well, the Renaissance and Old Masters, and we should just stick with it.” And they agreed.

But yes, whenever there were [acquisitions proposed]—well, first of all, the curators who were proposing these things all collected in the areas covered by the acquisitions policy. So they weren’t really proposing oddball things. Or not oddball, but things outside those collections. If they had, the trustees would’ve said, “Well, wait, this isn’t part of our policy.”

One of the things in the acquisitions policy was that they had to be beautiful objects of high quality. Which seems like a no-brainer, but Jiří Frel, our curator of antiquities at the time, loved any archaeological bit and piece. He didn’t care if it was a beautiful artwork on its own merits, he just—if it was ancient, he wanted it in the collection, as any archaeologist would. So I remember one time he proposed something. It looked like a wooden post that had a face drawn on it. I guess it was something that was used to support a helmet and a shield, and it kind of looked like a warrior, a statue of a warrior. But all that was left was this kind of armature that the things hung on. It was ancient, an ancient piece of wood. The trustees looked at that and said, “Well, how is this a beautiful object?” So they followed the policy and turned it down. So yeah, they kept [to] the policy.

Tewes: Well, in your nearly twenty years of going to these Acquisitions Committee meetings, what would you say were the largest acquisitions, or most notable, that came on during the time?

01-01:44:01

Hibbard: Well, there would be paintings, of course. Auction things were always tricky because a private collector can go to an auction and just—he knows how much money he’s got and he can bid. But a curator has to get it approved, has to get the bid set. They can’t go over the bid, they can’t read the room and say,

oh, well, if we just went one step above this, we'd get it. No, they've got to stop at the bid. So that was always complicated. But one of the first big acquisitions I remember that involved an auction was the sale of Chatsworth drawings. Chatsworth is a country house in England. We were buying, I don't know, fabulous drawings by [artists such as Andrea] Mantegna. It was a group of about eight really big names in art history. It was multimillions of dollars for the bids on [all of them], and it was tricky getting them all approved and then figuring out the bids, and then trying to keep them quiet, and then having somebody at the auction house who was bidding for the Getty, because you don't want [a] Getty [staff person] there. So that was always very interesting. The Pontormo [Jacopo Carucci] painting was one of the first major paintings acquired after Getty died that was bought at auction in New York. [Then there was] *Iris*, which wasn't bought at auction; it had sold at auction and been the most expensive painting sold at the time.

Tewes: Oh, the van Gogh?

01-01:45:58

Hibbard: Yeah, van Gogh's *Iris*. The guy who bought it, who was some guy from Australia—I forget his name—went bankrupt, so Sotheby's got it back. Instead of putting it up at auction, they negotiated a private sale with the Getty. The negotiations were very tricky and involved paying a bunch of money, and also deaccessioning some minor paintings in the collection that the curator didn't feel were up to snuff. But to give them to Sotheby's so they could sell them to make the rest of the purchase price. The acquisition process was very interesting and always kind of [exciting]. When the thing was approved and you were successful at auction, or there wasn't an auction and you just bought it, and it was shipped and then we opened it, it was really fun. You'd see these fabulous works coming into the collection.

Tewes: You mentioned that you would send a representative to a Sotheby's sale, instead of a Getty representative. Why is that?

01-01:47:24

Hibbard: Well, first of all, it's tricky bidding at auctions. I never did it. Some of the curators could do it, and they were good at it. Especially we had one, George Goldner, who collected himself and had bid at auction himself for his own purposes. So he was comfortable bidding at auction. So there was the fact that it's a tricky business and you need to be experienced in it so you don't get off on the wrong foot and don't put your hand up at the wrong time. And when the money [from the Estate of J. Paul Getty] first [cleared probate]—it's not so prevalent today, but back then, everybody thought the Getty was going to wreck the art world because they were going to have all this money from J. Paul Getty, and they were going to cause prices to go up and they would buy everything. Maybe it was a tiny bit true; but actually, more true is there were plenty of private collectors [who] had as much money, if not more, than the Getty. And there were these processes in [the United Kingdom, where the art

market was based], for stopping exports if the Getty bought something, and then [British museums] could raise the money to match the funds, which they did quite a bit. Sometimes they couldn't, but most often when they stopped something—that was certainly true in the early days—when they stopped something, they came up with the money. But sometimes they didn't, and then it would be [granted an export license]. It was a pretty fair process. It gave the [British] museums a chance to raise money to try and keep [the work] in the country. But if they couldn't, then the seller would benefit by being able to sell it to the Getty. So because there was this rep that the Getty had all this money, you didn't want a Getty person bidding, because then they'd think, oh, there goes the Getty again, ruining the art market. Also, if the Getty's interested in it, maybe it's an important thing and [it] made the price go up. So there were several reasons for not having a Getty person do it. Often, dealers [who had] worked with our curators and sold things on their own to [the Getty bid for us]. They would do it *gratis* to maintain good relations with the Getty.

Tewes: As you were speaking about this, I'm wondering, especially in those early years, what the Getty's relationship was like with the rest of the art world.

01-01:50:24
Hibbard:

I wasn't traveling and visiting dealers and collectors, the way the curators and director were, but sometimes I'd go to international conferences or I'd go to other museums as a courier or to meet with somebody. And it was in the press that we were upstarts. It was like [we were] nouveau riche and wouldn't be responsible and [would] wreck the art market. Why should [the Getty] have all this money? The staff at the Getty was very aware of it and wanted to counteract it by being very responsible and—especially John Walsh and Harold Williams.

I remember early on, there was this manuscript. Illuminated manuscripts are one of the collections at the Getty, which are—do you know what they are? They're Renaissance books that have paintings in them. There was this fabulous manuscript of Henry the Lion. It was a German manuscript. The Getty wanted to bid on it, but it was part of Germany's patrimony and the Germans were all upset, and the Getty backed down, said, "Okay, we won't bid on this and we'll leave it to you." So it was acquired by the German government.

So I think with time, that [worry about the Getty upsetting the art market] dissipated, because first of all, once they started building the Getty Center, the money that they used for acquisitions, there was less of it because they had all these building expenses, so the budgets were cut for acquiring. It was this big kind of push in the eighties up to the—yeah. But then in the nineties, there was less and less money. Then when the Getty Center opened, and then they were remodeling the Villa and they were running the Getty Center, there were all these expenses that they hadn't expected. So the acquisition funds kind of diminished. There was still a good chunk of cash, even when I left, and I

imagine even to this day, because they still keep acquiring [art]. But it diminished.

Also, there were other players that kept coming into the market—the Sultan of Brunei—that we would lose things to. So it was a bigger deal in the beginning than at the end of my time there. People weren't criticizing us so much. It was, oh, yes, the Getty has money, but—I would always have to tell people when I went to a conference that, yes, we do have budgets. No, we can't just spend money like it's water. But I think in a way, it made—even though there were fabulous opportunities—don't get me wrong; there were things that we could do at the Getty that no other museum could do, because of the money—but in a funny way, I think it made people very conscientious about budgeting.

Tewes: Oh, that's interesting.

01-01:54:22

Hibbard: Yeah. And keeping to budgets. At least that was my experience in the Museum. I don't know about the other programs.

Tewes: Well, I think that's a good place to stop for this morning. Is there anything you'd want to fill in that we've talked about?

01-01:54:41

Hibbard: Well, we didn't talk about the antiquities scandal. I'm not talking about the later one; I'm talking about Jiří Frel.

Tewes: Oh, yeah. Go ahead and start that.

01-01:54:51

Hibbard: So he was the curator of antiquities, from Czechoslovakia. He's dead now. He was quite a character. I think when he was in Czechoslovakia and living under the communists, he had to figure out how to work around the system, which was very bureaucratic. So he was kind of wily when he came to the Getty, when he came to us. He'd advised Getty, and then was working at the Metropolitan [Museum of Art]. Then Getty hired him to come to the Museum when they were building the Villa, and to acquire more antiquities because they were going to have a whole floor. The first floor of the Villa was just going to be dedicated to antiquities. He was very entertaining. He had a good sense of humor. He was the one that complained about the loan agreements, that lenders would have to sign over their first-born sons, because the language was so off-putting.

He discovered that wealthy Americans could get tax write-offs for donating to museums, which he thought was the best thing. And that also, if they'd bought the object for a certain price, held onto it for a while and then it appreciated, they could get a higher tax write-off. So he set up this system—and I don't think it was so different from other museums; it's just that he got a little bit sloppy—whereby he would see dealers—when he went to see dealers [to see]

things for the Getty, that he wanted to buy for the Getty, he would see something else and he would say, “So-and-so’s a collector I know, and he’ll buy this.” Then he’d tell the collector, “You should buy this. It’s a good price, it’ll appreciate it in value, and in two years you can give it as a tax write-off.”

In the beginning, I think there was nothing wrong with what he was doing. But he got kind of carried away, to the point where he was signing signatures on donation forms for donors that he knew, that he had talked to and they said, “Yeah, we’ll do it.” But he would just try and make it go so fast. He tried to do it in front of me, and I wouldn’t accept the form. So he said, “Well, if I have their permission, I’m not forging it.” I said, “Well, I don’t care. I need a form signed by the donor.” And then he was signing the appraisal forms. At that point, you had to submit an appraisal. You still do, but—he had stationery from a dealer friend of his and would sign an appraisal. To be fair, the dealer friend agreed with him. Jiří knew the market very well and [the dealer/appraiser] had agreed that he could do this. But still, it just got too fast and furious. And these objects weren’t very valuable. They were a couple thousand here, ten thousand there, because it’s a lot of archaeological material, which he loved.

But a couple of years later, he got an associate curator named Arthur Houghton, who saw this all going on. So Arthur reported it to John Walsh and Harold Williams, who were [both] there by then, and they did an investigation and decided [Jiří] had to go.

But there were a lot of articles in the *LA [Los Angeles] Times* about it. I’d had my first child, was on maternity leave, and the *LA Times* writers came here to try and talk to me. But they got thrown off because when my husband answered the door—he has a different last name—they said, “Mr. Hibbard?” And he said, “No.” He said, “I’m Mike Moody,” which is true. So they got all flustered and went away. But I thought that was strange for a reporter. You’d think they would look into that a bit. But anyway, so that was an early antiquities scandal at the Getty.

Tewes: Didn’t he also have problems with provenance?

01-02:00:08

Hibbard: Yes. Yes. Now we know that most antiquities on the market have problems with provenance. It wasn’t just Jiří; it was other curators and other [museums]. The rules kind of changed as we went along, and people’s awareness changed, too.

Tewes: Well, I think what’s most interesting about this story is that it says that this was a problem that at least the Getty faced for many years.

01-02:00:45

Hibbard: Right, right. No, it’s true.

Tewes: Well, we'll talk about the [both laugh] second scandal a little later.

01-02:00:50

Hibbard: Okay. Okay.

Tewes: Anything else you wanted to add for now?

01-02:00:54

Hibbard: No, I don't think so.

Tewes: Okay. Well, let's take a break here.

Interview 2: August 1, 2018

Tewes: This is a second interview with Sally Hibbard for the Getty Trust Oral History Project, in association with the Oral History Center at UC Berkeley. The interview is being conducted by Amanda Tewes at Ms. Hibbard's home in Santa Monica, California, on August 1, 2018. Thanks for having me back a second time here, Sally.

02-00:00:22

Hibbard: Well, thank you.

Tewes: When we left off, you were telling me a story about the antiquities. Who was the collector? What was his position, Frel?

02-00:00:32

Hibbard: Jiří Frel was the curator of antiquities.

Tewes: He was curator.

02-00:00:35

Hibbard: He was one of three curators there until they hired a fourth, which was in the mid-eighties. And a fifth pretty quickly. But to begin with, there were just the three: Burton Fredericksen, Gillian Wilson, and Jiří Frel.

Tewes: Okay. That's good to know. You mentioned that *LA [Los Angeles] Times* reporters actually came to your house looking for commentary from you.

02-00:01:04

Hibbard: Right.

Tewes: Did you ever feel nervous about being caught up in this antiquities scandal?

02-00:01:16

Hibbard: Well, I hadn't until they came to my house. Then, since I was on maternity leave, since I was kind of forewarned that they might come, I figured I could fend them off at my house. By the time I got back to the Museum, it had kind of died down. So no, I can't say I was. There were rules at the Getty about talking to the press, like don't do it. Refer to the Communications—well, what became the Communications Department. I was happy to follow that rule. Usually, they were more interested in talking to somebody who actually vetted acquisitions or proposed them, rather than the person who facilitated the paperwork and checked things, which is what I did.

Tewes: Well, actually, that's a good transition to talk about maternity. At the end of the seventies, I believe, you said you divorced your first husband?

02-00:02:37

Hibbard: Yes. We divorced in '80, '81, and I remarried Mike [Moody], to whom I'm still married, in '82. We had our daughter in '84 and our son in '87.

Tewes: You said you took maternity leave both times. How did you cobble together that maternity leave?

02-00:03:07

Hibbard: Well, it was actually pretty easy back then because they allowed you to use your sick leave. They also allowed you to take up to six months, which I think you can still do if you have complications. It used to be you could take up to six months if your department head agreed, or your supervisor. Mine did. The first time it was John Walsh and the second time it was Debbie [Deborah] Gribbon, and they both agreed to a six-month leave. The first time, practically the whole thing was paid by sick pay. I think as I mentioned to you on the phone, that they subsequently decided that that was discriminatory towards men that women could use their sick pay for maternity leave, so they stopped that. Then you were limited to six weeks paid from sick pay, and then you were entitled, I think, to three months altogether, under this combination of family leave policy or laws. But it wasn't all paid. You could use your vacation. But when I took it, I could still use sick leave, and so I was able to [be paid] because I never was sick; I had lots of sick leave the first time. And the second time, I had, I think, half my leave. I had enough for half my leave. So it wasn't as huge a financial burden as it was later.

Tewes: But there was no formal maternity/paternity policy at that point?

02-00:04:49

Hibbard: I can't remember when it was first written up. I think there must've been, even back in '84, but I'm not sure who—it was not a policy I had anything to do with; I just know what I was permitted to do. Certainly, over the time, especially after they changed the thing about you couldn't use your sick leave for more than six weeks, then there were more elaborate policies and policies that allowed fathers to take off family leave, as well. Family leave and baby bonding. The laws are complicated, but it [allowed] about three weeks of unpaid leave for fathers. Three months. Sorry, three months.

Tewes: I'm wondering how supportive you thought your supervisor was, or the rest of the team was, to taking this time off. Were you ever concerned that you would come back and things had been shuffled around so much you wouldn't fit in again?

02-00:06:01

Hibbard: Yeah, there was a little bit, especially the first time. I was taking leave right after we had a new director arrive on the scene. So I was a little nervous about, what if things change and I won't be there to advocate for my department and say what I think needs to be done? But it wasn't a problem. I always felt like the Getty could do more in that area of leaves and childcare, because they had such a concern for education, for children's education, especially young children. Also because there were a lot of women working there, and it seemed like an issue. Especially under Harold Williams, who I think was a very humanistic person, as in humanism, not human being. I was surprised

that they didn't do more for strengthening those policies ahead of, say, the state or—both maternity leave and childcare. But anyway, I felt lucky to be able to take six months off with each child, each baby. It's never enough, but it was more than a lot of people get.

Tewes: I'm interested in the Getty's approach to work-life balance, particularly in the 1980s, but maybe even what you've seen since then.

02-00:07:58

Hibbard: Well, one of the great things that happened under Harold was the off Fridays. So after he came—I'm not sure how many years after—but he had a survey done. It turned out that the benefit that employees valued the most was vacation and personal days, or time off. So they looked around and there were a few other places that were doing this, where you work longer days and you forego the overtime in order to have every other Friday off. So I think we went to a thirty-eight-hour work week by working a little bit longer during nine days of a two-week period, and then having every other Friday off. That was a great thing. Everybody liked it. A lot of people ended up coming in to work on those off Fridays, but it was quiet; you could get caught up. Then a lot of people spent the time, that free time with their families. So I think that helps the work-life balance. Certainly, it was something Harold was concerned with, and that filtered down. I wouldn't say the presidents after him were so concerned with it.

Tewes: Is that a policy—

02-00:09:44

Hibbard: It is always a concern. It was a concern for me and my staff, too. When the exhibition schedule would just get too crazy and projects kept mounting up, you'd have to go and say, "Look, we're having a problem; we can't keep up with this." But yeah, I think it's something that the Getty wrestled with, and as I understand it, other institutions do, too.

Tewes: This is true. Jumping back to when you were starting to build the Registrar's Department, did the responsibilities change for the Department over the years, when you took on in '75?

02-00:10:39

Hibbard: Yes, because everything kind of started snowballing. We were already making acquisitions, but we started making a lot more. We were already lending to other exhibitions on a small scale. But as our visibility became higher and as we started acquiring more important objects, we got more loan requests. So that meant there was more volume there.

One change that happened for my department was that rights and reproductions, which had been handled—oh, gosh—I think by the bookstore at first, was moved into my department. Then when we did the move to Brentwood, it was moved out to photo services, because we needed more time

to concentrate on the move. After Brentwood opened, the site in Brentwood, I think it was after that that I thought, well, it really is better back in the Registrar's Office, so it kind of came and went.

Then exhibitions. We started having them at the Villa after John Walsh came. Well, we'd had a few before then, but more so. Then when the Getty Center opened, those ramped up in a big way.

The other thing that happened was in the late eighties, we got our first computerized database. That led to a whole bunch of projects to try and get more data into the system and get more staff trained. Not in just our department, but we provided the training to other departments, so that the system would become more and more useful and eventually replace all the manual systems people were using. It was a hard fight at the Getty, because most of the collections were small and the curators had every object in their head and they didn't really need to go look at, consult a database; whereas somebody in my department who was dealing with all the collections, that's a larger number. Also, they weren't in on the ground floor when the collection was formed. So registrars really needed a database. But then we started acquiring photographs in 1984 and bought 20,000 photographs in one fell swoop. So that collection, it couldn't have been managed without a database. So that was a big addition, getting the system selected, bought, and installed, and then getting it to be used.

Tewes: So you're talking about some resistance within the organization to getting on the digital bandwagon. At what point did you realize that you needed to go digital?

02-00:14:13

Hibbard: Well, in the eighties. The antiquities collection was fairly large; it was about 6,000 objects. Paintings was small, maybe 400. And decorative arts was also pretty small, like maybe 1,000. But yeah, I think I started saying we needed to figure this out and work on it and get one purchased, and started going—there was another organization called the Museum Computer Network that had annual conferences, where people would talk about efforts to automate collection information. So I started going to those conferences and reading about other museums. There were some early pioneers among the Detroit Institute of Arts, who computerized the records on the collection. So it was about the mid-eighties. Then we finally got our first system in '89, and our second one after we'd moved to the Getty Center. They're still using that one.

