Cliff Dochterman:
A Rotarian’s Pursuit of Happiness through Service

Interviews conducted by
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in 2016

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Cliff Dochterman, 2016
Cliff Dochterman was the President of Rotary International (1992-1993), the Executive Vice President of the University of the Pacific, Stockton (1972-1990) and the Assistant to University of California President Clark Kerr (1958-1970). Dochterman was born in 1925 in Ohio. In 1950, Dochterman received his Master’s Degree in Public Administration from the University of California, Berkeley. Upon graduating, he became an integral member of the California Alumni Association before joining the University of California Office of the President. As Executive Vice President of the University of the Pacific, Stockton, Dochterman developed a culture of giving amongst alumni. Throughout his professional career, Dochterman was committed to community service and Rotary Club. An active leader in several Rotary International committees and leadership roles, Dochterman was pivotal in jumpstarting the PolioPlus program, which immunized over 2.5 billion children around the world. During his time as President of Rotary International, Dochterman continued to expand Rotary’s global service by raising and delivering over $3 million US dollars to refugees during the Yugoslav Wars. In this interview, Cliff Dochterman discusses the Free Speech Movement era from an administrative perspective and goes into detail about the evolution of Rotary International into a global philanthropic institution.
Birth in 1925 in Criderville, Ohio and move to Findlay, Ohio — Parents’ early divorce and being raised by mother and grandmother — Schooling, mother’s remarriage to Earl Dochterman, “he was really the only father that I knew.” — Move to Delaware, Ohio in sixth grade — Stepfather’s work as an electrician during the Depression — Elder brother Bill, closeness in age and friendship — Lifelong Boy Scout commitment — Joining the Findlay YMCA in 1932 or 1933 through a community donor, first awareness of the value of humanitarian giving — Junior high and high school extracurricular activities: drama, public speaking, debate — Beginning baritone horn at age 10 — 1943 high school graduation, beginning study at Ohio Wesleyan University — Drafted, disappointing rejection on account of poor eyesight — Parents’ travel and move to Berkeley — Summer semester at Berkeley, work in the shipyards: “Feeling I was doing at least something for the war effort.” — 1946 college graduation, job at San Francisco City Hall in the Civil Service Commission — Recruiting for the city of San Francisco to fill jobs after World War II — Interest in the law, plans to attend Boalt in fall 1947 — 1949 transition to a master’s degree in public administration — 1947 work begins on the Cal Alumni Association Lake Shasta camp — Starting fundraising work as director of California Alumni Scholarships — Meeting first wife Dorothy Coset, UC student and Rosie the Riveter — Dorothy’s teaching work in 1951 in newly-integrated Walnut Grove schools — More on California Alumni Association fundraising — Alumni cohesion in the era of football coach Pappy [Lynn Osbert] Waldorf — A golden age of alumni loyalty and state legislative financial support for UC — Cal Alumni Association’s independence from UC and thus effective lobbying in Sacramento — 1958 Clark Kerr is made president of the UC system, hires Dochterman as Assistant to the President and Community Affairs Office — Handling special situations: The Free Speech Movement, the Shah of Iran delivers the 1964 UCLA commencement address

Organizing inauguration celebrations for Clark Kerr on all the UC campuses — The Free Speech Movement in 1964-1965 — Kerr’s pacifist Quaker roots and his desire to resolve peacefully was in conflict with Governor Brown’s orders to call the National Guard — UC Regents dismiss Kerr in 1967 — Difficulty distinguishing sincere students desiring reform from those who enjoyed disruption for its own sake — Day-to-day advising Clark Kerr: “I was absolutely loyal in
public and absolutely frank in private. I think he respected that.” — The difficult
time following Kerr’s termination and Henry Wellman’s transition to acting
president — Charles Hitch is brought in as president, Hitch’s background in
business transforms the academic atmosphere of the office — More on work with
Kerr: giving information but not advice — Interpreting UC events for the larger
community

Interview 2: July 27, 2016

Audio File 2

Hour 1

The stigma of divorce in the 1920s and 1930s, early childhood in a home without
a male leader — Methodist church involvement, important moral development:
“Kindness, decency, giving, those are not, in my opinion, inborn traits. They’re
things you learn.” — A home full of women, memories of great-grandmother and
Aunt May who survived polio — More on Dochterman’s mother, Audrey, and her
work as a school teacher, her struggle to finish college and keep her children —
Younger sister, born when Dochterman was 16 — Mother’s later acting work, her
death at age 99 after a bad fall — Dochterman’s decision to leave Boalt after two
years — More on Clark Kerr’s 1967 dismissal — 1969 or 1970 move to Denver,
Colorado, job with the Education Commission of the States — 1960s teaching
business administration class at Golden Gate University — More on the move
from Berkeley to Denver: “I felt that my talents were no longer used and I was
just pleased to find a challenge that was so exciting.” — Diverse expertise of the
Education Commission staff — Return to California after three years, call from
Stan McCaffrey, job offer from the University of the Pacific — 1972 starting as
executive vice president, happy family life in Stockton — Community
involvement in San Joaquin County: Boy Scouts, chamber of commerce, United
Way, Rotary and parks and recreation — Designing University of the Pacific’s
development office, work with the board of regents — Cultivating the will to give

Hour 2

More on cultivating supporters: “You have to find the common denominator of
what makes a person feel good about giving…” — A surprise gift of $9 million
from Gladys Bernard — Learning the development ropes at the California Alumni
Association Cal Alumni Scholarship Program — Cultivating alumni identity at
University of the Pacific — Working directly with students — Working with Stan
McCaffrey, and 60 year friendship — McCaffrey becomes president of Rotary
International, is replaced by Bill Atchley as president of University of the Pacific
— Dorothy’s 1987 death from cancer — 1991 retirement from University of the
Pacific, offer of Rotary International presidency for 1992-1993 — Early
awareness of Rotary International — 1905 origins in Chicago promoting business,
growth in San Francisco, the United States, and the world — Nomination and
joining Berkeley Rotary in 1958 — Meetings and the Shattuck Hotel — President
1964-1965 — District governor 1968-1969 with Clark Kerr’s support — Representing UC Berkeley during a tumultuous period — Spoof Rotary speech — Joy in public speaking — Long friendship with George Togashi — Getting involved with Rotary at the international level in 1968 — Training Rotarians in service, organization — Rotary’s expansion from business club to service organization

Interview 3: August 4, 2016

Audio File 3

Hour 1

Honor at being Berkeley Rotary Club president, 1964-1965 — Celebrating Rotary’s 50th anniversary in Berkeley with the Berkeley Rotary Art and Garden Center at Live Oak Park — Role as liaison and “translator” between UC and Rotarians — The Free Speech Movement’s impact on Berkeley business — Diversity of opinion within Rotary membership — Selection as District Governor, 1968-1969 — Summer travel within the district — More on representing UC to the larger community — Rotary’s 1960s-1970s expansion to more international work, scholarships — International conventions — Fellowship and friendship engendered at Rotary meetings

Hour 2

Friendships with Dr. Bob Warner and Fred Joyce — 1970 move to Denver, Colorado — The Rotary Club of Denver — Helping to start University Hills Rotary Club — 1971 move to Stockton, California, membership in the North Stockton Rotary Club — Representing the University of the Pacific as President of the Stockton Chamber of Commerce — 1976 Thanksgiving luncheon speech — 1979 Clem Renouf forms the Health, Hunger, and Humanity (3-H) committee with Dochterman addressing Humanity aspect — 1980 work on the 80th anniversary fund and the origins of the Rotary polio program in the Philippines — Some resistance from Rotary to emerging global vision — 1981 or 1982 Stan McCaffrey becomes world president, asks Dochterman to chair the New Horizons Committee — Polio 2005, impact of polio on Dochterman’s family — Learning the scope of the proposed polio project in collaboration with Dr. Sabin, setting out to raise $110 million — Name change to PolioPlus, raising $240 million by the 1987 Rotary convention — Maintaining separation between PolioPlus fundraising the the Rotary Foundation — A big ask in Marysville, CA — Support at all levels of Rotary for polio program — Balancing Rotary, university work, and family life
Forging a partnership with the World Health Organization, 1987 — WHO’s initial reluctance — Other partners UNICEF and the United States Centers for Disease Control — 1983-1985 term as one of 17 directors of Rotary International, Vice President of Rotary working with President Dr. Carlos Conseco to get the polio program back on track — Consulting Dr. Sabin, learning the magnitude of international polio eradication — Shift in Rotary focus from simply purchasing the vaccine to partnering with WHO and local health professionals to distribute and administer vaccine — Additional expenses and logistics — Partnering with local health departments, approaching each country uniquely: “You give, you take, and you have to achieve the objective.” — Travel with wife Mary Elena to India for PolioPlus — National days of immunization in Argentina, Ethiopia — Program leadership by volunteer Bill Sargent — More on allocation, fundraising — Testing efficacy

