

Regional Oral History Office  
The Bancroft Library

University of California  
Berkeley, California

Sylvia McLaughlin

CITIZEN ACTIVIST FOR THE ENVIRONMENT: SAVING SAN FRANCISCO BAY, PROMOTING  
SHORELINE PARKS AND NATURAL VALUES IN URBAN AND CAMPUS PLANNING

Interviews conducted by  
Ann Lage  
in 2006-2007

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Sylvia McLaughlin, September 2009  
Photo courtesy of Frank Kinsel

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## Interview History—Sylvia McLaughlin

Sylvia McLaughlin is a familiar figure on the Berkeley campus. Attend a Bancroft Library or a Water Resources Center Archive event, a fitness class at the recreation center, or a protest of destructive campus expansion, and you may well see Sylvia there, actively engaged as she enters her tenth decade. Her connection to the university goes back to the 1950s and 1960s, when, as wife of Regent Donald McLaughlin, she hosted Board of Regents events, was involved in faculty wives groups, and joined efforts to keep architectural integrity and natural values as features of the campus landscape. She is best known, however, both in the Bay Area and nationally, as a stalwart environmentalist, one of the three ladies who saved the San Francisco Bay and a founding mother of, and still an active leader in, numerous environmental organizations. Beginning with the Save San Francisco Bay Association, which she cofounded in 1961 and whose first twenty-five years are documented in an earlier oral history,<sup>1</sup> and continuing with Citizens for an Eastshore Park [CESP] and an array of other Bay Area and national organizations, Sylvia has devoted nearly fifty years to advocacy for creating, preserving, or restoring natural resources, parks, and livable urban spaces. In 2006 and 2007, the Regional Oral History Office undertook an oral history with Sylvia McLaughlin to document fully her remarkable life and many contributions.

The oral history begins with Sylvia's family and early life in Denver, Colorado, revealing the roots of her later interests and commitments. Her parents, George Ernest Cranmer and Jean Louise Chappell Cranmer, provided models of civic engagement and plenty of examples of visionary thinking, as well as deep interest in parks, outdoor recreation, the arts, and community. Her father was manager of Parks and Improvements for Denver, Colorado, from 1935-1947, building ski areas, swimming pools, the Red Rocks theater, Stapleton Airport, and water works. Her mother was a founder of the Denver symphony, and their home had frequent visitors from the worlds of art, music, and sports.

After graduating from Vassar College and returning to Denver for wartime work and skiing expeditions, in 1948 Sylvia married Donald McLaughlin, twenty-four years her senior, and moved to California. Donald McLaughlin, a former professor at Harvard and former dean of the College of Engineering at Berkeley, was president of Homestake Mining from 1945-1961 and a regent of the University of California from 1951-1967. Settling into a home in Berkeley and beginning to raise a family, Sylvia was prompted to begin what became a lifelong crusade by the view from her hillside home: "We could see the dump trucks going down and filling the bay constantly. . . . It was a dump." She joined with Kay Kerr, wife of university president Clark Kerr, and faculty wife Esther Gulick to form Save San Francisco Bay Association and began a decades-long struggle not only to halt further degradation of the bay but to return privately owned shoreline lands designated for commercial development to public ownership and to restore them for public use as parklands and wetlands.

This oral history recalls and reflects on the first twenty-five years of Save the Bay, but focuses on the years since 1986 and on Sylvia's work with Citizens for Eastshore Park [CESP]. It

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<sup>1</sup> *Save San Francisco Bay Association, 1961-1986*, Interviews with Barry Bunshoft, Esther Gulick, Catherine Kerr, and Sylvia McLaughlin, Regional Oral History Office, 1987.

demonstrates the working out over the years of Sylvia's watchwords: vigilance, patience, persistence, and effective organization. It reveals considerable continuity in the original vision of the three founding women but also Sylvia's openness to incorporating new environmental concerns like biodiversity and toxic pollution and new allies from diverse backgrounds and ages. It also delineates the incredible network of environmental organizations that Sylvia has helped found, served on the boards of, acted as trusted spokesperson and advisor for, and attracted new activists to. These include traditional national organizations like National Audubon Society and Save the Redwoods League; local/regional groups like CESP, Greenbelt Alliance, Urban Care, Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association, and Strawberry Creek Plaza Alliance; and organizations with unique approaches and statewide, national, and international agendas, like Public Trust Group, Ecocity Builders, International Urban Estuary Network, and Resource Renewal Institute. Throughout, she has maintained her interest in the Berkeley campus and its relation to the Berkeley community. During the course of these interviews, in January 2007, Sylvia gained notoriety at age ninety by climbing into a campus oak tree to protest the building of an athletic training center which would destroy a stand of coastal oaks near the football stadium.

I met with Sylvia McLaughlin in the study of her Berkeley home to video-record our eight interview sessions, conducted from October 16, 2006, to May 25, 2007. Sylvia prepared for each session, often having relevant books, files, or photos at hand. Following transcription of the audio files, she carefully reviewed the transcript, correcting errors and spelling of names, but making no substantive changes. Transcripts of this oral history and others in the Regional Oral History Office's extensive collection of interviews relating to California's water resources, parks, and environmental activism can be found online at <http://bancroft.berkeley.edu/ROHO/collections/subjectarea/index.html>, under the heading Natural Resources, Land Use, and the Environment. Videotapes of the interview sessions are available for viewing in the Bancroft Library. Sylvia is giving her extensive personal papers to the Bancroft Library, and Save San Francisco Bay Association records are also in the Bancroft Library with a finding aid in the Online Archive of California: <http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/kt6n39q9n7>. The ROHO collection also contains the oral history of Donald McLaughlin and eight volumes of interviews on the McLaughlin gold mine, now reclaimed as the Donald and Sylvia McLaughlin Natural Reserve, a research and teaching station of the UC Natural Reserve System: <http://bancroft.berkeley.edu/ROHO/projects/mining/index.html>.

The Regional Oral History Office was established in 1954 to augment through tape-recorded interviews the Bancroft Library's materials on the history of California and the West. The office is under the direction of Richard Cándida Smith and the administrative direction of Charles B. Faulhaber, The James D. Hart Director of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

Ann Lage  
Interviewer

Berkeley, California  
August, 2009

**Sylvia McLaughlin**  
**Interviewed by Ann Lage, ROHO**  
**Interview 1—October 16, 2006**

[Begin Audio File 1 mclaughlin,\_sylvia\_1\_10-16-06.mp3]

01-00:00:00

Lage: And now we're recording, and today is October 16, 2006. And I'm Ann Lage, here for the Regional Oral History Office.

01-00:00:08

McLaughlin: I'm Sylvia McLaughlin.

01-00:00:10

Lage: Right. We're finally doing a whole oral history with Sylvia McLaughlin. Long overdue.

01-00:00:18

McLaughlin: I would like to say, first of all, that I'm so grateful to the Bancroft Library for doing this. I think it will be a really nice thing to have, for whomever. Particularly for my own family.

01-00:00:32

Lage: But also a lot of people in the Bay Area here, that are —

01-00:00:34

McLaughlin: In case they're interested, yes.

01-00:00:37

Lage: That's wonderful. Well, we wanted to start way back, and find out something about your family roots, and maybe you can begin with your father's family, and —

01-00:00:47

McLaughlin: Okay. Well, our families go back quite a ways, but I won't go back to the seventeenth century. They gradually moved west—

01-00:00:58

Lage: So, they came to this shore way back in the seventeenth century?

01-00:01:04

McLaughlin: Yes, probably. It's a little bit unknown. The family name is Cranmer, and my grandmother always said that there was someone in the family named Thomas and someone Catharine—spelled C-A-T-H-A-R-I-N-E. As you know, it was Thomas Cranmer who was Archbishop of Canterbury at the time of Henry VIII, and the story is that he had a brother who came over here. Catharine—spelled that way—was the name, I believe, of Catharine Parr, one of Henry VIII's wives. And it was the archbishop that arranged for the divorce. He was also very instrumental in—it was also said he had a German wife.

01-00:02:02

Lage: This archbishop?

01-00:02:03

McLaughlin: Yes. But he was very much involved with the Oxford University, and he also wrote the old Episcopal Prayer Book—the Church of England Prayer Book.

01-00:02:25

Lage: So, someone in your family really did trace the roots?

01-00:02:33

McLaughlin: Oh, not that much.

01-00:02:34

Lage: Well, that's a long way back, Sylvia.

01-00:02:38

McLaughlin: I guess you'd call it anecdotal history.

01-00:02:40

Lage: I see.

01-00:02:44

McLaughlin: But that seems to be pretty well substantiated. There are a few Cranmers here and there. There's a Southern California contingent. There's a group in Lafayette. I've talked to them.

01-00:02:55

Lage: Are they related, do you believe?

01-00:02:56

McLaughlin: I think we're all related, way back. So, anyway, the Cranmers went from Missouri to Texas, and then to Colorado.

01-00:03:19

Lage: And which generations are we talking about that moved west?

01-00:03:24

McLaughlin: Well, this book tells about my great-grandfather, John Hittson. He was sometimes referred to as the Cattle King of Texas. My grandfather Cranmer was one of his top cowboys, and apparently he was particularly adept at getting cattle across rivers, and so on.

01-00:03:51

Lage: I see. This was your grandfather.

01-00:03:53

McLaughlin: My grandfather. I only knew my grandmother, and several of my family have died in California, actually. She died in Santa Barbara. She had quite a full life. The story is that she went from where they lived in Texas by buggy when she was fifteen to keep a house for her father, who had a ranch in Colorado. The story is that her mother was a half- or full-blooded Cherokee Indian, and

the relations weren't too amicable at that time between the Indians and the Anglos, and so Grandmother, who at seventeen married William Cranmer and had six children, and then her husband died, quite young. It says in this book, five years later, she moved to Denver.

01-00:05:12

Lage: And this is your grandmother Cranmer, your father's mother.

01-00:05:13

McLaughlin: Yes.

01-00:05:15

Lage: Now, did you say she was a child of a Cherokee Indian woman?

01-00:05:19

McLaughlin: Yes, yes. And John Hittson.

01-00:05:24

Lage: And that's why they moved. Oh, and John Hittson was her —

01-00:05:28

McLaughlin: Her father.

01-00:05:29

Lage: Her father, okay. Now I'm getting this straight.

01-00:05:33

McLaughlin: If you'd like to borrow the book, it's pretty rough and tumble times they talk about.

01-00:05:43

Lage: So, how did she meet her husband?

01-00:05:46

McLaughlin: He worked for her father.

01-00:05:48

Lage: I see, okay. Now it's clearer to me. He was a cowhand.

01-00:05:52

McLaughlin: That's right.

01-00:05:58

Lage: And then they had six children, and she moved to Denver.

01-00:06:03

McLaughlin: But she was quite a personality, apparently. She was on the state parole board, she was active with Jane Jeffersons, which was, I guess, the Democratic party, she was a member of the Daughters of the Confederacy, at the same time that she was raising all these children.

01-00:06:26

Lage: Was she left fairly well-to-do, with her father being a rancher?

01-00:06:34

McLaughlin: Well, I'd say she was probably comfortably well off.

01-00:06:45

Lage: Now, where was your father in the birth order?

01-00:06:49

McLaughlin: First it was—they all had interesting names—Aunt Leontine, Aunt Jessica, William Henry Harrison, Jr., then my father, George Ernest Cranmer, then Catharine Houx Cranmer, then Willamain, who was called Babe, always, because she was the youngest. And so we're into the next generation, and there are only—I think—four cousins: myself; my brother, Forrest; my cousin, Bill Russell, in Central City, Colorado—my brother Forrest lives in London—and my cousin, Jane, who lives in Montana. And I'm giving myself a big birthday party in December.

01-00:07:54

Lage: Is that when you turn ninety?

01-00:07:56

McLaughlin: Yes. So, it'll become a family reunion.

01-00:08:00

Lage: Here? Will you be here?

01-00:08:01

McLaughlin: Yes.

01-00:08:02

Lage: Wonderful.

01-00:08:02

McLaughlin: Actually, the party's going to be at the Berkeley City Club. So, that will be fun, I hope.

01-00:08:11

Lage: Wonderful. I'm sure it will be fun. Because all those four cousins must have plenty of descendents also.

01-00:08:17

McLaughlin: Well, yes, but the one in Central City, he'll be taking care—his wife is pretty fragile. She's also ninety-one, as is my brother. My younger brother died a couple of years ago.

01-00:08:36

Lage: Now, do you remember your grandmother?

01-00:08:39

McLaughlin: Oh, yes.

01-00:08:40  
Lage: What was she like?

01-00:08:41  
McLaughlin: I was about ten or eleven when she died, yes.

01-00:08:42  
Lage: I see. Was she proud of her Cherokee heritage? Did that get talked about?

01-00:08:49  
McLaughlin: It was interesting. No one talked about it. Told us in recent years.

01-00:08:55  
Lage: So, it wasn't something that the family claimed.

01-00:08:57  
McLaughlin: No. It was kind of a subject that wasn't mentioned.

01-00:09:02  
Lage: But do you feel that it's accurate?

01-00:09:04  
McLaughlin: That it's accurate? Oh, yes. Mentions it in this book, and I think this woman's name was Selena Brown. Anyway. I would like to know more about it.

01-00:09:18  
Lage: Yes, it would be interesting to know more. Now, tell me something about your father's education.

01-00:09:29  
McLaughlin: Well, he went to the public schools in Denver, and then from East Denver High School, he went to Princeton.

01-00:09:40  
Lage: Now, was that a standard route for young people from Denver?

01-00:09:44  
McLaughlin: Not particularly. I think there's quite a cultural difference. He went on a cattle train—he'd been working at his uncle's ranch, went on a cattle train. I guess they thought he was a bit different. He probably thought they were a bit different.

01-00:10:05  
Lage: Did he talk at all about what it was like to land back in Princeton?

01-00:10:09  
McLaughlin: Well, when I went back East to college, he said it was very important to make friends with the people in the East, and to understand them, and particularly to make friends with your professors. He had some outstanding professors, including Woodrow Wilson and Charles Osgood, a professor of English. My uncle Harry, his older brother, went to Yale—also from East Denver High School. He was at the Yale School of Engineering.

01-00:10:59  
Lage: So, the family was interested in education.

01-00:11:01  
McLaughlin: For the boys.

01-00:11:02  
Lage: Oh, the boys. What did the girls do?

01-00:11:06  
McLaughlin: I'm not sure about that. I don't think any of them were college educated.

01-00:11:13  
Lage: What did your father study?

01-00:11:15  
McLaughlin: I believe he graduated in English, but he always had a great respect and regard for his college education. I have the hat he wore with the band, and he was the manager of the swim team, I think it was. He swam in Denver—I think that's what kept him going for years, even after he had had the stoke, he continued swimming. And he died in this house at ninety-one.

01-00:11:54  
Lage: In this house?

01-00:11:55  
McLaughlin: He had come out to visit me. My mother died first, in 1974, and then I went back and came out with him, but he was quite frail, and not well, so I think about two days later, he was gone.

01-00:12:15  
Lage: Oh, my. Shortly after your mother died.

01-00:12:17  
McLaughlin: A year after.

01-00:12:18  
Lage: A year after.

01-00:12:19  
McLaughlin: Yes. And you asked about his experience with the city.

01-00:12:28  
Lage: Right. First tell me about his business. What did he do for his livelihood?

01-00:12:31  
McLaughlin: Well, he started out in the brokerage business. When my mother and father were married, he didn't have a job. I don't know if you understood, in the pictures—I took the picture, last time I was in Denver, of the house where I was born.

01-00:12:48

Lage: I saw a picture on the Internet. It's a national historic site.

01-00:12:52

McLaughlin: No, that's not the house where I was born.

01-00:12:54

Lage: Oh, that wasn't where you were born?

01-00:12:54

McLaughlin: My brother was born there.

01-00:12:55

Lage: I see.

01-00:12:56

McLaughlin: My older brother. No—my younger brother was born there. My older brother was born in the house of my mother's parents, where they were living.

01-00:13:11

Lage: Before we get too far into your father's—you know—career, we'll go back and pick up your mother. So, whenever you want to take a little break, and—but just —

01-00:13:25

McLaughlin: As I said, my father—you asked about his work—anyway, so, when my mother started having children, they didn't have very much money, and so the four of us were born in the homes of either her parents or his parents—his mother. I had an older brother, Allen, who died when he was seven years old. My mother was very—it was difficult for her, I think, because he was apparently a wonderful child. Just had a strep throat, which is so easily handled, these days.

01-00:14:16

Lage: That's right. But not then. And how old were you when that happened?

01-00:14:19

McLaughlin: I was about four. I barely remember. Yes. My father did get a job, finally, by sheer persistence—he kept asking every day for a job every day, and just sort of sat on the doorstep of the office, practically. Finally he got the job, and then he went into partnership with another gentleman, and then for better or for worse, they had some kind of a falling out, and in 1928, the partnership was dissolved, and he essentially was retired—

01-00:15:06

Lage: At age—how old would he have been?

01-00:15:10

McLaughlin: Oh, he was pretty young, I guess.

01-00:15:12  
Lage: And what had he been doing? Was it a brokerage?

01-00:15:14  
McLaughlin: Stock brokerage?

01-00:15:14  
Lage: Stock brokerage.

01-00:15:16  
McLaughlin: Selling stocks.

01-00:15:17  
Lage: And did he do well at it? Did he make a good living for the family?

01-00:15:21  
McLaughlin: Oh, yes. He did very well.

01-00:15:23  
Lage: So, he retired at the right time, it sounds like.

01-00:15:26  
McLaughlin: Yep. Sheer luck.

01-00:15:28  
Lage: 1928.

01-00:15:31  
McLaughlin: Well, I'd used to think it sounded pretty boring. We would be out to breakfast, and he would say this was up half a point, or down a little bit, or—I thought, "Well, doesn't sound very interesting."

01-00:15:43  
Lage: No.

01-00:15:45  
McLaughlin: But that was his work. And so then, in 1928, we went on a Mediterranean cruise, and he was, I think, rather—I don't know if you'd say "unhappy," but he was an active type of person, had a lot of ideas, and wanted to be doing something. And he was quite a student of the different places we went. We went to Egypt, and he'd read all about the Book of the Dead, and knew a lot about that, and then different places we went to. We went to Taormina, in Sicily. That was where he got the idea for the Red Rocks Theater. So then, when we came back from that trip—and we were taken out of school and everything.

01-00:17:08  
Lage: And you were what? We haven't gotten you born yet, even, so.

01-00:17:11  
McLaughlin: Oh, yes. At that time, I was—let's see. About eleven.

01-00:17:19

Lage: So you were born in 1917.

01-00:17:21

McLaughlin: '16. December 24, 1916.

01-00:17:28

Lage: Okay.

01-00:17:30

McLaughlin: So then he went to the Republicans, and asked if he could be of service to them—he felt very strongly that you should give something back to your community in the way of public service. So, they said, no, they didn't have anything. So then he went to the Democrats. He became the campaign manager for the reelection of Mayor Stapleton.

01-00:17:59

Lage: That sounds like so much happenstance. I mean, he wasn't necessarily a supporter of Mayor Stapleton to begin with, or do you know?

01-00:18:11

McLaughlin: I don't know.

01-00:18:15

Lage: Was Mayor Stapleton a longtime mayor?

01-00:18:18

McLaughlin: Yes, he had been a longtime mayor. But my father had always been interested in city planning. He had actually studied it on his own, during his college years, and there were a number of things that he thought he could do for the city of Denver. So, he was given this appointed position, which was what he wanted—Manager of Parks and Improvements—which basically was the city parks, the regional parks, the mountain parks, plus the public works. He was in charge of the streets, the sewer, the airport—just about everything having to do with the operation of the city.

01-00:19:18

Lage: Now, that's very interesting.

01-00:19:21

McLaughlin: After he left that job that he was doing by himself, he was replaced by five people. So –

01-00:19:32

Lage: Do you remember him as an energetic man? What was he like in those days?

01-00:19:37

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. He had lots of energy.

01-00:19:40

Lage: And broad interests?

01-00:19:41

McLaughlin: He loved to dance. He was a great horseman. He enjoyed doing tricks. He always did tricks with us, and tricks on his horse—he could leap onto the horse, stand up in the saddle.

01-00:20:00

Lage: Now, when you say "tricks with us," you mean, like acrobatic?

01-00:20:03

McLaughlin: Mm-hmm. He'd swing me from the floor up onto his shoulders, and that's where I'd stand—on his shoulders. Things like that. We lived basically out on the edge of town, in those days, and just surrounded by prairie. Well, I guess it was owned by somebody, but —

01-00:20:29

Lage: Undeveloped.

01-00:20:30

McLaughlin: Totally. And so he just fenced in a lot of the area. Nobody seemed to care. So that way, we had cows and a cow barn. We had cows, horses, pigs, and chickens. So it was essentially kind of a rural life. He also built a swimming pool, which was one of the first in Denver, I think. I was about five years old, then, and he immediately got someone to teach us how to swim. We had a one-meter board and a three-meter board. And so we spent a lot of time in the pool.

01-00:21:13

Lage: And you were the only girl.

01-00:21:17

McLaughlin: Yes. There were really only two neighbors, quite some distance away. On the other side of this park was totally undeveloped, at that time. It is now named for my father, Cranmer Park, and they had sort of playground equipment, and so on. It was Linda Lee Gross and her family, and her father was the manager of Parks—so, the same job that my father later did. There was another girl who lived out in the other direction, but we mostly went down and played with Linda Lee, and she had two younger sisters. Who else, I couldn't tell you.

Well, it mentions in this material that you've got that Dad learned to ski. There was a big snowstorm in 1913, and a Norwegian named Houlson was skiing down the capitol hill—not much of a hill, but Dad was intrigued by it. So a group of Denverites went up to the foothills, and started this Genesee Mountain Ski Club, and they all skied. I've seen pictures of the women skiing in skirts—long skirts.

01-00:22:51

Lage: Because it was not an established sport, at that time.

01-00:22:55

McLaughlin: Well, this is 1913. Hardly! Well, and a few years later, too. And then there was this other fellow—we had a cottage near our house, and various people stayed there from time to time, and one of them was a fellow who was half Russian and half Italian—I think he was a Marquis, actually—Marquis D'ell Albizzi, he was a wonderful horseman, and he taught my brother how to ride—my older brother. I was very annoyed, because he said I was too young. My brother was then six, and I was five, you know?

01-00:23:48

Lage: That doesn't seem right. So, did you get to learn to ride?

01-00:23:54

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. After all, he taught my brother. All I needed to do was copy my brother. And then he also was very adept at skiing. So that was when my father bought a place up Bear Creek. I think his first idea was that it would be for skiing, but there's not very much in the way of hills there. But it was just an absolutely beautiful, idyllic place, as far as I was concerned.

01-00:24:29

Lage: Was this a vacation house, or —

01-00:24:31

McLaughlin: It was basically for summer, but we'd go up there in the winter, too. And so, Albizzi came for dinner one night, and then he stayed for a year. And then another fellow came—I guess Albizzi met him. His name was Arnolf Paulson. He was a Norwegian. And he stayed with us, and also was a skier. I think he was a champion ski jumper. So, we had a lot of sports in our growing up years.

01-00:25:06

Lage: Now, did these people kind of join the family, and have dinner with you, and—

01-00:25:10

McLaughlin: Oh, yes.

01-00:25:12

Lage: So, it was a kind of open household, it sounds like. Wonderful. Let's go back and learn more about your mother [Jean Louise Chappell Cranmer], and then come back to your own youth.

01-00:25:24

McLaughlin: My mother's people came from New England—quite a ways back, also—and then gradually migrated west. I guess through northern New York State, and whatever the next states are. Illinois. Her father was an engineer, and put in the water works in Evanston, Illinois, and then they went to Kansas, and I remember my mother saying that her grandmother told her that she would hide the children in the cornfields away from the Indians during the Civil War. So then they went from Kansas to Colorado. She was born in Trinidad,

Colorado, which is down near the New Mexico border. Her father was involved with the water works there. That was quite a coal town at that time, and they were having lots of labor trouble, also, at that time. My mother's grandmother—in those days, families lived together more, and her grandparents lived with them most of the time. And she used to go out and help deliver babies, things like that—the grandmother, that is. One time they opened the front door, and there was a dead Mexican. It was kind of troubled times. They moved to Denver when she was ten years old.

01-00:27:22

Lage: Because her father's job changed, or was it the —

01-00:27:26

McLaughlin: I'm not quite sure why, what was the reason.

01-00:27:31

Lage: Did she have brothers and sisters?

01-00:27:33

McLaughlin: She had a younger brother—considerably younger. He was nine years younger. His name is Delos Allen Chappell, the same as her father. And I still have Chappell cousins in Denver.

01-00:27:56

Lage: And how was your mother brought up? Did she go to public schools there?

01-00:28:00

McLaughlin: No, she went to private schools in Denver—I think it was Miss Wolcott's school. She would like very much to have gone to college, but they didn't think that was necessary at the time. She was also quite adept at playing the violin, so she was sent to Germany to study the violin. She and her mother.

01-00:28:27

Lage: Oh. She and her mother went?

01-00:28:29

McLaughlin: Yes. Yes, they wouldn't send her alone. And I think it may have been, also, to get over a love affair they didn't approve of.

01-00:28:39

Lage: Oh, my goodness! (laughter) When would that have been? Do you remember the time period?

01-00:28:45

McLaughlin: Well, it might have been 1912, I think.

01-00:28:50

Lage: So sometime before the —

01-00:28:50

McLaughlin: So, '12. I'm not sure that's right, but anyway.

01-00:28:59

Lage: So, what was your mother like, as a person?

01-00:29:05

McLaughlin: Well, she was interested in many things, and the early days—her mother died of breast cancer, because apparently she had this lump in her breast when she was in Germany, but these were Victorian times, and she didn't want to be examined by a male doctor, and by the time she came back it was too late, so she also died in California. And that was the —

01-00:29:34

Lage: Why California?

01-00:29:38

McLaughlin: A number of people from Colorado had gone to California because the lower altitude was supposed to be beneficial.

01-00:29:45

Lage: When they were ill, I see. Where did she go, do you know?

01-00:29:52

McLaughlin: Santa Barbara.

01-00:29:58

Lage: So your mother was fairly young when she lost her mother.

01-00:30:01

McLaughlin: Yes. She was caring for her at the time they were married. And then her father died—I'm not sure if he died before or after. Apparently, he said he slipped on the ice in Denver and broke his leg. And in those days, they just put you in bed, and then he got pneumonia, so that was that. So I never knew any of my grandparents, except my grandmother Cranmer. But then—

01-00:30:36

Lage: How did your parents meet?

01-00:30:40

McLaughlin: Oh, I don't really know.

01-00:30:42

Lage: They didn't tell you that story.

01-00:30:44

McLaughlin: It was a small town then. I guess you sort of travel in the same circles. And anyway—let's see. What would be interesting?

01-00:31:03

Lage: Well, the thing that's mentioned on the Internet is your mother's interest in music, and her civic involvement. What do you remember about that?

01-00:31:12

McLaughlin: Well, actually, she and her brother Delos gave their family home to the city for a museum. That was the Denver Art Museum, which is now the Chappell House. Now, I happened to be there when they knocked it down to get money to build a new one downtown. That was kind of sad. Beautiful home.

01-00:31:36

Lage: But that must have been the first art museum.

01-00:31:40

McLaughlin: Yes it was. I think so. As I said, that's where my older brother was born. It was a beautiful house, really.

01-00:31:57

Lage: When you said he was born there, did your parents live, then, with the family?

01-00:32:00

McLaughlin: Yes. It was a large home. My mother started something called “Moments Musicales”—musical gatherings with different instruments, and people would come and have tea, and so on. And those were very successful.

01-00:32:29

Lage: Are those things you remember as a child?

01-00:03:31

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. Because the school I went to was nearby, so I'd go over there sometimes. Then, later on, she started Friends of Chamber Music. She continued her interest in music, particularly chamber music quartets, and so on. Her friends in a string quartet played at our wedding. So, she was quite an accomplished violinist, and she and a gentleman whose name I can't think of right this minute played one of Bach's double concertos with the symphony. And at that time, the symphony was pretty much a volunteer organization. Mother became very interested in it—from that experience, I think—then became head of the Denver Symphony Society, and really was instrumental in its becoming a professional group. She was made an honorary member of the labor union, I think.

01-00:34:04

Lage: The musicians' labor union?

01-00:34:06

McLaughlin: I think so. I think that was it. And then she also, as I said, had many interests. She was particularly interested in astronomy and chemistry. She knew two of the professors out at Denver University. So, after we were all off, and out of the way, she took courses out at Denver University. So they gave her an honorary degree for everything that she'd done for the city of Denver. Both my parents were given the keys to the city, as well.

01-00:34:47

Lage:

Oh, my. So, you come by your civic activism honestly. It's in the family, it sounds like. Was it something that your parents talked about, or was it just their example?

01-00:34:58

McLaughlin:

It was just their example. Then, my father was also, at one time, head of the Denver Art Museum. He persuaded this lady—again, the name escapes me, but I'll think of it later—to provide a lectureship. It was the Cooke-Daniels Lectures. And so, he was very interested in having outstanding people come and lecture. And I think the first one that came was Ananda Kamris Swami, a very noted Indian philosopher. And they had made a reservation at the local, very small, hotel. He was rather dark skinned, and they said, "Oh, we're sorry. We don't have any space." So then he was invited to stay in our home, and from then on, all the lecturers stayed in our home. So it was really a very broad cultural education that we had just right at home, meeting all these people—including Frank Lloyd Wright. There's an article that I have here for you.

01-00:36:27

Lage:

He stayed in your home?

01-00:36:28

McLaughlin:

Oh, yes. And then my mother would go East to get soloists for the Denver Symphony, and they also would stay in our home. So, she became good friends with people such as Josef and Rosina Lhevinne, outstanding pianists, and Albert Spalding, and Lily Pons—just a whole lot of wonderful musical people. So we had this really rich upbringing, just sort of naturally.

01-00:37:08

Lage:

Right. Right in your own home around the dinner table, it sounds like.

01-00:37:11

McLaughlin:

That's right.

01-00:37:12

Lage:

Now, were the children included in all these activities, or did you have your separate sphere?

01-00:37:17

McLaughlin:

No, we were pretty much included, as I remember. And I remember Frank Lloyd Wright called our mother Bella Donna, because our house was so sort of Italian, Spanish; he looked down on it. Anyway, he designed a house that he wanted them to have—I don't know if he thought our parents were just going to tear down our house, and build his house, or what.

01-00:37:54

Lage:

Just without being asked, he came up with a design? How fascinating!

01-00:37:59

McLaughlin: And I think it was called the Mesa House, or something like that. It's described in this article.

01-00:38:07

Lage: But you don't think your parents asked him to do that?

01-00:38:10

McLaughlin: No. I don't think so. After all, they had a nice house. They didn't need another one. Well, do you want to know more about my mother, or my parents?

01-00:38:33

Lage: Well, let's go back, we have talked about both your parents, a little bit about you—I want to know just a little bit more about your growing up. You were born in 1916—right at the end of 1916. What kind of activities did you do? Were you an outdoor person? Indoor? You know—what kind of a child were you?

01-00:38:53

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. Well, as I said, my father was very much into sports.

01-00:39:00

Lage: And you were treated like one of the boys, or —

01-00:39:04

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. Sure.

01-00:39:04

Lage: — were you set aside as a little lady?

01-00:39:08

McLaughlin: Oh, no. I was trying to keep up with my brothers. Well, in the summer, we did a lot of horseback riding. We also did a lot of reading, because in those days—we had a little crystal set, I remember, about this big, with three earphones, and there were two radio stations in Denver. So we could listen to those.

01-00:39:46

Lage: You gathered round with your headsets?

01-00:39:49

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. And then, I remember Franklin Roosevelt—then we got a bigger, sort of family-sized radio, and we would listen to the fireside chats.

01-00:39:58

Lage: What was your family's feeling about Roosevelt? Did they become Democrats once your father accepted this job?

01-00:40:07

McLaughlin: I've no idea. That was never mentioned.

01-00:40:09

Lage: Politics wasn't mentioned?

01-00:40:13

McLaughlin: Politics, yes, but who anybody voted for was not mentioned.

01-00:40:17

Lage: How interesting!

01-00:40:19

McLaughlin: But they were very—anyway, that's the way it was. My mother, I remember her writing to her congressman about specific issues. And so they were concerned politically, very much so.

01-00:40:40

Lage: But not that strong party identification, it seems.

01-00:40:43

McLaughlin: I don't think so.

01-00:40:46

Lage: How about religion? Did that play a part in your life, or their lives?

01-00:40:51

McLaughlin: Well, we were sort of basically Episcopalian, I guess. But we didn't go to church very often.

01-00:41:01

Lage: It wasn't a strong feature?

01-00:41:04

McLaughlin: No, occasionally, we would.

01-00:41:10

Lage: Where did you go to school, when you started elementary school?

01-00:41:14

McLaughlin: Well, I went to this—it was called the Kent School for Girls. Now, it's Kent Denver, and it's coed, and much larger. And it was owned, or managed by the three Marys. Mary Wallace, Mary Rathvon, and Mary Bogue. And my brothers went to boys' schools. But then my parents thought I—about the eighth grade, I was very lazy, and didn't study very much. And so they sent me to one of the strictest schools they could find, in Connecticut.

01-00:42:03

Lage: Oh, in Connecticut! So, you left Denver, then?

01-00:42:06

McLaughlin: Yes, when I was fourteen.

01-00:42:07

Lage: Ah. And what was that school?

01-00:42:10  
McLaughlin: It's called Ethel Walker School. It still exists.

01-00:42:12  
Lage: Ethel Walker?

01-00:42:13  
McLaughlin: Ethel Walker. It still exists. It's still girls only.

01-00:42:20  
Lage: And what did you think of that choice?

01-00:42:23  
McLaughlin: I didn't have anything to say about it.

01-00:42:25  
Lage: That wasn't up for discussion?

01-00:42:27  
McLaughlin: No.

01-00:42:29  
Lage: Did you see it as a punishment?

01-00:42:31  
McLaughlin: No.

01-00:42:32  
Lage: No. Well, you say—you explained it now as sort of a —

01-00:42:36  
McLaughlin: Well, I realized it was sort of perfectly logical, I guess. I was lazy. I had other interests, I didn't —

01-00:42:47  
Lage: Well, were you lazy, or were you not interested in your studies?

01-00:42:50  
McLaughlin: Little bit of both.

01-00:42:52  
Lage: What were you more interested in? What did you like to do?

01-00:42:55  
McLaughlin: Well, just wasting my time—reading magazines, or reading books.

01-00:43:00  
Lage: Any memorable reading that you feel was important in your youth?

01-00:43:07  
McLaughlin: No, not particularly.

01-00:43:08

Lage: There aren't books that come to mind?

01-00:43:11

McLaughlin: Well, reading was what we did for entertainment, for our pleasure. And when we'd go up in the mountains, we'd always have lots of books.

01-00:43:30

Lage: And when you went up to the mountains, did you play mainly with your brothers?

01-00:43:33

McLaughlin: Oh, yes.

01-00:43:34

Lage: Or would you take friends along?

01-00:43:35

McLaughlin: Oh, sometimes we'd have—generally, houseguests on weekends. It was quite primitive up there. No electricity. No telephone. We did have a sort of a washhouse, with a functioning shower, and basin, and chemical toilet. But it was just a beautiful area, and we had a family reunion last year. My brother was—I guess two years ago—my brother was ninety. My brother, my cousin, and some of us went back up there. It still is pretty much the same.

01-00:44:21

Lage: Really? Still not overdeveloped, or —

01-00:44:25

McLaughlin: No—well, it's getting subdivided, and so on. For many years, the owners brought groups of children up from the South, just to enjoy being there, and riding, and so on.

01-00:44:39

Lage: Your family did?

01-00:44:40

McLaughlin: No, no, no. It was sold—the people that bought it, you know. It was related to some church group.

01-00:44:48

Lage: Did your mother like the mountains?

01-00:44:50

McLaughlin: Oh, I think so, yes. But it must have been somewhat of a chore for her, in a way. She'd bring up all the food for the weekend—all these houseguests—and take down all the laundry.

01-00:45:12

Lage: Did she have help in the home?

01-00:45:14

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. Yes. Those days, I think pretty much everybody did have somebody. And she taught a lot by example, I think. Taking care of other people, and so on.

01-00:45:33

Lage: Now, I've talked to a lot of people in your age group who mentioned their parents being much less involved in their lives than the later generations. Like, there was more of a division. The children went their own way, and maybe were looked after by governesses—

01-00:45:55

McLaughlin: Yes, we usually had somebody chasing after us.

01-00:46:00

Lage: But was your mother available? And your father? Did you have dinner together, and —

01-00:46:03

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. Sure. Yes, oh yes. We'd been in France in about 1925 and '26. We stayed for nine months. I guess the objective was to learn French —

01-00:46:22

Lage: All of you together?

01-00:46:23

McLaughlin: Yes. Well, basically, my mother and the three of us. My father was working. He came over and joined us. My grandmother came and joined us. And so that's why I got my start in French. My brother was not very well—my younger brother—so we spent about nine months at the pension in southern France. I went to a little school there run by these same ladies that ran the place. Then when we came back, my mother brought a young woman to essentially take care of us and speak French to us. I think she was probably very lonely. I don't remember her speaking very much. And then she also brought another one, who did the cooking, I think, for a while. And then she ended up in San Francisco, and I saw her when I came out here. She was cooking for the French Club out here.

01-00:47:45

Lage: And so did you become fluent in French, and keep that up?

01-00:47:48

McLaughlin: Yes. I was fortunate—I had quite good teachers all through school. And then, as I say, we went back again in 1928. We stayed about two months that time, and kind of had a little refresher course. But I enjoyed it. Then we had a Russian governess, Madame Moukine. She would read with us every afternoon—French. So that kept it up.

01-00:48:25

Lage: What do you remember about the governesses?

01-00:48:29

McLaughlin: When we went on this cruise, we had a very nice college girl who chased after us. Alberta Hale. Sort of left our parents a little more freedom. And then we joined up with another family—American family, friends. They also had three children, so we'd go off and play, and do other things. Play around the ship.

01-00:49:03

Lage: Sounds like a nice life

01-00:49:04

McLaughlin: Play around the ship, run in the public parks, and so on.

01-00:49:08

Lage: On this cruise?

01-00:49:10

McLaughlin: Oh, yes.

01-00:49:11

Lage: Where else did you go? We didn't really talk about that?

01-00:49:15

McLaughlin: Egypt, and —

01-00:49:17

Lage: And Sicily —

01-00:49:18

McLaughlin: —Jerusalem, and back to—then Sicily. Then we spent about a month in Florence, and that was really lovely. That was in April. And then we had some time in Paris, and that was about it.

01-00:49:41

Lage: That sounds very lovely.

01-00:49:45

McLaughlin: So, I considered myself to have been very fortunate to have had those experiences.

01-00:49:54

Lage: I'd like to talk more about what your father did as the parks director, but also continue your story, and hear about your high school in Connecticut. Which do you think follows on from here?

01-00:50:09

McLaughlin: Well, maybe school.

01-00:50:12

Lage: Well, when would that have been that you went back there? At age fourteen—

01-00:50:16

McLaughlin: Well, let's see. I went back a year, when I went East to school. So I graduated in 1935, and graduated from college in '39. One thing I enjoyed about it: they did a lot of sports. They had two hours every afternoon of sports, then you'd have two hours of study hall, then dinner, then more study hall. That was it.

01-00:50:45

Lage: And did you get into your studies, as your parents had hoped?

01-00:50:49

McLaughlin: You didn't have much choice.

01-00:50:51

Lage: It was strict, it sounds like.

01-00:50:53

McLaughlin: And they gave college board examinations at the end of every term, so by the time the real thing came around, we were pretty accustomed to it. It was sort of out in the country, and they did a lot of riding, but it didn't really appeal to me, because it was—well, it was very sort of eastern.

01-00:51:18

Lage: The English saddle, and —

01-00:51:18

McLaughlin: Yes, yes. Well, we rode English saddles always in Colorado.

01-00:51:24

Lage: Oh, you did.

01-00:51:25

McLaughlin: Always. But this was much more formal, and the sort of lack of freedom didn't appeal to me, I think it was, and formality, and so on.

01-00:51:42

Lage: Aside from horseback riding, was that the case across the board? More formality and less freedom?

01-00:51:48

McLaughlin: Oh, no. It was just horseback. Then I think I started a camera club, and a ski club. We'd go skiing through the woods. It was fun.

01-00:52:04

Lage: Did you make lasting friends there?

01-00:52:08

McLaughlin: Well, yes, in a way, but most of them were from the East.

01-00:52:14

Lage: And was that a difference that you perceived at that time? The girls from the East versus the way you'd been brought up, or it wasn't?

01-00:52:20

McLaughlin: No. No. I was just there to make the best of it.

01-00:52:27

Lage: Would you come home for summer?

01-00:52:29

McLaughlin: Oh, yes.

01-00:52:31

Lage: How about for Christmas?

01-00:52:33

McLaughlin: Always. Yes. In fact, I felt sorry for some of the eastern girls, because I had a home to go to. Some of the girls that lived in New York, well, they'd go somewhere else for Christmas, and somewhere else for the summer, and they didn't seem to have the same kind of roots or base that I had and always enjoyed. Because I really looked forward to going back to our home. Of course, we went on trains, then, and we'd always get up and see who would be the first one to see the mountains.

01-00:53:13

Lage: Did you feel an attachment to that landscape in Colorado?

01-00:53:19

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. I should say. It took me quite a while to get used to the eastern landscape, the Connecticut landscape. I felt hemmed in, because where we lived in Colorado was right out on the prairie—on the plains.

01-00:53:37

Lage: You had the mountains on one side, and then that —

01-00:53:40

McLaughlin: Yes. And we were on a hill, where we had a whole view of the Front Range, from along Pikes Peak on the south across to Mount Evans, and Longs Peak on the north. Magnificent sunsets. So it really was very special.

01-00:54:02

Lage: And did you ski a lot in Colorado?

01-00:54:05

McLaughlin: Ski a lot? Oh, yes. Particularly after I graduated from college. Yes.

01-00:54:13

Lage: And then, it sounds as if you were sort of encouraged towards college. It wasn't —

01-00:54:21

McLaughlin: Oh, not particularly.

01-00:54:23

Lage: No? I mean, your mother had wanted to go, and couldn't, and —

01-00:54:29

McLaughlin: No, but it was basically my decision. I didn't see much that would be very interesting, just going back to Denver. There were a number of girls from Denver who had gone to Smith, but I didn't want to necessarily follow them. I wanted to do something different. And I liked the countryside around Vassar—beautiful campus there. In those days, you didn't have to apply to half a dozen different institutions.

01-00:55:09

Lage: You just went.

01-00:55:10

McLaughlin: Yes. Anyway, my mother thought I got in because she knew somebody on the board of trustees. I said, "Mother, I passed the examinations." I thought I made it on my own. So, anyway. I did get in, and I really enjoyed it.

01-00:55:34

Lage: Now, what was Vassar like in those days?

01-00:55:37

McLaughlin: Oh, quite different from now.

01-00:55:38

Lage: This is during the Depression.

01-00:55:40

McLaughlin: It was the Depression, and it was also—I guess "in loco parentis" is the term. We had to be in by ten at night, or else sign in. We could stay out a little longer on the weekends. Men, of course, weren't allowed in above the first floor. Now, that's totally changed. Well, it's coed now.

01-00:56:15

Lage: Right. Was it paired with a men's school nearby?

01-00:56:20

McLaughlin: No. West Point was across the river, but I didn't ever know anybody over there. I had one brother at Princeton and one brother at Dartmouth at that time, and friends in both places. And a lot of the girls knew people at Yale. Now they have these mixers. They didn't have those in my day.

01-00:56:43

Lage: They didn't have those in your day? Well, how did you meet potential dates? Through your brothers, or —

01-00:56:50

McLaughlin: You either did or you didn't, I guess.

01-00:56:53

Lage: Did you have any romances at that time?

01-00:56:58

McLaughlin: No, not really, I don't think. Well, there were always little heartthrob interests, I guess you might say.

01-00:57:12

Lage: But nothing memorable that you're —

01-00:57:13

McLaughlin: Not really. I was always waiting for Mr. Right.

01-00:57:22

Lage: Okay. Anything else about college? What did you major in?

01-00:27:26

McLaughlin: French.

01-00:57:27

Lage: Ah. So you really continued your French.

01-00:57:30

McLaughlin: I really enjoyed German too—I had an interesting German teacher at Walkers, and she would take us down to the basement, where there was a piano, and she'd teach us all these German folksongs. And I thought, "Gee, that's a lot of fun." And so I did quite well in this elementary German course, and so I thought about majoring in German, but translating German to English is pretty simple, but English to German is not so easy. And so I thought, well, if I wanted to graduate from Vassar, I'd better major in something I thought I knew something about.

01-00:58:12

Lage: You had a good start on it.

01-00:58:13

McLaughlin: In French. Then I took three years of Spanish, which I enjoyed. And then history, and they had a wonderful survey course on art history. It was painting, architecture, and—what was it?—there was another one. It was just really an outstanding course. It was a lecture course, but they had seminars, and I was lucky enough to have the architecture professor. I really enjoyed that a lot. And what other courses did I enjoy? In those days—another thing that's quite different now—each dormitory had its own dining room, but they ate the same thing. So you could invite somebody over to have dinner with you, or you'd go and have dinner with them. Socializing that way. Now, everybody eats in a common dining room.

01-00:59:35

Lage: At Vassar?

01-00:59:37

McLaughlin: At Vassar, yes So, it's different in a few ways like that.

01-00:59:51

Lage: Were the social graces emphasized at Vassar in those days?

01-00:59:55

McLaughlin: Oh, in a way. The seniors were in the main hall, and some of the freshman were in the freshman hall. I remember my first two years, with a fellow Denverite who had gone East from high school. But then she didn't come back for the next two years. After dinner, they served after-dinner coffee in the main hall, and that's where I first learned how to pour. [demonstrates] Yes, the little finger. You had to be very careful—very small cups. That was about the only kind of little nicety they had.

01-01:00:50

Lage: What were the girls—yourself, but also the other girls—planning to do after college? Were careers in their minds?

01-01:01:00

McLaughlin: Oh, some of them did go into medical careers, scientific careers. This was wartime, too.

01-01:01:09

Lage: That's true. You graduated in '39, so we weren't actually in there yet, but it was on the horizon.

01-01:01:18

McLaughlin: It was indeed, and my brother had been in the ROTC at Princeton, he joined the Colorado National Guard, so they were taken first. And then, for two and a half—two years and four months, I think it was—I worked out at the Modification Center in Denver.

01-01:01:37

Lage: This was after you graduated.

01-01:01:38

McLaughlin: We modified B-17s and B-29s.

01-01:01:41

Lage: Now, what did you do there? What was your actual —

01-01:01:43

McLaughlin: Well, I learned how to rivet, and do all kinds of things.

01-01:01:45

Lage: You were Rosie the Riveter.

01-01:01:48

McLaughlin: Well, they did a lot of different things. The thing I enjoyed doing most was when I put out a shortage report. First we were on three eight-hour shifts, and then we were on two ten-hour shifts. That's portal to portal. You had to be there for ten hours.

01-01:02:06

Lage: Ten hours.

01-01:02:08

McLaughlin: Sometimes it was twelve hours, but not too often. And it was the type of thing where sometimes you had a lot of work, and sometimes you didn't have as much. But for the shortage report, I had to go around to all the offices, and to all the line, and find out if a certain part was needed —

[End Audio File 1 mclaughlin,\_sylvia\_1\_10-16-06.mp3]

[Begin Audio File 2 mclaughlin,\_sylvia\_2\_10-16-06.mp3]

02-00:00:00

Lage: You were right in the middle of telling me about your wartime job, doing the shortage report.

02-00:00:14

McLaughlin: Yes. And that had to be very accurate, and so I had a chance to talk to the machinists, and the people that were doing everything—the wiring, and so on. And tell them this part was really needed, and so on. They had put one out for each shift, so I had the responsibility of doing one for the shift I was on.

02-00:00:46

Lage: Now, that might not have been the kind of job you would have gone into, had there not been a war. Am I right?

02-00:00:55

McLaughlin: Who knows?

02-00:00:57

Lage: When you left Vassar, what were you thinking you would do?

02-00:01:03

McLaughlin: I was thinking of going skiing. I did a lot of that.

02-00:01:08

Lage: Right. So you went back home to Denver, and didn't —

02-00:01:12

McLaughlin: Well, actually, then I did have a really interesting job with this friend who later became my aunt. I don't think she was, then. She had gotten an assignment to write a book about Colorado, and southern Wyoming, and northern New Mexico. It was a series. And I knew people in those areas, and so—I can't remember whether I volunteered or she asked me. Anyway, we worked out a system where I drove her, and she—I think I paid for the gasoline, she paid for the hotels where we stayed, or something like that. It was pretty informal.

02-00:02:13

Lage: And did you help her research and write it?

02-00:02:17

McLaughlin: No, she did all the writing, but I introduced her to a lot of people. It was an interesting assignment. For several weeks, we did this.

02-00:02:30

Lage: And what—was it a guide book, or about how people lived?

02-00:02:33

McLaughlin: It was part of a series, yes. But then it was never published, because I think the publisher thought it was too personal, or it wasn't the type of book that they had anticipated having.

02-00:02:49

Lage: But the fun was in the doing it, right? And so, you went back and did a lot of skiing. You lived with your parents?

02-00:02:57

McLaughlin: Yes.

02-00:02:59

Lage: Tell me more about —

02-00:03:00

McLaughlin: But this was during the war, so we had coupons for gasoline, so we'd have to pool our coupons. I remember going with one friend and his wife. I had complete faith in his driving skills, because he had been driving over the mountains since he was twelve years old in trucks and so on. He would just put it in neutral going down the hills to save gas. Anyway, we'd carpool. We'd meet at a certain place, and go up. A group of us went up to a ski club we had. Well, at the same time, my father was building the Winter Park ski area, so in the summer, we'd go up and help build the trails.

02-00:04:01

Lage: Oh. Was that the first kind of winter park in that area? Were there other ski areas?

02-00:04:11

McLaughlin: Well, they were pretty informal. There was some skiing at Berthoud Pass and at Loveland Pass.

02-00:04:17

Lage: Did they have the —

02-00:04:18

McLaughlin: Ski lifts? Californians called them "up skis." We thought that was so funny. They were mostly rope tows. I remember one up above Leadville that would almost pull your arms out.

02-00:04:39

Lage: You'd just grab hold, and —

02-00:04:40  
McLaughlin: That's it. Hang on.

02-00:04:42  
Lage: — hang on, and up you go.

02-00:04:52  
McLaughlin: We built several trails up there at Winter Park. That was —

02-00:05:01  
Lage: Now, were they trails for hiking, or for cross-country skiing, or —

02-00:05:03  
McLaughlin: No, just for downhill.

02-00:05:04  
Lage: For downhill.

02-00:05:06  
McLaughlin: We did everything with the same pair of skis in those days. If you wanted to go cross country and uphill, you put on skins. And so, I remember I was using my brother's—I didn't fit my skis very well. I was following all these other skiers. And I'd usually get up to—they'd be resting, and I'd just get there. And then, they took off. You'd have to keep up or not.

02-00:05:43  
Lage: Well, I'll bet you were a pretty good skier, though.

02-00:05:46  
McLaughlin: Oh, I tried to follow the boys down.

02-00:05:48  
Lage: Now, tell me more about what the skins were.

02-00:05:54  
McLaughlin: They were—well, I may still have some around somewhere. You put skins on the —

02-00:06:04  
Lage: Animal skins.

02-00:06:05  
McLaughlin: — bottom of the skis, so that the rough part would catch the snow. I mean, you'd smooth —

02-00:06:16  
Lage: But what kind of a skin was it?

02-00:06:18  
McLaughlin: Pardon me?

02-00:06:18  
Lage: What kind of a skin was it? Was it an animal pelt?

02-00:06:21

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. Animal skin. With a canvas on one side, and the skin side on the snow side.

02-00:06:29

Lage: I see. So, it would help you get —

02-00:06:32

McLaughlin: It was the hair that would catch on the snow.

02-00:06:35

Lage: I don't think skiers today would even know the concept of that. Did very many girls—young women; you weren't really a girl anymore—ski? Was it —

02-00:06:47

McLaughlin: Oh, yes.

02-00:06:47

Lage: It was something both sexes did.

02-00:06:48

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

02-00:06:51

Lage: Were there competitions or anything like that?

02-00:06:53

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. Races.

02-00:06:55

Lage: Did you get involved in that?

02-00:06:57

McLaughlin: I raced some, yes.

02-00:07:00

Lage: And your father was quite a skier, too, wasn't he? Or was he?

02-00:07:04

McLaughlin: He kept at it, yes. But he always had his eye on developing other areas.

02-00:07:15

Lage: Tell me, now, about your dad, and what he did.

02-00:07:18

McLaughlin: He really was interested in providing all kinds of sports for the people of Denver, and he was there at the time when they had the WPA and the PWA money, and the CCC, which were largely responsible for building the Red Rocks Theater. Unfortunately, it's generally called an amphitheater, which irritated him quite a bit, because he said, "Amphi means 'both,' which makes it be like a coliseum. It's a Greek word."

02-00:07:52  
Lage: Now, what was the word —

02-00:07:53  
McLaughlin: Amphi.

02-00:07:54  
Lage: Amphi.

02-00:07:56  
McLaughlin: Like amphitheater.

02-00:07:57  
Lage: Right.

02-00:07:59  
McLaughlin: So, Red Rocks is just a theater. And it's not a coliseum.

02-00:08:07  
Lage: I see. The "amphitheater" implies both a theater and a coliseum.

02-00:08:12  
McLaughlin: Two sides. Red Rocks has just one side.

02-00:08:16  
Lage: I see.

02-00:08:16  
McLaughlin: You'll have to go there some time.

02-00:08:17  
Lage: I'd love to. How far up from Denver is —

02-00:08:19  
McLaughlin: There's a woman here who teaches at Berkeley that wrote a book about it.

02-00:08:22  
Lage: Oh, really? Well, I am going to Denver in two weeks.

02-00:08:28  
McLaughlin: Oh, really?

02-00:08:28  
Lage: To visit my daughter, who lives in Boulder.

02-00:08:30  
McLaughlin: Oh, that's nice.

02-00:08:31  
Lage: And I thought maybe we could do a little —

02-00:08:34  
McLaughlin: Oh, touring around, yes.

02-00:08:34

Lage: A little touring.

02-00:08:36

McLaughlin: Well, they have a very nice sort of a description. We stopped there last—was it last summer?—when we were there. No, summer before last. And they've done a very nice job of it, because they had to rebuild it, and I think it was largely due to the then-mayor Wellington Webb, who really wanted to have it done nicely in the way Dad would have wanted it to be. There were others who wanted to make it much more commercial, and so on, and he said no. Wanted to keep it more natural.

02-00:09:09

Lage: That's nice. Your father's vision continued. Do you remember him talking about the plans for that?

02-00:09:17

McLaughlin: Oh, yes indeed. We were just involved all the time.

02-00:09:21

Lage: Yes, tell me more about how you were involved, and what you know about it.

02-00:09:23

McLaughlin: My brother, in fact, tells the story of every time my mother would get some outstanding musician to come for the symphony, my father would get them to come out to try the acoustics at Red Rocks. He'd get Albert Spalding to play the violin here. They'd be jumping over piles of rock, and so on. And my brother took Marian Anderson out there to sing. His mother-in-law was very—she was from the South. I guess she wouldn't have appreciated that at all. But things were pretty—I don't know what you'd call it—segregated. But my mother—she met Marian Anderson in New York, once. They wouldn't permit her to go up the regular elevator. My mother went up the service elevator with Marian Anderson.

02-00:10:32

Lage: So, your mother had some really —

02-00:10:35

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. She would not do things like that.

02-00:10:39

Lage: And then, when she brought Marian Anderson out to Denver, was that controversial?

02-00:10:42

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. She stayed with us. I mean, she was the outstanding singer of the time.

02-00:10:48

Lage: Oh, of course. But do you think it was controversial among your mother's circle?

02-00:10:52

McLaughlin: I don't know. I think she was such outstanding artist that they kind of overlooked her color. But she was a lovely person.

02-00:11:04

Lage: So the Red Rocks Theater was sort of the place where your father's interest and your mother's could come together.

02-00:11:14

McLaughlin: And he brought over—I think it was Wagner's son; I can't remember his first name—to give advice on how it should be developed. I think Dad always really felt that it should be for classical music, and Wagnerian opera, and things like that, whereas it was mostly used for rock music, I think, unfortunately.

02-00:11:41

Lage: In later years. Now, where is it? Give a little more background about it, because we —

02-00:11:46

McLaughlin: Oh, it's just west of Denver.

02-00:11:48

Lage: In the hills.

02-00:11:51

McLaughlin: In the foothills.

02-00:11:51

Lage: In the foothills.

02-00:11:52

McLaughlin: There's a town of Morrison, and it's right near there.

02-00:11:59

Lage: And what was it that your father created —

02-00:12:01

McLaughlin: Oh, it had been a park, because of the formation. It's like the Garden of the Gods in Colorado Springs, and like the Flatirons next to Boulder. Incidentally, I climbed the Third Flatiron once. Twice, I did.

02-00:12:21

Lage: Now, when was that?

02-00:12:24

McLaughlin: When? Oh, after college. Went up with my brother and a friend of his. Another time, I went up with a couple of other friends.

02-00:12:36

Lage: Is that a technical climb?

02-00:12:38  
McLaughlin: Very.

02-00:12:40  
Lage: Did you have to use ropes, and —

02-00:12:42  
McLaughlin: Yes. Well, they put a rope around me, in case I did anything foolish. But then I learned to go down.

02-00:12:54  
Lage: To rappel?

02-00:12:54  
McLaughlin: They taught me how to belay.

02-00:12:56  
Lage: Oh, to belay.

02-00:12:58  
McLaughlin: That was fun.

02-00:12:58  
Lage: I've heard so many people talk about the early days of rock climbing out here, in the Sierra. But I have not talked to anyone who did it in Colorado. Was there an alpine club of some kind?

02-00:13:13  
McLaughlin: Oh, yes. Yes.

02-00:13:15  
Lage: And did you belong to it?

02-00:13:16  
McLaughlin: It was the Colorado Mountain Club.

02-00:13:19  
Lage: Were you a member of that?

02-00:13:20  
McLaughlin: Yes, but I didn't do much with it. But anyway, this was quite an experience.

02-00:13:28  
Lage: Oh, I'll say. So, back to Red Rocks—that was also a similar —

02-00:13:33  
McLaughlin: Part of the same formation. It was all along the—what's known as the Hog Back. In fact, this was in my geology book at Vassar. It's well known.

02-00:13:44  
Lage: And how did your father get the idea to make a theater there?

02-00:13:48  
McLaughlin: Well, he had seen in this theater in Sicily, at Taormina.

02-00:13:53  
Lage: Which was also built into the natural rock like that?

02-00:13:58  
McLaughlin: Not as much, but he kind of visualized it as a possibility.

02-00:14:05  
Lage: Did you have a sense from him—or from being there at the time—of how big an enterprise it was to get Denver committed to make the theater?

02-00:14:16  
McLaughlin: Oh, no. He was a doer. He had pretty much carte blanche to do it. He was only responsible to the mayor. There's a story that he wanted to eliminate this one big rock, and so he left orders to sort of blow it all up at once. He hadn't told the mayor, who had gone elsewhere that day. Anyway, if there were any repercussions, he was elsewhere.

02-00:14:58  
Lage: But that was a pretty big dynamite blast, I would guess.

02-00:15:02  
McLaughlin: Oh, yes. Well, it accomplished what he wanted to do.

02-00:15:05  
Lage: Was it controversial?

02-00:15:10  
McLaughlin: It could have been.

02-00:15:14  
Lage: He sounds like quite an amazing man as you talk about him.

02-00:15:17  
McLaughlin: He was. He was also quite a patron of the arts. Gladys Caldwell Fisher—she did the buffalo, she the mountain sheep that's out here in the hall.

02-00:15:30  
Lage: Now, who did this?

02-00:15:32  
McLaughlin: Gladys Caldwell Fisher. I'll show you out here, she—

02-00:15:37  
Lage: Should I come out?

02-00:15:38  
McLaughlin: Yes, please. [pause in recording.]

02-00:15:42  
Lage: You were talking about this artist. And did you say your father was more or less a patron of Gladys Caldwell Fisher?

02-00:15:50  
McLaughlin: Yes. Yes. They gave her the space to do her sculptures, right there in the garden of Chappell House.

02-00:16:00  
Lage: Oh, I see. Where your —

02-00:16:01  
McLaughlin: The Art Museum.

02-00:16:06  
Lage: I'm just reading in this book about Red Rocks that it was dedicated in 1941 with a Native American ceremony. Do you remember that?

02-00:16:19  
McLaughlin: 1941? No.

02-00:16:22  
Lage: I just wondered how that happened. And they also had opera singing.

02-00:16:31  
McLaughlin: I may not have been there—1941? Oh, who knows where I was. But I don't remember.

02-00:16:47  
Lage: Did you know Mayor Stapleton? Was he a family friend, as well?

02-00:16:51  
McLaughlin: Oh, yes. Well, not that close. We knew him and his son, Ben Stapleton, Jr.

02-00:17:09  
Lage: Was he your age group?

02-00:17:10  
McLaughlin: Pardon me?

02-00:17:11  
Lage: Was the son about —

02-00:17:12  
McLaughlin: About my contemporary. Here's a photograph of the Chappell House. And I think where my brother was born was in that sort of round room there, on the second floor.

02-00:17:34  
Lage: Oh, I see. A Victorian era house. And that was the art museum?

02-00:  
McLaughlin: It became the art museum, yes.

02-00:17:49

Lage: Well, your family was very involved in Denver history, that's for certain.

02-00:17:58

McLaughlin: Well, I can also provide this snazzy picture that I took of the house where I was born, if you'd like that.