Tewes: What technology were you using that the computers replaced?

02-00:15:40

Hibbard: Paper files. Which we still do keep paper files, but most of the stuff in the paper files now gets put into the computer, too, so it's more accessible. Our insurance company had a computer system that they track—because when I

started out, we had a scheduled policy, which meant they had a listing of every object in the collection. That's no longer the case. But so they had this very rudimentary database that had the number and a brief description and where it was acquired from. So we didn't actually have access to that system, but we'd get printouts from it. But so that just got added to the paper file, so it really was all paper. And there was a lot in word processing documents. So the curators pretty early on started converting from things typed on the typewriter to putting them into whatever word processing system we started with, and then ultimately to Word. And they learned that; they had to learn that, and they liked it. It was easier to use than the databases we had. The first one, definitely, and even the second one, it was still easier for them to—and they were used to it, so they didn't want to learn how to use a database so they could produce the same output that they could from their files in their word processing. That's the older curators. As the younger ones came in, they were more computer savvy. They also didn't know the collection as well, and so they took to using the database much better than the heads of the departments. I think that's pretty typical.

Tewes: How did you go about getting training for yourself and your staff to learn this new system?

02-00:18:01

Hibbard: Well, we had the database software creator provide us with training. Then once the person in my department who was in charge of the system for us, for my department learned it, she would offer training, either by going to people's desks and sitting with them, or when we got to the Getty Center, we had a very fancy computer training room, where there were workstations and you could go into any system that the Getty had and log onto it and see it. That was pretty slick. [laughs] Made it a lot easier to train a group of people at one time.

The one thing, if I had to do it all over again, I would—the directors, the people I reported to, all gave it lip service. They thought it was important, they supported the purchase of it, but they needed to be tougher on the Collections Departments to say, “You've got to use this or you can't have—you can't buy this object unless you prepare the proposal in the computer system, because we want to capture that data right from the get-go.” They weren't willing to do that, because there was a lot of pushback from the curators. The curator of photographs made this argument that photographs are on paper and card files are on paper, and so it's really better to keep records of paper objects on manual paper files. [laughs] It was like, oh my God. But by the time I left, pretty much everyone was using it; it just took a long time. It took longer than it should have.

Tewes: Does it make sense to you that your department was the one to lead on this, considering you're keeping the files, in many ways?

02-00:20:12

Hibbard:

Yes, my department wasn't the only one. In the beginning, it was. Then as we went along, new departments sprang up, like ITS, Information Technology Systems; or CIP, Collections Information—I can't remember what the P was for. But yes, in a way it does make sense that it started in my department, just because we had to deal with, as I said, all the collections. So that made a larger number. Also we were common. If the Paintings Department said, "Well, we're going to get a computer system; we'll do it for the paintings—" but then out here, the Antiquities and Decorative Arts and Drawings [Departments], they don't have anything. So I think it made sense to do it in the Registrar's Office, which is how it has happened at most museums. At MoMA [Museum of Modern Art in New York], in Detroit [at the Detroit Institute of Arts], it was the Registrar's Office. So yeah, I do think it makes sense, made sense.

Tewes:

I'm curious about the actual transition. Were you finding your efforts had to be spent on making digital records moving forward? Or was there a backlog of migrating this data?

02-00:21:46

Hibbard:

Both. We fairly early on got—we called them registration records, which were just a little bit better than what the insurance company had. For every object in the collection—we hired some data entry operators and—so we had something for every object in the collection. What took longer was all the rest of the data that we have on the objects. There would be these different campaigns like, we're going to go and enter all the photo techniques used for photographs in the Department of [Photographs]. It was a work on paper, but we didn't have whether it was a gelatin print or silver print or—so there would be specific campaigns to add data. I look back over the years of goals for the Department, there'd always be at least ten, maybe fifteen data projects that would be [included]. You'd get a chunk done and then you get another—you've now got a backup list, and then you add that; that's the next year's. So by the time I left, it was a very robust database and was being used to supply data for the website; it was being tapped into by other Getty systems. Which is what you want, because you don't want to have different data—you don't want to have one database that gets updated and has different information than the main database, so you want them all interconnected. They figured that out pretty early on.

Tewes:

How did you keep up with the changing technologies around data management?

02-00:23:50

Hibbard:

Well, I didn't really have to because first of all, we bought the software; we didn't create it ourselves. So we always had the company to go back to—even by the time we bought our first system, I had someone in my department—her name was Amy Noel—who headed it up for me. She really learned more of the nuts and bolts, the underlying data structures and things. Then we got

more and more support, because as more systems—in-house support—were being developed at the Getty, they had more infrastructure. They had a whole Technology Department that served the whole Getty Trust, so they would help.

I was more concerned with content than with how the software worked. Because for data to be good—they say garbage in, garbage out—for data to be good, you have to be consistent, you have to develop syntax rules and standards and things. You can get around that a little bit with string searching, but it works much better [if it's consistent]. So I kind of concentrated my efforts on that area, because I had a good overview of what was in the collection and what kind of data projects we'd done already. I knew that you could search for provenance in paintings, but you couldn't do it in decorative arts because it hadn't been entered yet. So that was kind of more my role than figuring out the technological advances.

Tewes: In developing, as you're saying, the syntax and everything that you need to search the system, make it usable, were you thinking specifically for the Getty? Or were you working within a best practices already in the field?

02-00:26:01

Hibbard:

Well, that's a good question because the Getty did have this big effort in that area. They were called the vocabularies project. And artist names, ULAN, United [sic] [Union] List of Artist Names. So they were doing a lot of work in standards and we tried to follow that. We tried to be in sync with those efforts.

A lot of it was the Museum staff, the curators; and then later, the Education Department got into the act. So for example, originally, we said "circa 1900" for an execution for an object. Then the Education Department, just when we were starting to do the labels for the Getty Center, said, "No, no, no, no. People don't understand what that means; it has to be 'about'." So we had to go change all the "circas" to "abouts." That was in a time, I would say, of people being more concerned about accessibility of labels. Then later, it sort of swung the other way and people were more concerned about the labels being good examples of scholarship, so we had to change it back to "circa." That was purely staff preference; it wasn't really who's doing it, what authority says you should use the "circa" and what authority says use "about." I didn't really care, as long as it was consistent and you could find the stuff.

The other thing, one other sort of example was, we had these loan object numbers that were kind of long—because they had "L" for loan and the date and—that were assigned to each object that came in on loan, then the lot and the individual item number. The curators didn't like that on exhibition labels; they thought it was too long, too much real estate to a number. "Why do we have to have these numbers?" But there was also the catalog number, which is usually much shorter—it's like catalog number 55, versus L.2016.10.2. So I said, "Well, if you want to use the catalog numbers, that's fine. I don't care. As long as it's a unique number and I can get to it, you can use whatever

number you want on there.” You can use the loan number, the catalog number; sometimes, in the case of acquisitions, we had other numbers. They were always in the record. But so that’s an example of coming up with a solution that still allows you to get to the information.

Tewes: Just for the record, this original system you purchased, was this Quixif?

02-00:29:07

Hibbard: Quixis.

Tewes: Quixis?

02-00:29:09

Hibbard: Mm-hm.

Tewes: When did you change, about, to The Museum System?

02-00:29:15

Hibbard: I think it was after we’d moved to—maybe around 2001, the early 2000s. So we had Quixis for maybe a dozen years, and had it through the move. It was an early system, so it was a little bit ponderous. But The Museum System was much easier to use and we got more takers.

Tewes: And that’s the system still in use?

02-00:29:46

Hibbard: Yeah, yeah. They’re better about upgrading their system than the software developer—I can’t even remember what they were called—was about updating Quixis. So as long as they don’t go out of business, I don’t see any reason why the Getty would change. But who knows, maybe something better will come along.

Tewes: You never know.

02-00:30:15

Hibbard: It is such a headache to change systems, because you have to map the data into the [new system]. When you get more data, it’s more work. A lot of it can be automated, but it took a lot of analysis to make sure we got the fields from Quixis into the right places in The Museum System.

Tewes: About how many years would you say the original transition took into Quixis?

02-00:30:40

Hibbard: To get it? Well, there was a long period of years where I’d just say, “We need to do this. We need to do this.” “Well, yeah, we think it’s important, but we don’t have the funds yet.” Then there was a [time] where, okay, you have funds now to explore it; then it was tied in fiscal year budgets. Then finally we figured out we wanted to buy it, so that was in the next year’s budget. Then once we bought it, I’d say—well, some people never transitioned, because

they never used it. But for people like my department and younger curators and people who needed to be able to use it, to get everybody trained up and get the data in that they needed to use, I don't know. It was never finished, because there was always more data to add. But maybe two years. And then it was pretty useful. So it took time. After that two years is up, there were still more people to train and more data to add, but it was at a pretty good place.

Tewes: That's interesting. Since we're on the topic already of collections management, you mentioned that you have these three teams: collections management, rights and reproductions, and exhibitions. Is there anything else about the development of the collections management team that you think is important to share?

02-00:32:25
Hibbard:

Well, the first step was automating the data. [The collections managers] also handled the collection audits. Back in the old days [at] the Villa, when it was just me the very first year or two, we had these surprise audits, where the auditors would show up with a person from what we called the downtown office—which was downtown LA, in the Getty Trust Building—and say, “We have to do this audit today.” You might have meetings, you might have—it was like they were trying to catch something missing. Well, after John Walsh came, he made the argument that the auditors should be working with us to help us to manage the collection; they shouldn't be trying to catch us out. So that stopped. But we still had a procedure whereby once a quarter, the accounting firm would generate a list of objects at random—some in storage, some in the galleries—with locations that were entered in the system, and you had to go show them to them. There might be, I don't know, a hundred objects from each—not from each, but combined. So that was something I did in the beginning, and then when [I] was able to hire a collections manager, that's something [she] took on.

Oh, and then in the early days they'd also do—once every three years, they'd audit an entire collection. Well, that's fine when there's 200 paintings; you can do that in a day or two. The last time they audited the antiquities was in the early eighties and there were like 6,000 objects, and it took a week. So in the Department of Photographs, if you were trying to do that—the museums that get large, like the Met[ropolitan Museum of Art] and big encyclopedic museums, they never do a 100 percent audit unless there's some big—there was theft—where was there theft? Was it the Smithsonian had some theft of objects, I think in the nineties? And they stopped everything and did a 100 percent audit. It took them a year or two. Obviously, people were working on other things, but there were teams that were auditing. But it's not typical. Doing these spot checks was a way of reminding people they have to keep on their toes. They have to write down when they move something.

Anyway, the collections managers would handle the audits and the database. And then they got involved in the imaging projects, because after the data was

in, the next logical step—or even it would’ve been more logical to do them both at once, but we didn’t have the wherewithal to do that—is to add digital images. I’m not sure if that’s still ongoing. We had a big backlog of photographs, but they were making good progress when I left. So the collections managers—in the Registrar’s Office there’s two now, and [for] quite a while there were two—would work with the Imaging Services Department, the Curatorial Department, and set up a process whereby things would be imaged. The move would be tracked from the storeroom to the Imaging Services and back, and then the image would be attached to the record in the collections management system. So then you could see the thing and read about it all in one fell swoop. That took a lot of their time.

02-00:37:08

Then other things would be emergency planning and recovery planning and backup copies of hard-copy reports, in case the system went down. And always updating those. They figured out how to run a nightly report of things going out, shipments going out the next day. Because on 9/11, one of the first things we had to do was stop shipments. We had things that were arriving at the airport which didn’t, because they stopped all the flights; and we had things that were on their way to the airport, which we had to call back. We still had use of the computer system, so we were able to quickly ascertain what was going on. Because they didn’t let the staff back in, they just let me. And I could go in and find out and say, “Oh, yes, I’ve got to stop this shipment, check on that one.” But we were thinking about, well, what if there’s a major earthquake, the airport’s shut, we’ve lost power? So we should have these hard-copy things that we print out each night. Or maybe it was once a week. So things like that, they would get involved with.

Tewes: Why were only you allowed on the system on 9/11?

02-00:38:39

Hibbard: Oh, not in the system. The system’s only accessible inside the Museum, and they closed and they told staff to stay home. People were coming to work and they said—they allowed department heads to come in, and critical security people and stuff like that. But the Museum was closed. Because I don’t know where you were, but nobody knew what was going on. So they were worried about, what if a plane comes and crashes into the Getty Center? So it was a scary time.

Tewes: That’s interesting. You’ve spoken a bit about the rights and reproductions team. Specifically about photographs, I’m interested in, what are the rights that the Getty takes responsibility for when taking a photograph or purchasing it?

02-00:39:42

Hibbard: Well, we’re talking mostly about copyright. The Getty moved from a very proprietary [position], saying they had copyright in their copy prints of art objects, which they don’t really, to saying, “We don’t claim copyright in

anything. If you want the object, you can take it; [that is], if you want an image, you can take it. You can use it for whatever you want.” That all evolved while I was there. But there’re two different kinds of objects in the collection, [as far as copyright is concerned]. There are the ones that are in the public domain or for some other reason have lost their copyright, which we didn’t have to worry about very much; we don’t worry about somebody reproducing [them]. And then there are objects in the collection that were either created by living artists or they have been dead, I don’t know, what is it, fifty years, less than fifty years? They have an estate or heirs. Or sometimes we don’t even know [if they do], but since they’ve been dead less than fifty years, we can’t assume [there is no] copyright. So we had to treat those differently and we couldn’t just let somebody download the image from the website and use it. So a lot of the efforts of that team was to manage those rights. When people did want to use [an image of a copyrighted object] for, say, a catalog or whatever, that we had to deal with them and say, “Well, we can give you an image, but only if you get permission from this rights holder. Once you do that and show it to us, we’ll let you have the image.” So in conjunction with that—it was just like with the data—on the objects there were data; there’s data on the rights. That all had to be added to the system, which we didn’t really start doing until we got The Museum System. We didn’t get it in Quixis at all. I don’t think it even had a rights module. But The Museum System did.

Tewes: Was that information inputted by rights and reproductions or by collections management?

02-00:42:31

Hibbard:

Rights and reproductions, because they were more familiar with it. People also in the other team, the shipping and exhibitions registrars, would input data, too. Not on the objects. We always had the objects, whether they were loans or acquisitions, being entered by the same collections management people. So we had very [consistent object data]. Object information was in sync across the board, used the same—but for things like loan records for—you’d have a lender that you asked to borrow an object from, and you wanted to track your correspondence with the lender and whether the lender agreed and what their restrictions were. Those records were created by the shipping registrars themselves, because they were using the data. The object record was created by the collections management people and maintained by them.

Tewes: How does this team handle borrowing of objects and images?

02-00:43:57

Hibbard:

Well, it’s a similar process. The collections management people would enter the object information. A curator would propose an object to be borrowed, the collections management team would enter the object information, and then the loan registrars would create the loan records. Pretty much the process I just described. When we were planning exhibitions, every month or two we’d

have a loan status meeting, because you want to make sure you're on track to get all the loans you need for this exhibition. We'd produce a report about where we were. Have they said yes? Have they said no? Have they signed the loan agreement? Because a loan really wasn't a loan until we had the contract. Then we'd decide who would chase this person down. If we knew the curator had agreed at the other institution, then my department would go after the registrars of that institution and say, "Hey, what's with the loan agreement?" If we had heard nothing, which happened a lot—we'd send off a request and you'd hear nothing—then the curator would be tasked with going to his counterpart or her counterpart and saying, "Did you get this request? What's up?" So we used that data a lot in planning for the exhibitions. Then the Design Department would use it to plan the designs, and the Conservation Department would use it to plan their mounts or what they had to do to the object when it got here, if it needed any special treatment.

Tewes: Did that data affect security aspects, as well?

02-00:46:02

Hibbard: Security? Security started using RFID tags, radio frequency [identification], so you could tell if something moved out of the—they did counts, manual counts of the galleries. Certainly after the Getty Center, maybe ten years after we opened there, they got this technology of putting RFID tags, which would sound an alarm in the security place, the control room, if something was moved. They didn't really care what it was; they cared that it was moved, and then they had to go investigate. But the tags had numbers and we did start entering them into the system. I forget if security utilized any reports based on those. Yeah, I'm not sure. I can't remember.

Tewes: Well, you mentioned rights and reproductions moved to Imaging Services for a while, and they came back. I'm wondering how it affected this team, having this under the Registrar's Department, how that differed from its other iteration?

02-00:47:40

Hibbard: When it came back, the person who was doing it [for Imaging Services] moved back with it. But her job was kind of [as] a permissions officer. People would write, say they want to publish this, and she'd get the image and send it. At that time, [they were] black and white photos and color transparencies. It wasn't digital. But then when we decided to go all digital, and we also decided we had to be more serious about tracking the rights to the [objects in the] photographs collections, mainly, but [also to] a few other contemporary [objects], that's when we hired a manager of rights, of the portfolio of rights. She's called registrar for rights and reproductions, but that's what she was doing; she was managing the portfolio of rights. So to answer your question, there wasn't much effect switching back, because it was the same person [I had trained and she also worked in the Museum].

But then when this new person came in to work with her, to supervise her and do all this other, I guess I'd say higher-level work, the main impact was we had a new person in the Department, a new area that the collections managers had to deal with in helping to make the system more [useful], to train her to use the system and improve it, so that she could get what she needed out of [it and] design reports for her. Then just planning all the work, all the data entry and all the meetings with the Department of Photographs. Our curator of photographs thought that the whole concept of copyright was silly and that no self-respecting art photographer would care about a copyright, which was totally wrong. [break in audio]

Tewes: Okay, we are back from a break. We were talking about the rights and reproductions team and the curator of photographs in particular.

02-00:50:15

Hibbard: Yeah. So he didn't think copyright should matter to art photographers. He thought that if we wanted to use an image in our catalogs that we didn't need to ask for permission for ourselves. He didn't care so much about outside requests, because that wasn't stopping him. Those outside requests are their own projects. But he didn't like it when we said, "Oh, you really can't use this." It meant we have to contact the artist or their estate, and he didn't like that because it slowed him down. So there was a lot of pushback from that department to do all these data capture campaigns. And that made it more of a challenge, but in the end, we persevered and did it.

Tewes: I want to skip to the exhibitions team. What kind of work does your exhibitions team in the Registrar's Department do around exhibitions? [break in audio] Okay, we're back from a short break. We were just discussing the transition to the exhibitions team and what kind of work that team does in the Registrar's Department.