Rotary education initiatives starting in 1947 with Ambassadorial Scholars — Rotary Peace Scholars — The path to official inclusion of women in Rotary — Duarte Rotary Club admits women in the 1980s — 1987 California Supreme Court and Unruh Act prohibit sex discrimination in business — Dochterman’s strong support for women in Rotary, 1989 Rotary bylaws amended: “I thought the time had come, that you can’t continue to hold on to ideas that no longer exist.” — Counseling clubs that resisted admitting women — Some reluctance, especially internationally — Women’s only clubs — First wife Dorothy’s support and diligent work as a Rotary wife and first lady — Dorothy’s death and concerns over electing a widower as president — Stan McCaffrey introduces Dochterman and Mary Elena — Mary Elena’s Rotary service, presidency of Moraga club, receiving the Rotary Service Above Self Award — Rotary’s evolution to include diverse members and leaders — Thoughts on the future of Rotary: expanding the ideals of Rotary to be more inclusive — Adapting the strict weekly meeting requirement to meet modern needs

1991 election as president of Rotary International for 1992-1993 term — Candidate selection process — First wife Dorothy’s death and nomination as president without a first lady, daughter Claudia’s help — Year-long orientation as
president-elect — Preparation, choosing the theme, “real happiness is helping others” — Getting the call while at Bill and Mary Louise Ives’ cabin in Michigan, asking the Iveses to be presidential aides — Beginning the work of president-elect at Rotary headquarters in Evanston, Illinois — Planning the presidential travel schedule — Attending board meetings — More on the year-long orientation — Learning the global scope of the Rotary organization — The ABCs of Rotary — On being an activator: “…you can do anything in the world if you’re not doing it for personal credit.” — Personal goals for the presidency: strengthening existing programs, recognizing people for good work — The importance of thanking and recognizing people

Hour 2

Ernst Ragg’s 1992 letter asking for Rotary’s help for refugees fleeing civil war in then-Yugoslavia — Travel to Zagreb, Croatia, visiting the camps — Raising $8 million separate from the Foundation — Partnership with an Austrian bank, Canadian Airlines, and German Rotarians to purchase and deliver supplies — On not taking sides: “We are meeting the needs of refugees.” — Recognizing Ernst Ragg at the 1993 Rotary convention in Melbourne — The challenges of maintaining Rotary as an international organization — Taking responsibility in difficult situations: closing a regional office in Sweden, fair appointment of Rotary Foundation trustees — Organizing presidential conferences in Barcelona, Johannesburg after the end of apartheid — Rotary Day at the United Nations — Planning for the annual Rotary convention, held in Melbourne in 1993 — Highlights of the convention — Ending presidential term with satisfaction and eagerness for the next chapter

Interview 6: August 31, 2016

Audio file 6

Hour 1

Acting as conference director for the 1963 Conference on Space, Science, and Urban Life — Choosing the Dunsmuir House in Oakland as the venue — The Space Administration mandate to transmit space technology to the public — Working with Bank of Stockton CEO Bob Eberhardt to produce “The Way It Started” historic vignettes for radio, print, and education — 1992-1998 term as Rotary Foundation trustee, 1997-1998 chairmanship — Rotary Foundation funds all used for humanitarian activities, funds are spent only after three years accruing interest — Priorities of the Foundation during Dochterman’s time — Education initiatives: Ambassadorial Scholarship Programs, Peace Scholars Program — Oversight, mediating and intervening in the event of misuse of funds — A Group Study Exchange censure — Rotary’s goal of achieving peace, defining “peace”: “Meeting human needs. So that people don’t have to fight.”
Business and ethical standards unify Rotary’s global membership — The Four Way Test — Promoting proper vocational life and ideas of good business — More on 1992-1998 term as Rotary Foundation trustee and 1997-1998 chairman — Work on Peace Scholars Program — Establishing an endowment fund — Fundraising from Rotary Clubs and outside organizations — 2001 appointment as chairman of Rotary Council on Legislation — Changes to Rotary bylaws at the 2001 council: meeting attendance requirements, admitting members beyond business leaders — Greater inclusivity: “The recognition that the business and professional life of communities has changed markedly in the last 100 years.” — Rotary’s apolitical stance — Early 2000s committee service: Long Range Planning, Dreams of the Future, Strategic Planning — Return to being a Rotary member after many years of leadership service — Membership in Moraga Rotary since 1994 — Hopes for the future of Rotary — Joining the Boy Scouts on 12th birthday in 1937 — Earning merit badges, working at scout summer camp — Influence of scoutmaster Bernard Miller — Scouting as preparation for “quality citizenship” — Scouting’s emphasis on personal achievement, diverse achievement — Continued interest and involvement as an Eagle Scout after college — Involvement as the father of a scout, president of the Forty Niner Council, helping with the Boy Scout Jamboree — Hiring Bob Mazzuca to the Forty Niner Council: “This is important to do: give other people the chance that I was given.”

Interview 7: September 8, 2016

Audio file 7

Camp Chief of the western division of the 1981 National Scout Jamboree — Jamborees held every four years, include 40,000 to 50,000 boys for ten days — Intersection of Rotary and scouting, travel to Nigeria and honorary membership with the Nigerian Boy Scouts — Meeting scouts in China and Sweden during Rotary travel — The Cliff Dochterman Scouting Leader Award, established in 2005 by Rotary — Thoughts on the future of scouting, co-ed scouting programs — Challenges to Boy Scouting policies on religion and sexual orientation — Receiving the Distinguished Eagle Award in 1991 — Berkeley YMCA service — 1977-1978 Stockton Chamber of Commerce president — Chairman of the San Joaquin Parks and Recreation Commission: “You take on some civic responsibilities if you want to be a ‘citizen.’” — An average day for Dochterman — Meeting Dorothy Jane Coset at the UC Berkeley Methodist Wesley Foundation in 1947 — Dorothy’s time as a Rosie the Riveter, her family
background, work as a teacher — Marriage July 4, 1954, children Claudia and Cliff, Jr. — Christmas celebrations, decorations — Dochterman dressing as Santa Claus at the Moraga Country Club — 1969 trip to Disneyland with Dorothy’s parents, hurrying home to watch the moon landing — 1969 travels to Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Thailand, and Cambodia — Daughter Claudia — Similarities to her mother Dorothy, education and teaching career — Son Cliff, Jr. — Scouting, interest in sports, career in athletics administration — Dorothy’s 1987 death from cancer — Meeting Mary Elena seven years later — Mary Elena’s daughters Elena and Karen — Blending families — Grandchildren — Feeling fortunate to have had not one but two very good marriages and families — Mary Elena’s family background — Traveling with Mary Elena for Rotary business, her Rotary service — Death from lung cancer after 20 years of marriage — Concluding thoughts: “I just hope that I have had a life that my family would be proud of. But also that I have in some way justified my space on Earth.”
Introduction by Dr. Bob Warner

“Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.”
–Ralph Waldo Emerson

It is an honor and a privilege to write this introduction of Cliff Dochterman: A Rotarian’s Pursuit of Happiness through Service. My wife, Mary Ellen and I value our relationship with him and are so pleased that we have him in our lives.

It is uncommon in a lifetime that we have the opportunity to meet a truly remarkable person. It is even rarer that we have the privilege to become friends with such a person, to learn and share with them, and to spend special times together. Cliff Dochterman is such a person and our friendship with him and his wife Mary Elena remains a true blessing.

We all owe a special thanks to Cristina Kim and Julie Allen at the Oral History Center, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. This project was made possible with the full support of Rotary District 5160, especially District Governor Fred Collignon, District Governor-elect Gary Villhauer, Past District Governors Ken Courville & Laura Day and Sheila Hurst. Also, significant support was given by Rotary District 6150 especially Past District Governor John Carter and Past RI Director Carl Rosenbaum. As this manuscript and video are shared, those who see them will be able to understand the positive impact that Cliff Dochterman has had on his family, friends, his community, and every institution and organization of which he has been a part throughout his life. His boundless energy and his dedication to making each of us a better person will be apparent.

To understand and appreciate Cliff Dochterman’s life and the influence he has had on all that he has encountered, one simply needs to understand a basic principle that defines Rotary and nearly one and a half million Rotarians around the world. This principle is “Service Above Self.” As you will hear, Cliff Dochterman was taught this lesson as a youngster in Findlay, Ohio. He has paid forward the small gift of a YMCA membership throughout his life. He has never forgotten the kindness he received.

This oral history project was born through a network of personal relationships in Rotary. It really began in Lisbon, Portugal and started as a simple conversation among friends. Laura Day, Sheila Hurst, Mary Ellen and I were visiting in The House of Friendship at the Rotary International Convention. We had become friends with Laura and Sheila through Cliff years before. Mary Ellen had told me that she had noticed that oral history projects were becoming quite prevalent. She had also researched the University of California at Berkeley and found that Oral History Center was nationally recognized. She thought it would be a special way to share Cliff’s knowledge and insight for future generations. It would be a way to share this living legend with all. We discussed this with Laura and Sheila and we all agreed to pursue the project. A few weeks later, Laura called to say the project would be launched! We are so pleased that Cliff agreed to be interviewed and that this idea among friends has now become a reality that can be treasured forever.