02-00:18:08

Lage: Sure. And the house that you grew up in—tell me about that house. The picture I saw of it made it look very grand.

02-00:18:16

McLaughlin: It was a large house. I always thought it was very comfortable. Sort of a U-shaped house, with a fountain in the middle, and a garden down below, swimming pool to one side. There was a front entry hall, a dining room on the left, living room on the right, and bookcases in all four corners, and a piano, and then sort of radio. Then beyond that, there was what we called the South Loggia, which was outside, then it was enclosed. It had a little pond in it—a fish pond.

02-00:19:08

Lage: How lovely.

02-00:19:09

McLaughlin: We'd bring the fish in from the outside pool in the winter, and then the other wing was a kitchen wing—pantry, kitchen, and rooms upstairs for the maid to stay, and then we had a compartment over the garage, and during the war, we had a Japanese family that stayed there. Ichi [Ichiro], Michi, and their son, Kenny had come from a Japanese internment camp.

02-00:19:40

Lage: Now, how did they happen to stay there?

02-00:19:42

McLaughlin: Well, my father had a good friend—there was a Japanese optometrist, and he was anxious to get a lot of these Japanese that had been interned out, and get them jobs. And Mother had had a cook for a number of years, and then she left, and she needed help, and my parents were getting on, and it was a large house. First we had one Japanese man, as a sort of outside person. Mother then saw a different person, and she said, "Well, I'm getting to wonder, a little bit, because they keep changing." And then we switched to Ichi, and he said, "Well, I think you'll find that I'll be different. I will stay, because I want to get my wife and little boy out of the camp." So then that was arranged for them, so then Michi stayed with us until the end of the war. Ichi and Michi. So, then, we helped, and they got a job with a family in Marin County. He always wanted to get back—he had had a very fine linen store on Shattuck Avenue.

02-00:21:15

Lage: Oh, my. So, they were from Berkeley

02-00:21:16

McLaughlin: They took everything, you know. The government did. My father helped get them a car to come back to California after the war. So now Michi still lives in a very nice house up on the ridge. Ichi died several years ago. But she was like a second mother to my children, and it was just a very nice relationship. She retired several years ago.

02-00:21:47

Lage: What did they do when they came back here?

02-00:21:50

McLaughlin: They just did domestic work. She finally persuaded him, I guess, not to try to get back into his former business. Because there was still a lot of antipathy to the Japanese when they first came.

02-00:22:04

Lage: When they came back to this area.

02-00:22:11

McLaughlin: So, then they worked for his friends in Piedmont, and then she started to come to help me, because I had little children then.

02-00:22:26

Lage: So, that was a long-standing relationship.

02-00:22:26

McLaughlin: I should say. We still, you know, we go and see her, and I talk to her on the telephone.

02-00:22:37

Lage: What were the attitudes in Denver towards the Japanese?

02-00:22:41

McLaughlin: Well, there had been a lot of Japanese farmers there, but, you know, there was prejudice. My mother would invite Michi to go to the symphony with her, and sit by her, and just showed people that she was not prejudiced. And the little boy was beat up at school, and Mother took it to court and got the little boy sent to a different school, and—here's a picture of our house.

02-00:23:26

Lage: 200 Cherry Street. Now, that does look very nice. It looks very gracious, as they say. Really lovely.

02-00:23:33

McLaughlin: Yes, it was. It was a very nice house.

02-00:23:36

Lage: Tile roof.

02-00:23:37

McLaughlin: And still is, and people there seem to enjoy it, so that's good.

02-00:23:39  
Lage: And did your parents have that built for them?

02-00:23:42  
McLaughlin: Oh, yes. Yes.

02-00:23:43  
Lage: I noticed it was built in 1917, shortly after you were born.

02-00:23:49  
McLaughlin: Yes, I think it was in 1917, yes. And then my younger brother was born there, and then my father went off to war.

02-00:23:56  
Lage: Oh, what did your father do in the war?

02-00:24:00  
McLaughlin: Well, I don't know. Not much of —

02-00:24:04  
Lage: You'd think he would be exempt, with —

02-00:24:09  
McLaughlin: No, he was in the artillery, I guess. Anyway.

02-00:24:12  
Lage: Did he enlist, or get drafted?

02-00:24:13  
McLaughlin: Yes, he enlisted. I don't know if they had drafts then, World War I.

02-00:24:32  
Lage: Do you remember his being gone, or were you too young?

02-00:24:37  
McLaughlin: No, but we have photographs.

02-00:24:47  
Lage: Your parents really sound like extraordinary people. You know, liberal-minded, and very effective, and visionary. Do you have a sense —

02-00:24:56  
McLaughlin: They enjoyed people. All kinds of people.

02-00:25:00  
Lage: What made them like that, do you think?

02-00:25:04  
McLaughlin: Oh, I don't know.

02-00:25:05  
Lage: Were all their friends like that? Did they stand out?

02-00:25:07

McLaughlin: No.

02-00:25:08

Lage: But you don't have a sense of—and you've mentioned they taught more by example. They didn't preach to the kids about how they should live their lives, or do you remember lessons that they taught?

02-00:25:26

McLaughlin: No. No, it was more by example.

02-00:25:30

Lage: What were some of the other visions that your father had for Denver, and accomplishments that he did as the director? Some of it was water works —

02-00:25:42

McLaughlin: He brought water over from the western slope—that's where the water was—and through the Williams Fork Tunnel. Of course, now Denver's spread all over, and there doesn't seem to be very much thought about where the water's coming from. It still seems to me a finite resource.

02-00:26:06

Lage: Well, they're always talking about drought.

02-00:26:09

McLaughlin: I know, a lot of drought. What else did he build? He built the Valley Highway.

02-00:26:15

Lage: He built roads.

02-00:26:21

McLaughlin: I started to say how interested he was in sports. He built five Olympic-sized swimming pools in different sections of Denver. He expanded the areas for parks. I remember, he built one called Congress Park, which is largely just a flat area of grass near Grant City, because he felt that that could be used for a number of different kinds of sports. Then, in wintertime, he was a very enthusiastic ice skater. He didn't start to skate until he was fifty years old. He took up figure skating, and he flooded the tennis courts so people could skate. And he always made sure they were kept in good condition. And there's a lake up at Evergreen, and he made a large area of that smooth for ice skating, and would have music and everything. We'd go up there and skate at night. It was so much fun. And it really gave the people of that area a wonderful opportunity—and for the surrounding areas.

02-00:27:34

Lage: And did he—was he interested in making recreation available in different parts of the city?

02-00:27:41

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. Absolutely. That's what he did. I mean, these five swimming pools—as I say—were in north Denver, west Denver, south Denver—not just the

affluent areas at all. And the poor people would really appreciate them, and needed them, these facilities.

02-00:28:03

Lage: He makes me think of William Penn Mott, in some ways. A can-do type of person.

02-00:28:09

McLaughlin: I should say. Yes, indeed. No, he was quite a visionary. He acquired a lot of the land for expanding the airport—Stapleton Airport, the old airport. Now, it's out in the next county.

02-00:28:34

Lage: Was it hard to get things done during the Depression? I mean, how did the city have money for these?

02-00:28:41

McLaughlin: Well, see, this was due to Roosevelt's New Deal WPA, or PWA.

02-00:28:50

Lage: Using those organizations for labor.

02-00:28:51

McLaughlin: Yes. And volunteer workers.

02-00:28:55

Lage: Like yourself.

02-00:28:56

McLaughlin: Yes. A lot of the skiers would go up, and then he'd get some of his highway people to go up. We'd take a victrola up, and play music, and bring some beer up, maybe.

02-00:29:14

Lage: What were attitudes towards drinking, and smoking, and things like that in your household?

02-00:29:19

McLaughlin: Well, he was totally against smoking.

02-00:29:21

Lage: Oh, really.

02-00:29:22

McLaughlin: Totally. And all his sisters smoked like chimneys. I don't know why he was so against it. He just was.

02-00:29:31

Lage: Was it a health matter? Was he aware of the health —

02-00:29:34

McLaughlin: No. Not in those days. We made wine at home, because his theory was that if we learned to drink wine, we wouldn't be so interested in drinking hard liquor. And so he got together with some of the local Italians and learned how they made their wine. And then he shared the grapes, that would come from California. And we had a large basement. You know, it worked out fine. And it was legal to make wine for your own consumption.

02-00:30:16

Lage: Amazing.

02-00:30:20

McLaughlin: He usually had two glasses of wine for lunch, and two glasses of wine for dinner, and that was it.

02-00:30:27

Lage: Sensible attitude.

02-00:30:28

McLaughlin: Oh, yes.

02-00:30:30

Lage: He sounds like a fun-loving person, too.

02-00:30:34

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. As I said, he loved to dance.

02-00:30:38

Lage: Was your mother a dancer also?

02-00:30:40

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. She enjoyed dancing. He was a little more sort of vigorous than she was. She was not exactly frail, but not robust.

02-00:31:07

Lage: Less of a physical person, maybe. Did she ski or anything like that? Did your mother?

02-00:31:15

McLaughlin: Well, I suppose she did ski at Genesee, all right. I remember her saying she would spend the nights trying to keep the rats off. That was what she remembered most about the ski trips. But in those days, people made their own entertainments. Once, she organized a big circus up at our house to benefit the symphony. And another time, there was a group called the Cactus Club, and they would do plays, and so on.

02-00:32:01

Lage: At your home?

02-00:32:02

McLaughlin: They did one, I'll have to get that song. They sang a song about my father.

02-00:32:21

Lage: At the Cactus Club?

02-00:32:23

McLaughlin: I think it was the Cactus Club, yes.

02-00:32:26

Lage: Kind of a satirical—?

02-00:32:27

McLaughlin: Yes. There's a friend of mine who lives here in Berkeley. Ann Farrell Folsom. Her father was a well-known poet, and also I think he worked for the sugar beet company. But anyway, it was something like, "Here's to Gorgeous George, the city's best improvement. For the rushing, gushing, flushing of the sewer is music to the educated ear." It went on and on. I forget the rest. I'll have to get the rest of it.

02-00:32:59

Lage: So, he did sewer design also? Water works?

02-00:33:03

McLaughlin: That was under his jurisdiction. And he had quite advanced ideas about the water purification, sewers, and so on. And the older people didn't always agree with him.

02-00:33:19

Lage: But were they ideas that took hold later?

02-00:33:23

McLaughlin: Later, I think, yes.

02-00:33:24

Lage: How did he know about all these things?

02-00:33:28

McLaughlin: Because he read up on them. And then, a lot of these things seemed logical.

02-00:33:36

Lage: Fascinating. Now, your mother was very musical, and you had a lot of musicians around the house, it sounds like. Did you have an instrument you played?

02-00:33:45

McLaughlin: Well, Mother hoped to have a string quartet in the family, but it never really happened. We were a big disappointment, I think, to her.

02-00:33:53

Lage: All of you?

02-00:33:54

McLaughlin: Well, I took the viola for one summer, and my older brother, he played the cello for some years while he was in school, too. And then my younger

brother played the violin for probably one summer, too. But also, then, I played the piano. And I remember, though, it was pretty disastrous. We'd each one of us be counting, and then we'd all come in on a different measure.

02-00:34:22

Lage: So, whatever skill she had didn't necessarily pass on.

02-00:34:28

McLaughlin: I'm afraid we dashed her hopes.

02-00:34:30

Lage: Oh, that's too bad. Well, I wonder if this is a good place to sort of wind down today. Have I made you talk enough?

02-00:34:37

McLaughlin: I think so. It's been a great pleasure, yes.

02-00:34:40

Lage: It's been fun.

02-00:34:41

McLaughlin: So, anyway, I think we've covered quite a lot. We've covered so much. And I'll probably think of other things.

02-00:34:49

Lage: Well, that's good. I always like to start up next time by sort of covering what we forgot this time. And usually—you know—you'll think of things.

02-00:35:00

McLaughlin: Yes.

[End Audio File 2 mclaughlin,\_sylvia\_2\_10-16-06.mp3]

End of Interview 1

**Interview # 2: March 1, 2007**

[Begin Audio File 3 mclaughlin,\_sylvia3\_03-01-07.mp3]

03-00:00:00

Lage: Okay. Now we are truly on, and today is March 1, 2007.

03-00:00:04

McLaughlin: March 1. My goodness. Wow.

03-00:00:07

Lage: And I will note that our first interview, and our last interview, was October 16. So it's been awhile.

03-00:00:14

McLaughlin: I should say.

03-00:00:15

Lage: Let me also introduce this. This is an interview with Sylvia McLaughlin, and I'm Ann Lage, for the Regional Oral History Office. You've been looking over the brief summary I did of our last interview, and we were going to start today by asking if you had any thought about what maybe we left out, what was important to the formation of Sylvia McLaughlin that we—

03-00:00:38

McLaughlin: Yes. This was during the time I was at Vassar. My older brother Forrest was at Princeton, and my younger brother, Chap, was at Dartmouth. My mother was quite an independent person, and would come to New York sometimes, and she would arrange for us to come into New York, and she took us to some of the wonderful musicals of that period. I just will never forget seeing the originals of some of those.

03-00:01:25

Lage: Can you remember which ones, in passing?

03-00:01:29

McLaughlin: Let's see. Mary Martin and Fred Astaire, and his sister, Adele, at—I forget what they were in, and a big—was it *High Tor*? [a musical about the Hudson River.] They were just a wonderful lot of plays and musicals at that time, Rodgers and Hart, and others. And so we had a lot of fun.

03-00:01:59

Lage: So, you'd get together as a family and do that?

03-00:02:01

McLaughlin: Yes. And then also, they had—well, my brother's friends at Princeton were my friends too, and we would go dancing in the Persian Room at the Plaza Hotel.

03-00:02:17

Lage: Oh, this sounds like a wonderful life.

- 03-00:02:18  
McLaughlin: Oh, yes. Then there was also the Maisonette Russe.
- 03-00:02:26  
Lage: Say that again?
- 03-00:02:27  
McLaughlin: Maisonette Russe. Russian small house. And it was down in the basement of the Plaza. And it was presided over by a former Russian nobleman. So, that was fun. And of course then we saw the museums, and things like that as well. But that was an important part of our time there.
- 03-00:02:57  
Lage: Right. The New York life.
- 03-00:03:00  
McLaughlin: Yes. But I really enjoyed the—it was a two hour trip on the train, back to Poughkeepsie, but it was really very nice, going right up along the Hudson River. I always enjoyed that.
- 03-00:03:17  
Lage: Did it ever make you think you might want to settle in the East?
- 03-00:03:19  
McLaughlin: Heavens, no.
- 03-00:03:21  
Lage: Never a moment?
- 03-00:03:22  
McLaughlin: Never a moment. And I would usually ride back to college with ten cents, which was all that was necessary to take the bus back to the campus. And what really amazed me when I went back for reunions was that there were so many cars on campus. And when I was there, I think it was only seniors with a very high grade point average that were allowed to have cars at all.
- 03-00:03:54  
Lage: So, it depended on your grades?
- 03-00:03:56  
McLaughlin: Yes.
- 03-00:03:57  
Lage: Not just on whether you could afford a car.
- 03-00:03:59  
McLaughlin: No.
- 03-00:04:02  
Lage: Did you ever have a car while you were there?

03-00:04:04

McLaughlin: Oh, heavens no. We would get together and go to New Haven, or Harvard, or Dartmouth in a taxi cab. That's how we managed. We car pooled.

03-00:04:20

Lage: Right. Well, maybe they'll get back to that someday, with our global warming. So, do you look at those times at all as a model for how we should be living our lives today? Does it have relevance as a model?

03-00:04:37

McLaughlin: Oh, I don't think —

03-00:04:37

Lage: These were Depression years. People were more conscious of —

03-00:04:40

McLaughlin: I didn't think so. I just never really give it much of a thought. That was sort of past history.

03-00:04:45

Lage: You don't look to a past that seems golden?

03-00:04:49

McLaughlin: No. That was just the way it was.

03-00:04:52

Lage: Oh, that's interesting. Now, were there other things as you thought about what we talked about last time that you wish you'd maybe emphasized a little bit more? I'm trying to get at lasting influences of your family, or your experiences growing up.

03-00:05:26

McLaughlin: Well, I think I rather envied some of my classmates who took really good notes, and had good grades, and so on. I was never really a—how shall I say?—an A student.

03-00:05:40

Lage: You don't think of yourself as a scholar, it seems.

03-00:05:42

McLaughlin: No. I had worked so hard to get into college that I kind of—shall we say—goofed off, once I got there.

03-00:05:49

Lage: Oh, you did! Now, is that a true assessment? Did you do the gentleman's C route?

03-00:05:55

McLaughlin: I'd never heard that expression.

03-00:05:57

Lage: No?

03-00:05:58

McLaughlin: No. But I spent the next several years trying to catch up. We had a core course that was required. I think the curriculum is probably quite different now, but I was interested in history, and languages, and then I took the—it was a survey course of art, and that was a really wonderful course, because it took in painting, sculpture, and architecture sort of from the time of Egypt to the present day. And it was taught by the top professors in each of those categories. And that made it very interesting when—several years later—we went to Europe and saw some of these same places. I could really relate to them, because I had studied them.

03-00:06:54

Lage: Do you remember any of your professors? Did you have any of these émigré professors? I know there were—in the thirties—a lot of Jewish refugees.

03-00:07:05

McLaughlin: There was a German professor of philosophy. I don't recall his name right now. I really enjoyed his classes, but I wasn't doing very well, so it was recommended that I change to something else.

03-00:07:18

Lage: Was he a German Jewish refugee, do you know?

03-00:07:19

McLaughlin: Yes. Yes. So, I changed to paleontology, and that was interesting. I had already taken geology as my required science, and it was sort of a toss-up between—because I didn't like to cut up things—it was astronomy or botany or geology. I thought, "Well, astronomy might be a little chilly, for observing the stars." And I thought botany I could do some other time, and then I really enjoyed the geology, because we went on field trips to different areas around Poughkeepsie, and we'd take along sort of a picnic lunch. And then little did I know I would marry a geologist.

03-00:08:08

Lage: Here you married a geologist, and you also certainly got into scientific questions here with your work with the bay. Did you draw on any of that science you'd had in college?

03-00:08:23

McLaughlin: No. Well, I did later on. Just a few years ago, I took Doris Sloan's Geology of the Bay Area.

03-00:08:31

Lage: That's a wonderful class.

03-00:08:32

McLaughlin: I should say it was. It helped, knowing some of the terminology. And then we would go on walks, with my husband Don, well, he'd point out the different kinds of rocks and terrain we were looking at.

03-00:08:47

Lage: Just thinking back to those professors at Vassar, I hear that art history was very much a subject of the German immigrants.

03-00:09:02

McLaughlin: Art history?

03-00:09:03

Lage: Yes. That they put their stamp on art history in this country. Did you have any sense of a particular approach, or —

03-00:09:10

McLaughlin: No. There was one very distinguished woman professor, I remember, for the painting. And there was quite a well-known architect with a Scottish or Irish name. McSomething or other. He was excellent, and he was also our seminar teacher. That was a very nice thing. This was a lecture class, but there were small seminar groups that met about once every two weeks, with one of the professors. As I said, they were all really outstanding. So, I enjoyed that. And my mother kept asking when I was going to take the survey course of the appreciation of music. So, finally I did. My senior year, you could take a pass/fail course, so I did that. Probably very fortunately, because it was right after lunch, and it was called Music 140—also, I remember that.

03-00:10:22

Lage: You remember these very well.

03-00:10:24

McLaughlin: And the professor—I think his name was Dickinson—he knew exactly where everyone was sitting, and so here we were, sort of half-asleep after lunch. And he'd ask a question, and say, "Miss Cranmer?" So that was —

03-00:10:43

Lage: And you would? I mean, you'd had more exposure to music than most people there, and to musicians.

03-00:10:48

McLaughlin: Yes, but this was an erudite course, and I really didn't understand what he was talking about, and so we would just repeat what he said. It was mainly meant for music majors. I enjoyed it. I enjoyed reading the books that were assigned.

03-00:11:11

Lage: Were there many women professors? What was the balance between men and women professors?

03-00:11:19

McLaughlin: Maybe about half and half.

03-00:11:21

Lage: A lot more women professors than you would have found at a coed school, then, if it was half and half.

03-00:11:29

McLaughlin: Well, I never really sort of paid much attention to that. I had some outstanding French professors who happened to be women, and as I said, this architecture professor was really quite outstanding, and then the geology professors were men. They had been students of Don's.

03-00:11:49

Lage: Oh, really? Well, you didn't know that at the time.

03-00:11:52

McLaughlin: One of them had been, and the other one, he knew. Yes.

03-00:11:55

Lage: Did you know Don at that time?

03-00:12:01

McLaughlin: He said he'd first met me when I was about fourteen, when he had come to look at a mine that my father was interested in. Did you want to go into this, now? Transition here?

03-00:12:17

Lage: We can transition into that, but maybe we should finish up a little bit more, and just wrap up the early years, and then we'll go back and pick up how you met Don.

03-00:12:26

McLaughlin: College years?

03-00:12:26

Lage: Yes. What were most of the young women—as you talked about your lives, and what you were going to do next—what were most of your college mates thinking about?

03-00:12:41

McLaughlin: I presume, getting married and having a family. That was what was done in those days.

03-00:12:47

Lage: So, they weren't thinking about becoming a professor, or —

03-00:12:51

McLaughlin: A few. A few had careers in mind. A few became physicians, lawyers, or went into politics. But I think that was quite a minority.

03-00:13:08

Lage: Did a lot of them get married before they left school, or just —

03-00:13:12

McLaughlin: A few did. And then many—of course—went into volunteer work in their communities.

03-00:13:20

Lage: Which was a standard thing for intelligent young women to do.

03-00:13:22

McLaughlin: Yes. Yes. Sure. But I didn't have any really firm ideas about what I wanted to do. I did a lot of skiing.

03-00:13:40

Lage: I know. You mentioned that last time, and I just wondered—when you went back home, it was '39. Of course, the war is gathering, and all. Were you thinking about—you know—what's the next step for me?

03-00:13:53

McLaughlin: I think in those times, we were kind of guided by events. I wanted to do something for the war effort, and I didn't have any responsibilities. I was living at home. I went out to this Australian lady, and she had a group that was doing what they called Bundles for Britain. This involved knitting a thumbless mitten. Well, I struggled over that, and I decided that that wasn't for me.

03-00:14:34

Lage: Was this to send to the British people, or the armed forces?

03-00:14:37

McLaughlin: Yes. Yes. And I wasn't very good at knitting. So then my father said, well, there was going to be this Modification Center out at the airport, and I might enjoy doing that. There was a six-week course in learning how to rivet, and learning the different—oh, literally the nuts and bolts.

03-00:15:09

Lage: What were they modifying at the Modification Center?

03-00:15:12

McLaughlin: B-17s, and later on, B-29s. The orders would come from Wright Field to Boeing, and then Continental Airlines had the contract from Boeing, and the buildings are still there. We thought they were huge hangars, but now B-17s seem to be quite small airplanes. I did that for two years and four months.

03-00:15:40

Lage: Did you do that after we got into the war, then? It must have been.

03-00:15:46

McLaughlin: I imagine so. It was in the early forties, yes. And then when the war stopped, I stopped doing it. But even then, we would pool our gas coupons and go skiing on weekends.

03-00:16:05

Lage: So, it didn't totally alter your life.

03-00:16:07

McLaughlin: No, but—you know, you were very conscious of the shortages, and the coupons that were required for many things.

03-00:16:17

Lage: Were there other things that you noticed as shortages other than gas? Other things that impacted you in some way?

03-00:16:25

McLaughlin: No. Nothing you couldn't get along without.

03-00:16:28

Lage: Make do.

03-00:16:28

McLaughlin: Yes. Everybody made do. But, it was interesting to be a part of that particular war effort. At the same time, my mother was being a Gray Lady out at Buckley Field, and ministering to the returnees. It was a big airfield there.

03-00:16:51

Lage: Is that a hospital?

03-00:16:54

McLaughlin: Yes. And then my father was doing all sorts of other things. Sometimes, we were having all this classified information.

03-00:17:03

Lage: Really? Like—tell me more about that.

03-00:17:06

McLaughlin: Well, a lot of the things that I was doing, we weren't supposed to talk about. And a lot of things my mother was doing, she wasn't supposed to talk about. And I guess a lot of the things my father was doing, he wasn't supposed to talk about. So, that's the way it was.

03-00:17:21

Lage: Were your brothers home at that time, or did they go into the war?

03-00:17:25

McLaughlin: Oh, no. My older brother had done ROTC at Princeton, and when he returned home, he joined the Colorado National Guard, and he would wear a uniform and do his training—whatever it was—every Thursday evening. People started wondering what he was up to, because that was before we got into the war. And then my younger brother joined the Marine Corps, so they were all involved.

03-00:17:58

Lage: Right. Right. Did your older brother get called into service, when we did get in the war?

03-00:18:04

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. They called up the National Guard first. All the National Guards. He got married just shortly before they were called up. Just a matter of a few months, I think. And then their son was born at Atascadero, California. At the time, his outfit was at Camp Roberts.

03-00:18:37

Lage: So, the whole family was really —

03-00:18:39

McLaughlin: Yes. Then he later went into the military government, because he had a knowledge of French, and then learned Italian, and —

03-00:18:53

Lage: So, the military government —

03-00:18:55

McLaughlin: In Europe.

03-00:18:57

Lage: In Europe.

03-00:18:58

McLaughlin: They went in right after the troops, and so on.

03-00:19:00

Lage: I see.

03-00:19:01

McLaughlin: And, so that was the war years. And we were certainly very pleased when they both came back, and my brother that was in the Marine Corps was over in the Solomon Islands, in Guadalcanal with the First Marines. I remember when he finally came back, he telephoned us from San Francisco. We were all so kind of overwhelmed by his actually being in the United States that all we could think of to say was, "Hello. How are you?" We forgot to ask when he was really coming home. And then my poor mother was waiting so anxiously, and when he did come back—of course it was on a train, and they were triple-decked accommodations for the soldiers. And then, of course, he thought he'd be going back again. But I guess while he was here, they were up at Treasure Island, and had a really good time. My cousin Jane was working in San Francisco at the time, and several other young ladies he knew, so.

03-00:20:26

Lage: So, he was having some fun, and you were all worried about him.

03-00:20:31

McLaughlin: Yes. And my other brother's wife moved around with her young son, followed him from one camp to another until he went overseas.

03-00:20:42

Lage: Then did she come back to Denver?

03-00:20:45

McLaughlin: No. They decided not to go back to Denver. They started their life in the East, and stayed East. First New York, then the Boston area. Well, her family were living in Boston, so.

03-00:20:59

Lage: So, the war is over, and maybe this is the time to talk about Don.

03-00:21:12

McLaughlin: Well, I'm not quite sure of the dates of the time when he came to look at the mine that my father was interested in. It was a mine that was a way up, about 11,000 feet, I guess. At least.

03-00:21:32

Lage: Was your father interested in that privately, or as part of the —

03-00:21:34

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. He was interested in that. Sort of a self-taught geologist, and he was always looking for mining prospects, or oil prospects.

03-00:21:50

Lage: Oh, interesting. We didn't talk about that aspect of his interests.

03-00:21:55

McLaughlin: I couldn't remember when he went looking for oil prospects. He had a big Packard touring car. He went where there were no roads—Indian country, at that time.

03-00:22:10

Lage: Did he take the family along?

03-00:22:11

McLaughlin: Oh, no. Oh, no.

03-00:22:12

Lage: Now, what about your mother's family? Was there mining in your mother's family?

03-00:22:16

McLaughlin: No. My grandfather Chappell was an engineer. He had laid out the water works for Evanston, Illinois, and various cities, and Trinidad. And then they were involved, I guess, with the coal mining there, in Trinidad. But he was basically an engineer.

03-00:22:40

Lage: Like a hydraulic engineer? Or maybe it was broader in those days?

03-00:22:45

McLaughlin: Yes. I'm not sure quite what —

03-00:22:48

Lage: What did he do with the coal mining, maybe? Was it engineering?

03-00:22:51

McLaughlin: I'm not sure of that. That's what was happening in the city of Trinidad. And interestingly, his wife did drafting in his office, which was rather unusual, I

think, at that time. And then my mother's grandparents lived with them, there. They came up to Denver when she was about ten years old.

03-00:23:16

Lage: So, other than your father's interests, you don't have mining in your own personal background?

03-00:23:24

McLaughlin: No.

03-00:23:27

Lage: So, tell me more, now. Your dad was interested in this potential mine.

03-00:23:31

McLaughlin: Yes. It was called the West London mine, and it was near the town of Alma. I'd been up there with my father—there was a terrible road, I remember. It took us two hours to go fifteen miles, and it was a real corduroy road, if you know what that is. Then I remember I had a headache—I guess from the altitude—and I had a terrible meal at the boarding house. I remember that aspect of it. I had gone up with another geologist and my father. So then, Don went up. He was teaching at Harvard, and he was also working for a firm that, I guess, Dad had gone to, for financial reasons.

03-00:24:28

Lage: So, sort of consulting geologists.

03-00:24:31

McLaughlin: Yes. So, Don was doing consulting work then, for them. I'll think of the name of it eventually. And so they gave a report, but it was not very favorable, because it was a complicated mine, from both a geological and legal standpoint. However, Don and my family kept up the friendship. Don, at the same time, was also doing consulting work for the Homestake Mine in Lead, South Dakota. The flights to Lead, South Dakota, generally went through Denver. You'd go to Denver, and then up to Rapid City. So, every few years, he would stop in and have dinner with my family. And then one time —

03-00:25:27

Lage: And so he remembers you from age fourteen.

03-00:25:29

McLaughlin: That's what he said.

03-00:25:30

Lage: But you don't remember him, it sounds like.

03-00:25:33

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. Somewhat. And then, once I remember—I guess it must have been maybe 1947—my mother said, "Well, Dr. McLaughlin,"—she always called him Dr. McLaughlin; he's a PhD. Dr. McLaughlin was coming to dinner,

would I go down to the Brown Palace to meet him? And I kind of wondered if I would recognize him. But I did. And—

03-00:26:05

Lage: So you were picking him up at the Brown Palace. That's where he was staying—the hotel.

03-00:26:07

McLaughlin: Yes. Yes. So, we just developed a very nice friendship. And then I remember there was another occasion, when I think my uncle, Harry Cranmer, was there, and various other people. I just looked at Don across the room, and thought, "Well, that's the person I'm really interested in."

03-00:26:36

Lage: Ah, how nice. Had you had any other serious beaux, up until then?

03-00:26:41

McLaughlin: Oh, yes.

03-00:26:43

Lage: Ones that you contemplated making a future with?

03-00:26:46

McLaughlin: No. There was one that my parents thought would be really suitable. But I didn't go along with it.

03-00:26:57

Lage: Interesting. Did your parents think that Don was suitable? Were they happy with this match?

03-00:27:02

McLaughlin: Well, they both liked him very much. My mother was somewhat concerned about our difference in age, but it was of no concern to my father.

03-00:27:15

Lage: Interesting. So, tell me more about Don. He was at Berkeley at that time, was he? No, he was—

03-00:27:23

McLaughlin: No, no. At that time in life, he was still teaching at Harvard.

03-00:27:30

Lage: He came to Berkeley in '41.

03-00:27:34

McLaughlin: I think it was 1940. Anyway, he was divorced in 1940, and Bob Sproul, whom he had known before, asked him to come back to Berkeley to put together the mining and the engineering schools. They were separate at that time. So, he was the dean of the College of Engineering. And he did do that. Then he was asked—I think it was about 1942—to be general manager of the Cerro de Pasco Mine in Peru. He had also done consulting work there. This was

another one of the Hearst interests. He also did consulting work for a mine that they had in Mexico, and of course the Homestake Mine was one of their principal ones. The company's head office was always in San Francisco, which was started by Hearst, Haggin, and Tevis. So, when he was here in 1940, then he bought the house at 1435 Hawthorne Terrace. His mother was living in an apartment just up the street. He had been brought up in Berkeley and Oakland. Their house on Euclid and Hilgard had burned in the 1923 fire, so then his mother was living in this apartment above the corner of Euclid and Hawthorne Terrace. So then she moved down. She had a companion that was living with her, Mrs. Leach. And so, she moved down. So the first time I came out here—the first time I came out, I stayed at the Fairmont Hotel. And then the next time I came out, I stayed with Don's mother.

03-00:29:47

Lage: Now, when did you first come out?

03-00:29:54

McLaughlin: Let's see. I think it was probably the spring of 1947. And my mother gave me the trip out, because just before Christmas, she'd had a bad eye situation and had to have surgery. My brother Chap was there, and he and I took care of her, and tried to cook the Christmas dinner, and everything else. So, that was Easter time I came out. And then the following September, I came out for the mining convention. It's always a big event. I remember, they had hired one of those large ferry boats that used to go around the bay. People would ask how come I was there, and I said, "Oh, well, I just came with my uncle." Actually, he had gotten on the same plane in Salt Lake. I don't know if that went over or not. I think people were a bit suspicious.

03-00:31:11

Lage: You mean they —

03-00:31:14

McLaughlin: They saw me hanging around with Don.

03-00:31:15

Lage: Right. And was your uncle a miner? I mean, he was actually there —

03-00:31:19

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. Yes, he was.

03-00:31:21

Lage: I see. Aha. So, was that '47, do you think?

03-00:31:25

McLaughlin: I think it was '47. So, then we were married Christmas of 1948.

03-00:31:30

Lage: I see. Now, by this time, Don was head of Homestake Mining, by the time you —

03-00:31:35

McLaughlin: Yes. Because '40 and '42—'44 or '45, he became president of Homestake.

03-00:31:49

Lage: Now, when you go back to this nice little story you had about looking across the room and saying, "He's the one for me," had he indicated his interest also? Tell me about how that happened.

03-00:32:01

McLaughlin: Maybe in a subtle way.

03-00:32:04

Lage: Did he talk to you? Did he talk to your parents? People did things differently in those days.

03-00:32:12

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. He talked to my parents. He talked to me, yes.

03-00:32:14

Lage: I mean, did he ask for your hand, as some —

03-00:32:17

McLaughlin: At some point. Well, we took a lot of trips to the mountains together. I was showing him the places I enjoy, and then I took him to meet some of my relatives, and my godmother in Wyoming, who was a good friend of the family. Everybody seemed to approve, so —

03-00:32:42

Lage: Oh, that's interesting. Now, tell me what he was like in those years.

03-00:32:48

McLaughlin: What he was like?

03-00:32:48

Lage: Yes. Did he like the outdoors, the way you did?

03-00:32:51

McLaughlin: Oh, very much. Yes. And I think that's one thing we had in common. He really enjoyed the mountains, and of course the geology, and he enjoyed people, and he was always very —

03-00:33:04

Lage: Did he ski?

03-00:33:05

McLaughlin: — always very charming. No, he did not ski. And I remember—when he died—several people speaking at the memorial service we had. Everyone spoke about the twinkle in his eye.

03-00:33:28

Lage: You can see that in these pictures —

03-00:33:30

McLaughlin: Yes.

03-00:33:30

Lage: — that are behind you back here. Did you worry about the age difference? I ask that as a woman who also is married to an older man.

03-00:33:42

McLaughlin: I didn't think a thing about it.

03-00:33:43

Lage: Didn't bother you, or —

03-00:33:45

McLaughlin: No. He was just so interesting, very lively, and it just wasn't an issue with me at all.

03-00:33:58

Lage: And what did you think about the move further west? You were so grounded there in Denver, it seems.

03-00:34:06

McLaughlin: I felt very lucky that moving from Denver—I would have moved anywhere with him, but I was glad it was California rather than some other place.

03-00:34:17

Lage: Before you started making these trips out to see Don, basically, had you been out here and visited?

03-00:34:28

McLaughlin: I came out with my family in 1939, when they were having a fair at Treasure Island. And I can remember how beautiful it was at night, with all the landscaping, and flowers, and so on.

03-00:34:45

Lage: So, if we want to look ahead to the bay, here you were in the middle of the bay back there in 1939—on filled land.

03-00:34:52

McLaughlin: Didn't think much about it, then. But I do remember once we drove from Colorado to Los Angeles, and you'd go across a lot of empty country. It seems like for miles and miles. And then all the sudden, here was Los Angeles spread all over, and I think you really get that impression also when you're flying over it. I thought, "My goodness." Of course, that's the way Denver is now, too, but anyway—no, I've really enjoyed the Bay Area so much.

03-00:35:28

Lage: So you were happy to move here, it sounds like.

03-00:35:30

McLaughlin: Absolutely. And his mother was a very sweet lady, and we got along very well.

03-00:35:40

Lage: When you first married, then, did you live in the same home with his mother?

03-00:35:42

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. Don said we could live anywhere, and what I really wanted was a view of both bridges and a southern exposure, and I realized that's what we already had.

03-00:35:53

Lage: And was that just up the street here?

03-00:35:55

McLaughlin: Yes. Two houses up the street.

03-00:35:56

Lage: Just two houses away.

03-00:35:59

McLaughlin: It was all right with her that we wanted to do things over a bit. Coming from Colorado, I wasn't used to all the fog and so on. I went and brightened things up a bit.

03-00:36:13

Lage: How did you change the house?

03-00:36:16

McLaughlin: Oh, I just made it a little brighter.

03-00:36:18

Lage: Painting, or —

03-00:36:18

McLaughlin: Yes. Mainly just painting.

03-00:36:22

Lage: Did she have her separate quarters, or just—I mean, how did it work, having the mother-in-law in the house?

03-00:36:30

McLaughlin: Oh, there were enough rooms. Bathrooms, and so forth. It was a large house. There were several bedrooms upstairs. When we were having it redone, it was kind of fun. It was sort of like living in an apartment, because I used the closet with an upturned box with a shelf in it to put the cooking utensils and the hot plate, and then there was a small room next to it, where I put all the big furniture and big pictures.

03-00:37:09

Lage: So you were living —

03-00:37:10

McLaughlin: Yes! Out of cans, and so on. We'd invite people for dinner, even. Don thought that was a little —

03-00:37:19

Lage: You did invite people for dinner?

03-00:37:20

McLaughlin: Oh, yes.

03-00:37:23

Lage: Did you have help, in terms of cooking and housekeeping, in those early years?

03-00:37:32

McLaughlin: My mother-in-law had sort of a housekeeper. I don't recall how often she came. Her name was Janie. Then, about three months after, Don and I were married and my mother-in-law came to Denver for the wedding, on the train. She was really the belle of the ball. Everybody was quite charmed by her. Then she died rather suddenly. Well, she had a heart attack when we were away.

03-00:38:14

Lage: How?

03-00:38:15

McLaughlin: She was eighty-seven.

03-00:38:17

Lage: But in about what year would that have been?

03-00:38:21

McLaughlin: Well, we were married in '48. '49, '50—'51 or 2. So, the doctor said, "Well, she could go tomorrow, or she could go in several months." So we didn't change our plans. And she did die about two days later. She had a massive heart attack, and that was it. But she'd lived a very full life. She'd been a sort of social secretary for Phoebe Hearst, and traveled with her, and, I guess, did many things for her.

03-00:39:03

Lage: Did she tell you stories about Phoebe Hearst?

03-00:39:04

McLaughlin: No. But that was sort of background.

03-00:39:16

Lage: Tell me about your wedding. You were married in Denver.

03-00:39:18

McLaughlin: Yes. Well, both my brothers had been married in the chapel of the Episcopal church. So, I went to the dean, and asked about it—if he'd like to do that. And

he said, "Well, no. They couldn't do that, sorry." Don had been divorced. It had been eight years before. He said, "However, I know a Presbyterian minister, and I think he'd read the Episcopal service." So, we had the Presbyterian minister read the Episcopal service in my family's home. We had mostly family. Well, there were about thirty people, then, and a large reception afterwards, right there, also..

03-00:39:59

Lage: I see. So more people came to the reception than —

03-00:40:01

McLaughlin: Oh, yes.

03-00:40:03

Lage: Did your family have any concern about divorce? Was that an —

03-00:40:07

McLaughlin: Oh, no.

03-00:40:08

Lage: It didn't bother —

03-00:40:10

McLaughlin: No. And then afterwards, Don's first wife—Eleanor Eckhart—she had married almost right away, after the divorce. Remarried. He was an English professor at Harvard. One time, Don, Jr. was out with us. He said, "My mother's in town." I asked him where she was saying, and he told me, and so I called her up. And I said, "We might as well get acquainted, because we share the boys." And so I went over and had lunch with her, and that made things a whole lot easier, all the way around.

03-00:40:55

Lage: Yes. How did that work?

03-00:40:58

McLaughlin: Worked fine. There were a few tense moments, yes, but she came—we were together when Charlie was honored by the Library of Congress in Washington, and then she came here, and, I think, was here for Thanksgiving dinner. Things like that.

03-00:41:17

Lage: That does make it easier, doesn't it?

03-00:41:19

McLaughlin: Oh, yes.

03-00:41:19

Lage: Tell me about the boys. Now, you weren't all that much older than your stepson.

03-00:41:24

McLaughlin: Ten years older than the eldest one, and he was two years older than Charlie.

03-00:41:31

Lage: I see. How did it go? Your meeting them, and then being a mother to them?

03-00:41:36

McLaughlin: Don made it very clear the boys had to approve of me, so I was a little nervous about that, but we all got along fine. And now, my stepson Don, he calls me every Saturday, or else I call him. And his first wife—they were separated, and then she died. He has a very nice French wife, now: Martine. They've been very happy, and they live in Cape Cod.

03-00:42:10

Lage: And his second son got polio, I understand.

03-00:42:14

McLaughlin: Yes.

03-00:42:15

Lage: Was that after you were married?

03-00:42:19

McLaughlin: Yes, I think it was. And it was just before the vaccine came out. And Charlie was taking his PhD—MA/PhD—at Harvard. And so they both got polio, and a friend took them both to the hospital the same day, and they were there for a year.

03-00:42:47

Lage: The husband and wife? Charlie and his wife?

03-00:42:48

McLaughlin: Yes. And he was affected in his legs, and she had the bulbar type. It affected her throat, and lost her speech. But she's managed, and Charlie managed very well.

03-00:43:06

Lage: He went on to be a professor, didn't he?

03-00:43:08

McLaughlin: Yes. And his big accomplishment was as editor-in-chief of the Frederick Law Olmsted Papers. Olmsted was sort of his whole life, from when he wrote his senior thesis at Yale on Olmsted, so I learned a lot about Olmsted, too.

03-00:43:27

Lage: Well, that kind of relates to your interests.

03-00:43:30

McLaughlin: Yes, well it was really interesting. Charlie was trying to raise funds for this California volume, and I thought he needed help, so a group of us started the

Friends of the Frederick Law Olmsted Papers for the California volume, and it was actually written by Victoria Ranney, from Chicago.

03-00:43:57

Lage: He directed it?

03-00:43:59

McLaughlin: Pardon me?

03-00:43:59

Lage: Did he direct the project, and she wrote that volume?

03-00:44:01

McLaughlin: He directed, yes. And then, when Charlie died a couple of years ago, the whole project was taken over by Charlie Beveridge, who had been with the project from the beginning, and who was very knowledgeable about it. I think it's almost finished now. It's to be a twelve-volume series.

03-00:44:30

Lage: Sounds almost like the Mark Twain Papers Project at the Bancroft Library—there's more work than you think, when you start.

03-00:44:37

McLaughlin: But Olmsted was quite a remarkable person. He wasn't in the best of health ever, apparently, but he traveled across this country in the late 1800s, I guess, early 1900s. The early trains, stage coach. Apparently, he had time to write voluminous quantities of letters. So, that's what Charlie was interested in.

03-00:45:11

Lage: And he did a plan for Piedmont Avenue, which is very close to one of your current concerns there, on the campus.

03-00:45:18

McLaughlin: Yes, that's right. Well, it was the Frederick Law Olmsted Papers that put up that plaque there, which you can see. We had a big ceremony there one day. So, it was very interesting for me to become acquainted with Olmsted and what he did in California.

03-00:45:35

Lage: Right. So your stepchildren have broadened your life, as they always do.

03-00:45:41

McLaughlin: Absolutely. Absolutely.

03-00:45:45

Lage: Well, that's nice. Well, let's think about moving to Berkeley. Your husband was really in a very prestigious job, I would say. Important job.

03-00:45:57

McLaughlin: Oh, yes.

03-00:45:57

Lage: Did you do a lot of entertaining?

03-00:45:59

McLaughlin: Yes, we did. Because at that time, you entertained at home. And so that's one reason we moved to this home.

03-00:46:05

Lage: When did you move here?

03-00:46:07

McLaughlin: 1955. Don was president of the Homestake Mining Company. Also, he was on the [University of California] Board of Regents, which he chaired for two years. We would have the Board of Regents here, or the Homestake board, and so on. Fortunately, we had a good sized dining room that could accommodate all these people.

03-00:46:35

Lage: Did that sort of come with the territory, when you married a man like Don, and did you know —

03-00:46:42

McLaughlin: Yes.

03-00:46:42

Lage: — that it came with the territory, when you got into it?

03-00:46:46

McLaughlin: It was all a learning experience, for me.

03-00:46:48

Lage: What was it like to move here and start your life? How did you meet people, and sort of define who you were going to be?

03-00:46:56

McLaughlin: I didn't know anyone when I came here.

03-00:46:58

Lage: Right.

03-00:46:59

McLaughlin: So I joined everything. Don was going to be away a lot, and I figured I had to make my own life.

03-00:47:05

Lage: So, he traveled a lot.

03-00:47:07

McLaughlin: Yes. And so, I joined—let's see. Of course, the Mining Auxiliary, and then various —

03-00:47:22

Lage: The Mining Auxiliary is wives of miners—mining —

03-00:47:25

McLaughlin: Well, it's called the Women's Auxiliary to the American Institute of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers, otherwise known as the WAAIMEs. At that time, they were—again, it was a sewing project. We were making quilts for the Oak Knoll Naval Hospital. It had to be eight inches square, and I struggled over one. Finally got it done. But then, after that, they turned to scholarship efforts, just for students.

03-00:48:08

Lage: To raise money for students?

03-00:48:09

McLaughlin: Yes.

03-00:48:11

Lage: Did you help make that change, given that you really weren't into sewing?

03-00:48:15

McLaughlin: No. I was just one of the younger members. I transferred from the Denver Junior League that I belonged to. So, that made me acquainted with some other people.

03-00:48:32

Lage: Was the Junior League just here in the East Bay —

03-00:48:35

McLaughlin: Yes

03-00:48:35

Lage: — or was it broader?

03-00:48:36

McLaughlin: It's now called Oakland East Bay, but it was—What else did I do? Oh, yes, Vassar Alumnae.

03-00:48:46

Lage: Yes, that's a good source. Did the Junior League have projects that you worked on? They usually do.

03-00:48:53

McLaughlin: Yes. Then after you got to be forty years old, you didn't have to do any more. Was it forty or forty-five? Anyway, I at that time went over and helped with the plants. The name of that house escapes me. It's a historic house at the edge of Lake Merritt.

03-00:49:25

Lage: Oh, Cameron House, maybe.

03-00:49:25

McLaughlin: Yes. That's where Paul Covel was a very knowledgeable person—all the plants, animals, and various sorts of—we would set up exhibits. Just little jelly jars of the various different plants, and so I was anxious to learn about California plants, so that's what I did. I helped him do that. That was my one Junior League effort, I think. I wasn't —

03-00:49:57

Lage: You hadn't found your home, yet.

03-00:50:00

McLaughlin: I'd do a lot of other things.

03-00:50:01

Lage: Tell me about other groups that you—Vassar Alum—

03-00:50:05

McLaughlin: Yes, and then of course I became the head of the—they pick on the newcomer, and they said, "Well, you can run it."

03-00:50:13

Lage: So, you were the head of that organization.

03-00:50:14

McLaughlin: Yes. And the college didn't really understand the geography of the Bay Area very well at that time, and at that time, we had different groups on the Peninsula, and Marin County, and East Bay. I was only concerned with the group in the East Bay. And then we started something called the Seven College Scholarship Effort. It was a fundraising—it was called Christmas Showcase, and we had it at the Claremont Hotel, and that worked out so well—it was the Seven Sisters colleges. And it was very nice, because you found that you could be friends with somebody from Mount Holyoke, or Wellesley, or other colleges, that were in your neighborhood. It was also very successful financially. But then it just so happened that we couldn't get anyone that wanted to head it up. So, it sort of died. That project died. And now the Vassar Club is sort of Bay Area-wide, and I think it seems to be mostly young people that go to some of the events. Their new president is coming in the middle of this month—March 15. So, there's going to be a reception for her.

03-00:51:39

Lage: So, you stay in touch with these groups, still, it sounds like.

03-00:51:43

McLaughlin: Oh, yes.

03-00:51:45

Lage: Did you meet friends through all of these groups?

03-00:51:48

McLaughlin: Actually, some of my best friends are Vassar alumnae from other classes.

03-00:51:54

Lage: That you met in this group.

03-00:51:59

McLaughlin: So, that's why I say it's one of the best things about Vassar, are its alumnae.

03-00:52:04

Lage: Yes. Right. Now, tell me—were there other groups? Did you get into anything that hinted of the environment? Well, the plants. I'm looking for —

03-00:52:16

McLaughlin: Yes, little clues. Nothing that I can think of. But we were very aware of the bay. We could see it being filled in.

03-00:52:28

Lage: Were you aware—did you notice what's happening to the bay?

03-00:52:32

McLaughlin: Oh, yes.

03-00:52:33

Lage: I'm still back here in the fifties, because we haven't talked about having children, and all that.

03-00:52:40

McLaughlin: We did a lot of these things simultaneously.

03-00:52:42

Lage: Right, sure. Well, let's talk about starting a family. When were your children born?

03-00:52:52

McLaughlin: Jean was born '53, and George in '55. And that's when a combination of factors—we were still living in the other house, but I was accumulating various things, as well as the two children.

03-00:53:14

Lage: What do you mean by that?

03-00:53:15

McLaughlin: Well, the house was getting a little cluttered. And then also—as I said—we were entertaining a lot, and this house was coming on the market. The woman who was living here was a very good friend of the woman who lived next door to us. Her name was—we called her Miss Adelia.

03-00:53:38

Lage: The woman who lived here?

03-00:53:39

McLaughlin: Yes. Miss Adelia Sperry. And then her in-laws were next door—all widows. So, she lived here alone, I think, for about twelve years, and her son thought

she would be better off in an apartment. So we just bought the house directly from her.

03-00:54:03

Lage: It's a beautiful house.

03-00:54:04

McLaughlin: Oh, I should say. We've enjoyed it very much.

03-00:54:07

Lage: Do you know the history of the house at all? Who designed it, and —

03-00:54:12

McLaughlin: These two houses were built by the brothers—the Sperry brothers—and designed by Henry Gutterson, who did a number of houses in this area.

03-00:54:23

Lage: And was that after the fire of '23?

03-00:54:25

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. Oh, this area was burned in the '23 fire. Or, not all of it, because there were a few houses here and there that were spared.

03-00:54:37

Lage: And has a nice, really a large lot for this area of Berkeley.

03-00:54:41

McLaughlin: Yes. It was about three quarters of an acre here. Probably, it was the Sperrys who planted the sequoias and redwoods. I think they're totally inappropriate for a home in the hills, because it spoils the view of the people behind you.

03-00:55:02

Lage: That's right. Do you have to do some pruning?

03-00:55:05

McLaughlin: Yes. Selective pruning a few years ago. Then they do grow back. But, no—we've enjoyed this house very much. I still do.

03-00:55:17

Lage: And it's a good house for entertaining?

03-00:55:19

McLaughlin: Yes. And having meetings. I don't know how many meetings have been in this house, but —

03-00:55:26

Lage: If walls could talk.

03-00:55:26

McLaughlin: I remember not only my meetings, but at the time of the student arrests, the day before Christmas in 1964—I believe it was—there were three meetings going on simultaneously in this house.

03-00:55:41

Lage: Tell me about that.

03-00:55:42

McLaughlin: Well, they didn't want to meet on the campus, I guess.

03-00:55:44

Lage: Now, who's "they"?

03-00:55:46

McLaughlin: Regents.

03-00:55:46

Lage: Oh, the [University of California] Board of Regents. Oh, oh, oh.

03-00:55:48

McLaughlin: Committees of the regents. One group met here, one met in the dining room, and one in the living room. So, I just took the children out. It was raining, I remember, but we just sort of went shopping. Anyway. And then of course I've had endless Save the Bay meetings, and all kinds of other meetings, both around the dining room table, and in the living room, and so on.

03-00:56:16

Lage: Did entertaining give way to meetings at some point? Or have they existed —

03-00:55:22

McLaughlin: No, some of that was simultaneous, as well.

03-00:56:27

Lage: Well, life is simultaneous, even though we might talk about it in sections here, like raising the family, and all of that. Now, you mentioned that you had help—that the Japanese-American couple —

03-00:56:39

McLaughlin: Yes.

03-00:56:40

Lage: — came with you, or—?

03-00:56:42

McLaughlin: Well, we helped to get them—they'd had a linen store on Shattuck Avenue, and then, of course, as you know, they were uprooted, and they were sent to a camp in Arizona, I think. And I think Ichi [Ichiro] had been born in Japan, but lived mostly in the Minneapolis area. Michi, our housekeeper, I think was born in Minneapolis. And their people were farming people, down in the valley. So, it must have been very hard times. So, my father knew a dentist in Denver that was getting some of these people out of the camps and finding jobs for them. And so, that's how we happened to have Ichi and Michi, and Kenny, their little boy. And we had quite a spacious apartment over our garage, and that's where they lived during the war—for the remainder of the war. And then, when the war was over, my father helped them to get a Ford

car. They wanted to go back to California, but there was still a lot of prejudice. They found it very difficult —

03-00:57:59

Lage: So, did they come back here, then, on their own?

03-00:58:02

McLaughlin: Yes. Well, first they found a job with a family in Marin County. Then when I came with Don, I helped them—for whatever reason, they weren't very happy with that employment—get a job with a friend of Don's in Piedmont. So then she started coming to help me once a week, and that developed into twice a week, and that developed into—finally—every day. So she was more like a friend of the family. Sort of like a second mother to the children.

03-00:58:38

Lage: Yes. Now, was—the woman was Michi.

03-00:58:43

McLaughlin: Michi.

03-00:28:44

Lage: Right. Was Ichi still alive?

03-00:58:47

McLaughlin: Oh yes. Yes. He died quite a few years ago, but —

03-00:58:52

Lage: Did he continue his work in Piedmont?

03-00:58:56

McLaughlin: Pardon me?

03-00:58:56

Lage: Did he continue to work in Piedmont?

03-00:58:57

McLaughlin: Yes.

03-00:58:57

Lage: I see.

03-00:59:00

McLaughlin: And then he would come—if we had a dinner party, she would cook, and he would serve, and so on. So, it worked out really nicely indeed. He would help with the heavy cleaning, and —

03-00:59:15

Lage: So, he helped you out as well, not just her.

03-00:59:47

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

03-00:59:19

Lage: But they didn't live here.

03-00:59:20

McLaughlin: Pardon me?

03-00:59:21

Lage: They didn't live here.

03-00:59:21

McLaughlin: No, they had a house down on Chestnut Street. And then Michi really was sort of uncomfortable in that neighborhood, and so then we helped them to get a house up on the ridge, in El Cerrito. And so that's where Michi still lives.

03-00:59:39

Lage: Oh. I'm going to stop, because we have to change the —

[End Audio File 3 mclaughlin\_sylvia3\_03-01-07.mp3]

[Begin Audio File 4 mclaughlin\_sylvia4\_03-01-07.mp3]

04-00:00:00

Lage: We're back on, on tape two, here. Well, it's actually tape four of our series. So, it sounds like having Ichi and Michi worked well for them, but also worked well for you.

04-00:00:13

McLaughlin: Oh, I should say. And then Don never believed in taking vacations. He said he enjoyed his work, so why should he take a vacation.

04-00:00:22

Lage: Did you know that when you married him?

04-00:00:24

McLaughlin: No. So then I—being an independent—turned and said, "Well, I like to get away." And I also wanted to show the children other parts of the country, and have them become acquainted with their cousins. And my mother was very active with the music world, also in Aspen. She was a part of the music scene there.

04-00:00:54

Lage: That Aspen Festival? Was that going on then, even?

04-00:00:56

McLaughlin: Yes. Yes. So, she rented a house there. So for two or three summers, I rented a little house, and Michi came with us.

04-00:01:07

Lage: Oh, fun.

04-00:01:10

McLaughlin: So, they had a chance to meet the Colorado cousins, and so on.

04-00:01:15

Lage: And experience the mountains.

04-00:01:16

McLaughlin: Yes. And then also, I took them up to the ranch of these friends I've mentioned before in Wyoming, and so they got to ride horseback there, and do things I enjoyed.

04-00:01:28

Lage: Right. Did you take them to the Sierra at all?

04-00:01:35

McLaughlin: No, not really.

04-00:01:37

Lage: That wasn't your home territory.

04-00:01:38

McLaughlin: That's right.

04-00:01:39

Lage: Did you ever get to continue your skiing?

04-00:01:42

McLaughlin: Yes, I did. I took the children skiing. I took Don up once, and —

04-00:01:50

Lage: Up where, now?

04-00:001:51

McLaughlin: Because I wanted him to see where—up to Sugar Bowl—where we skied. I wanted him to know that part of our life, you know, because I was taking the children —

04-00:01:57

Lage: Oh, your husband Don.

04-00:01:58

McLaughlin: Yes. I was taking the children up skiing, because I wanted them to have this opportunity. And those days, it was a lot simpler up there than it is now. And cheaper, too. Sugar Bowl was nice, because once you got there, you were there. You didn't have to get back and deal with the skis, and the car, and everything.

04-00:02:21

Lage: You mean you could just stay there, and walk.

04-00:02:23

McLaughlin: Yes. And I said, "Oh, see those girls in stretch pants up there." That was the costume of the day. He said, "I could see them on Montgomery Street." He took the next bus home. (laughter)

04-00:02:40  
Lage: He didn't like it!

04-00:02:44  
McLaughlin: Well, you know, it wasn't his thing.

04-00:02:45  
Lage: Right. And if you don't like to ski, what are you going to do?

04-00:02:48  
McLaughlin: There wasn't anything. I just wanted him—really—to see where we were, and what we were doing.

04-00:02:55  
Lage: Would you take the bus up there, or would you drive?

04-00:02:57  
McLaughlin: No, I'd drive. I didn't mind driving in the snow, I'd done that a lot. We got snowed in, once. It turned out George enjoyed skiing, but Jeanie—for whatever reason—was more interested in figure skating. So, I tried to introduce them to that, as well.

04-00:03:21  
Lage: So, where did she do that? Here in Berkeley?

04-00:03:23  
McLaughlin: Iceland.

04-00:03:24  
Lage: Iceland. Oh, yes. That was a great place. Maybe it still is a great place. Is it still there?

04-00:03:31  
McLaughlin: There's talk of its closing.

04-00:03:31  
Lage: Is there?

04-00:03:33  
McLaughlin: And there's an effort to keep it going. So, I don't know who's going to win out.

04-00:03:39  
Lage: So, it sounds like Don was pretty involved with his work, and you kind of ran the family and the kids. Is that correct?

04-00:03:46  
McLaughlin: Pretty much, I guess. But he really enjoyed taking the kids out walking in the hills. We all enjoyed that. Of course, he would describe what we were looking at.

04-00:04:01  
Lage: Geologically.

04-00:04:03  
McLaughlin: Yes.

04-00:04:03  
Lage: Sure.

04-00:04:04  
McLaughlin: And one year we went up to the top of Mount Tam on New Year's Day, and everything was so clear. It was just beautiful. We'd go up to the top of Mount Diablo, and walk in the hills.

04-00:04:18  
Lage: Well, there's so much of that around here. It's just beautiful. Where else might you take the kids? Did you take them to Europe, or on any of Don's exploratory mining jaunts?

04-00:04:33  
McLaughlin: No, by that time he was mostly involved in the business world of mining, and he was very interested in the monetary policy, with gold being the central part of that.

04-00:04:49  
Lage: Of course. Homestake Mining was a gold mining company, we should mention.

04-00:04:50  
McLaughlin: That's right. And then in later years, the McLaughlin Mine—which was named for him—was discovered up at the confluence of Napa, Lake, and Yolo Counties. And then, as you may know, the Homestake company gave a large portion of that to the university. And it's now the Donald and Sylvia McLaughlin Reserve.

04-00:05:18  
Lage: I know that. But was Don alive when that was discovered?

04-00:05:27  
McLaughlin: Oh, yes. In fact, he encouraged the geologists to look at some of the old reports about that area.

04-00:05:37  
Lage: Oh, interesting. Yes, he must have had quite a feel for —

04-00:05:41  
McLaughlin: Yes, and the technology improved, so that they could make money from very fine-grain gold, which they hadn't been able to. That happened also in Nevada—the gold there—the Carlin Drift, it's called. It was discovered by John Livermore. So, that was a big find.

04-00:06:06  
Lage: Now, was that connected at all with Don's work, or just something you knew about his kind of mining work?

- 04-00:06:11  
McLaughlin: Separate, yes.
- 04-00:06:12  
Lage: So, you felt very involved in the mining world, and with miners.
- 04-00:06:16  
McLaughlin: Well, yes. It was part of my life.
- 04-00:06:19  
Lage: You know, I hadn't realized until your birthday party that Lee Swent [director of the Western Mining oral history series at the Regional Oral History Office] had known you for so long.
- 04-00:06:25  
McLaughlin: Oh, yes. Yes.
- 04-00:06:26  
Lage: And she told me that, in fact, she was at the party where Don brought you, way back in '47 or '48, whenever it was—she knew you were with him.
- 04-00:06:40  
McLaughlin: Yes, yes. At the mining conference.
- 04-00:06:43  
Lage: Right, and her husband also worked for Homestake, right?
- 04-00:06:46  
McLaughlin: Yes. Well, her father-in-law was the general manager at this mine in Mexico. A little town, Tayoltita. It was the San Luis Mine. And so Lee spent eight years down there.
- 04-00:07:01  
Lage: I realize that.
- 04-00:07:02  
McLaughlin: And, yes. I gave her a lot of my maternity clothes.
- 04-00:07:06  
Lage: She had her children while she was there. Except she said she always came here to have her children.
- 04-00:07:10  
McLaughlin: Yes. And so we were having children about the same time. Then she and I are going up in April to the McLaughlin Mine to see the wildflowers.
- 04-00:07:28  
Lage: Oh, nice.
- 04-00:07:29  
McLaughlin: And then going on up to visit some friends in Nevada City, the Dickeys and Evelyn Beynon, also mining people.