02-00:52:03

Hibbard: So that's the biggest team. Collections management was two, maybe three, with part-time data entry people. And rights and reproductions, well, I guess we did hire a third person; started out one, then two, then three. I don't know what it is now, but that's when I left four years ago. The shipping registrars, our exhibition registrars—shipping, loans, and exhibitions—I think there're four. Then we had two registrars at the Villa, who did a combination of collections management and exhibitions.

But so they're the ones who do—it's really the nitty-gritty registrar stuff, which is arranging loans to and from the collections, arranging art shipments, arranging courier trips. Let's see. Installing and being on the exhibition installation team; seeing objects unpacked, checking them in; getting copies of the condition reports from the conservators. They work with the conservators and the curators in the galleries. They plan the exhibition installation schedule, based on when the objects are arriving, whilst trying to combine shipments

from the same city in Europe. So if you're borrowing from, say, six lenders in Italy, you want them all to come—as many as possible—to come together, because it cuts down on transporting them to the airport in Rome and transporting them from LAX. It's more economical. On the other hand, you don't want too big a group. Sometimes you need to split it up, because especially if it's an indemnified exhibition, there is a limit, a value limit per instrument of transportation, mode of transportation. So for that reason, the registrars are the ones to plan the exhibition schedule.

The other complication is, like for manuscript shows, we have these things that go in cases. Manuscripts can't just be left out; they have to go into these sealed cases. There's one case that's about Flemish manuscripts from the fifteenth century, and one's coming from Berlin and one's coming from New York and one's coming [from somewhere else], you've got to arrange it so that all those people arrive at the same time, so they can all be installed together, because when the courier leaves, you can't open the case. The courier has to see it installed, and then the case has to be closed. So it would get really complex, and they spent a lot of time figuring out installation schedules. I'm sure there's more.

Tewes: That's interesting that you can't sort of put objects in a staging area when they've arrived.

02-00:55:28
Hibbard:

Mm-hm. A few places that knew us well would let us install without their persons present. Local loans, especially. But yeah, these major loans from especially European institutions—I have to say, too, when we would lend to international exhibitions in this country or Europe, we'd send couriers and we'd want to see it placed in the case and then not opened until our courier came back at the end of the exhibition to deinstall it. It has had the effect of making—there's rarely damage during these international exhibitions, especially if they're indemnified by the US government, because of this practice of sending couriers and the technology of packing materials and knowledge about the modes of transport. It's a whole science of—it's an art and a science, art packing and shipping.

Tewes: I can see that. I think exhibitions is a good place for me to ask about the interactions between departments at the Getty, specifically [the] Registrar's [Department]. You've got Conservation and Security and Curators. How do they all work together in something like this?

02-00:56:59
Hibbard:

Well, we had—*have*—we had and there still is—an exhibitions coordinator [in the Exhibitions Department], who when I was there, was Quincy Houghton, who went on to the Met shortly after I retired. And [now] they have somebody else there, who came from the British Museum. But that's a department who is responsible for making all the departments work together.

They do it a lot through meetings. When we're preparing budgets for the next fiscal year, there's a whole series of meetings where the curators present their ideas for what the exhibitions are going to be. Usually, we already know what the exhibitions are going to be, but it's a more formal presentation. Because they've been working on it for years and there has been already some money spent preparing, sending people off to look at objects. But when the exhibition's going to occur, [ahead of] the fiscal year it's going to occur [in], there's a presentation meeting, and there's a form about the exhibition that lists all these things: what kind of educational programs are there going to be? What kind of design? How many text panels, wall panels, labels, signs? For my department, what's critical is the object list, because that has the type of object, the dimensions, and that's what we use to put our budgets together for shipping. And it has a guestimate value, which is how we arrive at whether we're going to apply for indemnity or not. If not, will it fit in under our max for our insurance policy, so that we can cover it without indemnity? So then that sort of is what starts it all, and the budgets are prepared and they're approved. Then the next fiscal year—it's all based on when the exhibition opens—and we start having meetings. Sometimes they're just the people concerned with design: the curators and the designers. Sometimes they're loan status meetings, which I described earlier, where that would be the curators and the registrars. Sometimes the conservators are in on those because there is a treatment that has to be done before the object can go into an exhibition. So all that is really the responsibility—organizing those meetings and the paperwork that goes with it is the responsibility of the Exhibitions Department, the exhibition coordinator, which I think is—yeah, it's an assistant director position.

Tewes: And would *you* attend these meetings as chief registrar?

02-01:00:16

Hibbard:

Yeah, I always went to them. And there would always be somebody in my department, an exhibition registrar, who would be the frontline. So I would go with one person or the other. Besides the fact that I wanted to know what was going on, ultimately, if we're having trouble making a loan or getting a loan agreed and I knew somebody at the other museum—or sometimes I'd get involved, and so it would just help me to have all the background knowledge. I always was the one who signed the loan contract, so the more I knew about what had gone before and what negotiations we'd had to do with these lenders, [the better].

The hardest part about these exhibition loans are crazy demands by lenders, usually from Italy, you know, where they want to fly—the norm is business class with the object, and economy without—they'd want to fly round-trip business or round-trip first. They want their husband or their wife on the same flight, which is also a no-no in the international code of courier practice. They'd want us to pay for a hotel in San Francisco, because they're going to go up there afterwards. We're like, "No, we'll pay for you at the hotel here,

but you're lending to the Getty, you're not lending to a museum in San Francisco." There'd be unreasonable demands that we'd have to push back on that [because they] were [not] best practice.

Tewes: You said this often happened with Italian—

02-01:02:15

Hibbard: Yeah.

Tewes: —collectors. Why is this?

02-01:02:17

Hibbard: My cross to bear: Italian couriers. Some of them were great and very professional, but there was certainly a number that—it just seemed to happen more with that country than France or England or Germany or—although, it's hard because they have the object you want. Towards the end, we were seeing this trend of—especially from countries that don't have—museums that don't have [resources], where they would charge a horrendous loan fee. It was typical, considered okay to charge a nominal loan fee, like \$200 for paper processing or something. But it got so that some lenders would say, "Okay, it's \$7,000 a month for the—" so if you have an exhibition that's two months long— "\$14,000 to borrow our object." That didn't happen very often, but it was happening more. And we had to pay it, we had to find the money.

We borrowed from Egypt a couple times, and we had the Sinai—there's a monastery in the Sinai Peninsula.

Tewes: Oh yeah, the *Holy Image, Hallowed Ground: Icons of Sinai* exhibit.

02-01:03:57

Hibbard: Yeah, right. The monks themselves, who were the caretakers of these objects, weren't so difficult to deal with. But also the Egyptian Antiquities—whatever it's called—committee or department or [Ministry of Antiquities]—had to get their requirements into the agreement, too. They require, usually when they lend ancient Egyptian—these were Christian objects; they weren't ancient Egyptian—they require that a person from Egypt go and stay in the country for the entire exhibition, or *two* persons. You have to put them up. So you have a three-month exhibition, you're not only paying for them to come and install the objects, then you're paying for them to stay. And then you have to give them some sort of benefit, like training. That made sense, in a way, because they want to improve their professionalism. So they come to the Museum and they get exposed to things we're doing. And then you have to pay for their food and their medical insurance. It's a very expensive proposition, so you can't do that unless you have resources.

Tewes: I'm interested in, say, this trend of charging a higher loan fee. Do you think that is a trend because the museums are losing revenue or resources? Or is this, again, thinking that the Getty has the resources to help pay for this?

02-01:05:48

Hibbard: No. Because it didn't just happen to the Getty. It's not because they're losing resources; it's because they never had resources. One example I remember was this museum in Sofia, Bulgaria, that had this fantastic Greek bronze, Hellenistic bronze head that we really wanted for our Hellenistic bronze exhibition. So they had one of these exorbitant loan fees, and they said, "We lent to the Louvre and they paid it." So we checked with the Louvre and they said, "Yeah, we had to do it." Then they said, "Well, we lent to the British Museum and they paid it." We checked with the British Museum and, "Yeah, we had to do it." They have you kind of over a barrel. If you say, "Okay, forget it, we won't borrow it," then [if] it's like a centerpiece of your show and illustrates a point, so—it's sad. I guess they figure, well, we have the objects; they have the money, so let's charge them.

Tewes: Has there ever been an instance where, because of difficult lending practices or fees or et cetera, that you had to go back to the curators and say, "I don't know that we can have this object?"

02-01:07:05

Hibbard: Yeah, it happened rarely, but there were a few cases where it was just too impossible. And maybe it wasn't a key object for the show; it would've been nice, but—so then we'd say, "Well, it's just not going to work." But that happened so rarely. Because the Getty had resources, they could usually make it work.

Tewes: That's interesting. Well, now that we've spoken about the *Icons of Sinai* exhibit, what do you remember about that show? That was in 2006.

02-01:07:46

Hibbard: The climate control issues, the humidity issues. Sinai's very dry. These manuscripts have just been in this dry environment all their lives. They're fine. They were being shipped to California and to the Museum, which has a controlled atmosphere, but not that dry. So we had to send our head packer. First she built these crates here that have a special seal in them and—what's it called—silica gel, conditioned to the low humidity. Or they conditioned it there. I think that's what they did, they conditioned it there. Then they put it in and it maintains the dry humidity in the crate. Then it has these special seals. So very elaborate packing. Art object packing is elaborate to begin with, but that was even more so. So that kept them in a dry environment until they got to the Getty. Then we had this room in one of the conservation labs, Brian Considine's lab. It was a room that you could control the temperature and humidity, independent of the whole air conditioning system. I don't think they could get it down to what it was in the Sinai, but they got it down a lot lower. So if the Museum galleries are at 50 percent, I think they got it down to like 35 percent. So that's where the stuff was stored and acclimated. Then when the installation started, the galleries, too, had to be—conservators worked with engineers to get the humidity down lower than it's ever been. I think they got

it down to just under 40. Because it was a slow transition, they didn't see any evidence of—

Tewes: Degradation?

02-01:10:19

Hibbard: —the books starting to respond to change in humidity. So that was the big challenge for that one. [laughs]

But it was a beautiful show. It was really popular and lots of people came who had never been to the Getty. We would often see monks in the plaza, not from the monastery, but from other monasteries in California and the United States. So it was definitely worth it, but it was a job.

Tewes: And you mentioned the issues of Egyptian government, as well.

02-01:10:56

Hibbard: Yes, and their—

Tewes: So someone did end up staying the length of the show?

02-01:11:00

Hibbard: Mm-hm, mm-hm. I think there were two people, actually. We talked to the Met. “Oh yeah, we had to do that, too.” So it didn't seem like they were just going after the Getty.

Tewes: So another show that we talked about was the *Aztec Pantheon and the Art of Empire*, which opened in 2010 at the Villa. What was that exhibit experience like for the Registrar's Department?

02-01:11:41

Hibbard: Well, it was unusual in that we didn't normally—we lent several shows to Mexico of photographs, and we had dealt with Mexican museums. INAH, which is the overall—Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia—the overall organization that all the museums are under. But I don't think we'd ever borrowed from Mexico. So that was a trick, because they'd send up their contracts and they were all in Spanish; we had had them translated. There were all these [conditions].

One of the hardest things to overcome, and not just with Mexico, but with some of museums in Europe, too, was you try to limit your liability to what's covered by insurance. Our fine arts policies or theirs, sometimes you have to use the lender's insurance; they won't accept yours. But they're always these same fine arts [insurance] policies, underwritten by Lloyd's [of London], usually, and they pretty much have the same conditions and they have the same exclusions, which are few, but they are there. Vermin is one thing Lloyd's—they will not cover vermin, damage from vermin. Well, for a while, terrorism was off the list, but then it got covered again. I can't [think of

others]. Well, maybe it'll come to me, but there was like one or two other things. It was pretty broad coverage, but there were these couple of little things that were excluded and you couldn't get coverage for them from anyone. They were rare things that wouldn't typically happen in a properly-run museum or with proper shipping arrangements. War, war. They wouldn't cover war risk. So if a war broke out, a declared war, while your object was in transit and a bomb hit the boat, you were out of luck. So the rule of thumb was to get [it agreed that] you're only liable for things covered by insurance. If it's damage for something that isn't covered, that's too bad; it's tough. Sorry, owner museum, you're not going to be reimbursed. This is the price you pay for lending these objects and borrowing objects and putting on these exhibitions so everybody can benefit from international loan exhibitions. But some museums just refuse to accept this, and then you had to decide—then we had to get approval from the President's Office, would we accept this liability? Because then that would mean the Getty would have to pay out of pocket for a \$10-million loan object, instead of making a claim against insurance. So usually, we were successful in talking people out of it. There was a big concerted effort by the Association of Art Museum Directors; I think they were the ones who were pushing for it. Or maybe it was the lawyers. At one of those conferences, they did a presentation on how we should all fight against this, and here's some correspondence to use and examples of arguments.

Usually it worked, but it didn't work with Mexico. They refused to agree to this. They wouldn't sign the contract. We annotated the contract. "So how about this?" They wouldn't do it. They kind of agreed to it, but then they didn't sign the contract, so we thought something was up. But they said, "Oh, the courier coming with this shipment will sign the contract." But then the courier got there and said, "No, I can't sign the contract." So it's not a good idea to have hugely valuable objects on loan without a loan agreement, a signed loan agreement, so—I think we just never had a signed loan agreement for that show. It was risky, but everything was fine.

Tewes: Wow. Did that make you nervous?

02-01:16:54

Hibbard: Oh yeah, completely. At a certain point, I'd done as much as I could and we just had to say, "They're here and they won't sign; what do we do? What do you want us to do?" And so on. "We'll let it go." So it was frustrating dealing with them because it seemed like it was by design that they put off signing the contract. Then I talked to somebody at the Chicago Art Institute who had had the same experience. It seems to be a way they have of not signing off on language that's not theirs, which is what we were asking them to do. And we wouldn't sign off on their language, so—

Tewes: Oh, that's fascinating, actually.

02-01:17:53

Hibbard: Yeah.

Tewes: Considering you'd spent some time studying Mexican art, and even relearning Spanish, did that all come in handy with this particular show?

02-01:18:05

Hibbard: Yes. I was able to use my Spanish with them, and also with loans from Madrid. We borrowed quite a bit from the [Museo del] Prado and a few other places. So that was nice. It was fantastic having the Aztec art because it brought back—some of the pieces were really famous and I'd seen, even when I was down there. It was great having it, having it all on display at the Villa.

Tewes: I want to talk about *Pacific Standard Time*. The original iteration, I believe, was in 2011.

02-01:19:00

Hibbard: Mm-hm.

Tewes: How did this show differ from others you worked on?

02-01:19:06

Hibbard: Well, we'd had contemporary objects before, modern art, but there were some—I don't know if we'd had any of these high-polished plastic works. I'm trying to think. I think the things we'd had before had been video art and works on paper, paintings. But these, there were a lot of sculptural works in this that were highly-polished plastic pieces. [One] that leaned up against a wall; you could knock into it and the whole thing would fall down. Or found objects that were piled up. There were a lot more worries about people knocking into them and shipping them. The local ones weren't a problem, because we just send our guys to go pick them up, and they know how to handle it and deal with it. But we had one piece come from New York and it was damaged in shipment. Even though it was a found object and the artist—what's the artist's name? I can't think. He's around and he was here and he came in and said, "Oh, it's fine." But the owner was very difficult and didn't like the fact that the pages got rearranged on this open book that was falling apart. On purpose, falling apart. It was falling apart when it was found in a riverbed and stuck on this work of art called *The Library*. The artist thought it looked fine, but the owner was upset. Anyway, so there were more private collectors, which sometimes are easier and sometimes are trickier than museums to borrow from. There were living artists to deal with, which sometimes is a pleasure and sometimes is difficult. Then there were these materials that were kind of fragile and not like framed paintings or marbles on plinths, which we were more used to.

Tewes: Well, and in the case of the found object piece, it sounds like some of these are ephemeral pieces, so it's harder to conserve and display.

02-01:21:44

Hibbard: Yeah, right. They're sort of meant to degrade, but—

Tewes:

That's interesting. What did it mean to the Registrar's Department that this was a region-wide exhibit, *Pacific Standard Time*?

02-01:22:05

Hibbard: You know what? I don't think it meant much. There were other shows going on, but we weren't involved in them. That was more the work of the Grant Program or the Foundation. I'm trying to think if any objects came—sometimes if two museums are borrowing from the same source at the same time, they'll try to combine shipments to save money. Because art shipping and insurance are the *biggest* line items in the exhibition budget, and so they're always looking at ways to cut corners or to save money there. But I don't think it affected the work of our department. I'm just trying to think. The data on the objects would go into the website, which also had links to the websites of other museums that had—but no, it really didn't affect my staff.

It was nice. We liked the idea that it was [region wide]. I went to see a couple of those shows and enjoyed them. Same with *Architecture* [*Pacific Standard Time Presents: Modern Architecture in LA*], when they did *Architecture* a couple years later. This last—I wasn't there, but the Latin America one.

Tewes:

The *LA/LA*?

02-01:23:50

Hibbard: Yeah.

Tewes:

Yeah.

02-01:23:54

Hibbard: It's fun to go around the city and see exhibitions of stuff you're interested in and then kind of relate.

Tewes:

Well, it's interesting, in talking to Betsy Severance, she mentioned that in the most recent show, anyway, that there was a lot more coordination, even among registrars.

02-01:24:09

Hibbard: Oh. Oh.

Tewes:

So I was trying to figure out how far back this went.

02-01:24:13

Hibbard: Yeah, okay. Well, I wasn't—

Tewes:

Relatively new, maybe.

02-01:24:16

Hibbard: I wasn't there for the last show, so that's good.

Tewes: It was coordinated at many levels. Another show you mentioned on the phone, and I'm not sure which one you meant. Both of these were at the Getty Center in—no, I'm sorry. Yes, they were both at the Getty Center. The first was in 2000, *Raphael and His Circle of Drawings* from Windsor Castle; and another was *Leonardo da Vinci and the Art of Sculpture: Inspiration and Invention* in 2010. I couldn't remember which one you were interested in, that you thought was particularly challenging because of government indemnity.

02-01:25:02

Hibbard:

I don't remember talking about those on the phone to you. But certainly, it wouldn't have been the Raphael; those were drawings. We'd borrowed several drawing show[s] [from Windsor Castle], even at the Villa. Even before John Walsh came, we borrowed a loan of Leonardo drawings from Windsor Castle, so we were pretty checked out with them. Then we'd had another one of—I think the Raphael was our third show. We had anatomical drawings, we had a landscape, Leonardo landscape. But the Raphael was our third show with them, so we had that down pat. The indemnity application wasn't too complicated because they were just drawings, and two-dimensional things are much easier. They had a way of packing them at Windsor, putting them between two pieces of [plastic] framing them with some Art Sorb that kept the humidity stable. So that wasn't difficult.