Through Rotary, my wife and I came to know Mary Elena and Cliff in a very special way. Of course, anyone in Rotary in the last 5 decades has heard of Cliff Dochterman. Mary Ellen and I
were no different. However, prior to 2002 we had not met him. We first saw him in Barcelona. We attended a breakfast at the convention and the speaker had cancelled. Not to worry we were told because Cliff Dochterman had agreed to “stand in.” I remember his talk as if it were yesterday. Cliff has that kind of effect. He came to the podium and greeted us, and then he turned around and put on a little cap and had a telephone in his hand. He turned back to the audience and for the next 45 minutes he had “A Conversation With Paul Harris.” At 7 in the morning he had the audience in stitches. We were amazed because in the midst of laughter, he had told us the story of the beginnings of Rotary. We had witnessed firsthand one of his many gifts, his gift for public speaking and connecting with the audience. Following this we began to dream that he might someday actually come to our Rotary district in Arkansas, USA.

About five years later, this dream became a reality. At International Assembly, as the district governor elect, I was seated at Cliff’s table and sat right next to him! We took the opportunity to invite him and Mary Elena to come to our district conference in Memphis, TN. He accepted and we were thrilled.

In 2008, he and Mary Elena arrived in Memphis late on a Wednesday evening. Mary Ellen and I met them and we went to a late supper. Cliff and Mary Elena told us that they had learned the day before that Mary Elena had been diagnosed with a serious cancer. We told them that we were shocked they had come after just learning such sad news. They said there was no where they would rather be. Over that weekend, we became close friends, we laughed, cried and had a very successful conference. Cliff and Mary Elena showed Mary Ellen and I the value of having strong character and faith.

Over the next years, we saw them often and learned so much. We enjoyed our visits and shared many good times and some sad times. Mary Ellen and Mary Elena often went to church together. We visited California, they came to Arkansas, and we saw them in other places around the world. On a visit to Mary Elena and Cliff’s home shortly after Halloween, we saw bag after bag of Halloween candy left at their front door by the neighbors. Cliff explained that he collected the leftover candy to include in Christmas stockings Moraga Rotary made for young people in juvenile detention. No project was too small.

In spite of their personal challenges, Cliff and Mary Elena always had time for others. Cliff schedules time at Rotary events just to meet and talk with folks from all walks of life. It is amazing to watch him give time to everyone that crosses his path. He is truly interested in others and it is always obvious. We visited him in Moraga shortly after Mary Elena’s death and it was overwhelming to hear the esteem that others held for both of them.

It was in Moraga during this visit that we heard about the local movie house project. Apparently, Mary Elena and Cliff had planned to go to the movie but there was no elevator. This prevented Cliff from attending. Cliff contacted the owner who explained that he did not have the funds to comply with ADA requirements and he was fearful that he may have to close the theatre. Cliff then organized a campaign to raise the money needed for an elevator. Thanks to this effort, everyone in Moraga can enjoy the movies.

Cliff has touched Rotary on every level. He has been instrumental in working for the eradication of polio. When this began in the early 80’s, it was a vision of a few dedicated Rotarians and now
it is soon to be a reality. He was recently asked to chair a meeting at the RI Convention in Sweden in which he mediated a discrepancy in the Rotary International Presidential election. He has often found himself in the very center of the Rotary world serving at his best. You can also find him editing his own Rotary Club’s newsletter or serving his special quesadillas at his district fundraiser. This combination of humility, vision, common sense, and fairness are some of the qualities that make him remarkable.

Another example of Cliff’s impact is his involvement in scouting. He is an active member of the Boy Scouts and there is an award named in his honor. The Cliff Dochterman Award is an honor available to recognize an individual Rotarian who acts as a role model and renders distinguished and dedicated service to Scouting through active service, leadership or other exemplary contributions to the Scout Association of his or her home country.

It will be apparent as you listen to Cliff that he is a great teacher. He shares his knowledge in a meaningful, entertaining way that makes it easy to learn. His understanding of peoples from around the world coupled with his optimism and belief in humankind has helped to shape Rotary’s direction and accomplishment for past decades. His life and his legacy will continue to shape Rotary’s for future decades.

As you delve into this oral history given first hand by Cliff Dochterman, it will be worthy to remember some thoughts about Cliff from some who have known him best:

“Cliff is an individual who is a role model for individuals who desire to create a better world. As a Rotarian, Scout leader and a dedicated American, he has led by example always putting others above himself. His joyful disposition has brought great success in motivating others to community service. We are all better because we have had the opportunity to serve with him and to know him.”
- John Germ, Chattanooga, TN, USA, Rotary International President 2016-17

“Cliff Dochterman is quite simply an enigma. The debt owed by Rotary to Cliff will remain immeasurable. He has shaped Rotary's thinking in his day and with his speeches he has inspired hundreds of Rotary leaders to reach heights they would not have aspired to previously. At the heart of this twinkle eyed colossus in Rotary lay a man of vast knowledge, a Churchillian wit and unlimited humour. As the proverbial saying goes they just threw away the mold after God made Cliff Dochterman.”
- K. R. Ravindran, Colombo, Sri Lanka

"Cliff Dochterman is truly a living legend. He has been a mentor to me for 60 years. He has touched and addressed more Rotarians in more places at more times than any other person who has ever lived. There is a reason for this. He is the BEST! I love him"
- PRIP Rick King, Livermore, CA, USA, Rotary International Rotary 2001-02

“ I first met PRIP Cliff in 1972 when we were Training Leaders together. When he became Rotary's International President in 1991 I had the privilege of serving on his Board of Directors. I have never served under a Chairman that had such a detailed command of a meeting’s Agenda but who took time to involve each of the 19 members. Regardless of how difficult a decision, involving persons from probably ten different countries, he was always able to gain a consensus,
due to his humorous and comfortable leadership.
-Wilf Wilkinson, Ontario, Canada, Rotary International President, 2007-08

“CLIFF-THE MOUNTAIN: Dr. Clifford L. Dochtermann was much senior to me as a District Governor and it was just a chance that I preceded him as Rotary International President. I was very fortunate to have him as my immediate successor. In fact, I was tremendously benefitted by his camaraderie, knowledge, vision and total co-operation. I got to know Cliff from late 70s and since then I have developed great respect for him as a man. He is a unique friend, a unique leader, a unique Rotarian. He is known by his wit and humour, and a great orator. Once he shared with me, ‘Raja, as a speaker, my greatest regret is when I see most people taking notes of my jokes and missing on the message that I give.’ Truly, Rotary is rich because of Cliff. Cliff is not a mere cliff. He is a mountain with Himalayan heights.”
-Rajendra K. Saboo, Chandigarh, India, Rotary International President, 1991-92

Most recently Cliff was asked by Rotary International President John Germ to speak at Rotary International Assembly in San Diego before all the incoming Rotary Governors and their spouses. Cliff’s speech was the closing address to the 500 plus incoming governors. It was about successful leadership and titled “You Are The Conductor.” In it, he stressed the many aspects of leading a district and the need for harmony as the crescendo increases.

This analogy was especially appropriate and reminded me of this quote from Benjamin Zander, Conductor, Boston Philharmonic Orchestra; a great conductor will “awaken the possibility in other people. If their eyes are shining, I know I am doing it. I have a definition of success and it’s not about wealth and fame and power, it’s about how many shining eyes I have around me.”

Cliff has been surrounded by shining eyes for decades and has been “The Conductor” like none other. He is the Maestro!

The impact of an individual is measured by the difference they make in the lives of others. This oral history will give others today and in the future a better understanding of the impact of Clifford L. Dochtermann, Sr. has had on the world.

Bob Warner
Rotary Club of Jonesboro
Jonesboro, Arkansas, USA, February 2017
Interview 1: July 6, 2016

Kim: My name is Cristina Kim, and I’m here with Cliff Dochterman. Today is July 6, 2016, and we’re here in Moraga, California, and this is the first session of many interviews. But as we were discussing earlier, Cliff, I just wanted to see if we could start off talking a little bit about your early childhood and what it was like growing up.