04-00:07:40

Lage: And she mentioned another mining friend with a place in Tahoe Meadows that you go to?

04-00:07:46

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. Molly Joralemon Albrink, yes. Molly may be coming up this month. We have still lots of mining connections. And then I have a cousin in Colorado, in Central City, who is also into mining, and he was—I think—pretty much a high school dropout. Then he went into mining in Central City, and he bought up a lot of the old properties for taxes, and I think he's done very well. The gambling has come in there, and so he's been able to sell off some of his properties.

04-00:08:29

Lage: Mining morphs into so many different things.

04-00:08:33

McLaughlin: Yes. They still do a little mining there. But anyway, one thing leads to another, always, and then pretty soon—I've gotten involved with so many different things.

04-00:08:47

Lage: There seem to be several spheres here. We have the mining sphere—I'm thinking of all your groups—you're so well known for organization, and bringing people together. And I'm thinking about how the spheres of your life sort of intersected here—I'm drawing a mental diagram. You must have had a lot of people you met through your children. People always do. Schools, and other mothers. Is that part of the Berkeley connection?

04-00:09:17

McLaughlin: Not that I remember too much.

04-00:09:19

Lage: Okay, so that wasn't one for you. But the Vassar connection, and other young women's groups. The UC connection—university connection—did you meet a lot of people?

04-00:09:34

McLaughlin: Lot of connections there.

04-00:09:35

Lage: Right.

04-00:09:36

McLaughlin: I'll have to dig up these—I wrote three papers listing all my connections.

04-00:09:43

Lage: Oh, you did?

04-00:09:43

McLaughlin: Yes.

04-00:09:44

Lage: Now where and when did you do that?

04-00:09:47

McLaughlin: Well, this brings us to another issue. We're—several of us—tree sitters. We're going to meet with a new vice chancellor, Nathan Brostrom. He's come from the financial world and didn't know anything about us, particularly, and so I thought it would be helpful if I just jotted down all my connections over the years, and all the different issues that I've participated in with the university. So I'll find that for you.

04-00:10:27

Lage: I would like that, because it'll help us—it might be a good supplement to this, but also help us talk about things.

04-00:10:34

McLaughlin: Surely.

04-00:10:35

Lage: So let's try to find that. So that's one big area of connections—and these all interrelated, I'm sure. And then the other one that comes a little bit later than what we're talking about is all the environmental concerns.

04-00:10:53

McLaughlin: Yes. They do kind of intersect. Campus trees, and the waterfront, watersheds.

04-00:11:02

Lage: We should say, because people are going to look at this, and read it many years hence. We're talking right as you're in the midst of one of your current issues. Let's talk about that just for a minute—what your concern is about the oaks? The trees sitters.

04-00:11:24

McLaughlin: Oh, my goodness!

04-00:11:27

Lage: Just to set the scene, to know that this is going on while we're interviewing. I think that's important.

04-00:11:30

McLaughlin: Yes. Well, there's this beautiful grove of oak trees, and the university, in their wisdom, wants to replace them with a big concrete building for the super-athletes—they're called something else—that play on the football teams. And it's all interconnected with the large donors for football, and the football enthusiasts, and with the coach. The coach's contract. It seems to me a misplaced priority when the coach gets paid more than the university president, but that's another story—

04-00:12:19

Lage: But it affects how you feel.

04-00:12:20

McLaughlin: (laughter) Yes. And anyway, the university administration says, well, they're going to plant three trees for every tree they take out, maybe elsewhere. But that's totally different. This is a whole natural habitat there, and it's just beautiful—very peaceful—

04-00:12:45

Lage: And it's on sort of the Olmsted corridor, along Piedmont Avenue, there.

04-00:12:49

McLaughlin: Yes, exactly. And the city of Berkeley has laws that you're not supposed to cut down oak trees, but the university is above the law, and it comes to—whatever they want to do. So, I don't know how it's going to come out. It remains for the lawyers to have that determined. And there's going to be a trial, three months, six months, whenever.

04-00:13:25

Lage: Do you see this connected also to the future plans of the law and business schools? Is there a connection there?

04-00:13:33

McLaughlin: Unfortunately, they lumped all those things together in what's called the Southeast Campus Integrated Project—SCIP. They're not that integrated, I don't think. These big connector buildings—so-called butterfly buildings—for the law school and the business school, which would be in what's now the old parking lot. And then a 900-car garage underneath what's now known as Maxwell Family Field. I just don't think the university's looking at all this in a cumulative way. Because, for instance, there will be two new buildings built up on Radiation Hill—that's what we used to call it. One is in process now, with 1,000 more people. Well, they'll each probably have a car.

04-00:14:37

Lage: That's for the [Lawrence Berkeley] Lab?

04-00:14:41

McLaughlin: That's for something else. I'm not sure what that's for. Then, the BP [British Petroleum] Institute—or whatever it's to be called—will have another building, of course.

04-00:14:50

Lage: Where the Calvin Building is now.

04-00:14:51

McLaughlin: Yes. Lots more people there. All those people will funnel down onto Gayley Road, as well as all the people in that 900-car garage, and I just don't think it makes very much sense. I don't think the university is—they say they're concerned about the safety of the student athletes. I do not think they show very much concern for the neighbors up on Panoramic Hill, because if there were an earthquake, or disaster, or fire, it would be very difficult for people to get down, and for the firemen to get up. And we know what happened in the

Oakland-Berkeley fire. People lost their homes. People lost their lives. The same thing could happen here. At the time of that fire in '91, I-House [International House, located adjacent to the proposed building site] was evacuated, because they figured the wind was so volatile it might have come over here. You know, we were all at risk—always, every fall.

04-00:15:56

Lage: It's a lot of people to put up in this corner of campus.

04-00:15:57

McLaughlin: Yes. So, anyway, that's just one of the current issues. But I'm also very much involved with the university's expansion plans west of Oxford Street. Some of us have been working for several years to have that be known as the Strawberry Creek Plaza.

04-00:16:18

Lage: Now, which area—is that the Berkeley city parking lot?

04-00:16:22

McLaughlin: Well, the university owns a lot of this, between Center, Shattuck, and Addison, and Oxford. And that's where they plan to have a hotel, conference center, and the art museum. We'd just like them to be sited so that there will be a nice open-space plaza fronting on a pedestrianized Center Street, with hopefully the creek going down through it. That's our vision.

04-00:16:48

Lage: Yes. Now, when you say "our" —

04-00:16:49

McLaughlin: Sometimes the visions happen, sometimes they don't.

04-00:16:50

Lage: Right. But if you don't have a vision —

04-00:16:53

McLaughlin: That's right.

04-00:16:54

Lage: You don't get anywhere. When you say "our," are you working with a particular group on this, or —

04-00:17:00

McLaughlin: Yes. It's quite a considerable group, and we've been called the—what is it?—Strawberry Creek Plaza Alliance, and this is Ecocity Builders, the Sierra Club, the Creeks Council, a number of different interested people. And then we've been trying to talk with all the stakeholders, including the Downtown Berkeley Business Association, and university people, and so on. This has been going on and on.

04-00:17:39

Lage: Have you had some meetings in this house over —

- 04-00:17:41  
McLaughlin: Pardon me?
- 04-00:17:42  
Lage: Have you had some meetings in this house?
- 04-00:17:44  
McLaughlin: No, no. We always meet—we used to meet in the Indian Café. It closed. Now we're meeting in the Jupiter Café. Every Monday, noon. So.
- 04-00:17:55  
Lage: Right. Every Monday, noon, you say? Wow. You tend to —
- 04-00:18:03  
McLaughlin: I don't go every Monday.
- 04-00:18:04  
Lage: It seems that groups form around specific issues.
- 04-00:18:08  
McLaughlin: Issues. That's right.
- 04-00:18:09  
Lage: Are they reconfigurations of people—are they the same people who show up over and over?
- 04-00:18:17  
McLaughlin: Sometimes. And sometimes they're new.
- 04-00:18:19  
Lage: Does the oak preservation bring out a different crowd at all, or —
- 04-00:18:24  
McLaughlin: Well, this was Shirley Dean, and Betty Olds, and myself—local people, and students, and some faculty that are involved. But it seems to me there's kind of a limit somewhere of how effective a university or a community can be when it grows beyond a certain limit. It doesn't become very sustainable.
- 04-00:19:02  
Lage: Now, your husband—just to get back to our history here—he was very interested in the plan for the university, and the architecture —
- 04-00:19:09  
McLaughlin: Very, and the architecture, and the landscaping, he was very interested in.
- 04-00:19:16  
Lage: How do you think he would feel about this? Would—I don't know that that's a historical question, but —
- 04-00:19:19  
McLaughlin: I would hope—oh, no. No. I would think he'd be supportive.

04-00:19:23  
Lage: Of your point of view?

04-00:19:25  
McLaughlin: Yes. He wasn't that much into football, whereas I think a lot of—yes, it's kind of a money thing. That's where the money comes from. And yet I doubt if it trickles down to the history department, or the English department.

04-00:19:48  
Lage: I don't think it does.

04-00:19:51  
McLaughlin: Or the library.

04-00:19:55  
Lage: Let's see. I'm thinking this is a good place to stop for today, and next time get more specifically into how you got drawn in both to the university world, and the environmental.

04-00:20:07  
McLaughlin: And I'll have that list for you. Then also, we haven't at all talked about Save the Bay, or —

04-00:20:14  
Lage: No, no. I know.

04-00:20:14  
McLaughlin: — the interest in the shoreline parks.

04-00:20:16  
Lage: No, I know that. I'm trying to lead up to that. I have you back in the fifties, now, except for this one diversion because I wanted to ground this in the present. But we talked about—you know, mother of young family, and as I understand it, the Save the Bay came around 1960. Is that —

04-00:20:36  
McLaughlin: That's right. '61.

04-00:20:37  
Lage: So, let's get into that next time: how you got involved, what your concerns were. Especially if we can get some new information. I mean, I know we have an oral history with you and Kay Kerr and Elizabeth Gulick. But let's see if we can start to fill in —

04-00:20:57  
McLaughlin: Esther Gulick.

04-00:20:58  
Lage: Esther. I'm sorry.

04-00:21:01  
McLaughlin: Well, yes. That was in '88, so —

04-00:21:05

Lage: I know.

04-00:21:05

McLaughlin: It's quite a span.

04-00:21:06

Lage: Well, a lot has happened. But, I mean, even to talk more about those early days, and think of some new insights.

04-00:21:12

McLaughlin: New angles.

04-00:21:13

Lage: New angles.

04-00:21:14

McLaughlin: Well, I will have to read up on what we said before.

04-00:21:16

Lage: (laughter) Right. I'm going to stop —

[End Audio File 4 mclaughlin\_sylvia4\_03-01-07.mp3]

**End of Interview 2**

**Interview # 3: March 13, 2007**

[Begin Audio File 5 mclaughlin\_sylvia5\_03-13-07.mp3]

05-00:00:00

Lage: Today is March 13 —

05-00:00:06

McLaughlin: March 13.

05-00:00:07

Lage: — 2007, and we're continuing the interview with Sylvia McLaughlin. Now, Sylvia, we've been all over the place. We ended last time with the oaks in 2007.

05-00:00:21

McLaughlin: We're going back to the sixties now.

05-00:00:23

Lage: Right. Right. We talked about establishing a home, and I just wanted to get a little bit more into how you experienced Berkeley in the fifties. It was a very different place, I think, than it's become.

05-00:00:35

McLaughlin: Somewhat. For instance, we had a wonderful department store, Hinks. And it just provided everything that any household needed.

05-00:00:52

Lage: And that's where you did your shopping?

05-00:00:55

McLaughlin: Ah, yes. Everybody was.

05-00:00:57

Lage: On Shattuck Avenue?

05-00:00:59

McLaughlin: Yes. The building is still there. It has lots of movie theaters, and all sorts of other things, but—and people dressed up more.

05-00:01:12

Lage: How would you dress to go down to Hinks, for instance?

05-00:01:17

McLaughlin: Well, Berkeley wasn't quite as—one didn't dress up as much to go down to Hinks as to go to San Francisco, which, at that time, the women were considered some of the best dressed in the country. You always wore a hat, and gloves. The whole bit. You'd dress up a bit to go downtown.

05-00:01:52

Lage: I remember the hardwood floors in Hinks.

05-00:01:53

McLaughlin: Oh, yes.

05-00:01:54

Lage: And the little pneumatic tubes.

05-00:01:56

McLaughlin: That's true, yes. That the change would come down in.

05-00:02:11

Lage: What about cultural events? Was there much happening in the way of culture in Berkeley, or was that something you went into the city for?

05-00:02:20

McLaughlin: We had season tickets for the symphony. Don was away a lot, so we didn't—he enjoyed opera very much, but we never had season tickets for the opera. I think there's more now in the way of theatre in Berkeley. But it was quite a little bit, of course, with the university. There were always interesting lectures we could go to.

05-00:03:03

Lage: Did you do that? Did you spend much time on the campus, or going to events on the campus?

05-00:03:11

McLaughlin: I don't recall too much, but I always had vague ideas of wanting to, then I'd go back and I would have been hard-pressed to decide which department to focus on. I was interested in a number of different things.

05-00:03:33

Lage: So you did think maybe about going to graduate school?

05-00:03:37

McLaughlin: I was thinking about it

05-00:03:39

Lage: Not seriously?

05-00:03:39

McLaughlin: Never got further. The first time I became interested in politics, and going down to City Hall, was when I was invited to a meeting in the neighborhood, because there was a proposal to change the zoning in our neighborhood.

05-00:04:02

Lage: Do you remember what they wanted to change it to?

05-00:04:05

McLaughlin: I don't really recall. I think it was single family to something else. Then I remember one other issue that brought a lot of people down to City Hall was when the city wanted to—they had all this gas tax money, and they wanted to widen fifty streets in Berkeley. And the citizens did not want that to happen.

And they said, "Well, if you're having problems getting fire trucks up the hill, well, get smaller fire trucks."

05-00:04:49

Lage: They wanted to widen streets up here in the hills?

05-00:04:52

McLaughlin: Just everywhere, really. Probably mainly in the hills. Another proposal was to put a shopping center up at the top of the ridge, by Grizzly Peak and Shasta.

05-00:05:08

Lage: Oh. That's one I've never heard of.

05-00:05:11

McLaughlin: Well, again. The city staff, I presume, thought it would be handy for the people who lived up there in that area, but the people that lived up there preferred to go down to the existing shopping areas.

05-00:05:29

Lage: To Hinks.

05-00:05:30

McLaughlin: Yes.

05-00:05:32

Lage: So, did you get to know any of the city officials at that time—

05-00:05:37

McLaughlin: Oh, yes.

05-00:05:37

Lage: — before you got involved in Save the Bay?

05-00:05:42

McLaughlin: Well, not too much. Mostly it was after we started Save the Bay.

05-00:05:51

Lage: But you did get in—you had some sense of the process, rather than neighborhood —

05-00:05:53

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. Yes. And the council—everything was much simpler in those days. You could just walk in and talk to any of the council people, and most of them also had other jobs, so you could—access to them was very easy. None of them had aides, as they do now—you know, everyone has to have their aide to answer the phone, or intervene in some way. There was much less security. You could just walk into City Hall and knock on their door. And then, the same thing with the staff. Much fewer staff persons. And so you could really become quite well-acquainted with the staff people.

- 05-00:06:55  
Lage: Right. And it was a much more politically conservative group than came later, in the fifties and early —
- 05-00:07:02  
McLaughlin: Oh, it was very conservative, yes.
- 05-00:07:05  
Lage: They were mainly Republican? Or, I guess, they didn't run by office, but you knew, nevertheless.
- 05-00:07:12  
McLaughlin: Yes. They were mostly rather conservative businesspeople. I think Bernice May was the first woman on the city council. I guess that was sort of the late fifties. I'm guessing.
- 05-00:07:30  
Lage: Were you interested in this kind of political angle? Was that something that got your attention?
- 05-00:07:41  
McLaughlin: My father, in Denver, had been—was working for the city of Denver, so I knew a little something about it.
- 05-00:07:50  
Lage: Yes. You kind of knew how cities worked, and how people got things done.
- 05-00:07:57  
McLaughlin: Well, I think Berkeley was probably different. But I used to go around with my father, when he was manager of parks and improvements in Denver.
- 05-00:08:11  
Lage: What about your enjoyment, or knowledge, or use of parks in Berkeley, and the East Bay Regional Parks? Was that something that you —
- 05-00:08:23  
McLaughlin: Oh, yes, we just were very grateful to have the East Bay Regional Park—well, of course, first, when the children were smaller, we went up to Codornices, and there was an area there for children. It was a wonderful neighborhood park. And then we would go up and take walks. Of course, my husband Don being a geologist, he would explain all the geology to us. So some of it rubbed off, I think.
- 05-00:09:02  
Lage: Did you ever get involved in the Hillside Club?
- 05-00:09:08  
McLaughlin: No.
- 05-00:09:10  
Lage: Did you know people involved? Or was it active at that time?

05-00:09:12

McLaughlin: It wasn't very active then, I don't believe.

05-00:09:14

Lage: It was active in an earlier era, maybe.

05-00:09:18

McLaughlin: Yes, earlier, and then, now it's trying to have a revival, I believe.

05-00:09:24

Lage: But that wasn't something that—because at an earlier time, it really helped define the character of Berkeley.

05-00:09:29

McLaughlin: That's right. Yes. No, I think I was probably busy enough.

05-00:09:36

Lage: Yes. I just wondered what was happening with it then. And how about schools? As the children got old enough, did they go to nursery school?

05-00:09:45

McLaughlin: No. I didn't realize that that was something that children needed to do, so no. We had this lovely Hillside School, just a few blocks away, and so that's where both our children started. And Don, of course, had gone through the entire Berkeley school system—public school system. His son Don, Jr. had gone to the university —

05-00:10:24

Lage: Oh, he had gone to Berkeley? Don, Jr.?

05-00:10:29

McLaughlin: The university. That was after he'd been in the Navy. Well, then I was very concerned about what was being taught, and how it was being taught. This was interesting, it was just after Sputnik, the Russian effort to be in space, and so on. And so my son George, who was taking a class in Russian when he was at the Hillside School —

05-00:11:07

Lage: They were teaching Russian?

05-00:11:09

McLaughlin: Well, it was a sort of extra class that your child could go to; it was taught, I think, by some graduate student up at the university. And that was when he was in the first grade, or kindergarten. But then I was concerned about the amount of time that the children seemed to be out on the playground. I was there for an hour, once, and the same neighborhood girl, I saw her out on the playground twice in an hour. I thought, "School is where you're supposed to learn, and study, and so on." And then I was concerned about how they were being taught to read. At that time, it was the—I forget what the system was called, but it was sort of just looking at the words.

05-00:12:11

Lage: That kind of—I forget what it's called, too. Looking at the whole word, rather than phonics?

05-00:12:16

McLaughlin: Yes. And I had been taught to read in the phonics system. Anyways, I did a lot of research into different schools, and so then I decided to send the children to private school, principally because I thought that it was important that they learn to read through the phonics system.

05-00:12:42

Lage: So they were pretty young, then when you made that choice. When would that have been? In the early sixties?

05-00:12:49

McLaughlin: Well, let's see. Jeanie was born in '53, and George in '55, so I guess, yes. And at that time, the Anna Head School was in the original building in Berkeley.

05-00:13:05

Lage: Now, it's part of the university.

05-00:13:09

McLaughlin: No, no. Oh, yes —

05-00:13:10

Lage: The building.

05-00:13:10

McLaughlin: The buildings, yes. And the school moved. So, Jeanie stayed there for twelve years.

05-00:13:15

Lage: So she went all through school there.

05-00:13:17

McLaughlin: Yes, yes.

05-00:13:18

Lage: Well, how did Sputnik figure in? You mentioned Sputnik. How did that—did that raise your concern, or affect the way the schools taught?

05-00:13:29

McLaughlin: People became more concerned with the fact that our children should learn more science-oriented subjects, I guess. That was when George was doing the Russian, but that didn't last too long.

05-00:13:53

Lage: I mean, did you approve of his doing the Russian? I guess you enrolled him in it.

05-00:13:56

McLaughlin: Oh, goodness, I took him up there. Yes.

- 05-00:14:01  
Lage: So, you didn't think it was rigorous enough? Is that part of the problem? You were afraid the public schools weren't rigorous enough?
- 05-00:14:10  
McLaughlin: Well, it was just from my casual observation.
- 05-00:14:14  
Lage: Now, at some point—and I don't know the date—the schools were integrated. Was that later?
- 05-00:14:22  
McLaughlin: Well, Carol Sibley was very much involved in that. I don't recall what years it was.
- 05-00:14:29  
Lage: But were your children already in the private schools?
- 05-00:14:31  
McLaughlin: Yes.
- 05-00:14:32  
Lage: I see. So it wasn't kind of the turmoil around that —
- 05-00:14:36  
McLaughlin: No. No.
- 05-00:14:37  
Lage: — that made you move them. And where did George go? Anna Head was a girls' school.
- 05-00:14:45  
McLaughlin: That's right. He went to Bentley School.
- 05-00:14:53  
Lage: Both still going, aren't they?
- 05-00:14:55  
McLaughlin: Yes. Sort of in a different way. At that time, it was on Benvenue. We carpooled with some neighbors.
- 05-00:15:09  
Lage: And were you happy with the education they had there, at these two schools?
- 05-00:15:13  
McLaughlin: I think you can get a good education at a public school or private school, depending on the teachers, and some are better than others, I would say. So, I think they had a good start. I think George had a wonderful—several good teachers there. His handwriting was better then than it is now. (laughter)
- 05-00:15:55  
Lage: Wonder what that indicates.

05-00:15:57  
McLaughlin: Pardon me?

05-00:15:58  
Lage: What does that indicate?

05-00:16:00  
McLaughlin: Well, the manner in which he was taught. One teacher wanted him to write faster, and then it deteriorated.

05-00:16:10  
Lage: Oh, my goodness. Okay. So you have lots of involvements—this is all before the bay. Were any of them environmental? Did you know people in the Sierra Club, which probably was one of the most active environmental groups at that time?

05-00:16:29  
McLaughlin: No. I was interested in the Sierra Club, but not particularly active.

05-00:16:38  
Lage: Did you know people who were active in it? Did you have a tie there, do you remember?

05-00:16:44  
McLaughlin: No, but I was always interested in outdoor activities.

05-00:16:46  
Lage: Yes, you were.

05-00:16:51  
McLaughlin: From my Colorado background. One of the first organizations I joined was the Save the Redwoods League.

05-00:17:03  
Lage: Oh, I see. When did you join that?

05-00:17:04  
McLaughlin: That was just because I went over to—this is shortly after I arrived, and Don had some friends visiting. So then we went over to have lunch with this friend of theirs. Turned out it was a Vassar classmate, and so she said, "Oh, Sylvia, you must join the Save the Redwoods League." So I said okay. So that must have been in the fifties.

05-00:17:37  
Lage: And was she active in Save the Redwoods League, this friend, or friend of a friend?

05-00:17:44  
McLaughlin: Probably not. I think she probably just thought it was a worthy organization. No, she was also busy raising a family. Let's see. After I became active with the Save the Bay, then I was invited to speak—I guess I probably had joined

the Audubon Society at that point. I was invited to speak at their panel, at a convention they had in Boston.

05-00:18:26

Lage: This is the National Audubon Society?

05-00:18:27

McLaughlin: Yes. It was to speak from a citizen's point of view, and it was just before we were getting the Save the Bay bill through the legislature, and so on. I remember one of the other people on the panel was the assistant secretary of the army. So I had an opportunity to ask him why the army had approved the Bay Farm Island fill.

05-00:19:22

Lage: The Corps of Engineers.

05-00:19:23

McLaughlin: Yes. And he said, well, the state had given its assent. So that was interesting.

05-00:19:32

Lage: So, he did know the issue.

05-00:19:35

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. Yes.

05-00:19:39

Lage: That's interesting. Wherever you went, you were able to make those connections, I've noticed. Did you get involved in anything like League of Women Voters, or anything more directly concerned with the political world?

05-00:19:57

McLaughlin: I don't think so.

05-00:19:58

Lage: It was a pretty active group here in Berkeley.

05-00:20:01

McLaughlin: That's right. Of course, after we started Save the Bay, then we tried to make connections all sorts of other organizations.

05-00:20:10

Lage: But you hadn't been involved before? Or with any party politics? Did you get involved in any party politics?

05-00:20:17

McLaughlin: No.

05-00:20:18

Lage: Was Don involved in party politics?

05-00:20:20

McLaughlin: No.

05-00:20:21

Lage: Did he stay kind of apolitical, or was he —

05-00:20:25

McLaughlin: I would say so, yes. He was mostly concerned with business affairs, and then he became very interested also in monetary policy, and he continued traveling a lot. He was on two or three different boards of directors.

05-00:20:47

Lage: He was a staunch supporter of the gold standard, it seemed.

05-00:20:50

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. Great believer in the value and importance of gold.

05-00:20:58

Lage: Which makes sense, given his occupation.

05-00:21:00

McLaughlin: That's right. That's right.

05-00:21:03

Lage: Well, this seems like an interesting background. Now, let's talk about—I know you've talked about it many times, but we just have to hear the story of how this involvement with the bay started. Had you noticed it? How did you experience the bay in your daily life?

05-00:21:28

McLaughlin: Well, I could see it.

05-00:21:29

Lage: From here?

05-00:21:29

McLaughlin: It was very important to us.

05-00:21:34

Lage: As a viewscape? How did you think about the bay?

05-00:31:39

McLaughlin: Well, that was one of the important—of just, to me, living here, was proximity to the bay, and being able to see the bay. We did not have a bay in Colorado. And I just thought it was so beautiful. We had a nice view from our previous home, but unfortunately, we had to look at it through a telephone pole and lots of wires. So then, we were looking for another home in the neighborhood, and Don said, "Well, we've got to make sure that it has a view with no wires." And we found this house just across the street."

05-00:22:31

Lage: Yes, there are no wires down there. Beautiful. (laughter)

05-00:22:36

McLaughlin: Well, it's a little foggy right now. But we could see the dump trucks going down and filling the bay constantly.

05-00:22:42

Lage: Oh, you could?

05-00:22:43

McLaughlin: Oh, yes.

05-00:22:44

Lage: And where were they going from?

05-00:22:48

McLaughlin: Wherever there was construction going on.

05-00:22:52

Lage: So, you had sort of noticed that —

05-00:22:54

McLaughlin: You can still see them going down, except they're not filling the bay.

05-00:22:58

Lage: Where are they going now?

05-00:23:00

McLaughlin: Well, unfortunately, there's still a dumping place on our Eastshore State Park. Some refer to it as the dirt hotel, because they take the dirt there, then they take it from there and use it somewhere else, on a month-to-month lease, I believe, to the park district. The park district will be doing the maintenance, and operation, and developing of this park.

05-00:23:30

Lage: The East Bay Regional Park District.

05-00:23:32

McLaughlin: Eastshore State Park, which we always wanted to have. From the very beginning, we wanted to acquire the privately held land, and have it for a park with open space.

05-00:23:44

Lage: Yes. That was one of your early goals—let's just go back, now, to the past, because I want to go into the Eastshore park in depth, but maybe next time. I've heard people tell about the smell of the bay as you drove along the —

05-00:24:01

McLaughlin: That was the Emeryville Crescent, because that's where the sewage came into the bay.

05-00:24:07

Lage: Just as raw sewage?

05-00:24:11

McLaughlin: I'm not sure. Anyway, East Bay Municipal Utilities District—commonly known as East Bay MUD—built their plant there, and that solved that problem. A lot of people remember this odoriferous smell as they drove by, yes.

05-00:24:35

Lage: So, the bay didn't seem—I mean, it was beautiful from a distance, but up close, it probably really wasn't an attractive —

05-00:24:42

McLaughlin: That's right. And Kay Kerr—another cofounder of Save the Bay—would take visitors, because her husband was chancellor, and then president, of the university. They had foreign visitors, and she would apologize for the appearance of the shoreline. It actually was a dump.

05-00:25:12

Lage: As she drove them —

05-00:25:14

McLaughlin: Yes. From—oh, say, from the airport to their home.

05-00:25:22

Lage: When you see it through a visitor's eyes, I think you have a different perspective.

05-00:25:26

McLaughlin: Yes. It's so very gratifying to see it now, and so many people enjoying it. What was a dump is now a lovely park. To see so many people enjoying just being out there in what we used to call the North Waterfront Park, now Cesar Chavez Park. It's really gratifying. And then the Bay Trail, now, is over halfway around the bay.

05-00:26:01

Lage: Is it really that extensive already?

05-00:26:03

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. Well, it's been ongoing, yes. They do it section by section. I forget what year it was built. [State Senator] Lockyer had that —

05-00:26:19

Lage: Bill Lockyer?

05-00:26:20

McLaughlin: Yes. That was—oh, five or six years ago, I believe, so it's been happening gradually.

05-00:26:29

Lage: So, the thing that caught your attention was the fact it was being used as a dump, basically.

05-00:26:36

McLaughlin: Yes. We could see it being filled, and then the city of Berkeley had this plan, which they thought would be of benefit to the city, to double the size of the city by filling approximately 2,000 acres of open water of the bay. We didn't think that was a very great idea.

05-00:27:01

Lage: Now, at the time, there wasn't a "we."

05-00:27:03

McLaughlin: Oh, yes.

05-00:27:04

Lage: I mean, when did you come together with the three ladies, as they are called?

05-00:27:09

McLaughlin: It was probably in late 1960, and then we formally organized early in 1961.

05-00:27:21

Lage: Did you know Kay Kerr well, before you came together? How did you —

05-00:27:26

McLaughlin: Not well. I can remember very clearly. My husband said we should invite them to dinner, and that I should go to call on her before that—before inviting them to dinner. So, I went to call on Kay, and it was one of those really, really foggy days. I could hardly find her house. Her little girl, then, was about the same age as my little girl: about three years old. Caroline. So, that's how we became acquainted. Because of my husband being on the Board of Regents, and Clark Kerr being at that time chancellor, and then later president. I hadn't known Esther, but Kay and I also belonged to the Town and Gown Club. We met there at a tea, and we were starting to talk. At that time, also, was when the report had come out from the Corps of Engineers—their 2020 report for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, in which they said that 70 percent of the bay was shallow enough to be filled.

05-00:29:01

Lage: So this was a national report?

05-00:29:03

McLaughlin: Yes. And there was an article about this in the *Oakland Tribune*, with a diagram showing that when the bay would be filled to that extent, it would be more like a river.

05-00:29:20

Lage: Bay or river.

05-00:29:22

McLaughlin: That's right. It was both knowing that and also this horrendous plan of the city of Berkeley's—that was what galvanized us into action.

05-00:29:39

Lage: And what was that plan for?

05-00:29:42

McLaughlin: Well, the plan—as I mentioned—developed the open water out in front of Berkeley.

05-00:29:49

Lage: And put factories, or —

05-00:29:51

McLaughlin: Oh, it was to be for houses, and industry, and recreation.

05-00:29:58

Lage: Just to enlarge the city of Berkeley.

05-00:30:00

McLaughlin: That's right.

05-00:30:03

Lage: When the *Oakland Tribune* reported on that plan, what was the tone? Was there a tone of outrage in that article, or was it —

05-00:30:13

McLaughlin: No. It was just a factual statement. It was just a report, reporting on it.

05-00:30:18

Lage: Because in those years, development didn't have the bad rep it has now.

05-00:30:24

McLaughlin: In those days—well, Berkeley wasn't the only one. There were development plans all around the bay. It was at that time that riverfronts, bay fronts, ocean fronts were regarded as dumping grounds all over the country.

05-00:30:43

Lage: And building grounds.

05-00:30:44

McLaughlin: Yes. It wasn't until shortly thereafter, I guess—maybe we helped start a change in people's thinking—that rather than think of it as progress to use a beautiful natural resource for urban development, there was quite a change. Then people began to regard their riverfronts, bay fronts, lake fronts, so forth as an aesthetic and economic asset, and began really to beautify and appreciate them.

05-00:31:38

Lage: Yes. And it's hard to know if this was a trend that was slowly growing and your timing was just right, or how much you three ladies and your group advanced that thinking.

05-00:31:56

McLaughlin: Well, I hope we helped to advance it.

- 05-00:31:58  
Lage: I'm sure you did.
- 05-00:31:59  
McLaughlin: I think we did.
- 05-00:32:00  
Lage: So, when Kay—I've heard the story —
- 05-00:32:03  
McLaughlin: Because we had a lot of unsolicited press, and so the word was getting around. There was an excellent article in the *Reader's Digest*. There were articles in *Time*, *Newsweek*, *Life*, *Look*, *National Geographic* —
- 05-00:32:20  
Lage: All about the bay.
- 05-00:32:22  
McLaughlin: All about our efforts to save the bay from being filled.
- 05-00:32:27  
Lage: Was this right in the early years that you got that good publicity?
- 05-00:32:31  
McLaughlin: Yes.
- 05-00:32:32  
Lage: And was this unsolicited, you say?
- 05-00:32:34  
McLaughlin: Yes.
- 05-00:32:36  
Lage: So, it caught people's imagination.
- 05-00:32:39  
McLaughlin: They came to us. Of course, that all helped when we were trying to get the legislation through to have a regulatory agency, which finally happened.
- 05-00:32:58  
Lage: Yes. I want to back up, now, to that early founding. I understand it was you and Kay, originally—Kay Kerr—who said, "We've got to do something."
- 05-00:33:09  
McLaughlin: Yes. Well, at this tea, as I said, Kay and I were talking about this, and I said to her that I would rather work on this than anything else I knew. And she said, "Well, call Esther Gulick. She's concerned also." Kay and I had been talking about Berkeley's plan, and about the Corps of Engineers' report. So I called Esther, and then the three of us got together out at Kay's, and then we decided to have a meeting of all the, then, conservationists. They weren't even called "environmentalists" in those days. And this was the Sierra Club, Save the

Redwoods League, Audubon, and there were about a dozen of the then-leaders.

05-00:34:19

Lage: Do you remember their names? I'd like to —

05-00:34:22

McLaughlin: Yes. David Brower was there for the Sierra Club, Mary Jefferds for the National Audubon—she had a little shop in Berkeley—and —

05-00:34:33

Lage: A little shop, you say?

05-00:34:34

McLaughlin: Yes. It was on Bancroft Way.

05-00:34:39

Lage: Was it an Audubon shop?

05-00:34:40

McLaughlin: Yes.

05-00:34:41

Lage: Oh, I see.

05-00:34:42

McLaughlin: And she had books, and literature.

05-00:34:44

Lage: On Bancroft. Was it near the campus?

05-00:34:48

McLaughlin: It was just across the street, yes. Then John DeWitt, from the Save the Redwoods League, then I remember there was a fellow—Willis Evans—I think he was from the Fish and Game Department, and I remember him saying, well, the South Bay was nearly lost already. I think he meant it all from the standpoint of the toxicity and general—what the plans to fill were, down there. Kay had described our concern, and they said, "Yes, it's very important. We should save the bay. We're all too busy." Each one said they were too busy saving the wilderness, or saving the birds, or saving the redwood trees, and I think it was David Brower who said, "Somebody should start a new organization." They all filed out, and wished us luck.

05-00:36:20

Lage: They all filed out, and —

05-00:36:22

McLaughlin: They all filed out of the house—the room. And we sat down and decided then and there that we were going to start that organization.

- 05-00:36:33  
Lage: Now, I'm interested in the way you described saying to Kay Kerr you'd rather work on this than anything. It indicates a sense that you wanted to work on something.
- 05-00:36:49  
McLaughlin: Of course.
- 05-00:36:50  
Lage: Did you have that sense that—this seemed to be the thing that really caught your imagination —
- 05-00:36:55  
McLaughlin: Yes.
- 05-00:36:55  
Lage: — because other activities you've told me about: sewing, and knitting —
- 05-00:37:01  
McLaughlin: No, no. Well, I guess I felt that it was important to do something constructive. In those days, I think it was impressed on us that you should give back—sort of a *noblesse oblige*—if you had the opportunity to, and do something for your community, and so on, and so forth.
- 05-00:37:34  
Lage: And you were a capable woman, and a career was not necessary, or probably thought of for you. Is that true? I mean, you didn't have too much thought of going into the workforce.
- 05-00:37:48  
McLaughlin: No. And we were lucky enough to have household help—nearly everybody had a part-time housekeeper, or somebody to help care for the children.
- 05-00:38:09  
Lage: Because your children were quite young at the time, right?
- 05-00:38:11  
McLaughlin: Yes. And we also had—all three of us had the support of our husbands.
- 05-00:38:22  
Lage: Did you come home and discuss this —
- 05-00:38:24  
McLaughlin: Oh, sometimes.
- 05-00:38:25  
Lage: — idea about founding this organization?
- 05-00:38:29  
McLaughlin: Oh, no. We just went and did it.

05-00:38:31

Lage: (laughter) You just did it. So, what was involved in doing that—in founding the organization?

05-00:38:37

McLaughlin: Well, we just did what we thought would get lots of members. Our first thought, of course, was to stop this idea in Berkeley. And it was already at the City Planning Commission stage. We didn't have very much time. We had to give ourselves a crash course in anything that had to do with the bay.

05-00:39:05

Lage: And how did you do that?

05-00:39:08

McLaughlin: Well, it was self-education. (laughter) Because there was lots we had to learn very quickly, as well as the whole political process. We necessarily went to lots of meetings, and then we also drew up a list of all the people that we knew of—all our Christmas card lists, and so on. Then I remember we went through the whole Berkeley faculty book; Kay checked the ones she knew. Then we sent out our first invitation to join this new organization. We only charged one dollar, because we felt it was important to have lots of members.

05-00:40:03

Lage: And what was your spiel?

05-00:40:06

McLaughlin: Well, we explained the situation. At that time, Berkeley had a newspaper—the *Berkeley Daily Gazette*—and there were headlines saying that this was the city manager's dream—to fill the bay.

05-00:40:25

Lage: Was that said approvingly, or with alarm?

05-00:40:30

McLaughlin: Oh, no. It was his idea of what would be good for the city. And this was what we did not agree with. So, it was pretty much known what was going on, by those who took the *Gazette*, anyway. So, we had a number of community meetings, too. Bob Ratcliff—he was our friend. He was a local architect, and he drew up alternative plans, which we promoted, with no fill.

05-00:41:15

Lage: And what was the vision there?

05-00:41:18

McLaughlin: Parks and open space.

05-00:41:21

Lage: I'm just trying to get a sense of how it may have changed over the years, too. When you thought of a park by the bay, was it as natural a park as you're now thinking of? Was it wetlands and native plants?

05-00:41:37

McLaughlin: We didn't go into details. Our first thought was to acquire the land—it was all privately held land.

05-00:41:48

Lage: So you thought it should be acquired.

05-00:41:49

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. We managed to turn the thinking of the city council around.

05-00:42:00

Lage: Did it take an election to do that? It's mentioned in the record somewhere: well, there was the election in '63.

05-00:42:08

McLaughlin: No, actually it was in 1963 that we visited each councilperson. The one thing we did, over at Martha and Murray Benedict's house, over on Cedar Street—Kay had a friend who worked for the Bank of America, so he would come to these meetings. There would only be six or eight of us around the table, with one councilperson. This gentleman from the Bank of America, his specialty had been making loans to marinas, and so on. So, he could tell them what they could expect, and so on, and I think some of the councilmen began to have second thoughts about whether or not this would be a good idea to do.

05-00:43:14

Lage: Because his message was that it wasn't that economically feasible to build the marinas?

05-00:43:21

McLaughlin: Well, he just spoke of his experiences in other cities and other areas. Then, I believe the then-mayor, I think, created a blue ribbon committee to look into this—whether it would be economically advantageous. And I guess they weren't totally convinced. So, a lot of things contributed to their changing their mind. As well as our growing organization, at that time. Because we would show up at the council meetings and hearings and make statements and so on. And as I said, we had several community meetings, where the city would make their presentation, and then we would make ours.

05-00:44:19

Lage: Did you have a hard time getting the open meetings? I think of the public participation in government as kind of coming as a result of some of these environmental issues. Was it standard procedure to have open hearings for issues—planning, and stuff —

05-00:44:39

McLaughlin: Oh, I think so. Oh, yes.

05-00:44:42

Lage: Wasn't difficult to get on the agenda and say your piece?

05-00:44:46

McLaughlin: No. And we became quite friendly with the staff persons. There was a fellow by the name of Jim Barnes, who was the head of planning at that time.

05-00:45:05

Lage: Was he someone whose mind you had to change?

05-00:45:08

McLaughlin: Well, he worked for the city, so they had their agenda, and we had ours. Then there was a fellow from Santa Fe [Railroad], always came to all the hearings. His name was Robert Walker—Bob Walker. Very nice fellow. And I guess Santa Fe wanted to know what we were up to as well.

05-00:45:29

Lage: Now, they were the major landowners, right?

05-00:45:31

McLaughlin: Yes. In the mid-twenties, mid-thirties, Santa Fe bought up all the other independent holdings, so they were the principal landowner quite a little distance, and of the water from Emeryville into Albany.

05-00:46:07

Lage: So how did you work with or against this Robert Walker?

05-00:46:4

McLaughlin: Oh, I just mentioned him because he always was there at the city council meetings when we were, too.

05-00:46:21

Lage: And would he present —

05-00:46:24

McLaughlin: No, he wasn't—I don't recall that—[telephone rings]

05-00:46:30

Lage: I'll put this on pause. Okay, we are back recording.

05-00:46:41

McLaughlin: Well, you were asking about whether Robert Walker presented. I don't remember that he did, particularly. He just wanted to keep track of what was going on.

05-00:46:51

Lage: But the city's plans to fill the bay had a lot to do with Santa Fe, I would guess.

05-00:46:57

McLaughlin: Oh, yes.

05-00:46:58

Lage: If Santa Fe's the one who owned that property.

05-00:47:02

McLaughlin: Yes.

05-00:47:05

Lage: I don't quite understand how it works—how the city fills the bay, and it's private property. Was it Santa Fe that was going to actually develop it, and the city had to give the permits?

05-00:47:22

McLaughlin: That didn't come out. I forget what I was going to say about it. Anyway, they came out with the city's interim waterfront plan, in which they limited the fill, and they showed exactly where it would be, and I think they also said that an effort would be made to acquire the privately held land. And they also set up what was then known as the Waterfront Advisory Committee—it's now a Waterfront Commission—and I was on that first one.

05-00:48:30

Lage: Do you remember when that occurred?

05-00:48:33

McLaughlin: Pardon me?

05-00:48:34

Lage: When did that occur, that they set up the Waterfront Advisory Committee, early on?

05-00:48:36

McLaughlin: 196—

05-00:48:38

Lage: '63?

05-00:48:38

McLaughlin: The council of early 1964 reaffirmed the decision that had been made—I guess the end of November, early December of 1963. Anyway, so then I started up a fundraising committee of the advisory committee subcommittee to acquire the lands. You couldn't really plan for somebody else's land.

05-00:49:13

Lage: So, right from the beginning, you wanted to make those public lands.

05-00:49:15

McLaughlin: Yes. Yes. So, it took a while.

05-00:49:21

Lage: (laughter) It did! I'll say. Right.

05-00:49:24

McLaughlin: Requires patience and persistence.

05-00:49:26

Lage: Yes. Of the three of you—you had your separate roles, in a sense, it seemed.

05-00:49:33

McLaughlin: Yes. It was sort of an interdisciplinary working arrangement.

05-00:49:38

Lage: How do you see it as breaking down?

05-00:49:41

McLaughlin: At that time, it was a common way of doing things that it was felt that it was important for a man to be in the leadership position. So, we had a man for our president, and then Kay was the vice-president.

05-00:50:05

Lage: Now, tell me more about that. I don't mean to interrupt, but I find that very interesting.

05-00:50:10

McLaughlin: Well, for instance, it was the same thing —

05-00:50:13

Lage: Did you talk about that? Did you say, "Well, we should have a man as our president"?

05-00:50:17

McLaughlin: No. It was just taken for granted. For instance, with the precursor to Greenbelt Alliance—it was People for Open Space, before that, it was something else—Dorothy Erskine did most all of the work, but there was always a man who headed up the organization. It was just sort of the way it was done.

05-00:50:42

Lage: But you didn't question it.

05-00:50:44

McLaughlin: We would consult with the man—he would sign all the letters, and so forth—but we did all of the work.

05-00:50:49

Lage: Did the men realize that they were just figureheads?

05-00:50:53

McLaughlin: I don't know. (laughter) They went along with it. They went along with it. They believed in the cause, of course. Our first president was a young man who worked in Emeryville, and he swam in the bay. His name was Jan Konecny.

05-00:51:14

Lage: He wasn't a prominent or well-known person, was he?

05-00:51:18

McLaughlin: No, not particularly. But then, sometimes, he would speak before the city council.

05-00:51:23  
Lage: How did you find him?

05-00:51:25  
McLaughlin: Oh, I don't remember. (laughter)

05-00:51:27  
Lage: You don't remember if he was a friend of a friend, or friend of Kay's?

05-00:51:30  
McLaughlin: Maybe—he probably heard about Save the Bay, and—

05-00:51:34  
Lage: Now, did he take an active role in shaping your thinking, or planning?

05-00:51:38  
McLaughlin: Did he? Not too much, no. After that, Bill [William Penn] Mott was our president, at the same time he was general manager of the East Bay Regional Park District.

05-00:51:55  
Lage: Now, that makes some sense. He was a figure of importance in this area.

05-00:52:02  
McLaughlin: Oh, yes. He was a well-known person.

05-00:52:05  
Lage: And did he take an active role? Did he meet with you frequently?

05-00:52:09  
McLaughlin: Well, not very, because he was busy with his job. But again, we would consult with him. He would sign some of the letters, and so on. And he went to Washington, and then —

05-00:52:30  
Lage: Or to—he went to the state, actually, didn't he, first? He became state park director.

05-00:52:34  
McLaughlin: That's right. State first, yes. So, when he went to Sacramento, then Will Siri became president, and he was president for many years.

05-00:52:45  
Lage: Twenty years, I think.

05-00:52:46  
McLaughlin: Yes.

05-00:52:47  
Lage: Now, how did he relate to—he had a pretty active wife himself.

05-00:52:54

McLaughlin: Yes. Well, he took really quite an interest in what was going on. But we would meet every Monday. Kay, she had been a journalism major—I believe at Stanford—so she did most of the writing. Esther was an economics major, so she kept the books, and all the membership records.

05-00:53:23

Lage: You were a French major. So you —

05-00:53:25

McLaughlin: I was a French major. I did just about everything—whatever else needed to be done, and was sort of a gadfly. The records were kept on 3x5 cards in shoeboxes, we had, I think, five sets. It was unbelievable.

05-00:53:45

Lage: Five sets of —

05-00:53:46

McLaughlin: Well, one set was alphabetical, another set was by county. I forget what the other three were, how they were organized.

05-00:53:58

Lage: So, all your members were entered five times. This was before computers, for sure. And then re-filed.

05-00:54:03

McLaughlin: Yes. This was before copy machines, also. We used lots of carbon paper.

05-00:54:10

Lage: Oh, I'll bet. Because you sent out these newsletters. How did you—did you print those? Mimeograph?

05-00:54:18

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. When we were going to hearings in Sacramento, prior to the passage of the Save the Bay bill, I would write the message—the subject of the hearing—because being a 501(c)3 organization, we couldn't tell people how to vote, I remember, but we could tell them what the hearing was, when it was, where it was. That was necessary information. We arranged busloads of people to go up, and so on, and so forth. I would, as I say, take these postcard-sized messages down, and then there was a woman who had a mimeograph machine, I remember, on Durant. She would run them off, and I would pick them up and mail them.

05-00:55:37

Lage: And did your dues cover a lot of those expenses, or did the three of you have to throw the money in for mailing, and —

05-00:55:44

McLaughlin: For the most part they did. A lot of people gave us more than the one dollar.

- 05-00:55:51  
Lage: When you rented the charter buses, did people pay to take the —
- 05-00:55:56  
McLaughlin: Everybody paid their own way.
- 05-00:55:58  
Lage: Yes. I see. So, it was really a group effort. Now, what about the organization itself? Did you have a model in mind when you planned it? Did you have an organizational model?
- 05-00:56:08  
McLaughlin: Oh, no. We learned by doing.
- 05-00:56:09  
Lage: You just did it. (laughter)
- 05-00:56:13  
McLaughlin: Well, we all were members of other organizations. We could see how they did it.
- 05-00:56:19  
Lage: Did you have a committee structure? Or was it mainly concentrated in the three of you, in those early years?
- 05-00:56:25  
McLaughlin: Oh, in the early days, it was mostly just the three of us.
- 05-00:56:30  
Lage: So, you got people to do their one dollar membership, but you didn't necessarily have them heading up committees?
- 05-00:56:39  
McLaughlin: I don't recall that we had much in the way of committee structure. The issues were pretty clear.
- 05-00:56:52  
Lage: There was not any give and take, or disagreement over what issues you were going to concentrate on?
- 05-00:56:59  
McLaughlin: Well, the first issue was Berkeley, and then the next issue was to get statewide legislation, because we were invited to go to other communities where they were having similar problems. So, I remember going to Sausalito, to Alameda, down the Peninsula, because all these different communities were having similar problems. So they were all very interested in having statewide legislation, as well.
- 05-00:57:36  
Lage: It seems like the Mel Scott report was formative.

05-00:57:40

McLaughlin: That was extremely helpful, yes. And here again, it was because Kay knew Eugene Lee. She probably had the idea that we needed all this factual information. He was then heading up the Institute of Governmental Studies —

05-00:58:12

Lage: Eugene Lee.

05-00:58:12

McLaughlin: Yes. And he said he thought Mel Scott could do it, and he did just an excellent job.

05-00:58:21

Lage: This will let me change the tape, because it's time.

[End Audio File 5 mclaughlin\_sylvia5\_03-13-07.mp3]

[Begin Audio File 6 mclaughlin\_sylvia6\_03-13-07.mp3]

06-00:00:00

Lage: — none of that got recorded. I changed the tape, while we were off.

06-00:00:04

McLaughlin: Sorry about that.

06-00:00:05

Lage: No, no problem. I needed to change the tape. We're talking about the Mel Scott report<sup>2</sup> and the importance of that. And that got you into the whole regional issue.

06-00:00:17

McLaughlin: Well, yes. Senator [Eugene] McAteer, who's really carrying this legislation for us—well, first, he set up the [Bay Conservation and Development] Study Commission. That was all one summer. He really regarded that book, Mel Scott's book, as very important, and he referred to it all the time.

06-00:00:53

Lage: Yes—a lot of that worked its way into that legislation, didn't it?

06-00:00:56

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. Yes.

06-00:00:58

Lage: So, that report was very key.

06-00:01:00

McLaughlin: That was very helpful.

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<sup>2</sup> Mel Scott, *The Future of San Francisco Bay* (Berkeley: Institute of Governmental Studies, 1963).

06-00:01:04

Lage: And what role did you take—and the three of you, but you in particular—in this study commission? Were you asked to testify?

06-00:01:11

McLaughlin: Went to all the meetings! Absolutely. I can't remember all the people who were on, but it was quite a blue ribbon group of people. Nick Petris was on it, and Joe Bodovitz was the executive director —

06-00:01:36

Lage: Executive director of the study commission?

06-00:01:40

McLaughlin: Yes.

06-00:01:42

Lage: Joe Houghteling, I believe, was on it as well?

06-00:01:44

McLaughlin: Yes, Joe Houghteling, also.

06-00:01:47

Lage: Were these anybody that—had you known any of these men before?

06-00:01:55

McLaughlin: We may have known some of them, but we certainly became acquainted.

06-00:02:02

Lage: (laughter) Did you have just formal interactions with them, or did you have a chance to talk to them socially?

06-00:02:10

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. We had a chance to meet with them. But they knew of our interest, because they saw us there every time there was a meeting. Then they recommended the setting up of the Bay Conservation Development Commission, to do studies on the bay—they did thirty-some studies.

06-00:02:37

Lage: Now, this is after the commission got set up, which involved legislation being passed.

06-00:02:42

McLaughlin: Yes.

06-00:02:43

Lage: That initial commission, even.

06-00:02:44

McLaughlin: Right. That was 1967, no—

06-00:02:49

Lage: Five. '65, I think, and then '69 —

06-00:02:52

McLaughlin: '65, yes. In those days—it's hard to believe—but the legislature only met every other year. And so it was in '67 BCDC was doing all these studies on the ownership of the bay, the fish, the sand, the tides, everything that had to do with the bay.

06-00:03:23

Lage: Because they were developing a permanent plan, right?

06-00:02:27

McLaughlin: Yes, and it had to have all this factual information. Because then, ultimately, it was the information that was the basis of the plan, and the plan was also voted on by the legislature.

06-00:03:43

Lage: And it wasn't that easy to get it through, right? I mean, didn't it pass just by a vote or two?

06-00:03:50

McLaughlin: That was when it was made permanent.

06-00:03:52

Lage: Right, right.

06-00:03:53

McLaughlin: Yes. That was really our big battle, I should say.

06-00:04:00

Lage: Tell me what's most memorable to you, looking back on it—about that battle.

06-00:04:07

McLaughlin: Well, we went to a number of the hearings. I think maybe one of the most memorable things was sitting there with Esther—I think we were holding hands nervously—as they were counting the votes, and listening to people talk.

06-00:04:26

Lage: You had a lot of letter writers.

06-00:04:29

McLaughlin: Oh, they said they'd never received so much mail on any issue. Cartons of letters went up. That was before email. And also telephone calls.

06-00:04:41

Lage: Was the strength here in the East Bay? How did you reach out to other areas?

06-00:04:49

McLaughlin: Oh, no. It was all around the bay. We had groups in Marin County, down on the Peninsula.

06-00:04:57

Lage: And how did that develop? How did it develop that you had—you started here, just the East Bay group, very focused on Berkeley —

06-00:05:05

McLaughlin: Well, we generally knew of people who were involved in these other areas. And also, we relied on groups such as the League of Women Voters, and it was just coming together of all the people that were interested in the issues in those areas.

06-00:05:31

Lage: It caught on very quickly, it seems. You didn't have to do that much convincing of the citizenry, it sounds like.

06-00:05:40

McLaughlin: Convincing of—

06-00:05:41

Lage: I mean, it was an easy sell to the citizenry.

06-00:05:44

McLaughlin: Yes.

06-00:05:46

Lage: Maybe not to the officials in Sacramento.

06-00:05:49

McLaughlin: Well, another thing that was very helpful, I think, was that—I mentioned these studies that BCDC did. Then Dorothy Erskine—she was a very good writer—she would boil them down to four pages and send them out to her group —

06-00:06:18

Lage: And then, what was her group?

06-00:06:20

McLaughlin: Well, I can't think just now of what it was called at that time.

06-00:06:29

Lage: Was it Citizens for Parks and Recreation?

06-00:06:31

McLaughlin: Regional Recreation and Parks. Then Kay would take those—

06-00:06:42

Lage: And she [Erskine] was in the city.

06-00:06:43

McLaughlin: Yes. She was very interested in the bay. She had a beautiful home on Telegraph Hill, and we would meet over there; some years later Save the Bay had their meetings there. You could see all the ships going by. It was pretty exciting. Anyway, then Kay would take these four pages treating these different subjects, and she would boil it down to one page, and we would

oftentimes have a cartoon or a photograph and then some lines about what the issue was, and then a description on the back, and we would send that out to all of our members.

06-00:07:45

Lage: So, you used each others' resources.

06-00:07:48

McLaughlin: Yes. So that was another way of getting the word around, and informing people.

06-00:07:57

Lage: Now, did you draw on any experts in public relations, on how you should design these appeals?

06-00:08:06

McLaughlin: Oh, no. I don't think so.

06-00:08:10

Lage: This was your own sense of what would appeal to your membership.

06-00:08:13

McLaughlin: Of course, and what was important, the issue—whatever it was. Kay was very good at that. But we did call on experts, generally people that Kay knew on the faculty, and they would go down to the City Hall and speak on our behalf.

06-00:08:39

Lage: Experts in what areas, are you thinking?

06-00:08:41

McLaughlin: Well, for instance, Fred Balderston, who was, I believe, a professor in the business school, in economics. He would go down and speak for whatever the issue was. Because he was highly regarded in his field, we felt they were more likely to believe him, rather than one of us. (laughter) So, we had several people like that we could call on, and who very kindly did go down, and help us out in that way.

06-00:09:28

Lage: So, they were experts, not just men.

06-00:09:31

McLaughlin: That's right.

06-00:09:32

Lage: But experts in their field.

06-00:09:34

McLaughlin: Yes, indeed.

06-00:09:35

Lage: Over time, I think you've become the most formidable testifier. You don't need the Fred Balderstons anymore.

- 06-00:09:45  
McLaughlin: I was sort of the one that was, I guess, kind of pushed out in front.
- 06-00:09:48  
Lage: Yes. Now, how did that happen?
- 06-00:09:49  
McLaughlin: Well, because it was Berkeley. Kay said she lived in El Cerrito, and she didn't want to do it. Esther was rather shy and reserved.
- 06-00:10:08  
Lage: Did it come naturally to you—the public presentation?
- 06-00:10:12  
McLaughlin: No, it was just something that I—I don't know, I just did it. No, I was pretty nervous there at first, because I'd never done anything like that before. But I remember, Jack Kent—at that time—was on the city council. He would always give me a little twinkle or smile. That encouraged me.
- 06-00:10:42  
Lage: Well, in some ways, just speaking of Jack Kent, maybe it's in this previous interview, the story is told of his saying we should just have a straight line as the bayfront—we should just draw a straight line down the waterfront. Do you remember that?
- 06-00:11:00  
McLaughlin: No, I don't.
- 06-00:11:02  
Lage: Was he supportive from the beginning?
- 06-00:11:05  
McLaughlin: Was he supportive?
- 06-00:11:06  
Lage: Yes, Jack Kent.
- 06-00:11:07  
McLaughlin: Oh, yes. But I think he was—I'm not sure if it was Jack or someone else—I was talking with somebody on the phone, and he said, "You mean you don't want any development?" And I said, "No." And I guess that was what was done in those days. It was thought that that would be beneficial to the city—tax base, and so on.
- 06-00:11:42  
Lage: Did you feel that way all around the bay? Were you upset that it became the Bay Conservation and *Development* Commission?
- 06-00:11:51  
McLaughlin: Yes, I sort of didn't like that, but somebody said, "Oh, well, it's just a term that's used," or something like that. But it's worked out okay.

06-00:12:03

Lage: I mean, was it your sense that we'd had enough development and we shouldn't have any more, or did you always see the need for some development?

06-00:12:20

McLaughlin: I think I just didn't like the idea of industries or development on the waterfront.

06-00:12:30

Lage: I don't know if this occurred so early on, but later, you know, there's something of a conflict between the need to conserve, to set aside, and the economic concerns of labor, maybe African-American communities, or other working class groups. And they said, "Environmentalists are elitists. They're not thinking of the needs of the people." Did that come up in those early years, and what's your thinking?

06-00:13:05

McLaughlin: Well, I remember—I'm not sure if it was [Ron] Dellums or just who it was anyway—but he felt that it was important to Save the Bay. Then we would have quotes from well-known people of the time. I had one quote from the head of one of the labor unions at that time, implying that the beauty of the area was important also.

06-00:14:08

Lage: But you must have had some opposition as well, from labor unions?

06-00:14:13

McLaughlin: I don't remember that we did.

06-00:14:14

Lage: No? You don't remember it being an issue? The city council in Berkeley changed dramatically in the sixties, becoming —

06-00:14:23

McLaughlin: Yes.

06-00:14:23

Lage: Much more—what shall we say?—liberal, radical, and several prominent African-Americans became members, like Ron Dellums, you mentioned, and —

06-00:14:34

McLaughlin: Byron Rumford.

06-00:14:36

Lage: Well, he was in the state legislature. Did that change things? Or how did Save the Bay change as those changes were happening in society?

06-00:15:00

McLaughlin: I don't know that there were any really basic changes.

06-00:15:06  
Lage: You didn't find difficulty in the sort of new constituencies?

06-00:15:10  
McLaughlin: No. No.

06-00:15:11  
Lage: Finding support?

06-00:15:13  
McLaughlin: I remember at one of the hearings at the city council, a Black woman whom we didn't even know got up and spoke, and she said, "God didn't intend to have the bay filled." And then it turned out that she enjoyed fishing in the bay, herself. I should remember her name. She was a very sweet lady.

06-00:15:50  
Lage: Did you get to know her?

06-00:15:51  
McLaughlin: Yes.

06-00:15:53  
Lage: Would you draw her into your activities, or you just knew her from council meetings and —

06-00:16:00  
McLaughlin: Well, we had similar—I'll remember her name next time.

06-00:16:13  
Lage: Yes. You'll remember it. Of course, not developing on the bay doesn't mean you wouldn't develop somewhere else, I suppose. I mean, did you ever make that argument? "I don't object to factories, but I just don't want them on the bay"?

06-00:16:27  
McLaughlin: Oh, no. Oh, no. We were focused on what we were doing.

06-00:16:37  
Lage: Right. I'll say. We were talking about how support around the bay developed, and you mentioned Dorothy Erskine. Now, did you have somebody in Marin that you were tied in with?

06-00:16:49  
McLaughlin: Oh, yes, and we always tried to have on our board of directors people from the different areas.

06-00:16:56  
Lage: I noticed that Mrs. Norman Livermore was on your advisory board. Ike Livermore's wife?