The Leonardo one was because again, they're sculptures. Some of them are quite large. It was coming, I think, to us and then to the High Museum [of Art]. Or maybe to the High Museum and then to us; I can't re[member]. Maybe it was High Museum first. And it was Leonardo, so that's always a challenge.

But I think the first one like that that we did, an indemnified objects show, was Bernini. We got our sea legs from dealing with that one, because it did involve going to Italy and meeting with lenders and sending our conservators over there to see how this could be mounted. Because it was always tough dealing with loans to California and the seismic precautions that we like to take, that our conservators [need] to take on mounting things, where you have to take a—you take an impression of the profile, and then you make a mount out of that, a metal mount that will be lined with felt, and it will press in on the sculpture and then be drilled into the pedestal, but will not hurt the sculpture, and there will be no drilling into the sculpture. To do this, you need to get the impressions made, because you need some time to make the mounts. To go there and take impressions ahead of time, you need to tell them, "Well, it's a seismic area in California, so we need to do this so if there's an earthquake—" but then you bring up the earthquakes and you're worried that the lender's going to say, "Oh, well—" even though the Getty has an excellent record and nothing was damaged in the '94 Northridge quake, because we have this great technique of mounting. So that was kind of the learning curve for borrowing three-dimensional works that you had to—again, a lot of Italian lenders—deal with them on. I think Leonardo was later, so we had sort of been through that.

Tewes: Well, technically we're going to move back in time, but I think we're staying thematically on course here. [laughs] Do you recall when you were able to hire your first employee and truly make it a *department* of registrars?

02-01:29:15

Hibbard: Yes. The first one was—now I can't remember; I would just be guessing. But maybe seventy—I took the job in '75; I was probably on my own for two years. The first one was a guy named John Caswell, who I think is still working as a registrar, but in Sacramento at the Crocker [Art Museum]. At least he was when I retired. I actually haven't kept track of him. It wasn't so much, oh, now I've got a department; it was like, oh my God, I've got someone to help. I have all these projects to do and we can divide this up. But it really felt more like a department when I hired the third person, who became the collections manager-type person, because then there were three of us. Then I had another assistant registrar, and then a staff assistant. So when we got to five, that really felt like it. Then you were asking me when we starting taking our first interns. I think I figured it out, that it was right around—it might've been the '88-'89 year or the '89-'90 year. Then when we had five registrars—or four registrars, a staff assistant, and an intern. It really seemed like we'd arrived. We were getting lots done.

Tewes: Did you have to make a case for why your department needed to grow? Or was this part of the larger Getty expansion?

02-01:30:58

Hibbard: Yes, I always had to justify it and I always had to argue for it. Sometimes it took longer than others. I have to say that I liked having fewer staff, rather than more. Some departments grew very fast, and I liked it—I think my department was one of the ones that grew more slowly. It did grow, and had to; but yeah, I always had to justify it. Usually by citing new projects and work that we'd undertaken. When they decided I should take rights and reproductions back and not only give out the permissions, but also put together the portfolio of rights, that was a pretty easy one because obviously somebody has to do all that. But if it was the same [work we were already doing], like we need another loans registrar because our loans have increased threefold and there's still the same one person doing it, I would make those kinds of arguments.

The downside of having a department, of having people you supervise, is it's more administrative work. There's job descriptions to write, there's training, there's performance evaluations, there's meetings. But yeah.

Tewes: The management aspect, I guess, is—

02-01:32:37

Hibbard: Yeah. But I managed, I guess. [laughs]

Tewes: Well, how did you—

02-01:32:48

Hibbard: And also, other departments were growing at the same time. The whole place was growing. Forty-five when I started, and by the time we got to the Getty Center, there was something like 1,200 employees Getty-wide, not just at the Museum. So it wasn't just my department. It's, what, the burden of wealth. [both laugh]

Tewes: So proportionate, perhaps, to the work that needed to be done?

02-01:33:14

Hibbard: Oh, yeah. I would say so. It could've even grown more.

Tewes: How did you decide to divide these duties of the Registrar's Department into teams or among certain people? Was this something that came organically, or did this come from feedback from staff, or even best practices?

02-01:33:48

Hibbard: Well, both. As I said, the shipping and exhibitions registrars, that's kind of nuts-and-bolts registrar stuff, as is collections management. So there was already this idea of having collections managers and registrars out in the field. I really saw the need for [collections management] once we started computerizing, because we needed people to get the data in and manage the database. So that's sort of when the collections management team started forming. That would've been in the mid-eighties or when we started pushing for the computer system and started researching it. Then rights and reproductions just grew out of the fact that they gave it to me, and then they gave it back to me. So there had to be people. It's not always the case that the registrars manage—they do in a lot of museums; they manage the rights portfolio. But it can also land in other departments in other museums: in the Legal Department, in the department that actually produces the images. So that wasn't necessarily based on best practices. But it just made it logical to have separate people working on that from collections managers and the exhibition registrars.

Tewes: That makes sense. Again in my conversation with Betsy, she said that registrars are a team, unlike conservators, who often work alone. Do you agree with that assessment?

02-01:35:53

Hibbard: Well, I think certainly registrars are more dedicated to teamwork than other departments, just because they not only have to work together as registrars, but they also have to work with the other—the other departments generate the registrars' work; it's not the other way around. So I think there's more of a coordinating role. The person you hire to be a registrar needs to be someone who enjoys coordinating and communicating; whereas the person you hire to be a conservator has to have great conservation skills. It also helps if they're good communicators and coordinators, too, but that's not the primary goal of hiring them. Certainly, the most skilled conservators or the best conservators

to work with were the ones who were willing to work as a team and not just focused in on their little project. But there were definitely ones of the latter ilk, in my experience.

Tewes: I was just interested if that's inherent in the work, as you were saying, or just a way you designed the Department.

02-01:37:26

Hibbard: No, I think it's inherent in the work. A good registrar also has to be an organized person. Again, I have to say that the best curators and conservators I worked with were the ones who were organized, as well as good scholars [or having] good hand skills or [being] good researchers. But you could be a great curator without being particularly organized. You can't really be a good registrar without being organized. I mean, that's our claim to fame.

Tewes: I definitely see that. [both laugh] You mentioned that you didn't have an annual budget at first.

02-01:38:12

Hibbard: No. It was just part of the—because there was no registrar; it was just me in the Administrative Office. So I think things that—art shipments have to be paid for out of the main Administrative [budget]. I can't remember how many departments there were then. I think there was a department called Administration, and the Director's Office had a separate little budget. But I think any charges I incurred were charged to that main Administration budget. But budgeting was a much more fluid thing back then. It was sort of like, "There's no money; you can't do anything." "Well, we have to do this." "Okay, well then we'll pay for it out of this." It wasn't like you planned ahead and said, "We could have this shipment [or] that shipment, and this is how much it's going to cost. So we need this in our budget or [we can't] do these shipments."

Tewes: How did you begin to build that budget, specifically for that department?

02-01:39:23

Hibbard: Well, once I got my own department and I could track it better—because it was difficult when it was buried in a giant administrative budget. So that was one reason why it should've been that way from the beginning. But if you knew about a shipment [that] was going to occur in the next fiscal year, which you rarely did that far out in advance, you could budget for it. You could go to the airlines or the shipping agent or the packing person and say, "Give me a budget for this object. It's this big, it's coming from here." But frequently, what happened was during the year, a curator would say, "Okay, there's this painting I want to buy and we're going to bring it here for study. So can you get it shipped?" With no money budgeted, because it wasn't even a glimmer in the curator's eye a year ago when you're preparing budgets. So for that, I would just base it on the previous year's budget. How much did we spend on art shipments for acquisitions per department? I would ask the curators, "Do

you have any big ideas in mind? Are you going to borrow a collection that you're considering?" Because they didn't have to come up with specifics, because they couldn't. So art shipping was the big line item.

Budgeting for office supplies and other stuff we used, again I would base it on the year before. Computer contracts or support agreements, when that was in my department, I'd base it on the year before. And it got so you could kind of ballpark it or build in a little bit of an inflation factor.

The salaries were not budgeted by us. Salary increases and new staff, that was all handled by [administration] because they didn't want department heads to be able to say, "Okay, well, I know I'm budgeting for a new staff assistant." "Wait, that's not approved." You're not allowed to budget for that. Which I think is pretty typical. When we'd get our budget instructions, there'd be all these categories, and there'd be staffing and [it would] say, "This is to be left blank. If you have any staffing—there's no money for staff. But if you have any staffing needs, contact so-and-so, the overall budget manager."

Tewes: In our first session, we began a conversation about developing policies and procedures, and I wanted to continue it now. How did you begin to start creating these? You mentioned that you had to get write-off from administration, particularly in the earlier years when there was a smaller staff. But how did you sit and say, "These are going to be our policies and procedures for X, Y, and Z"?

02-01:42:52

Hibbard: Well, policies, a lot of them were things that all museums have, like acquisitions policy or deaccessioning policies, loan policies. So there were examples out there to look at. Then rights policies, what our copyright pol[icy]—we do claim copyright in our copy prints or we don't. There were also examples of those. So it sort of depended. There were some things that were unique to the Getty.

We had this whole program—back in the Villa, we were actually charging for it—of conserving stuff for others and charging for it. But later, after we became so well-resourced, we would do it for free. Especially the paintings conservators, but also to some degree the other departments—antiquities and decorative arts and sculpture. They'd go around and find an interesting project in Europe and they'd say, "We'd like to work on this for a year. We'll do it for free. We'll clean the painting, we'll take x-rays, we'll do all—" they were often impoverished museums or museums that didn't have the kind of facilities they have at the Getty for that type of work. "Then we want to display it for six months afterwards in our galleries," so that we'd get a little bit of benefit ourselves. It was a great deal, because conservation is super expensive. These places often didn't have conservators on staff, and when they did sometimes the conservators would come and work with our conservators.

Anyway, that didn't happen a lot in other museums, so we needed procedures for how to deal with [it], how to administer these incoming loans and conservation projects. First, we just treated them as standard loans to the collection. But then we realized, no, it's a little bit different because our conservators always wanted to publish the work they did on it afterwards. So we tweaked the contracts to say that we were allowed to publish our work on them and we would give them copies, but they couldn't say we couldn't publish. Sometimes they'd fight that and sometimes they'd say fine. So it was kind of through trial and error and practice that you learned what you needed from these projects that would be beneficial to the Getty and to the field, and adjust the procedures to reflect that.

Tewes: You also mentioned that you were learning some of this on the go, while reading the museum registration book?

02-01:46:23
Hibbard:

Mm-hm, *Museum Registration Methods*.

Tewes: Methods, okay.

02-01:46:26
Hibbard:

Yeah. Then later, there was another book that was published called *A Legal Primer on Museums*. It was [written by] the woman who was at the Smithsonian, a lawyer, and then she ran the George Washington University Museum Studies Program. She just died. But anyway, yeah, *Museum Registration Methods*. That was already published when I became registrar. It was like the first book on how to do it. There've been lots of publications added since then on collections management, on exhibition installations, on copyright. But that was helpful. I have to say, it got more helpful as it went—I think new editions have been issued maybe four times. And each time, it gets more specific and there're better examples of contracts and experiences that you might run into.

Tewes: Now, was that book in particular published by AAM?

02-01:47:44
Hibbard:

Mm-hm.

Tewes: Which *was* American Association of Museums.

02-01:47:49
Hibbard:

Yeah, American Alliance for Museums, or of Museums.

Tewes: Keeps changing on us. [both laugh] Okay. I just wanted to note that. But I think it's interesting that you come on in the Getty during this period of great transition for the Museum itself, but it also feels like there's standardization of practices happening across the field.

02-01:48:10

Hibbard:

Yeah. Yeah. It was very helpful, being involved in that and go[ing] to meetings and conferences where registrars are codifying practice and—yeah, it helped.

Tewes:

Well, I think in many ways the Getty has become a symbol of best practices, in and of itself. At what point do you think you went from learning about best practices to being a model for a lot of these things?

02-01:48:52

Hibbard:

I don't—well—

Tewes:

Or is that relevant in the Registrar's Department?

02-01:48:58

Hibbard:

No, no, it's certainly true that over the years, people would call me from other museums and ask, "Well, how do you handle this?" Or, "How do you have that?" A whole delegation came from Dallas because they were building a new conservation lab, and they wanted to talk to us about how we moved the collections. And we did the same thing, too, before we moved from the Villa to Brentwood. We went up to Seattle; they had moved their collections. And we went to San Francisco; SFMOMA [San Francisco Museum of Modern Art] had moved their collections. But after we moved to Brentwood, then all of a sudden everybody was coming to us. I gave a talk about it at the AAM conference in 2008. I think it was 2008.

So I think after we became more visible, after Mr. Getty died and the will came—the estate was settled—and we were more in the news, people knew about us, I would start getting calls. "Can I have a copy of your acquisitions policy? We want to see your conditions and loans [forms]." Then we kind of did a lot in the way of warranties for acquisitions that we required sellers to sign. Those kept getting refined as we kept having problems with provenance, and we got a lot of requests for those. I thought it was good to share all that stuff, because I had benefitted from it myself. Was there anything else?

Tewes:

Well, you mentioned the Northridge earthquake briefly, which hit in 1994. You said the objects were largely saved out of that. How else did the earthquake affect the Getty?

02-01:51:38

Hibbard:

Well, the big effect, which wasn't really for the Museum staff to deal with; it was for the building staff, the—what was it called, the Building Department—they were building the Getty Center then, at that point; they were working on the foundations and the caissons and the structural steel. They discovered these cracks in the welds of major structural steel pieces. They commissioned a study—I thought it took place in some institution in Texas—anyway, and decided that instead of four welds, these crossbeams should be welded in twelve places, and went back and redid all that had been done so far, which

was mainly, I think, the lower levels on the top of the hill. Then it got added to the building code of Los Angeles, and all buildings had to be checked for this. So that was a delay and an expense. And at that point, we had to cut back the program, the building program for the site, because it would cost a bunch more money. I think they had some across-the-board reduction of 15 percent or something, the space and materials, just to make up for that.

As far as anything else, well, it certainly gratified the Museum staff, because all the planning that had been done to protect these objects—which is not *my* department, but the Conservation Departments and the art handlers—had kind of paid off. Or completely paid off. Again, this wasn't my department, but people were already contacting the Getty about seismic mitigation, and there was just more and more of that, contacting our conservators and—

Tewes: How did earthquakes in general and this in particular affect policies and procedures around art objects?

02-01:54:26

Hibbard: Well, when John Walsh came, he said we needed an emergency plan. We'd done evacuation, fire drills and things like that, but we didn't have really a full-fledged emergency plan. So that took a guy from the East Coast to move here and say, "We need this." So the head of Security led the effort and all the collections staff partic[ipated]. Well, not the curators. The conservators, registrars, and art handlers all participated in drafting this plan for the collections. And Security and the PR Department—I forget what it was called then; it's been changed—and the administration did it for visitors, and put together this massive plan. And we started having annual drills, where we would have volunteers come and pretend to be visitors and we'd have makeup artists come and do wounds on people. They were very elaborate. And set up triage places [for the injured] and then have teams—it would be a registrar, a conservator, and an art handler—going through, going and checking galleries, and recording damage. If there's something, a water main's [broken], they would have scenarios that say, "water rushing down here." So then you'd pretend like you're pulling the object out from under, because otherwise, you leave things in place. When there's object damage, you leave it in place. That was another thing I had to write up, was damage procedures. You leave it in place so the conservator, when he gets there—or she gets there—can see exactly where everything was and pick up each little piece. But if there's ongoing damage, if leaving it in place is going to make it worse, then you are supposed to move it. Anyway, they had all these scenarios. It took a good chunk of time to initially put it together, and then another chunk of time each year to do the drills. But our director felt strongly about it. Now I need to get some more water. [break in audio]

Tewes: Okay, we are back from our break. And, Sally, you were talking about earthquake preparedness at the Getty.

02-01:57:04

Hibbard:

Yes. So the other thing—maybe we talked about this on the phone—but there was a rule that you never left an object unsecured. So even if it was on a table in a storeroom, you're working on it and you're going to come back and work on tomorrow and the next day and the next day, each time you leave that object in the storeroom, you have to strap it in or put it back in its bin or whatever. Because the objects were all stored with seismic mitigation measures, too, so you had to put those back into place. Or if it was on a cart, a painting on a cart that you're going to install in the morning, you set the brake so the cart won't move around, and then you strap it in. You might strap the cart to a pole in the room. So that was a rule we had, that other museums not in earthquake zones don't have to worry about.

Tewes:

You also mentioned some flooding in the 1980s.

02-01:58:11

Hibbard:

Yeah. We had flooding in the decorative arts storeroom, because there was a period of heavy rain and the storm drains of the Villa either hadn't been cleaned or couldn't keep up with it. So the water backed up and it flooded into the storeroom. Most things were up on shelves anyway, but there were a few big pieces of furniture that were just sitting on their feet, antique feet or legs, in the storeroom, and those got some water damage around the base. They weren't the best pieces, because the best pieces were on display; but nonetheless, you don't want them damaged. So that instituted a rule of not having anything on the floor, but having it up on a pallet or blocks or something. We also I think at that point started putting Trace Tech[nology] everywhere, which is this kind of tape that you put around—or wire—around the edges of storerooms. It has a wire going to the security control room, where all the alarms sound. And if moisture touches it, an alarm sounds and you know to go check. There might be a leak or somebody spilled a bucket of water on it. [both laugh]

Tewes:

Oh, that's interesting.

02-01:59:48

Hibbard:

Yeah. Yes, it is. It's a good invention.

Tewes:

Were there other moments where either there were some close calls or you'd seen some disasters at other museums that changed the way you approached policies and procedures?

02-02:00:13

Hibbard:

I don't know, California's so disaster prone because of earthquakes and fire. Definitely, when there were major earthquakes—there was one in Kobe, Japan, in the eighties, and one of our conservators and our head preparator went there and went to see the damage in the museums and talk to them about it. Same with the Loma Prieta [earthquake]. We sent somebody up there to talk to the museums and see how they fared and what worked and what didn't work.

That all went into the body of knowledge that the Getty was collecting on seismic mitigation, and informed the design of the Getty Center.