01-00:00:31
Dochterman: All right, be happy to do so. Well, I was born in Ohio, in a little town called Cridersville. I happened to be there because my mother went to my grandparents’ home. At that time, in 1925, it was not uncommon that people were born in the family home. So I was born December 13, 1925, in Cridersville, Ohio. Then my family moved, mostly to the area of Findlay, Ohio, which is about, oh, maybe fifty miles south of Toledo, in the northwest part of the state of Ohio. Findlay was a town of maybe, at that time, I would guess, maybe 20,000, and it had two or three industries. One was the Marathon Oil Company, Cooper Tires, and a number of other companies making heavy equipment and that type of thing. I lived a very interesting young life, in the sense that I’ve often kind of tried to dismiss it from my mind, because at that time, when I was about a year old, my mother and father divorced. It was a tremendous stigma for a person to come from a divorced family. And so my mother, who was a schoolteacher—. Consequently, I stayed with my grandmother. So I was raised largely by two ladies, great people, my grandmother and my mother. I went to school in Findlay, Ohio, a great school. Started at Washington School and went through the fifth grade. About that time, my mother remarried, to my stepfather, Earl Dochterman. So shortly after that, my stepfather adopted my brother and me. I had a brother, Bill, who was a year and a half older than I. So our names were changed to Dochterman and we had a great life together with my stepfather, and [he] was really the only father that I knew. So those were the beginning days of growing up. Subsequently after, in the sixth grade, we moved to the central part of Ohio, a town called Delaware, Ohio.

Kim: Can you tell me a little more about your stepfather, when you met him and what he was like?

01-00:03:54
Dochterman: Well, I guess I can’t remember an awful lot, because when my mother and stepfather started planning to be married, I guess I was probably about eight or nine years old. They went together for a while before they decided. It was right in the heart of the Depression years and very, very difficult for everyone. He was an electrician, and did a lot of electrical work for construction companies, that type of thing.
Kim: What about your brother? I know you had a brother named Bill, I believe.

01-00:04:55

Dochterman: Yeah. My brother Bill, he and I were very close together. We were, as I said, about a year and a half apart in age, so I was always trying to compete with him. I remember I wore an awful lot of hand-me-down clothes. He got the new ones and I got the used clothes, because this was just the way people did. People passed on clothes, in a family group like that. So he was a year ahead of me in school all the time and we were competing. I was competing, to try to catch up with him as much as I could. So we were very, very close in our ages and in our friendships.

Kim: So what were you competitive with him about?

01-00:05:51

Dochterman: He became a Boy Scout, and I always wanted to be a Boy Scout. He was ahead of me, and so I had a motivation to try to keep up with him, and that I tried to catch him. So I joined the Boy Scouts on my twelfth birthday. One of the neighbors gave me the fifty cents to join the Boy Scouts at that time, and I became the first rank of Tenderfoot the night I joined. So I was intent to catch up with my brother. Ultimately, several days before I actually reached my fourteenth birthday, I had become an Eagle Scout. People indicated that it was, at that time, the youngest Eagle Scout in the country, because I was really competing to pass my brother, which I did at that time. But we had a lot of things in common. We were just competitive in a friendly way.

Kim: I know that the Boy Scouts ends up being a lifelong commitment for you. What initially interested you in the Boy Scouts? What kind of activities were you doing or codes?

01-00:07:31

Dochterman: Well, I just enjoyed the activity. My brother probably was more athletic than I, so he was more active in sports and football and things of that nature. I had a very bad eyesight problem and wore heavy glasses and a lot of things at that time, so I couldn’t do a lot of things. But the big thing in the Boy Scout program is the fact that a boy can compete in many, many ways. They may not be the most organized, the most coordinated, the strongest, the fastest, but they may be the best in camping or best in knot tying or doing all kinds of things. A boy can achieve in many, many ways in the scouting program, without necessarily having the ability to be an athlete, or something where they would sit on the bench if they were in Little League and the best ones are put on the field. So the scouting program, the best can be best in everything in the program. That’s one of the things I always found interesting. So I went to a summer camp, and had a job at summer camp for a number of years. It gave me a good background of recreation and helping kids that come along to be the best they could be.
Kim: So you ended up working at a camp, even as a young person.

Dochterman: Oh, yes. I started working in Boy Scout summer camps when I was, I think, thirteen. I worked all through high school and, well, several years in the summer camp program. So I had a lot of experience working in camps. That subsequently was good, when the University of California, many years later, started a summer camp called the Lair of the Bear. I heard about they were looking for people with camping experience, so went in and said, “I’d like to work.” They were starting the camp, so the first year of the Lair of the Bear, which has now gone sixty years or more—. That’s another story.

Kim: That is another story that I’m excited to hear. But before we jump to your time in California, I read somewhere that you were able to join the YMCA with your brother.

Dochterman: Well, yes. I look back on this moment as a child—and I was probably, oh, maybe eight or nine years old—as an indication of when I first became aware of the idea of humanitarian concern, or the idea of giving to other people. The town of Findlay, where I was growing up, had a very large YMCA. Large building, a lot of athletic activities. We were right in the middle of the Depression. Maybe this must’ve been, oh, probably 1932 or ’33, somewhere along in there. Somebody asked my mother—the school principal, I think—said, “We have some memberships in the Y for boys that cannot afford it. Would you be embarrassed if we offered you a couple memberships in the YMCA for your two boys?” She said, “No, we would appreciate it very much.” So my brother and I became members of the YMCA and we’d go down there maybe two or three nights a week, after school. We learned how to swim, we learned how to play basketball, we learned games, we learned all kinds of things at the YMCA building. I used to walk to church, in order to save the nickel on the streetcar and buy candy on the way home. But if I walked—it was probably three or four miles—I would walk by the Marathon Oil building. Not a big building, in a sense, today, but probably eight or ten stories. I’d walk by this building and think, somebody, they said, gave me the membership in the YMCA. I wonder who that could be. Why would anybody give a membership or give money to somebody they didn’t know? I began to think of what the value is of helping somebody you might not even know. They wouldn’t be your relatives or anybody, and how can anybody be so wealthy, to do those kinds of things? I learned the value of humanitarian giving, giving to causes, giving to help people you may never know or never see; but you know the satisfaction of helping someone else. So we had some great experiences learning things. But I think the greatest thing out of that little gift of membership to the YMCA was the beginning of a understanding of the value of volunteerism, of volunteer giving to other people.
Kim: Thank you. So can you tell me more about why it was such an important kind of ability or opportunity to go to the YMCA? If you hadn’t had that membership, what was your childhood like? What were you doing before that?

Dochterman: Well, we were just playing in the street. There weren’t organized playgrounds. You play in an empty lot down the street. It became a football field; at one time of the year, it became the baseball field. It was just the playground for kids. It was not the structured program or the teaching program that you had in an organization like the YMCA or the Boy Scouts or other kind of groups like that. So I’ve often thought, maybe I’d just been another guy on the street, playing. You don’t know where you’d go. Particularly kids that didn’t have a father supervising him or giving him direction, leadership. Awful easy to just kind of become a waste and lose sight of any values in your life. So I often thought that YMCA membership was a significant part of a growing experience, even for a person who, at that time—maybe eight or nine years old—would not know it, or could not understand it in the depth and understanding that people would have today.

Kim: So this first kind of brush with volunteerism and humanitarian giving, how does that kind of carry on as you’re growing up as an adult, both in Boy Scouts, but as you’re going into high school? How are you—?

Dochterman: Yeah. Well, I recognized the fact that there are things that people can do. You can develop some interests that you many never have thought you’d have. Being a little bit more outgoing and step forward and say, maybe I ought to try that. So when I got into high school, and even junior high school, I started doing things like being in dramatic performances, plays, and then doing public speaking and debate—had some great debate teachers—learning the skills of talking and speaking, which I think have been lifelong treasures that they gave me in my high school years.

Kim: Do you have any fond memories from those high school years of a particular performance or speech that you gave?

Dochterman: Well, I was in a lot of plays. I just did a lot of kind of performances. Did a few Shakespeare performances. In the state of Ohio, they used to have a one-act play competition, and our group won one, first place for outstanding play, of one-act plays. But I had a teacher in debate who was very, very helpful, thoughtful, kind. As a matter of fact, a few years—well, quite a few years—later, I was asked to come to Ohio Wesleyan University, where I did my undergraduate work. I was asked to come and speak at commencement, I guess it was. So I sent a letter to my old debate coach and said, “I’m going to be giving a speech. If you would like to come and take notes and give them
back to me, like you used to do, I’d be pleased to have you there.” So I remember getting an honorary degree that day and bringing reference to my debate coach, who was in the audience that day. But no, I had some wonderful experiences at that time.

Also had a lot of good experiences playing in the band. When I was ten years old, I remember very vividly, I used to walk by a music store. They had a unique baritone horn. It was not the typical baritone horn, because this was shaped like a Sousaphone, and it actually goes over your shoulder and you play it. It was called a cavalry-type horn, because horseback military units used to be able to use this. You didn’t need to have two hands, like you normally do. I thought that was the greatest thing. On my tenth birthday, my mother got it for me. I imagine she paid maybe eighty dollars for this horn. But in the middle of the Depression, she probably paid for it for a number of months, at five dollars a month or something like that. But I got that horn and my brother was playing a trombone. So I played the baritone horn, and subsequently, I had another type of baritone, too. But I played these in high school, high school band, marching band. [interview interruption] In any event, then I actually played in the symphony orchestra in college, too. So I had those, a lot of experiences in the musical group. Even when I was at the University of the Pacific, we had a group of faculty members and we had a little group that was a non-marching band. We played on the back of a beer truck, I think it was. We were in parades. We would do Christmas carols in the Macy’s store and a few other places at Christmas time. I think the only group that ever asked us back twice was the Alzheimer’s Society. [they laugh] They had forgotten what we sounded like. But music was a big part of my life for most of life.