06-00:17:05  
McLaughlin: No, I don't think so.

06-00:17:10  
Lage: I noticed it in the letterhead here. But maybe she wasn't on for long, if you don't remember. Because she lived in Marin.

06-00:17:18  
McLaughlin: Yes. Well, we thought it would be important to have names people would recognize, like Admiral Nimitz, and Mrs. Nimitz, and so on.

06-00:17:32  
Lage: But, you don't remember Mrs. Livermore being active, or—this was just a Regional Committee. Do you want me to show you? And this is '61. This is way back. Ansel Adams, David Brower —

06-00:17:51  
McLaughlin: Mrs. Newton Drury —

06-00:17:52  
Lage: Newton Drury and Mrs. Newton Drury —

06-00:17:54  
McLaughlin: She was very active on our board. That's Dorothy Erskine.

06-00:18:01  
Lage: Oh, this is Dorothy Erskine. Yes. Mrs. Morse Erskine.

06-00:18:04  
McLaughlin: Yes.

06-00:18:05  
Lage: Now, who is Francis Filice?

06-00:18:06  
McLaughlin: Francis Filice was a professor of biology, I believe, at San Francisco State.

06-00:18:14  
Lage: Hal Gilliam.

06-00:18:15  
McLaughlin: Harold Gilliam, yes. He was at that original meeting, up at Esther Gulick's.

06-00:18:25  
Lage: Both Knowlands—Mr. and Mrs. Knowland.

06-00:18:29  
McLaughlin: Well, maybe Kay knew them. And Mrs. Norman Livermore. You're right.

06-00:18:34  
Lage: I just wondered, because later, her husband was in Sacramento.

06-00:18:38  
McLaughlin: Yes. Right. [SM added in editing: “I think we were referring to Norman B. “Ike” Livermore’s mother. It is for her that Mount Caroline Livermore on Angel Island is named.”]

06-00:18:42  
Lage: Robert Miller.

06-00:18:43  
McLaughlin: He was from Berkeley. I should remember what he was affiliated with, but he was very important.

06-00:18:53  
Lage: And the Nimitzes.

06-00:18:54  
McLaughlin: Yes. Both of the Nimitzes.

06-00:18:54  
Lage: Now, how—did you know the Nimitzes, or Kay?

06-00:18:57  
McLaughlin: Oh, yes. He was on the Board of Regents, and they lived just down here on Walnut at one time.

06-00:19:06  
Lage: Oh, they did?

06-00:19:06  
McLaughlin: Yes. Oh, we used to see them—they were friends.

06-00:19:12  
Lage: And were they actively involved, or just names on the letterhead?

06-00:19:18  
McLaughlin: I think they were basically names.

06-00:19:23  
Lage: Let's see how it changes over time. Here we have William Penn Mott.

06-00:19:29  
McLaughlin: Yes.

06-00:19:30  
Lage: Who also was in Sacramento for some key decisions—well, I'm thinking of the Southern Crossing decision, where Reagan ended up opposing the Southern Crossing [bridge across the bay]. Ralph Shaw.

06-00:19:47  
McLaughlin: (laughter) You're embarrassing me.

06-00:19:48  
Lage: You can't remember him? (laughter) Mrs. Harmon Bell?

06-00:19:57  
McLaughlin: She was connected with the Garden Clubs.

- 06-00:20:01  
Lage: Another sort of conservation group.
- 06-00:20:02  
McLaughlin: Yes. They were very important, always.
- 06-00:20:07  
Lage: William Goodall? Do you remember him?
- 06-00:20:11  
McLaughlin: Bill Goodall. He was with the Audubon Society.
- 06-00:20:22  
Lage: Now, here we have the officers. We still have Jan [Konecny]. Martha Benedict was a member of the board?
- 06-00:20:34  
McLaughlin: She was very active, always. She had her husband [Murray Benedict]—he worked for the Agricultural economics at the university.
- 06-00:20:47  
Lage: Now, this is interesting, because she's the only one on this list who uses her own name and not her husband's—Mrs. Martha Benedict. Everyone else has used her husband's name. Was that just —
- 06-00:21:02  
McLaughlin: I don't know why.
- 06-00:21:04  
Lage: It's what was done, in those years.
- 06-00:21:06  
McLaughlin: Yes. That's right.
- 06-00:21:08  
Lage: Okay. Let's see if we have any new members here, as we go along. It's not a test, so if these people aren't important, we don't have to—and I love this poem by Josephine Miles.
- 06-00:21:30  
McLaughlin: Oh, isn't that nice? Yes.
- 06-00:21:32  
Lage: Now, was Josephine Miles a friend?
- 06-00:21:36  
McLaughlin: Well, she was an outstanding professor. Probably Kay knew her.
- 06-00:21:40  
Lage: “When I telephoned a friend, her husband told me, ‘She's not here. She's out saving the bay.’” (laughter) I love that.

06-00:21:47

McLaughlin: It's interesting, because several people thought that they were the ones she was referring to.

06-00:21:53

Lage: Who do you think she was referring to?

06-00:21:56

McLaughlin: I've no idea. It could have been any one of several.

06-00:22:04

Lage: I noticed somewhere in my reading that at one point, sort of a Bay-wide committee was formed—I'm trying to find the name here.

06-00:22:15

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. As I said —

06-00:22:16

Lage: Citizens' Alliance to Save the Bay, or something.

06-00:22:20

McLaughlin: Oh, that was when we were trying to get the bill passed, in '69.

06-00:22:26

Lage: So, that was sort of a formal coming together —

06-00:22:27

McLaughlin: Yes, but we always—as I said—thought it was very important to have geographical representation on the board. Every other year, we would have a conference, and the different counties would be represented, and they would meet separately, and then discuss what their issues were, and then report to the general meeting. In retrospect, those were quite informative, and totally amazing, because this was always held the first Saturday in December. It was usually raining, and we would have three to four hundred people show up, all members of Save the Bay.

06-00:23:23

Lage: And from all around the bay.

06-00:23:24

McLaughlin: Yes. And I think in those days, it was very much more of a participatory organization than it is now. Now they have many more people on the staff that do the interaction with the legislators, and so on, [and they just use?] decision makers.

06-00:23:46

Lage: But then, you felt even though you didn't draw so many people into the core governing group—which was the three of you—that people were active members.

06-00:23:56  
McLaughlin: Oh, I should say. Yes. Well, we were in communication with them. We knew who they were, and —

06-00:24:04  
Lage: You knew who you could call on, when you wanted something done.

06-00:24:07  
McLaughlin: Absolutely.

06-00:24:08  
Lage: What about the women in the South Bay? I remember, it seems like Claire Dedrick and Janet Adams got very involved there.

06-00:24:18  
McLaughlin: Well, this is—as I say—the Save the Bay bill was —

06-00:24:25  
Lage: Right. In '69.

06-00:24:27  
McLaughlin: Yes.

06-00:24:28  
Lage: We're spanning that decade, now. Did you work very closely with them?

06-00:24:34  
McLaughlin: Oh, yes.

06-00:24:36  
Lage: Did they come to the —

06-00:24:36  
McLaughlin: And Dwight Steele was working, also, with them, and with the Sierra Club, and so forth, and so on.

06-00:24:43  
Lage: So, there was a lot of interaction.

06-00:24:44  
McLaughlin: Oh, yes.

06-00:24:45  
Lage: Dwight Steele was active in the Bay Chapter of the Sierra Club.

06-00:24:48  
McLaughlin: Yes.

06-00:24:50  
Lage: And then he was also active in Save the Bay?

06-00:24:52  
McLaughlin: Oh, very. And then in CESP.

06-00:24:56  
Lage: In?

06-00:24:57  
McLaughlin: Citizens for Eastshore Park.

06-00:24:58  
Lage: Ah. CESP.

06-00:25:01  
McLaughlin: Yes.

06-00:25:01  
Lage: Did you get to know Janet Adams and Claire Detrick? They're interesting, because they went on to work on the Coastal Alliance, and then of course Claire Detrick went on to be [California state] secretary for resources.

06-00:25:19  
McLaughlin: Yes. We did get to know them, quite well. In fact, I saw Claire just a few weeks before she died, in Sacramento.

06-00:25:31  
Lage: How long ago did she die?

06-00:25:31  
McLaughlin: Oh, just about two years ago.

06-00:25:35  
Lage: I see. She went on to do a lot of things: State Lands Commission, and —

06-00:25:39  
McLaughlin: Yes. Right. Then I also used to—she got divorced, after a while—but I would see him [husband Kent Detrick] occasionally when I would be in Sacramento.

06-00:25:52  
Lage: Yes. He was very active in that WestBay action.

06-00:25:56  
McLaughlin: Oh, yes. And he was very knowledgeable about bay issues. And when he died, I was trying to help get a lot of his materials for the Bancroft Library.

06-00:26:11  
Lage: Oh, you were? Good. Were you able to?

06-00:26:14  
McLaughlin: I brought two carloads of information down. He had it all quite well organized in files, and so on. But a lot of his information—I thought—would be very important to have.

06-00:26:38  
Lage: And did you get it to the Bancroft?

- 06-00:26:40  
McLaughlin: Mm-hmm.
- 06-00:26:40  
Lage: Oh, good. Wonderful.
- 06-00:26:47  
McLaughlin: Now, I think working with Save the Bay and with so many other organizations has been really a wonderful way to meet interesting people, and people that have had really positive, constructive ideas, and I think I've enjoyed that aspect of it very much.
- 06-00:27:20  
Lage: And you engage with them in a different way from, say, putting on a dinner party.
- 06-00:27:26  
McLaughlin: Oh, yes.
- 06-00:27:26  
Lage: I mean, you really engaged at an important level.
- 06-00:27:31  
McLaughlin: And, in fact, some of the dinner parties we went to—particularly Kay would use to promote saving the bay. And those days, when the regents met in the different places, different cities where the university had a campus, Kay tells the story—I forget during whose administration—the lieutenant governor said, "Now, Kay. We're not going to talk about the bay." (laughter)
- 06-00:28:21  
Lage: Did you ever get that reaction?
- 06-00:28:26  
McLaughlin: I don't think so. Well, she was probably more forceful than I was. But, no, they knew what we were about, anyway.
- 06-00:28:39  
Lage: You know, in the back of this volume, this early oral history which was recorded in '85 and '86—they have the record of I guess it was the twenty-fifth anniversary conference.
- 06-00:28:52  
McLaughlin: Oh, yes.
- 06-00:28:53  
Lage: The transcript of all these different speeches.
- 06-00:28:54  
McLaughlin: Oh, really? Oh, that's good, because that was wonderful.

06-00:28:58

Lage: It's very nice. And people are commenting—I think Joe Houghteling comments, and maybe some others—about looking out from the BCDC—

06-00:29:09

McLaughlin: Scene.

06-00:29:10

Lage: And seeing Kay and you and feeling—I don't think "intimidated" would be the word, but held to account, maybe.

06-00:29:19

McLaughlin: Yes. Well, they knew we were vigilant.

06-00:29:25

Lage: Yes. Yes, definitely. You didn't just get the legislation passed and then go away.

06-00:29:30

McLaughlin: Oh, no.

06-00:29:31

Lage: Did you have some discussion about Save the Bay after the passage of the legislation that you'd worked so hard for?

06-00:29:41

McLaughlin: Well, we felt it was important to make sure BCDC was on the right track, and—

06-00:29:47

Lage: You knew it wouldn't just happen, it seems like.

06-00:29:52

McLaughlin: We just wanted to make sure.

06-00:29:55

Lage: I'm just trying to get some sense of what you talked about, how you —

06-00:30:03

McLaughlin: Well, we would really—we were aware of the issues. We studied them, and we always got out newsletters, and informed our members of what was going on.

06-00:30:20

Lage: Did you ever have a difference of opinion on the basic direction or goals of what you were doing?

06-00:30:30

McLaughlin: You mean amongst ourselves?

06-00:30:32

Lage: Yes. Amongst yourselves.

- 06-00:30:36  
McLaughlin: Not regarding our goals, no. Yes, we had differences of opinion, of course.
- 06-00:30:42  
Lage: Is there anything that comes to mind that would be important?
- 06-00:30:45  
McLaughlin: Oh, no. No.
- 06-00:30:48  
Lage: I just want to know if this means—if this is significant. This is the Albright Lectures.
- 06-00:30:57  
McLaughlin: Oh, yes.
- 06-00:30:58  
Lage: They're on the web.
- 06-00:30:59  
McLaughlin: Really? Oh, my goodness.
- 06-00:31:00  
Lage: The three of you gave—and that was 1988. So, here we are in 1988, and each of you spoke. Esther implies that you wrote hers. (laughter)
- 06-00:31:15  
McLaughlin: I helped.
- 06-00:31:17  
Lage: Esther spoke about the past, Kay about the present, and you about the future.
- 06-00:31:23  
McLaughlin: Yes.
- 06-00:31:24  
Lage: Now, this was '88. Kay says, "Our association is the only one with the principal responsibility of monitoring the commission for bay fill and quality public access."
- 06-00:31:40  
McLaughlin: Yes.
- 06-00:31:40  
Lage: "There's not time to discuss in relation to toxic pollution, loss of wetlands, and the consequences of reduced fresh water inflow. Many agencies and many organizations are concerned with these problems." She's implying that—to me; this is the way I read it—we should focus on bay fill and public access.
- 06-00:32:03  
McLaughlin: That's what we did.

06-00:32:04

Lage:

Now, you come on. This is the starting of your talk: "Our vision"—and you start talking about a four-part vision: fresh water inflow, a bay fringed with wetlands to provide habitat for microorganisms, wildlife, and migratory shorebirds, a bay encircled by a necklace of public shoreline parks. I just wondered if this fresh water inflow, and the wetlands, the habitat were things that you turned to more naturally.

06-00:32:29

McLaughlin:

No. I mean, we have—as I say—focused on the bay fill and public access. And that's what BCDC is still concerned with, primarily. But Kay recognized that these other issues existed, and then I just had that as part of the overall vision.

06-00:33:14

Lage:

It was sort of your division of the talk, not a division of how you —

06-00:33:19

McLaughlin:

No. We didn't —

06-00:33:22

Lage:

You didn't disagree, or —

06-00:33:24

McLaughlin:

No, we didn't share our talks with one another beforehand. I did help Esther. I think she was having—you know, she had a memory loss problem, so I think she needed a little help. It was just beginning then.

06-00:33:57

Lage:

You stayed more involved, after, say, 1988. Is that true? I should ask you, rather than tell you.

06-00:34:10

McLaughlin:

Yes, I think so. I forget what year it was that Kay left the board.

06-00:34:20

Lage:

I think it was about this time, '88.

06-00:34:22

McLaughlin:

Well, we thought that the situation was changing, and I remember there was one summer when Will Siri appointed a committee to sort of study the structure of the organization, and what we should be doing, and so on. And I think perhaps there was a general realization that a lot of these other things were important. And also—yes, I guess I did stay involved. Well, I'm really interested in seeing what I said here, in view of the fact that that's exactly what I did. I said, "I'd like to focus on the vision of the bay's necklace of shoreline parks and trails." And so that's where I helped put most of time, and effort, and energy.

06-00:35:41

Lage: Right. You really have had a long-standing vision that you've pursued over decades.

06-00:35:48

McLaughlin: Yes. So, it was very gratifying to finally achieve this two-county, five-city Eastshore State Park. But we still have some gaps in it.

06-00:36:02

Lage: (laughter) I know, we're still working. And actually, I want to really look at that Eastshore Park next time—the development of it and kind of trace the work on that the way that this interview traces the earlier work on the bay.

06-00:36:17

McLaughlin: Okay. I'll read up on some of that, so I'll be better prepared.

06-00:36:22

Lage: And your role in particular.

06-00:36:26

McLaughlin: Yes.

06-00:36:29

Lage: When you started Save the Bay, people weren't talking about microorganisms, and even habitats quite as much as later.

06-00:36:36

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. No, not as much, but that was part of what we learned when we were studying up on the bay—all these other things contributed to make the bay what it is. We knew it was important to have sufficient fresh water, we knew that all the little microorganisms—that they were important—and —

06-00:37:11

Lage: That's a shift from seeing the bay as something—as a scenic resource to see from your window, it seems to me. At some place along the line, the bay became something more to you.

06-00:37:27

McLaughlin: No, I wouldn't say that. We always knew that these other areas were important, and that they contributed to the whole bay—but we just had to focus on the filling and the public access issues first.

06-00:37:54

Lage: They were the emergency.

06-00:37:55

McLaughlin: Yes. You sort of go from crisis to crisis. That was the crisis. I think that's what we still do: whenever there's a crisis, you jump in and deal with that.

06-00:38:19

Lage: Right. And maybe that —

- 06-00:38:21  
McLaughlin: Then you have the time afterwards to deal with other issues. That's interesting. Now they have the [Albright] talks on the web. I didn't—I really worked on mine.
- 06-00:38:39  
Lage: It was very good. You can tell.
- 06-00:38:40  
McLaughlin: Worked hard on that one.
- 06-00:38:42  
Lage: That was an important —
- 06-00:38:43  
McLaughlin: It was very important.
- 06-00:38:44  
Lage: — lecture, the Horace Albright Lecture [at the UC Berkeley College of Natural Resources].
- 06-00:38:45  
McLaughlin: Yes.
- 06-00:38:46  
Lage: And you mentioned that you knew Horace Albright.
- 06-00:38:49  
McLaughlin: Yes.
- 06-00:38:50  
Lage: He was in mining also, of course.
- 06-00:38:51  
McLaughlin: Yes. He was a good friend of Don's, and so that made it even more important, I guess.
- 06-00:39:02  
Lage: It's interesting how he's not the only case where mining—a type of mining—and a real sense of conservation come together, Horace Albright. There was also Will Colby, who wasn't a miner, but he was a mining lawyer, and quite a conservationist with the Sierra Club.
- 06-00:39:25  
McLaughlin: Yes.
- 06-00:39:26  
Lage: Did your husband appreciate what you were doing with the bay?
- 06-00:39:30  
McLaughlin: Oh! He was very supportive, always. And I would—well, he didn't always like it that I came home so late from meetings. Meetings in City Hall went on

until sometimes 1:00 or 2:00 in the morning. But I took the children down to city hall once or twice so that they could see what their mother was up to. I also took them to Sacramento, to show them how that worked, and what I was doing up there. I thought they should know about that.

06-00:40:15

Lage: What was taking so much of your time.

06-00:40:16

McLaughlin: That's right.

06-00:40:19

Lage: That's interesting. Well, an awful lot changed in Berkeley—or, a lot was going on in Berkeley while you were saving the bay—those initial years of the sixties and early seventies, I'm thinking of. We were having the antiwar movement, and the student unrest on campus, and the People's Park issue—how did those things overlap, or affect one another? Do you have any sense of that?

06-00:40:49

McLaughlin: No, not really. They were the sort of issues of the time, but by then, BCDC was doing its work.

06-00:41:07

Lage: Well, it's interesting that some of the student activism got focused on a park—the People's Park, and then they moved over and built the park on Hearst—on the Hearst Strip, if you remember, over the BART. Right away they built a secondary People's Park.

06-00:41:29

McLaughlin: I don't remember that.

06-00:41:29

Lage: This was in '69.

06-00:41:31

McLaughlin: Oh, really?

06-00:41:31

Lage: Yes. I mean, that's why we have a park going down the Hearst Street strip; the BART right of way was going to be developed, and apartments or something put there. But after People's Park was closed down, this alternative park was built by the students and the citizen activists in Berkeley at the time. I just wondered if some of that fervor for parks and the more rousing environmental movement bled over into Save the Bay at all.

06-00:42:13

McLaughlin: I don't think so, no.

06-00:42:15

Lage: It was a different group of people?

06-00:42:16

McLaughlin: (laughter) Yes! Different times. Different issues.

06-00:42:19

Lage: Okay. Same times, really. I mean, this is happening at the same time.

06-00:42:22

McLaughlin: Same time. That's true. That's true.

06-00:42:30

Lage: Do you remember, were people concerned, people that you were involved with civically—were they concerned with the issues on campus, and the marches, and the Telegraph Avenue developments?

06-00:42:44

McLaughlin: Oh, I would go over to the campus, and see what was going on, and then I'd look around, and there would be someone—I mean, a lot of the crowd out on Sproul Plaza were people like myself—you know, neighbors. Besides, I always thought that Don should have firsthand accounts, so I could tell him what was going on. It was interesting.

06-00:43:10

Lage: Was it a hard time to raise children?

06-00:43:14

McLaughlin: Oh, I could remember going down to pick Jeanie up, and there was a lot of tear gas around. And I remember another time, we were going to see this play, and the people who had tickets for it—it was a wonderful French play, Rabelais, and people couldn't go the first night, because of all the tear gas, so they came the second night, and were sitting on the stage. It was really quite moving, because they looked as though they were sort of part of the stage play. So, things like that. I remember when they had the march, and so on, I could hear it—Don was away, but I think it was really interesting, because so many citizens were really marching there to have it be peaceable.

06-00:44:30

Lage: This was '69, probably, you're talking about, with People's Park.

06-00:44:33

McLaughlin: Yes. And then, was it the Blue Meanies, the national guard, and so on.

06-00:44:45

Lage: Well, your daughter must have been very close by, with Anna Head—wasn't Anna Head School still right there? Just adjacent to People's Park?

06-00:44:53

McLaughlin: That's right, yes.

06-00:44:56

Lage: So, were you concerned?

06-00:44:58

McLaughlin: Oh, no.

06-00:45:02

Lage: Was Don concerned? He was a little more—maybe—troubled by the—

06-00:45:10

McLaughlin: He never mentioned anything, but I remember I was a little concerned when Clark Kerr—I guess, then president of the university—phoned at about 3:00 in the morning once, and that was when the governor had called in the national guard. And so Don got dressed and went over to the campus to see what was going on. One very positive aspect of all of that was that he said he'd be glad to see any of the students for breakfast, up to five students, so we became very good friends with some of them. (telephone rings)

06-00:46:08

Lage: We're back on.

06-00:46:09

McLaughlin: I was saying that Don would have some of the students that were interested in what was going on, and he would learn firsthand from them.

06-00:46:28

Lage: Do you remember if this was during the Free Speech Movement?

06-00:46:31

McLaughlin: Yes. Yes.

06-00:46:34

Lage: Did he ever have people like Mario Savio, some of the leaders in the FSM?

06-00:46:39

McLaughlin: No. He saw Mario later. They went to the same doctor's office. But, no, he had the—I remember one was the vice-president of the ASUC. Sharon Mock, her name was then. We're still good friends. She became very good friends—and some of the others, too. This was a very nice association that Don really built up through these breakfast meetings.

06-00:47:22

Lage: That's a very nice idea.

06-00:47:24

McLaughlin: I was just sort of there making sure they had everything they needed.

06-00:47:28

Lage: You didn't get in on the conversation?

06-00:47:30

McLaughlin: No, not very much. I was taking the children to school, and things like that.

- 06-00:47:36  
Lage: Do you remember any of the other students that he had, or how he invited them?
- 06-00:47:44  
McLaughlin: Well, the word just was—he let it be known that he was open to having students come for breakfast.
- 06-00:47:57  
Lage: That's a very nice way of really getting to know what's happening.
- 06-00:48:00  
McLaughlin: Yes. I mean, here was a regent of the university taking a personal interest in their thoughts.
- 06-00:48:10  
Lage: Tell me whatever you know about that—if it affected his point of view, or —
- 06-00:48:20  
McLaughlin: Well, I'm sure he learned a lot. As I say, I would just be on hand, and then drive the children to school, so I wasn't really a part of it, too much. Around here somewhere, there's a book—it got to be sort of a—basically, several of them were repeaters that came back several times, and then I think we had a dinner once and had them all there. They created a book for Don, which was really, really nice.
- 06-00:48:57  
Lage: Well, that would be very nice to see, if you run across it.
- 06-00:49:00  
McLaughlin: I'll try to find it.
- 06-00:49:01  
Lage: That might be a nice one for the Bancroft Library.
- 06-00:49:04  
McLaughlin: Oh, yes.
- 06-00:49:05  
Lage: Yes. I mean, there's a lot of interest in the Free Speech Movement, and the aspects that haven't been covered before. I don't ever remember hearing this talked about.
- 06-00:49:16  
McLaughlin: Well, I'll look it up. I'm sure it's around.
- 06-00:49:23  
Lage: How did he feel about the way it was handled on campus? Was he supportive of Clark Kerr, or supportive of the chancellor, or do you know?

06-00:49:34

McLaughlin: Well, he kept a lot of his thoughts to himself, and probably the ones he did tell me, I shouldn't mention.

06-00:49:43

Lage: All right, but it's been a long time now. Did he continue to be involved as the issues—they got more complicated, it seems to me, as time went on. We had People's Park, the Third World Strike, and we had a lot of antiwar activity. Did he continue to be involved, say, as the Third World issues came up?

06-00:50:17

McLaughlin: I don't think so. I think 1966 was his last year as a regent.

06-00:50:29

Lage: Oh, I see. So, those were later.

06-00:50:31

McLaughlin: But he and Roger Heyns were very good friends—the chancellor here—and of course he knew them all. I still hear from his wife, Esther Heyns, at Christmastime. But it was—as you know, I've become involved again in the university affairs, and I think things were a bit simpler then.

06-00:51:12

Lage: In what respect?

06-00:51:17

McLaughlin: Well, for one thing, it was largely the chancellor that ran the university. Now, there are all these vice chancellors and assistant vice chancellors, and associate vice chancellors. It's gotten to be much more of a sort of structured bureaucracy. And I think earlier on, I think the decision makers were probably more accessible.

06-00:51:53

Lage: Just as in the city, you mentioned how accessible the decision makers —

06-00:51:56

McLaughlin: Oh, yes.

06-00:51:57

Lage: Yes. Life seems more complicated. You know, I think this is a good place to stop, and we can take up next time. I want to talk a little bit more about transitions in the Save the Bay organization, when the three ladies sort of stepped aside, and then get into the Eastshore Park.

06-00:52:16

McLaughlin: Okay.

06-00:52:17

Lage: How does that sound?

06-00:52:17

McLaughlin: That sounds good.

[End Audio File 6 mclaughlin\_sylvia6\_03-13-07.mp3]

**End of Interview 3**

**Interview # 4: April 6, 2007**

[Begin Audio File 7 mclaughlin\_sylvia7\_04-04-07.mp3]

07-00:00:27

Lage: Today is April 6, 2007, and this is our fourth interview with Sylvia McLaughlin, and we're continuing to talk about Save the Bay. Last time, we went very quickly over those first twenty-five years of Save the Bay, because your previous oral history covered it in more detail, and also the talk that the three of you gave for the Albright Lecture.

07-00:01:13

McLaughlin: Oh, yes.

07-00:01:14

Lage: But I'm wondering if anything had come to mind that you did want to reflect on.

07-00:01:19

McLaughlin: Oh. In the first twenty-five years?

07-00:01:21

Lage: Yes.

07-00:01:24

McLaughlin: I imagine that was pretty well covered in the previous oral history. But down here [in notes for the interview] you say, "What were the strengths and the stresses of Save the Bay when the three of you turned over the reins." Well, I retired in 1986. Well, actually, there was a period before that when I kind of left the regular Monday meetings because my children were teenagers, and I felt they needed more of my time.

07-00:02:18

Lage: Now, tell me about that, because I hadn't been aware of that. What were the regular Monday meetings?

07-00:02:23

McLaughlin: The regular Monday meetings went on for years.

07-00:02:26

Lage: Between the three of you?

07-00:02:27

McLaughlin: Yes. And then Kay had generally a friend that she would dictate to. One was Elaine Anderson, another one was a lady whose name I have forgotten. I think she was a cousin of Kay's. I can get her name from Kay. Kay would dictate letters to this or that legislature, or whatever was the need, and Esther and I would put our two cents' worth in, and we all sat around Kay's kitchen at the dining room table.

- 07-00:03:08  
Lage: And that's really where the business of the Save the Bay got taken —
- 07-00:03:11  
McLaughlin: Yes. And also, that's when we would have interns and such.
- 07-00:03:18  
Lage: Tell me about the interns. That was your only staff, other than Janice Kittredge?
- 07-00:03:24  
McLaughlin: Yes. And, well, we had, generally work-study students from the university, or conscientious objectors, or—Barry Nelson started out that way.
- 07-00:03:40  
Lage: Oh, he did. Yes. I'm just wondering how you started with the conscientious objectors.
- 07-00:03:48  
McLaughlin: Kay figured that out somehow, and some of these young men were outstanding, and went onto very good careers.
- 07-00:04:00  
Lage: Did any of them—other than Barry Nelson—go on to an environmental career?
- 07-00:04:05  
McLaughlin: Oh, yes. Yes.
- 07-00:04:07  
Lage: Can you remember any of those names? We've just been talking about memory before we turned this on.
- 07-00:04:12  
McLaughlin: Kay has a phenomenal memory. I can probably get that information from—I think that's in the oral history. Their names also.
- 07-00:04:22  
Lage: Right. We won't worry about them yet.
- 07-00:04:25  
McLaughlin: But they were very nice young men, and a pleasure to work with, and they also helped Kay a lot. They did a lot of her filing, and things like that. So, she benefited.
- 07-00:04:37  
Lage: Now, why were they usually young men, rather than young women? Or were they? Did you primarily have young men?

07-00:04:45

McLaughlin: We had young women as well. One was Lisa McGimsey, her name was, and then she went on to do other things. She was very good, and then she moved to some other state. No, we weren't —

07-00:05:03

Lage: You weren't gender biased.

07-00:05:04

McLaughlin: (laughter) Oh, no. I should say not.

07-00:05:06

Lage: Because in her oral history, Janice Kittredge does point out that you usually had—she actually says you preferred to have the interns as men. Maybe that's just the way she saw it.

07-00:05:22

McLaughlin: Maybe that's the way she saw it. I certainly had no feelings pro or con. Good help was good help, and there was always, seemingly, a lot of details to take care of.

07-00:05:40

Lage: So, tell me more about—you left those Monday meetings.

07-00:05:44

McLaughlin: Yes. But I was still sort of the one that went out to speak to other groups, and I went to schools, I went to men's organizations, I went to any place that we could persuade them to have us.

07-00:06:03

Lage: Over particular issues that were —

07-00:06:05

McLaughlin: Well, to tell them about what we were doing.

07-00:06:12

Lage: What kind of a response did you get? Do you have any memories of particularly engaging encounters?

07-00:06:20

McLaughlin: I went to the Berkeley Breakfast Club once, and there was only one person there. That was some kind of response, I guess. But I gave him the same spiel I would have given had there been a dozen people. Sometimes we gave slide shows, and I'm sure it's also been in the oral history that we had several films done, and we'd —

07-00:06:47

Lage: You'd show those around.

07-00:06:48

McLaughlin: — present those. We loaned them out to schools. So, there was a lot of this sort of PR work that went on all the time.

07-00:06:59

Lage: This sounds more like general PR than a particular —

07-00:07:03

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. Then also, when there were hearings at the Berkeley City Council or the state legislature, I was sort of pushed out in front.

07-00:07:13

Lage: Did Kay do some of that also?

07-00:07:15

McLaughlin: No.

07-00:07:15

Lage: Oh, she didn't? She didn't testify at the hearings, and —

07-00:07:19

McLaughlin: I don't think she ever did. She went, but she was sort of the power behind the throne.

07-00:07:27

Lage: Now, was she shyer about speaking in public? Or do you know why she didn't take that front person role?

07-00:07:37

McLaughlin: I really don't know.

07-00:07:38

Lage: Did it have anything to do with her husband's position?

07-00:07:40

McLaughlin: I have no idea. And Esther was very shy. We went up to Sacramento once for some legislative hearing, and she was speaking. Some of these legislators were asking rather probing questions, and I think Esther really was uncomfortable. I would have been, too, in that position. And so I think that was one of the last times that she volunteered to be the spokesperson, so.

07-00:08:17

Lage: It doesn't sound—then—like the legislators sort of deferred to you, because of—

07-00:08:24

McLaughlin: Oh, never.

07-00:08:25

Lage: They were as tough on you as they would have been on anyone.

07-00:08:28

McLaughlin: Oh, sure. Very. And there were very few women legislators at that time.

07-00:08:36

Lage: There is a lot of gender here.

07-00:08:38

McLaughlin: There is a bit. Well, I remember there was one redheaded woman—whose name I should remember—in the legislature at that time, and she stood out, not only because of her red hair, but because she was one of the few women.

07-00:08:55

Lage: How did they treat you? I mean, did you ever feel you were being patronized?

07-00:09:03

McLaughlin: Well, we were called all sorts of names by various and sundry—not necessarily up there, but no, I never considered that we were patronized. At least I didn't feel it. If they wanted to treat us the way they treated—that was all part of the job.

07-00:09:21

Lage: Right. You don't seem like you'd be sensitive to this kind of —

07-00:09:24

McLaughlin: Oh, no.

07-00:09:25

Lage: — slight. I told you how Phyllis Faber really sees the environmental movement as a really kind of gendered thing. I want to talk to her about that. I don't get that impression from you, that you feel that your role as a woman affected how you functioned —

07-00:09:46

McLaughlin: No. I tried to always be appropriately—when we would go to Sacramento, I remember sometimes I had a blue linen suit, and a flowered hat. I'm not sure if I had gloves, but anyway. We tried to be very appropriately dressed. We didn't want to have the sort of "little old ladies in tennis shoes" syndrome.

07-00:10:11

Lage: Because that was the way women environmentalists were often characterized.

07-00:10:16

McLaughlin: And, so I generally wore—well, medium heels. Not exactly high heels. I was not going to wear tennis shoes.

07-00:10:30

Lage: And a hat.

07-00:10:33

McLaughlin: Oftentimes, I wore a hat. But at the Berkeley City Council, in those days, the council members were very courteous.

07-00:10:46

Lage: And did you dress differently for the Berkeley City Council meetings?

07-00:10:52

McLaughlin: Maybe a little bit. But still, we tried to be appropriately dressed. Those were the days that you dressed a little bit—you didn't go downtown in blue jeans, and things like that.

07-00:11:06

Lage: Yes. That's so true. Let me ask you another follow-up kind of question. Oh, go on.

07-00:11:15

McLaughlin: Yes. There was one—you know, sometimes these issues became even amusing. Once, I was accused of coming out of the men's room. Well, that was totally wrong, because I was just coming up the stairs, and I guess in the State Capitol—I think that's where it was—this was in the newspaper.

07-00:11:52

Lage: Who accused you of coming out of the men's room?

07-00:11:55

McLaughlin: I don't even remember. But I thought it was kind of funny.

07-00:11:59

Lage: But did you only read about it in the newspaper, or did you get —

07-00:12:02

McLaughlin: Yes. Yes.

07-00:12:04

Lage: Nobody encountered you there—that's pretty funny. Now, that's certainly —

07-00:12:11

McLaughlin: It was totally erroneous, and they were just trying to—I guess, as you say, trying to put us down, or denigrate us in some way. I just felt it wasn't personal. It was the issue that they were disagreeing with.

07-00:12:29

Lage: Right. Do you remember what newspaper that was?

07-00:12:32

McLaughlin: No.

07-00:12:33

Lage: I think that's a very telling comment, frankly.

07-00:12:37

McLaughlin: I probably have it up in one of my boxes.

07-00:12:38

Lage: That would be a good one to put away. You know, most of the environmental groups then were run by men: the Sierra Club had almost no women —

07-00:12:51

McLaughlin: Yes. Yes, I think I was telling you before that we started out having men —

07-00:12:56

Lage: As a president.

07-00:12:57

McLaughlin: Yes. Well, we were doing most of the —

07-00:13:00

Lage: You were doing the work.

07-00:13:01

McLaughlin: Yes. They would sign the letters.

07-00:13:03

Lage: Do you think women see or saw the environmental issues any differently from men? Were different things important to them?

07-00:13:17

McLaughlin: No, not really, but we had the interest, we had the time, maybe we were more nurturing. I also developed a theory that women take care of the home, and essentially because when we put down what our profession is, I put down homemaker. Well, I've come to realize that I'm a homemaker for my home, my garden, my neighborhood, my community, and the larger community of this region, the state, the planet. It's the same feeling of wanting to—you try to have a nice, tidy house; you try to have a nice garden; you try to have a nice community; and I think the quality of life with clean air, clean water, so on, is a part of that. It may be sort of subconscious. Maybe. Just a theory. But I've thought that maybe this is one reason women are perhaps more attuned to trying to effect change in the environment. But on the other hand, it's men who are out there busily making money and doing business so that the women could have the leisure time to do these other things.

07-00:15:20

Lage: That's true. Well, why do you think the big organizations, like the Sierra Club—at that time, not so much now—were dominated by men?

07-00:15:31

McLaughlin: I think it was a part of the same idea that sort of men were the leaders. You found more men in the legislature, more men in the city councils, more men in the business organizations. I think—maybe, who knows—maybe the environmental movement helped the women's movement come along.

07-00:15:59

Lage: That's an interesting thought. Well, you know, the women's movement did come along in these years, and in some ways challenged this whole view of

women as homemakers. Did that affect your perceptions or your functioning in any way? Were you very tuned in to the women's movement?

07-00:16:21

McLaughlin: Not at all.

07-00:16:23

Lage: Tell me about, you know, what reactions you might have had.

07-00:16:29

McLaughlin: Well, naturally, it was going on, but I thought it was—I didn't think it had very much to do with what I was trying to achieve, and it was sort of—as far as I was concerned—kind of a side issue. All the publicity of the bra burning, that sort of thing, sort of didn't fit our style so much.

07-00:17:03

Lage: (laughter) Yes. The bra burning. Well, you didn't—you were raising a daughter at this time. Did you have a —

07-00:17:10

McLaughlin: Son and daughter.

07-00:17:12

Lage: Yes, I know. A son and—that's fair enough. Did the kind of expectations you might have had for your daughter shift at all, do you think, because of the women's movement? Or what her expectations for herself might have been?

07-00:17:25

McLaughlin: I never really even thought about that. I do tend to think that I sometimes had the same—when my daughter was quite young—same expectations for her that I had when I was a young girl. But obviously, that didn't work very well, so I had to change with the times.

07-00:17:54

Lage: Now, what do you mean by that? What didn't work very well?

07-00:18:01

McLaughlin: Well, she was naturally of an independent mind, had her own ideas—what she wanted to do, what she wanted to wear, things like that. I don't think that had anything to do with the environmental movement, and I think I told you that I did take both of them to council meetings and to the legislature.

07-00:18:24

Lage: Right. And to the mountains, and —

07-00:18:27

McLaughlin: Oh, yes.

07-00:18:29

Lage: So they were getting the whole complement of background, it sounds like.

07-00:18:33

McLaughlin: That's right. Well, that wasn't my purpose, really. There were a lot of things that went into it—taking them back to Colorado, Wyoming, different places.

07-00:18:51

Lage: So, when you pulled back from —

07-00:18:53

McLaughlin: All the places that I enjoyed, I wanted to share with them.

07-00:18:56

Lage: Yes. Yes. When you pulled back from being so active on the Monday morning meetings, was that partly related to Don's health?

07-00:19:06

McLaughlin: No. No, it was my decision. But I continued to go to the BCDC meetings as well as Kay and Esther, and—as I was saying—did a lot of the public interfaces: speaking, and so on.

07-00:19:30

Lage: Just not as much of the week-to-week running of the organization. Okay. Let me see if I have another question. I think I know what the answer to this one will be. We talked last time about the university being in such turmoil, and you said it really didn't have much effect on Save the Bay, but I didn't ask specifically about when Clark Kerr was fired with enthusiasm [as president of UC]—you know, how he usually liked to describe it—which was '67. Did that affect Kay's concentration on Save the Bay, or did it affect your lobbying in Sacramento?

07-00:20:13

McLaughlin: I don't think so. No. No.

07-00:20:19

Lage: So, nothing to say to shed light on that?

07-00:20:22

McLaughlin: No.

07-00:20:23

Lage: (laughter) Okay.

07-00:20:24

McLaughlin: That's probably in his oral history, and Don's oral history.

07-00:20:29

Lage: That was quite an event.

07-00:20:30

McLaughlin: Yes it was. Well, I think I probably told you about his calling Don up at three in the morning.

07-00:20:41

Lage: No.

07-00:20:42

McLaughlin: Oh, well that was when there was a lot of student unrest—well, that's when they were going into Sproul Hall, and I was over there and saw them climbing in out on the roof. So, Don felt he should go over too and see what was going on. That's probably all in his oral history.

Then I remember some things were kind of amusing. You know, I'd go over there sometimes to see what was going on. Sometimes I'd walk over, so I could give my husband a firsthand report. And there was a circle of women, and they were sort of dancing around and singing, "Shut it down!" They had a kind of a little dance step they were doing, I don't remember what the rest of the song was. But it was rather lively. They probably didn't even know what the issues were, but they were participating.

07-00:22:03

Lage: A certain playfulness about it.

07-00:22:04

McLaughlin: I don't know if they were even students. They might not have even been students.

07-00:22:06

Lage: Would you talk to any of these young —

07-00:22:10

McLaughlin: Oh, sure. They were busy doing their thing. But, oh, yes, you could talk to anybody. They were interesting times. Anyway, they didn't have anything to do with our Save the Bay.

07-00:22:38

Lage: Right. I didn't think so, but I wanted to be sure. Let's see what we have here. okay, well, let's talk about—you said, really, you never left the organization. That's true. But they do talk about 1986 through '91 as kind of being a transition in leadership.

07-00:22:56

McLaughlin: Well, there were several times when we sort of changed direction a bit, and we would have a retreat and decide what was important to do. So, I think at one juncture it was decided to—I think organizations go through different phases, and every now and then, they have to take a look at themselves and see how they could become more effective. And that's essentially what we were trying to do. So some of us felt that maybe it was time that we become more formalized—that is, to have an executive director, and so on. So then, all one summer there was a committee. This was when Will Siri was president. He appointed a committee, and I think Doris Sloan was chairing that committee. They discussed, I guess, a lot of the issues, the problems, and how

things could be done differently, better, so on. So then, that's when we came up with the idea of having an executive director, and more formalized.

07-00:24:27

Lage: Did any of the three of you take part in that committee —

07-00:24:32

McLaughlin: No.

07-00:24:32

Lage: — or was that kind of a separate thing?

07-00:24:32

McLaughlin: No. No. It was separate. Don Weden was very—I think he was a part of it.

07-00:24:41

Lage: And who is Don Weden? Give me a little background.

07-00:24:43

McLaughlin: Don Weden—W-E-D-E-N—he was a planner for San Jose, and he was on the board. Then he was also on the board at another time, when quite some years later, when again we felt it was time for a change. It was quite a tense time, too, because there were a number of new board members, and they felt a loyalty to the executive director, Barry Nelson, but some of us thought that he was paying more attention to his particular interest—which was water issues.

07-00:25:32

Lage: Like the delta? Bay-delta?

07-00:25:34

McLaughlin: All the water issues. And now he's doing an excellent job at NRDC [Natural Resources Defense Council], with the water issues. There were various other things that went into all of this. But that's when Nancy—she was then Nancy Wakeman, Nancy Strauch now—she and I were talking together on the phone practically nightly, so then we really had quite a showdown at board meeting. Don Weden was the chairman at that time.

07-00:26:17

Lage: Okay. This must have been about '96, I'm guessing. So, you and Nancy Wakeman —

07-00:26:27

McLaughlin: Yes. And Joe Engbeck was —

07-00:26:31

Lage: You thought things weren't going well.

07-00:26:33

McLaughlin: We had sort of rump meetings. Because our whole intent was to have the organization become more effective.

07-00:26:43

Lage: Was Barry Nelson not such a good manager of the organization, or was —

07-00:26:48

McLaughlin: Well, this was the first job he'd ever done anything like this.

07-00:26:51

Lage: He'd started as an intern.

07-00:26:52

McLaughlin: I mean, he just went from being a student, basically, to being an intern, and then to being in this paid position.

07-00:27:01

Lage: He was hired 1990 as executive director.

07-00:27:05

McLaughlin: Yes. So that's sort of the history of it. But we had gotten together, as I said, on several other occasions to determine what was needed. Again, I don't remember the year, but we determined that it was very important to pay more attention to the wetlands, the shorelines, the marshes, that sort of thing. So that's when we hired Ruth Gravanis, and we brought together thirty-some organizations that were interested in the shoreline around the bay, and the wetlands, and so on. And we all worked together for that purpose.

07-00:27:56

Lage: Did you bring them together under the auspices of Save the Bay?

07-00:27:58

McLaughlin: Yes. It was —

07-00:27:58

Lage: Or did you create a new —

07-00:28:00

McLaughlin: No. It was the—oh, I forget what it was. Some kind of alliance.

07-00:28:06

Lage: And Ruth staffed that?

07-00:28:09

McLaughlin: Yes. And she did an excellent job. And then there's another time. Every now and then, we would take a look at our mission and our goals, and tweak them here and there, and change them a bit. And then I remember another occasion when we met—I think down on the peninsula—and determined that we needed to change our purpose a little bit, our goals, and to include education. I could get the documentation if you want. Education, and history—

07-00:29:07

Lage: Restoration got added in at some point.

07-00:29:11

McLaughlin: Restoration. Yes, probably in that time frame. And now, of course, it's one of the main efforts is restoration and wetlands, and all that sort of thing.

07-00:29:30

Lage: And education—a lot of educational programs, it seems.

07-00:29:31

McLaughlin: And reaching out to other groups, which I think David [Lewis] has done an excellent job doing that. Well, you probably know he's partnered with the Girl Scouts, and with East Bay MUD, and various other groups for different purposes. And I think it's very good to branch out like that. I always tried to get Save the Bay at least talking with groups that might not necessarily agree with us, such as the Bay Planning Coalition, and then the Bay Area Council once gave us an award—environmental award—and we got the Bay Area Council to give an environmental award to the then-District Engineer of the Corps of Engineers. James Lammie, his name was.

07-00:30:34

Lage: And that was kind of a coup, to get them interested in the environment?

07-00:30:38

McLaughlin: Well, I think some other people across the country wondered why we thought the Corps of Engineers were worthy of an award, but this Colonel Lammie was very approachable, and at that time, the Corps of Engineers would have what they called environmental teas, and they would have—maybe there would be, usually fifteen or twenty of us that would show up at their office, and they would tell us what they were proposing, or doing, or thinking of doing, and the issues, and problems, and so on. We'd have very frank discussions back and forth. It was, I think, a very healthy arrangement.

07-00:31:32

Lage: I had the impression that this district moved in that direction, the Corps of Engineers in this district, maybe faster—

07-00:31:39

McLaughlin: Well, maybe we helped push them there.

07-00:31:43

Lage: Yes. Well, did you have contact with their leadership, aside from Mr. Lammie?

07-00:31:47

McLaughlin: Oh, yes.

07-00:31:49

Lage: Earlier on? I mean, was that part of your mission, to sort of work with organizations like Corps of Engineers? To bring them around?

07-00:31:57

McLaughlin: Well, sometimes it was essential, if we had some issue that they were concerned with, like the bulkhead lines.

07-00:32:07

Lage: Like?

07-00:32:08

McLaughlin: The bulkhead lines.

07-00:32:09

Lage: Well, tell me about that.

07-00:32:10

McLaughlin: Well, the city requested that the bulkhead lines be put out wherever, and Berkeley —

07-00:32:17

Lage: Now, what are bulkhead lines? I don't even know what they are.

07-00:32:20

McLaughlin: Well, you can fill out to the bulkhead line, and Berkeley's was —

07-00:32:23

Lage: Oh, so it is a [demarcation] line.

07-00:32:24

McLaughlin: Sort of a line, and on certain maps, you can see them. Anyway, yes, the Corps was involved in a number of things we were concerned about.

07-00:32:41

Lage: So, was it the Corps that set the bulkhead line?

07-00:32:44

McLaughlin: Yes.

07-00:32:44

Lage: So, you would work with them —

07-00:32:47

McLaughlin: No, the bulkhead lines, by the time we were active, they'd already been set, as had some of the legislation for where people could fill, and so on. My memory's failing me again. But there had been legislation at different times which permitted certain things. For instance, there was one in 1913 for the Berkeley area, and another one in '62, I believe. So that had to do with, I think probably the State Lands Commission. I'll get those for you next time. So, we had to do essentially be knowledgeable about all these different legal aspects, and we always made a point of—well, I tried to—being acquainted with the

people at the Corps. And of course, this is not easy, because they change every two years, the colonels. But they were always very cordial. I've been to a number of their sort of changing of the guard, and so on. And we had several meetings, I think over at the [San Francisco] Bay Model, and I think it's important for people to know about the Bay Model.

07-00:35:07

Lage: It's a wonderful—

07-00:35:08

McLaughlin: I should say. So we tried to interact with any group, I think, that had something to do with the bay.

07-00:35:20

Lage: You mentioned the Bay Planning Council as being not so much in line with your thinking. Now, what was that?

07-00:35:28

McLaughlin: Bay Planning Coalition. That's the maritime industry—their representative, the maritime industry.

07-00:35:34

Lage: I see. So how did you interact with them, for instance?

07-00:35:41

McLaughlin: Well, I just felt it was important to have a cordial relationship, first and foremost. This really—I think—has paid off.

07-00:36:03

Lage: But how do you develop these cordial relationships? Where did you interact with them?

07-00:36:10

McLaughlin: Well, it's very easy, seems to me. We'd go to a lot of the same meetings. BCDC, and so on.

07-00:36:17

Lage: I see. BCDC meetings and whatnot.

07-00:36:23

McLaughlin: And they've had the same executive director for all this time, Ellen Johnck. On one occasion, I think it was probably Caltrans that complained to the governor that BCDC wasn't treating them right, and so the governor, in his budget, reduced the amount of money that BCDC was to get by half, just for six months. They were funded for only six months. And all the things they did, half of it was going to be given to the regional board, and the other half to some other group. So we got together with the Bay Planning Coalition, at that time. We—Save the Bay. And Marc Holmes was then working with Save the Bay. And he and Nancy Strauch and I, and Roy Gorman, an attorney who was then on the board—we met frequently with the Bay Planning Coalition and

developed a strategy. Because, in the meantime, the legislature said they have a hearing, and Joe Bodovitz was running this hearing. It was the—what commission was it? I guess it was the BCDC commission. But this was a public hearing, and there were five of us, and we'd rehearsed this before. And I led off. We were essentially saying the same thing in a different way—that full funding should be restored.

07-00:38:56

Lage: But coming from all these different directions.

07-00:38:59

McLaughlin: So, I led off, then the chairman of the Bay Planning Coalition spoke—a very charming gentleman, who was in the development business of some sort. Then Nancy Strauch spoke, then one of their people spoke, and so we alternated like that. Roy Gorman spoke, and so I think the commissioners were pretty astonished to see, essentially, we were all holding hands. Then there was John Briscoe. John Briscoe, he's very eloquent.

07-00:39:55

Lage: And he's in the maritime industry?

07-00:39:58

McLaughlin: Yes. He was one of the founders of it [the Bay Planning Coalition]. So anyway, he was saying such complimentary things about me, and Save the Bay, and the commission, and so on. Anyway, full funding was restored.

07-00:40:13

Lage: Oh, that is an interesting story.

07-00:40:19

McLaughlin: I should also say that a report was written. It was a joint report that was written by both the Bay Planning Coalition and Save the Bay. This was Marc Holmes—who was then working for Save the Bay, and is now with the Bay Institute—and Ellen Johnck. So, we turned in this joint report to the governor.

07-00:40:47

Lage: What were the benefits of BCDC to the maritime industry? Why were they so supportive?

07-00:40:56

McLaughlin: Well, I mean, they had to go before BCDC for permits for anything.

07-00:41:00

Lage: I see. So, they must have felt it was a fair process?

07-00:41:08

McLaughlin: They felt they would rather deal with BCDC than to have to go to San Diego for some other meeting for what they want to do here in the Bay Area. They wanted to deal just with this one organization, not with two separate other

organizations that didn't really know about what was going on in the Bay Area.

07-00:41:34

Lage: Well, that's an interesting time of coming together. You must not have really been enemies, as one might think.

07-00:41:43

McLaughlin: No, we never were.

07-00:41:48

Lage: Do you remember when that was? Was that pre-1985 or 6?

07-00:41:55

McLaughlin: It was probably around then.

07-00:42:18

Lage: How did it change things when you did have an executive director? Did it change the power of the board, or the running of the organization?

07-00:42:27

McLaughlin: Well, no. It was just like any organization. He would make his report, and so on. He was essentially—well, sort of running it as a business, I guess you could say.

07-00:42:40

Lage: So it became more businesslike?

07-00:42:43

McLaughlin: Well, and then at the same time, we had the president, who really ran it. But it worked out okay.

07-00:42:53

Lage: How is the president chosen? Who selected —

07-00:43:00

McLaughlin: We had a—let's see. It's in the by-laws, I'm sure. We probably had a nominating committee, and elected the officers, and the officers elected the president, something like that. But then—as I say—when this issue happened, and Don Weden was then the chairman, it was then that he appointed a committee to resolve this sort of impasse.

07-00:43:35

Lage: Between your executive director and —

07-00:43:38

McLaughlin: Yes. And it just so happened that he was out of the country at that time. When this all—

07-00:43:44

Lage: Barry, or —

07-00:43:45

McLaughlin: Barry was. When this all happened. They went around the board, and had a vote, and it was split down the middle, so that's why the president—Don Weden—appointed a committee to resolve the situation. And that's when Larry Orman took over, then, for six months.

07-00:44:12

Lage: So, you did resolve it by letting—

07-00:44:14

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. Got everything kind of straightened out.

07-00:44:17

Lage: Right. Now, you say the new board members —

07-00:44:20

McLaughlin: Barry was essentially kept on, but in a different role. That was kind of an interim thing, and then he went to the NRDC.

07-00:44:33

Lage: So, he kept on in charge of water issues.

07-00:44:36

McLaughlin: Yes. Which he was very good at, yes.

07-00:44:42

Lage: Was the rest of the staff loyal to Barry, or to the board? I mean, did it cause disruption in the —

07-00:44:48

McLaughlin: Well, I don't know how much I should say about this.

07-00:44:52

Lage: Well, Janice Kittredge talks about it, so I thought I would ask you.

07-00:44:56

McLaughlin: What did you say?

07-00:44:57

Lage: Janice Kittredge talks about it —

07-00:44:59

McLaughlin: Oh, she did.

07-00:44:59

Lage: — in her oral history. From her point of view.

07-00:45:04

McLaughlin: Oh. From her point of view. Well, shall we say there was a sort of lack of harmony between Barry and Marc.

07-00:45:16

Lage: Marc?

07-00:45:17

McLaughlin: Marc Holmes.

07-00:45:19

Lage: Oh, he was one of the staff.

07-00:45:20

McLaughlin: He was the one I was telling you about.

07-00:45:21

Lage: Yes, okay. Sorry.

07-00:45:26

McLaughlin: And I'm sure that was difficult for them, because—well, perhaps they each had a different idea about things, and the way things should be done, and so on, so. Anyway, it all got resolved.

07-00:45:50

Lage: Yes, it got resolved. And it doesn't sound like it was just a question of the organizational effectiveness, but was it also a question of priority setting—where your efforts should go? That's what I'm gathering from —

07-00:46:05

McLaughlin: Yes, it was kind of a combination, I guess. Because, basically all of us wanted to have it be an effective organization, and Larry just managed to keep everything on an even keel. He's very good at that.

07-00:46:23

Lage: What had Larry been doing before that? He was with —

07-00:46:28

McLaughlin: Greenbelt Alliance.

07-00:46:28

Lage: Oh, he was with Greenbelt Alliance before that.

07-00:46:31

McLaughlin: Actually, there's a bit of history here, because—well, you can see over here, there's a picture of Larry. [displays illustration] I don't know if that shows. During the time when the Santa Fe and Murphy were proposing this regional shopping center—you called it a mall, we didn't refer to it as a mall, ever. It's a regional shopping center.

07-00:47:13

Lage: They called it a mall?

07-00:47:15

McLaughlin: No one ever spoke of a mall at that time. It was a regional shopping center. You have the El Cerrito Plaza. People didn't call that a mall. I just wanted to correct you.

07-00:47:29

Lage: Oh, I didn't realize I used the term "mall."

07-00:47:32

McLaughlin: You had, yes.

07-00:47:33

Lage: I did? Shorthand. Shorthand. You're right—proposed a shopping mall. You know where I got that wording, I bet? From—I have it right here—there's a wonderful history—Norman LaForce has written a history about Eastshore Park. I think he used the term.

07-00:47:58

McLaughlin: Okay. I should correct him. Anyway, Larry was at that time either—I'm not sure if he was a student or a graduate student at the university, and his professor—I think it may have been Randy Hester—had Larry and another student take this on as their project.

07-00:48:23

Lage: This regional shopping center?

07-00:48:25

McLaughlin: Yes. And at that time, it was a group that Roz Lepawsky and I had co-founded, Urban Care, that sort of led the charge in opposing that. Ariel Parkinson was very much a part of that, Jack Kent, a number of people. I've several boxes, all dealing with that. So anyway, that's how I became acquainted with Larry. And this other fellow sort of went on to do other things, but Larry and I developed a very strong friendship. So then after he graduated, I guess he was looking for a job at the—it was People for Open Space, then, and Dorothy Erskine—did you ever get her oral history?

07-00:49:28

Lage: No. It's such a shame.

07-00:49:29

McLaughlin: She would have been—anyway, she had been really running it. Well, this organization felt it was time for them to have a change, and for them to have an executive director. I could see Jack Kent was probably in the middle of this, because he was head of that at one time. The man was always—Dorothy Erskine did all the work. No, Jack Kent was very—and we worked closely together, always, on Save the Bay, and Dorothy Erskine—Save the Bay met in her apartment for several years, and anyway, that was the department that Larry was in.

07-00:50:24

Lage: City [and regional] planning?

07-00:50:26

McLaughlin: Planning, yes.

07-00:50:27

Lage: At Berkeley.

07-00:50:27

McLaughlin: And then Jack also was connected to People for Open Space, which became Greenbelt Alliance. So then I remember Dorothy Erskine called me and asked me what I thought about Larry Orman; would he be able to do this job? I said, "Oh, of course. He'd be excellent." And so then he did it for twenty-five years, probably. And since then, he's branched into the Green Info Network. One thing was he always had kind of a knack for working with organizations, and taking them when they were in trouble and sort of smoothing things out, getting things reorganized. He did that with a number of different organizations, not only Save the Bay.

07-00:51:21

Lage: I see. Did he do it [work with Save the Bay] while he was also with Greenbelt Alliance?

07-00:51:25

McLaughlin: No. No, no.

07-00:51:26

Lage: It sounds like these times overlapped.

07-00:51:27

McLaughlin: No, no. Afterwards. He sort of was developing his career in different ways. In the meantime, he'd gotten married, too, and I gave them their rehearsal dinner here. And now they have a nice little boy, Christopher. But then he also developed another business called Green Info Network, is his business, too.

07-00:51:58

Lage: Is that what he does now, or is he with an organization?

07-00:52:01

McLaughlin: Yes, yes. Both. He did both.

07-00:52:05

Lage: So what is his position now, aside from GreenInfo Network? Is he still with Greenbelt Alliance?

07-00:52:10

McLaughlin: I guess you might say he works as a consultant. Yes.

07-00:52:13

Lage: I see. He seems like he'd be a good person to do an oral history with, having been in so many different places.

07-00:52:19

McLaughlin: Absolutely. Yes.

07-00:52:25

Lage: There are a lot of people we haven't really recorded that I wish we could. And then David Lewis—how was he chosen as executive director [1998]? What was his background?

07-00:52:47

McLaughlin: Well, this was during the time that Larry was with us.

07-00:52:49

Lage: Right. Did he help lead that selection?

07-00:52:52

McLaughlin: Probably, yes. There was probably a committee, of which I was not a part. There were several who were selected. Well, I remember telephoning some of his previous employers—several of his previous employers. He was working in Washington DC, but he had grown up in the Bay Area. He wanted to return to the Bay Area, and he just seemed to fit what we needed at that time.

07-00:53:29

Lage: Had he come out of an environmental organization in Washington DC?

07-00:53:32

McLaughlin: He had worked with Friends of the Earth, and then he'd also worked in a legislative manner, with the Congress. He'd had some good experience.

07-00:53:50

Lage: Has he taken the organization in a different direction, or changed?

07-00:53:55

McLaughlin: Somewhat. All organizations change over time. I think he's doing an excellent job.

07-00:54:04

Lage: A lot of organizations, it seems to me, are becoming more staff-directed, and less board-directed.

07-00:54:09

McLaughlin: Yes. That's true. Yes, that is very true. Whereas the board members were doing most of the work, and with a minimal staff, now it's the board members that are raising the money to pay the staff. And this happens in a lot of organizations. CESP still is in the board-member-doing-the-work syndrome.

07-00:54:34

Lage: Yes, I bet they are. But aside from the work, what about policy setting? It sounds like the board really set the policy.

07-00:54:45

McLaughlin: Yes. Oh, yes. The board still sets the policy, I'm sure. But I think the executive director seems to, probably proposes a lot of the ideas, and the direction, and so on. And also—well, the types of people that are selected. In the early days, we tried to have good geographic representation, as well as

other things. Now I think that they have maybe different qualifications they're looking for in board members.

07-00:55:33

Lage: Like fundraising, or?

07-00:55:36

McLaughlin: Oh, yes.

07-00:55:38

Lage: Now, you're not on the board, now.

07-00:55:39

McLaughlin: No. This was—on one occasion, I was at a board meeting, where it was decided the organization should become more formalized, and have specified three-year terms, then you could be elected for another three-year term, then you would be off. So they passed around a sheet of paper, to start with, asking each board member if they wanted to be on one more year, or two years, or three years. So I checked the one year. I thought I'd been on long enough. And so that year was up in 1999. So then, they gave me a wonderful, wonderful party the following May.

07-00:56:31

Lage: Was that hard to leave, or are you so busy with your other organizations that

07-00:56:36

McLaughlin: Ah, no. I felt it was a very good time to leave. I felt it was in good hands. Everything was going well. And it seemed the right time. Kay Kerr had left a number of years earlier. She left, I think, it may have coincided with the time that Barry Nelson became the executive director, and it sort of changed course for the organization.