But besides earthquakes, I can't think of any—I was trying to think if there was an example of fire, but I can't remember what. There were a couple times when there've been fires near the Villa, or just this last year, there was a fire up in Sepulveda Pass, not far from the Getty Center. It's designed to be very fire-resistant, the way the land around it is kept. There's lots of brush clearance every year to keep the brush down, and then the planted part is designed to slow fire down from reaching the building. Then the building itself is made of concrete and steel. We never had to test it, but the plan always was that if a fire would come through the canyon where the Villa is or down the hillside where the Getty Center is, that the thing to do would be to close all the doors; turn off the air conditioning, because it brings in outside air and you don't want smoke in the galleries; seal the doors; and ride it out. You wouldn't try to move the collection, because first of all, where are you going to move it to? And secondly, the roads are all stopped, are all blocked off. That was a problem getting to the Museum, especially the Villa, when they would have fires. They had a Topanga [Canyon] fire at one point. You'd try to go up there to see—say it happened on a weekend—and you couldn't get in because they'd block it off, the police, and they wouldn't let in. "Oh, I work at the Getty." Some people had success talking their way in, but generally, you didn't.

So the idea was just to make the buildings themselves fireproof and not try and move the collections. Every few years, they would ask me, well, what's our plan for moving the collections? So I thought, well, if you want to get some big air tankers that we keep on site and you want to develop a safe storage spot out in the desert, we can—it's just, how do you move it across LA? After an earthquake, how do you move art around town? "Well, can you look at outside storage places, see if there's someplace we can move it and store it?" Everyplace we looked, they wouldn't have climate control or their security systems weren't great. "So you mean there's going to be a major earthquake or a major fire and we're going to risk the art by trying to put it on a truck and move it across town to an inferior storage space?" It was just, "Let's just make this building the safest place for it to be, even [if] the earthquake's happening under us or if the fire's happening around us." So that's what they did.

Tewes: That's interesting. It's sort of a shelter-in-place for the art.

02-02:04:46

Hibbard: Yeah. Yeah.

Tewes: Interesting. Well, thinking more broadly, was there any fieldwork associated with the Registrar's Department?

02-02:05:07

Hibbard: You mean in an archaeological dig?

Tewes: No, as in travel required for the position.

02-02:05:14

Hibbard: Well, there were certainly courier trips we did all the time. We were going to start this program of loans from the Courtauld Institute [of Art], which was something initiated under Barry Munitz. The Getty Trust gave them a bunch of money to help them, help their finances, and in return they were going to lend us a selection of paintings over a period of—I can't remember—it was five years or something, six years, ten years. The Courtauld board liked this idea because they liked getting money. Courtauld staff were not very happy about it because they didn't like the idea that we were cherry picking their best paintings, taking them off. They were used to, when they made loans, to having very stringent demands about what—you have to pay for their insurance, you couldn't use your own. The deal with this was, no, it was going to be our insurance, but we would pay for the shipping. We'd pay for a courier; it would be business with the art and economy without, when they always demanded one round-trip—things like that. So I did go over there and meet with their staff—the registrar and, I think, a curator—about plans, and told them how we ship from London and that we do this all the time. And this is what the contract says, so this is how it's going to work. And do you have any questions? And there's an art shipping firm we used in London, who they used, too, and their representative came and listened in and offered his advice. So is that what you mean?

Tewes: Yeah.

02-02:07:25

Hibbard: More work outside of the Museum? Yeah.

Tewes: At what point registrars maybe *go with* curators when thinking if these object can even travel for an exhibition.

02-02:07:38

Hibbard: Mm-hm. Well, that was the conservator's call; it wouldn't have been the registrar's. What we would do is we would point out problems with the shipping route; lack of shipping qualified packers, like in the Sinai Peninsula or a particularly complicated route. We always tried to fly non-stop from major European cities, but sometimes—we borrowed these mosaics from Tunisia. Actually, it was one of the few times when we shipped something on a boat. But it was a truck loaded that then had to come across the Mediterranean to Germany, and was shipped from Frankfurt.

Tewes: So it stayed in the truck the whole time?

02-02:08:32

Hibbard:

Yeah. So the German shipping company went there and they did the packing. They're specialized art packers. They brought their trucks and their packing materials, they packed it, they put the art on the trucks, and then they drive onto the ferry, and then they go—I can't remember where they got off, if it was Italy or—it was probably somewhere in Italy. Then they drive up to Frankfurt, where they fly it to the US. So when that show was being proposed, that's something that I brought up. I said, "This is complicated. It's going to be complicated shipping." But it all worked out. In a lot of cases, we would rely on the shipping company's expertise. This company had shipped things from Tunisia before and could tell us what to look out for.

By far, the things you had to travel for were courier trips, which at the Getty were limited to collections staff. I think they are at most museums. So that meant curators, conservators, registrars, and art handlers were the staff from which couriers were drawn. When [the Getty] first started [sending couriers]—and for many years, it was pretty much the curator's call on [that]—they would say first if they wanted the trip. "No." A conservator could say, "This has to have a conservator." And that would always [mean that the courier had to be a conservator], so if it had tricky condition or [issues]—usually it didn't happen with a two-dimensional work, but [rather with] a sculpture. Then it was the conservators' dibs next. "Do you want to go? Do you want somebody on your staff to go?" Then my department, and then the art handlers. But around 2008, we got a new associate director for Collections, which was the person I reported to. David Bomford came from the National Gallery in London. They had a policy where they published like six months in advance the scheduled courier trips that [were coming up]. Because [with] outgoing loans, you usually send couriers with your own things to other institutions. Outgoing loans had to be requested a year in advance, in order to get onto the schedule and go through the approval process. So usually, we knew pretty far in advance when those trips were happening, and so we could publish the schedule. Then he said, "Do that, send it out to all the Collections Departments, and let people put their names in." Which was great, because it allowed people who don't often get to go on courier trips to say, "What about me?" It's more transparent. So I think they're still doing that today. We did it for the last eight years that I was there: 2008 to 20[14]. Six years [rather].

Tewes:

Was there a trip you took that stands out in your mind?

02-02:12:06

Hibbard:

Oh, there are several, but I took two trips with this corner cabinet. At the time we bought it in the eighties, it was the most expensive piece of furniture ever bought, because it was bought at auction. It's a really ugly thing, but it's very ornate. It goes in a corner. It has gilt bronze all over it and marquetry. It's French. It was bought from Geneva. I had to go there to get it and to accompany it back. Then I think two years later, Gillian Wilson decided that it had to be restored and there was no [in-house conservator]—it was before we

had a decorative arts studio set up at the Getty, a Conservation Department. She said the only person who could restore it was in England, so it had to go to England. So I accompanied it to England. It was a huge thing, but it broke down into three pieces. There were three pretty large crates, but not as large [as] if the whole thing was crated as one. So you fly over. You fly those long flights to Europe, and then it had to be taken up to this little village north of London, where this restorer had his shop, studio. So you get on a truck with these blokes and we start driving, and then they say, “Oh, it’s ten o’clock, time for a break.” They pull over to a pub and then go in and order a pint of beer. And that’s their coffee break; they drink a pint. Probably today, that wouldn’t happen, but this was one of my first—or maybe my third courier trip. So I didn’t feel like I could say, “Oh, we’re not having any drinking on this trip.” They were fine and they drove on. And we get to this guy’s shop, studio, and they have to go up these little, narrow stairs to this workroom on the top of this two-story building, and the crates won’t fit. So then they have to—everything’s double crated, so they have to open the crates outside and take them up in the inner crates. Those do fit, but there’s no elevator so that mostly—it was an experience. But the piece got there safely and it was restored. I didn’t have to go get it to bring it back; somebody else did that. But that was an adventurous trip.

Tewes: Sounds like it.

02-02:14:53

Hibbard: Yeah.

Tewes: How are you feeling, energy-wise? Do you have a few minutes left in you?

02-02:15:01

Hibbard: Well, what—

Tewes: I want to talk about the transition to the Getty Center, but that might be a while.

02-02:15:07

Hibbard: Do you have more topics after that?

Tewes: I think we can finish after that for today.

02-02:15:16

Hibbard: Well, I can go longer.

Tewes: Okay.

02-02:15:17

Hibbard: Maybe another half hour.

Tewes: That sounds good to me. So as you’ve mentioned earlier, there is a big Getty Center built in Brentwood, and officially opened to the public in 1997. But

you had a lot of preparation to do before that move. Can you tell me what kind of work you needed to do?

02-02:15:39

Hibbard:

Well, yes. We worked for years on that project, the whole Museum staff. But for the Registrar's Office, the big—first of all, there was planning our space, the program. Not only our workspace, office space, but also meeting with the chief preparator to talk about things like packing and crating and the art path. He really took the lead on that; he was really good at it. He wanted to make sure that anyplace an object needed to get, in any gallery in the space, there was a way for it to get there inside, and there would be no problems with heights or clearances. So that's why we ended up with three freight elevators, which is—we didn't have a one at the Villa. We had kind of a large passenger elevator that we made do. Sometimes you had to take things outside and bring it around on a bridge, up to the upper floor of the Villa, because it didn't fit in the large passenger elevator. The design that the director wanted, and everybody else, was these—have you been to the Getty Center?

Tewes:

Yes.

02-02:17:03

Hibbard:

Yeah. So you know how you go inside and outside of pavilions around a main courtyard. So if something had to go to the top floor, it came up in one pavilion, where the freight elevator was, but then it had to get to the second floor; it couldn't get there and stay [indoors]. You'd have to take it outside and then take it into the next pavilion. We didn't want that. So that's why we did it with freight elevators in three different places, in order to be able to get objects everywhere they needed to go, *inside* the climate-controlled envelope. So there was planning for that, planning for storerooms, which I was tangentially involved in.

But then the big planning responsibility for my department was planning the move. Again, we did it in conjunction with the art handlers, the chief preparator, and the conservators were very involved, especially the objects conservators. It seems like we were working on it—we *were* working on it—for years in advance. It was very nervous-making, but it went well. Security went a little bit nuts. We spent a lot of time talking about security for the move and what to do, and whether—somebody once had an idea that we should move at night because there were fewer people, bad guys out. I said, "What do you mean? Bad guys always come out at night. [laughs] And anyway, if something goes wrong, I don't want to be stuck at night on the road with a truck full of art and you can't get anybody in to fix it." So we rejected that. Besides, circadian rhythms and—this was going to go on for months, and to have to reverse people's work schedule—but so [for] the first move, the first truck that went, we had an art handler driving it; a registrar was on the truck; there was a plainclothes secur[ity]—one of our security cars was following it; [a] plainclothes policeman was following it; and then a [black

and white] police car in back—no, a police car in front—and then a helicopter, [laughs] a police helicopter overhead.

Tewes: Oh, wow.

02-02:19:58

Hibbard: People on the street were like, what's going on? So we regrouped and said no. I said, "I don't want all that attention. Let's just go to no police cars. Let's go to plainclothes all [the way] and no helicopter, because we want to be a little bit under the radar. We don't want people [thinking], what's going on there?" So they did that.

Then we did things like vary the route. There are several routes you can take, and you didn't know the route you were going to take until the truck loaded up, and then the head of security would come out and give it to you. Then there was all the recordkeeping. You record things that go into the crates, the number of crates. It was typical moving stuff. And then updating the system when stuff got over there. Multiple moves.

Then there was the whole period of installation, where they were taking things up to the galleries and installing them. We had these big carts in the galleries on wheels, where you can lock up small stuff overnight, so you didn't have to bring it back down. Of course, the carts were fixed in place, so they wouldn't roll if there was an earthquake.

It was a lot of coordination, recordkeeping. But it was also rewarding because you were doing this great thing, you were creating this new museum.

Tewes: Did you have to change any of your procedures within the Registrar's Department because of this move, because there was a difference in storage spaces or gallery spaces?

02-02:21:57

Hibbard: Not really. It all translated pretty well, because a storeroom, even if it's a different configuration, is still a storeroom.

We had to come up with a set of procedures for not letting people get on the tram with art. If they had art, they had to be redirected back to their cars, and they had to call and see if they could—sometimes members of the public want to bring art in for curators to look at or expertise, things like that. Usually they are smart enough to know that they should call ahead of time, but I was worried about—sometimes people did show up at the Villa just with a painting in their car [trunk]. [We'd say], "Well, sorry, [the curator is] not here today. You've got call and make an appointment and come back later." We didn't want to have that happen at the Getty Center, [where] the person's got the work of art on the tram [and] it gets damaged while it's on the tram. So that was a little bit different.

Is there anything else? No, I don't think the art procedures had to be adjusted very much just because of the move. As always, new wrinkles turned up and we'd have to adjust that; but it was more to do with situations than with the difference between the buildings.

I think there was more of a people adjustment, people adjusting. The Villa's kind of in a canyon; it's very intimate. It's also just the Museum. And here, you're up on a hill and you're one of several entities. Again, because Harold Williams was such a humanist—it wouldn't have happened under any of the other presidents—but they had a team of psychologists come in and talk about transitions and talk to the staff about adjusting to new workspaces, new environments. It's one of those only-at-the-Getty things. But it was a nice idea.

Tewes: If I'm understanding correctly, that also meant your department was split, with the two registrars [left] at the Villa.

02-02:24:43

Hibbard:

Right. So then we had to get used to having two offices. Although because in the buildup to the Getty Center, we hired more staff—because we're going to need more staff at the Getty and we're going to need to leave a contingent at the Villa—so I was able to hire, I think, two additional people, who also were hired to work on the move. There wasn't room in our existing department, and so those two additional people were located in a different place onsite. In the Ranch House, was it? No, they had some temporary buildings, trailers that we brought in; they were located up there. So we kind of got a little bit of practice of having staff in two different places instead of all being together in the same large room, which is the case now at the Getty Center, and was the case before the move at the Villa. But yeah, that was an adjustment. That was more of an adjustment for me, because I had to go back and forth. And maybe for the staff assistant, because she did things for the Department as a whole. But the rest of the people, they—and the collections managers did a lot with the Villa, at the Villa, too—so yeah, it was an adjustment.

Tewes: That's interesting, that the personnel aspect of the move was just as important as the art movement. What about the new exhibitions that were going to occur at the Center? I'm wondering how the Registrar's Department handled all of that, which you had been doing at the Villa, plus the move. Did that affect the move at all or vice versa?

02-02:26:46

Hibbard:

Well, we tried not to let anything affect the move. There was one registrar who stayed back on the farm, or she moved over with us, [but she] wasn't assigned to the move. She was assigned to working on the upcoming exhibitions. So we weren't really making many loans; we'd had a loan moratorium. We weren't really borrowing things yet, but we would be for these exhibitions. So she was working on the exhibitions, the first exhibitions. It was really too much, actually. But she held it together and she got it done.

So that was hard. That was hard, because I really should've had another person I could've taken somebody off the move to work with her; but if I did that, then the move [would be understaffed]. So it was sort of like, protect the move at all costs. And the installation, because we're opening at the end of the year and it has to get done. But yeah, we kind of had to hit the ground running, starting to plan these exhibitions, because they [have] a long planning horizon, timeline.

Tewes: So you've detailed the move itself, with the plainclothes [police] and the route differentiation. I'm wondering if there's anything about moving within such a short distance that differed from these transatlantic moves you'd arranged in the past.

02-02:28:31
Hibbard:

No. We purposely said, no, there is no difference. If anything, it's got to be even tighter, because there's going to be more of them and more possibility for someone to notice and bad guys to do stuff. The one thing that would be different is for the packing, was a little bit different. So if it wasn't a climate-sensitive object—say it was a marble sculpture, where we would normally double crate it to protect it from shock, so if it falls off the trolley to the airplane, it won't be damaged. Our art handlers figured they could put some of these things in slat crates, which [are] a lot faster, cheaper to build. They're essentially open crates that kind of stabilize the object but don't seal it in. Since it was our guys on the trucks—we did use a local art shipping company to help, but they were all trained art handlers, and we were going to have a registrar on every truck—we didn't think it was necessary to completely seal up all the crates. So that was a little bit different than if we were lending a statue to an exhibition in Paris. But otherwise, the security was just as rigorous, if not more so. Security officers would follow in their own cars, I remember, when we took something to or from the airport. So we were already used to doing that. But we didn't usually have police, plainclothes policemen, which was something we added, that our head of Security added.

Tewes: I'm not sure if this is relevant or not, but I'm just wondering if LA's traffic patterns played into this move at all.

02-02:30:46
Hibbard:

Well, we were fort[unate]. First of all, it was a close distance. It does get very backed up going east on Sunset [Boulevard] in the evenings. When I was coming [home from] the Getty Center, I would be coming west towards Santa Monica. And it was always a smooth shot home for me, but you'd see traffic backed up for miles on Sunset. I guess it's people who work in the Palisades or Malibu and they can't afford to live there, so they drive back to the 405 and go over to the valley or something. But that would happen in the evenings, and we would do our moves mid-morning. So after the morning traffic had diminished or ended, that's when we'd start. There wasn't really a lot of traffic at that time. The time we would never do [it] would be in the evening,

when coming from the Villa over to [the Getty Center because that] is when there was traffic backed up. So it wasn't specifically because of that; I think it just worked out that way. But yeah, that's another reason not to work at night: because if you start to move in the evening, there's still going to be traffic on Sunset going [east].

Tewes: Is there anything else you want to add about the move itself and what that meant for you?

02-02:32:36

Hibbard: No, I can't think of—I was greatly relieved when it was all done. It went very smoothly. We didn't lose anything, nothing got damaged. Yeah.

Tewes: Good. As we close out for today, is there anything you'd want to add about the development of the Registrar's Department?

02-02:33:11

Hibbard: I can't think of anything. Let me think on it overnight.

Tewes: I definitely want to hear that. Thank you so much for your time today.

Interview 3: August 2, 2018

Tewes: This is a third interview with Sally Hibbard for the Getty Trust Oral History Project, in association with the Oral History Center at UC Berkeley. The interview is being conducted by Amanda Tewes at Ms. Hibbard's home in Santa Monica, California, on August 2, 2018. So thank you for meeting me for a third session.

03-00:00:20

Hibbard: My pleasure.

Tewes: I thought we'd pick up today with some of the work you were doing outside of the mainstream at Getty. One of these was, actually, you did some teaching work over the years. From 1981 to 1983, you taught with University of Southern California. Tell me what you were doing with that program.

03-00:00:43

Hibbard: I think it was a museum studies course. The woman who was teaching it wanted a session on museum registration methods. Maybe it was two sessions; it definitely wasn't a whole course. So she asked me to do it and I said yes. She would bring the class to the Getty. That was my experience whenever somebody would ask me to teach a class about museum registration. So the students would come, I'd give a brief presentation of the kind of work we did, and then kind of throw it open to questions. It was always a good group and they always had interesting questions.