Kim: So I want to hear a little more. I know that you end up going to college, so where do you go to college?

Dochterman: Well, this was a difficult time again, because I graduated from high school in 1943, right in the middle of the war. I was not old enough yet to enlist or be drafted. So there was a college in our town, and I thought, well, I’ll go here for a year and then go into the service. Which I started, which is Ohio Wesleyan University. It’s highly rated, among small colleges in the nation. So I started there, and then I was drafted. Unfortunately, one of my biggest disappointments of my whole life, I was rejected from military service because of very poor eyesight. I can hardly even think of the personal tragedy, because my brother was already in the service and I wanted to join him. So since I started to school, I thought, well, I’ll continue and see how it goes. My parents were then traveling. My father was moved around with a lot of the war industries, and so they had finally moved to California, out here. So I went on
and finished in three and a half years, so that I could get out. I decided I wanted to go to law school as soon as I could, and so I finished there. My family had moved to Berkeley. So I took one summer session at Berkeley and graduated in December of 1946. Then I applied to Stanford and Berkeley law schools, and was accepted at both places. I figured that I could handle Berkeley tuition better than I could handle Stanford tuition. So in the meantime, I came back to California in the fall-winter of 1946, and I went to get a job, till I could enter law school.

Kim: Before we go there, can I interrupt you and ask a question?

01-00:25:01
Dochterman: All right.

Kim: So you go to California for the first time, because your family’s here, and you’re doing an extension course here for a semester?

01-00:25:12
Dochterman: I did a summer school semester.

Kim: So what was your impression of California and Berkeley at the time, from Ohio to California?

01-00:25:20
Dochterman: Oh, I enjoyed it here. My family was living in Berkeley. I could walk to the campus, and I enjoyed the campus and I enjoyed my professors. I was lucky enough to get all A’s in the courses I was taking the summer session, so it was easy to transfer those and speed up my graduation. Because I was just in a hurry, a hurry to get out of school and to get into law school.

Kim: Why do you feel like you were in a hurry?

01-00:26:00
Dochterman: Mainly because I was not successful in getting into the service. I felt that I had not accomplished something that I wanted to do. So I came out a couple summers while I was going to Ohio Wesleyan here, and I worked in the shipyards. Just to earn some money for the summer, as well as feeling I was doing at least something for the war effort. It was such a difference in the society we live today, where people do not feel the desire and the motivation to be working for the welfare of our nation. At that time, everything you could do to help was important. So that was my motivation. After I finished my university work there, I came out and took a job in San Francisco. I found a job in City Hall, in the Civil Service Commission. This was 1946 then; the war had ended. So at that time, the city was beginning to try and refill its employment records and the spots that had gone empty during the war years. So I was doing a lot of recruiting of people to take civil service exams and
give civil service exams. It was a great experience for a young guy just out of school, and the people there that I worked with were very, very dedicated in working for the City of San Francisco. So we did all kinds of recruiting for people, from doctors for the county hospital to policemen, firemen, people working in the parks and on the streets and everything. We were looking for employees and trying to restock the employment records of San Francisco.

Kim: So what was the recruitment process like then? I’m sure San Francisco in 1946, there was a lot of people looking for work.

Dochterman: Oh. Well, we would go out to different organizations and try to get them to encourage their members to take civil service exams. Here’s a list of jobs that we’re going to give civil service exams for. [We’d] encourage people to sign up. We would look all kinds of places—schools or trade schools, everyplace—to get people to learn about a civil service exam being giving and how they could sign up and perhaps become part of the city employment.

Kim: So what drew you to that job in San Francisco?

Dochterman: Well, my earliest major at Ohio Wesleyan was political science and economics, and so I just went to the City Hall and there was a job open in the Civil Service Commission. I subsequently used that experience as the basis for a master’s dissertation at Cal. When I got a master’s degree, I used an analysis of the employment procedures and testing procedures of the San Francisco Civil Service Commission as my master’s thesis, while at Berkeley.

Kim: I’ll have to find that later. So you take that job in San Francisco, but you know it’s temporary at the moment?

Dochterman: Oh, yeah. I knew it was till the following September, when I could go to school and enter Boalt law school.

Kim: So why were you interested in pursuing the law at that time?

Dochterman: Well, I just had a feeling that it would lead to a number of different professions, if I were not able to practice law or did not wish to practice law. But also, I had some desire to be a candidate for public office, perhaps, and I felt this was an entrance way. I was probably pretty naïve, too. Nobody in our family had ever practiced law, or I did not have the same background that a lot of people in law school [had], of coming out of families with fathers and uncles and others that have had a long practice of law.
Kim: So what year do you begin law school at Boalt?

Dochterman: In fall semester of 1947.

Kim: Okay.

Dochterman: I went ’47 and ’48. In ’49, I decided this really isn’t my cup of tea. So I went over and took a master’s program in public administration, with Professor May as my advisor. That went on, and [I] got that degree in 1950. So I was there three years, doing graduate studies at Berkeley.

Kim: Was it a big decision for you to change from law school to public administration, or did you—?

Dochterman: Well, it was a big decision, but I had been thinking about a career in education for some time and thinking, is this reasonable? I recognized that there’s an economic difference of university personnel and many lawyers and others. But I guess I was getting more realistic in my own personal views, that here is an area [in] which I’d like to work, and perhaps [it would] be more satisfactory in, oh, raising a family having a time, and working in a climate of a college or university campus.

Kim: So make that shift because you realize you want to work in higher education.

Dochterman: Yeah. Well, plus the fact that I had begun—. My first year, ’47, that’s—. Well, actually, ’48, the summer of ’48. But in ’47 and early ’48, the Cal Alumni Association was thinking of starting a summer camp for families and alumni. I talked to the manager, and they felt that the experience that I had had in summer camp would be sufficiently valuable to help them. So they hired me to be, essentially, the assistant director of the first camp that they had. This was up at Lake Shasta. It was just starting; it was brand new. It was building something right out of the wilderness; nothing there before. We had to generate electricity and pump water out of a stream and everything, and build buildings and build platforms for tents and everything. We started from new. So I got to meet so many of the university people that we had coming up there. A lot of faculty members came up each week to part of the programs, and so I got to know a lot of the people. After the second year, they decided to move the whole camp to Pinecrest, so they asked me if I would go over there, too. So I went over there. Then I graduated with a master’s degree and they said, “Would you come to work for the university?” I decided I would join in the Alumni Association. University of California had never had a fundraising development program. We had one area, which was called the California
Alumni Scholarships, which was raising funds and giving scholarships. So I directed that program. It really was the first of the development programs the University of California ever had. Now they raise millions and millions of dollars; but at that time, we were raising hundreds of thousands of dollars, to have scholarships for kids that would come from all over the state of California. I was the field director, so I directed all kinds of programs around the state for alumni, and became good friends with Bob [Robert] Sproul and with Clark Kerr and a lot of faculty members. They gave me a lot of encouragement to come along, and ultimately, I was working with them. When Clark Kerr then became the statewide president, he asked me if I would be an assistant, and that’s how I moved into that position at the university.

Kim: I want to backtrack a little bit.

01-00:38:01
Dochterman: Okay.

Kim: You can say if you don’t want to go this way, but I know that you meet your wife—right?—your first wife, around this time, at Berkeley.

01-00:38:08
Dochterman: Yeah. Yeah. Yes. Dorothy Coset was my first wife. She was a student. After she had graduated from high school, she worked in the war industry over in Alameda, Alameda Naval Air Station. She was an early Rosie the Riveter. She was a small person, and so she could be inside the planes, riveting to the outside. So she and her sister were both riveters there. After the war, then she decided to go on to Cal, and we met at Cal. She became a schoolteacher.

Kim: How did you guys meet?

01-00:39:08
Dochterman: Well, I think we might’ve met at the Wesley Foundation, which is a Methodist youth group there on the campus, which is a kind of a social group that was right on the campus there. We had a wonderful thirty-two years together. She was a lot of fun and we just had many, many good years together. So she went on to teach. Her first job was at Walnut Grove, which is up the Sacramento River, above Rio Vista, on the river. Walnut Grove was a kind of agricultural area. But it’s an interesting time. She graduated in ’51, with her degree. So it’s surprising that that was the first year Walnut Grove had integrated schools. The Oriental schools had always been separate schools. This was the first year they’d combined them, which is somewhat hard to believe, 1951, ’52. But she taught up there for maybe three years, and then she came back and taught in Oakland till we were married and had a couple children, or had a child, and she stayed home and took care of our children. So we had a boy and a girl. Or a girl and a boy, in reverse.
Kim: Did she ever talk about the difficulties of integration, and were you—?