07-00:57:09

Lage: Did she leave with a feeling that it wasn't going in the direction she wanted?

07-00:57:18

McLaughlin: I'd rather have her comment on that.

07-00:57:20

Lage: Okay. I have gone down and looked at some of the papers. There are so many in the Bancroft already, and I know they're not all there. It's a little overwhelming. But I saw that the idea of merging with Baykeeper came up in the 1990s.

07-00:57:41

McLaughlin: Well, I don't know about merger. They wanted our support, anyway. We gave them considerable support, and I think they've done an excellent job. Will Siri was promoting that.

07-00:57:58

Lage: Promoting Baykeeper, or promoting a closer tie?

07-00:58:02

McLaughlin: No. It was just getting started. It was Mike Herz, was the one who headed that up. No, I think they've done an excellent job. Now there are a number of other organizations having to do with the bay, and they each are somewhat different. The Bay Institute does a good job—they're a little bit more scientific. I went to their fundraiser. I guess it was last fall, and at the silent auction, I thought, "Well, it'll be helpful. Sign up for a lot of things." And one of the things I won was what they called the water train, and it was just a wonderful trip on the train—on the Amtrak—up the Sacramento River to Sacramento, and you go right along the bay for a good part of it. We were all in one car, and it was jointly sponsored by the Oakland Museum—what is it, the Natural Sciences Guild?—and the Bay Institute. So they have several experts that were telling us what we were looking at, and the history, and all about it. So, it was a really interesting —

07-00:59:38

Lage: Sort of coals to Newcastle, though, given all your background. This is about to run out of time, so I'm going to stop it here. Maybe we're running out of time, also.

[End Audio File 7 mclaughlin\_sylvia7\_04-04-07.mp3]

**End of Interview 4**

**Interview # 5: April 20, 2007**

[Begin Audio File 8 mclaughlin\_sylvia8\_04-20-07.mp3]

08-00:00:17

Lage: Let's put the date on. Today's April 20, 2007. We're in our fifth session with Sylvia McLaughlin, and we're going to talk today about Eastshore Park, which you're still involved with, and have just come from a meeting about. But I want to go back to the early visions for a park. I mean, frankly, when you think about it back in the sixties, it was an unlikely place to think of having a park, along that —

08-00:00:44

McLaughlin: We never thought of anything as unlikely.

08-00:00:47

Lage: I know, but tell me how you happened to conceive of this area as a park, and what the various inputs were to that vision.

08-00:00:56

McLaughlin: Okay. Well, when we were able to get the Berkeley City Council turned around in 1963, and then it was reaffirmed by the new council after the election in 1964 —

08-00:01:11

Lage: To turn around to do what? To give up the idea for development?

08-00:01:17

McLaughlin: No. To give up their idea of a massive filling of the bay, and they also said they would restrict the amount of bay fill, and they drew the lines, which have been followed. We now have what was North Waterfront Park—it is now Cesar Chavez Park—all built on landfill.

08-00:01:42

Lage: A dump, basically. So, you turned them around to not have development —

08-00:01:49

McLaughlin: Yes. But part of it was that also—and I can show you this in printing—the Interim Berkeley Waterfront Plan said that privately owned lands should be acquired for public parks and recreation.

08-00:02:16

Lage: So you got that into an official city document.

08-00:02:19

McLaughlin: Yes.

08-00:02:20

Lage: Right. Now, how did you do that? I mean, was that a hard sell?

08-00:02:28

McLaughlin: No. I think it was a part of the whole change in attitude, and I think Jack Kent probably wrote it. He wrote very nicely.

08-00:02:36

Lage: So, he was on the commission to write the plan?

08-00:02:38

McLaughlin: He was on the city council.

08-00:02:39

Lage: Oh, on the city council. That's right.

08-00:02:41

McLaughlin: Yes. And he was also the professor at Berkeley of City and Regional Planning. I'll write myself a note to get that for you, because it was really very well written. So that was really, I would say, the start of the idea. I mean, we really always had that idea, even though the Santa Fe kept coming up with plans for fill developments, and the regional shopping center, and there were always, from time to time, lawsuits, and so on. Having a shoreline park was always our vision.

08-00:03:28

Lage: Had you thought of it as connecting the whole eastshore line, not just Berkeley?

08-00:03:34

McLaughlin: Well, of course I think our original focus was on the Berkeley portion of the shoreline. But then, also, the [East Bay] Regional Park District became interested, and they put shoreline parks down as their priority.

08-00:03:53

Lage: Now, when was that? Was that as a result of your lobbying, or was it independent?

08-00:03:59

McLaughlin: You keep challenging me to remember dates.

08-00:04:04

Lage: Well, I know.

08-00:04:05

McLaughlin: Anyway. Okay. This was a special study that they had that was chaired by Stewart Udall. And I think that was in the seventies, I'll guess. And I also have copies of that, and copies of—because I was representing Save the Bay, and I wrote down all the reasons that they should—I think we were also concerned with the possibility of getting some state funding—so I wrote down all the reasons why there should be a shoreline park, and the shoreline parks should be part of their agenda, which it did become. So then they got Point Pinole, and various other areas, Robert Crown beach, and so on. Whereas originally, the regional park district was concerned with the hills area.

08-00:05:10  
Lage: Yes. So, this was a major shift for the regional parks.

08-00:05:13  
McLaughlin: It was. And then Al Baum was involved with that, I believe, as I recall.

08-00:05:20  
Lage: Who was that? I didn't get the name.

08-00:05:24  
McLaughlin: Al. Alvin Baum—B-A-U-M. He also worked with Joe Bodovitz in the early days of Save the Bay legislation.

08-00:05:37  
Lage: Okay. Was the idea sort of a parks-for-the-people idea? That they would bring the parks to the area where the poor people lived, or was that not part of it?

08-00:05:52  
McLaughlin: To a certain degree it was. But this was—as you said—a departure for the park district. But this became a part of their long-range plan. And so, we helped them promote that.

08-00:06:10  
Lage: The little behind-the-scenes constant pressure that you and your —

08-00:06:15  
McLaughlin: Yes. And then Urban Care was also involved in that.

08-00:06:18  
Lage: Tell me about Urban Care. I came across that group, and I don't know anything about that.

08-00:06:22  
McLaughlin: Roz Lepawsky and I—and others—founded that.

08-00:06:26  
Lage: Now, you founded that back in the seventies.

08-00:06:28  
McLaughlin: Yes.

08-00:06:29  
Lage: And why did you found that when you had Save the Bay? What did Urban Care—?

08-00:06:34  
McLaughlin: Well, Save the Bay at that point—they weren't very focused right on this particular area. Urban Care became very focused on the shoreline, and the need for parks. We got a lot of other organizations involved, like the League of Women Voters, and so on.

08-00:06:57

Lage: No, just the name, Urban Care, gives you a different feel from Save the Bay, or Save our Seashore, or Save the Redwoods. This was about the city. What was the thinking there?

08-00:07:12

McLaughlin: Well, it is a city. Shoreline Park, an urban park. And I think this was the first urban shoreline park that the state sort of bought into. I think they were not accustomed to having urban shoreline parks.

08-00:07:33

Lage: We might as well go on with how you lobbied the state parks. That seems like a theme, too. Over the years, you were working with state parks.

08-00:07:41

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. Went up there a number of times. Under each administration. Dwight Steele was always—when we started Citizens for Eastshore State Park, that was our vision, and Dwight was just an outstanding environmentalist. He worked with the Sierra Club, with Save the Bay, and he knew a number of the people. He had also been working for the League to Save Lake Tahoe. He knew a number of people in Sacramento, and so, as I say, we went up under several different administrations to see the head of the resources agency, and the head of the park system, and see if we couldn't involve them.

08-00:08:33

Lage: Now, what kind of response —

08-00:08:35

McLaughlin: They were always very polite, and seemed to agree with us, and so on. But nothing very much happened.

08-00:08:43

Lage: Was there a difference between the different administrations? You must have started this with Huey Johnson.

08-00:08:48

McLaughlin: Oh, yes.

08-00:08:49

Lage: In Jerry Brown's administration.

08-00:08:49

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. We were there. I remember meeting—we met at the Nut Tree there, with Huey and a number of people.

08-00:08:55

Lage: Now, was Huey responsive?

08-00:08:56

McLaughlin: Oh, they all were.

08-00:08:58

Lage: I see.

08-00:08:59

McLaughlin: As I said, they were all very pleasant, responsive, and thought it was a great idea.

08-00:09:03

Lage: What about the Deukmejian? It sounds like under the Deukmejian Administration, things slowed down a bit.

08-00:09:08

McLaughlin: Yes. Very much so. From time to time, things just sort of collapsed, basically.

08-00:09:19

Lage: And then the Pete Wilson Administration—was Doug Wheeler more responsive to urban planning?

08-00:09:23

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. We had a big press release event down on the shoreline. Pete Wilson was running, then, for election, and he endorsed our idea for a state park.

08-00:09:36

Lage: Oh, he did?

08-00:09:37

McLaughlin: Oh, very enthusiastically. And we had a lot of press there, and we all spoke up, and so on. Then the next day, the Gulf War started, so we didn't get much coverage.

08-00:09:52

Lage: Too bad. Well, after he got elected, was he equally as interested?

08-00:09:57

McLaughlin: I think things sort of flattened out a bit. Some of these things take time, but persistence as well.

08-00:10:10

Lage: This might be the overall message of your career. Time and persistence.

08-00:10:19

McLaughlin: Determination. Never give up. And then it's always helpful to have good leadership along the way.

08-00:10:30

Lage: Well, let's talk some more about the leadership. Tell me more about Urban Care. Who were the Lepawskys?

08-00:10:37

McLaughlin: He was a professor of, history? [political science] Anyway, he was quite a distinguished professor, and she knew a very different variety of people, both at the university and in the community. Mary Jane Johnson was a black

woman from down the flats that was interested in it, and she knew a lot about the different people. And then Jack Kent was part of it.

08-00:11:06

Lage: I have names of Ariel Parkinson, Fred Weekes, Shirley Dean—they were all involved?

08-00:11:09

McLaughlin: Yes. They were all interested. And it was Urban Care that put on—largely, it was a Planning Commission meeting. We had rehearsed it beforehand—or Roz had—so, they were to make a decision. So, it came down—I think there were eleven people on the Planning Commission at that time. It came down ten to one.

08-00:11:46

Lage: In your favor.

08-00:11:47

McLaughlin: This was opposing the development.

08-00:11:49

Lage: Opposing development?

08-00:11:51

McLaughlin: Yes. And a wonderful mental picture of this fellow. He was the—I should remember his name—he was Canadian, I believe. Anyway, he was holding the flashlight, so Ariel could read her notes. We were all very friendly.

08-00:12:15

Lage: Oh, he was the one against?

08-00:12:16

McLaughlin: He was promoting. He was the promoter.

08-00:12:18

Lage: Promoting the development?

08-00:12:19

McLaughlin: Yes.

08-00:12:19

Lage: Oh, how wonderful. (laughter) Now, you also met—over the years—with a lot of people from Santa Fe Railroad?

08-00:12:28

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. There was a fellow by the name of Robert Walker—Bob Walker. He came to all the city council meetings. We were always very friendly. I always figured you might as well be friendly. You don't get anything by not being friendly. You might gain something by being friendly.

08-00:12:42

Lage: Could you ever convince them of the value of your vision?

08-00:12:46

McLaughlin: No. They had their agenda, and we had ours.

08-00:12:54

Lage: Okay. We're back on. I turned it off briefly. We were talking about your meetings with Santa Fe —

08-00:13:06

McLaughlin: Bob Walker.

08-00:13:07

Lage: — and Bob Walker.

08-00:13:08

McLaughlin: Then there were a number of meetings that were held here in my house. I don't know how many Saturday morning breakfasts I had with the top leadership of Santa Fe.

08-00:13:20

Lage: And several of you from—

08-00:13:22

McLaughlin: Yes. Oh, yes. Dwight Steele was always there.

08-00:13:25

Lage: Can you remember sort of the tenor of those meetings, and what interchanges went on?

08-00:13:31

McLaughlin: I probably have notes about it.

08-00:13:33

Lage: I hope those go to Bancroft.

08-00:13:34

McLaughlin: Oh, yes, they'll all go to the Bancroft. Then also some of the top people—I think Norman LaForce was among the two who, with Dwight—and I met once or twice with them, in their head offices in San Francisco. And this was with Bert Bangsberg, from—he was a local person. This was with the railroads. And then, as you know, Santa Fe Railroad had some changes. Catellus became its real estate arm. That was a made-up name. C-A for California, and Tellus was a god of lands, a Roman god of lands. I've heard that story. Anyway, those people were much different to deal with than the railroad people.

08-00:14:36

Lage: In what respect?

08-00:14:38

McLaughlin: Nelson Rising was the head of it. I think he maybe still is. Very cordial and easy to deal with.

08-00:14:44

Lage: Were they easier to deal with, are you saying?

08-00:14:46

McLaughlin: Well, about that same time, I think there was a bond issue, and we were able to get the shoreline park listed among those that were going to receive money from this bond issue—I think it was prop 70, probably. And so, sometimes when a corporation sees the money, then they become a willing seller. And that's what happened.

08-00:15:22

Lage: So, they didn't care whether they developed it or whatever, as long as they got some money for it.

08-00:15:28

McLaughlin: Well, I think they saw the handwriting on the wall. Emeryville didn't want the development. Albany didn't want the development. Berkeley didn't want the development. Then Assemblyman Tom Bates provided legislation, which made the East Bay Regional Park District be the lead agency for acquisition of the Santa Fe-Catellus properties.

08-00:16:01

Lage: Now what was the reason for that? Was that because—I mean, why East Bay Park, instead of the state parks?

08-00:16:16

McLaughlin: Maybe they were closer to it. They had a history of doing that sort of thing. Besides which, it was on their agenda to acquire shoreline parks.

08-00:16:33

Lage: Would that have been Hulet Hornbeck [for the regional parks], who —

08-00:16:35

McLaughlin: Yes. Hulet did a lot of that. Hulet was in charge of acquiring lands, yes, but Bob Doyle was the one who did the negotiations. I forget how much money it was, but it wasn't as much as they had wanted, I think, originally.

08-00:16:57

Lage: And it sounds like you were very involved in all of this.

08-00:17:01

McLaughlin: Oh, yes.

08-00:17:01

Lage: How did you keep up with what was going on —

08-00:17:05

McLaughlin: I was largely involved, well, with the group.

08-00:17:11

Lage: But it wasn't like Tom Bates passed the legislation, the East Bay Regional Park took over. You were there all along the way. You and your colleagues.

08-00:17:19

McLaughlin: There were several of us that went and spoke with Tom Bates, and put it out on the table, what was needed, and then he provided the legislation that enabled this to happen.

08-00:17:32

Lage: And then once it went to East Bay Parks, did you work with Bob Doyle and —

08-00:17:37

McLaughlin: No. That was their thing to do.

08-00:17:40

Lage: You were just aware of the fact that he was doing it.

08-00:17:41

McLaughlin: Yes.

08-00:17:44

Lage: Did you have people on the East Bay Parks board that were closely involved with CESP?

08-00:17:51

McLaughlin: Well, Mary Jefferds was, at that time, on the board. She was on the board for a number of years—twelve years. I ran for the park district one year.

08-00:17:58

Lage: Oh, I didn't know that. When was that? Oh, here I am, asking you for dates.

08-00:18:03

McLaughlin: Yes. Dates again. If you'd like to see, I've got a still of —

08-00:18:11

Lage: A poster. Yes.

08-00:18:13

McLaughlin: It says, "Parks need McLaughlin," or something like that.

08-00:18:16

Lage: And you didn't win?

08-00:18:18

McLaughlin: Well, the *Gazette* said I had won, and I was running against Paul Harbert, whom I knew —

08-00:18:25

Lage: Of Harbert's Sporting Goods.

08-00:18:26

McLaughlin: I'd nothing against Paul. I made a point of going into his store during this campaign. So, anyway, it was Jean and Will Siri who said, "Sylvia, you should run for the park district." And I said, "Well, I'll take it up with the family," and they said, "Oh, that's okay." And so, to make up for it, I tried to get them extra-specially nice food for dinner, because I'd have to go off and do the politicking. But I enjoyed the process a lot.

08-00:18:58

Lage: It must have been early on, if you were running against Paul Harbert.

08-00:19:04

McLaughlin: Yes, well, as I was starting to say, the *Gazette* said I had won, and then several days later, they said, well, no, that I hadn't won. That Paul had won the reelection. I was basically running against the system, because the system was that someone would resign, and then the Chamber of Commerce, or the Rotary Club, or Powers that Be would appoint somebody else, and then that person would run as an incumbent. So, anyway, it's probably just as well that I didn't win.

08-00:19:42

Lage: This must have been in the sixties. The *Gazette* wasn't around too long after that.

08-00:19:47

McLaughlin: Oh, it was the paper for a long, long time.

08-00:19:51

Lage: Yes, at that time. But didn't it demise in the seventies, or sometime soon after?

08-00:19:55

McLaughlin: Oh, I'm not sure when it was. But it was still around then. Even Byron Rumford said he noticed a whole bag of—he thought I should have a recount, because he had seen a bag of votes that he didn't think had been counted.

08-00:20:11

Lage: But you didn't push it.

08-00:20:12

McLaughlin: No, I thought it was too much trouble.

08-00:20:14

Lage: Well, that's a very interesting tale, and something I had not heard.

08-00:20:18

McLaughlin: So then, the next time around, when Mary Jefferds ran—I think I was probably the first woman to run —

08-00:20:25

Lage: It was sort of an old boys' club.

08-00:20:27

McLaughlin: Yes. And then, well, it was those far-sighted men that had originated the park district, which has been such a blessing to this whole area. So then Mary Jefferds won, and she was there for twelve years, and then she resigned because of her health. So then Jean Siri took her place, and she was there for quite a number of years.

08-00:20:53

Lage: So you always had someone on the board, who was vitally interested.

08-00:20:56

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. And now —

08-00:20:58

Lage: And maybe even more than one.

08-00:20:59

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. And now, I think we can talk to all of them, and they're all interested, and so on. So, yes, we've kept in close touch, and we always try to have someone representing the park district come to our CESP meetings. And so they report what they're doing, and so on. And then also, we monitor what's going on at their meetings. One of our members now, Ellen Barth, goes up to their board meetings, and then Norman LaForce and Arthur Feinstein go to what they call their roundtable, discussing issues with the staff and board members.

08-00:21:47

Lage: It's a complex process.

08-00:21:48

McLaughlin: It is. Then also, we still try to keep tabs on the State Parks Department, and the Resources Agency.

08-00:21:58

Lage: Do you work through the State Parks Commission at all, or did you, over the years?

08-00:22:02

McLaughlin: Well, we did, when they had the meeting right down here in Berkeley, and when they finally accepted the park design, and the whole idea. I think that was 2002—I should remember.

08-00:22:13

Lage: But more recently. When you were going up there and meeting with the state parks director over the years, did you also work with the commission?

08-00:22:20

McLaughlin: No, I didn't interact very much with the commission at that time.

08-00:22:25

Lage: It's hard to know exactly what their role is.

08-00:22:26

McLaughlin: Yes. It was mainly the director, and so on.

08-00:22:34

Lage: Any stories that come to mind about those meetings, or the director's response to the idea of this urban park?

08-00:22:42

McLaughlin: Well, there might be some among Dwight's notes, because he was the one that was really responsible for a lot of those meetings.

08-00:22:52

Lage: Now, his job, wasn't he a negotiator, a labor mediator? And he worked with the Maritime Association.

08-00:22:56

McLaughlin: Yes. Yes. So, he was an ideal person to—

08-00:23:00

Lage: Yes. Could you see that quality in him in the meeting?

08-00:23:07

McLaughlin: Yes. I mean, always very courteous, very firm, knew what his goals were, and had a plan to get there.

08-00:23:18

Lage: That helps.

08-00:23:19

McLaughlin: That's all important.

08-00:23:20

Lage: Yes. Really skilled people.

08-00:23:21

McLaughlin: He was just a fine gentleman. We really miss him.

08-00:23:25

Lage: Yes. Yes. I ran across a note that Santa Fe once sued on the grounds of conspiratorial taking of property.

08-00:23:39

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. I don't know how conspiratorial it was.

08-00:23:41

Lage: But apparently that's what they —

08-00:23:42

McLaughlin: Well, the taking is the legal term, right?

08-00:23:47

Lage: Yes. Were you party to that, at all? They weren't suing citizens?

08-00:23:52  
McLaughlin: No, no. Lawyers dealt with that, yes.

08-00:23:57  
Lage: They weren't suing the individual citizens? Or were they?

08-00:23:59  
McLaughlin: No. No.

08-00:24:00  
Lage: Were they suing the city?

08-00:24:05  
McLaughlin: I think so. I'll also say that we had to have faith in our lawyers.

08-00:24:19  
Lage: Do you remember things about the public trust aspects of the bay front?

08-00:24:23  
McLaughlin: Oh, that was so important. Very, very important.

08-00:24:27  
Lage: Did it affect these lands along the shoreline?

08-00:24:29  
McLaughlin: It certainly did. That decision came down in 1980. Let's see. Santa Fe and Murphy sued the city.

08-00:24:51  
Lage: Now, Murphy was—

08-00:24:51  
McLaughlin: He was a part owner of what's now known as Berkeley Meadow —

08-00:24:56  
Lage: He was not the George Murphy of senatorial fame?

08-00:24:49  
McLaughlin: No, different George Murphy. He was a developer from Hawaii, and he just happened to own a good portion of what is now known as the Berkeley Meadow. I think Roz Lepawsky originally added that term. We used to call it the Murphy property, even though a good part of it was owned by Santa Fe. Anyway, let's see—the state entered the lawsuit. That was—I think—in 1972, when the Planning Commission turned this down, and then Murphy and Santa Fe sued the city.

08-00:25:48  
Lage: On the grounds of their taking.

08-00:25:50  
McLaughlin: Yes. And then the state entered the suit, and broadened it to the borders of Berkeley. So then the State Supreme Court came down with a very important

decision in 1980, saying that the unfilled lands could not be filled because of the public trust—they belonged to all of us.

08-00:26:20

Lage: Ah. Regardless of who —

08-00:26:24

McLaughlin: Claimed them.

08-00:26:24

Lage: — claimed they owned it. I see.

08-00:26:25

McLaughlin: Yes. We referred to the Santa Fe as the purported owners. But they did say that the already filled lands—this did not apply to the already filled lands. However, some people always felt there was a bit of a cloud over that part of the decision.

08-00:26:51

Lage: Because?

08-00:26:53

McLaughlin: Just because there was. Because it had been title trust lands.

08-00:26:57

Lage: At one time.

08-00:26:58

McLaughlin: Yes. And so—well, you don't want to get into the current issues now, I guess.

08-00:27:05

Lage: Well, do. It's on your mind, and we may not get back to them. We may forget to get back to them.

08-00:27:11

McLaughlin: Well, a few years ago—I guess it was the Department of Defense—decided to decommission a number of the military bases, and there were ten of them around the San Francisco Bay. I was told one day that at Alameda, the developers were not paying any attention to the public trust issue, so I formed this little group called the Public Trust Group, and we tried to bring it to their attention, and I think that has helped. We also were active at Mare Island, at Treasure Island, in the Hunter's Point, and this all has to do with the title lands public trust issue. Nancy Strauch, with whom I was just meeting, she would speak on a weekly basis with the members of the State Lands Commission, particularly with Blake Stevenson, who was about to retire. Also this group keeps touch with the commission still, because they're very active, particularly with Treasure Island, and still with Alameda, and Hunter's Point. There's also Hamilton Air Force Base. So—Let's see, where were we?

08-00:28:55

Lage: We were talking about that decision where already filled lands were not part of the public trust.

08-00:28:58

McLaughlin: Yes. But then I was talking about the current applications. Oh, I know what I was talking about. It was the fact that we went up to meet with the new members of the commission. They are appointed by —

08-00:29:33

Lage: The State Lands Commission.

08-00:29:35

McLaughlin: State Lands Commission is appointed by the governor. On it are the lieutenant governor, the state controller, I believe, and the director of finance. I was only able to go to the last one, which was an appointment with John Garamendi, the lieutenant governor, with his aide, Brian—I forget his last name. Anyway, he was extremely interested, and very helpful, and very cordial. So, they've since made some very good decisions.

08-00:30:21

Lage: Under Garamendi?

08-00:30:22

McLaughlin: Yes. Under this current State Lands Commission.

08-00:30:30

Lage: About these different areas you've just described—the former military bases —

08-00:30:34

McLaughlin: Well, one big decision, I think, actually was in San Diego. One has to do with Chevron and their long wharf lease and so on. They objected to giving access to a trail, and that's still in limbo. Then there was another one that affected the Bay Area, that I'll probably think of in a minute. So, I wrote a note to John Garamendi, and I thanked him for this decision, with copies to the director of the commission, and I got back a very nice letter, handwritten letter, from the lieutenant governor. I thought that was pretty nice.

08-00:31:26

Lage: Yes. Well, it seems like this is part of your mode of operating also, to thank people for good things.

08-00:31:32

McLaughlin: It's very important. Very, very important. I think any people in the political field will tell you that.

08-00:31:42

Lage: Right. You don't just write when you're mad.

08-00:31:44

McLaughlin: No—I'll never forget. My father was in public service, as he called it, in Denver. And when he had a note—this is a reason why I've felt it's so important—when he had a note from someone thanking him, he was actually so touched that it made a big impression on me, that it's so important to thank people when they do something that you approve of.

08-00:32:16

Lage: Well, that's maybe one of the secrets of your success.

08-00:32:24

McLaughlin: I can remember a lot of times telling Kay and Esther, "We must write them and thank them."

08-00:32:28

Lage: That seems very womanly also.

08-00:32:32

McLaughlin: Well, I hadn't thought about that.

08-00:32:35

Lage: Well, the women are the ones that write and thank for the nice social engagement, or whatever.

08-00:32:42

McLaughlin: That's true. That's true. But anyone can.

08-00:32:46

Lage: Sure. Do you kind of challenge—or, do you and your cohorts—challenge this State Supreme Court ruling that said the already filled lands are not part of the public trust?

08-00:33:00

McLaughlin: No. No.

08-00:33:00

Lage: I mean, in a way, that could be seen as a negative thing.

08-00:33:01

McLaughlin: No. It's just been left as is. But a lot of people refer to that case, that Berkeley case.

08-00:33:09

Lage: But you kind of wonder why just because they've been filled, we've lost them as public trust.

08-00:33:14

McLaughlin: Well, we had a substantial victory in that case, so.

08-00:33:19

Lage: So, you were happy to get half the loaf.

08-00:33:22

McLaughlin: There were some excellent people in the Supreme Court at that time. Excellent people in the AG's office. We were very lucky with all of this. A lot of luck.

08-00:33:34

Lage: That was 1980, so that was during the Jerry Brown administration, and when you talk about the Supreme Court, you must have had some of his appointees.

08-00:33:46

McLaughlin: I don't think so. I don't think so.

08-00:33:47

Lage: No? Am I off on my dates? I think it was. If it was 1980. Deukmejian came in in '82, and he kind of changed the Supreme Court.

08-00:34:03

McLaughlin: Oh. Well, maybe you're right.

08-00:34:09

Lage: So, tidelands still subject to tidal action are protected by the public trust. That's the way I've written down that decision. Tidelands still subject to tidal action are protected by the public trust.

08-00:34:24

McLaughlin: Yes. Yes.

08-00:34:25

Lage: So what did that affect along the shoreline? Did it affect part of that Berkeley waterfront?

08-00:34:31

McLaughlin: Oh, yes.

08-00:34:32

Lage: Anything that hadn't been filled.

08-00:34:35

McLaughlin: Well, see, the original land for the city was to fill all that open water. And then Santa Fe owned, or claimed they owned—purported to own—a goodly portion of it. So they were prohibited from filling that.

Another very big case which used the public trust was in the South Bay. This [the Westbay Community Associates] was a consortium of David Rockefeller, Ideal Cement Company, the Crocker Land Company, and Lazard Frères [an investment banking company]. They wanted to fill a large portion of the South Bay. It started in a small way in the city of San Mateo, and the state entered for the case, again, and expanded it. And again because of the public trust—I think Pete McCloskey was involved in that and various other outstanding lawyers—and so the public trust was a big issue that prevented them from filling that huge area.

08-00:35:44

Lage: That was an amazing, bold idea. They would scrape off San Bruno Mountain and dump it into the bay.

08-00:35:48

McLaughlin: Yes. The top of the mountain, oh, yes. Then they had Bechtel involved, and they were going to have a—what do you call it—a conveyor belt that would take the dirt from the top of the mountain across the freeway into the bay. They had plans for it. So, we happened to know at that time—he was a good friend of Don's and mine—the executive vice president of Kaiser. Kaiser was involved in this, too. So I went up to see him one day.

08-00:36:24

Lage: Now, who was it?

08-00:36:27

McLaughlin: His name was Wallace McGregor. He actually painted that picture [indicates painting]. That was from their home in Tiburon. And then he painted another one of my husband. So I just told him, they better not do anything of that sort. There would be a big problem. They would have a big problem.

08-00:36:49

Lage: And how did he respond to that? Was that just a friendly jibe, or did you really —

08-00:36:54

McLaughlin: I meant it very seriously. And he realized that I did. He realized I had all these people behind me, I guess.

08-00:37:02

Lage: Yes. So, how did he react? Did Kaiser make a change in their —

08-00:37:07

McLaughlin: Well, then, they were beaten in the courts.

08-00:37:11

Lage: I see. So, they didn't —

08-00:37:13

McLaughlin: They had the highest paid lobbyist in Sacramento. When we were trying to get BCDC passed as a permanent agency in 1969, that was when we sent busloads of people to the hearings, and cartons of mail to the legislators. So, we had the power of public opinion. And I think that's what made it happen.

08-00:37:40

Lage: It really is an inspiring story that we kind of need to hear today. You know, people can make a difference, because we sort of forget that. Maybe you don't.

08-00:37:51

McLaughlin: Well, as I always say, one person can make a difference, a group of people can make an even greater difference, and the larger groups of people can make a big difference.

08-00:38:00

Lage: Yes. And one of the things that your groups were so good at was mobilizing people, it seems.

08-00:38:08

McLaughlin: Well, we just sort of did what we thought was sensible to do to achieve our goals.

08-00:38:14

Lage: But of course it captured their imagination, too—people's imagination.

08-00:38:18

McLaughlin: Yes. I mean, San Francisco Bay was something that people who live around here can see. But what really impressed me was the people that didn't see it who became members of Save the Bay because it meant something to them, just to know it was there. Like so many people feel it's important to save Lake Tahoe, because it's very important to us all. And so we all belong to the League to Save Lake Tahoe.

08-00:38:50

Lage: Whether or not you go to Lake Tahoe all the time.

08-00:38:52

McLaughlin: Sure. Exactly. And we had members in Save the Bay from just about every state in the union, plus several foreign countries.

08-00:39:01

Lage: Really?

08-00:39:02

McLaughlin: Yes.

08-00:39:03

Lage: Something like Save the Redwoods, where the redwoods became an iconic —

08-00:39:09

McLaughlin: You might say that, yes.

08-00:39:10

Lage: — value, in some ways, and people from the East Coast joined.

08-00:39:15

McLaughlin: Yes, actually, they were very generous. They gave us their membership list, and so some of the members that came from the East Coast were originally Save the Redwoods League members, too. So, we did a little list exchanging sometimes.

08-00:39:32

Lage: The bay seems different, because it's grittier—it's right in the middle of all the teeming life of the city, whereas the redwoods was kind of this vision of being away from it all, and the giants. So it seems like a real change in tone to me, even to think of putting a park right alongside a freeway.

08-00:39:58

McLaughlin: Well, it's all we had. We met up with the state park people, and somebody just said, "Well, it's just a dump." I said, "Well, it's our dump." And we want to have it be our park. So I think they realized then it was really important to us, and no matter whether it was garbage underneath or what. But I was thinking of current issues, now, related to that.

08-00:40:52

Lage: Related to public trust?

08-00:40:53

McLaughlin: No. Related to the urban park idea. Well, that'll come back to me. My mind gets cluttered.

08-00:41:07

Lage: I probably clutter it by interfering with you.

08-00:41:12

McLaughlin: So, what were we talking about, before?

08-00:41:13

Lage: Well, we're talking about lots of different things, really. That's okay. We don't have to have a linear story here, as long as the different concepts come out. We were talking about public trust, and public trust access.

08-00:41:27

McLaughlin: Public trust, yes. And then the urban park idea.

08-00:41:32

Lage: The Meadow seemed to be very important. The Meadow comes up over and again in Norman LaForce's history<sup>3</sup>.

08-00:41:41

McLaughlin: Well, that was where they had all the building proposals, and development proposals, and so on.

08-00:41:51

Lage: That's where Murphy wanted to put the regional shopping center.

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<sup>3</sup> Norman LaForce, *Creating the Eastshore State Park: An Activist History*, 2002.

08-00:41:55

McLaughlin: It was mostly Santa Fe. Santa Fe bought out Murphy, so at that time it was just Santa Fe.

08-00:42:22

Lage: It sounds like you had various—well, first of all, you had several cities that you had to deal with, and then you had the different city administrations. It sounds like—

08-00:42:30

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. We went to planning commission meetings, and city council meetings in Oakland, Emeryville, Berkeley, Albany, Richmond.

08-00:42:43

Lage: Did you also get involved in elections for city council?

08-00:42:47

McLaughlin: Probably, yes.

08-00:42:50

Lage: Supporting certain members? Because there were political shifts.

08-00:42:53

McLaughlin: Oh, yes.

08-00:42:54

Lage: I noticed that an election in '84 in Berkeley seemed important. The BCA won, and they won with a pro-park group.

08-00:43:08

McLaughlin: Yes, that was quite a change. Well, before that, it was very much of a businessmen's council when we first started Save the Bay, but they came to see the light, finally.

08-00:43:22

Lage: Well, businessmen, but you mentioned Jack Kent was on it.

08-00:43:27

McLaughlin: Yes, he was the one other voice, I guess.

08-00:43:30

Lage: Well, that BCA—I've forgotten the name of the other group—

08-00:43:35

McLaughlin: All the alphabet soup.

08-00:43:37

Lage: Yes. That was quite divisive in Berkeley.

08-00:43:41

McLaughlin: Yes, we don't have Republicans and Democrats in Berkeley. It's the BCA, and then the BDA—Berkeley Democratic Association. And various other ones.

08-00:43:54  
Lage: And would Save the Bay or CESP take sides in elections like that?

08-00:44:00  
McLaughlin: Oh, no. I was always of the opinion that you should talk to everyone, no matter who is running for what group. I felt it was important that they all know what our goals were.

08-00:44:18  
Lage: And keep friendly with both.

08-00:44:19  
McLaughlin: Yes. Because you didn't know who was going to be —

08-00:44:22  
Lage: Oh, it's ABC, was the other group—ABC. BCA and ABC. Gus Newport, now he was BCA, and he was mayor for a number of years.

08-00:44:34  
McLaughlin: Oh, always very cordial.

08-00:44:35  
Lage: Was he supportive of the park idea?

08-00:44:37  
McLaughlin: Oh, yes.

08-00:44:38  
Lage: Or did you have to sort of —

08-00:44:38  
McLaughlin: Yes. No, no. He was very supportive.

08-00:44:40  
Lage: Good. And then City Manager Dan Boggan's name comes up.

08-00:44:45  
McLaughlin: Oh, yes. He was an interesting person.

08-00:44:48  
Lage: Tell me about his point of view.

08-00:44:50  
McLaughlin: You know, he's now the aide to Dellums.

08-00:44:54  
Lage: Oh, he is?

08-00:44:55  
McLaughlin: Yes.

08-00:44:55  
Lage: And before that, he was on campus.

08-00:44:58

McLaughlin: Yes.

08-00:44:59

Lage: As—what was he?—administrative vice chancellor, or something.

08-00:45:05

McLaughlin: And then he went, I think, to Washington.

08-00:45:06

Lage: Oh, and now he's back with Dellums. That's interesting.

08-00:45:10

McLaughlin: Well, I remember one meeting—is it finished?

08-00:45:18

Lage: It's just coming towards the end.

08-00:45:20

McLaughlin: All right. I'll be quick. One meeting, he held up Berkeley's master plan, and he said, "This doesn't mean anything." And so that sort of got to some of us, and we argued vehemently that it did, indeed.

08-00:45:37

Lage: Because he wanted to make a deal with —

08-00:45:39

McLaughlin: I've always been friendly with him, though. Then he later was—I worked with him when he was with the university under Chang-Lin Tien.

08-00:45:50

Lage: On what issues did you work with him at the university?

08-00:45:53

McLaughlin: Well, I can remember a breakfast meeting here, and he was among those present. Can't remember what the issue was. (laughter)

08-00:46:00

Lage: One of the many.

08-00:46:01

McLaughlin: One of those issues.

08-00:46:02

Lage: Okay. I'm going to stop this, because it's flashing, here.

[End Audio File 8 mclaughlin\_sylvia8\_04-20-07.mp3]

[Begin Audio File 9 mclaughlin\_sylvia9\_04-20-07.mp3]

09-00:00:03  
Lage: We're looking at the little list that I sent to you about planning—now we are recording—planning this session today, which you didn't get.

09-00:00:33  
McLaughlin: Goodness.

09-00:00:35  
Lage: All those things. (laughter) okay. Well, we'll get to them all eventually. So, we're looking at the letterhead here for Citizens for Eastshore Park. And that's a fairly current one? Except Dwight Steele has died.

09-00:00:59  
McLaughlin: He died 2002.

09-00:00:59  
Lage: It's not too current then.

09-00:01:05  
McLaughlin: It's relatively...

09-00:01:08  
Lage: Pretty stable leadership group, it looks like.

09-00:01:13  
McLaughlin: Yes. (pause) He declined to be on.

09-00:01:33  
Lage: Oh, who's that?

09-00:01:35  
McLaughlin: Noel Nellis. He was too busy.

09-00:01:46  
Lage: Do you have formal meetings of your board?

09-00:01:48  
McLaughlin: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. And we have sort of executive sessions. Because our meetings are open, so when I want it just to be the board, and discuss things . . . And there's our mission, there.

09-00:02:04  
Lage: And Tom Bates is a vice president.

09-00:02:08  
McLaughlin: Who?

09-00:02:10  
Lage: Tom Bates.

09-00:02:10  
McLaughlin: Well, he never comes to meetings, but he likes to be on the list.

09-00:02:14

Lage: Yes. Well, still, to have the mayor of Berkeley as your vice president must count for something. Okay, the mission: "To preserve and enhance the natural resources and recreational and educational opportunities of the Eastshore of San Francisco Bay, creating a necklace of shoreline parks from the Oakland Estuary to the Carquinez Straits." Beautiful. You don't go down to the southeast shore?

09-00:02:42

McLaughlin: Pardon me?

09-00:02:43

Lage: You don't go down to the southeast shore—San Leandro, and —

09-00:02:46

McLaughlin: Well, this is enough for now.

09-00:02:47

Lage: This is enough. But that's pretty broad—Oakland Estuary to the Carquinez Straits.

09-00:02:51

McLaughlin: Yes. We're personally very interested in the Oak to Ninth issue.

09-00:02:58

Lage: Oak to Ninth—tell me what that is.

09-00:03:01

McLaughlin: Well, that's a whole different subject. A big proposal to develop on the shoreline, and again, Waterfront Action is taking a principal advocacy role there, and again, it has to do with the public trust, tidelands trust.

09-00:03:21

Lage: Is that Port of Oakland?

09-00:03:23

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. It's right on an estuary there. And then we're in North Oakland, through all the East Bay cities. We've now been participating in the planning process in Albany, because there was a big proposal for a development there, next to the race track, and now there might be an opportunity, because the citizens around Dixon decided they did not want to have the race track there.

09-00:04:02

Lage: Citizens what? I missed one —

09-00:04:03

McLaughlin: Well, Magna Corporation that owns the race track—it's a Canadian corporation. They were going to build another big race track at Dixon.

09-00:04:11

Lage: Oh, at Dixon.

09-00:04:12

McLaughlin: After Bay Meadows shut down. They had a lot of land up there. But then a citizens' group formed, and got it on the ballot, and they voted it down. So, now there's a question as to how much longer they're going to stay in Albany, if they're going to stay, what they want to do, so on. In other areas, this Magna Corporation has been putting developments, shopping malls, and so on, and slot machines in by the racehorses.

09-00:04:49

Lage: Do they connect with Indian gaming?

09-00:04:52

McLaughlin: No. Not so far.

09-00:04:54

Lage: Because how can you put slot machines? I thought—

09-00:05:00

McLaughlin: You get legislation that permits it. And they were promoting this legislation that did not pass.

09-00:05:09

Lage: Albany seems to have been a little bit more difficult city than Berkeley. Is that right?

09-00:05:14

McLaughlin: Well, their problem is they need the revenue that they are getting, so there needs to be some development there, but it does not need to be right on the shoreline.

09-00:05:26

Lage: They need the revenue because they don't have as much commerce as Berkeley, or —

09-00:05:30

McLaughlin: Yes. Well, they've become accustomed to it.

09-00:05:35

Lage: The racetrack is an important part of their income.

09-00:05:37

McLaughlin: Yes. However, there's less and less that comes from the racetrack. People find other ways to gamble. Just at home, do it on the Internet, I guess, or however.

09-00:05:47

Lage: So, what is your alternative? You seem to recognize that they need the income, the revenue. Where would you say the development should go? Or is that a position you—

09-00:05:59

McLaughlin: Yes. There probably should be some development, but we haven't really determined how much or exactly where, but probably closer back towards the freeway, away from the actual shoreline. That should be parks.

09-00:06:13

Lage: Like where they put Target? I mean, would you want to see it on the inland side of the freeway?

09-00:06:20

McLaughlin: Not necessarily. It could be on the other side of the freeway. Well, like the Berkeley Marriott, you know. Whatever it's called now—Doubletree.

09-00:06:31

Lage: What about housing in that area? Would that be something that you would —

09-00:06:37

McLaughlin: Again, that's up to the citizens of Albany, because if you have housing, then you have to provide all the services—I mean, schools, fire, police, so on. So maybe it isn't economically advantageous. So you have to weigh all those things. So we're watching that. And it's at Point Molate where the real threat is for an Indian casino, and the shopping malls, and housing.

09-00:07:05

Lage: Now, what city is Point Molate in?

09-00:07:07

McLaughlin: Richmond.

09-00:07:08

Lage: In Richmond. Another city that probably needs the revenue badly.

09-00:07:11

McLaughlin: Exactly. Chevron offered them \$50 million, but they preferred to go with the promises of the developer.

09-00:07:23

Lage: Now, what did Chevron offer? To buy that land, or —

09-00:07:28

McLaughlin: To keep it as is. [tape interruption]

09-00:07:35

Lage: We were talking about Albany, and their need for revenue, and Point Molate. The gaming.

09-00:07:50

McLaughlin: The city of Richmond. Right now, we're very much concerned with Richmond, because Richmond is going through the process of updating their general plan, and so there's actually sort of a strategy meeting Monday night to try to see if we can persuade the—there are a lot of people involved in this.

Now we're partnering with what is known as the North Richmond Shoreline Open Space Alliance, and these are the people that live out there in Parchester Village and some of the other areas, that want to have the shoreline zone, as they call it, to be for parks and open space. And a lot of it is marsh areas, and others could be usable by people. And in back of that would be a commercial housing zone, because—again, as you were saying—those people really do need jobs, and they need housing, and so on.

09-00:09:17

Lage: But keep the shoreline free of development.

09-00:09:19

McLaughlin: Yes. And the park district is interested in acquiring some of that land, and so on. But there's also a threat from development.

09-00:09:30

Lage: And what was Chevron planning? You said Chevron offered \$50 million.

09-00:09:36

McLaughlin: Well, it was just sort of a blanket offer, but they wanted —

09-00:09:39

Lage: For that land.

09-00:09:40

McLaughlin: They wanted to keep Point Molate as is, and not have development out there.

09-00:09:45

Lage: Oh, they did.

09-00:09:45

McLaughlin: Yes.

09-00:09:45

Lage: For their own —

09-00:09:47

McLaughlin: Well, as security, they say.

09-00:09:49

Lage: That makes sense. I would think that would be an important issue.

09-00:09:51

McLaughlin: Yes. Because it's right next to their refinery.

09-00:09:57

Lage: I would think it would even be questionable whether you should build homes out there.

09-00:10:01

McLaughlin: You should go out there sometime. It's just on the north side of the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge. You go out there on what's called Western Road —

09-00:10:05

Lage: I have never gone up there and walked around. I'm going to. And then, are there places to walk?

09-00:10:11

McLaughlin: There are a lot of historical places, and there's another thought to have a sort of a heritage historical corridor, going from the Rosie the Riveter National Park to, then, there's a whaling station on this point in San Pablo, and then there's a big powderworks in Point Pinole, various other things like that.

09-00:10:40

Lage: So, it could be a shoreline park with a historical shoreline trail.

09-00:10:43

McLaughlin: Yes. Yes. And then of course the Bay Trail is going through that, too. And there's a group called TRAC—that's Trails for Richmond Action Committee. They're doing a great job trying to get the Bay Trail connected close to the shoreline. And that's when they were having a little disagreement with Chevron. And again, State Lands Commission has stepped into that. It hasn't quite yet been finally worked out.

09-00:11:35

Lage: It's interesting to me how many different groups are involved.

09-00:11:40

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. I have to get you one of these from the North Richmond Shoreline Alliance. They have a lot of groups in that coalition there. Coalitions, because it's important too. As we were saying, one person can make a difference, but if you have a whole group, and groups of people, it's more impressive.

09-00:12:05

Lage: Is Citizens for an Eastshore Park just one of those groups, or is it more of a —

09-00:12:10

McLaughlin: No, we're just one of them.

09-00:12:12

Lage: Just one. It's not that you bring all these—sure. Now, we're looking at the North Richmond Shoreline Open Space Alliance.

09-00:12:20

McLaughlin: And it's run by this fellow—this black fellow from Parchester Village, Whitney Dotson. He's also on our CESP board, and then also Henry Clark, who—I think he has a PhD, Dr. Henry Clark—has been active for many years as head of the Contra Costa Toxics Coalition.

09-00:12:46

Lage: And he's involved in this also.

09-00:12:47

McLaughlin: Oh, yes.

09-00:12:48

Lage: So, this is a very broad interest group. It sounds like it spans different races, and people interested in —

09-00:12:53

McLaughlin: And there are all these different councils in Richmond, neighborhood councils that are involved. And they really want to have the shoreline be for their own enjoyment.

09-00:13:08

Lage: Right. And free of toxics, which —

09-00:13:10

McLaughlin: Oh, yes.

09-00:13:11

Lage: That is a problem along some areas there, isn't it?

09-00:13:13

McLaughlin: It is.

09-00:13:14

Lage: I mean, you mentioned the powder—what was it, a gunpowder plant, or something?

09-00:13:19

McLaughlin: Yes. And there was originally a powder plant on the Albany waterfront as well. I think there was one that blew up in San Francisco, so they brought it over here.

09-00:13:33

Lage: Well, is that a problem with the park planning? What to do with those toxics?

09-00:13:38

McLaughlin: Oh, always.

09-00:13:39

Lage: Yes. That must add to the cost of developing a park, and —

09-00:13:48

McLaughlin: Another big issue down here—it's called Campus Bay, and also the Zeneca property. That's where the Richmond Field Station of the university is. A lot of toxics there, and also a lot of would-be users in the area, so that's another area of the shoreline that's in limbo. And probably with the rising sea level, it'll be a different story.

09-00:14:15

Lage: Yes. Is that something that you talk about? Because your whole park might be submerged.

09-00:14:21

McLaughlin: Well, therefore it's much better to have it be parks, rather than houses.

09-00:14:23

Lage: That's true. I guess it's one more argument for not developing.

09-00:14:28

McLaughlin: Could be.

09-00:14:30

Lage: Do these various groups that come together over these issues have a common vision, or do they have a lot of tension at various times?

09-00:14:40

McLaughlin: We're trying to have it be a common vision, yes.

09-00:14:43

Lage: You don't find that they break apart over certain issues.

09-00:14:47

McLaughlin: Oh, no.

09-00:14:47

Lage: Has there been any particular point where there's been a divisive —

09-00:14:53

McLaughlin: Well, you always have certain details that you're not in total agreement about, but most of these organizations arrive at consensus opinions. I don't agree over every little detail that CESP puts forth, but if that's where the majority wants, I'll go with it. Although, if you feel strongly enough about it, well, you voice your opinion, naturally. Maybe you can change some other opinions.

09-00:15:38

Lage: When you think of this long involvement with saving the bay and making a park, do you think of it as a radical movement, or a conservative movement, or somewhere in between? Do you ever think in those terms?

09-00:15:55

McLaughlin: I never really thought in those terms.

09-00:16:00

Lage: Do you think of it as an extension of the kinds of things your father was doing, or something different?

09-00:16:09

McLaughlin: Well, I may have gotten some of that from osmosis. No, I've always been more focused on our particular goals, and what name they give to it didn't sort of enter into the picture. Others have, I guess, called it whatever they want.

09-00:16:35

Lage: Well, I'm saying that because the book that we were talking about—Dick Walker's book—I don't want to misconstrue it for the historical record, because I've only had it one day, and I looked at it very briefly. But he does want to acknowledge that what people have been doing with preserving the

bay—even though it tends to be run, or has been in the past, by elites—the university crowd, the better-off—it challenges the property rights of capitalist organizations. It has a certain radical component to it.<sup>4</sup>

09-00:17:25

McLaughlin: I suppose that's one way of looking at it.

09-00:17:27

Lage: Right. And as you described, at least at the present time, it's broader than just elites. It involves people in the neighborhoods in Richmond, and all that.

09-00:17:36

McLaughlin: Oh, I should say so. Yes. And we always tried to involve all different kinds of people. We may have been those fortunate enough to have the leisure to do this, but I think women did in those days, more so than now. I don't know if we could have achieved what we did in today's world, because so many women are in the workforce, and it was largely the women that went up to Sacramento. It would be almost sort of amusing, sometimes. We'd go to hearings, and all the men and would-be developers would be on one side, and the women who preferred to have parks and open spaces, the bay, were on the other side.

09-00:18:30

Lage: That's interesting. You were quite aware of it. And were the men?

09-00:18:37

McLaughlin: Well, you couldn't help but notice.

09-00:18:39

Lage: Did the men—were they aware of it also?

09-00:18:42

McLaughlin: I don't know. Wasn't important in those days.

09-00:18:47

Lage: But, now it seems very mixed gender.

09-00:18:51

McLaughlin: Yes. But now you have a lot of women lawyers, a lot more professional women, as well.

09-00:19:02

Lage: The activity in your organization doesn't seem to have suffered by women not having as much free time. You have very active membership—it sounds like—and readership.

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<sup>4</sup> Richard A. Walker, *The City in the Country: The Greening of the San Francisco Bay Area* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007).

- 09-00:19:13  
McLaughlin: In the Save the Bay, or in CESP?
- 09-00:19:15  
Lage: In CESP, I'm thinking of right now.
- 09-00:19:19  
McLaughlin: They're mostly the board members, are the ones that are actively involved.
- 09-00:19:25  
Lage: What age group are the board members?
- 09-00:19:31  
McLaughlin: Various different ages. From me on down.
- 09-00:19:35  
Lage: But you do have some younger ones?
- 09-00:19:37  
McLaughlin: Yes. I think we have a broad spread.
- 09-00:19:45  
Lage: So this isn't just a coalition of the retired.
- 09-00:19:48  
McLaughlin: No. No.
- 09-00:19:50  
Lage: Because you wonder who does have time in this very busy world.
- 09-00:19:53  
McLaughlin: That's right. Well, people seem to make time for it, things they believe in. Personally, I've never been so busy as I am right now.
- 09-00:20:04  
Lage: I can tell. I don't know if I've asked you this. I think I may have. But do you recall when the idea of protecting and restoring the wetlands came in. I mean, I don't think that was your —
- 09-00:20:19  
McLaughlin: It wasn't the original thought, no. Our original thought was saving the bay from being filled, and providing public access. The idea of wetlands restoration did come in some years later, I believe.
- 09-00:20:35  
Lage: From scientists? Where did it—?
- 09-00:20:43  
McLaughlin: I think it was those that were interested in the wildlife, and the birds, and the Audubon, and so on. Gradually, it became more of a project for organizations to become involved with.

09-00:21:02  
Lage: It seems to have been in the surrounding —

09-00:21:07  
McLaughlin: Well, there was a movement of restoring the creeks, as well, which I think is just wonderful, to have all these volunteers involved in saving the creeks, and restoring the creeks, and restoring the marshes.

09-00:21:23  
Lage: And that, of course, feeds to the bay, and makes a difference.

09-00:21:26  
McLaughlin: Surely, yes.

09-00:21:26  
Lage: Have you been involved with those organizations? I mean, have you joined them?

09-00:21:30  
McLaughlin: Well, I support a number of them. I send them my \$5.00, or whatever.

09-00:21:34  
Lage: Right. But it's not your thing.

09-00:21:37  
McLaughlin: I only have so much time. I go to the meetings, once in a while—the Urban Creeks Council, groups like that.

09-00:21:50  
Lage: When the park was finally achieved, then there was a planning process.

09-00:21:55  
McLaughlin: Yes.

09-00:21:57  
Lage: And that was done by professional planners?

09-00:21:58  
McLaughlin: Yes.

09-00:22:00  
Lage: Do you have some thoughts on that process?

09-00:22:03  
McLaughlin: Well, yes. That could be a whole different story.

09-00:22:06  
Lage: Would you like to start next time with that?

09-00:22:08  
McLaughlin: Yes, and then I can have some material for you.

09-00:22:10

Lage:

That's sort of what I thought—we would end with getting the park, and then talk about planning it. Because that sounds like it brought up new —

09-00:22:18

McLaughlin:

Yes, the planning took quite a while, and then the implementation has barely begun, and there's always the question of funding. So, all those are different parts of the same issue.

09-00:22:30

Lage:

This is why you still have Citizens for Eastshore Park. Well, let's save the planning process for next time. And we'll start there.

09-00:22:41

McLaughlin:

Yes, then I can—I have lots of documentation, visuals. It's really helpful to know what's coming up, so I can be a little better prepared.

[End Audio File 9 mclaughlin\_sylvia9\_04-20-07.mp3]

**End of Interview 5**

**Interview # 6: May 4, 2007**

[Begin Audio File 10 mclaughlin\_sylvia10\_05-04-07.mp3]

10-00:00:00

Lage: All right. We are recording, and today is May 4, 2007, and I think this is interview six with Sylvia McLaughlin. Last time, we got the Eastshore Park established, and we were going to talk today about the process of planning for the park—which sounded very interesting—and implementing it, and funding it. But planning came first. So, I'd like to know your involvement in the planning process, and what you thought about it. So, start out with —

10-00:00:41

McLaughlin: One thing, I think before we get into that, I think it's important to know the various agencies that were involved. The state parks, Coastal Conservancy, East Bay Regional Park District—they were the principal ones. It seems to me there's one more I'm leaving out. And so any professional planners were responsible—essentially—to a consortium, a team. Those were the principal ones. And then we worked with not only those agencies, but also with the planners whom they selected: Wallace, Roberts & Todd, and there was a fellow by the name of Steve Hammond who was in charge.

10-00:01:49

Lage: Now, was Wallace, Roberts & Todd a company?

10-00:01:53

McLaughlin: Oh, it's a national firm, and actually it was—I think—started by Ian McHarg, who was a very famous professor at the University of Pennsylvania, who wrote the book *Designing with Nature*.

10-00:02:16

Lage: Was choice of firm an issue?

10-00:02:20

McLaughlin: Oh, I don't think so. Oh, we didn't have anything to do with it. We had nothing to do with that.

10-00:02:25

Lage: But it's interesting—they went outside the Bay Area to pick —

10-00:02:28

McLaughlin: There's an office in San Francisco. It's a national firm. It's known as WRT. The plan received an award from the American Planning Association and also from the Waterfront Center. I happened to be on the jury at that time, but I was reluctant to push it too much. But they had done an excellent application for the award, and so they won it in conjunction with the Oakland Waterfront planning, the trail, which was done by EDAW. Well, E-D-A-W.

10-00:03:27

Lage: The trail along the port of Oakland, and —

10-00:03:29

McLaughlin: Yes. EDAW, again, is a nationally known planning firm. Also has a San Francisco office. However, it's been rather frustrating, because I think the plan was completed in 2002. We finally dedicated the park in 2006.

10-00:03:54

Lage: It's slow, isn't it?

10-00:03:58

McLaughlin: They had enough money for the plan, but there's been a dearth of funding to implement the plan, and it still looks like a little linear vacant lot, as far as I'm concerned.

10-00:04:12

Lage: But let's talk about the planning. I read an account by Don Neuwirth. Now, was Don Neuwirth one of the planners?

10-00:04:17

McLaughlin: Yes, he was sort of a coordinator.

10-00:04:21

Lage: Working for WRT?

10-00:04:25

McLaughlin: No, he was working—he was kind of in the middle.

10-00:04:28

Lage: Oh. He was a coordinator for the agencies?

10-00:04:33

McLaughlin: I think so, yes.

10-00:04:35

Lage: Well, he described the process of public hearings, and hearing all the voices that wanted a stake.

10-00:04:43

McLaughlin: Yes. At one hearing, we were having four hundred people. Yes. There were a lot of meetings. They did go to the community—I should say communities.

10-00:04:57

Lage: Now, tell me about that—the idea of communities.

10-00:05:01

McLaughlin: Well, they said they wanted the input from the citizens. And of course, as you noted, there were many different groups. The ball fields people were always very vocal at these meetings. At one hearing, why, they had all their little kids in baseball outfits. And we broke up and sat at different tables—they had ball field people at every table.

10-00:05:34

Lage: So, they wanted sports facilities. Little league, and —

10-00:05:37

McLaughlin: Yes. Because there was a dearth of sports facilities in the East Bay, and this is very popular with youngsters, and also with women playing soccer, and whatever else. Rugby—I don't know if the women play rugby.

10-00:05:57

Lage: Now, had they been a voice as you were trying to get the park established? Had they played a role in CESP or any of the other groups to establish the park?

10-00:06:06

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. Yes.

10-00:06:08

Lage: So, they were interested from early on.

10-00:06:10

McLaughlin: Yes. And then there were the dog people.

10-00:06:13

Lage: Tell me about the dog people.

10-00:06:15

McLaughlin: They were also very vocal. I think they publish a newsletter called ARF, or BARF, or something. ARF. And they want to have off-leash spaces for their dogs. This is an ongoing discussion with Crissy Field [in Golden Gate National Recreation Area] also. According to the state parks, they do not permit dogs off-leash in state parks; however, the regional park district does. So some of these areas want to stay with the regional park district, you see. And there's still a big issue in Albany about the off-leash dogs.

Then there's another group called Let It Be. They didn't want any change. This was mostly for the Albany Bulb.

10-00:07:07

Lage: They wanted—I don't know if we can call it natural, really, because it's not —

10-00:07:13

McLaughlin: No, it's not natural.

10-00:07:15

Lage: But they wanted it the way it was.

10-00:07:16

McLaughlin: The way it is.

10-00:07:19

Lage: Which incorporates what? What would that imply?

10-00:07:21

McLaughlin: Well, the so-called art, the rebar, the concrete, the weeds, the trails, and so on, which they enjoy with their dogs, and in a sense, the dog people also want to have sort of a status quo.

10-00:07:43

Lage: So, the Let it Be and the dog people were in the same camp.

10-00:07:46

McLaughlin: Pretty much. So, it was largely due to CESP that we were able to bring all these different groups together to endorse the plan that was made, which they did. And when the State Parks Commission had a hearing in Berkeley, prior to their voting, all these different groups endorsed the plan. That was a big help. We particularly had many—the leadership of CESP—had had a number of meetings with the ball field proponents, and ultimately, it was figured out to have a—what is it called? When the three jurisdictions, various jurisdictions came together.

10-00:08:53

Lage: Like a mediation?

10-00:08:54

McLaughlin: Pardon me? No, no, no. There's a term for it. I'll remember it. So that it was made possible for the city of—I think Berkeley, and Albany, maybe, and the private owner, and the state parks—all that to come together to make this work, to have ball fields there.

10-00:09:32

Lage: And where did they put the ball fields?

10-00:09:35

McLaughlin: Near Gilman Street. It's in the process of being built as we speak.

10-00:09:40

Lage: Near the racetrack?

10-00:00:00

McLaughlin: Well, there's an area there—some of it's owned by Berkeley—that's used for bales of hay, and horse barns, and so on. The North Basin Strip was designated—this is what we call that area—for public recreation, and so on. And having ball fields seems to really fill a community need which was very important.

10-00:10:19

Lage: So, you didn't object to that solution?

10-00:10:21

McLaughlin: Oh, no. We helped work it out.

10-00:10:22

Lage:

Yes. Yes. Well, I'm interested in the role of CESP versus the planners. I mean, did you help the planners to incorporate this into their —

10-00:10:33

McLaughlin:

Yes. You really should talk to Robert Cheasty, because he, and Norman LaForce, and Ed Bennett—they really were at the forefront of working with all these different groups. And we went to the planning commission hearing in Oakland, we went to council meetings. Whenever this plan was presented, several of us went to these hearings. Arthur Feinstein for Audubon. We stood up and spoke in support of the plan. And there were various commission meetings in Berkeley, and a city council meeting, and a city council meeting in Albany, and a commission meeting in Richmond. As I say, it was sort of like a dog and pony show, because the planners would present the plan, and then we would step up to the mike and speak our endorsement of it.

10-00:11:44

Lage:

But what happened before the plan was actually produced? I mean, that two-year period when they were making up the plan, what was the role of CESP? Did the planners themselves work out the compromises between the —

10-00:12:01

McLaughlin:

No, no. CESP did. Before that—well, we spent years going back and forth to Sacramento talking to parks people, and the Natural Resources Agency under several different administrations to sort of pave the way for all of this.

