



ORAL HISTORY CENTER of The Bancroft Library UC Berkeley

Newsletter - December 2015

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ORAL HISTORY CENTER

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Oral History Center

About

Oral history has a long distinguished place at the University of California. Hubert Howe Bancroft conducted oral history interviews beginning in the 1860s in support of his 39-volume history of the West. In 1954, the Regional Cultural History Office was established to conduct oral history interviews with leading citizens in California and the West. In the late 1950s, under the new leadership of Willa Baum, the office was renamed the Regional Oral History Office. In 2014 we became the Oral History Center of The Bancroft Library. Over our many decades of operation, we have conducted over 4,000 interviews on almost every topic imaginable. The vast majority of these interviews have been transcribed and made available via our database.



Rosie the Riveter project interviewee and NPS Ranger Betty Reid Soskin was recently featured on KQED's Forum program

The new [Oral History Center website](#) is here -- with more improvements coming soon!

From the Director

[From the Director: Looking Back on 2015 and Ahead to the Future](#)

When Shelley Stokes, a recently retired librarian at Howard University in Washington DC, decided to write about the life of her father, Maurice Stokes, Cleveland's first African-American mayor, she knew she need to develop her interviewing skills. Several years ago she discovered on the Web a summer workshop held annually at UC Berkeley's Oral History Center geared to educate participants in just that.



Participants in our 2015 Summer Advanced Oral History Institute

So when Stokes retired last spring, she decided to sign up for the workshop in Berkeley -- and is she glad she did.

"I wanted to learn how to do a better job of conducting interviews, how to convert tapes to CDs, and preserve oral histories," she wrote to me recently. "I enjoyed connecting with other people, and I received meaningful solutions and was encouraged to purse my projects and dreams."

Stokes was one of about 40 people from across the country and overseas who attended the August institute, which featured lectures and hands-on guidance to participants about their oral history projects. It was just one highlight of a year at the Oral History Center that saw the office undertake exciting new projects ranging from the history of the freedom to marry movement and economists at the University of Chicago, to the West Coast cocktail and many individual histories in our University and Community history series. [[Read more](#)]

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[Oral History in Action](#)

[A New Initiative on the Women Leaders at Berkeley Launched](#)



Phoebe Hearst,
one of the earliest "women
leaders of Berkeley"

We are pleased to announce the launch of a new project, one that is long overdue. Elaine Tennant, Director of The Bancroft Library (TBL), has created a fund for oral history interviews with women who helped to build and bolster UC Berkeley. While we have a long tradition of interviewing male leaders from around campus, women leaders have been underrepresented. It is now time to conduct more interviews that reflect the invaluable contributions of such women.

Tennant gathered a multitude of women who are tied to campus - professors, philanthropists, advisors, friends, researchers, and staffers - for a lunch on December 1, 2015 to begin a conversation about the strength of the women builders of Berkeley. These women - of whom included several of our staff, both current and retired, as well as with women whom we've interviewed - convened at The Bancroft Hotel. Kathryn Neal and Theresa Salazar, TBL archivist and curator respectively, pulled several treasures from the library; these items were on display and drew a large crowd at the start of the afternoon. [[read more](#)]

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[From the Archives](#)

[From the Archives: Zelma Long, A Pioneering Woman Winemaker and Her Global Impact](#)

You may not know Zelma Long's name, but if you drink wine, you've very likely tasted the fruits of her labor. She helped produce some of Robert Mondavi's famous wines in the 1970s and then, as head winemaker, elevated Simi Winery in Healdsburg to among the great wineries in California. More recently, she and her husband Phil Freese produce what many call the best Cabernet coming out of South Africa under the Vilafonte label. Our office first



Pioneering winemaker Zelma Long
was first interviewed in 1991

interviewed Long in 1991 and 1992 and here we revisit that interview in which she recalls the early years of Robert Mondavi Winery and the rise of Napa Valley to global importance; she discusses changes in winemaking practices and in the American palette; and she muses on the growing role of women in the male-dominated wine industry. Just last year we initiated another substantial interview with Long, catching up with her in the busy two decades since she was last interviewed. That interview, which covers her more recent forays in global winemaking among other topics, will be release in January 2016. Until then, check out our [earlier interview](#) with this pioneer.

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[News About OHC](#)

[Call for Nominations: the 2016 "Class of 1931" Honorary Interview in University History](#)

Nominations for the 2016 "Class of '31 Oral History Interviewee" are now open! We invite anyone to nominate a UC Berkeley faculty or staff person who has made a significant contribution to the life of the campus. The person selected will be invited to participate in an oral history interview conducted by our office. [Submit nominations here](#). Previous honorees include: Professor of Anthropology **Laura Nader**, former director of the Pacific Film Archive **Edith Kramer**, and **Patricia Pelfrey**, a leader in the study of higher education.

In recent months...

The Oral History Center has completed several fascinating interviews that you might have missed. So, we'd like to help you catch up on our latest releases: an in-depth life history interview with UC Berkeley Professor and 2013 [Nobel Laureate Randy Schekman](#); UCSF Professor and co-founder of the biotechnology firm Chiron, [William Rutter](#); [Ron Choy](#), who was the first director of the path-breaking American Cultures program at Berkeley; [Jill Shoemaker](#), formerly an executive with Dryer's Grand Ice Cream; cocktail historian and raconteur [Dave Wondrich](#); former Berkeley assistant vice chancellor and recognized city planner [Dorothy Walker](#); [Art Gensler](#), who 50 years ago founded what is now the largest architecture firm in the United States; founder of the Omega Boys Club, [Joseph Marshall](#); esteemed teacher and Aikido practitioner [Janet Diajogo](#); and [John Pritzker](#), a leader of the Jewish community in San Francisco and beyond.



2013 winner of the Nobel Prize in Medicine, Randy Schekman

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[Coming Up](#)

And stay tuned for...

In the coming months, check back to the Oral History Center website for the

release of our highly-anticipated interviews, including with:

- Famed and widely-collected artist **Ed Ruscha**;
- Renowned economists trained at the University of Chicago, including **George P. Shultz** and **Arnold Harberger**;
- Several more interviews with women who worked on the homefront in World War II as part of our long-running **Rosie the Riveter Oral History Project**;
- Leaders in the state's protection of the natural environment, **Joe Bodovitz** and **Will Travis**;
- Wine marketing and hospitality innovator **Margrit Mondavi**;
- **The University of California Athletics Oral History Project**, which features interviews with 70 experts on the issues of university sports programs;
- UC Berkeley law professor and educational reformer, **Jack Coons**;
- **Edith Kramer**, who served as director of Berkeley's Pacific Film Archive for many years;
- The first five interviews documenting the history of **West Coast Cocktails**, including **Jorg Rupf, founder of St. George Spirits**;
- Famed James Beard award-winning winemaker **Zelma Long**;
- **Phyllis Cook**, a leader of San Francisco's Jewish community;
- **George Halvorson**, recently retired as CEO of Kaiser Permanente, one of the largest providers of health care in the United States;
- **Keith Yamamoto**, Professor of Cellular and Molecular Pharmacology, and campus leader, at UC San Francisco

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UC BERKELEY LIBRARY

The Oral History Center (OHC), a research division of The Bancroft Library, documents the history of California, the nation, and the interconnected global arena. OHC produces carefully researched, audio/video-recorded and transcribed oral histories and interpretative historical materials for the widest possible use.

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