Dochterman: Well, not too much, because it had happened when she went up there. It just happened. But it seemed to work out so well. Nobody had a problem anymore. The fifties were beginning to see much more understanding. The whole racial and cultural differences were beginning to fade in their intensity, I think. At least that was my impression.

Kim: I just want to go back a little bit. So the California Alumni Association, that’s a big pivotal point, you becoming involved with them.

Dochterman: Yeah. That’s right.

Kim: So it’s initially with the camps?

Dochterman: Well, my first experiences there was working with the camps. Then I got to know Stan McCaffrey, who became the executive director after Bob [Robert] Sibley. I got to know Bob Sibley quite well, because he was the one that had the idea of these summer camps. He was the long-time executive director. I imagine he was there for at least thirty years, as executive director and built the California Alumni Association into one of the largest, most effective university associations across the country. He was retiring, and Stan McCaffrey was selected to be the executive director—executive manager, I think the term is—of the Alumni Association. So it was Stan who asked me if I’d be willing to come and join them, because they were strengthening the association, were trying to really expand the fundraising capacity of alumni of the university at that time. So it was a job that had a lot of responsibility and an awful lot of opportunity for creativity, imagination, and just doing some new things that hadn’t been done before.

Kim: There was no template for fundraising, so you were really inventing it.

Dochterman: Sure. We set up groups all over the state of California. At that time, people from out of state, non-resident students, were not nearly as prominent as you see it today. People back in the fifties went to school largely where they lived, and it was not the selection process that we see today. But no, I found it a very fascinating opportunity. I got to know people. Every part of the state of California, we had little groups of alumni clubs and organizations raising money and selecting students from their area to come to Cal. So that was a very interesting program.
Kim: How did you make it enticing for these alumni, or to even have a sense of alumni identity? Was that a little bit of what you were doing, did that just—?

01-00:45:12 Dochterman: Well, a little bit, but alumni programs go up and down. At that time in the fifties, you also have to remember that Pappy [Lynn Osbert] Waldorf was the football coach, and Cal was not just winning the games; the only question was how big of a point spread would you have in the games, because they won games week after week after week and they went to the Rose Bowl. That kind of enthusiasm helps alumni who are great athletics fans. Some are just synthetic alumni, in terms that they like Cal, whether they went there or not. Others are just people who took a new interest because the Cal Bears were in the newspaper every day. I remember we used to take silent films of the football games, with a written narration, and we’d send them around on Greyhound buses to these groups, so that they could watch the Cal game. They were not broadcast since that was before TV. But they would watch a silent film of the whole lousy game, and somebody would read the script. Here’s going over left tackle, and doing this and that. But we would put those big round cans of film on a Greyhound bus and send them to Sacramento, and then they’d go to Stockton and then to Fresno and up and down the valley, and people would have these gatherings every week, to watch the Cal football game. But it was a different atmosphere of the university then than what I see today. A lot of it was a cultural thing, in the fact that people who went to a university generally stayed there their whole life. Bob Sproul, he got his degree 1912, and he stayed his whole life in the shadow of the university. Virtually all the administration were Cal graduates. People worked their whole life, one university. So that was the kind of atmosphere a university was then. Today, a lot of people—faculty, administrators—if there’s a better job down the road, they’ll go. They don’t have any great dedication, a lifetime dedication, to a university. The same way in business, to a company or corporation. If the company down the road will pay me a few more thousand, I’ll go down there tomorrow. That kind of atmosphere existed in a college campus, which then, people were dedicated and stayed long. Everybody knew everybody on the campus. I remember one day Jim [James] Corley, who was our vice president for legislative relations, he was the university’s representative in Sacramento. I used to go with him a lot of times; we’d go up as we were doing things in the legislature. The legislator says, “Do you guys have enough money this year? Can we give you a little bit more for research? Do you have something in the ag school you can do that’ll help our county? Do you need more money? Do you need something else?” That was a difference. Now we fight for every nickel you get. But at that time, California was a different kind of a institution, and there was this deep loyalty to the Cal alumni. I found that very, very interesting, and it was so essential to getting fundraising programs initiated.
Kim: And did you feel a part of that as you joined the Cal Alumni?

01-00:50:15

Dochterman: Oh, sure.

Kim: You felt dedicated?

01-00:50:16

Dochterman: Oh, yeah. I could sing every song, with every verse and everything. You become totally consumed into this feeling of, this university is unique; it’s distinctive; it’s a place you’ll spend your life, have an opportunity.

Kim: So I know you did a little bit of the legislation representation in Sacramento. Is that right?

01-00:50:49

Dochterman: Yes. We would often make the circuits and talk to different legislators, or we’d put on a reception. Quite frequently, we’d have receptions. The University of California would put on a reception up in Sacramento for legislators and talk a little bit about a particular program or activity, or something where we had a particular need or something like that. But a lot of faculty and staff would make their circuits up in the legislature.

Kim: So at this time, the California Alumni Association is really part of the university, and helping fundraise for particular programs and special projects?

01-00:51:42

Dochterman: Well, it was never a part of the university. It was a separate organization, a separate corporation. So consequently, it could speak in the legislature in a way that faculty and others could not. They could give the facts about programs. But from a lobbying standpoint, the Alumni Association was in a much better position than university personnel, except for our primary representative, who was Jim Corley at that time, up in the legislature. We had an office in Sacramento just for the legislative contacts that we had, staff members that had the contacts up there.

Kim: So is that why you think that the Alumni Association was even more effective, because there was independence?

01-00:52:43

Dochterman: Oh, it was very effective because it had an independence from the university. I know this as a fact, because in those years that I worked with the Alumni Association—maybe eight years or something—I was never on the retirement system of the university, and I realize it today. But no, it had an independence and it was very important.
Kim: But at that time, I know that you’re working with Clark Kerr on special projects, as well.

01-00:53:20
Dochterman: Yeah. Yeah.

Kim: So what were these special projects?

01-00:53:24
Dochterman: Well, a lot of these would be up in the legislature. But we also had events when we would take, visit, our alumni groups around the state. We had a thing called the presidential tour. Once a year, we would take the president and, oh, maybe two or three faculty members and make a tour for a week, of visiting alumni, having dinners with alumni groups all up and down the state. I would organize those types of events. We would ride in two or three cars and you had a lot of time to get acquainted. So I would conduct these, what they call the president’s tours. They were highly structured, and they were very, very well-organized events. The alumni enjoyed having the president come and talk to them personally. So those were those kind of things. And I would do a lot for special occasions, like help on commencements, and arrangements and a lot of the structural organization for commencements. I know for Clark Kerr, I organized nine inaugurations for him being inaugurated as president on each campus of the university at that time.

Kim: Was that with the California Alumni Association or after?

01-00:55:23
Dochterman: No, that was when he had asked me and I left the California Alumni Association and came to work in the president’s office.

Kim: So that happens in ’58, is that right?

01-00:55:34
Dochterman: I think it was ’58, yeah.

Kim: So how does that happen? Was it an exciting opportunity? Do you remember—?

01-00:55:40
Dochterman: Oh, yeah, it was a great opportunity because he had just been selected to be president, and he called and asked if I would be interested in taking on the assignment. Working for Clark Kerr, as he told me one day—. He said, “I look at your job as being the heart of the university. He said, “We have a university with 300,000 students. We’ve got 10,000 faculty members. We’ve got 20,000 non-academic employees, and thousands of alumni.” And he says, “There’s no rules, regulations that can meet every decision. We have to have somebody who can listen, use judgment, and solve problems. So,” he said,
“that’s your job.” My title was Assistant to the President and Community Affairs Officer for the campus and public community. So I used to handle a lot of funny things. But Clark Kerr seemed—well, he did, I’m sure—have full confidence in giving me the opportunity to solve problems. I would prepare the solution for him and he would carry it out. We would write. He was an interesting guy to work for, because he didn’t come to the office very often. He worked out of his home, up in El Cerrito. So we would send a grocery box each morning out to his office, filled with all the files of completed staff work, and he would go through and check and put his little initial, CK, on it in green ink, and it would come back that afternoon. We’d have another one going out at the same time. It was a very interesting system, but we accomplished an awful lot. But he generally had high confidence in what I did.

Kim: What were some of these funny projects that you were responsible for finding solutions for?