10-00:12:26

Lage:

But I'm thinking about resolving these conflicts between the dog owners, the public art, the people who wanted to launch their kayaks —

10-00:12:40

McLaughlin:

This was all CESP.

10-00:12:43

Lage:

Done during the planning process? Before the plan was actually set in stone?

10-00:12:47

McLaughlin:

Yes. Yes. Because we got them all to agree to the plan. Well, the plan was made with a lot of public input.

10-00:12:58

Lage:

So, the planners listened to all these different groups —

10-00:13:00

McLaughlin:

Yes.

10-00:13:01

Lage:

— at the hearings. Was there anything that you as a person, or CESP as a group simply couldn't abide? What did you oppose?

10-00:13:12

McLaughlin: CESP operated by consensus. I may have had some different thoughts, but we were a consensus group.

10-00:13:19

Lage: But were there things put forth by the community—like the public art? Did CESP not want the public art to stay—if we call it public art?

10-00:13:32

McLaughlin: I don't think we really took a position on it like that. Because various different ones had different ideas, and basically, it was up to the state. And nobody wants to deal with it. People were somewhat reluctant to deal with it.

10-00:13:51

Lage: Right. Right. So bringing people together was one of the roles of CESP.

10-00:13:59

McLaughlin: Oh, very much so.

10-00:14:00

Lage: Can you describe any of those encounters? How do you —

10-00:14:04

McLaughlin: I wasn't a party to a lot of them.

10-00:14:05

Lage: You weren't.

10-00:14:08

McLaughlin: It was mostly Robert Cheasty and Norman LaForce of the Sierra Club who were able to bring this all to fruition, to make it all happen.

10-00:14:22

Lage: It's really quite amazing. We live in a very contentious area, and yet to get people to agree on it all —

10-00:14:29

McLaughlin: We had to forge these agreements in order to achieve our goal, to make it work. And so all the groups were unanimously in favor of this plan. There were details that various ones didn't agree with. For instance, when they were showing it to Emeryville, they had an extra path the people in Emeryville didn't want. So the planners listened. I mean, each community had this opportunity to discuss the plan before it was made final. And then it was presented to the State Parks Commission, and that was a very important meeting.

10-00:15:27

Lage: And how did that go? Did you go to that?

10-00:15:30

McLaughlin: Oh, of course. We went to all these meetings.

10-00:15:36

Lage: Did the State Parks Commission seem to understand the concept?

10-00:15:43

McLaughlin: I think they did, because once again, I think we all spoke—they had an open mike. You had your three minutes. And a lot of people did speak.

10-00:15:56

Lage: And most people spoke in favor?

10-00:15:59

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. As I said, all these various, disparate groups endorsed the plan.

10-00:16:06

Lage: Now, it was designated a state seashore, I understand, which was the first time that that term had been used.

10-00:16:15

McLaughlin: Well, that was actually because, I think the Sierra Club found that by designating it as seashore, it afforded more protection for the natural areas. So, it may sound rather odd for a bayside park to be called a seashore, but that's the reason. We wanted to protect the Emeryville area there, and various other marshland areas. Because they were very important for the wildlife, and so on.

10-00:16:54

Lage: Did the dog owners understand the needs of the wildlife areas? I mean, the fact that dogs couldn't be unleashed?

10-00:17:02

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. No, I don't think they all ever quite understood it, because they always think their dogs are under control, and so forth. So there's always a kind of ongoing discussion, as I said. It's still ongoing with the national parks in San Francisco—and probably in other areas throughout the country—as to how you deal with this issue, because many dogs do enjoy going into the water, yet if you have small children, and so on, wanting to share the same beach, that can present a problem. But by and large. And our CESP meetings were always open. We generally had a representative from the dog people would be there, and anybody else is welcome to be there.

10-00:18:07

Lage: There was even some concern about the homeless—maybe this was earlier—but that the homeless had kind of an enclave down there in Albany?

10-00:18:15

McLaughlin: Yes, particularly in Albany. Somewhat in Berkeley. Well, again, this was sort of a city of Albany problem, which may still exist, but CESP didn't really have anything to do with that.

10-00:18:37

Lage: It's quite amazing how many people cared about the area, for whatever reason.

10-00:18:42

McLaughlin: There was a lot of concern, yes. I think this was brought out when the planning group had all these hearings. Well, their purpose was for community input, and I think that (laughter) it happened, but it was sort of frustrating sometimes, because sometimes there were so many people that wanted to speak, you only had not even three minutes to speak. Not easy to get your points across in a very short time. Well, there were even some times it was one minute, I think.

10-00:19:26

Lage: So, you wonder about the value of public hearings, if people can only talk for one minute.

10-00:19:30

McLaughlin: Well, they still get recorded, and you can say whether you approve or disapprove or want something different.

10-00:19:44

Lage: It's really quite extraordinary, if you step back from it a bit—the involvement. People's involvement in this issue.

10-00:19:57

McLaughlin: Well, I guess I never thought of it as being extraordinary.

10-00:19:57

Lage: You're used to it! Well, I think we should, in a way, that that strip of land —

10-00:20:06

McLaughlin: I've always been going to so many meetings where there have been a lot of people that are involved. I mean, I went to a meeting two nights ago about a Berkeley issue, and our team was there, and we all got up and spoke.

10-00:20:24

Lage: Now, what was that issue?

10-00:20:27

McLaughlin: Strawberry Creek Plaza. The university is coming into the city of Berkeley for their hotel, conference center, and art museum, and we want them to have a nice open plaza area with a pedestrian Center Street, and some type of water feature—watercourse, creek, whatever you want to call it.

10-00:20:50

Lage: Opening up Strawberry Creek?

10-00:20:53

McLaughlin: So, there's this subcommittee of the planning commission that's discussing all this. So, we just want to bring this to their attention once again.

10-00:21:05

Lage: Now, when you say "we"—this was something I was going to ask you later, so we might as well just go to it now—when you say "we," what group is that that you're involved with?

10-00:21:14

McLaughlin: Oh, this is another one. There's a group of us that have been meeting for several years every Monday, and hearing from different people that are involved from the university, from the Downtown Berkeley Association, from the BART, from the AC Transit, from the city planning point of view. We generally have someone speak their piece and tell their angle on all this at each of our meetings. Sometimes we just talk amongst ourselves.

10-00:22:00

Lage: And what's the name of the group?

10-00:22:04

McLaughlin: Strawberry Creek Plaza Alliance.

10-00:22:07

Lage: Oh, okay. Very focused. Focused on Strawberry Creek Plaza. So this has been a matter of years, too.

10-00:22:12

McLaughlin: Yes. Oftentimes, Carole Schemmerling from the Urban Creeks Council comes, Juliet Lamont, who's also concerned with the urban creeks, Richard Register, and Kirstin Miller, from the Ecocity Builders—I'm also on that board. Helen Burke, from the Sierra Club, and she's been more or less chairing these meetings and bringing these people together. And she's also on the planning commission—or, was. No, she's still on the commission. No longer the chair. But she's also on the DAPAC subcommittee.

10-00:23:08

Lage: Say that —

10-00:23:09

McLaughlin: It's called DAPAC—Downtown Area Planning Action Committee, something like that.

10-00:23:19

Lage: Does the David Brower Center figure in there?

10-00:23:32

McLaughlin: Not much. It's the next block.

10-00:23:37

Lage: I'm surprised that this group didn't incorporate that in some way.

10-00:23:43

McLaughlin: We try to be focused.

10-00:23:46

Lage:

What is Ecocity Builders? I'm getting us off of Eastshore Park, and I'm going to go back to it, but—you're on that board. It looks like a very interesting group.

10-00:23:55

McLaughlin:

It is. Well, I first knew Richard Register when he and I were both objecting the widening of I-80. That was quite a few years ago—I don't know, ten or twelve years ago. And he's interested in having cities be more planned for pedestrians, rather than for cars. This means more and better public transit, and buildings sited—just what they're talking about now with all this interest in reducing our energy—sited so they get the maximum amount of sunlight, and just really logical things, you'd think.

We have also been working with representatives from the university, and we've gone to other areas. The Ecocity Builders had a trip to San Luis Obispo two or three years ago, and forty people went down. We were supposed to go on the train, but the train got sidetracked because of the Union Pacific freight train, and so we eventually went down on a Greyhound bus, but nevertheless, they arranged a very good program for us, and here again, they had a community that was made aware of their creek by a small group of individuals, and so the businesses, instead of regarding the creek as we used to regard the bay—as a place to dump things—they turned their businesses around, and fronted on the creek, had their restaurants kind of leaning over, so they could see this delightful little creek that runs through it, and they closed off a street in front of one of the missions. At that time, there was a 50 percent vacancy in the business district. Now there are no vacancies in the business district. Cars are parked on the periphery, on the outside, and it seems to work very well. So there are models such as that.

I'm also on Huey Johnson's Resource Renewal Institute, which has been working with groups in the Netherlands, New Zealand, Singapore, the state of Michigan, various other states, that are doing green planning. And again, this is all very logical to reduce the air and water pollution, and land, and right in line with what people are doing and thinking now.

10-00:27:10

Lage:

It's very forward thinking, but it makes a lot of sense.

10-00:27:13

McLaughlin:

Absolutely.

10-00:27:15

Lage:

Very interesting. The I-80—were you opposed to that because of its effect on the Eastshore Park, or for other reasons? Tell me about that.

10-00:27:28

McLaughlin:

Well, it's been proven—and even Caltrans said—"Well, in a few years, it'll be just as crowded." So it just didn't seem a very wise thing to do at the time.

- 10-00:27:43  
Lage: Would it have impacted the Eastshore Park? Or was it going to go inland?
- 10-00:27:49  
McLaughlin: Their designers worked out as it is now to have room for the Bay Trail, and they wanted to have access—in case of emergency need—to this frontage road, and then eventually they did widen I-80.
- 10-00:28:14  
Lage: But as much as they had planned to?
- 10-00:28:17  
McLaughlin: I think so.
- 10-00:28:18  
Lage: Oh, I didn't realize that.
- 10-00:28:19  
McLaughlin: It's about as much as they could, given the space.
- 10-00:28:22  
Lage: And they did the flyover. Was that controversial?
- 10-00:28:24  
McLaughlin: Oh, it was very controversial. And I remember Dwight Steele, he went before BCDC any number of times to explain how it could be done differently. But to no avail. They did it their way. One thing we did prevail upon: they were going to have it so that it would be just all concrete underneath, so you couldn't see through. So we got them to change that.
- 10-00:29:00  
Lage: So that as you drive, you mean, you can see? Of course that's the area where we've had our [freeway] meltdown recently.
- 10-00:29:08  
McLaughlin: Yes.
- 10-00:29:09  
Lage: Wow. So, the idea that all these issues are intertwined —
- 10-00:29:16  
McLaughlin: They are.
- 10-00:29:16  
Lage: — come together in your activities.
- 10-00:29:19  
McLaughlin: Yes.
- 10-00:29:20  
Lage: Yes. The transportation, the city beautiful, the creeks.

10-00:29:23

McLaughlin: Right, right. What we need more of—it seems to me—is comprehensive planning. Now, some of us are trying to persuade the university that's what they need.

10-00:29:36

Lage: And how does the university accept this Strawberry Creek Plaza idea?

10-00:29:43

McLaughlin: Well, we keep talking to different ones. We had a meeting—a group of us—with the chancellor, Berdahl.

10-00:29:56

Lage: The previous chancellor.

10-00:29:57

McLaughlin: Yes. At that time, the city was showing a lack of enthusiasm, so nothing ever happened. You just have to be persistent, and keep at it.

10-00:30:10

Lage: Right. What street would it affect? What street would be the plaza?

10-00:30:16

McLaughlin: Oxford, Center, Shattuck, and Addison.

10-00:30:19

Lage: Addison and Center. It could really revitalize the city.

10-00:30:23

McLaughlin: Absolutely. Well, it's entirely possible. Again, this is what we were saying two nights ago. And here, another example is the big proposal for BP to give an extraordinary amount of money to the university to work on biofuels. Well, here again, it's just most business as usual, perpetuating the automobile, perpetuating the building of the automobiles, and roads, and so on. [tape interruption]

10-00:31:07

Lage: Okay, now we're back on.

10-00:31:10

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. I was talking about the biofuels industry.

10-00:31:13

Lage: The BP deal. Now, have you gotten involved in that?

10-00:31:17

McLaughlin: Oh, yes.

10-00:31:17

Lage: Did you go to the meeting at Hillside Club?

10-00:31:21

McLaughlin: No, because I was at this other meeting. There was another meeting, anyway. But I've been trying in other ways to persuade people. There was an excellent article in the British magazine *The Ecologist*.

10-00:31:36

Lage: About this issue? This BP issue here?

10-00:31:38

McLaughlin: No. About biofuels.

10-00:31:40

Lage: About biofuel.

10-00:31:42

McLaughlin: And I was saying this perpetuates the planning for the automobile culture, whereas we should be putting more emphasis on public transportation. The Europeans are way ahead of us on using their energy in more productive, people-oriented ways, and not being so dependent on automobiles. So we have a lot to learn, I think, from Sweden, from Germany, from the Netherlands.

10-00:32:24

Lage: And a lot of that's done by a heavy tax on oil.

10-00:32:30

McLaughlin: Well, some.

10-00:32:31

Lage: Which raises the price of gasoline way beyond what we pay.

10-00:32:28

McLaughlin: Yes, but they get lots of public services in some of those countries, which we do not receive. It's a trade-off. And also, they have outstanding public transportation. And in some cities, the public transportation is subsidized so that it's free. Well, this would encourage people to get out of their cars.

10-00:33:11

Lage: That's right.

10-00:33:12

McLaughlin: And it works. So, I just think it's too bad there's such an emphasis here on Chevron's giving \$25 million to the Davis campus, and they're partnering with Weyerhaeuser to try to make fuel out of wood, and fibers, and so on. That's all part of the picture, but just one aspect. So that's why I'm involved in that.

10-00:33:45

Lage: Yes, that's interesting, because people are coming at that opposition to BP from different directions. Some are opposed to the secret research, and researched financed by a —

10-00:33:58

McLaughlin: Others are opposed because of what they do to Third World countries, and others because perhaps we'll be planting all our public lands with the plants for the biofuels rather than plants for food. So let's just say there are many angles to this.

10-00:34:25

Lage: Many angles. Some don't like another building on campus, on the east side of campus.

10-00:34:33

McLaughlin: It'll be up Strawberry Canyon, again. And it seems to me there are only so many cars that will fit onto Gayley Road, and Piedmont Avenue, and Warring. I mean, it's sometimes bumper to bumper now.

10-00:34:49

Lage: There's no public transit up there.

10-00:34:51

McLaughlin: There is a bit. There is a bit.

10-00:34:51

Lage: To speak of. Not very much.

10-00:34:55

McLaughlin: But you keep building—there's another building going up with 1,000 more people, and 500 more cars, I think, up on the Radiation Hill, that we used to call it. And it seems to me there's a limit to sustainability of the growth.

10-00:35:24

Lage: Interesting evolution. I'm just thinking of it of how the environmental movement has evolved, too—or the conservation movement, from protecting parks, and now we're thinking about sustainability of the earth.

10-00:35:38

McLaughlin: Yes. We've gone more global, maybe. But it is certainly all interrelated, and I just feel, for instance, that some people are losing their sense of the importance of natural values, such as for the oak grove. They think buildings are more important. They bring in money. It's all related to football. People seem to have an emotional attachment to the stadium, and they're willing to spend millions of dollars to redo the stadium, but there's a lot of concern from the neighbors, because in an emergency or disaster, you know, it would really be difficult for the people on Panoramic Hill, or in the surrounding neighborhoods, difficult for the fire department. There are just so many aspects to this continual growth.

10-00:37:02

Lage: There are many, many aspects. And when you say some people are losing their concern with natural values, do you think that's societal, or —

10-00:37:12

McLaughlin: This is my personal opinion. Other things took seemingly more importance, such as putting buildings on what formerly were—I mean, the university campus used to be more like a park. It's getting to be less and less so. Well, as are the cities. And I think we must really pay attention to the importance of open spaces.

10-00:37:43

Lage: Now, do you think about overpopulation as a problem? Is that something that's become a concern of yours?

10-00:37:52

McLaughlin: It is a concern; not one of mine.

10-00:37:56

Lage: It's not something you see as a threat. Because there is that one side of the environmental movement that focuses on overpopulation, immigration, and issues like that.

10-00:38:09

McLaughlin: Well, I think so many things are interrelated, such as the tax structure, housing, transit. It's all related to planning, and that's why I think these issues need to be looked at in a more comprehensive way than they have been. For instance, looking at the university again, each department has its own fundraising element, and then a number of them are planning expansions. Engineering has expanded, business school wants to expand, have more professors, more students. The law school wants to expand, have more professors, more students. They seem to have forgotten about small is beautiful, and they think bigger is better. Maybe it is from some standpoints, but I think they are not looking at some of the consequences of really, largely, the overcrowding of the streets. And it seems to me a point comes when there needs to be a sort of a harmonious balancing of what is being developed, and what is possible in order to have a really livable community. I think we want to retain the quality of life here, and it's not always easy.

10-00:40:10

Lage: Right. It seems like almost a structural thing at the university, as you describe it—the scrambling for resources as the state cuts back its funding.

10-00:40:20

McLaughlin: That's part of it, yes, indeed.

10-00:40:23

Lage: And each department and college is out on its own, competing for —

10-00:40:28

McLaughlin: Yes. And so that's one reason they're just so thrilled to have BP's munificent gift. And it will probably happen, but I just hope that it will also include research on other aspects of this whole problem.

10-00:40:52

Lage: Besides biofuel.

10-00:40:54

McLaughlin: Yes. But that's what the intent is.

10-00:40:58

Lage: It's also going to be secret research, I'm told—you know, with labs that are shut off from other parts of the department.

10-00:41:08

McLaughlin: I don't know very much about that. It probably has to do with who gets the patents, and who gets the money, and so on, and so forth. So many of these things are based on the bottom line. And I think it seems to me possible they consider this a public service, which is part of the university's mission, but you sometimes just wonder.

10-00:41:39

Lage: Which public are they serving?

10-00:41:43

McLaughlin: Teaching, research, and public service, that was their mission.

10-00:41:45

Lage: Now what would Donald McLaughlin have said to this kind of building and research, do you think?

10-00:41:56

McLaughlin: When he was a regent, he was always very interested in the planning of the campuses and in the appearance of the campuses, and he and Clark Kerr determined that the cap [on number of students], I think, should be 29,500. I think it's now 34,000. I think he would be very concerned. I mean, he could probably see advantages, but I think he would see more the importance of having limits to growth

10-00:42:41

Lage: Do you think that he—as a businessman—would express the kind of concern that you've expressed about things being driven by the bottom line, or the almighty dollar, or —

10-00:42:54

McLaughlin: Well, naturally he would understand that—probably a lot better than I would—but as I say, he was always very concerned about the appearance of the campus, about the limits to growth, and about how the campuses were created, and so on. He was there during a very interesting period when they added five new campuses, and it was a period of growth. Very much so. But it was a different kind of growth, in a way.

10-00:43:44

Lage: Right. Well, it was serving—spreading out through the state.

10-00:43:47

McLaughlin: Yes. Different communities. Yes. He was also on the Committee on Grounds and Buildings, and on the committee of—I forget—I can't think of the exact name. It had to do with education. The —

10-00:44:13

Lage: Educational Policy, or something like that?

10-00:44:15

McLaughlin: Something like that.

10-00:44:18

Lage: You talked about Ecocity Builders, and I ran across the Heart of the City project. Is the Heart of the City project connected to the Strawberry Plaza?

10-00:44:29

McLaughlin: More or less the same. Same area. Different name.

10-00:44:32

Lage: Are you involved in that, too?

10-00:44:34

McLaughlin: It was the same thing. It just sort of evolved.

10-00:44:40

Lage: I was thinking when I was reading about Jack Kent, and his interest in planning, are these different strands of thinking from what Jack Kent —

10-00:44:54

McLaughlin: I don't think so. Jack was a great influence on many people, including myself. Any time I had to write something or speak, I would check it out with Jack first. And he was always very encouraging at the time he was on the city council. We all wanted the university to be the best it could be, of course. But we also had various ideas about how it could be more effective, and a group of us used to meet at the Faculty Club, and had very spirited conversations with—

10-00:45:47

Lage: Now, was that a formal group, or just —

10-00:45:49

McLaughlin: Oh, very informal.

10-00:45:51

Lage: Spirited conversations about—

10-00:45:52

McLaughlin: Well, actually about campus planning, and different aspects of it.

10-00:45:59

Lage: Was that about the different—tell me more about it. Who was involved?

10-00:46:05

McLaughlin: It didn't even have a name. Bob Brentano would usually come, and just a number of interested people. Usually no more than ten.

10-00:46:19

Lage: And was Jack Kent involved in that?

10-00:46:21

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. He sort of spearheaded the group.

10-00:46:23

Lage: I see. And can you think of other people who were in it?

10-00:46:29

McLaughlin: Another friend, Ann Slaby, and she can probably tell you others who were involved.

10-00:46:33

Lage: Now, did this coalesce around some of the —

10-00:46:38

McLaughlin: Issues of that time?

10-00:46:38

Lage: Issues, like the redwood grove, and —

10-00:46:42

McLaughlin: No. I don't think so. No, that was different.

10-00:46:46

Lage: It was just a more general discussion?

10-00:46:47

McLaughlin: Yes.

10-00:46:50

Lage: So, what was the tenor of those discussions, if you remember. Do you remember the decade that we're talking about?

10-00:47:00

McLaughlin: Maybe Carroll Brentano would remember.

10-00:47:02

Lage: I'll ask her.

10-00:47:03

McLaughlin: It was—well, Jack's been gone now several years. It was—oh, let's see. Where are we now? It was probably in the eighties, nineties.

10-00:47:19

Lage: But it wasn't over things like [preserving] Cowell Hospital, and —

10-00:47:23  
McLaughlin: No.

10-00:47:24  
Lage: Just in general? Well, that's very interesting.

10-00:47:26  
McLaughlin: Well, it might have been, but anyway.

10-00:47:31  
Lage: Did Jack Kent ever get into the Ecocity kind of thinking?

10-00:47:37  
McLaughlin: No.

10-00:47:38  
Lage: Maybe it was a little earlier, then.

10-00:47:45  
McLaughlin: Well, as I say, he had this other sort of rump group.

10-00:47:50  
Lage: But, I mean the thinking of an ecological perspective on planning.

10-00:47:56  
McLaughlin: Oh, probably. To a certain extent, yes. I mean, he was the one who was very active in—when Dorothy Erskine started the Citizens for Regional Recreation and Parks, which became People for Open Space, which became Greenbelt Alliance. And Larry Orman, who was our first director, he worked with us when Roz Lepawsky and I started Urban Care. Larry was—I think he was a grad student then, and he was assigned this as his project.

10-00:48:39  
Lage: And what field was he in?

10-00:48:42  
McLaughlin: I think that was planning—regional and city planning.

10-00:48:48  
Lage: I see. So he came out of...

10-00:48:54  
McLaughlin: So then we had a lot of dealings together, and he became the first executive director of Greenbelt Alliance.

10-00:49:06  
Lage: And Dorothy Erskine is a figure I wish we—we have a brief oral history with her, but it's not very long or very broad. It's not about her personal life very much.

10-00:49:22  
McLaughlin: Her son is still living, you know.

10-00:49:24

Lage: Her son is? Was she an important figure in Save the Bay? I know you met there.

10-00:49:31

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. Very much so. She, I think, gave us the first membership list which we used, because we had many of the similar goals. Then in later years, we had our board meetings in her home at Telegraph Hill, and she also had the Greenbelt Alliance meetings there.

10-00:50:01

Lage: Was she a particularly astute organizational person?

10-00:50:05

McLaughlin: Very. Very. I may have told you this. In the early days of BCDC, when they had been charged to make a plan, they did all these studies, about thirty-some different studies of all the different aspects of the bay.

10-00:50:25

McLaughlin: And Dorothy would boil them down to four pages and send them out. She had something called "Regional Exchange." This was her newsletter and then Kay Kerr would boil those four pages down to one and we would send it out to all our members.

10-00:50:44

Lage: So this was a kind of way of networking?

10-00:50:47

McLaughlin: Yes.

10-00:50:47

Lage: Before the Internet.

10-00:50:50

McLaughlin: We used the telephone a lot. That worked. We used post cards. We used letters.

10-00:50:58

Lage: Did Dorothy Erskine—what was her group again? Was it mainly San Francisco or did she reach out to other parts?

10-00:51:05

McLaughlin: She also was fundamental in the establishment of SPUR [San Francisco Planning and Urban Renewal (now Research) Association]. What became SPUR originally had to do with housing, I believe, in San Francisco. No, it started in San Francisco and became regional, as the name implies. Regional Recreation and Parks.

10-00:51:25

Lage: So that was her group? Regional—?

10-00:51:26  
McLaughlin: Yes. Recreation and Parks. And just happen to have over here—these are your exhibits.

10-00:51:41  
Lage: Oh, good.

10-00:51:42  
McLaughlin: This is the 20/20 report.

10-00:51:47  
Lage: Let's put these all here. We have exhibits.

10-00:51:52  
McLaughlin: All right. Here we have exhibits. For instance, Dorothy had this done. At one time, there was a proposal to take over the Presidio and sell it off to the developers. And so she had these different studies done.

10-00:52:18  
Lage: “Economic Impact of a Regional Open Space Program.”

10-00:52:21  
McLaughlin: This is another one, “The Case for Open Space.”

10-00:52:25  
Lage: Let's get some dates on this. This is from People for Open Space.

10-00:52:36  
McLaughlin: This is “The Case for Open Space, San Francisco Bay Area.” This is People for Open Space.

10-00:52:41  
Lage: Mike Heyman was involved with this one, in preparing the plan, it looks like.

10-00:52:47  
McLaughlin: Here's the board of directors. John Sutter, here's T. J. Kent.

10-00:52:52  
Lage: So Dorothy was instrumental in getting this started?

10-00:53:01  
McLaughlin: Oh, yes. In those days, she was Mrs. Dorothy Erskine, the secretary, while Jack Kent was president. She always got some man to be the president.

10-00:53:15  
Lage: Similar to your organization. And the board of directors was mainly men. But was she the power behind People for Open Space?

10-00:53:23  
McLaughlin: Oh, yes. She did all the work, generally all the work.

And these are really fascinating exhibits. I dredged these up because of my organizing all the boxes, and these will also all go to the Bancroft, of course.

10-00:53:39

Lage: Oh, good. Good.

10-00:53:39

McLaughlin: This is the Santa Fe plan, and also this is the Santa Fe plan.

10-00:53:46

Lage: So both of these prepared by Santa Fe?

10-00:53:49

McLaughlin: Yes. And this is Bob Walker, who would come to all the Berkeley City Council meetings when this was being discussed. And this is January of 1968, "Proposed Mutual Commitments for Land and Water Development."

10-00:54:13

Lage: Now, I wonder if we can run this by the camera. You hold this up and I'll see if the camera is getting it. Oh, it's getting it perfectly.

10-00:54:23

McLaughlin: So you see they were—at least they were doing regional planning.

10-00:54:33

Lage: But a great deal of new fill there.

10-00:54:39

McLaughlin: Oh, of course. And a new freeway, I think. I forget what the—

10-00:54:49

Lage: Oh, a new freeway. I'm just going to hold this up a little bit. "The Santa Fe Plan, 1968."

10-00:54:55

McLaughlin: That doesn't show the new freeway. See, this is the bulkhead line here, so they were going to fill that to the bulkhead line. Anyway, it was a very imaginative plan, shall we say.

10-00:55:19

Lage: That was sixty-eight?

10-00:55:22

McLaughlin: Sixty-eight. You see, then Victor Gruen Associates—I remember one meeting at Kay Kerr's and Louis, I forget his last name, who was the principal planner, came from Los Angeles, and he looked down at it [the bay], and he said, "See, it's not being used." And I said, "I'm using it. I'm looking at it right now." And he had a different idea of what "using it" was. This was what he meant [refers to the Santa Fe plan].

10-00:56:00

Lage: Right. Commerce and industry.

10-00:56:02

McLaughlin: So the next time Santa Fe did a plan, well, they, I guess, had learned their lesson and they hired a local person. And we didn't much like that one, either. But I just think this is a really—

10-00:56:22

Lage: That's a great exhibit.

10-00:56:26

McLaughlin: And so, as I say, these will all go to the Bancroft, as well.

10-00:56:33

Lage: Great. Good, good. Lauren Lassleben [Bancroft Library archivist] asked me, "When are we getting another shipment?"

10-00:56:38

McLaughlin: Oh, yes.

10-00:56:40

Lage: I'm looking at this one, another Santa Fe plan.

10-00:56:43

McLaughlin: This is more text, I believe. This is a "Proposal for the Development of the EastshoreTidelands of San Francisco Bay, prepared for the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railway Company."

10-00:57:01

Lage: Its formal name.

10-00:57:02

McLaughlin: That's right. "Architecture and Engineering Filing, Victor Gruen." October of 1963, this is.

10-00:57:09

Lage: Oh, this is earlier, then. That'll be interesting for someone to compare the two.

10-00:57:19

McLaughlin: Yes. Well, here's another picture. So it shows how they extended the fill.

10-00:57:31

Lage: Oh, the fill here out in Emeryville was to go almost to Treasure Island!

10-00:57:44

McLaughlin: Right.

10-00:57:46

Lage: Another industrial harbor, the entire Richmond area. And Berkeley, that's out to the bulkhead.

10-00:57:55

McLaughlin: Yes. There was a lot of proposed filling. A proposed rapid transit system out here in the Bay.

10-00:58:13

Lage: Oh, that's interesting, Probably an elevated track?

10-00:58:17

McLaughlin: Who knows? “Water depth and clay, wind, waves, and surge.” Goodness. They did a lot of research for this.

10-00:58:32

Lage: Sure they did. Think of all the money they put into it. Hold on, I have to change the tape here.

[End Audio File 10 mclaughlin\_sylvia10\_05-04-07.mp3]

[Begin Audio File 11 mclaughlin\_sylvia11\_05-04-07.mp3]

11-00:00:00

Lage: Now we're back on. [Looking at plans for the Berkeley Waterfront, 1963]

11-00:00:01

McLaughlin: This is what they call a land use plan.

11-00:00:07

Lage: Now that's a very pretty piece of—hold it up just a bit. There. There, we got it. Berkeley Island we have out here. Berkeley Island. They do have parks and playgrounds —

11-00:00:20

McLaughlin: Oh, yes.

11-00:00:21

Lage: Out on the island.

11-00:00:22

McLaughlin: Industrial. They have a little bit of everything.

11-00:00:25

Lage: And residential. A lot of residential. All the yellow, which would be interesting in an earthquake, wouldn't it? All that filled land.

11-00:00:36

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. And then all the services that would have been needed—police, and fire, and schools.

11-00:00:45

Lage: And transportation corridors down to service that area. Well, people have very different ideas now. We're looking back forty years.

11-00:00:58

McLaughlin: Yes. That's why I have forty years worth of boxes. That's where I found these.

- 11-00:01:04  
Lage: I wonder if forty years from now, we'll look at some of the current plans for the campus, and —
- 11-00:01:09  
McLaughlin: Probably.
- 11-00:01:09  
Lage: — all the building, and think the same way about that.
- 11-00:01:12  
McLaughlin: Well, they'll probably be recycling them, like they did—perhaps you saw the George Lucas recycling of the Letterman Hospital?
- 11-00:01:22  
Lage: I didn't. No.
- 11-00:01:23  
McLaughlin: It was totally amazing. I went by there once, and there were these two piles of—well, the rubble had been reduced to sort of pebbles. And then I guess they reused it in the building, or for streets. I'm not sure quite what, maybe for their cement. But there were big piles. Now it's beautiful—I used that in my recent statement—they looked out on this water feature and park, and it's just lovely.
- 11-00:01:59  
Lage: The Crissy Field redo there is just beautiful, and the opening up of that whole area for people.
- 11-00:02:04  
McLaughlin: Oh, yes. But this is the part of the Presidio that was required to be leased out so that they could be self-supporting. And George Lucas ended up subletting some of the areas. But it's really beautiful. You should see it. It's a little stream. So, anyway, there's some interesting planning going on.
- 11-00:02:32  
Lage: What do you think of this idea that parks should be self-supporting?
- 11-00:02:38  
McLaughlin: Like the Presidio?
- 11-00:02:40  
Lage: Yes.
- 11-00:02:43  
McLaughlin: I think it could happen at the Presidio, but I would hate to see it happen anywhere else. And I think it's just really unfortunate that parks are the first things that get cut when it comes to maintenance, and funding, and for acquisition.

11-00:03:02

Lage: Yes, the state parks have suffered terribly.

11-00:03:04

McLaughlin: Very. As have our national parks. Well, that's a different subject.

11-00:03:09

Lage: This brings us back, though, because we didn't finish with the Eastshore Park. We talked about the planning, but then you indicated you're not terribly happy with the speed with which it's being implemented.

11-00:03:23

McLaughlin: I guess we shouldn't be [unhappy]. As long as it's happening. Like when you're in traffic, if it's moving, well, that's good. This is moving. Our Assemblywoman Loni Hancock is very anxious to get more. There are some pockets of money in the state where it is possible to get the funding for these certain projects, and she's trying to do that. She's been very helpful, as have all the various legislators.

11-00:03:58

Lage: Is it an expensive park because of the toxics, and the rebar that you mentioned, and all of that?

11-00:04:05

McLaughlin: That's just in the Albany area. No, but it is expensive to create something that looks like a welcoming park, rather than something that's just nothing but weeds and no place to sit, and no picnic tables, and so on.

11-00:04:26

Lage: So your vision is to make it more welcoming, with recreation?

11-00:04:29

McLaughlin: Oh, absolutely. It's for people, as well as for wildlife. Thus far, they've just fenced off part of the Berkeley Meadow for the wildlife. Well, it really looks not very attractive, I think. And once in a while you see a bird in there, but I think the hope is that there will be more wildlife attracted.

11-00:05:00

Lage: Through planting, or how will they attract wildlife?

11-00:05:05

McLaughlin: Well, the planning of it—some seasonal lagoons, and planting, I suppose, yes. But I think it's sort of—well, we won't go into that now.

11-00:05:18

Lage: Well, do. No, tell me what you were going to say.

11-00:05:23

McLaughlin: I think it definitely is in need of more funding to make it look as they planned to have it look, so that people will recognize that this is meant to attract

wildlife. And then when it attracts the wildlife, then people will enjoy looking at the wildlife.

11-00:05:45

Lage: Right. And will people be allowed to walk through there? Will there be trails?

11-00:05:47

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. There are trails you can go through now, but no dogs. The fences are really to keep the dogs out; whether it does or not, I'm not sure.

11-00:05:59

Lage: Now, it's a state park, but administered by East Bay [Regional Park District]? Is that it?

11-00:06:06

McLaughlin: Yes. Took them several years to get that agreement, but it finally happened. The East Bay Regional Park District is responsible for the maintenance and operation of the Eastshore State Park.

11-00:06:23

Lage: And who pays? Who's funding —

11-00:06:25

McLaughlin: Well, actually the park district receives money from the state.

11-00:06:31

Lage: I see. So they're supposed to be reimbursed for their expenses.

11-00:06:34

McLaughlin: I mean, that's the way the park district exists, is money from the state. I don't know if there was any financial arrangement going into this agreement or not. But I think that the funding has to come from special sources, like bond measures and things like that.

11-00:06:58

Lage: But it did get funded through some bond measures, did it not?

11-00:07:00

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. And we all helped get those passed.

11-00:07:03

Lage: Yes. I know. You're working on many fronts. Okay. Now, let me see what else we might need to talk about. I know that out at Point Reyes, there's a certain amount of conflict between people who want "wilderness"—I'm going to put it in quotes—and people who want to conserve the cultural resources, like the ranches, and historical sites that are not natural, that are not wild. Is that a concern here—what do you think about conserving the cultural resources in the park?

11-00:07:52  
McLaughlin: I think it's important. I think it's very important. Well, most of this was a dump, so we didn't have much of a cultural resource.

11-00:08:02  
Lage: Well, some would say that that public art was a cultural resource.

11-00:08:06  
McLaughlin: Depending on how you look at it.

11-00:08:11  
Lage: I take it you didn't see the artistic value of a lot of that.

11-00:08:14  
McLaughlin: No.

11-00:08:18  
Lage: Just wondered. okay. Let's see. What else shall we go to now? We've talked about some of these local concerns. Here's a question related to what we talked about in the city of Berkeley. I looked up the website for BAHA—the Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association—and saw that it evolved out of Urban Care.

11-00:08:45  
McLaughlin: That's interesting.

11-00:08:46  
Lage: That's what they say, that it evolved out of this organization that you and Roz Lepawsky founded.

11-00:08:51  
McLaughlin: How interesting. Yes.

11-00:08:53  
Lage: But now, you don't know that, you're saying.

11-00:08:55  
McLaughlin: No! Oh, glad you looked up the history. I must have given you that list of all my involvements, did I?

11-00:09:05  
Lage: You did, in the —

11-00:09:08  
McLaughlin: Must have been three pages.

11-00:09:08  
Lage: — just the university.

11-00:09:10  
McLaughlin: Yes.

11-00:09:10  
Lage: Involvements with the university. But I know you've been active in BAHA.

11-00:09:26  
Lage: I wish you knew more about how BAHA evolved out of Urban Care, because I was thinking you'd be the person who would know that.

11-00:09:36  
McLaughlin: No. You can ask Lesley Emmington, and she could tell you who would know the history.

11-00:09:41  
Lage: Okay. Is she a BAHA person?

11-00:09:44  
McLaughlin: Oh, yes.

11-00:09:45  
Lage: Have you been pretty involved in BAHA in their issues?

11-00:09:49  
McLaughlin: Just on issues.

11-00:09:51  
Lage: Particular ones that interest you.

11-00:09:53  
McLaughlin: Yes. Where we have a common interest. For instance, they're very interested in the grove of oak trees, that area. We combine on a lot of things.

11-00:10:09  
Lage: Are they interested in things like the Strawberry Plaza?

11-00:10:13  
McLaughlin: Yes. And—well, that whole list tells you the various things that I was involved with with them.

11-00:10:28  
Lage: But this [list] has to do with the university, mainly. Is that something that would be good to go into now? Or do you want to study this a little bit and talk about next time?

11-00:10:45  
McLaughlin: Maybe next time.

11-00:10:51  
Lage: Well, maybe we should stop here, and next time pick up other organizations, and then the issues relating to the university. How does that sound?

11-00:11:12  
McLaughlin: Yes. That would be a long session.

[End Audio File 11 mclaughlin\_sylvia11\_05-04-07.mp3]

**End of Interview 6**

**Interview # 7: May 11, 2007**

[Begin Audio File 12 mclaughlin\_sylvia12\_05-11-07.mp3]

12-00:00:00

McLaughlin: [Looking at a list of environmental groups in which McLaughlin has been active] I was thinking of maybe one I hadn't put down. There was one called the—what was it?—International Estuary Network.

12-00:00:30

Lage: Oh, International Estuary, yes.

12-00:00:31

McLaughlin: And somehow this didn't get on the list, maybe because it no longer exists. This was started sort of under the auspices of Save the Bay, and we arranged exchanges with, particularly, Japan and Brazil. Doris Sloan started this. And Mark Holmes went to Japan. I'm not sure where the money came from for this trip. They showed him various things around there. They probably sent someone over here. And then a young woman came from Brazil, and she stayed here at my house for two or three days, and I made appointments with her to see different environmental organizations. And then Stana Hearne and I went to Brazil, and we stayed with a man and his wife there who were very interested in the same things we were. We had sent them a little list of the things that we were interested in—water issues, environmental education, so on—and they made these appointments for us to see the people that were involved. It was absolutely fascinating. Then Doris had said be sure and go to Curitiba. We were mostly in Sao Paulo, and around there. And then we did visit Curitiba, which is one of the foremost advanced cities—in the way of city planning—in the world.

12-00:02:14

Lage: Oh, so you were doing beyond estuaries. You were looking at city planning.

12-00:02:19

McLaughlin: Well, because it was right there, and she said not to miss it, and it wasn't that far away. And again, it was suggested whom we should talk to, and these appointments were arranged for us. So that was a really important shoestring organization.

12-00:02:45

Lage: Now, let's try to place that in time. Was that when Doris Sloan was president of Save the Bay?

12-00:02:52

McLaughlin: No, I don't think she was, then.

12-00:02:54

Lage: Do you remember the approximate time of that?

12-00:02:58

McLaughlin: I'll have to ask Doris about—I probably have some notes somewhere in my boxes. But I can remember—maybe—no more than ten, maybe just eight of us sitting around a table at the Save the Bay office and discussing these International Estuary countries that we wanted to connect with.

12-00:03:28

Lage: Now what was the thinking? I think that's really important that we have this group that's very focused on our region, here, and then somehow the international vision comes into it.

12-00:03:40

McLaughlin: Well, certainly when we started Save the Bay, we focused on Berkeley, then we realized that the whole bay needed to be looked at. Similarly, we realized there are many other bays that have similar problems.

12-00:04:03

Lage: Did you want to learn from them? Or did you want to show them —

12-00:04:05

McLaughlin: Both. It was an exchange of information. And it was very educational for us—and, I would hope, for the people that they sent over here.

12-00:04:17

Lage: Did any scientists get involved in this network? I think of someone like Joel Hedgpeth, who studied estuaries, and other people here in the Bay Area.

12-00:04:31

McLaughlin: No, no. It was mostly just—

12-00:04:34

Lage: More environmental activists.

12-00:04:36

McLaughlin: Yes. The volunteers, and so on. We paid our own way, as far as I know. And as I say, it was interesting staying in a family, and then just having these introductions to the knowledgeable people there. And the people in Brazil were so friendly. When we were in Curitiba, this woman with whom we talked, she said, "Well, now, be sure and don't look like a tourist." I don't know. Because I guess they rob the tourists. So we tried not to look like tourists too much, though I think it was probably pretty obvious.

12-00:05:21

Lage: What was the nature of the city planning that was so forward-looking there?

12-00:05:25

McLaughlin: Oh, you don't know about Curitiba?

12-00:05:26

Lage: I don't know about it.

12-00:05:27

McLaughlin: Oh, my goodness. Well, there was a mayor who had a lot of really good ideas. He created pedestrian-only sections of town, he created buses and bus stops that were much more practical, he created a circulation system for the buses, he had parks that were very user-friendly, and then he would have the library right there at the corner of the park, and just a lot of things that were really ahead of his time, in a way. And then he became the head of that region as well.

12-00:06:24

Lage: You mean governmental —

12-00:06:25

McLaughlin: Politically. Yes. His name was Jamie [Jaime] Lerner. I think that was it.

12-00:06:34

Lage: Not a very Brazilian-sounding name.

12-00:06:38

McLaughlin: No, well, as you probably know, there are a lot of different ethnic groups that settled in Brazil. There are a lot of Irish names, and German names, Italian names, and so on.

12-00:06:51

Lage: I wish we could just think of dates decade-wise. It sounds almost like your later Ecocity involvement.

12-00:07:01

McLaughlin: Well, it was quite—yes. Because actually the Ecocities group went to Curitiba, made a trip there. I'd already been there, so I didn't think I needed to go. We all went to San Luis Obispo, and then those people from San Luis Obispo are going to come up here in another month or two to explain what they have done to our city officials.

12-00:07:31

Lage: Uh-huh. Interesting. Yes. You know, we never put the date on the tape, so let's do that. It's May 11, and this is our seventh interview with Sylvia McLaughlin, just so we have a formal beginning to this. And today we were going to look at the range of the environmental organizations that you've been involved with, and at interrelationships, too.

12-00:07:54

McLaughlin: Well, when we first started saving the bay, we did—I guess they call it—reach out to other like-minded organizations, and then I would become involved, and I would learn what they were doing, and became interested, and so on, so I guess that's what led me to be involved in so many other organizations. And then the Audubon Society heard about our activities here, and although I'm not a birder, don't know much about birds, I guess I'd helped save the habitat. So I spoke at one of their conventions, and they asked me to be on the board.

12-00:08:36

Lage: Now, we do have some dates here. That was in the seventies.

12-00:08:41

McLaughlin: Well, as I said, some of them are sort of guesses.

12-00:08:44

Lage: Right, but I bet we come up with these dates as people go through your papers at the Bancroft—'70 to '76, you have written here. What was that experience like? How did you find the National Audubon Society organization?

12-00:09:00

McLaughlin: Oh, it was interesting. I was one of the first women on the board, one of the first from the West—well, Ann Gillette—Ann Witter Gillette—had preceded me. And then there was a woman from Texas, and well anyway, they were very concerned with sort of national issues, and I said, "It's important to pay more attention to the chapters." I felt that was my role, and they weren't paying very much attention to the chapters.

12-00:09:46

Lage: Their chapters are more kind of independent, aren't they?

12-00:09:50

McLaughlin: The chapters are the ones that are located in different areas. They're the ones that do all the work, basically, and the relationship with the National Audubon had been rather tenuous. In fact, there was a big effort at one time for the Golden Gate Audubon to secede from the national group. I think one other group did secede.

12-00:10:21

Lage: Was it over philosophical issues?

12-00:10:29

McLaughlin: Probably over a sort of lack of recognition, and a lack of funding. Because they would get just—if you send in your dues to the National Audubon, then they're supposed to send the chapters a certain amount, and I think the chapters felt they were getting the short end, and that there was not as much interest as there should have been in what the chapters were doing.

12-00:10:52

Lage: Were you involved in local chapters here? Like the Golden —

12-00:10:54

McLaughlin: To a certain extent.

12-00:11:57

Lage: So how did your initiative, or your attempt to get them to pay more attention to the chapters, how did that go over?

12-00:11:11

McLaughlin: I don't really remember. I guess they pretty much carried on as usual. And then also at that period, the meetings had always been held in New York City, because National Audubon had been started by some—I think basically some investment bankers who liked to go out and do birding. So then, I think it was under Elvis Stahr, who was then the executive director, that they met in different parts of the country. So I had the big advantage of being on several boards that met in different parts of the country, of seeing cities that I would not have otherwise gone to, probably.

12-00:11:58

Lage: And was it sort of a field-trip atmosphere?

12-00:12:02

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. We would always have a field trip with it, too. I remember once we went to Big Bend, Texas, and then to various places in Florida, and Milwaukee. Generally where there was a very active local chapter. Connecticut. Anyway, then again when I was on the National Recreation and Park Association, they met in different places. And so that was, I guess, part of my environmental education.

12-00:12:47

Lage: And maybe part of theirs, having you on the board. Did you feel you were bringing any kind of new ideas to them? Include the National Recreation and Park Association as well.

12-00:13:10

McLaughlin: I don't know about any particularly new ideas. I probably tried to push some of the issues I felt were important. For instance, one of the things that I was concerned about when I was on the board of National Audubon, we started a subcommittee on education—environmental education, because I thought that was very important. I can't really remember where it went, but we had a lot of good people on this small committee.

12-00:13:52

Lage: How big a board did they have?

12-00:13:54

McLaughlin: Oh, that was a good-sized board, large board. Maybe thirty-five, something like that.

12-00:14:04

Lage: And not too many women, and mainly eastern, you say.

12-00:14:08

McLaughlin: In the beginning, yes. But they gradually expanded to have people from all over the country. That was one of their —

12-00:14:17

Lage: One of their goals?

12-00:14:17

McLaughlin: Yes. I mean, they even met in places like Wyoming, and, as I say, different parts of the country. Seattle, and so on.

12-00:14:32

Lage: Did they also—I think of Audubon as sort of broadening their concerns over time —

12-00:14:39

McLaughlin: Oh, I think so.

12-00:14:40

Lage: Not just birds, but habitat. Was that a shift that was taking place at that time, do you think?

12-00:14:46

McLaughlin: I think so. Probably. Because as I say, I was chiefly responsible for helping save the habitat. Because as you know, the bay is a part of the Pacific Flyway, so we had learned about that. And then on our board, we had some people on the Save the Bay board that were very knowledgeable about various—Mary Jefferds, for example. She used to have a shop on Bancroft that was essentially from the national headquarters.

12-00:15:28

Lage: An Audubon shop?

12-00:15:29

McLaughlin: Mm-hmm.

12-00:15:29

Lage: Mary Jefferds?

12-00:15:30

McLaughlin: Yes. It was right on Bancroft, just right across from the campus.

12-00:15:38

Lage: Near the Wilderness Press?

12-00:15:40

McLaughlin: Yes.

12-00:15:43

Lage: Do you have any thoughts on—just as we go through these, which organizations were the most vital?

12-00:16:00

McLaughlin: The most —

12-00:16:01

Lage: The most vital, the most creative, on the forefront. And which were maybe kind of stodgy. I'm particularly thinking about the national ones, like National

Recreation and Parks. This was in the seventies, that you were on that board, also.

12-00:16:21

McLaughlin: Well, there was quite a large group, and it focused on the parks and recreation. They also had a certain number of sort of—I forget what we were called—citizen members, and about two-thirds of the group were professional people.

12-00:16:43

Lage: That were involved with the national parks?

12-00:16:46

McLaughlin: With parks and recreation.

12-00:16:47

Lage: I see. When you say "professional," you mean they were employed by —

12-00:16:50

McLaughlin: Employed by, yes.

12-00:16:52

Lage: National Park Service?

12-00:16:52

McLaughlin: Yes.

12-00:16:53

Lage: Oh, I see. So, this was really a support group.

12-00:16:55

McLaughlin: And some of them would be from cities, some from counties, some from national parks. Then the Student Conservation Association was very interesting.

12-00:17:05

Lage: Now tell me about that. Was that —

12-00:17:09

McLaughlin: This was started by a fellow Vassar alum, and she wrote this up as a senior thesis, to have volunteers work in the national parks and national forests and BLM lands as volunteers, as I say. High schoolers, and younger college students. That is still going on, and they're doing a very good job. I don't know how well recognized. Because someone said, "Well, then why don't you turn this—why don't you really do it?" You know. So then she established this organization.

12-00:17:50

Lage: Oh, I see. She wrote it up as a proposal, and then she—

12-00:17:51

McLaughlin: Yes. That's right.

12-00:17:53

Lage: So, she was a young recent graduate of Vassar.

12-00:17:54

McLaughlin: Yes.

12-00:17:57

Lage: And this is a national organization, then?

12-00:17:59

McLaughlin: It is a national organization. In fact, they have an office in Oakland, but the headquarters is still in New Hampshire. They do very valuable work in the parks, in all different ways.

12-00:18:17

Lage: Have you involved any of those students in Save the Bay, or in any of your other activities?

12-00:18:24

McLaughlin: No, because as I say, they go out and they work in a sort of a hands-on type of—building trails, and improving the environment in various different ways. They're sometimes working in the visitors centers, and things like that. But mostly, it's active work such as trail building, and so on.

12-00:18:53

Lage: Interesting. And who was the person? Do you remember the name of the —

12-00:18:56

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. Elizabeth—she's been married a couple of times—her last name is now Putnam. Elizabeth (Cushman) Titus Putnam. And she's still actively involved in it. My friend Judy Nadai, who lives in San Francisco, was at one time the chairman of the board. Another Vassar—it was quite a heavily Vassar group.

12-00:19:23

Lage: Heavily Vassar. Now, when you get on boards of directors—I'm just taking these three that you've just talked about—are you expected to help with fundraising, or with policy?

12-00:19:34

McLaughlin: Oh, on every board you are, I think. The East Bay Conservation Corps was another very interesting one I was on for a number of years. So, you know they take people basically off the streets, and put them to work largely doing landscaping environmental work for—they have contracts with East Bay MUD [Municipal Utility District], with the Park District, and so on.

12-00:20:03

Lage: Is it mainly young people, or —

12-00:20:05

McLaughlin: Yes. Mainly young people. And then part of the program is educational, and every Friday that have sort of a studying component. It's really quite inspiring, because some of these young people were high school dropouts, and then they get their GED, and some of them go on to college and careers.

12-00:20:33

Lage: Do some of them get inspired by the contact with nature?

12-00:20:37

McLaughlin: Yes, and there are expectations for these people, such as being prompt and doing a good job, some of the things like that. There would be the same expectations no matter what kind of job they would be doing afterwards. So that was interesting.

12-00:20:59

Lage: And that was—Oh, you've been on that for a long time. '85 to —

12-00:21:03

McLaughlin: Yes.

12-00:21:04

Lage: — '98. We skipped over Partners for Livable Communities. Tell me about that.

12-00:21:44

McLaughlin: Well, that was also very interesting. It was started by Bob McNulty, who was from Oakland. It's a national group, and their idea was to have communities made more livable by various different things going on in them. And Partners for Livable Communities had some very sort of important people on it. Like Bill Reilly, who had been the head of the EPA at one time, and—oh—various others.

12-00:22:05

Lage: But it was founded here in Oakland?

12-00:22:09

McLaughlin: Yes, but they're mostly based in Washington, DC.

12-00:22:13

Lage: Oh, they are. Who is Robert McNulty?

12-00:22:16

McLaughlin: Bob McNulty? Well, he spent most of his career—he and his wife—working for this organization. And they also developed a liaison with a community in France. And I'm not sure quite what that as all about, because they didn't meet very often, so—but the organization still exists, although I think he's about to retire.

12-00:23:00

Lage: Just tell me a little bit more about that, if you can. Did it focus on urban conservation, or urban planning?

12-00:23:09

McLaughlin: Yes, I would say urban planning. They thought it was important for cities to be attractive, and to have all the arts represented, and sort of making the downtowns more lively, I would say, in various different ways.

12-00:23:38

Lage: So it wasn't necessarily ecological, but it was —

12-00:23:40

McLaughlin: Yes. It was broader than that.

12-00:23:43

Lage: And was that an active board?

12-00:23:48

McLaughlin: Yes.

12-00:23:48

Lage: Did you take an active role, or kind of watch?

12-00:23:51

McLaughlin: Well, I sort of dropped out—I dropped off most of these organizations when my husband was not well. That was in the early eighties. So, I didn't —

12-00:24:06

Lage: You can only do so much.

12-00:24:07

McLaughlin: That's right. And I did kind of stay with Save the Bay, but I didn't go to very many meetings.

The Resource Renewal Institute is still going on. And they are, as you may know, interested—this was started by Huey Johnson, who had been the [California] Resources Agency secretary under Jerry Brown. Well, before that, he had started the Trust for Public Land. Before that, he'd been with the Nature Conservancy. That's when I first met him.

12-00:24:45

Lage: So you met him way back.

12-00:12:46

McLaughlin: Way back.

12-00:12:47

Lage: When he was just a young-un.

12-00:24:50

McLaughlin: I was trying to interest the Nature—well, I always tried to interest any group in our bay saving efforts. So, this must have been in the early sixties, and I remember showing him all the plans Santa Fe had for development.

12-00:25:05

Lage: And how did he react in those early days to Save the Bay? Was he supportive?

12-00:25:10

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. I should say. He's written several books, and a video's been made, a film has been made about his green plan ideas. He's just about to come out with another effort. Because I think this is very timely, particularly with everybody looking for ways to save on their energy, and so on. And greenhouse gas emissions, and all that. His prime model was the Netherlands, and I think they've passed their five-year mark. They're going for their ten-year mark. They were able to bring together the business people, the environmentalists, and the ordinary citizens to achieve certain goals by certain times.

12-00:26:19

Lage: Goals toward greenhouse gases?

12-00:26:21

McLaughlin: No, for having better quality air, better quality soils, and better quality water, because everything had been just really, really polluted.

12-00:26:38

Lage: In the Netherlands?

12-00:26:39

McLaughlin: Yes. And also, the country of New Zealand has been quite at the forefront of this movement, and certain cities. Singapore, and the state of Michigan—various states are adopting some of these principles. New Jersey.

12-00:27:01

Lage: Now, are you saying these principles that Huey Johnson has put forth?

12-00:27:06

McLaughlin: Yes. What's called the Green Planning Path. Anyway, we'll be hearing more about it very soon, I'm sure.

12-00:27:15

Lage: Okay. Now, let's go back and talk a little bit more about Huey Johnson, because he's such an interesting —

12-00:27:20

McLaughlin: Very.

12-00:27:20

Lage: — figure. And he's been around a long, long time, and part of that time he was in government.

- 12-00:27:26  
McLaughlin: Yes.
- 12-00:27:27  
Lage: Now, you also had contact with him when he was head of the Resources Agency. That was under Jerry Brown.
- 12-00:27:34  
McLaughlin: That's right.
- 12-00:27:34  
Lage: So, how did you —
- 12-00:27:36  
McLaughlin: We were trying—even then, we were trying to interest him in—I remember a meeting we had with Dwight Steele, and we organized it, and various others from the CESP group.
- 12-00:27:52  
Lage: Tell me about the meeting.
- 12-00:27:54  
McLaughlin: Well, actually, we had it at the Nut Tree. You know, he was personally very supportive, and interested, and so on, but I don't think very much happened. Well, this was not unlike—we went to every administration, and we talked to their Resources Agency people, we talked to their parks people, and nothing much ever happened.
- 12-00:28:22  
Lage: It takes so much patience. But it's interesting to me when someone who's really a devoted environmentalist gets into a state position —
- 12-00:28:32  
McLaughlin: He accomplished a lot at the state level, yes.
- 12-00:28:35  
Lage: But maybe not as much as you wanted.
- 12-00:28:38  
McLaughlin: Well, we had our focus, and he was doing other things.
- 12-00:28:42  
Lage: Yes. And when did he start this Resource Renewal Institute? Was that when he came out of —
- 12-00:28:50  
McLaughlin: That was after he came back from Sacramento.
- 12-00:28:55  
Lage: And you were on that board.

12-00:28:56

McLaughlin: Yes. From the beginning.

12-00:28:59

Lage: How does that organization function?

12-00:29:03

McLaughlin: Well, he has a very small board. Annette Gellert, of the Gellert Foundation, has been very interested. She's the chairman, and Huey's the president, and Alf Heller is on the board, and Chris Erdman, and a few other people. [Sylvia McLaughlin is secretary—ed.] And we don't meet very often, but Huey's very approachable, and —

12-00:29:29

Lage: Is it pretty much a one-man operation, though, do you think? Or does he listen to the board, and —

12-00:29:34

McLaughlin: Oh, he listens to the board, yes. Well, certain ones are very interested in the financial aspect, and the nuts and bolts, and so on. But he is a very creative person, and he's been able to get funding from different places, different sources.

12-00:30:02

Lage: Where does he get his funding? That's always a problem with organizations.

12-00:30:05

McLaughlin: Oh, Huey likes to fish. He takes people out fishing. He likes to hunt. He gets invited to these—well, I guess if you're sitting on a duck blind for a long time with some affluent people, they're right there to listen to you.

12-00:30:27

Lage: I interviewed him once, on a specific topic, which was about Mrs. Gerbode—Martha Gerbode. We were doing a sort of retrospective on her.

12-00:30:38

McLaughlin: Oh, really? I remember her. I used to go skiing with Dr. Gerbode.

12-00:30:41

Lage: Oh, you did?

12-00:30:41

McLaughlin: Yes.

12-00:30:42

Lage: Oh, my.

12-00:30:43

McLaughlin: He'd go to Aspen, and do a bit of skiing, and then he'd have a cocktail party with some of these affluent people there, and tell them about his project.

12-00:30:53  
Lage: Huey?

12-00:30:54  
McLaughlin: Yes.

12-00:30:54  
Lage: Yes. Because he does seem good at—he interested Mrs. Gerbode, and—

12-00:30:57  
McLaughlin: Huey's basically a very good salesman. He was doing that before he ever went into conservation work.

12-00:31:05  
Lage: Doing sales work?

12-00:31:06  
McLaughlin: Mm-hmm. But no matter what you're doing, you're selling ideas. I've been trying to sell ideas of saving the bay, saving the shoreline, whatever.

12-00:31:16  
Lage: And it's a constant preoccupation.

12-00:31:20  
McLaughlin: Yes. It's trying to persuade people—well, not necessarily to buy your product, but to become involved in what you're doing.

12-00:31:32  
Lage: That's an interesting way of looking at it.

12-00:31:35  
McLaughlin: Oh, yes. (telephone rings) I'm sorry. [break]

12-00:31:38  
Lage: We were talking about Huey Johnson and about sales work, and about his creativity, too. You've been in so many organizations, and I'm just trying to think of a way to sort of capture how they interrelate, how they affected you, how you affected them —

12-00:32:31  
McLaughlin: Oh, lots of times there's an interrelationship, because you learn from one, and you can sort of transpose that into another. I can't think of any really good examples right now, but sometimes it's how they operate, how they do things, and sometimes you see people in one organization, you think people are good in this other organization.

12-00:32:54  
Lage: And can you think of times when you helped effect a change because of—did you bring something back to Save the Bay, or to CESP, things that you've been most centrally involved with? It's hard to think of examples, I know.

12-00:33:15

McLaughlin: Maybe it sort of goes by osmosis.

12-00:33:21

Lage: Yes. It's hard to think of examples, which is what I'm trying to push you to do.

12-00:33:29

McLaughlin: But with all of these groups, I have benefited. I have learned from them. So it's been a life-long learning experience for me.

12-00:33:46

Lage: Well, I was thinking I wanted to ask you to reflect on the talk that Dick Walker gave last night on his new book [*The Country in the City: the Greening of the San Francisco Bay Area*]. I'm just going to ask you one thing about it. They talked about how some of the environmental groups—some of the questions, especially, brought this out—implying the environmental groups had sort of calcified. I don't think that word was used, but maybe they weren't as forward looking.

12-00:34:14

McLaughlin: Have become more institutionalized.

12-00:34:16

Lage: More institutionalized. And I thought it was overlooking all the new organizations that keep being founded, and you're one of the people who keeps founding new organizations. Why did you kind of move—not move away from Save the Bay, but on to other —

12-00:34:38

McLaughlin: Why did I?