Tewes: I'm wondering, it sounds like this was a very hands-on sort of teaching experience for you.

03-00:01:44

Hibbard: Well, we sat around in the office. If I'd done it after we'd digitized, there would've been a demo of the system, but at that point there wasn't. So it was mainly discussing accessioning, marking objects, shipping objects—the same kinds of things we've been discussing—and how the registrar does that at museums.

Tewes: Why do you think there wasn't a formalized training at the university about registration?

03-00:02:19

Hibbard: Well, the woman who was teaching the class, her background was as a curator, so she could speak to that. She wasn't working in a museum. Well, she was at USC; I guess they did have a gallery. So I think she just wanted more expertise than she had, so that's why she would—I think in a few other cases she also had outside speakers from museums. I'm not sure, but I think conservation was one of them.

Tewes: I just find it interesting because you say you didn't really get a formalized version of this course during your art history work.

03-00:03:03

Hibbard: Right, right. I would've liked someone to do for me what I did for these students. But it was still pretty rudimentary, just kind of touching the surface. But at least it gave them awareness of the existence of the profession and kind of what we did, what we do. What *they* do; I don't do it anymore.

Tewes: You did something similar through Cal State Fullerton in 1982, I believe.

03-00:03:37

Hibbard: Yes, it was the same idea. The teacher there, I think, was a friend who worked in the Education Department at LACMA [Los Angeles County Museum of Art]. He would go down to Fullerton to teach a class, but occasionally he'd bring the class to other places for exposure to other things that he didn't know so much about. So he asked me to do the same thing for his class on museum registration, which I did. Similar; they came, we talked, I made a brief presentation, and then answered questions.

Tewes: Was the Getty supportive of this teaching work and using the Getty as a model?

03-00:04:28

Hibbard: Well, I don't even know if they knew. Well, they must've, because I would've had to make reservations. Yes, everybody always was showing groups around or meeting—it was considered sort of part of your job. Especially when we opened the Getty Center, they kind of tapped all the department heads to help lead tours and show people the new site, the new building. So I think it's a museum thing.

Tewes: This is also pretty early on in your career at the Getty, and I'm wondering if you felt prepared to impart everything you'd learned.

03-00:05:19

Hibbard: Well, that's all I could do, was tell them what I'd learned. But yeah, I'd been there, what, more than five years on the job, so I knew—I wasn't the most expert registrar around, but I knew enough to tell them about the field and what I did and what I knew other people did. Even then, I'd been to conferences and met with other registrars, so I knew that what I was doing was right.

Tewes: Felt confident about that.

03-00:06:00

Hibbard: Uh-huh.

Tewes: You also mentioned in an earlier session that you had graduate interns at the Registrar's Department. Can you tell me about this program a little bit more?

03-00:06:13

Hibbard:

Yes. It was a program that continues to this day. I think it was started in the late seventies at the Getty. You had to be in a master's program to apply. Initially, it was pretty much only the curatorial offices that were taking interns. But eventually, the program grew and we decided, well, why shouldn't we take one, too? No, sorry. I think the program started in the eighties. And it was a number of years before we started taking interns. We took our first intern, I think, around 1988 or '89, and then pretty much every year since then and to this day. Sometimes there would be a funding cut and not every department who wanted an intern could get one. So then they would say, "You can't have an intern this year." Or they would take turns telling different departments they couldn't have one. So there might've been one or two years that we didn't have one. It was surprising the number of people who wanted to work in the Registrar's Office. They were all getting master's in museum studies; a few in art history, but mostly museum studies. A number of them have gone on and are working in other museums, so it's been a good training.

Tewes:

How did you structure these internships in your department? What did you hope these interns would learn or help with?

03-00:08:11

Hibbard:

Well, it became more and more structured over time. At the beginning, they were really just kind of shadowing different people in the Department and working on projects they assigned. Then it became more formal, where we'd have not only them doing that, but also having specific tutorials on certain topics. I always did fine arts insurance and one of the exhibitions registrars would do exhibition planning and things like that. Emergency preparedness, those topics that we—well, they worked on exhibition planning all the time, but they weren't necessarily there when we'd have an emergency drill, so we [thought], well, we should cover this separately and this should be a tutorial. By the time they left, they were pretty much exposed to all the things that we encountered in our work.

Tewes:

Were these students from local universities?

03-00:09:23

Hibbard:

No. They applied from all over the country. Even a lot of international students, too, applied. One year we had somebody from Ireland. But mostly, they were from the States. Sometimes if there was a good candidate who was local I liked to take them, because why not support the local students? But it really was more about their qual[ifications], what they had done and how they'd shown interest in the field in the past. I was a little bit wary of taking somebody who really wanted to be a curator. So you could usually tell that from their work experience.

Tewes:

Are there any notable interns you would like to mention or work that came out of their tenure?

03-00:10:27

Hibbard:

Well, I don't know about not[able] and I've been out of touch for a while, but we have somebody who went to the Guggenheim in New York and someone who went to the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C. When I left, there was an intern, someone we'd had as an intern, who was working at LACMA in the Registrar's Office. I'm sure there're more, I just can't think of more examples.

Tewes:

That's fine. Well, yesterday you spoke about how you had to teach yourself, in many ways, how to do this work. How do you think that impacted your approach to teaching and mentoring others?

03-00:11:15

Hibbard:

Well, I certainly liked it when somebody had initiative and I could give them a little background and say, "If you really want to know more about this—" we had an in-house library with lots of books on collections management and a lot of publications on registration methods and copyright and—so I guess because I'd had to figure it out and learn it myself, I always appreciated when we had interns who were motivated to do that, as well, and just didn't need it all given to them verbally. So there was that.

But really, the best thing about the program was hands-on work, whether it's overseeing and entering and proofing a data entry project or working in the galleries. We often had interns working in the galleries on exhibition installations, which was great experience and fun, rather interesting. So that was the best, I think, experience. Better than the tutorials and the research and reading museum registration methods was the actual hands-on work.

Tewes:

Do you think the opportunity for more hands-on work was something that made the Getty an appealing internship?

03-00:12:58

Hibbard:

Oh, irrespective of my department's participation, the Getty internships were very coveted and they got lots of highly-qualified people. I think it was people who wanted to work in museums. And if you want to work in a museum, it would be a nice museum to work at, so we never had any problem having applicants.

Tewes:

Wonderful. Now, you have been involved in several professional organizations over the years. We talked about AAM yesterday, which is now the American Alliance for Museums. What is RC-WR?

03-00:13:46

Hibbard:

Oh, I'm not even sure it's called that anymore; it might be called WMA now. Let's see, WR was Western Region, and the Registrars Committee. So just like the AAM had the national group, then each region had its own group and own conference. Then the Registrars Committee had the main committee and

then had these regional [ones]. So RC[-WR] is the Registrars Committee of the Western Region.

Tewes: Got it.

03-00:14:24

Hibbard: So mainly registrars from the West like California, Arizona, Oregon, and Washington—I can't remember—Utah maybe, and Nevada and New Mexico. I can't remember how far West it went, but—

Tewes: [laughs] So you started attending these conferences in 19—well, you may have been attending it earlier, but you were presenting on a panel starting in 1978.

03-00:14:52

Hibbard: Right.

Tewes: That was on the importance of museum objects. And that was a [RC-WR] conference.

03-00:15:01

Hibbard: Right. Importation.

Tewes: Importation.

03-00:15:04

Hibbard: Importation of museum objects.

Tewes: Oh, sorry.

03-00:15:07

Hibbard: Yeah. So that's kind of part of art shipping, when you're shipping it from overseas and you're importing it. What are the rules about that and how do you do it? Basically, you have to have a customs broker; but how do you find one? How do you decide what customs broker to use? Things like that. Also some of the rules that the customs brokers follow. Art is duty free, so you don't have to pay duty on art. At this time, I don't think there were any fees. There was later a fee for just the—I can't remember the name of it, but it was a fee for the time that the customs had to deal with your import. It wasn't just on art; I think they did it across the board. It initially started, I think, [at] 4 percent or maybe 4 percent of the value of the shipment, which was fine for most importers that were importing china or flatware or things like that. But we had one painting come in that was worth \$50 million; it was an exorbitant [fee], it was like a \$200,000 fee for just processing the paperwork. So we fought that. I think they raised it with the Getty's legal counsel and they raised it with their colleagues at the other museums, and it got changed so that there was a percentage or a ceiling. And the ceiling was something like \$700. But I didn't actually talk about that at the conference because that hadn't happened yet. But things like that. What to know about importing.

Tewes: Well, and certainly you had been doing a lot of that work already by that time.

03-00:17:20

Hibbard: Yes. Yeah, yeah. Well, only three years, but I guess they thought I knew—they asked me to do it, so—the Getty was acquiring a lot and people knew that.

Tewes: Another—this goes to what we spoke about yesterday—in 1994, you spoke at the MCN [Museum Computer Network] conference?

03-00:17:44

Hibbard: Yes.

Tewes: About computer-generated loan forms.

03-00:17:47

Hibbard: Right. These were early days. So you get all your data in the system, but then do you still have to go to a typewriter to type up a loan form? It seems so obvious now: you just make a template that the whole thing can print out on. But people weren't used to that and didn't know how to do it. So I took ours and did—what do you call that; it was before Keynote, so you had to use [an] overhead projector—and explained how we did it. People seemed to like it.

Tewes: I'm wondering. That same year, you published something through the Museum Computer Network called "Computer Generated Forms." Did that come out of this conference?

03-00:18:38

Hibbard: Right, right.

Tewes: Was that mainly about how you had implemented it at the Getty, or what you hoped the field would be doing?

03-00:18:46

Hibbard: Yes, how we implemented it at the Getty. I wasn't trying to dictate to the field. Although it really was a no-brainer. You design it, you make it, you have a blank sheet of paper. Initially, just the data would print on the form. And then eventually as we went on, finally we got the logo that we could insert into the report, in the database, so you just stuck a blank piece of paper and you got the form out that looked just like what we had stuck in a typewriter.

Tewes: It's interesting to hear about the development of these ideas. [laughs]

03-00:19:33

Hibbard: Right, right. It seems so obvious now, but people were wrestling with it. Well, how do we get that to match up? Well, you make the headings part of the report, so then you don't have to worry about it matching up. But at that point, we didn't know—we didn't have the ability to add the logo to the database and get that printed, too.

Tewes: A few years later, 1998, you hosted a spring meeting of Southern California members of the Registrars Committee of Western Region. Can you tell me about that conference? Because you did a lot of work for that.

03-00:20:15

Hibbard: Yes. We knew that everybody was interested in seeing the Getty Center, and everybody in the museum field—well, most people in the museum field, especially registrars—were interested in behind-the-scenes tours. We had great new conservation labs; a beautiful loading dock, which registrars go nuts about; first-rate art storage. So after we opened—we'd been open a couple months—I got permission to have this meeting. We invited all the people who are members of the Western Region, local—although I did get some calls from registrars. There was a registrar from the Kimbell [Art Museum] who called me up and said, "Well, can I come to this?" I said, "Sure." We were going to take them through the storeroom, so we couldn't have hundreds of people. I think we limited it to about fifty, and then we were going to break them up into different groups to tour through so they wouldn't have a big, huge group going through at one time. So we met in the Museum's auditorium. We said hello, we broke up into groups, went around—we had figured out a route—then we went back to the auditorium and answered questions, and then had a box lunch.

Tewes: Do you remember any feedback from anyone on the tour about these new facilities?

03-00:21:58

Hibbard: Well, everybody was blown away because the Getty, especially then—and even today—is beautifully [planned]—the behind-the-scenes is terrific. The labs are great, the conservation studios are wonderful, storerooms—we ran out of storage for photographs, but otherwise storerooms are all—the furnishings, the shelving and the racks and all these things are top-flight. So people were very impressed. Also they were very impressed with the Registrar's Office, because at the Villa I had been in the basements for twenty years. So when we were planning the office at Brentwood, I said, "I need natural light." I kind of had to fight for that, but in the end we got it. So we have a whole wall of windows in this long office with different workstations. So they were very impressed with that.

Tewes: I think it is true that much of the time registrars get stuck in the dark corners—

03-00:23:11

Hibbard: It is. Right, right.

Tewes: [laughs] —of the archives.

03-00:23:14

Hibbard: Well, it was fortuitous, in that the building goes down the side of a ridge. So there were lower floors that had windows where we could locate our offices.

Tewes: How do you think these facilities at the Getty Center have held up twenty years on?

03-00:23:39

Hibbard: Pretty well. They do keep up with maintenance. They do have resources, so they keep up with maintenance. There are some times I would be in an interior stairwell that only staff sees or an interior elevator, and I'd notice the door's kind of banged up or the banister was chipped. It didn't look as good as the stuff that was out where the public was, but that's to be expected. You always pay more attention to the front of the house.

I think there were some challenges. The travertine floors that are outside on the plaza had little divots in them, because of smoothing travertine, there's going to be depressions. When we first opened, women in spiked heels were getting their heels caught them and falling. So they went around and they filled them with kind of a—it must have been a plastic material. But then it kind of yellowed, so then they had to—I can't remember what they did to fix that. So there were surprises like that, that again, happens with most new buildings.

Tewes: Breaking it in?

03-00:25:01

Hibbard: Mm-hm.

Tewes: Also in 1998, you were a speaker at the AAM conference, which was in LA. I think this was about collection moves. Considering you had just completed a very large move, what were you speaking about?

03-00:25:23

Hibbard: These kinds of talks are kind of usual, because I went to ones given by other registrars at other AAM conferences myself. We had a lot of photographs, because as we were moving we documented it. So I would speak to slides and just describe what we were doing and how we did it. So there would be pictures of the art handlers packing objects in the galleries and pictures of loading the trucks and pictures of riding over on the trucks, and then pictures at the other end of the installation and working on that. So it was usually the same story, but it just helped to have the visuals. Then afterwards, sometimes I would get follow-up phone calls with questions about, "Well, how did you mark your crates," or things like that.

Tewes: Did you have the sense that there was something you did during that move that intrigued your colleagues?

03-00:26:48

Hibbard: Well, we certainly had more money for security. I did tell the same story about how there was way too much security in the beginning. You could tell that there was something going on, and we wanted to be more under the radar.

So I think they were intrigued by the idea of a helicopter overhead, but not in a good way. We heavily relied on the collections management system to track the collection, so I think people were interested in that. Although by then, a fair—most museums, if they didn't have a collections management systems already, they were going to have one, they were getting one. So it wasn't so unusual. So I don't think there was anything earth-shattering that we said, but I think it was just helpful—as it was to me—to see, well, this is the process and this is what it looks like; this is how they did it.

Tewes: You just mentioned the collections management system. And I'm not sure I picked up on that: that this, in many ways, seems like the ultimate test of everything you had put in place regarding management.

03-00:28:07

Hibbard: Right, right. So we had a rule that everything had to be entered—anything that moved one day had to be into the system by the end of the next day. So we had people who were furiously—it depended on how many objects were [in a shipment]—sometimes one person could get it all in; sometimes we needed two. Not only did the objects have numbers, but then when the objects went into crates, the crates had numbers, and then we tracked the numbers as they went out the door, and then we tracked the numbers as they came off the truck, into the new place. That all got entered. So not only to help us track it, but also that we'd have a record. It could generate checkoff lists and reports with object crate numbers and item numbers. It worked really well and made it a lot easier than if we'd had to do it manually.

Tewes: Oh, I imagine.

03-00:29:10

Hibbard: This was still with Quixis. We didn't have TMS, The Museum System yet, but Quixis worked fine for it.

Tewes: For that particular move?

03-00:29:19

Hibbard: Mm-hm. This isn't on [the list I gave you], but after the Villa opened we did the same kind of thing. I didn't organize it myself. By that time, we had a Villa registrar who reported to me, and she and her assistant registrar, the assistant registrar for the Villa, organized a similar thing for the Southern California or Western Region Registrars Committee to come see a behind-the-scenes tour of the Villa after it had been remodeled.

Tewes: Oh, that's a great idea. We're going to talk about the remodel a little bit later. Finally, I think we decided in 2008 you spoke at AAM again about couriers traveling with artwork. Do you remember what your main concerns were for this topic? Because you'd been thinking about how this process has gone back in the seventies. Had anything changed in 2008?

03-00:30:22

Hibbard:

No, it was pretty much the same with—well, probably [not in] the seventies. We didn't do it much in the seventies, but in the eighties and nineties there were already starting to be standardization. Like the idea that you pay business class when that person is traveling with the object, but you only have to pay for economy for the return to keep costs down. Three nights was standard for international, that you'd pay the person to stay for three nights in your location. Sometimes we had to pay for longer, because we needed the person to stay longer because there were multiple objects and they were being installed in different cases on different days. But the minimum was three nights, and for domestic couriers it was two nights. So that had been evolving all the way up until at the time I—or had been evolving in the eighties and nineties. And by the time I gave the talk, there was a standard, this code of courier practice that was the AAM code that we all tried to follow. But all along with that were these crazy demands that some museums—sometimes it was the museum, but usually it was just the staff member who had more autonomy to make demands and say, "Oh, no, I want round-trip business," or, "No, I want to stay a week and I want my family member." That kind of stuff. A lot of what I spent time talking about was ways to push back on that, because you don't want to offend the person but you want to try and protect the resources of your institution and what had worked for us. So that was the kind of talk it was.

Tewes:

That reminds me that it feels like the Registrar's Department is often the frontline in cultivating a relationship with the lender. Do you agree with that?

03-00:32:48

Hibbard:

Yes. Not the front[line]. The very first contact is from the curator. But then once we've asked for the loan and we're negotiating the loan, it is the Registrar's Office that's often trying to negotiate these things. Sometimes we have to call in backup from either the curator or the director, draft a letter for director to sign and say, "This doesn't seem reasonable" to his counterparts. "Is there anything you can do to help us out with this?" But a lot of times, the Registrar's Office would be on the ground fighting these battles, [laughs] so—

Tewes:

It's a lot of pressure. [laughs]

03-00:33:36

Hibbard:

Mm-hm.

Tewes:

Finally, we mentioned you wrote about computer-generated forms. But also in 1994, you published in the *Registrations Quarterly* about labeling procedures.

03-00:33:53

Hibbard:

Marking objects.

Tewes:

Marking objects.