01-00:58:50
Dochterman: Oh, people often, they do something for the university. I remember a case of a woman who had had an operation over at a medical center in San Francisco. I think they had removed some ribs or something, and her shoulder had dropped, and she wanted to have the university solve her problems or something like that. I remember she came in. She says, “I’m going to show you what happened,” and she started taking her blouse off. I said, “Just a second.” I had my secretary—. “Lois, come on in here. We have a decision to make.” But I remember a time where the Shah of Iran was going to speak as commencement speaker at UCLA. The pro-shah group, the anti-shah group. I remember going out in the lobby of the office there and there were fifteen or twenty pro-shah people. I thought they were ready to rip somebody apart. And to solve the problem at that time—. We were able to get it solved by having—. If you can imagine today how protestors operate. We had the pro-shah group stay on one side of the street, the anti-shah group on the other side of the street. We let them protest across the street, but the commencement went down the middle of the street, or the academic procession. I remember some kind of a problem we had, somebody was on a university research and had some trouble with a scuba diver—I mean with the equipment—and whether the university would be liable or stand by it. A lot of the problem were things that had to ultimately be sent to legal counsel. Others were things, just a simple solution. I remember the so-called Free Speech Movement. The president says, “You go. Chancellor Strong is having a meeting.” What to do the first day, when they were all sitting in and surrounded a police car and everything. He said, “I want you to sit in the meeting with them. Keep me informed.” He had me report on each campus each week. He would say, “I want to know what is happening on each campus of the university each week.” And so I had people [with] whom I had developed personal relationships, whose judgment I could respect; and I would check each campus each week, or they would call me,
what’s happening, so that Clark Kerr had some kind of impression of what’s going on [at] UCLA or with Davis or each campus. In other words, I was trying to be as helpful, to help him to do the job that he had the responsibility for.

Kim: So when you were checking in on all the different colleges, or universities rather, that you helped inaugurate—. Well, let’s take a step back. So you help inaugurate a lot of these campuses—UCLA, UC Santa Cruz.

Dochterman: Oh, yeah. Yeah. Clark Kerr decided he wanted to have some kind of inauguration on each campus of the university. I would go and work with the local people, what they wanted to do, but also represent the president, of what he would think would be appropriate. So each one was different. It was not a set pattern. Some campuses, we had full ceremonies, academic robe and everything; other[s] were much more informal ceremonies, involving students, involving faculty, involving the personnel. We tried to make each one of them a little different, so that it would be something that would be appropriate for that campus, and not necessarily a rubber stamp of each one.

Kim: When you were checking in—you said you would get called each week from a different university—was that consistently throughout the years, or specifically in ’64, around the movement?

Dochterman: No, no, no. Every week that we were together. That was almost nine years, I think, of his presidency. But I tried to keep him informed of what was going on or things that he would want to know. Obviously, some of the campuses, if they wanted to get something to the president, they know that if they talked with me, I would be sure to get it to the president. Sometimes people feel that you have to have some kind of a conduit to talk to the president. But with Clark Kerr, you didn’t need that; you just needed the opportunity of somebody who had a direct line. And the president respected the opportunity to respond some way.

Kim: Well, going back to how he described your position being the heart of the university, I’m sure sometimes you were put in places where you had to mediate difficult situations. Is that right?

Dochterman: Oh, yeah. A lot of times we had to. There were problems that came up that they’re not easy to solve, but we tried to work things out to different people. Different kind of solutions sometimes.
Kim: Well, I know a big thing that happened was the Free Speech Movement. What were your recollections of that time, and what was it like working for Clark Kerr?

Dochterman: Well, you had to know Clark Kerr and his background. Clark Kerr was a Quaker, and he came out of Swarthmore College, which is a Quaker school, and they’re basically pacifists. So when you recognize his background was in labor negotiations—Clark Kerr could solve the problems of some of the toughest unions, as negotiator for some of the toughest labor negotiations in the country. But the difference, I’ve often thought, was that in a labor dispute, people want to solve the problem. Labor wants to get back to work so they get paid, and management wants to get the product made or the task performed. So there was a desire to solve a problem. But as I saw, from my perspective in the so-called Free Speech Movement, there wasn’t that intent to want to solve a problem. It was—at least it appeared—mostly one to disrupt the mechanism of the institution. Like, what do you want? We don’t know, but the answer is no. So you had to face this, is that there was not this desire to solve a problem, as he was used to handling. Secondly, as he said to me one day, he says, “I know that the governor wants me to call in the National Guard.” He said, “If there was one person hurt, one person killed on this campus, I would carry that with me the rest of my life. We’ve got to solve these problems without military action,” as they subsequently had at Kent State. So that was his feeling, is that he was a pacifist and he felt that the problems had to be solved, and it put him in a tremendous dilemma with the board of regents, with the governor and lieutenant governor and everybody. That’s why the regents terminated him. I remember that horrible day. We were in the hallway. He says, “I’ve just been terminated. It’s over.” So those were some awful days. Every day, you don’t know what you’d find when you went to the office, where there’d been a sit-in in there or where there’d been rocks thrown through the window or something like that. Those were just part of the scene. There were so many pieces to those times, of where was the support coming from? Who was supporting the disruption? So many pieces of it that it’s very, very difficult to pinpoint rights and wrongs. Because the group of students, many of them had been down in the Deep South in ’63-64, learning the techniques of civil disobedience, as part of the struggle for racial equality. These were very, very—. A few students were very sincere; a lot of them just enjoyed the disruption of the establishment. Or were not students. I remember one day a mother called me and says, “Would you tell me what day commencement is?” I said, “Well, what school is your daughter in?” Well, this was when you could still talk to parents about their students, which you can’t do today. I said, “Well, let me check.” So I called her back and I said, “Well, the commencement is June the 8th,” or something. “But your daughter’s not going to be going through commencement.” She said, “What do you mean? She’s been there for four years and I’ve been sending her
money every month.” I said, “Your daughter hasn’t been registered at the university for the past two years.” So there were a lot of kids, young people—not necessarily kids, but young people—that were caught up into a period that was part of the nation, what it was going through. We used to get people from other universities coming, said, “We don’t know what we’re doing. What are you folks doing in this area?” We would talk with them. Some guy from Minnesota or someplace says, “You know, it’s hard to have picketing or a sit-in when it’s twenty degrees below zero.” He says, “So we don’t have those same problems.”

Dochterman: But Berkeley had so many things going at that period of time. We had two different philosophies in the media. We had the Knowland group, with the *Oakland Tribune* on the east side, and then certain TV shows; and we had the group on the other side, which was owned by the—. What?

Meeker: Hearst?

Dochterman: Hearst group, by the Hearst families and the *Examiner*, and owning some news television. And they were both competing with each other for better headlines. There were periods when the TV would be over there wanting a show for the five o’clock news or seven o’clock news, and they’d pull out some placards and give them to a few students, so they could take some pictures, so they’d have something in front of Sproul Hall or someplace. It was crazy. Then there were the whole group that were not students at all, that would destroy the merchants’ windows, break the windows or things, just in rages of rampant destruction. So it’s awfully hard to have rational discussions. There would be speeches every day in front of Sproul Hall. People would gather a group around. A lot of them, I’m sure, were very, very sincere about the teaching and educational resources. And some of the faculty were very supportive of the students. I remember one faculty member was out there speaking every day in Sproul Hall, until one night when the students broke into his building and destroyed his research papers. Then he had a different attitude about this whole thing, as it became personal. So these were so many things, and we were trying to keep a ship afloat.

Kim: So what were you specifically advising Clark Kerr? What were your day-to-day actions? How were they impacted by everything that was going on?

Dochterman: Well, we were trying to give him a reasonable input of what was happening. Of course, he was getting information from his chancellors, and they were doing their best. I remember one day, one of the chancellors said to me, “Well, I don’t know what to do.” He says, “What do we do? We’re trying to run an academic institution and we’ve got so many people that are disrupting the
operation.” On the other hand, there were classes going on and many faculty, students, totally oblivious, not at all interested. They were there to fulfill their education. I’ve talked to a lot of alumni that said, “Oh, I was there, but I wasn’t involved in those activities.” So it’s just hard to say how many were student activists and how many were just hangers on that came there because they found there’s a certain excitement. Maybe it raised your blood pressure a little bit, to get involved. But that’s just one person’s opinion. A lot of people have written a lot of books and theses and dissertations on different aspects of the Free Speech Movement, which as I often said, as I recall it, started as a twelve-inch opportunity. The thing that happened was, if I recall it correctly, or at least from my perspective, in the fall, there was a rent control measure on the ballot. I think it was the rent control measure that—. The regents’ policy was that you could campaign on the street and on the sidewalk, but not on the campus. So they had these card tables giving out literature and all that. Somebody sees that the card table was twelve inches on the campus, on the grass, and they go down and tell them to move that, and they wouldn’t do it. So they said, “Well, send a police officer over there and just tell them to move the card table twelve inches and that’s it.” So with the very sound judgment of somebody, they sent a police car over. The police car was surrounded and people began to jump up and down on it, and pretty soon you had what was called the Free Speech Movement. At least that’s my perspective of what seemed to happen. I’m sure there’s others that have deeper understandings or different understandings, but that’s my perspective of how I saw the thing unfold.

Kim: But overall, it seems that you were very loyal to Clark Kerr and very supportive of him, during these times.