12-00:34:38

Lage: Yes. Did you see —

12-00:34:40

McLaughlin: Well, no. I felt Save the Bay was doing a good job. They were in good hands. I had these other issues that I was extremely interested in—the shoreline park. They're all related.

12-00:34:51

Lage: They are related, but couldn't—say, take the Sierra Club as an example. They will start a committee to focus on Eastshore Park.

12-00:35:03

McLaughlin: Well, that's actually how CESP, I guess, got started, because we started a shoreline park committee, I remember, at Kay Kerr's house.

12-00:35:14

Lage: Oh, you did? Within Save the Bay?

12-00:35:18

McLaughlin: Yes. Dwight Steele, and various others were on it.

12-00:35:23

Lage: And then why did it move out of Save the Bay and become its own organization?

12-00:35:28

McLaughlin: Well, for a time, before we got our own 501(c)(3) status, why Save the Bay was our fiscal—we were under their umbrella, so to speak. I just think it was felt that we could be more effective that way.

12-00:35:55

Lage: Having this single focus?

12-00:35:56

McLaughlin: Yes. Yes.

12-00:35:57

Lage: The other group that was interesting to me that you founded was the Public Trust Group.

12-00:36:01

McLaughlin: Yes.

12-00:36:02

Lage: Now, why did that come about as a separate group?

12-00:36:08

McLaughlin: Well, it's quite simple. This was at the time when the military bases around the bay were being decommissioned and turned over to civilian use. Generally, just for one dollar, they'd turn it over to whichever city was closest. And also generally the navy—or whoever had been there—left a lot of toxic waste, and so forth. And then I had a call from Carl Anthony when he said, "Sylvia, nobody's paying any attention to the public trust." Because most of these bases are built on tidelands, which are viewed with what is known as the public trust doctrine. And I think at that time, the focus was on Alameda. And so I gathered together a group of people, and we started this little group. First it was sort of under the umbrella of the Trust for Public Land. Marty Rosen was very interested, then head of the Trust for Public Land, so we would meet there in his office. Then—well, I was busy with other things, so I turned the leadership over to Eve Bach. She had been the assistant—not the general manager—anyway, assistant manager of the City of Berkeley. She was working for Arc Ecology.

12-00:37:55

Lage: For what?

12-00:37:56

McLaughlin: Arc Ecology. A-R-C Ecology.

12-00:38:00

Lage: I don't know that group.

12-00:38:02

McLaughlin: It's a San Francisco group. It was started by Saul Bloom. And particularly interested in toxic areas, and so forth. And then Sandy Threlfall was very interested. She started her own group, Waterfront Action. She's primarily interested in the Oakland Waterfront. She and I have gone to a number of Waterfront Center conferences together. Then Ruth Gravanis, who had worked at Save the Bay on wetland issues—she was very knowledgeable. And then there are two or three others that come to the meetings. And so, we also were very active on Mare Island. There was a woman there named Myrna Hayes who was very active there. Our mission, as we saw it, was really to acquaint the decision makers with the public trust doctrine, and tell them that they had the responsibility for all the people of the state in some of these areas. And it's the state lands, so we always kept in close touch with the State Lands Commission, with their staff. And Nancy Strauch was also in this group, and she would talk with one of their staff persons, Blake Stevenson, on a weekly basis. So we knew what they were doing; they knew what we were doing.

12-00:39:48

Lage: Was this to kind of remind them that as they make these decisions, they can't develop the public trust land?

12-00:39:56

McLaughlin: Yes. We were kind of a watchdog group, I guess. Ruth Gravanis has been very effective working for the last several years on Treasure Island. Because the developers, of course, saw this as primarily for housing, which they wanted to put on the edge. Well, with Ruth's work, she was able to influence their planning, and also with the help of the staff at the State Lands Commission. Every time there's an election, well the representatives on the State Lands Commission change. So then we have to, again, let them be aware that we're there, and we've become acquainted with them. We've just recently gone through that process.

12-00:40:54

Lage: Sort of educating the State Lands Commission to the history?

12-00:40:57

McLaughlin: Well, or being sure that we know that they're there. And also the Hunter's Point area.

12-00:41:09

Lage: Now, does the Public Trust Group look at all these areas? You focus on the former lands of the military?

12-00:41:14

McLaughlin: Well, yes. Over there, well, at Concord Naval Weapons Station. I mean, there are a lot of public trust issues in these different former military bases, as I say,

since they were really built—a lot of them—on the tidelands. So, the last person we saw was the lieutenant governor, John Garamendi, and he was very cordial, very helpful.

12-00:41:43

Lage: And receptive?

12-00:41:45

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. And also on the commission, there are three commissioners: the state controller, and the state director of finance, and the lieutenant governor.

12-00:42:01

Lage: I know the political—not appointees, but political figures, elected officials, are members of the State Lands Commission. What about the staff? Does that change as the different administrations change?

12-00:42:18

McLaughlin: Yes. Yes they do. There have been some very good staffers. Unfortunately, several of them are retiring.

12-00:42:28

Lage: Because some of them have—they've done good work over the years, since the San Bruno Mountain—

12-00:42:32

McLaughlin: Oh, excellent—yes. Yes, indeed. So, anyway, that's a really ongoing but very important aspect of really saving the bay.

12-00:42:47

Lage: Yes. It really is. And here again, it's another new group that maybe is sort of under the radar in terms of people who are documenting the history. There are so many small groups.

12-00:43:04

McLaughlin: Maybe.

12-00:43:06

Lage: Do they communicate with each other through newsletters anymore, or how do they communicate? What kind of a record does a group like —

12-00:43:16

McLaughlin: Public Trust Group?

12-00:43:17

Lage: — Trust Group leave. I'm thinking about the Bancroft Library [historical records].

12-00:43:22

McLaughlin: Of course. There are minutes of the meetings, and then we're on the list of the various people that are trying to do development sometimes. So, yes, there is a record, and this has been going on for some time.

12-00:43:47  
Lage: Hopefully, those minutes might go in your —

12-00:43:50  
McLaughlin: Oh, yes. Of course.

12-00:43:51  
Lage: — deposit to the Bancroft. Now, you don't have email.

12-00:43:54  
McLaughlin: No.

12-00:43:55  
Lage: You don't get email. I would guess a lot of the groups are communicating with each other via email.

12-00:44:00  
McLaughlin: Yes. Well, they think I'm a big nuisance, of course, but they do print out materials for me.

12-00:44:06  
Lage: Do they print out and fax to you?

12-00:44:08  
McLaughlin: Sometimes. I mean, that works very well. Sometimes colleagues drop things off at my porch, put things under the rock. That's my message center.

12-00:44:23  
Lage: There's a lot of email—so much is done via email in organizations, now, and a lot of that is lost to history. It doesn't get saved.

12-00:44:33  
McLaughlin: That's right. I hadn't thought of that.

12-00:44:36  
Lage: It doesn't get saved —

12-00:44:37  
McLaughlin: Unless it gets printed out.

12-00:44:38  
Lage: — unless it gets printed out. And you might be the person that it gets printed out for, which makes your records even more important.

12-00:44:45  
McLaughlin: (laughter) I'll remember that.

12-00:44:47  
Lage: Yes. You can tell them that.

12-00:44:48  
McLaughlin: All right.

12-00:44:49

Lage: You're the one that's saving the record. Like Ed Wayburn would have things printed out for him in the Sierra Club, and he has files of all these printouts.

12-00:45:00

McLaughlin: I'm sure.

12-00:45:02

Lage: And he's put them in the Bancroft. But I think if he hadn't—and others have done that too, I'm sure some of the earlier email correspondence, at least, would have been lost.

12-00:45:10

McLaughlin: As you say, a lot of the communication is by email. Well, I'll make these people aware of how valuable I am. Keeping the records.

12-00:45:18

Lage: Right. Because I think it's fascinating as you bring out all these different groups, and how they spin off and focus on an issue.

12-00:45:28

McLaughlin: And yet they do interact. Because, for instance, the shoreline park group, CESP, we very much like to network with other groups. We very much like to have their support when there's a big issue. And it seems to me a lot of the environmental organizations work this way. When they need your support, they let you know. And, you know, there's all different ways of showing support. Well, one's financial. You can show up at meetings, make statements at meetings, write letters; there's lots of ways of interacting with other groups that you believe in.

12-00:45:27

Lage: Now, the people that you mentioned that got involved in the Public Trust Group. What are their backgrounds, and—you know, I know Marty Rosen was Trust for Public Land.

12-00:46:42

McLaughlin: Yes.

12-00:46:43

Lage: What about Ruth —

12-00:46:44

McLaughlin: Ruth Gravanis?

12-00:46:45

Lage: Gravanis.

12-00:46:46

McLaughlin: As I said, she—at one time, Save the Bay had a retreat, and decided they should focus more on the wetlands around the bay. So we got in touch with all the organizations. There were thirty-some organizations around the bay that

were interested in wetlands. So, Ruth—we sort of created a kind of a subcommittee, and Ruth was in charge of that.

12-00:47:18

Lage: Now, was she a paid employee?

12-00:47:20

McLaughlin: She was.

12-00:47:21

Lage: Okay. So, you created a—

12-00:47:25

McLaughlin: Yes.

12-00:47:25

Lage: — program, and hired somebody.

12-00:47:27

McLaughlin: So, she did that for several years, I think. Then I guess that just got, maybe, taken—it was not as urgent, or—anyway, the structure changed. Put it that way. But she's done very valuable work, as I say, regarding the public trust in some of these different bases, particularly Treasure Island. Huey Johnson has been particularly interested in the public trust issue, and they have a subgroup called the Public Trust Alliance, and Mike Warburton heads that up. He's a very knowledgeable person about the law. He's testified at hearings in other parts of the state.

12-00:48:22

Lage: But he doesn't focus on the military. I mean, is that why—

12-00:48:26

McLaughlin: No.

12-00:48:26

Lage: — you created Public Trust Group?

12-00:48:26

McLaughlin: No. No, that's right. Yes. But he generally comes to our meetings, and as I say, he's extremely knowledgeable and brings also public trust issues to the attention of the developer, or whoever is trying to do something where public trust is involved.

12-00:48:52

Lage: Now, as you describe this kind of cooperation to me, you describe it as a very—not a contentious or competitive relationship —

12-00:49:05

McLaughlin: Oh, no.

12-00:49:06

Lage: — but very collaborative.

12-00:49:08

McLaughlin: Very collaborative.

12-00:49:09

Lage: So you don't see organizations competing for primacy, or membership?

12-00:49:14

McLaughlin: No. At one point, I wondered why there are so many different organizations now involved with the bay, but each one has a slightly different focus. For instance, the Bay Institute has more of an interest in science, and Baykeeper is toxic issues, and so on. But yet I think there's a lot of commonality in these issues that we all support, but some support them to a greater degree, and now I think that a lot of the organizations, including Save the Bay, are becoming very interested in restoration, and that sort of thing. Creek restoration, marsh restoration. And that, again, is something that the foundations are interested in funding—these projects.

12-00:50:11

Lage: The local foundations here in the Bay Area?

12-00:50:13

McLaughlin: Mm-hmm.

12-00:50:13

Lage: Like which ones? Is there a whole range of foundations that you go to?

12-00:50:20

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. We look on the chart, and see which ones are interested in which efforts, and —

12-00:50:24

Lage: And there you go.

12-00:50:27

McLaughlin: That's right. The Foundation Center is very helpful. But basically it's the people who are on the boards of these organizations that have the responsibility for raising funds.

12-00:50:41

Lage: Even the grant seeking?

12-00:50:44

McLaughlin: Yes. The organizations that have enough money—like Save the Bay now has—they have several people in their development department. CESP has one employee, and I try to do the best I can with several of the board members that are helping.

12-00:51:04

Lage: Now, last night at the talk we went to —

12-00:51:09

McLaughlin: The committee structure.

12-00:51:14

Lage: There were comments from the audience last night that seemed to express some fear that environmentalists would get bought off, or not retain this radical edge that Dick Walker talks about. Is that something that you see happening? When an organization, like Save the Bay, develops a bigger budget, and has bigger sources of funding, do they get compromised?

12-00:51:49

McLaughlin: Oh, I think that's a little too strong a word to use. I would say that they're maybe not at the cutting edge of advocacy, as much as we used to be.

12-00:52:03

Lage: In what way?

12-00:52:11

McLaughlin: Well, where there are opportunities for them to—I'm not saying this is only Save the Bay. Other organizations, too, that become more institutionalized—there are opportunities to be part of a group that is trying to effect change. They can choose not to be part of that group, just for whatever reason, maybe.

12-00:52:43

Lage: Well, do you think it's because of their funding connections?

12-00:52:46

McLaughlin: Sometimes. Sometimes I think they don't want to alienate the funders. So, they're very careful about choosing what they want to do. Some of the things, like education is non-threatening, whereas if there's something that you want to promote, that might be slightly different.

12-00:53:17

Lage: What would be more threatening, do you think? I mean, can you point to a particular project that —

12-00:53:26

McLaughlin: Well, a lot of times it's involved with litigation, for one thing.

12-00:53:30

Lage: I see. Litigation to stop development?

12-00:53:36

McLaughlin: Yes. That's generally what it's about. But on the other hand, I think organizations go through different phases. The first phase, they're just a shoestring organization, largely run by the board. And then they seem to—over time, those original people become older, and drop off, and then it's become more professional now. You have these different categories of professionals that are into the planning, or the development, or whatever, whereas we had to be sort of knowledgeable about a whole bunch of different things.

12-00:54:30

Lage: Right. So, do you think this explains some of your interest in —

12-00:54:42

McLaughlin: Moving on?

12-00:54:42

Lage: — continuing to develop these smaller organizations, and newer ones?

12-00:54:46

McLaughlin: Well, no. I would say that maybe I just see something that needs doing, and that somebody should do it.

12-00:54:56

Lage: And instead of working through the bureaucracy of an existing organization, you can just start anew. Is that right, or am I not —

12-00:55:06

McLaughlin: Yes, I think. And with the individuals with whom you share this interest, and whom you think will be really actively involved. So, I guess that's what's compelled me to start other organizations, or be a part of the original structure of organizations. If you see that an organization can be made more effective, that's one way of dealing with these things. But otherwise, if the existing organizations aren't sort of, as I say, stepping up to the plate, and doing everything you think that might be done, there's the recourse of starting an organization that will focus on what that issue is, the outcomes that you're seeking. For instance, in the seventies, when there was this proposal of the Santa Fe to have the regional shopping center down in Berkeley Meadow, then that was when Roz Lepawsky and I started the Urban Care organization.

12-00:56:36

Lage: But was that because Save the Bay didn't want to focus on that? Was there a —

12-00:56:44

McLaughlin: Well, they were part of it, but we were largely the chief—we had the leadership on that.

12-00:56:58

Lage: Against the regional shopping center.

12-00:57:00

McLaughlin: Yes.

12-00:57:01

Lage: But I'm trying to understand if there was less willingness within Save the Bay to challenge that idea, the idea of the regional shopping center—or were they more willing to say, "Well, maybe we'll give up that little bit"?

12-00:57:17

McLaughlin: No. I don't remember where they were on that. But we had some very good local people, and Roz and Albert Lepawsky were very forceful in the community, and so on, and so forth.

12-00:57:40

Lage: So you were the driving force behind the opposition to that regional shopping center.

12-00:57:42

McLaughlin: Yes. Yes. And we really were the driving force, as you say, for the hearings that were held for the Planning Commission, the City Council, and so on. Anyway, that worked. And then also, that was at the same time that the [East Bay] Regional Park District was kind of reviewing their priorities, and they had a group—I forget what it was called—and it was led by Stewart Udall. So, I remember there were various hearings. Sometimes I would speak for Save the Bay, sometimes I would speak for Urban Care. Sometimes I would —

12-00:58:36

Lage: Speak for both?

12-00:58:39

McLaughlin: — for CESP, and—you know. It depended.

12-00:58:44

Lage: Whichever seemed to work better?

12-00:58:48

McLaughlin: Well, no. If somebody else was going to speak for this organization, then I could speak for the other organization.

12-00:58:50

Lage: Oh, I see. I see. You could put on different hats, depending where you were needed.

12-00:58:54

McLaughlin: Sure. Sure.

12-00:58:55

Lage: Yes. Interesting. Let's see. We're skipping all around, but I think that doesn't matter. We're going to cover everything eventually. You were on Save the Redwoods League.

12-00:59:06

McLaughlin: Yes.

12-00:59:07

Lage: Board of councillors. Now, that's another organization with another culture.

12-00:59:15

McLaughlin: Well, actually, my husband had been on that board. It had been largely founded—I think—by some of the University of California—some of their leadership, who really enjoyed the redwoods, and so on. And for a long time, Bob Sproul, the president of the university, was the treasurer. And things like that. So there was a close association.

12-00:59:43

Lage: I'm going to hold you one minute. I didn't notice the hour, and —

[End Audio File 12 mclaughlin\_sylvia12\_05-11-07.mp3]

[Begin Audio File 13 mclaughlin\_sylvia13\_05-11-07.mp3]

13-00:00:02

Lage: Okay. We are back on. We were talking about Save the Redwoods League, and you were saying that your husband had been —

13-00:00:13

McLaughlin: He'd been on the board of councillors for—oh, several years.

13-00:00:20

Lage: And did you sort of replace him on the board?

13-00:00:24

McLaughlin: Oh, probably.

13-00:00:25

Lage: After he died?

13-00:00:26

McLaughlin: Probably.

13-00:00:27

Lage: That seems to be a pattern with Save the Redwoods League.

13-00:00:29

McLaughlin: (laughter) Yes. Keep somebody in the family. And then they also appointed my son George, but I think he found it was sort of one more thing, and he was busy with his young family, and so on. So, he dropped off.

13-00:00:46

Lage: Now, I'm looking to see when you were on that board. For a long time—twenty years, if your dates here are correct. You have '83 to 2003.

13-00:00:59

McLaughlin: That's about right, yes.

13-00:01:01

Lage: I interviewed Bruce Howard not long ago—not long before he died. Was he president during the —

13-00:01:08

McLaughlin: Every time we had a Save the Redwoods League meeting, why, Bruce could tell me what was going on with the National Audubon, because he was on that board for many years.

13-00:01:16

Lage: That's right. He was.

13-00:01:18

McLaughlin: And they were having sort of a revolution during the time that he was on the board, and he was in charge of chapter relations. I told you there was this sort of a feeling by the chapters. Anyway, it was always really interesting to talk to Bruce. He was really knowledgeable about both organizations.

13-00:01:47

Lage: Now, that seemed to be an organization that the board of councillors wasn't that active in setting policy, it seems to me. Did you have that impression? How did it compare with Save the Bay in that respect?

13-00:02:08

McLaughlin: Again, I think they have a committee structure, and then also several of us felt that this was one of the organizations that might be made more effective, and they have what they call their board of directors is really their executive committee. This was how they choose to do it. And their board of councillors is what most organizations call their board of directors. And so a group of us would meet and have a very nice dinner, and discuss all these different ways in which we felt the organization could be made more effective. So, I think a number of those ideas have been put into practice now. And two of the individuals who were in our little rump group are now on the executive committee, which they call the board of directors.

13-00:03:16

Lage: I see. And what did you see—what kind of changes were you proposing?

13-00:03:30

McLaughlin: It varies with the different groups. We had another issue like that with Save the Bay. A group of us felt that there should be some changes. So we would have other meetings —

13-00:03:46

Lage: Rump meetings.

13-00:03:47

McLaughlin: Yes. And Save the Bay had a lot to do with personnel, and with the Save the Redwoods League, maybe it was somewhat the way they operated, and so on, but I think they seem to be doing a fine job, now. So I've discovered that I really enjoy being a part of these efforts to make organizations more effective. Because it's a subtle way of being creative, trying to improve the way in which they work to be more effective. I think, perhaps because I've been on a number of different boards, you develop sort of thoughts and ideas about what

works well, and how you can improve this or that organization by making a few changes.

13-00:05:09

Lage: Now, you're being very abstract.

13-00:05:15

McLaughlin: I know you want to have —

13-00:05:16

Lage: Specifics of what makes an organization effective, and how you —

13-00:05:19

McLaughlin: It's different with each organization, because the organization's needs might be different at different times. As I say, sometimes it's personnel, sometimes it's the committee structure, sometimes it's a little bit of both. Sometimes it's major policy decisions. But it seems to me there was one other organization I was doing this for, helping. But oftentimes, organizations kind of go on year to year, and I think it's really good to have people on their boards that can look at an organization and try to have it be more effective, because you want to achieve something, all these various organizations do, even though they're mostly volunteer people. Although now, I would say that some of the organizations are becoming more institutionalized, they attract a different type of person onto their board.

13-00:06:56

Lage: Because they attract the funding?

13-00:06:58

McLaughlin: Yes, that's part of it. Because they like to have people that are well connected with the different businesses, or different sources of funding, so that they can pay the staff that does the professional work that formerly was done by a lot of the board members. So, it's a little bit different way of operating—management style.

13-00:07:26

Lage: And do you think there is an effective balance between the volunteer board [and the staff]—where should the power lie? That's always been a huge struggle in the Sierra Club, for instance. Should it be the staff or the board who runs the place?

13-00:07:43

McLaughlin: It seems to me—and this is just off the top of my head—it should be a collaborative type of management, and essentially—well, they always say, "Well, it's the board that makes the policy, and the paid staff are the ones that execute." But I think a lot of times now, it's, say, an executive director that tries to put in place some of the ideas that he or she and the staff generate. Naturally, they have to get a go-ahead from the board of directors. But it's a situation where it allows the staff to be creative as well, which I think is good. And some staffs always were very effective, fortunately. I think of the Trust

for Public Land. A lot of these organizations really take their lead from the executive director, and so on, and whatever interests they may have.

13-00:09:14

Lage: And some are set up to be primarily a staff organization. I would guess Trust for Public Land was sort of set up that way, to have a strong —

13-00:09:24

McLaughlin: Well, they have a very effective board as well, too. But for instance, it's their staff people who go out and make these land transactions and things like that—sort of like a land trust, and so on.

13-00:09:43

Lage: You were on Trust for Public Land National Leadership Council. Is that like a board —

13-00:09:49

McLaughlin: No.

13-00:09:49

Lage: — or is that more of an advisory group?

13-00:09:53

McLaughlin: Well, I was once on an advisory group, and then they sort of changed the structure. I think they just sort of didn't know what to do with us, so...

13-00:10:01

Lage: But was that an active policy-making group?

13-00:10:05

McLaughlin: I think it's just a sort of honorific, and they'd like to have us be more helpful at raising funds, I think. Because now they have a national advisory council, they have state advisory councils, and we were just sort of left over. That's my personal opinion.

13-00:10:27

Lage: Yes. But as a group, was that an organization that you think highly of?

13-00:10:36

McLaughlin: We only meet once or twice a year, and generally, we are apprised of what the organization is doing. So, essentially, also, I think we can be ambassadors for the organization, if we're knowledgeable about what they are doing.

13-00:10:57

Lage: And a link, maybe, to your other organizations.

13-00:11:00

McLaughlin: Mm-hmm.

13-00:11:03

Lage: Okay. Let's see. Greenbelt Alliance. You're on that board—or you were on that board of directors. Were you on —

13-00:11:11

McLaughlin: I think we worked together very closely for a long time. There was a very good friend of Jack Kent's who was head of it, very good friend of Dorothy Erskine who really ran it. She and her husband Morse Erskine were very supportive of Save the Bay. And then Larry Orman—I may have told you—was given the task of working with Roz Lepawsky and me when we were having regional shopping center —

13-00:11:50

Lage: Oh, he came in at that point?

13-00:11:51

McLaughlin: Yes, and I became very well acquainted with him. So then he was our first executive director. I remember Dorothy Erskine asked me what I thought about him, so I recommended him highly to be executive director of People for Open Space.

13-00:12:11

Lage: And he stayed with that for a long time.

13-00:12:13

McLaughlin: Yes. He still has sort of related businesses now.

13-00:12:22

Lage: Well, what kind of an organization was it when you were there? Were you there during any period of transition, where you were involved —

13-00:12:30

McLaughlin: With the Greenbelt Alliance?

13-00:12:30

Lage: Yes. Were you there when it morphed into Greenbelt Alliance? When I say "were you there," I meant were you an active member of the board?

13-00:12:42

McLaughlin: Yes, I think I was there when they were even choosing the name of People for Open Space, where it was formerly Citizens for Regional Recreation and Parks. And then it turned into People for Open Space, and that turned into Greenbelt —

13-00:12:55

Lage: Did that mean a change of mission, or was it just a change of name?

13-00:12:59

McLaughlin: No, well, that has changed a bit over time, and I think one thing I remember was that Larry's always been a good friend, so we would talk about issues and things, but they applied to—I think it was the Hewlett Foundation—for a grant, and they were turned down. So then they had to sort of regroup, and decide on what their mission really was going to be, how they were going to get there. And I think that was when they branched out—I believe—and went into the local communities a little bit more, and became more active

politically. Because after all, it was many of these communities or counties that had the say-so over development of open space, and so that's where their presence really made a difference.

13-00:14:05

Lage: You mean they went into political work within a community?

13-00:14:10

McLaughlin: Yes, and telling the community what the alternatives were to the development—that they could have this open space area, and so on. And I think that's been very effective. They now have—oh, I guess you would call them field representatives—in the East Bay, and over the hills, and the North Bay area. It's still very much of a Bay Area organization. But, I mean, the so-called Bay Area counties cover quite a little area.

13-00:14:51

Lage: And how are they funded now? Are they grant-funded from foundations?

13-00:14:59

McLaughlin: Foundations, individuals. That's it.

13-00:15:02

Lage: That must be a constant struggle.

13-00:15:05

McLaughlin: It is with all these organizations.

13-00:15:06

Lage: Yes. Goodness.

13-00:15:08

McLaughlin: They seem to be—they're doing well, because I think people can see what they've been accomplishing.

13-00:15:16

Lage: Are there particular foundations here in the Bay Area that have helped keep these organizations afloat that you would point to?

13-00:15:28

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. Well, the Gerbode Organization, the Dean Witter Foundation, the San Francisco Foundation, the Goldman Fund Foundation.

13-00:15:48

Lage: Hewlett. Has Hewlett been helpful?

13-00:15:50

McLaughlin: Yes. And —

13-00:15:57

Lage: Has Packard?

- 13-00:15:58  
McLaughlin: Mm-hmm. You just go down the list, and see —
- 13-00:16:01  
Lage: I mean, I would think that would be an important component of —
- 13-00:16:05  
McLaughlin: The foundation help? Oh, yes.
- 13-00:00:00  
Lage: — this green culture that we're talking about. You know, what keeps it going and funds it, aside—well, we know that there's this vast array of volunteers, but as you say, there are also paid staff positions. Do you think having these kinds of environmentally oriented foundations has been important?
- 13-00:16:30  
McLaughlin: Oh, very important. I should say. And I've become acquainted with a number of the fundraisers in these different groups, and some of them sort of wove around, too. They all know one another.
- 13-00:16:44  
Lage: The fundraisers in the environmental groups.
- 13-00:16:46  
McLaughlin: Yes, yes.
- 13-00:16:48  
Lage: Yes. Have you been acquainted with the funders? The people in the foundations that keep —
- 13-00:16:55  
McLaughlin: Oh, yes. That's important as well. Yes. I mean, I've been going to them over the years —
- 13-00:17:03  
Lage: Has there been an education process to educate the foundations that you could talk about?
- 13-00:17:15  
McLaughlin: Well, we try to inform them as much as possible about what we're doing, always. I mean, they like to know.
- 13-00:17:24  
Lage: I'm just wondering why—for instance—you may not know, but maybe you can think of a—why would the Goldman Foundation develop such an interest in the environment?
- 13-00:17:39  
McLaughlin: Well, that apparently has been one of their principal interests, because these Goldman awards certainly reflect that.

13-00:17:51

Lage: But it's not —

13-00:17:55

McLaughlin: They usually have several different categories—the sort of human welfare, education, and environment. And so if you fall into one of those categories, well, that's the way it is.

13-00:18:10

Lage: Right. But I'm thinking again —

13-00:18:12

McLaughlin: I mean, you can look at some of their annual reports, and that's the way they're—

13-00:18:16

Lage: Oh, I know. I know. But this is not something, maybe, you can answer, but maybe part of the green culture that Dick Walker talks about—part of what has enabled it are organizations like Goldman, Hewlett, Packard developing an interest in the environment.

13-00:18:39

McLaughlin: Yes, well, they certainly have been very helpful.

13-00:18:45

Lage: It wouldn't be a given that they necessarily would do that. Somehow, at some point, they developed an interest in it.

13-00:18:54

McLaughlin: Yes, well I think it works both ways, because the organizations seeking funding sort of educate the funders about what their issues are, and what their problems are, and what their needs are. And so, then I guess the funders develop a greater interest.

13-00:19:16

Lage: Seems like another angle, because they have been very generous to the environmental movement.

13-00:19:21

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. And then of course everybody now is trying to get their foot in the door there with the Moore Foundation, so CESP is one of the ones. We're trying to see if we can get a little support from them, because they have a Bay Area fund, especially for the Bay Area. They're very interested. They like to give—apparently—big checks of money for environmental issues and conservation internationally and in South America. They've given a lot because of Betty Moore's interest in medical things. There's a Hewlett Packard Hospital in Palo Alto. So they have all these different categories as well, in their particular interest. Generally, it reflects the interest of the funding leadership. It's like Gordon and Betty Moore, you know?

- 13-00:20:35  
Lage: Especially when the organization's relatively new.
- 13-00:20:39  
McLaughlin: Yes.
- 13-00:20:39  
Lage: Now, do you find that it helps to have connections at the foundations?
- 13-00:20:49  
McLaughlin: Oh, yes.
- 13-00:20:50  
Lage: When CESP is looking for money, do you do it with a formal grant application, or do you do it with personal contacts?
- 13-00:21:00  
McLaughlin: I think both are important. Yes. You have to really do both. Again, this is sort of an educational process for the board members, whoever's going to meet with the funding person.
- 13-00:21:22  
Lage: Interesting. Similar to your politicking in other areas.
- 13-00:21:26  
McLaughlin: Oh, yes. And you see them around, and so you get to know sort of the who's who of the funding world. And a lot of times they stay there in those positions for some years.
- 13-00:21:46  
Lage: The staff members of those groups, yes. I know Hewlett had—and maybe they still do—a policy of keeping their program officers only for a set period of time. Maybe it was five years. And then —
- 13-00:22:03  
McLaughlin: It seems to me I remember quite a little turnover there. I didn't know it was a policy.
- 13-00:22:09  
Lage: That's the way I understood it, as a policy. It may have been to keep fresh ideas.
- 13-00:22:14  
McLaughlin: Could be. Whereas some of these other—like Gerbode, and Dean Witter, and San Francisco Foundation—the same people had been there for a number of years. And that's nice, because you become acquainted, you get to know them, they know you, they know what you're doing. And so on. I think all these personal relationships are extremely important, no matter what you're doing.

13-00:22:43

Lage: Now, I just want to be sure we've covered all of your different organizations. I'm going to skip the Frederick Law Olmsted Papers, because we talked about that.

13-00:22:51

McLaughlin: We did talk about that.

13-00:22:52

Lage: In one of our very early interviews. The Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs—there's another organization that is sort of beneath the radar.

13-00:23:01

McLaughlin: I don't really do much with them.

13-00:23:05

Lage: You say you were a vice president from '70 to '78.

13-00:23:08

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. (laughter) Didn't do much in that position, either.

13-00:23:11

Lage: You must have been kind of a representative of Save the Bay.

13-00:23:13

McLaughlin: Well, I knew Hazel Wolf, who was quite an interesting personality, and she always was very interested in Audubon. She started—I think single-handedly—over twenty chapters in the state of Washington.

13-00:23:34

Lage: Of Audubon? Goodness.

13-00:23:36

McLaughlin: She would meet people on the airplane immediately, so she was quite a salesperson. Get them involved in the Audubon, and so on. And she lived to be over one hundred years old, and she would come and stay with me here. So she was the one that asked me to be on this board.

13-00:23:52

Lage: And was she a leader of Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs?

13-00:23:56

McLaughlin: Yes, she was.

13-00:23:58

Lage: I see.

13-00:23:59

McLaughlin: And she knew all the people that were doing it. So I went to some of their meetings that were in this area. They take positions on issues. So they can be quite vocal. They can be very helpful on political issues.

- 13-00:24:18  
Lage: And speak out on —
- 13-00:24:19  
McLaughlin: Yes, because they represent many different groups.
- 13-00:24:25  
Lage: Okay. And we talked about Urban Care. I think we've talked about Ecocity Builders in Berkeley. Oh, here's the International Urban Estuary Network, on the second page.
- 13-00:24:42  
McLaughlin: Oh, yes. That's right. That's what I was talking about earlier, yes.
- 13-00:24:46  
Lage: Yes. International Rivers Network.
- 13-00:24:49  
McLaughlin: That's the IRN. I think I sit on their advisory board, and they actually have their head office here in Berkeley, and I think they just do a really outstanding job.
- 13-00:25:02  
Lage: And what's their focus about international rivers?
- 13-00:25:08  
McLaughlin: Largely preventing dams, and working with the local people. I suppose in some cases, helping to see that the dams are removed. It's essentially saving rivers—free-flowing rivers.
- 13-00:25:28  
Lage: Did they grow out of California's efforts here?
- 13-00:25:31  
McLaughlin: I don't think so. And I think the mining has pretty much wound down, I think—that committee.
- 13-00:25:46  
Lage: It has. The oral history mining project.
- 13-00:25:51  
McLaughlin: Lee [Swent, oral historian with ROHO] interviewed about—I don't know how many different people in the mining industry.
- 13-00:25:54  
Lage: Oh, she did so many.
- 13-00:25:56  
McLaughlin: I should say.
- 13-00:25:57  
Lage: At least two hundred.

13-00:25:59

McLaughlin: Goodness. I'm looking forward to her book. That will be so interesting.

13-00:26:01

Lage: Yes. Yes. Very much so. Lee Swent, we're talking about, for the record, here. Okay. Now, I had a lot of questions, which I think we've pretty well covered, but I'd like you to talk a little bit more about networks. It keeps coming up, and you mentioned that Hazel Wolf was such a good saleswoman, and would meet people on airplanes.

13-00:26:25

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. And she'd also go to the national board meetings, and she was quite an interesting personality. She was always one to speak out and speak up.

13-00:26:37

Lage: Is this within Audubon?

13-00:26:39

McLaughlin: Audubon. And she was quite a friend of David Brower, and when she—I may have told you this.

13-00:26:48

Lage: No.

13-00:26:49

McLaughlin: Some meeting where David was speaking, and afterwards, there was a question and answer period, she raised her hand. He said, "Yes, Hazel?" She said, "Dave, when this is finished, would you go out and buy me a martini?" (laughter)

13-00:27:03

Lage: I bet he was happy to do that.

13-00:27:05

McLaughlin: Of course. So that really brought down the house, I'm sure.

13-00:27:11

Lage: Was she one of the ones in Audubon who wanted more focus on the local chapters?

13-00:27:15

McLaughlin: Probably, yes.

13-00:27:16

Lage: Yes. Since she founded so many.

13-00:27:18

McLaughlin: Yes, and she was quite a force, you might say. And she was a very diminutive little person, and yet never hesitated to speak up and speak out. She's quite a legend up there.

13-00:27:42

Lage: Really?

13-00:27:43

McLaughlin: Yes.

13-00:27:44

Lage: Has there been a book written about her? I seem to remember —

13-00:27:47

McLaughlin: It could be. I think so.

13-00:27:47

Lage: — a biography or something about her. [*Hazel Wolf: Fighting the Establishment* by Susan Starbuck (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002)]

13-00:27:49

McLaughlin: I think so.

13-00:24:50

Lage: I'll have to check on that. No, but what I was going to say is I've heard the same thing about you—that you'll meet people on airplanes, and get them involved. Is that —

13-00:28:02

McLaughlin: I don't think quite to the extent that Hazel Wolf did.

13-00:28:07

Lage: But you do have a reputation for—and this came out at your birthday party—bringing people into the movement, hooking people up. Can you think of —

13-00:28:25

McLaughlin: I've never really thought about that. I guess it sort of is doing what came naturally, as I said.

13-00:28:31

Lage: But can you think of young people that you got involved, or any examples? Or is this just going to be an urban legend?

13-00:28:38

McLaughlin: Well, Larry Orman was one.

13-00:28:39

Lage: Larry Orman is the perfect example.

13-00:28:43

McLaughlin: I've always had an interest in young people. This afternoon, I'm being interviewed by a young woman who called me up out of the blue from Saint Mary's College. I'm always glad to help young people in that way.

13-00:28:58

Lage: Now, what is she interviewing you about? Just to give a —

13-00:29:01

McLaughlin: Oh, I think she's—I don't know. They're doing some paper, or whatever it might be—project. But I think it's important to encourage them and help them, and so I've done any number of interviews like that.

13-00:29:20

Lage: Have you also helped place people into jobs? You did mention Larry Orman, and he's a good example of that, but are there others that you can think of?

13-00:29:31

McLaughlin: Well, another one I helped was a friend—everyone calls him Jeff Cook—who started the Environmental Careers Organization a number of years ago. I helped him—when he came out here, he had received an award to go national with this group. I met him—I went to Audubon, and Massachusetts Audubon was separate from the national. I was there with my stepson, and then I said, "Well, I should make a courtesy call." I was on the board, then, of the National Audubon. And so they said, "Oh, have you heard of this new group that's just formed. They have the room upstairs." And so I went up and talked with this young woman—Jeff, who started it, was not there then. So then he and I became very good friends. He came out here, and saw there was some kind of an event honoring—I think—Bill Evers. We were on a boat. These were all the environmentalists of the Bay Area—all the leading environmentalists. So, I introduced him to all of these people. Then he followed up. He came and stayed with us for two or three weeks, and went to see a lot of these different people he met on that trip, and started an office here. Just at the present time, he's going through some very difficult legal issues, which is too bad, but these things happen. So, I think I've—over the years—tried to encourage young people, and tried to help in different ways.

13-00:31:19

Lage: His organization was Environmental Careers?

13-00:31:23

McLaughlin: Yes. He puts—somewhat similar to the Student Conservation Association, except with the Environmental Careers Organization, they used to pay part, and then have the agency—They place interns—generally college students or graduate students—with businesses, government organizations, or environmental groups. And they would pay part, and the participating organization would pay part. Now, I think, in general, the participating organization pays most of it, if not all of it. But then it's a wonderful education for these interns. And then some of them stay on as a permanent job.

13-00:32:16

Lage: And does this try to bring people from different social backgrounds and economic backgrounds into the —

13-00:32:22

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. And he made a big effort to have people of color. And he would have these job fairs, particularly aimed at areas—he's had some in Oakland, and down in Florida. Different places—Washington—to increase the number of minority people that were interested in environmental occupations.

13-00:32:50

Lage: Now, how did that thrust—how was it accepted with the established environmental groups? You mentioned you introduced him around, and all. Is this something that —

13-00:33:01

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. Well, he, I guess, became aware of the environmental groups, and all the funding opportunities out here, and so on. So, you know, it was very successful for many years until, unfortunately, it got into this legal entanglement.

13-00:33:24

Lage: With his group? Regarding his organization?

13-00:33:27

McLaughlin: Yes.

13-00:33:28

Lage: That's too bad.

13-00:33:29

McLaughlin: Which is too bad, yes. But he had people, for instance, placed at BCDC, and with, I think, maybe with the USGS, with various different—some agency in Sacramento, and so on. And the people that they would select were always very high caliber young people.

13-00:34:04

Lage: Okay. I think we should save the university for next time. We have another big topic of the university things. But I want to—since we just, together, went to Dick Walker's talk last night about the green culture in the Bay Area, *The Country in the City*. Did you have any reaction to—I know you haven't read the book yet, but you heard his outline. Did it ring true to you, or do you have any thoughts?

13-00:34:39

McLaughlin: No. I'm looking forward—very much—to reading his book, and I'm sure he went to a lot of the sources and so on. Because I think it's a very timely subject right now. This is what we're trying to do in this Strawberry Creek Plaza area. We're trying to make the cities look more—and be more—livable. And how does that happen? It happens if you bring nature in. This is one reason why we're trying to save the oak grove on the campus. I think it's a very important aspect—

13-00:35:22

Lage: To bring the country into the city.

13-00:35:24

McLaughlin: Yes. Very important aspect. So maybe this book will be helpful. I think next time I go sit in a tree, I'll take it with me.

13-00:35:32

Lage: Right!

13-00:35:33

McLaughlin: Last time, I was reading the book on oaks.

13-00:35:36

Lage: Well, you need a good book if you have to be up there for a while. The one kind of contentious moment during the questions last night regarded the degree of development we should have in the city. You know, infilling, I guess.

13-00:35:59

McLaughlin: Yes. Well, and I agree with Greenbelt Alliance. They've been promoting infill so that there isn't sprawl, in the same way that I think it's important if you're going to try to get people out of their cars, you have to provide better rapid transit and bus service, and so on. This is something that's been very successful in other cities—either free buses, or, for instance, in my hometown of Denver, they have a free bus. You can get on. It just runs for about twenty blocks. There are no other cars on the street, just the bus.

13-00:36:44

Lage: Oh. So the street is devoted to the bus.

13-00:36:48

McLaughlin: And pedestrians. And it's in the middle of downtown Denver. And then they have two cross streets, where there's a light rail. And then they have another bus that goes around to all the museums. I'm not sure if that one's free or if they charge a little bit, but I think that all these things need to be taken into consideration. You have to plan comprehensively.

13-00:37:17

Lage: But do you think there's a danger of too much infill, or being captured by the developers who want to build—you know—their —

13-00:37:27

McLaughlin: I wouldn't say "being captured by the developers," but for instance, ABAG comes out and says, "We have to have so many units in every city to accommodate the future population." I don't think they always know about the future population. They base these forecasts on the past, and it doesn't necessarily happen. It's sort of like the weather. I think sometimes the forecasters know what's going to happen, and sometimes they don't. Today was supposed to be a nice sunny day. Well.

13-00:38:02

Lage: Pretty foggy.

13-00:38:04

McLaughlin: The sun will probably come out in maybe another hour, and then go in an hour after that. So, they do the best they can—the forecasters—both—I'm sure—with ABAG and as regarding the population. But for instance, a lot of the young people now are choosing not to have families, and both of them work—well, that creates a different kind of community. You have less need for schools and spaces of that sort, and you have—maybe—the succeeding generation, maybe they won't want more children. I know some countries are experiencing very low population increase. For instance, I think Japan's encouraging people to have more children. Hard to believe. So I think there are so many trends like this that vary over time, and I would hate to see Berkeley dotted with high rises. Sometimes—well, just as with anything else, it gets to be too much.

13-00:39:36

Lage: Yes. Yes. So it sounds like you want sort of a balance between the infill and —.

13-00:39:46

McLaughlin: Well, I think there certainly has to be a balance with the amount of open space for all these people. You either have to give them a little plot outside the central city—this is what some European countries do—or else make a city livable. For me, what makes a city livable is to have attractive streetscapes, and parks, and so on. This is what people think of when you think of Paris, or London, or some of these areas where they have beautiful parks and parkways.

13-00:40:28

Lage: Right. You got involved in the proposal down here at Vine and Shattuck [a small shopping area a few blocks west of Sylvia's home].

13-00:40:39

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. Fortunately, I haven't heard much about it lately, so I hope it's just going to go away.

13-00:40:45

Lage: This was a proposal to make more of a plaza and take away some parking spots, and apparently the merchants were unhappy with it. I don't know who else.

13-00:40:57

McLaughlin: Well, not only the merchants. I find the diagonal parking very convenient. Many, many people do. And to have it all over in one particular area—I mean, I just didn't think it was very sensible.

13-00:41:16

Lage: But it sounds like there might have been aspects of it that you would like, because it was supposed to make an attractive plaza, and a better place —

13-00:41:25

McLaughlin: Just sounded to me like more concrete.

13-00:41:27

Lage: I see. Was that —

13-00:41:30

McLaughlin: It seems to me they could make some improvements, yes. In a simple way, without so much disruption.

13-00:41:41

Lage: I see. It wasn't a popular plan.

13-00:41:45

McLaughlin: No. And it was done by—well, you just kind of wondered whether they had other developments in mind, whether it was purely altruistic.

13-00:42:03

Lage: You don't think it came out of a better city planning initiative.

13-00:42:08

McLaughlin: It came out of one fellow who was on the Planning Commission, and one fellow who was on the Berkeley City Council.

13-00:42:15

Lage: And what was—?

13-00:42:18

McLaughlin: Well, one's in real estate business, and one's an architect. I don't know.

13-00:42:22

Lage: Did it involve a high-rise building, or more intense building at one point.

13-00:42:30

McLaughlin: No, I think maybe they're just really, sincerely trying to make the area more attractive, which—that's fine. But I think in order to provide the existing shops with business, there needs to be nearby parking. That's why Fourth Street is so successful, because they have ample—and then their parking is free, too. A big parking lot back by the railroad track, as well as on the street parking, and they don't have very broad sidewalks, but everybody manages, and they do have street trees. But there's a very nice quality about the whole area, and I think that's what they have made an effort to create and to maintain. You know, the livability of it is—

13-00:43:43

Lage: Well, so parking is part of livability, it seems, in our —

13-00:43:48

McLaughlin: Our society.

13-00:43:48

Lage: — city, where it's hard to get around by public transportation sometimes.

13-00:43:52

McLaughlin: That's true. That's why I think that a lot of the public transportation should be improved, because those of us who are concerned with the Strawberry Creek Plaza idea, we've been talking to the BART people, to the bus people, to all the transportation people that are involved, as well as the people that are planning at the museum, and the hotel, and so on. I do think these things have to be planned in a comprehensive way.

13-00:44:30

Lage: They do. That's what makes it so difficult, I guess.

13-00:44:36

McLaughlin: Well, that leads into the university's planning.

13-00:44:38

Lage: But let's save that for next time, since I think—I know you have another thing coming up this afternoon. I don't want to wear you out.

13-00:44:45

McLaughlin: Right.

[End Audio File 13 mclaughlin\_sylvia13\_05-11-07.mp3]

**End of Interview 7**

**Interview # 8: May 25, 2007**

[Begin Audio File 14 mclaughlin\_sylvia14\_05-25-07.mp3]

14-00:00:06

Lage: Okay, we're on. You can wear your glasses, now that we're not reflecting so much. Today is May —

14-00:00:14

McLaughlin: 24th?

14-00:00:14

Lage: — 25th.

14-00:00:15

McLaughlin: Okay.

14-00:00:17

Lage: 2007. I'm Ann Lage, and I'm interviewing Sylvia McLaughlin. This is our eighth session, tape 14. So we're really moving along, and we may finish today, or we may —

14-00:00:32

McLaughlin: Think of other things.

14-00:00:33

Lage: — devote another session to some personal things. So, our focus—initially, at least—is going to be on the university, but I had a couple follow-up questions from last time, just to be sure we covered all the environmental organizations that you've been involved with. Was there anything we missed about connections? For instance, we barely mentioned the name of David Brower, who of course is the most —

14-00:00:58

McLaughlin: Oh, of course David Brower and I were friends, and he and I went to a number of the same events, and I went to several of his Sunday morning breakfasts, where he made waffles.

14-00:01:15

Lage: Now, what were those? I don't believe I've heard about his Sunday morning breakfasts.

14-00:01:20

McLaughlin: He really enjoyed bringing people together, particularly young people, and so it was kind of a tradition that he had. And his poor wife never knew how many to prepare for, but he'd make very good waffles. And he was mostly out in the kitchen making waffles, and everything was sort of serve your own, buffet style.

14-00:01:45

Lage: Was this in the earlier years, or more recently?

- 14-00:01:48  
McLaughlin: Oh, this was fairly recently.
- 14-00:01:50  
Lage: Like in the nineties?
- 14-00:01:52  
McLaughlin: Yes, in the same house, up on Stevenson. Yes.
- 14-00:01:58  
Lage: Right. Right. Did he have much impact on the local issues, do you think, or was his —
- 14-00:02:07  
McLaughlin: Well, we were always allies, and believed in what one another was trying to do.
- 14-00:02:17  
Lage: Now, some people thought Dave was—you know—far out as an environmentalist. People like Stewart Udall would say, "Well, we need these far out people, to get us —
- 14-00:02:28  
McLaughlin: Oh, yes.
- 14-00:02:28  
Lage: — somewhere near the middle." Did you view him as a sort of a radical?
- 14-00:02:33  
McLaughlin: No, I really admired him tremendously. Particularly, he had such a facility with the English language, and he—I mean, if it hadn't been for Dave Brower, we might have had the Grand Canyon filled, and dammed, and who knows what. But he was the one who took the big step—I'm not sure if it was authorized by his board—to do these beautiful photographic books, which absolutely showed what a beautiful place this was, and, I think, did a lot to contribute to the members of Congress realizing how important this was.
- 14-00:03:15  
Lage: Those Exhibit Format books. They had an impact on a lot of people, I think.
- 14-00:03:20  
McLaughlin: Oh, absolutely. And then I think it was really great that they put them in a smaller, cheaper edition.
- 14-00:03:27  
Lage: The Ballantine paperbacks.
- 14-00:03:28  
McLaughlin: Yes.

- 14-00:03:30  
Lage: Were there other—I don't get the impression that Brower particularly influenced you. You were contemporaries, really.
- 14-00:03:39  
McLaughlin: Yes.
- 14-00:03:40  
Lage: Were there any environmentalists that you should say helped shape your thinking? Either people you read, or came in contact with? Maybe Dave Brower did. I shouldn't assume.
- 14-00:03:50  
McLaughlin: You mean —
- 14-00:03:51  
Lage: That shaped your thinking about the environment.
- 14-00:03:56  
McLaughlin: I don't think so.
- 14-00:03:58  
Lage: A lot of people mentioned —
- 14-00:03:59  
McLaughlin: Well, we tried to be as well informed as possible in all aspects of the various issues we were interested in: land use planning, water, air quality, water quality, just the whole gamut of environmental issues. Because they are actually all interrelated.
- 14-00:04:20  
Lage: Yes, that's—you've made that point throughout this, which is an important one. A lot of people mentioned Rachel Carson, and I guess we're just celebrating the one-hundredth anniversary, now, of her birth.
- 14-00:04:33  
McLaughlin: For what? I'm sorry.
- 14-00:04:35  
Lage: They mention Rachel Carson as being somebody who was so important in shaping people's thinking.
- 14-00:04:38  
McLaughlin: That's right. Well, she was.
- 14-00:04:40  
Lage: Was she somebody you read?
- 14-00:04:43  
McLaughlin: We antedated Rachel Carson.

14-00:04:45

Lage: I know.

14-00:04:45

McLaughlin: So—lots of people just don't know that.

14-00:04:49

Lage: Right. Well, it's interesting that Dick Walker pointed that out, either in his book or in his talk.

14-00:04:55

McLaughlin: Oh, really? Yes. I started reading his book that he gave to me, and then on this recent trip, it just somehow disappeared. I suspect it's still at Cape Cod, at my stepson's, and covered over with some other papers. I don't know. And then they're off on a trip, so I'm sure they'll send it if it's there, but I've never had anything disappear quite like that. I've ordered another book.

14-00:05:24

Lage: Oh, good. Well, that'll help his bottom line. (laughter)

14-00:05:28

McLaughlin: And then I had a call from Harold Gilliam, who was also reading it with great interest.

14-00:05:38

Lage: It didn't get such a great review in the *Chronicle*, I noticed. I don't know if you saw that—the same day that John King wrote, I would say, rather an unfavorable comment about the Strawberry Creek Plaza idea.

14-00:05:53

McLaughlin: I haven't seen that. I haven't caught up with the papers.

14-00:05:54

Lage: You didn't read that? This was a good week ago, maybe more.

14-00:06:00

McLaughlin: Well, see, I —

14-00:06:01

Lage: You've been away.

14-00:06:02

McLaughlin: — I left on a Tuesday, I think, and I just came back—no, I left before that. Anyway, I just got back Tuesday, so I've got all the papers stacked up to catch up.

14-00:06:13

Lage: Well, look for those, because I know you said you were going to talk—last time we were together you were going to be talking to John King, and shortly after that, he wrote about the Strawberry Creek Plaza, and I didn't feel it was very favorable.

14-00:06:32

McLaughlin: I don't think I really have seen that. Sorry.

14-00:06:37

Lage: You probably haven't. [Phone rings] Do you want to get that? I'll put it on pause. . . Okay. Were you involved at all in *California Tomorrow*? We didn't mention *California Tomorrow*.

14-00:06:57

McLaughlin: Oh, with Lew Butler, and a fellow that was writing *Cry California* —

14-00:07:06

Lage: Alf Heller. Right.

14-00:07:07

McLaughlin: Yes. Well, yes. I probably worked with them, and thought it was a great idea, and Alf Heller, I think was ahead of his time, and I think it was a good time then—still a good time—to have some kind of a plan for the state of California. I mean, we've just been growing like Topsy.

14-00:07:36

Lage: And did you know Lew Butler very well? He's an interesting person.

14-00:07:39

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. Still do.

14-00:07:44

Lage: He's gone on with *California Tomorrow*, hasn't he?

14-00:07:48

McLaughlin: Yes. I'm not too sure what his focus is now.

14-00:07:59

Lage: Okay. So, anything else that you think we missed last time? Or maybe you'll have to see the transcript before you can say that.

14-00:08:05

McLaughlin: I think. Yes. Then I'll probably think of lots.

14-00:08:08

Lage: Right. One question I put in this little outline that I sent you—you used the phrase "natural values."

14-00:08:21

McLaughlin: Yes.

14-00:08:22

Lage: In relation to a lot of the things you're doing on the bay shore, in downtown Berkeley, and on the campus, and I wondered if you could expand some more on what you mean by natural values.

14-00:08:39

McLaughlin: With regard to the bay, I'd say it was appreciating the natural values of the beauty of the water, and the bay itself, as opposed to commercialization of the shoreline, and more development, as far as the bay goes, okay? And the next one was —

14-00:09:12

Lage: Downtown Berkeley.

14-00:09:13

McLaughlin: Downtown Berkeley. I think cities are enhanced by bringing nature into the cities, as Richard Walker's book shows, and there's an article in the current SPUR newsletter I meant to have a quote from—cities all across the country, now, that they've studied are really trying to make their downtowns attractive by making distinctive places—larger open spaces, with more natural greenery, and so on. And I just think it certainly has been proved to be helpful. Studies have shown that people in the hospital that look out and see a tree, or a flowering shrub, or whatever, get well much quicker than those who are just looking at a blank wall, and I just think that our downtown could really be very much enhanced by having some water features, daylighting the creek, however it wants to be done —

14-00:10:48

Lage: Now one thing John King—excuse me, I'm interrupting, but—one thing in this article he wrote, he seemed to scoff at, was that the water feature on Center Street really would be kind of an artificial water feature, because the creek runs off in a different direction. It wouldn't be the real Strawberry Creek. Is that something that—how do you respond to that?

14-00:11:18

McLaughlin: Creeks have a way of wandering around. It might seem artificial to him, but these creeks branch off in various different directions —

14-00:11:32

Lage: So you don't think that kind of redirecting the creek with pumps or whatever takes away from the nature.

14-00:11:35

McLaughlin: No. No. And it's perfectly feasible, and more people would be able to enjoy it. No, I don't think it needs to be just in one certain place. And I learned recently that Phoebe Hearst had a water feature—a beautiful fountain—down in the middle of Shattuck Avenue where the railroad station formerly existed.

14-00:12:09

Lage: Oh, really? She funded the creation of it?

14-00:12:15

McLaughlin: I think so. And I don't know if that was part of John Galen Howard's plan or not. It very well could have been.

14-00:12:23

Lage: Right. That would be interesting to research, wouldn't it?

14-00:12:25

McLaughlin: Yes. Well, I think there's a photograph of it at BAHA.

14-00:12:31

Lage: Nice. Another thing I thought of in relation to Strawberry Creek—here I'm taking us back to that Center Street project—when you talk to the city or other people about it, does anyone bring up the problem of the homeless, as making it an attraction for gathering of homeless people? Because that seems to be a perceived problem in downtown Berkeley.

14-00:12:58

McLaughlin: I think it's a problem all over the country, not only in downtown Berkeley. I mean, I don't think it would attract many more. I think the problem has to be dealt with. It's a different problem, and I mean, we have it right down here, six blocks away on Shattuck and Vine.

14-00:13:31

Lage: Right. Well, I know that that was a concern there, with the [proposed] remake of that area. People seemed to be very concerned that it would attract more homeless people.

14-00:13:42

McLaughlin: Well, as I say, it is a multifaceted problem that needs to be dealt with.

14-00:13:49

Lage: Does Ecocity Builders get into that?

14-00:13:52

McLaughlin: No. No.

14-00:13:53

Lage: Suggest ways of dealing with it, or—but it's not something that you perceive as a problem for that area [in downtown Berkeley]?

14-00:14:00

McLaughlin: No. No. It is a problem. Who knows how it's going to be resolved, but I think various different efforts are being made with different cities, and I think probably there needs to be kind of a multifaceted approach to the problem, as I think they're trying to do in San Francisco, and other places. And probably they gravitate to Berkeley, because we're considered more tolerant than some other areas, also because of the climate. It's, I'm sure, not an easy life, being on the streets. But then there also is kind of a subculture of young people that just seem to be part of this whole scene, and I don't know how that's going to be turned around. It's a different part of the same problem.

14-00:15:10

Lage: Right. Now is that an aspect that you've ever gotten very involved with?

14-00:15:15  
McLaughlin: No.

14-00:15:15  
Lage: You keep more to the environmental.

14-00:15:19  
McLaughlin: You have to have some focus. I try to.

14-00:15:21  
Lage: Right. okay. Now, I interrupted you in the middle of natural values.

14-00:15:27  
McLaughlin: Oh, yes. okay. Then there's the issue of the trees—the grove of trees. I think it's very beautiful. It's a kind of green oasis on the eastern side of campus. The campus used to be like a park. Gradually it's getting filled up with buildings. I just think that to replace it with a building that could be put elsewhere doesn't make very much sense. But they have their agenda, and now it's up to the lawyers.

14-00:16:11  
Lage: Yes. Well, let's go back in time to university-related projects that you have had a hand in, or a hand in opposing, most often. Shall we do that?

14-00:16:29  
McLaughlin: All right.

14-00:16:29  
Lage: The first one that you mentioned to me was the plan to cut down a grove of redwood trees to build the undergraduate library, Moffitt Library.

14-00:16:41  
McLaughlin: Yes.

14-00:16:41  
Lage: And that must have been —

14-00:16:42  
McLaughlin: I wasn't really too much involved with that.

14-00:16:46  
Lage: Oh, you weren't?

14-00:16:47  
McLaughlin: No. Probably was busy with other things.

14-00:16:51  
Lage: You had listed it on your —

14-00:16:53  
McLaughlin: Oh, yes. Well, I didn't want that to be overlooked, yes. I was very pleased when they went out and when they had a special fun fair, music written by

Andrew Imbrie, and I don't know if Josephine Miles wrote a special poem or not.

14-00:17:15

Lage: Now tell me about that. Was that after it was defeated? Andrew Imbrie?

14-00:17:19

McLaughlin: Yes, when the university—in their wisdom—managed to change the plan, and move the building slightly, move the road slightly, and save the trees. So there was a big celebration. So, lots of times it doesn't take too much to change. Apparently the plan was able to be modified, so that's what happened.

14-00:17:54

Lage: So, there's always hope.

14-00:17:56

McLaughlin: Yes. Absolutely.

14-00:17:56

Lage: But you say Andrew Imbrie wrote a piece of music?

14-00:17:59

McLaughlin: Yes.

14-00:17:59

Lage: And there was a poem, also?

14-00:18:01

McLaughlin: I'm not sure if—well, you know Josephine Miles wrote this wonderful poem about saving the bay.

14-00:18:06

Lage: Oh, yes.

14-00:18:07

McLaughlin: And she was just so talented. She might well have, but I don't know that for sure.

14-00:18:17

Lage: But you weren't involved enough in that to say who ran the opposition, and how the university —

14-00:18:22

McLaughlin: No. No. I was cheering them on from the sidelines.

14-00:18:28

Lage: That's good. But there is a long history of this kind of protest, probably starting even before that.

14-00:18:34

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. I'm sure.

- 14-00:18:37  
Lage: The next one that we come upon was a plan having to do with the Women's Faculty Club, and Senior Men's Hall.
- 14-00:18:45  
McLaughlin: Oh, yes.
- 14-00:18:45  
Lage: Are those one and the same?
- 14-00:18:47  
McLaughlin: Yes.
- 14-00:18:48  
Lage: I've only heard primarily about Senior Men's Hall. Now, what—tell me about this.
- 14-00:18:53  
McLaughlin: Well, again, the dates somewhat elude me. I think it was early seventies, probably. Because the Faculty Club wasn't doing too well financially.
- 14-00:19:08  
Lage: The men's?
- 14-00:19:10  
McLaughlin: The men—well, it's —
- 14-00:19:10  
Lage: *The* —
- 14-00:19:11  
McLaughlin: *The* Faculty Club. And so someone came up with the idea to raze the Women's Faculty Club, because the thought was that it was not up to the fire code, and put a glass and steel extension—I don't know who the architect was—onto *the* Faculty Club. And then allow the women to join the Men's Faculty Club, and that would bolster up their financial situation. So, in doing that, why they would eliminate the Senior Men's Hall.
- 14-00:19:57  
Lage: And build an extension way out into the women's spot.
- 14-00:20:01  
McLaughlin: Well, sort of off to that side. Now, the idea of taking the women's down was just to have the women be forced to join the men's. That was it.
- 14-00:20:12  
Lage: And you were a member of the Women's Faculty Club, I'm assuming.
- 14-00:20:15  
McLaughlin: Yes. I'm an associate member, whatever. But there was this wonderful woman, Florence Minard, who was a retired professor of art at Mills College, and she found a fireman—a retired fireman—who came and said, well, he

looked over the building, and said, "If you just do a little here, a little there, and adjust this, and so on, everything will be okay." So they did that. And then I sort of volunteered to go and see Walter Haas, because the Haas family was providing the funding for this glass and steel extension.