03-00:33:55

Hibbard:

Yeah. Yeah. Which was funny, because actually at the Getty, since we have a huge conservation staff, we don't mark the objects, the registrars [that is]. They often do in small museums that have no conservators. But we do check that the objects are marked, we record it in the database. Or we did; I'm sure they're still doing that. So really, I had to talk to all the conservators about the marking materials and how to do it and which materials are good to use for what kind of objects. A lot of it is chemistry. For fragments or pottery, ceramics, you put down a layer of a B-72, which is kind of like plastic, and then you mark it with the number, and then you put another layer of B-72 on top, let it dry. So it was things like that, different media. And what do you do? How do you mark it? Textiles, you might sew a label on in a discreet place. Paintings are easy because you just [put] a sticker on the back of the frame.

Tewes:

It feels like 1994 was a big year for you. Do you recall it being so?

03-00:35:31

Hibbard:

Yeah, I guess I was more involved at that time in these outside groups. Yeah, I guess so. I don't really know why I did more of that back then than I did later. Maybe I just was more ambitious back in the nineties, but who knows?

Tewes:

Well, certainly leading up into the move, you were preoccupied.

03-00:36:04

Hibbard:

Yeah.

Tewes:

Is there anything you want to speak to more about your professional development?

03-00:36:12

Hibbard:

No, I think we've pretty much covered it.

Tewes:

Okay. Well, then I want to move back into conversation about the Getty. We mentioned that the Getty Villa reopened in 2006, but I think it was under construction for several years before that. How did the construction onsite affect the staff members who were there?

03-00:36:42

Hibbard:

If you don't mind, I just thought of something else about professional development.

Tewes:

Oh, go ahead.

03-00:36:46

Hibbard:

One thing is, my staff got bigger. And so with these conferences and meetings, I really wanted them all to be able to travel and go to one conference a year. So since I had done all that, oftentimes I wouldn't go to a conference because I wanted to use the money to send someone there. I thought it was very important for my staff to have professional development opportunities, too.

Tewes: Oh, I think that's great. That's part of why we're talking about mentorship, developing your department.

03-00:37:21

Hibbard: Yeah. Anyway, sorry. So let's—

Tewes: Oh, the Getty Villa reopening, and there was construction onsite. Was your department of two that was still there displaced at all?

03-00:37:37

Hibbard: Yes, they moved, along with the curators' offices and the Conservation Department. They moved to something called the South Building, which is on the Brentwood site. Have you driven in the south gate ever to go up?

Tewes: No.

03-00:37:58

Hibbard: Okay. Well, it's an entrance that's off of Church Lane, and now it's where they direct all business appointments; they didn't back then, but now they direct all business appointments through that entrance. There's a building there, and it was—I can't remember, I think it was just for future use, something that was built for future use, and they were storing stuff in it. But anyway, they rehabbed it for offices for people at the Villa to work in while the Villa was under construction, because there wasn't any place to work there. So actually, they were closer; they were just down the hill. In a way, it was kind of easier managing the Department. It wasn't a twenty-minute drive each way. Although we did go over to the Villa a lot to see how the construction was coming, once they started working on the finishes and—

Tewes: Did you need to move the collection at all during this construction?

03-00:39:08

Hibbard: Yes. We moved the collection out and stored it at the Getty Center, in various places. There was some future gallery space that a lot of it was stored in, because it wasn't being used. Nooks and crannies. So it was kind of all over the place. That move out was, again, a big collections management challenge. I think by then we did have The Museum System. Then when it came time to move it all back, we moved it all back. By that time, we were so experienced moving across town with that route that it went very smoothly. Not that the first time didn't, but there was more to learn the first time.

Tewes: Was there anything you decided to do differently, having been through a move about ten years before?

03-00:40:14

Hibbard: I don't think so. I think we had even better reports, because the report generator in The Museum System was a little bit easier to work with than the one in Quixis. But it was pretty much the same process. There probably were some improvements that I'm just not remembering, but nothing stands out.

Tewes: I also want to talk a bit about the economics of running this department. We spoke about your budget yesterday. The Getty is known for have a very large operating budget, but it still has its financial challenges, particularly with downturns in the stock market. How have these various financial downturns affected Getty operations and your department in particular?

03-00:41:19

Hibbard: Well, they always did. We would hear in the good years about the smoothing formula and how they would average the return on investment over a period of three years. Then based on that, they would project for the next year: how much budget for the whole operation, how much it would be, and whether it would be an increase or decrease. So if you had a bad year where the market was down and the return was poor, that would get averaged in. By the same token, if there was a great year where the stock market rose, you wouldn't just automatically get to spend 10 percent more the following year because it would be averaged over this period of three years. So that made sense. But then it seemed like whenever there was a downturn, all of a sudden the smoothing formula's out the window. "Well, we did terribly last year, so there's going to be no budget increase this year. In fact, we have to make a 3 percent cut or a 5 percent cut," or whatever. So that was always challenging.

But basically, [during] the time I was at the Getty the stock market performed pretty well, with a couple notable exceptions. I remember the first big downturn, I think was in 1987, where the stock market fell 400 points in one day. Immediately, there was a hiring freeze. It was difficult for us because I'd just lost our staff assistant. The associate director for collections hired her away from us. So I was in the process of hiring a new staff assistant and, "Oh, no." "How long is this freeze going to go on?" But it turned out okay because they didn't prohibit hiring—people transferring from another department. In fact, one of the best applicants was already working at the Getty in another department and wanted to come work in the Registrar's Office. But there were departments that were affected; they couldn't make their hires. So it was difficult.

Then you'd be told you had to cut so much from your budget. For my department, the operations budget [I budgeted for] was pretty small, because [it did not include] salaries. There were a couple years where they didn't give any staff increases or even cost-of-living or anything because of the economy. But they never said, "You all have to take a 3 percent cut in your salary." So the cuts we had to make were to things like operating supplies and memberships—maybe we'd have to cut out a few organizations that we join—or travel, things like that. But people felt it when it happened.

And then in 2000—when was it, 2008? Is that when the big—

Tewes: Yes. The recession?

03-00:44:58

Hibbard:

The Great Recession. We had to make staff cuts then. I'm not sure if it was in 2009 that we had to cut staff. That was hard because they decided they weren't going to cut any of the Conservation and Curatorial Departments, because they're kind of the meat of the institution. The Museum, that's where everything, all the ideas come from. But other departments had to cut staff. I had to cut one staff member. It was hard because a lot of the other departments supported the work of the curators and conservators, like the Registrar's Office, the Imaging Services, the art handlers, and the designers. So they were having to cut staff, but the people generating their work were still the same size. So that was challenging. But we did it, we got through it.

Tewes:

Do you remember how long that particular budgetary cut lasted?

03-00:46:17

Hibbard:

Well, I think it lasted until after I left. We were eventually able to hire another staff assistant, but that's because we reorganized the work of the Department and decided we didn't need—I think by that time, we had three people at the Villa. Yeah, after the Villa reopened, we hired a staff assistant there half time. Then she became fulltime and was promoted to assistant registrar. We decided we just needed two people at the Villa, so we had that position that we could fill and hire a staff assistant in the Brentwood office, [where] there was a greater need for one. So I never got that position back when I was there; I left in 2014. But a year or two later, Betsy [Severance] was able to add another position to the Department. Now, also the workload was increasing. So I don't know if she'd say it was like having a new position or just adding back the position. She probably would've liked to have back that position and another one, but at least she was able to come back to what had been our previous strength.

Tewes:

At these times when there are budget cuts being made to different departments, did you ever feel like you got feedback or were able to give feedback about how it would affect your department or how you would prefer these cuts to be made?

03-00:48:12

Hibbard:

Well, after the recession, there was a second round. I think it was in 2012, it was right after Jim Cuno had started. He came in with a mandate to cut Museum staff. People thought the Museum got off too easy a couple years before and that the other programs had to cut more. So there was another round of cuts. I heard about these other departments getting asked to justify—and they did go to the departments and say, “Why do you need so many people?” You have to justify what you do and all that. They didn't contact me and I thought, yay, I don't have to cut another staff person. But eventually, I did get a call from the CFO saying, “What can you cut? Tell us what you can do.” So I looked at it and I thought I would offer myself up. Now, because I was the only one who was really of retirement age, I could start collecting a pension at that time. Wouldn't have been as good as the one I ultimately got,

because the number of years factors into your formula. But they were also offering a kind of a buyout, which was two weeks for every year of service that they would pay your salary. So for me, because I'd been there so long, I could've been paid for a year-and-a-half and then start taking a pension. So it wasn't completely altruistic. But I wasn't ready to retire. In fact, they turned me down and they said, "Oh, you don't have to get rid of anybody. We don't want to lose you," or, "We don't want to pay your severance; it's too much." So it was nice that in the end we didn't have to be cut again. But I really didn't want my staff—they were all younger. I didn't want to have to lay anyone off. So in that case, yes, they did come and ask us and let us try and defend ourselves.

Tewes: Wow. I want to ask a bit about the Getty's ongoing antiquities troubles. I don't know how best to describe this. Yesterday, you mentioned [in] earlier years there were some problems with—

03-00:51:06

Hibbard: Donations.

Tewes: Donations, yes. These ones really revolve around an Italian suit about antiquities being removed illegally from the country. Can you tell me a bit about what you remember about the situation?

03-00:51:25

Hibbard: Well, the Italians had discovered—they'd raided a freeport—Port Franc in, I think it was Geneva; it was somewhere in Switzerland—of an Italian dealer, and found photographs of objects that were obviously recently out of the ground, because they still had dirt on them. So it was sort of like a smoking gun that these had been recently excavated. A number of them, the Getty hadn't bought them from that dealer, but [they] were in the Getty. So the dealer had sold them to somebody else, who then sold them to the Getty; or a large group of them were donated by the Fleischmans [Barbara and Lawrence], who were these collectors in New York. So this started a whole investigation by the Carabinieri. They started investigating Marion True, who was the curator of antiquities at the time, even though there were objects in other museums that were also found in this trove of photographs. But the Getty had the most, and it was the most visible museum collecting antiquities. So there were years where we were producing reports for the lawyers, for our lawyers to give to the Italian lawyers, to give to the Italian government, to tell all the information we had on these objects. Then they indicted Marion, which was terrible. I think in the end, they never really intended to convict her. I think it was a way to scare American museums and collectors into not buying antiquities. In fact, it worked. Right after she was indicted, the director of the Metropolitan [Museum of Art] went over to Rome and said, "Let's make a deal," and gave back some objects in the collection and protected his staff from being indicted as a result. So it was unfortunate. It was a hard time.

Tewes: You mentioned that you were friends with Marion. How did this affect you on a personal level?

03-00:54:24

Hibbard: Well, I was devastated. I felt badly for her because she was having to go through these horrible experiences of going to the trial in Rome and all these paparazzi taking pictures of her. And it spread. She had a house in Greece, which the authorities raided there and claimed she had used Greek antiquities in building the house. Well, in Greece you see column bits and marble bits in foundations of houses and in the walls; whenever the stucco's removed you see this. Because [these ancient bits are] just lying around, people use them. And she didn't build the house; the previous owners had done it. They accused her of taking antiquities and putting them in her house. That did finally go to trial and she was found not guilty.

The Italian case just dragged on so long that the statute of limitations ran out, so then it was over. But that was after suffering through—I think it was around ten years from the time they started investigating the Getty and Marion to when they finally declared the trial over.

Tewes: Well, the trial started in 2005.

03-00:55:52

Hibbard: Right. Yeah, and I think it was 2010 or '09 when it ended. But they started investigating her before that.

Tewes: Right.

03-00:56:07

Hibbard: Also, she was such a leader in sort of pushing back on collecting antiquities and changing the Getty's policy to one where we notify countries of origin, of possible origin that we were considering this object; did they know anything about it? There were different iterations of the policy. Whenever she discovered that something was stolen, when she discovered hard evidence, she would press to return it. She didn't get any credit for that. She had returned quite a few objects by the time they indicted her—the Getty had, based on her recommendations. So it just seemed very unfair. She, before she was indicted, was saying, "Well, I think we're going to have to stop collecting, because it's too fraught. You can't trust the sellers and—" so anyway, it was very upsetting.

Tewes: Were you following the *LA [Los Angeles] Times* coverage of this piece?

03-00:57:31

Hibbard: Yeah. Well, yes, unfortunately. That was upsetting, too. I didn't understand why these two journalists had such an ax to grind over a local museum. I read the book. They got a lot of it wrong.

Tewes: Was that *Chasing Aphrodite*?

03-00:57:55

Hibbard: Yeah. They got some stuff right. It irritated me; they would kind of make up stuff just for color and to make it sound like they were there and they knew what was happening. Nobody said that; that wouldn't happen.

Tewes: You mentioned that collecting policies were already changing around antiquities. Did anything substantive come out of this event, in terms of acquisitions?

03-00:58:32

Hibbard: Yeah, it tightened up even further. I always tell people it was kind of an evolving situation, this whole area of provenance of antiquities. There were definitely reasons why collectors didn't want to be known. They use dealers and they said, "You sell this and you don't tell them who owned it," because they're wealthy and they have other objects in their collections. Sometimes dealers didn't want to tell the people they were selling to [who the owners were] because they wanted to keep their clients to themselves, so then the buyer wouldn't go around and try to buy something else from that person and bypass the dealer. So there were legitimate business reasons and privacy reasons why sometimes you didn't have a provenance. The Getty, along with all the other museums who were collecting antiquities, didn't automatically assume that lack of a provenance meant that it was smuggled or stolen. But over the years, that kind of changed. I think we all began to realize, probably there's a good chance that this was smuggled. So that was around the same time we started tightening up the antiquities [acquisitions] policy. I don't know if they've done another version of it since I left, but they did one after the case settled in Italy, or were working on it during the time it was being processed. So now it's actually: you do have to have documented provenance. Back to 1970, '73—I think I mentioned it yesterday—the date of the UNESCO [United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization] Convention. But I don't know how they can tighten it further. I guess they could have it go back further, but the UNESCO Convention date seems to be the date everybody's using. That was a convention on stolen property.

Tewes: How did these events affect you in the Registrar's Department?

03-01:01:01

Hibbard: Well, we had to do a lot. We had to produce a lot of information: copying files to producing reports on all the antiquities in the collection, all the antiquities in the collection [where the] country of origin was Italy or where it was probably made in Italy, the execution, when it was created. Things like that. Or everything we bought from Robin Symes or a list of all the dealers, the antiquities dealers. Thank God we had a collections management system. We had an automated system then. That made it a bit easier, but it still took a lot of time.

Then I was deposed twice. Once in connection with some little inscription that came from Sicily and wasn't a particularly valuable work of art, but the inscription was important. Then a second time in connection with the Fleischman donation and purchase.

Tewes: Do you remember anything about those depositions?

03-01:02:19

Hibbard: Well, they're not fun because you want to be cooperative, but you don't want to say the wrong thing. Obviously, first of all, you have to be truthful. But I guess they went all right. The lawyer said it was fine afterwards. There were always Getty lawyers in the room, Italian lawyers, and a court stenographer.

Tewes: Did you have much preparation with the Getty lawyers before these depositions?

03-01:02:53

Hibbard: Oh, yeah. Yeah. Well, I was just providing the information I knew. I knew what was being asked for. It's funny: in some ways, I think a lawyer will tell you, you don't want to be overly prepared, because you don't want to sound glib; you want to sound honest. So it was kind of, I think, a happy medium. Or not a happy medium. They would try to prepare us—those who had to give depositions—but not over-prepare us.

Tewes: Can you explain to me the significance of the Fleischman donation?

03-01:03:52

Hibbard: Well, it was the largest—I think it's the largest still to this day—donation the Getty received. It was a combination purchase and gift. I think we paid for one-third of the collection and received two-thirds of it as donations. That's why the theater is called the Fleischman Theater at the Villa. It's also why Barbara Fleischman was on the board for a while.

But it was unfortunate because after the donation was made—it was set up so that we wouldn't take possession, I think, for four years or something. But then Lawrence Fleischman died suddenly and we had to accelerate the gift, because otherwise Barbara Fleischman would've had to pay all these taxes on our gift, which didn't seem fair, because of community—or inheriting from her husband. I'm not quite sure the legalities of it. But anyway, so we had to all of a sudden get this stuff out of their apartment in New York and into our possession. It was right around the time we were preparing for the move to the Brentwood site, so it was a logistical hassle, nightmare. But we managed to do it. The things were great that they gave us and sold to us, and a lot of them are back in Italy now.

Tewes: As part of this—

03-01:05:45

Hibbard: Settlement, yeah. Yeah.

Tewes:

You mentioned having to run reports for the various legal authorities. Do you feel like this antiquities problem rested heavily on the Registrar's Department?

03-01:06:06

Hibbard: Well, as far as documentation, yes. Certainly, I think the Curatorial Departments had—in particular Marion, but also the person who took over for her, Karol Wright—had more meetings with lawyers and discussions about it than I did. But the lawyers quickly realized that the kinds of documentation they needed, which were not scholarly articles on pottery techniques, but were import documents and invoices and deeds of gifts, that those were in our files. So they were constantly asking for information and copies. It wasn't hard to produce, but it was time-consuming.

Tewes:

Certainly. Is there anything else you want to add on that subject?

03-01:07:18

Hibbard: I always regretted, I always wished that the powers-that-be at the Getty had come out swinging more for Marion, like the people who were above her, which includes the board; the president, Harold Williams; John Walsh; Debbie [Deborah] Gribbon, and been more vocal in the press about how she was a leader in getting the Getty to cut back on collecting antiquities and how she was following policy. She didn't make up—she didn't go around and just buy antiquities just because she could; she did it because there were board policies about [it]: we will acquire these objects and this is how we will vet them. That was all approved. The whole process of her indictment made it sound like she was really on her own, and it wasn't the case at all. That upset me.

Tewes:

Understandably. What are some of the most significant changes you've seen at the Getty over your many years there?

03-01:08:58

Hibbard: Well, the paintings collection improved quite a bit. Mr. Getty famously didn't like to—he liked bargains, and paintings were always expensive. Whereas French furniture was a relative bargain; that's why that collection's so strong, because he was able to buy great things fairly cheaply. So that's a change. And then the scope of the collections is a big change, because there were just the three areas he collected in. And then they added drawings, manuscripts, photographs, and sculpture. So the [increase in the] size and the breadth of the collections was a big change.

The staff. The size of the staff and the professionalism of the staff increased greatly from the time I started until the time I left. Just having those resources made so much possible: from building the Getty Center to all the projects; doing conservation for other museums for free; all the research projects that

people undertook. I remember the Decorative Arts and Sculpture Conservation Department was able to conduct this many-year-long project on French bronzes. [First] we analyzed our own [bronzes]. Also because there was a scientific lab at GCI, the Getty Conservation Institute, we could do this work. Then when we borrowed from other people, we got permission to analyze their bronzes and created this big database of what these bronzes were made of. It's kind of esoteric, but very important for the field. So just the resources made so many great things possible. And made [for] a lot of work.