14-00:21:07

Lage: Was this Walter Haas, Sr. that you went to see?

14-00:27:10

McLaughlin: I think it was Junior. Anyway, he was the CEO then. So he was very cordial and very nice. He said we were causing them a lot of extra time, and so on, in this project. Well, fortunately, it didn't happen.

14-00:21:32

Lage: He wasn't too receptive to you, though, it sounds like.

14-00:21:36

McLaughlin: Well, he just implied that we were causing them to take more time. And that's often a tactic.

14-00:21:45

Lage: Yes.

14-00:21:47

McLaughlin: So I guess they thought better of it, particularly when the Women's Faculty Club was shown to be all right, and up to fire code, and so on.

14-00:21:59

Lage: Was there quite an amount of support from the community? I remember people being very mad about tearing down Senior Men's Hall.

14-00:22:07

McLaughlin: Oh, really? Yes. Yes. I think we probably did have—and certainly BAHA was very much involved. F. Minard, as she called herself, was quite a sparkplug.

14-00:22:22

Lage: Oh, really?

14-00:22:23

McLaughlin: And she would call me up about 7:15 in the morning, something like that. And she was rather hard of hearing, so the conversation would be all sort of one way, and she would say, "Oh, thank you very much." She'd ask me to do something or call someone or do something, and then she'd say, "Thank you very much, my dear," and then hang up.

14-00:22:45

Lage: You had no way of saying no.

14-00:22:46

McLaughlin: Right. Everybody admired her a lot.

- 14-00:22:51  
Lage: But you don't have the feeling—I'm guessing from what you say—that it was the pressure on the Haas family that turned it around.
- 14-00:23:01  
McLaughlin: I don't really know how it all happened.
- 14-00:23:03  
Lage: You don't really know what happened behind the scenes.
- 14-00:23:04  
McLaughlin: No.
- 14-00:23:05  
Lage: And who was chancellor then? Bowker, I guess. Or maybe it was —
- 14-00:23:09  
McLaughlin: I think it was Al Bowker, yes. And so now, I think things are pretty well resolved.
- 14-00:23:18  
Lage: Well, the Women's Faculty Club seems to be in very nice shape now.
- 14-00:23:21  
McLaughlin: Doing well. Men's is doing well. Senior Men's Hall now has a different name, I think. Senior Hall, is it? There are various groups that meet there.
- 14-00:23:34  
Lage: But just for the record, we should say that Senior Men's Hall is a log cabin.
- 14-00:23:40  
McLaughlin: Yes.
- 14-00:23:40  
Lage: And it's a very natural area, with redwoods, and —
- 14-00:23:43  
McLaughlin: That's right.
- 14-00:23:43  
Lage: And the idea—and this was at a time when people were very concerned with a back to nature mentality.
- 14-00:23:52  
McLaughlin: Maybe. I don't know. This was also designed by John Galen Howard, I believe, and yet it seems to fit in.
- 14-00:24:06  
Lage: So that's interesting. okay. Now, the next one was also under Chancellor Bowker, and that had to do with the Naval Architecture Building, which is up against Hearst Avenue.

14-00:24:20

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. Well, there was a big effort to redo that, and have the Bechtel Engineering Center there. Yet again, BAHA was very much involved.

14-00:24:41

Lage: And did you get very involved in that? I think your husband did, according to some of the things I've read.

14-00:24:44

McLaughlin: Yes. I had to be rather careful.

14-00:24:49

Lage: Tell me about that. What was —

14-00:24:52

McLaughlin: Well, he was helping to raise money for the Bechtel Center.

14-00:24:54

Lage: I see. And he was very tied in to the College of Engineering.

14-00:24:59

McLaughlin: That's right. And so anyway, as it turned out, I think there was another situation where we managed to have an alternative plan. I think this was always very important to have an alternative plan that seems to work, and I think this worked out very well.

14-00:25:25

Lage: Did BAHA suggest where the alternative might be, or did they —

14-00:25:31

McLaughlin: Probably. Yes.

14-00:25:33

Lage: They did do a lawsuit. That apparently delayed —

14-00:25:37

McLaughlin: Well, that often happens, too. But —

14-00:25:43

Lage: So you say you had to be a little careful.

14-00:25:45

McLaughlin: Yes. Anyway—you know, well, my husband was involved. I didn't want to sort of be an upsetting factor in any way. But I think that's where the School of Journalism is now, and the Bechtel Center seems to be well situated, so. Again, the alternative plan turned out to work very well.

14-00:26:19

Lage: It worked. It worked.

14-00:26:23

McLaughlin: And that's what we did, really, when we were saving the bay. We had alternative plans. And that's what we're trying to do with the Albany area, and the shoreline up in North Richmond. It just takes a lot of persuading, though.

14-00:26:39

Lage: Right. And you try to present a different vision.

14-00:26:42

McLaughlin: Yes. Exactly. It takes—often—a lot of persuading to get other people to share your vision.

14-00:26:57

Lage: Do you think the university is an easier opponent or a more difficult one than others you've run against?

14-00:27:07

McLaughlin: No, I don't think it's much different.

14-00:27:09

Lage: Not much different from Santa Fe?

14-00:27:13

McLaughlin: Well, yes, in a way. Of course they're totally different issues, but with Santa Fe we were dealing for the most part with a railroad, and lots of meetings were held in my dining room on Saturday mornings, which I may have mentioned. And in their offices. They, as a matter of fact, did one of the first regional plans. They planned to fill in a lot of the shoreline, from Emeryville through to Albany. So in that sense, they were creative. But we preferred our alternative plans.

14-00:28:00

Lage: Yes. Right. okay. Now we come to one that was not as successful, and that was a campaign to save Cowell Hospital.

14-00:28:11

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. And put the business school elsewhere.

14-00:28:13

Lage: Right. Was that a concern with Cowell Hospital, its building? Or was it —

14-00:28:19

McLaughlin: It was a combination. There was also the thought that it would be beneficial to Berkeley's downtown business, if the business school were located closer to downtown Berkeley. And our preferred site was basically where the parking lot is for the Tang Health Center.

14-00:28:44

Lage: I see.

14-00:28:46

McLaughlin: And they said, "Well, it should be up where it's close to engineering, and law, and so on." So I walked it. I said, "It's a ten-minute walk." Anyway. You win some, lose some.

14-00:29:00

Lage: Now tell me what your role in that was. That was about 1977, around in there, and it was Chancellor Bowker, again.

14-00:29:08

McLaughlin: No, I think that was Chancellor Heyman.

14-00:29:09

Lage: No, no. I have the wrong date.

14-00:29:11

McLaughlin: That was Mike Heyman.

14-00:29:12

Lage: It was later, and Chancellor Heyman, in the eighties.

14-00:29:17

McLaughlin: I think also maybe the school of business wanted a prestigious location there, at sort of the top of the campus. Unfortunately, as it turned out, they really don't have much of a view, because there were a lot of the technical experimental things that were going on at Cowell Hospital that had to do with the optometry department, and so they put two extra floors on the optometry building, and it's just across the street.

14-00:30:05

Lage: So that cut off the view of the Haas Business School?

14-00:30:08

McLaughlin: No, it cut off the view from the Haas Business School to the bay.

14-00:30:12

Lage: That's what I mean. The bay.

14-00:30:14

McLaughlin: They just have a little slice of a view from one window. But now, of course, they want to expand even more—along with the law school—into the Boalt parking lot. It's one of the expansion ideas of their SCIP Plan, so-called. The southeast end of the campus.

14-00:30:46

Lage: Tell me how you were involved in that Cowell Hospital controversy. Did you meet with a group, or with the chancellor, or —

14-00:30:57

McLaughlin: Oh, I was pretty much involved. And I don't recall if there was a lawsuit or not. I think there was. I have pictures of when they were taking it down. They

had a bulldozer. It was rather sad that they didn't save and recycle a lot of the good things that could be used still, like some of the marble in the bathrooms, and so on. And then they knocked down this very nice building that had the same wood paneling as the house here, in order to make room for the road.

14-00:31:45

Lage: Was that an additional building?

14-00:31:47

McLaughlin: Oh, yes.

14-00:31:48

Lage: Oh, it was one of the homes.

14-00:31:51

McLaughlin: It was formerly a fraternity building. The same fraternity that Don and Clark Kerr belonged to, actually.

14-00:31:58

Lage: Oh! And what was that? What fraternity was that?

14-00:32:01

McLaughlin: I don't know. Sorry about that.

14-00:32:04

Lage: That's okay.

14-00:32:08

McLaughlin: But it had gone from being a fraternity building to being some kind of an institute. But here again, they just—you know—I guess they just contracted out that it should be destroyed, and knocked down the building in very short order, as soon as the word came from the court case.

14-00:33:01

Lage: You know, I remember the discussion about Cowell Hospital, and the indication was that it was outmoded as a building—it was not useful anymore, because we don't have that kind of hospital services on the campus.

14-00:33:25

McLaughlin: Yes. There were various aspects of it, like that, and as you probably remember, there were a lot of steps up to it, and the way they cared for the students was different then than now, probably. But it was a very nice building.

14-00:33:48

Lage: Did BAHA or others have an idea for use of that building?

14-00:33:54

McLaughlin: For an alternative use?

14-00:33:55

Lage: Right.

14-00:33:56

McLaughlin: No, I don't think so. But I think BAHA did have it landmarked, and so on. Because it was a very nice architectural building.

14-00:34:08

Lage: Yes, it was.

14-00:34:12

McLaughlin: Anyway, as I say, that's one we lost. You know, I remained friendly, always, with the Haas family. There was nothing personal about it, as far as I was concerned.

14-00:34:29

Lage: Well, they didn't really place the building.

14-00:34:32

McLaughlin: Pardon me?

14-00:34:32

Lage: They didn't really place the business school. They just helped fund it.

14-00:34:36

McLaughlin: They might have had something to do with the location.

14-00:34:38

Lage: Oh, do you think so?

14-00:34:40

McLaughlin: I would think so. Sorry about that.

14-00:34:45

Lage: Did you have any conversation with them over it? With the Haas family?

14-00:34:48

McLaughlin: No.

14-00:34:50

Lage: How about the Bechtel building? Did you talk at all to Stephen Bechtel, or —

14-00:34:56

McLaughlin: No.

14-00:34:56

Lage: — did your husband, do you know?

14-00:34:58

McLaughlin: Well, Don probably did, because they were very good friends.

14-00:35:06

Lage: Anything else to say about the Cowell Hospital? It does seem to be sort of the first step towards what we're dealing with now, with the oaks.

14-00:35:17

McLaughlin: With the long range development plan, and so on? I think basically it comes down to the size of the university, and how large it wants to be. Stanford has a lot of space. UC Berkeley does not have all that space, and yet they keep adding more institutes, more faculty, more students, and one wonders where it's going to end—if and when.

14-00:36:01

Lage: Not in our lifetimes, probably.

14-00:36:03

McLaughlin: Well, I hope so. Because—I mean—the matter of the congestion of Gayley Road and Piedmont Avenue is really quite an issue now, and if they proceed with all the buildings that are being planned for Strawberry Canyon, and the stadium, and so on, there could be some pretty disastrous times, if there were a fire like in '91, or an earthquake. All the people up in Panoramic Hill, trying to get away from it.

14-00:36:51

Lage: And the employees coming down.

14-00:36:51

McLaughlin: All the other people coming down Strawberry Canyon, and the firemen trying to get up to lend assistance. I think it's something that should be very carefully considered.

14-00:37:03

Lage: That's the basis of the lawsuit, isn't it, in part? The earthquake potential, and public safety?

14-00:37:10

McLaughlin: Oh, well there are several lawsuits going on. Yes, it's having to do with parts of it, the earthquake. But I think of—for instance, the Panoramic Hill Association people are very concerned about their safety.

14-00:37:29

Lage: And they don't like the football stadium siting.

14-00:37:36

McLaughlin: Well, that's been going on for a long time.

14-00:37:37

Lage: Right. It really has. The question of the lights, and other uses of the stadium.

14-00:37:47

McLaughlin: And it was the professor who was head of the philosophy department. I can't think of his name [Charles Rieber]. Anyway, they had a home up there, and they were so upset they moved to Los Angeles.

14-00:38:07

Lage: Was that the Blakes?

14-00:38:08

McLaughlin: No.

14-00:38:08

Lage: No. It wasn't. I think the Blakes had a home there also.

14-00:38:13

McLaughlin: It was Dorothy Joralemon's family, and I should —

14-00:38:18

Lage: That was way back when it was built.

14-00:38:20

McLaughlin: When it was built in the twenties. But then I heard recently that the women from the Town and Gown Club planted a lot of trees in Berkeley and on the campus. Some of those oak trees could have been planted by some of the Town and Gown Club ladies.

14-00:38:38

Lage: Oh, really? How did you hear that?

14-00:38:42

McLaughlin: Well, we have an archivist, a historian at the Town and Gown Club, and that's what she was saying.

14-00:38:51

Lage: How interesting.

14-00:38:52

McLaughlin: I mean, she didn't say specifically that they planted those trees. She said they did plant trees—lots of trees around Berkeley, and on the campus.

14-00:39:05

Lage: That sounds like a good article for the *Chronicle of the University of California*. I'm going to make a note here. I'll ask you about that after. The next issue that you had on your list was one that you couldn't really remember, but it had to do with Chancellor Tien. Have you any clues what that might have been?

14-00:39:30

McLaughlin: No, and I have asked Lesley Emmington [from BAHA] about it, and she was trying to remember also. We had several meetings back and forth, and he would come with his—this was a breakfast meeting here—he came with John Cummins, I believe, and Dan Boggan, who was the business manager. I think he came here a couple of times. Then he invited us over to the private dining room in the Women's Faculty Club, so we had quite an exchange on this issue, whatever it was. But it was all resolved, so everybody was very happy, and now we seem to have forgotten what it even was.

14-00:40:18

Lage: I wish we could remember, because it would be nice to have an example of one that was resolved.

14-00:40:23

McLaughlin: Oh, well, we'll probably remember.

14-00:40:25

Lage: And Chancellor Tien himself got quite involved?

14-00:40:28

McLaughlin: He was very much one to want to communicate with people, and he was also the one that hired a very fine person, Mike Dobbins, to head the buildings department, whatever they call it in the A & E Building there. And Mike Dobbins was also very concerned with community involvement and input, and was responsible for doing all the southside planning, and so on. Then unfortunately, he left for another position in Alabama, I believe. But he was like a breath of fresh air here—really wanted to resolve issues in a way that would be both beneficial to the university and to the community.

14-00:41:38

Lage: So there are models for good relationships?

14-00:41:41

McLaughlin: Yes. Yes. Oh, yes.

14-00:41:44

Lage: Now how about Dan Boggan? Was he receptive?

14-00:41:47

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. He was—I knew Dan from when he was with the Berkeley City Council, and so he was good to work with.

14-00:42:01

Lage: He was open to the community?

14-00:42:08

McLaughlin: Excuse me.

14-00:42:08

Lage: [Pause.] Okay, we're back on. We were talking about Dan Boggan.

14-00:42:13

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. We had a very good relationship, and here he is back in Oakland.

14-00:42:22

Lage: Right. With the Dellums Administration.

14-00:42:25

McLaughlin: Ron Dellums. And I knew Ron Dellums when he was on the Berkeley City Council.

- 14-00:42:29  
Lage: Was Ron Dellums receptive to Save the Bay concerns?
- 14-00:42:34  
McLaughlin: Oh, I think so. Yes.
- 14-00:42:36  
Lage: Did you ever get help from Dellums when he was a congressman?
- 14-00:42:40  
McLaughlin: Probably.
- 14-00:42:42  
Lage: You can't think specifically, though.
- 14-00:42:44  
McLaughlin: No.
- 14-00:42:45  
Lage: Okay. So Chancellor Tien is a plus, at least, in your book, in terms of being concerned with the community and the campus relationship?
- 14-00:42:55  
McLaughlin: Yes.
- 14-00:42:56  
Lage: You worked with Chancellor Heyman under Save the Bay also, hadn't you?
- 14-00:43:02  
McLaughlin: Oh, yes.
- 14-00:43:02  
Lage: He'd been so involved in environmental issues.
- 14-00:43:07  
McLaughlin: I think it was Mike and Roz Rosenfeld that wrote the study—this was in the sixties—on the ownership of the bay. Of course, being both a lawyer and a professor in the law school and in planning, he was very knowledgeable about that.
- 14-00:43:26  
Lage: Yes. But how was he to work with on the Cowell Hospital issue?
- 14-00:43:33  
McLaughlin: The business school? Well, that was a different story.
- 14-00:43:38  
Lage: Did he listen, though? Did you have meetings with him on that?
- 14-00:43:45  
McLaughlin: I don't remember, really, any meetings. He had his agenda and we had ours.

14-00:43:51

Lage: Right. So that one was not a happy story.

14-00:43:53

McLaughlin: Yes. He won.

14-00:43:54

Lage: Okay.

14-00:43:56

McLaughlin: But we're still very good friends.

14-00:43:57

Lage: Is it hard to stay good friends with people that you have these —

14-00:44:02

McLaughlin: No. I've never had a problem. I always believe in talking over issues with people, and there's no reason not to remain friends, as far as I can see.

14-00:44:19

Lage: Right. Now let's see, we've hit almost every chancellor, in terms of relating. And you had some dealings with Chancellor Berdahl regarding the Hearst Mining Building, it sounded like, from your inventory here. What was your involvement when they were planning to remodel and restore the Hearst Mining Building?

14-00:44:48

McLaughlin: Paul Gray was the dean of the school of engineering, and he asked me to be on their fundraising committee, which I was, for whatever the term was. I knew this was probably Don's favorite building, so I thought it was very appropriate that I do whatever I could to have it be done right. And so I told Dean Paul Gray that they'd better be very careful and do it just in the best way, because otherwise they might get in deep trouble with BAHA. And so they came here, and we had several meetings with the architects, and they put everything out here on the floor, and engineers and architects were here, BAHA was here, and then we had several other meetings at BAHA's buildings, and maybe another meeting here. And again, whatever the issues were were resolved, and they did an absolutely beautiful job of renovating the building. It may have cost a little more, I know that, but now everyone is so proud of it.

14-00:46:24

Lage: They are very proud of it. They use it for all kinds of fundraising events.

14-00:46:25

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. Events. Yes.

14-00:46:29

Lage: Well, what were the issues? Do you recall what the issues were?

14-00:46:34

McLaughlin: It was a model for seismic retrofitting, what they did. I went several times with a hard hat on, looking at the way they were doing this. What were the issues? I think chiefly financial, as many things are.

14-00:46:58

Lage: Just cutting corners to —

14-00:47:03

McLaughlin: Probably, yes, but they were able to raise money from some large corporations, including the Homestake Mining Company. So everything worked out, I think very well.

14-00:47:23

Lage: Now, when you have these discussions, do you ever get the feeling that they're asking for your assistance in fundraising?

14-00:47:32

McLaughlin: Well, it seems like everything I get involved with has to do with fundraising.

14-00:47:36

Lage: Right. I mean, did you make any efforts in terms of helping fundraise for that?

14-00:47:43

McLaughlin: I think I helped sign some letters.

14-00:47:46

Lage: It is just beautifully restored.

14-00:47:48

McLaughlin: Absolutely.

14-00:47:49

Lage: I noticed that they actually restored a lot of bad things that had been done earlier, postwar changes.

14-00:47:57

McLaughlin: That's right. They tried to restore it to what it had been originally, and I think did so very successfully.

14-00:48:06

Lage: Is it still, do you know, is it still a good building as a teaching and research building?

14-00:48:12

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. I'm sure.

14-00:48:13

Lage: It's not just a museum?

14-00:48:15

McLaughlin: Oh, heavens, no.

14-00:48:17

Lage: Because it almost qualifies as that.

14-00:48:20

McLaughlin: Yes, now it is used a lot. A lot of offices there. They use a lot of natural lighting, and so on. [Phone call, break in recording]

14-00:48:43

Lage: Okay, we are back on, after your conversation with Harry Conger, and we had finished with Hearst Mining Building. I want you to talk a little bit about connections with the university other than saving things that you've had since —

14-00:49:08

McLaughlin: Oh, well, I perhaps don't want to overlook the Faculty Wives, and I belong to the Section Club, and generally was too busy to do very much with any of the sections, but I would always go to their teas, and so on. And then a long, long time ago they did have what they called College Teas, and I would be asked to pour tea, and —

14-00:49:32

Lage: Now, what were they? Tell me more about that. What were College Teas?

14-00:49:36

McLaughlin: That was at the Women's Faculty Club, and they had—I remember—once Mrs. Nimitz was pouring at one end, I was pouring at the other end, and she had a very good system of the way she stacked things up, and so on. Because it was complicated, because for tea, sometimes people wanted it weak or strong, with milk, with sugar—you know, this and that and the other.

14-00:50:09

Lage: Was this tea for students, or for the faculty wives?

14-00:50:13

McLaughlin: No, it was for the faculty wives. It was the College Teas. And when Don first became a regent, well, I was invited to these teas. I didn't know a soul, so I went over, and sort of went through a receiving line, and said, "How do you do?" and had some tea, and left. Then several years later, they made a big effort to introduce you around, to have it be a more friendly experience.

14-00:50:44

Lage: But initially it was not that—it didn't help you meet people?

14-00:50:48

McLaughlin: Well, that was my first experience, then. But I think if you were a faculty wife, then some other faculty wife would probably take you there and introduce you around.

14-00:50:59

Lage: But you were a regent's wife. You mentioned Mrs. Nimitz. Were there other sort of big presences among the women?

14-00:51:15

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Well, I remember once I went down to Los Angeles for tea with then-governor Mrs. Pat Brown.

14-00:51:32

Lage: Was this around the time of a regents' meeting?

14-00:51:38

McLaughlin: I don't really remember. I think—I went on my own, because she was having this tea, and Don happened to be on the board of Western Airlines, so I had a free ride on Western. So that was so very helpful. And in those days, why, the regents met at all the different campuses. So they would entertain the wives of the regents, and so on. And that was interesting.

14-00:52:11

Lage: And how was tea with Mrs. Pat Brown?

14-00:52:14

McLaughlin: It was very nice.

14-00:52:15

Lage: Do you remember anything particular about it?

14-00:52:17

McLaughlin: No. She was always very friendly, and I think the university meant a lot to them. And I know Governor Pat Brown was reported as saying that appointing someone to the Board of Regents was the highest honor he could confer. I think the attitudes may have changed a bit since then.

14-00:52:49

Lage: Who appointed Don to the board?

14-00:52:55

McLaughlin: Governor Earl Warren.

14-00:52:55

Lage: Earl Warren. I'm sure he felt the same way about it.

14-00:53:01

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. He appointed several regents. Dr. [Howard] Naffziger—that was a time that it was felt it would be important to have someone knowledgeable about the hospital, and he was a very distinguished, I believe, neurosurgeon. Then Jesse Steinhart, a very outstanding lawyer, and Gerald Hagar, another very outstanding lawyer and the husband of Ella Hagar, Ella Barrows Hagar, daughter of one of the presidents.

14-00:53:39

Lage: Did you get to know Ella Hagar very well?

14-00:53:42

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. Quite well. And then it was Ella Hagar who asked me to be on this Mills Associate Council, which I have enjoyed so much.

14-00:53:53

Lage: Now, what is that?

14-00:53:55

McLaughlin: This is a group that was—I think—organized as a support group for Mills College, but probably about at the time Aurelia Reinhardt, and there are no term limits. You can do as much as you wish, or not, and the objective was that we were to be ambassadors for Mills, as it were. In those days, you were even encouraged to have some of the faculty or students to your home for a meal. These were all women who had not gone to Mills, but who were supportive of women's education, and our principal role was to provide scholarship funds. And that's what we still do.

14-00:54:55

Lage: So, you're still involved in that?

14-00:54:56

McLaughlin: And the women come from all around the Bay Area. So it's been a very interesting group of women.

14-00:55:03

Lage: I would think so, especially when it's women who aren't associated with Mills, other than just having an affinity for it.

14-00:55:11

McLaughlin: I should say. And I always really feel I gain more from the few meetings that we have out there than anything I can contribute, and I'm a great admirer of their president, Jan Holmgren, who's been there now for fifteen years.

14-00:55:31

Lage: Well, they've had a lot of controversies over whether to remain a women's college or not.

14-00:55:38

McLaughlin: Yes. Yes. Well, that's all in the past, and it's very much just a women's college, except for the graduate programs, which are coed.

14-00:55:51

Lage: Does your group hold fundraisers, or how do they —

14-00:55:56

McLaughlin: We're expected to contribute a certain amount, and that's really—no, we don't have any fundraising, really, per se. Well, except that I'm supposed to—I have a whole list of people I'm supposed to call, and say, "You're on the list, and you haven't yet paid your dues or made your contribution for this year." So to that extent, we do.

14-00:56:25

Lage: Well, that's fundraising. Yes.

14-00:56:29

McLaughlin: Kind of try to encourage them.

14-00:56:31

Lage: Right. Tell me more about Ella Hagar. We did an oral history with her, of course.

14-00:56:36

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. Well, she was a very enthusiastic, wonderful person. Of course, I've known her daughters as well, and her son, George, I knew. And of course she was a fundraiser *par excellence*. She had a big fundraiser for, I believe, for Alta Bates [medical center], and also for the College Preparatory School. She was always involved in good works.

14-00:57:16

Lage: And very much a part of the community —

14-00:57:18

McLaughlin: Oh, I should say so.

14-00:57:19

Lage: — as well as the campus.

14-00:57:19

McLaughlin: Yes.

14-00:57:21

Lage: And she must have been in Town and Gown also.

14-00:57:23

McLaughlin: Oh, I'm sure. Yes.

14-00:57:25

Lage: I'm going to stop this here, because the tape is coming towards the end. Time to change.

[End Audio File 14 mclaughlin\_sylvia14\_05-25-07.mp3]

[Begin Audio File 15 mclaughlin\_sylvia15\_05-25-07.mp3]

15-00:00:00

Lage: Now we're on. Now, let's see. We're finishing up with university things and going to travels, but I wanted to —

15-00:00:12

McLaughlin: Well, we were—I was talking about some of the —

15-00:00:14

Lage: Some of the old timers.

15-00:00:16

McLaughlin: Yes, and of course Don was a very good friend of Bob Sproul, and so we went to a lot of functions at their home.

15-00:00:31

Lage: At the University House?

15-00:00:33

McLaughlin: Yes. And I assume you've done [an oral history with] Marian Sproul Goodin. Have you done her?

15-00:00:41

Lage: I'm not sure that we have.

15-00:00:43

McLaughlin: Yes. Because that's where she grew up. Ida Sproul was such a wonderful hostess. I think she had really worked on it, as she was very skilled at remembering people's names. We went to a number of quite special events there. When we would have dinner there, her mother would—I guess it was her mother-in-law—would be there for cocktails. We would have two drinks, and that was it, and then into the dinner. And then she would retire upstairs.

15-00:01:30

Lage: Ah. So his mother lived there?

15-00:01:32

McLaughlin: It was Mrs. Sproul. Yes. Grandmother Sproul.

15-00:01:40

Lage: What was Ida Sproul like as a person?

15-00:01:42

McLaughlin: Oh, she was just a dear person, very friendly, and I'm sure a great help to her husband.

15-00:01:52

Lage: Did she entertain in a formal way?

15-00:01:54

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. Well, life was much more formal in those days. Even under the Heynses, it was more formal. Everything is becoming less formal now. But, well, we went to one dinner there when the Queen of Greece was there, another occasion when Prince Charles was there. I shook hands with him. Another occasion when his father, Prince Philip, was there. I shook hands with him. Well, Ida was always extremely gracious, yet abided by the protocol that was required for these special guests.

15-00:02:54

Lage: Entertaining royalty must not be easy.

15-00:03:01

McLaughlin: Well, it didn't seem to bother her. Well, of course Prince Charles was there—I forget in what year—but he was extremely friendly. His father was a little bit more difficult to talk to. I was trying to make conversation with him at one point.

15-00:03:27

Lage: Do you remember when this was?

15-00:03:29

McLaughlin: And then we went to some—pardon me?

15-00:03:31

Lage: I wonder if you can place in time when these visits were.

15-00:03:35

McLaughlin: Oh, goodness. That'll be difficult. It was during the time of the Sprouls, certainly [The visit of Prince Charles was in 1977—ed.]. And then Don—my husband—said, "Well, you should really come to some of the parties that the [Regent Edwin] Pauleys have." And so I arranged to have someone stay here with the children, and went down—of course they had a beautiful home, and

15-00:04:04

Lage: This is Los Angeles, I'm assuming.

15-00:04:05

McLaughlin: Yes. And they entertained in a very elaborate, formal style. Once they had a dinner for the Shah of Iran. And on the invitation, it said it was essential to be punctual. So we all had to arrive at a certain time. She was very beautiful, I remember.

15-00:04:33

Lage: The shah's wife?

15-00:04:34

McLaughlin: Yes, Mrs. Shah. Had on the most gorgeous dress, and Don was quite taken with her, of course. I sat at a table with Greer Garson. It was a combination of movie people, diplomatic people, and so on. And Greer Garson was very attractive, too, of course, and she spoke excellent French. I think the sister of the shah was at our table, and also the lieutenant governor. Anyway, the sister of the shah didn't speak much English. I could speak French to her, too. But that was one of the other experiences I had.

And then there was another very elegant party we went to in Santa Barbara. Oh, I forget the name of the regent, now—He had beautiful orchid greenhouses, and each guest—of course you were in a long dress—would be given an orchid to coordinate with her outfit. It was really something else.

- 15-00:05:59  
Lage: So these were quite gracious affairs.
- 15-00:06:01  
McLaughlin: Yes.
- 15-00:06:02  
Lage: High society for California. It doesn't sound Berkeley-like. Did you have a sense of a difference in culture between north and south?
- 15-00:06:16  
McLaughlin: Oh, not really. No. It was just whatever. And then Don was a regent at a very interesting time, because that's when they were establishing three new campuses, at Santa Cruz, and —
- 15-00:06:38  
Lage: Santa Cruz, and Irvine.
- 15-00:06:40  
McLaughlin: Irvine. Yes.
- 15-00:06:41  
Lage: Santa Cruz, Irvine, and San Diego.
- 15-00:06:45  
McLaughlin: Yes. San Diego. So.
- 15-00:06:48  
Lage: So, did you travel and —
- 15-00:06:50  
McLaughlin: I went with Don on a number of those occasions when they had —
- 15-00:06:54  
Lage: To look at sites?
- 15-00:06:55  
McLaughlin: They'd have meetings there. And sometimes we'd take—the children were quite young. We'd take them with us. Don would take them walking on the beach, or here and there.
- 15-00:07:07  
Lage: So you could balance these active roles with motherhood, it sounds like.
- 15-00:07:13  
McLaughlin: Tried to, yes. But those were interesting times.
- 15-00:07:19  
Lage: Very. Any more about parties and regents? I think that's just a very interesting topic that's often overlooked. The social side of the regents.

15-00:07:37

McLaughlin: Irvine was the only campus I didn't go to, because the regents would always meet at one of the different campuses. So you became acquainted with whoever happened to be the chancellor, and the family, and so on. And of course Kay Kerr would always go, and I was not a bridge player. Some of the ladies played bridge. I'd usually bring along my bills to pay.

15-00:08:07

Lage: Oh, really?

15-00:08:08

McLaughlin: Yes.

15-00:08:10

Lage: Goodness. Not wasting time.

15-00:08:13

McLaughlin: Ah, no. Tried not to.

15-00:08:15

Lage: So, you were the bill payer in the family?

15-00:08:19

McLaughlin: Well, yes. Household bills.

15-00:08:22

Lage: I've often heard that in, you know, earlier eras, the men did all the finances, and some of the women were left completely in the dark about their finances.

15-00:08:34

McLaughlin: That's true.

15-00:08:34

Lage: It doesn't sound like that was the case in your family.

15-00:08:39

McLaughlin: No, well, my mother was a good role model. She did all the household bills, and was very good at it. I wasn't very good at it. I'm not very good at it. I did it. Now my daughter's my bookkeeper.

15-00:08:54

Lage: Oh, that's nice.

15-00:08:55

McLaughlin: Very nice.

15-00:08:58

Lage: Okay. Can you think of other university connections—I guess the first way I got to know you was at almost every event I would go to on the campus, you would be there. The Water Resources Archive —

- 15-00:09:14  
McLaughlin: That's right.
- 15-00:09:14  
Lage: — you've been a supporter of, the Bancroft Library. Do you want to talk about those two connections?
- 15-00:09:20  
McLaughlin: Well, I think Don had been on the [Friends] Council of the Bancroft Library.
- 15-00:09:27  
Lage: Oh, he had?
- 15-00:09:28  
McLaughlin: And so I felt a kind of a kinship there. And I just think it's an invaluable treasure house of material, and I'm so glad that they are interested in all my Save the Bay material, and various other things.
- 15-00:09:53  
Lage: Have you made arrangements to make an additional—I told Lauren Lassleben that you were ready.
- 15-00:10:00  
McLaughlin: Yes, they're coming to take—they've taken twenty-five boxes, I think, so far. But that's just sort of the tip of the iceberg, but we're working on it.
- 15-00:10:08  
Lage: Well, that's good, then. They'll be soon back in their new quarters, in the next year or so.
- 15-00:10:19  
McLaughlin: Oh, yes. I hope so.
- 15-00:10:20  
Lage: And how about the Water Resources Archive? How did that relationship come about?
- 15-00:10:29  
McLaughlin: Oh. I don't really know. I don't really remember how that happened.
- 15-00:10:34  
Lage: But have you been on their Friends' Board, or are you just interested in their programs?
- 15-00:10:42  
McLaughlin: I was asked, actually, to give a lecture—which I did. I don't know if you heard it. Were you there?
- 15-00:10:49  
Lage: I don't believe so.

15-00:10:50

McLaughlin: Anyway, that was about the most prestigious thing I've done, and so I told all my friends—I wanted to have a little group support, so I told all my friends, so they all came. And then I've also been—Linda Vida has asked me to come to various different events that they have, and I just think they do a great job.

15-00:11:27

Lage: She's done a wonderful job, I think—

15-00:11:28

McLaughlin: I should say so.

15-00:11:29

Lage: — with lecture series.

15-00:11:31

McLaughlin: So, anyway, I've been on panels, I guess, and so on.

15-00:11:35

Lage: Any other university connections that we should talk about? I know that more stories are going to come to mind.

15-00:11:43

McLaughlin: Oh, yes. I'm sure.

15-00:11:45

Lage: People, or events. But anything you can think of?

15-00:11:50

McLaughlin: Just a day or so ago, I met this fellow on the street while we were both getting our *Daily Planet*. And he said, "Oh, I know you." He said he remembered coming here for Arts Club meetings. I think Don was probably the only engineer that was in the Arts Club, which was mostly faculty men from the humanities—music, art, theatre, English, history, so on. All those departments. And I think Jack Kent came, too, city and regional planning. And they would go to the home of a member, and the wife would provide cocktails and hors d'œuvres. Sometimes for dinner, sometimes they went to Faculty Club for dinner. But then the wife was supposed to disappear.

15-00:12:50

Lage: Now how did you feel about that?

15-00:12:53

McLaughlin: Oh, that's the way it was. This was sort of a men's group. I suppose it no longer is, I don't think—if it still exists. They used to have one person who would give a paper, and then another person would be the chronicler, and would report on this person's paper at the following meeting.

15-00:13:18

Lage: I see. And would that take place at the cocktail hour, or —

15-00:13:23  
McLaughlin: No, no. Afterwards.

15-00:13:23  
Lage: Afterwards. Did any of the wives come to the cocktail hour?

15-00:13:32  
McLaughlin: I think I usually did.

15-00:13:35  
Lage: I wonder how Don got involved in the Arts Club, being a miner.

15-00:13:40  
McLaughlin: I really don't know.

15-00:13:41  
Lage: A mining engineer.

15-00:13:42  
McLaughlin: He just seemed to have a lot of friends in the various different departments of the faculty. And so I guess it somehow happened.

15-00:13:50  
Lage: Did you think any more about that planning group? Last time we talked about the Jack Kent planning group.

15-00:13:58  
McLaughlin: Telesis, you mean?

15-00:13:59  
Lage: No, it was having to do with campus planning.

15-00:14:02  
McLaughlin: Oh, the group that we used to meet with.

15-00:14:03  
Lage: Right. And you couldn't think of too many people involved with it.

15-00:14:08  
McLaughlin: No. That was a lot of fun, though. Again, we were just trying to sort of think up ways that the university could improve itself.

15-00:14:22  
Lage: I wonder if that came about around the time that they were going to raze the Naval Architecture Building. Or do you think it was earlier?

15-00:14:29  
McLaughlin: No, this was totally different. Different effort, yes.

15-00:14:31  
Lage: Totally different. okay. Another mystery. All right. Well, do you want to talk about travel? This has come up several times today, and I know you've been talking to Harry Conger [former Homestake Mining Company president].

15-00:14:46

McLaughlin: Yes, because it was—well, I knew when I married Don that he was going to be away quite a lot. That's just the way it was going to be, because he was on several boards, and he was still consultant at several mines, and when we were living across the street at 1435 Hawthorne Terrace, we were redoing it, and I said, "We have to get out of the house for a couple of days while they do the floors." And he said, "Well, let's go to Mexico." So, we went down to this mine in a very small town, Tayoltita, Mexico. And he used to go—it was four days on a mule.

15-00:15:42

Lage: To get into it?

15-00:15:42

McLaughlin: Yes. But about forty-five minutes in an airplane, but there had to be no wind, and so you would go from Mazatlan. So that was quite an interesting experience.

15-00:15:56

Lage: Now was this where Lee Swent was living?

15-00:15:58

McLaughlin: Yes, that's where she lived.

15-00:16:00

Lage: So she was living in that remote a spot?

15-00:16:02

McLaughlin: Oh, yes.

15-00:16:03

Lage: No wonder she came up here to have her babies.

15-00:16:06

McLaughlin: Yes! And they were so hospitable there. Of course, everywhere we went, people were hospitable, but that was an interesting experience. And also, I can remember sitting around, and it was very dry there, so we were dancing on the grass, and that worked out fine.

15-00:16:40

Lage: Oh, you mean you had a dance held on the grass?

15-00:16:44

McLaughlin: Yes.

15-00:16:46

Lage: What was the mine configuration? Were there a lot of Anglos down there?

15-00:16:52

McLaughlin: Well, it was just kind of an American compound there.

15-00:16:58

Lage: So, it must have been a large operation.

15-00:17:00

McLaughlin: Yes, but I think Lee made an effort to become acquainted with some of the local women, and the local people, too—much more than some of the others did—which made her life much more interesting, I think.

15-00:17:14

Lage: She's talked about that, in fact, in the little oral history, which was very interesting.

15-00:17:17

McLaughlin: I'm sure. We were only there for a few days, and we went down to the *Club de los Leones*, and we were dancing there. It was kind of cantilevered over the river that—well, it was dry most of the time. That was the only time that trucks could go on the river.

15-00:17:47

Lage: Would drive right in the river bed?

15-00:17:47

McLaughlin: Yes. There's a picture of me somewhere around here on a mule going up to see a mine.

15-00:17:58

Lage: In Mexico?

15-00:17:59

McLaughlin: Mm-hmm. At that time. So, anyway, I was saying, "Well, there's so much dust, let's not be dancing here anymore." So we went outside. We could see the dust that was coming off the floor, I guess just because of the dryness and so on.

15-00:18:25

Lage: You mean rising up out of the riverbed? Oh, my.

15-00:18:27

McLaughlin: Yes. It was a rather late night, I remember, but then here a lot of our hosts there were at the airplane at 5:00 am to see us off. As I said, there had to be no wind, because the airfield was so short, and you had to go up—we went in on a five-passenger small plane, just one or two engines. Then we went out, and they had bought, I think, three or four trimotor planes, because of the way they could fly up slowly and land. They would take the ore out by plane. Apparently, the general manager some years before had come up here and gone over to Crissy Field, and asked if there were any—this was Lee Swent's father-in-law—asked if there was any experience in landing an airplane uphill, and he said, "Well, I don't know, but here's a pilot. We'll take you up and see." And that was Jimmy Doolittle. They took Jay Swent flying, and they went up on some of the hills in Marin, I think.

- 15-00:20:11  
Lage: And landed?
- 15-00:20:11  
McLaughlin: Yes. So, it proved that it could happen. It could work.
- 15-00:20:16  
Lage: And that was in preparation for this mine?
- 15-00:20:20  
McLaughlin: Well, they had been going in only by four days on a mule.
- 15-00:20:24  
Lage: I see.
- 15-00:20:25  
McLaughlin: So this was an alternative way of transportation.
- 15-00:20:28  
Lage: And this was a gold mine?
- 15-00:20:30  
McLaughlin: Yes, it was mostly gold.
- 15-00:20:34  
Lage: Why, that's quite a tale.
- 15-00:20:37  
McLaughlin: Yes. And then I think the story I heard was that Jimmy Doolittle was feeling—I guess this was kind of a lot of fun. He started doing some tricks, and so on, which Jay Swent hadn't really counted on.
- That was an interesting trip. Then when we came back, we were met by Don, Jr. who was living here then, going to the university. He said, "Oh, your house nearly burned down." And apparently the people that had worked on the floors left the shavings and everything on the front porch. And it spontaneously combusted. Fortunately, the people across the street noticed the smoke and the flames, and called the fire department.
- 15-00:21:36  
Lage: It could have spelled the end of the house, if someone hadn't been watching.
- 15-00:21:37  
McLaughlin: Yes. Well, you have to be careful. I have to look and see where else we went.
- 15-00:21:51  
Lage: Did you go to Peru?
- 15-00:21:54  
McLaughlin: Yes. Several times. Of course, Don was general manager down there—I think from 1942 to '44—and after he left being dean of the College of Engineering. Well, first of all, I would say we had several trips to Lead, South Dakota,

where the Homestake Mine is. Of course there would be formal parties there as well, for the president and his assistant, and so on.

15-00:22:38

Lage: Tell me about Lead. How big a community was it?

15-00:22:41

McLaughlin: Lead? Oh, I went up there even in the wintertime. It was a picture postcard town, really. I think it's quite attractive.

15-00:22:56

Lage: Was it pretty much a company town?

15-00:22:59

McLaughlin: Yes.

15-00:23:00

Lage: Homestake?

15-00:23:03

McLaughlin: And at that time they had no union, because it was a sort of paternalistic, I guess, way of doing things. And they had, I think, a good relationship with the workers, and provided hospital care, and so on.

15-00:23:19

Lage: And housing, did they provide it? Do you know?

15-00:23:23

McLaughlin: I'm not sure how that worked. I think they probably did.

15-00:23:26

Lage: How big a community was it?

15-00:23:27

McLaughlin: Oh, it's not a large community. And then part of it, because of taking the ore out, part of it was sinking, so they made that into a public garden and park. It's called the Sinking Garden. And then of course the next town is Deadwood, and that's a very different type of town. Lead was rather conservative, I would say, but if people wanted to kick up their heels, and so on, they had a lot of the bars and so on down in Deadwood.

15-00:24:01

Lage: I see. Somehow the idea of formal parties in these very small towns just isn't what I expect, never having lived in one. Were they formal parties of the type that you might have at University House, or at Regent Pauley's house?

15-00:24:22

McLaughlin: No. Not quite that formal.

15-00:24:25

Lage: What kind of attire would you take to wear, when you went to Lead?

15-00:24:35

McLaughlin: Oh, I don't remember. Well, as you can see, I was never really one to wear pants. Just what you'd wear most anywhere, I guess.

15-00:24:48

Lage: But, I mean, for a party?

15-00:24:50

McLaughlin: Oh, for a party?

15-00:24:50

Lage: Yes.

15-00:24:52

McLaughlin: I think generally probably a short dress.

15-00:24:57

Lage: And how about in Mexico? The parties in that remote mine—were they pretty fancy, or casual?

15-00:25:03

McLaughlin: Well, again, you have to take the climate into consideration. There it was perfectly all right for the men just to wear a shirt without a tie. Yes, you tried to dress up a little bit.

15-00:25:28

Lage: But not formal.

15-00:25:29

McLaughlin: Oh, no. Now, where am I?

15-00:25:36

Lage: Anything else about Lead? The people you met?

15-00:25:42

McLaughlin: I went skiing up there the first winter. And then there's a small town area known as Spearfish, where the Bjorges—the general manager—they had a sort of a summer cabin. A number of the people did. I remember we had a sort of barbeque outside there. I was impressed by the hugeness of the steaks. But that was the way they did things there. And of course the Black Hills were very attractive there, the whole area, and that's where we met Korczak Ziolkowski, who was carving the head of Crazy Horse out of the mountain. His wife Ruth and her family are still doing it.

15-00:26:48

Lage: Still working on that?

15-00:26:49

McLaughlin: Mm-hmm. So that was interesting.

15-00:26:52

Lage: Was it the Black Hills that you ski? Where you ski? Where did you ski out there?

15-00:27:00

McLaughlin: Well, of course the tourists—everyone goes to see the carved heads Gutzon Borglum did of the presidents.

15-00:27:09

Lage: Right. Mount Rushmore.

15-00:27:10

McLaughlin: Yes, Mount Rushmore. But we'd generally only be there a few days. And then you mentioned Peru. That was really interesting. We went up to the headquarters, the Cerro de Pasco mine, which was in a place called La Oroya. It's all quite desolate there, I guess because of all the toxics or something. The hills are all pretty bare. It's up about 12,000 feet. Then you go on up—Cerro de Pasco itself is even higher. It's around—oh—13,000. I'm not quite sure. Anyway, the hospitality was great, no matter where you were. Don went to the various outlying mines, and I went with him.

15-00:28:24

Lage: And how would you travel there?

15-00:28:26

McLaughlin: By car. He had a car and driver. He had a wonderful—it was a Chevrolet convertible. So I insisted on getting one just like it when we got back. Well, not just like it, but it was a Chevrolet convertible. His driver was a driver he'd had before, Jose. Mostly accustomed to the streets of Lima, I think. But it was interesting to go to some of these outlying areas. These women—the wives of the mine managers—had to be very self sufficient. Particularly if they had children, too. Sometimes they would have a native Peruvian maid, who would probably be barefooted. I remember in nearly every home you went to, they had a silver tea service. It was sort of emblematic of their civilization.

15-00:29:29

Lage: I see. They brought that with them.

15-00:29:31

McLaughlin: Yes. But I really admired these women so much, for being quite isolated, and yet they managed. That's what they did, so—

15-00:29:53

Lage: And they must have been happy to see you coming, though.

15-00:29:56

McLaughlin: Well, I don't know.

15-00:29:57

Lage: Did you get the feeling they appreciated having visitors?

15-00:30:01

McLaughlin: Once, I—of course, I had studied Spanish in college, but I was a little confused, because I was supposed to come back to have lunch. And 2:00 is *dos*, and 12:00 is, I think, *doce*. They were on American time, and they were having lunch at 12:00. I thought they were meaning 2:00, and I'd go out with Jose, and I love to climb around in the hills and pick the little alpine flowers, and then I'd put them in these large ashtrays. Another time, I went with Jose and we went to the neighboring town, I think it's Huancayo, and you had to go up over a pass. And then it started to storm. Well, we got down, then we headed back. This was just a gravel road. And it was snowing, as well. The driver was—as I said—more accustomed to the paved streets of Lima, and I'd been accustomed to driving in the mountains of Colorado. There were a lot of trucks on the road, and I kept telling him, "Don't stop. Don't stop." He said, "Oh, *los camiones*," you know. Because once if you stop, it's hard to get started again on these gravel roads. So I think we stopped up on the crest at the top, so I said I had so much experience—I enjoyed driving—so I slipped in to the driver's seat. I probably scared him going down.

15-00:32:03

Lage: That's what I'm thinking. You felt you could handle it better?

15-00:32:08

McLaughlin: Yes. But then I—just before we got into down—I turned it back to him, so he wouldn't be seen not driving.

15-00:32:24

Lage: Well, that's funny. Maybe it would be good to take your glasses off. I'm getting all these reflections now.

15-00:32:29

McLaughlin: Sorry about that.

15-00:32:30

Lage: That's okay. If you can see. I don't want to —

15-00:32:38

McLaughlin: Oh, yes, and then it was also interesting about Cerro de Pasco to see the—I think about 14,000 feet high—to see the old Spanish workings. Just so amazing that the Spanish were there in the sixteenth century, I guess.

15-00:32:59

Lage: Making mines?

15-00:33:00

McLaughlin: Mm-hmm.

15-00:33:02

Lage: And these are also gold mines, I'm assuming?

15-00:33:03

McLaughlin: Yes. And then some silver, and other things too, I think.

15-00:33:10

Lage: Up at 14,000 feet. That is amazing.

15-00:33:15

McLaughlin: Of course Don, when he was there, he made a point of becoming acquainted with the local people—the top heads of the mining people there. So that was very nice, too. They would entertain us.

15-00:33:43

Lage: In all these different spots in Peru, you mean?

15-00:33:46

McLaughlin: Well, in Lima, particularly. And we stayed up at a very nice hotel, El Country—it was a country club on the outskirts of Lima. But Don enjoyed it there a lot. He wanted to show me all the old places he would go to, and so on.

15-00:34:09

Lage: Where he'd spent time?

15-00:34:09

McLaughlin: Mm-hmm.

15-00:34:11

Lage: Were most of the mine owners American or European?

15-00:34:19

McLaughlin: Well, most of the people he knew were Peruvian.

15-00:34:22

Lage: Oh, they were Peruvian.

15-00:34:23

McLaughlin: And on a later trip where we went to another mine that the Homestake was involved with, we went up to Arequipa, which is a beautiful town. We went up over quite a high pass, and we didn't feel like jumping around at 15,000 feet. And then that night, these people were very hospitable, having dinner, and there was some music, and some gentleman asked me to dance. It turned out to be something like *La Marinara*, or something like that. I had to do the best I could.

15-00:35:15

Lage: At 15,000 feet!

15-00:35:17

McLaughlin: No, this was only twelve. Eleven or twelve. And then we went on to a mine in the southern part of Peru, and it was built by the Utah Mining—it used to be Mining and Construction. It looked like a little Mormon town. It was interesting. We were shown the school they had, and so on. And then we went down to another little town, Ito, I think, and then from there flew up the coast. That was really interesting because you could see how really desolate some of those areas are.

15-00:36:16

Lage: When you say desolate, you mean vegetation?

15-00:36:17

McLaughlin: Yes, yes.

15-00:36:20

Lage: Do you think that was because of the altitude, or some other—

15-00:36:22

McLaughlin: I don't know. It was just desert, I guess.

15-00:36:30

Lage: Have you been back there in more recent times?

15-00:36:37

McLaughlin: No. Oh, yes I have. I went back with this group that I'm going to be having lunch with and we had a wonderful trip. And then I had the opportunity to go to Cuzco and Machu Picchu. All the time Don had been down there he'd never been there. But he was too busy with work at his job. So that was a wonderful trip. I enjoyed South America a lot.

15-00:37:00

Lage: And you speak Spanish! Or do you speak Spanish?

15-00:37:04

McLaughlin: Yes. Well, I took three years in college, but I can get along.

15-00:37:10

Lage: Twelve or two—

15-00:37:10

McLaughlin: [laughter] Yes! Aside from things like that. I think I spoke about going when Don was a regent to the UC program abroad.

15-00:37:33

Lage: You mentioned it but I don't remember that it—

15-00:37:35

McLaughlin: We went to Göttingen and then Padua and Bordeaux and Madrid. And now, of course, there are many, many different areas where they have the UC program abroad.

15-00:37:45

Lage: This is just when they were just kind of beginning.

15-00:37:50

McLaughlin: Yes, and I think the UC program is quite outstanding in that the students that go there are expected to just go into the regular classes with the local students and so they have to be quite proficient in the language before they go there. Whereas I think some universities and colleges, I think maybe Stanford, if you

go to Stanford in France, it's not as much a part of the culture in the classes as the UC study abroad program is.

15-00:38:26

Lage: And in the UC program, they also live in the community.

15-00:38:29

McLaughlin: Pardon me?

15-00:38:30

Lage: With the UC program, they also live in the community, rather than in separate dormitories. It does make a difference.

15-00:38:38

McLaughlin: Oh yes. So that was very interesting. A moment here, see where else we went. Another trip I went on with Don was to South Africa and that was, I think, because of his interest in monetary policy as well

15-00:39:14

Lage: Now why South Africa for monetary policy?

15-00:39:18

McLaughlin: Well, that's where they have a lot of gold. That's what Don was interested in.

15-00:39:22

Lage: [laughter]. In the gold standard.

15-00:39:26

McLaughlin: Yes. And a very good friend, Angus Collie, was a delightful person with Scottish ancestors, and they entertained us in their home. And another, he was with the Chamber of Mines there, and then another gentlemen also entertained us. And his wife was an artist, I think. I bought one of the paintings and it just barely fit into my suitcase. But the landscape around there that she had painted reminded me of sort of the northern Colorado, southern Wyoming landscape. And then of course we went to Cape Town and my nephew happened to be there then. He showed us around. And that's a lovely area that reminded me of northern California.

15-00:40:23

Lage: I guess the climates are not that different.

15-00:40:25

McLaughlin: Mm-hmm. Excuse me, on that trip, we also went to one of the animal parks. There's one park quite near Johannesburg, and then we went to, I think it was Kruger Park and stayed at one of these little houses and it was a really nice experience.

15-00:40:50

Lage: This must have been during apartheid, of course.

15-00:40:53

McLaughlin: Yes, it was.

15-00:40:54

Lage: And how early on was it? In the seventies, or sixties?

15-00:40:59

McLaughlin: I think it was '63, yes. And it was—

15-00:41:03

Lage: How did that strike you?

15-00:41:05

McLaughlin: Oh that's just sort of the way—We went out to some of these towns, the black communities in Soweto and we were shown around there and we were shown some of the ways in which they trained the miners that come, they teach them a common language.

15-00:41:24

Lage: What language did they teach them? Because they come from so many different tribal languages?

15-00:41:32

McLaughlin: Yes. And it was interesting to see how they would select the leaders amongst them. They would give them sort of tests to do, how they would get a log from here to there, something like that. One person would come up as a leader and so he'd be given a supervisory position. So it was interesting being there at that time. What did they say? Black by day and white by night? But the people there would send their children off to boarding schools at quite an early age.

15-00:42:20

Lage: Out of the country?

15-00:42:21

McLaughlin: Yes.

15-00:42:22

Lage: Did they say why?

15-00:42:24

McLaughlin: It was just not very comfortable being there. A lot of the people, some of them anyway, I'm sure slept with a revolver right beside them.

15-00:42:42

Lage: So there was a sense of fear, of social unrest?

15-00:42:47

McLaughlin: There was very much a sense of fear. But we felt perfectly comfortable in other people's homes.

15-00:43:02

Lage: Was there a lot of security around other people's homes?

15-00:43:05

McLaughlin: No, not that I knew of. Well, there probably was in the way of servants and dogs and maids and so on. Yes.

15-00:43:15

Lage: Were the people you were visiting—I wouldn't want to call them "native," because you would think of the black South Africans as being the natives. What heritage were they? Were they people who had lived there for generations?

15-00:43:30

McLaughlin: Some I think had, were Afrikaans.

15-00:43:39

Lage: Were the ones who sent their children back to Europe?

15-00:43:43

McLaughlin: Generally, they'd send them back to Britain or Australia or New Zealand. These were the educated people. Then there was a couple that came over here and we took them up to Yosemite. I remember it was just a, it was the only time I'd ever stayed at the Ahwahnee [Hotel]. Late May, a few days, and there was just a light snow. It looked like powdered sugar on all the greenery and you also saw the white dogwood. I think they were very appreciative, seeing that. Well, they had been very hospitable to us so Don thought this was something we could do for them.

15-00:44:39

Lage: And would Don—What would he be doing in South Africa aside from thinking about the gold thing?

15-00:44:48

McLaughlin: Well, meeting with these people. Sometimes there were conferences, I guess. For example when we were in Rio de Janeiro, seven years later, there was the International Chamber of Commerce and we met there. Then we went from there on up to Peru, that was the trip I described. He also had meetings some years later in Munich, I think. Just different conferences, meetings he went to.

15-00:45:30

Lage: Now the children were very young on many of these things you've been describing.

15-00:45:33

McLaughlin: Yes.

15-00:45:35

Lage: Did you take them on trips—

15-00:45:37

McLaughlin: They went with us to—Well, let's see, George was fifteen when I went over there. It was 1970 I think. That was when I drove from Madrid to—then we met Don, then Jeanie was in Switzerland at that time staying with family

friends. Another time, Jeanie was married then and she was in Yugoslavia and we drove from, I'm not sure, I guess it was Madrid to Zagreb [laughter].

15-00:46:36

Lage: That's a pretty good drive!

15-00:46:39

McLaughlin: Yes, and I did all the driving. But that was interesting. I enjoyed traveling. It was of course fun to be with Don and go to all these really interesting places.

15-00:47:01

Lage: Did you ever go to Asia?

15-00:47:03

McLaughlin: No. And I've never been to Australia. Although he knew a number of the Australian mining people, also.

15-00:47:13

Lage: Just didn't happen over that way?

15-00:47:14

McLaughlin: That's right.

15-00:47:16

Lage: Interesting! Any other travels that we've missed here?

15-00:47:19

McLaughlin: There's one other trip we took that might be of interest. He was on a number of different boards, including the International Nickel Corporation, INCO. So many of these mines and boards don't even exist anymore, including INCO. They were having a meeting in London, so we went over there and stayed at this very elegant hotel, the Claridges Hotel. There were a number of the wives along, but I had different interests than they did. They wanted to go to plays, theater, antique shops, and so on, and I was looking into what the British did with their solid waste or with their garbage [laughter]. Interested in their land trusts and so, things like that. So I kind of pursued my own interests there.

15-00:48:48

Lage: Did you make connections before you went so that you could meet with people in these various areas?

15-00:48:57

McLaughlin: I must have had some kind of connections. I don't know, maybe I just looked in the Yellow Pages, you know? But I found these people and did learn about what they did and so on.

15-00:49:14

Lage: And did that have an impact on any of your thinking?

15-00:49:20

McLaughlin: It was important, related to my interest in planning and so on.

15-00:49:28

Lage: Were there other ways that these travels, I mean as a whole, have had some shaping of you and the way you approach the environment in the Bay Area?

15-00:49:42

McLaughlin: You mean other things I did on my travels?

15-00:49:50

Lage: Yes, or things that you saw—

15-00:49:51

McLaughlin: Well, yes, and I guess for Kay too, I mean she'd been to Sydney and seen the beautiful harbor there. We were always interested in other waterfronts and designs and so on. And so that's why, for several years, I've gone to these Waterfront Center conferences which give awards to good designs. Our shoreline park has received a design award, the planners, Wallace, Roberts and Todd, WRT. But I think travel can't help but be broadening, informational, informative.

15-00:50:14

Lage: Yes, and open horizons. You had mentioned when we started this so long ago, how your father had been influenced by a trip to Sicily, was it?

15-00:50:48

McLaughlin: Yes.

15-00:50:50

Lage: Very directly.

15-00:50:51

McLaughlin: But then also he was quite a student of planning and architecture and history.

15-00:51:01

Lage: You do seem to have followed in his footsteps.

15-00:51:03

McLaughlin: Pardon me?

15-00:51:04

Lage: You do seem to have followed in his footsteps in many ways. Your father's.

15-00:51:08

McLaughlin: My father—I've followed in his footsteps. Yes, I think so. I used to go out with him sometimes when he was on trips to see the various parks and so on. He, I think, did have some kind of influence on me. He also wanted to make people aware of the beauty of nature, to bring the beauty of nature to the city.

15-00:51:49

Lage: Yes, it seems very much that way. Do you have any progeny coming along following in your footsteps? Any grandchildren or your own children who take up your interest?

15-00:52:07

McLaughlin: Oh who knows! Well, I think Jeanie pretty much has her own interests and my granddaughter Larisa is still in college. She's currently interested in photojournalism as a career. My other two grandchildren are only almost fourteen and almost twelve.

15-00:52:27

Lage: We'll have to give them some time.

15-00:52:29

McLaughlin: Give them a little time, yes.

15-00:52:30

Lage: But do you work on them? [laughter]

15-00:52:32

McLaughlin: No, but I think the schools nowadays do a very good job. The school that Grace goes to is over by Lake Merritt and they do a lot nowadays with what they call service learning. They make sandwiches for the homeless or they go to the St. Paul's Terrace, an old people's home nearby, which I think is very good. They go over to Lake Merritt, and Grace, my granddaughter, was responsible for counting a certain kind of bird. So I think they do try to make them aware of their surroundings and their environment.

15-00:53:21

Lage: So you have Larisa, Grace, and who's your—

15-00:53:25

McLaughlin: Alexander.

15-00:53:26

Lage: Alexander.

15-00:53:29

McLaughlin: And he's generally referred to as Zander. Zander and Grace.

15-00:53:38

Lage: OK. Now anything else that we should be covering that you can think of this morning?

15-00:53:42

McLaughlin: [laughter] Can't think of anything right now, but probably as soon as you leave I will.

15-00:53:49

Lage: You will. Or when you get the transcript, you'll think, why didn't we talk about this or that? For now, I think we are finished and thank you very much.

15-00:53:58

McLaughlin: Well, thank you! It's been a lot of fun!

[End of Interview]

## ANN LAGE

Ann Lage is a principal interviewer for the Regional Oral History Office in the fields of natural resources, land use, and the environment; University of California history; state government; and social movements. She has directed major projects on the Sierra Club since 1978 and on the disability rights movement since 1995. She conducts interviews on the UC Office of the President, the Department of History at Berkeley, and on environmental protection and natural resource management in California and the West. She is a member of the editorial board of the *Chronicle of the University of California*, a journal of university history, and holds a B.A. and M.A. in history from Berkeley.