Tewes: That's the other side of it.

03-01:11:27

Hibbard: Yeah, that's one thing that I often would tell people. We do have budgets, but there is still money, and a lot of money. So the good thing is: somebody gets a brainstorm and, yes, we can make it happen. We do have the money to ship this art object over here and do this analysis or whatever. But the bad side is: there's not the pressure that I think you have in other institutions that aren't so well-endowed, the financial pressure that says, okay, well, wait. That's just too much. We can't afford that. So then it kind of keeps the workload manageable. We often—not always, but often—could embrace opportunities, even if they cost money, that others couldn't have.

Tewes: What about changes to the sites where you operated?

03-01:12:35

Hibbard: Oh, yeah. Well, big changes. In Brentwood, there was a bunch of chaparral, and now there's this huge building—*buildings*—and gardens and galleries and library. And the Villa, too, was greatly—the Villa was beautiful to start with. Kind of strange. Recreate a Roman villa? Really? But still, it was lovely and it did teach you a lot about what Roman villas were like in the time of the eruption of Vesuvius, 79 AD. But yeah, the sites. Even the Villa site became greatly improved over the time I worked there. And the Getty Center was a spectacular [project]. I think it was the largest single-stage building project in the history of Los Angeles when it opened. I don't know if anything else has come along that's been larger, but—

Tewes: That's impressive.

03-01:13:49

Hibbard: Yeah.

Tewes: I also want to talk about another problem, this time in leadership at the Getty with Barry Munitz. These years are not always remembered very fondly by many people, but I want to know what you recall about his leadership at the Getty.

03-01:14:19

Hibbard:

Well, he couldn't have been more different from Harold Williams, because Harold, as I said a couple times, was a humanist and cared about people. Barry was much more, well, I guess cutthroat. He didn't really care about things that—it didn't seem like he cared about people's feelings or the staff's morale, things like that, which that was important to Harold. When he first came, he seemed very funny and smart. He gave talks to the staff that were amusing. He would always talk about his celebrity friends when he gave these talks, so that we wondered about that. But then it became very divisive. I never reported to him, so I kind of was protected from it. It was the people above me who had to deal with him. He worked all the time and he expected everybody else to work all the time. There was no idea of work-life balance the way there was with Harold Williams. What else is there to say about Barry?

During the time he was there, he centralized a lot of things that the Museum had managed itself. But more administrative things, like the plant operations and accounting things. He would bring them in under the Trust instead of leaving them in the Museum. But for a museum registrar, you can't really—there's no Registration Department at the Trust. So in that way, I was kind of sheltered from his centralization project.

You may have heard of his chief of staff. Jill Murphy was a very—the trustees complained about her to him towards the end of his tenure and hers. And he characterized her as having sharp elbows, [but] I think it was more than that. She could be very mean. Again, I didn't bear the brunt of that. People above me did.

Tewes:

Another element of this is that a lot of, I guess, leaks occurred from the Getty to the *LA Times*. Were you surprised, given the low morale?

03-01:17:44

Hibbard:

No. That's what happens when people are dismayed with the leadership. So yeah. [laughs] It was like, how do they know that? I learned stuff that I didn't know. But yeah.

And this wasn't just Barry, but there was all this tension between the Museum director [and the president of the Trust]—not always, but a lot of comments were made in the press about the fact that the Museum director had to report to our president. Why wasn't the Museum director just head of the whole thing? Why were there all these different programs formed and why isn't left—because originally, there was a museum that had a library and a Conservation Department, and why didn't it just grow under the Museum director? That was even a topic of conversation with Harold Williams and John Walsh, and there was some tension there. But looking back on it, [those were] the halcyon days because it got so much worse under Barry. Now it doesn't seem to be such an issue. I'm sure the current director would like it better if he were in charge of the whole shebang, but he was hired in by Jim

Cuno so he came into it not expecting to be a director of a museum like [it was previously at] the Met, with everything reporting to him. He came in expecting to report to the president of the Trust. So I think it's not such an issue now.

Tewes: So maybe it wasn't just the structure, but the management of the structure?

03-01:20:07

Hibbard: Or the personalities. Well, certainly management was a factor with Barry Munitz, because he just wasn't a good manager. He upset everybody.

Tewes: I'm wondering, given that you saw many different museum directors and CEOs, what are the significant changes in leadership that you saw over the years?

03-01:20:48

Hibbard: Well, I already talked about the difference between Barry and Harold. Let's see, there was John Walsh, Debbie Gribbon, Michael Brand, and now Tim Potts. The M.O. of the Museum directors was pretty consistent [in that] they would deal with their immediate reports, [who] were the assistant directors and associate directors, and not have too much interaction with the staff below. Obviously, they did from time to time. I think that's the way it is in most museums. You deal with your direct reports and then let them deal with theirs. So the management styles, in that respect, were kind of similar with all of them. John Walsh was friendlier with the staff. He played softball, organized Christmas caroling at Christmas. Yeah, I would say he was the most socially interactive with the staff, of all the directors that I experienced there.

Tewes: Did that extend to the professional side?

03-01:22:41

Hibbard: What do you mean?

Tewes: Having a lot of social interaction with the staff, how did that affect the daily operations, working with the staff?

03-01:22:51

Hibbard: Well, I think he was more beloved. He was the most beloved director that I worked under. So I think probably people generally wanted to please him more than maybe the ones that followed after, because he was kind of more one of us. But no, he still relied on his deputy directors and assistant directors and associate directors for communication with the staff. We did have all-staff meetings and we did have department head meetings, so he did communicate. But by and large, he relied on a small group around him, as the other directors did. So I don't know if that answered your question.

Tewes: Yeah. Is there anyone else you would like to speak about, in terms of leadership that you've encountered at the Getty?

03-01:24:02

Hibbard:

Well, I thought David Bomford was a lovely person to work for. He was my immediate supervisor, the one before last. The last one was an old friend of mine. We kind of started out at the Getty together. Well, I started first. We remain good friends. He's retired; I've retired. I actually had dinner this week with him.

Tewes:

Who's that?

03-01:24:34

Hibbard:

His name's Thom [Thomas] Kren. I don't know if he's been interviewed.

Tewes:

I don't think he has.

03-01:24:42

Hibbard:

Well, he should be. He was the founding curator of the Manuscripts Department, and then he became associate director for Collections; first acting, and then he actually got the job permanently. I adore him, so he was great to work for. Actually, I was pretty lucky; I didn't have any really bad people to work for. Not like Barry Munitz. But David Bomford was lovely. He was kind of forced out of the Getty, which was unfortunate, and is now at the MFA [Museum of Fine Arts] in Houston, where he's building a new building.

Tewes:

We haven't spoken about Deborah Gribbon at all.

03-01:25:40

Hibbard:

Yes. There's so much about Debbie that I don't want to talk about her too much. But I will say that when she first came, we were good friends. We had our children around the same time and spent a lot of time together outside of work. Not so much after she became director. Then she was no longer my direct supervisor. Her associate director, Bill [William] Griswold, became my direct supervisor.

Tewes:

Right. So you retired in 2014?

03-01:26:27

Hibbard:

Mm-hm.

Tewes:

Why did you choose to leave at that time?

03-01:26:31

Hibbard:

Well first of all, I wanted to go out at the top of my game, which I thought I was still at. Secondly, I, amazingly enough, have two living parents, who are very aged and have health problems. They live in San Diego, in La Jolla. So whenever their health took a dip, it would worry me and I'd have to go down there. I just didn't want to keep doing that and working, because it took away—I thought I had to be more free to respond to them. In fact, I haven't done much more than what I did when I was working, but at least I feel better

about it. So it just seemed like the right time. And financially, I could afford to do it, so I did.

Tewes: I'm wondering why you chose to stay at the Getty most of your career?

03-01:27:35

Hibbard: Well, because the place changed so much. It was kind of a sleepy little—well, it wasn't so sleepy, because the Villa had opened, so it was busy. It was always busy. But once the [distribution] of Getty's will was announced, it was obvious that we were going to have all these resources, and then we were going to build a new museum, and then we're going to start doing special exhibitions, and we're going to continue to acquire and acquire even more at an even faster rate. It just kept changing. It kept growing and there were new challenges. I guess maybe the last—let's see, 2014. Maybe the last five years or so, or from maybe 2004 on when we were settled in at the Getty Center, or 2006 when the Villa reopened, maybe there weren't so many changes after that and it was kind of [a] steady state. But I sort of liked having a steady state for a while. It was sort of like, I know how to do this. I've got all the work that I can handle; they're not going to give me anymore because they've already given rights and reproductions back to me. So maybe I coasted along a little bit towards the end. But before that, it was just constantly changing and becoming more interesting, so there was no reason to leave.

Salaries improved, too; that helped. They became more competitive. Harold had the idea that we shouldn't pay more than other people, but we should be in the upper third of the pay grade for Getty staff to get the best people. The subsequent presidents didn't feel that way, so salaries flattened out a little bit after Harold left. But they were competitive. You don't make a lot of money working in a museum; that's not why people go to work there. But there were livable salaries paid there at the end of my time, which wasn't the case at the beginning of my time.

Tewes: Well, given some of the challenges we've discussed, did you ever think that you might leave earlier than your retirement?

03-01:30:20

Hibbard: Well, no, not really. No, I never considered—I never was unhappy there, so I never considered leaving, just, "I'm quitting; I hate this." To go somewhere else, it just didn't make sense. If you want to work at a museum and you're working at the Getty, and you have a job that you like there, it doesn't really make sense to go anywhere else. Maybe if I'd been a scholar and there was a field I was interested and this museum had a better collection than the Getty, that would be a reason to leave. Often we had curators who left us for that. But I wasn't. The type of work I would've done at another museum would've been similar to what I [did at the Getty]. It would be the same set of circumstances, the same type of work. So there just wasn't a compelling

reason for me to leave. I did offer myself up, as I said, two years before I retired, but they didn't take me up on it.

Tewes: Fortunately.

03-01:31:45

Hibbard: Well, yeah, I liked those last [years]. I was glad I stayed those last two years.

Tewes: Now, you've mentioned to me that you were growing professionally right alongside other professional organizations about registrars. So I'm interested in the changes you saw in the field as a whole. For one, is it possible to still get a job in this field without an advanced degree?

03-01:32:12

Hibbard: No, I don't think you [can]. In fact, when we rewrote the job descriptions last time, we changed the requirements to have a master's in museum studies. Or I guess it could be another field, but museum studies is the most obvious. It could be art history, maybe, if you take museum studies courses. So no. Although experience does count for something. I can't remember if Betsy Severance has a master's, but she was so experienced that even if she didn't, they would have promoted her. But yeah. As I said, all the intern applications we got were from people going through master's programs. So I think it would be hard now for somebody to be hired at the Getty as the registrar without a master's degree. Somebody from the outside.

Tewes: How has training changed since you entered the field?

03-01:33:31

Hibbard: Well, it's much more well-documented. We have training topics for every position in the Department, which we didn't have when I first started. We constantly update the job descriptions, so that helps to give a new person: this is what you're supposed to be doing. We also have lists of routine duties so that everybody remembers that this month you're supposed to run this report and give it to so-and-so to review and approve. So there's lots more documentation of what the roles are of everybody in the Department. Then just like we improved the training of interns, we improved the training of new staff and have a list of orientation topics. Besides the topics that pertain to their work, there's also general topics like, how do you find an art object file and where are the paintings files and things like that. Then the Getty itself has extensive training for new staff, computer training that's Getty-wide that you can take advantage of. So when you get a new software system in, they always provide training in that system. So it's kind of improved across the board.

Tewes: What role do you think the Getty has played in fostering connections and innovations in the field of museum work?

03-01:35:22

Hibbard:

Well, a big role. Because first of all, the Museum itself does a lot with other museums in planning exhibitions, and the curators and conservators collaborate with their colleagues across the country and internationally on studies and research projects and publications. Then there's also the larger Getty, the Getty Trust with the Foundation and how they—like the *Pacific Standard Time*, where they provide seed money for regional collaboration on a certain topic of art history that is then researched, studied, and exhibited. I'm sure there's lots of other examples, but that's what comes to mind now.

Tewes:

What do you see as your personal contribution to the Getty?

03-01:36:33

Hibbard:

Well, developing the registration methods and building up—I mean, getting, acquiring—a collections management system and filling it with data. That is done by other departments besides the Registrar's. The curators add to the system and conservators add to the system, but a lot of the beginnings of an object record are entered by the Registrar's Office, and a lot of the backlog data entry projects are done by the Registrar's Office. So it's very robust now. You can search it online, the public can search it.

Then all the work I did on policies and procedures. Some of it [was] just offering my comments and improvements; some of them, drafting them from scratch. I guess one thing I always tried to do was, instead of sitting down and writing something new or designing a new form, I would look at what we had already and see—if there's some new problem that we had to deal with, we had to have a policy about or a procedure about, I would see if there was a way to dovetail it into [something already] existing. Because otherwise, you get form creep or contract creep, procedure creep. So I was always conscious of that and, I think, tried to make those kinds of things, which people don't really like to deal with, as succinct as possible and not endless.

Tewes:

Fair enough. What has it meant to you to have worked for the Getty for all these years?

03-01:38:45

Hibbard:

Well, I think I said before, it was a good ride. I was very fortunate that I landed there right when I did and was able to stay there for forty years and do everything I was able to do in my department, organizing it; and then supporting the activities of the collections staff, the curators, and the conservators. I was grateful that I was able to take two six-month leaves to have my children. There was enough latitude for me to do what I had to do as a parent. They have policies where if you have to go have a conference with your child's teacher, you can take the time off. I didn't have to do that because I was exempt, so I could kind of set my own hours. But since we were a support department, I felt very strongly that I should be there at regular working hours. And I was generally, pretty much; but if I had to—there was enough latitude for me and for the people under me that if something came up

with your kid at home, you could go deal with it. So that was another part. I was just thrilled to be part of all the great things they did: the exhibitions, the acquisitions, the educational programs for kids. I wasn't involved in those, but I like the fact that the Getty did it. So it was a good place for me to work. It was very fortunate that I discovered this field, because it was perfect for me because I like to be organized and I like to think of more efficient ways of doing things, and that's kind of what a registrar needs to do.

Tewes: What do you see for the future of the Getty?

03-01:41:09

Hibbard: Well, as long as they do such a good job managing the money, as they've done in the past—you can just look [at cases where this wasn't done]. The story of the Huntington [Huntington Library, Art Collection, and Botanical Gardens] comes to mind, because they had all their money in railroads because that was what Henry Huntington's business was. When the railroads went south, they kind of lost their endowment. They've built it back up now. At the Getty, the bulk of this money was in Getty Oil Stock, but they divested themselves of that rapidly and got a diverse portfolio. As long as the resources hold out, I think it'll just be more of the same: more research into art history, more conservation projects—not just at the Museum, but also at GCI—more exhibitions, more acquisitions in certain areas. We'll run out pretty soon in paintings and antiquities, but I think there's endless room for growth with photographs and drawings and sculpture. So I don't see it changing unless they make some bad investment choices, and they seem to be pretty checked out on that.

Tewes: Is there anything you hope for the future of the Registrar's Department in particular?

03-01:42:52

Hibbard: Well, I hope it stays a congenial place to work. It was very congenial. I like to say so myself, but I think everybody who worked there would agree. Maybe not everybody, but most people. And I hope it remains adequately staffed, so that they can keep up with the busy schedule of supporting the collections projects and exhibitions.

Tewes: Certainly an ongoing challenge. What's next for you personally?

03-01:43:36

Hibbard: Well, nothing in the art world, except I do go up to the Getty to see exhibitions or I go to LACMA. I enjoy going to museums, so I'll continue to do that. And seeing colleagues that I worked with or people who are still there.

I'm doing the usual things you do when you retire. I'm taking yoga, I'm gardening, I'm cooking, I'm reading, I'm doing the *New York Times* crossword, which I never had time to do before. My husband and I are traveling more, which is lovely. Our kids live in Brooklyn. Our daughter's a

conservator at MoMA [Museum of Modern Art], so she followed me in the museum field, but in a different area. She has a baby, and so we have a granddaughter now. So we go back to New York quite a bit, go see exhibitions and plays when we're back there. So it's a nice life.

Tewes: It sounds lovely. [laughs] I'm curious about your daughter. Did she follow in paintings, or what was her concentration?

03-01:44:49

Hibbard: No, she's a sculpture conservator. When she was in the Brownies—Girl Scouts, I guess—I brought her troop to the Getty and took them up to the conservation labs, because everybody loves to see the conservation labs. Brian Considine, who's, in fact, on your website, brought out a piece of gold leaf and let all the girls play with it and pass it around. That just made a big impression her. Then we went to the paintings lab and the painting conservator there, Andrea Rothe, was kind of a character and made jokes and entertained them. Then we went to the antiquities lab and Jerry Podany was there, and he made jokes and entertained them. So it was like all these nice, friendly people, and these interesting things going on with art objects. Then when the Northridge earthquake happened, we had a plaster tree of life from Mexico fall over, and she glued it back together and did a really good job. She was ten, but she had good small motor skills. I think her dad said, "Oh, you should be a conservator," and those things kind of combined to make her think about it as a career. And she aimed for it when she went—she went to Pomona [College] and majored in art history. And then applied to the three schools there are in this country, and I have to brag because she was accepted at all three, which rarely happens, and ended up going to Winterthur [Winterthur Museum, Garden and Library]. And then had various jobs, but now she's at MoMA.

Tewes: That's amazing.

03-01:46:37

Hibbard: Yeah. So it's fun. So when we go to New York, we go see her at MoMA and see what they're working on in the lab, and it feels like very familiar.

Tewes: Certainly. Finally, how would you like to be remembered in your personal life, your professional life?

03-01:47:00

Hibbard: Fondly and respectfully. That I did a good job, that I was supportive and firm but not rigid. My signature's on so many documents there. I'm sure in the next century they'll say, "Oh, here's this Sally Hibbard person again. I wonder who she was." Because even if they're all computerized, there will be still these documents and there'll be archival paper, too. But yeah, I'd like to be remembered as someone that established a lot of the policies at the Museum, the first policies that the Museum managed its collections with, and as somebody who got the job done.

Tewes: Well, that's wonderful, too. Is there anything you'd like to add, Sally, that we haven't discussed?

03-01:48:12

Hibbard: I don't think so. I can never think of anything when you ask me these questions, but I think we've covered a lot, so I don't think there's anything else.

Tewes: Well, thank you so much for your time. I appreciate it.

03-01:48:26

Hibbard: Well, thank you.

[End of Interview]