Dochterman: Absolutely. Absolutely. I was absolutely loyal in public and absolutely frank in private. I think he respected that. But in the public, I was totally loyal to him. Not just loyalty, it was my feeling of what he was doing was right. He had a philosophy, he had a personal understanding of his beliefs, just as many of the demonstrators, I’m sure, were honest in their beliefs, whether it was properly directed or not. It was not necessarily all the time, directed in positive ways. Then those who were not students would be faced with the situation that they had, and would somehow become just caught up into a major public activity, public scene, just riots and disruptions, when they had the sit-ins and so many people were arrested and taken out to Santa Rita, I guess it was—the prison, or the army base—in Dublin.

Kim: Well, what I was thinking of is that in 1967—. [interview interruption] So this is our kind of last point, and then we’ll start off next time with when you leave the university and go to your next job in Denver. But yeah, so just in 1967, I
know that’s when Clark Kerr, his position is terminated. Do you remember
that time period, that transition? You were his assistant at the time, so—.

I was. I do remember. I remember the day vividly, when he told me that he’d
just been terminated. I was not in the regents’ room at that time. I think it
must’ve been in an executive session, because it was a personnel matter. But
he told me. Well, it was a tragic, tragic time, for the university as well as for
all of us. So what the regents did was to make Vice President [Harrison
Richard (Harry)] Wellman the president. Yeah, acting president. So Clark
Kerr just moved out and we just continued. Dr. Wellman had his own ideas,
his own direction, his own people that he responded to. So it was kind of a
period of limbo for some of us on the Kerr team. [interview interruption]

But I was saying, there was a period where the university was kind of in limbo.
They were looking for a new president, and Harry Wellman was acting
president, carrying on. He had been vice president for agriculture, if I recall
correctly. So then the regents finally brought in—excuse me a second—
Charles Hitch. The regents brought Dr. Charles Hitch, who came from
Washington, D.C. In my opinion, personally, there was a tremendous change
in the university atmosphere. Mr. Hitch brought in two or three of the people
who were leaders in government programs, particularly close associates of
President Kennedy. They came in and their background was in governmental
affairs, rather than academic institutional affairs—in my opinion, here again.
I think that there was a change in the atmosphere of the University of
California, of a very substantial nature, after Clark Kerr left, because he was
the last of the Californians that were running the university. The university
became, it appeared in my judgment, much more politically oriented than
academically oriented. But people may have [a] difference of opinion; that
was my personal opinion. So I was no longer the right-hand person in the
president’s office. We kind of floated along for a period of time, and I worked
for several other people who came in with the Hitch team. That was a
different situation, and much more difficult, from my perspective. So when an
opportunity came along—. Somebody called me one day and said, “Come
over and take a look at a position that’s being opened up in Denver.”

I would love to—. In the next session, we’ll start off with Denver. But just to
kind of wrap up this first session, I was wondering, going back to this kind of
big moment in your career, with the Free Speech Movement and Clark Kerr—.
You were his right-hand man, you’re giving him advice. In retrospect, is there
anything that you would’ve told him differently, or would’ve given a different
piece—?
Dochterman: I’m not sure I would be the one giving him advice. I would say I probably was trying to give him information, on which he was very, very capable to make up his own advice. But I was trying my best to provide him with information that was available, but he and his chancellors made the decisions. They were the ones that were responsible for the university. Anything that I could do to be helpful or to keep people informed was something I was doing. At that time, I was also trying to interpret in the community. I was doing quite a bit of public speaking about the situation at the university. Most people thought the university was going down the tubes or something, and they were so negative to the university. I had the feeling my responsibility as a community affairs person was—not only affairs within the campus, but in affairs in the state of California—trying to interpret what was going on there was not destroying the academic quality of the university or the university as an institution, but that this was a phase. I happened to come across this speech that I made in 1965 or ’6, of comparing this with the earliest days of the University of California, where it was under all kinds of attack by the radical students. These were in the 1870s and 1890s, of all the clamor they had at Berkeley because of these awful students that were doing things there in the town and everything. I tried to put this period of time into some kind of perspective, and trying to make the message that the university wasn’t being destroyed; that it was too strong, too good, had too deep a base to have it really destroyed by this period of time. That was really one of the things that really gave me the encouragement to go out and speak to groups and to, in my role as a Rotary leader, to speak to Rotary clubs about what’s happening at the university, and it’s not going down the tubes.

Kim: Thank you so much.

Dochterman: Well, I hope that starts us off.

Kim: It starts of off perfectly, and we’ll keep going next time with Rotary.
Today is July 27, 2016. This is Cristina Kim in my second interview with Cliff Dochterman in Moraga, California. So Cliff, I know we just briefly talked about kind of going back with some follow-up questions. I know we had an amazing interview a few weeks ago.

Let’s do it.

In our first interview you noted that at the time of your parents’ divorce, divorce at the time was a stigma. A “tremendous stigma” is actually what you said. So I was wondering, were you ever cognizant of that stigma or made to feel it as a young person?

Well, my parents were divorced when I was an infant, actually, and so I never knew my birth father. I saw a picture of him once, but that’s all the knowledge that I ever had. And I grew up with my mother and often with my grandmother, who took care of us a great deal of the time. And it was a stigma. Back in the twenties, in the thirties, people lived in homes where there were mothers and fathers and kids and everybody knew everybody. That was something we didn’t have, was a man in the house. My grandfather had died. He was killed in an automobile accident. And so it was something that I didn’t have in my life, was a male leader. And the fact that I just never talked about the fact that I didn’t have a father. It was just kind of a stigma in society at that time that people married for lifetime, and divorce was not a usual thing and so it was a difficult thing in my life. And I had an older brother who was a year-and-a-half older than I and we did a lot of things together. But I lived in a female household. A mother and a grandmother that raised us. And so it was a stigma at that time. Other people, all my friends, they had fathers at the home. So I just never talked about it. Even after my mother was remarried and my brother and I, we were adopted then by my stepfather. I still didn’t ever talk about it. Probably most of the people that I went to grade school, high school, were never aware of the fact that my stepfather was not my birth father because it was something that I just didn’t care to talk about. I never had any desire at all to ever meet or see my birth father. So never happened. Never had a desire to do so.

How do you think being raised in a female household, by your mother and grandmother, made you the person you are or gave you perhaps a different childhood?
Dochterman: Well, I think my grandmother was very active in her church. Both of my parents were very active in their church. My grandfather was a Methodist minister. And so growing up in this kind of an atmosphere, we were churchgoing, regular churchgoing, attending family. That was what you did on Sunday. And all of our family would go to church on Sunday. I learned, I think, a great deal of things that were important in setting some kind of a style in your life, certain values that were important, certain things that were important in our family. Whenever we would, say, “Well, somebody else gets to do that,” in our family, “But in our family we don’t do that,” or whatever it would be. And so I learned certain values or certain styles of living that were perhaps—were all obviously basic of the teaching and the learning and the value system our family had.

Kim: So what were some of these values and systems?

Dochterman: Well, values like the importance of family, the importance of kindness, the importance of honesty, decency, kindness. These were all the kinds of things that were important in our family. And doing things for people. And learning how to be just a decent person. Awful easy for boys particularly, at least in my judgment, if there’s no male in their household, to learn the things of the street rather than the things of values in a home. And so you have to learn them somewhere. Kindness, decency, giving, those are not, in my opinion, inborn traits. They’re things you learn. You learn to be kind. You learn to be honest. You learn to have certain things. You learn what kind of language is appropriate for people, what kind of values you have in your own life. And you see these. I saw these a great deal in my mother, in my grandmother. And I also knew my great-grandmother. She was a great old-lady and we’d always spend our Christmas Day with my great-grandmother as I was growing up, big family household and lots of cousins and aunts and uncles, most of whom I’d have to endure we thought as kids. Now I wish I’d known them better. But my great-grandmother was a grand dame. She presided over the family pretty well. So she went on, I imagine. She probably went to about ninety years old. And so I got to have a relationship with my great-grandmother. And I had an aunt, who would be my grandmother’s sister, lived with my great-grandmother because she had polio when she was a child. And I was scared to death of Aunt May because—was probably in her thirties at that time when I was growing up or forties. But she had long steel braces on her legs and when she would try to walk she would have to clip the calipers into their fixed position and kind of walk. As little kids, three, four, five years old, Aunt May was some kind of a monster or something. And she was just a kindly person who was suffering the effects of polio. And I guess later in life, probably fifty years later when I had a chance to do something about polio, I often remembered Aunt May and how she scared us. But she was suffering something that
maybe I could do something about. Little flashback of what things influence your life. Probably not deliberately but they influence because things that you do remember and say, “I guess that was—Aunt May had those problems.” So those were kind of things that happened in my early childhood.

Kim: I wanted just to touch on Berkeley really quickly. But could you tell me a little bit more about your mother? Kind of paint me a portrait of who she was?

Dochterman: Well, my mother, she had two children, my brother and I. And she had struggled to work her way through college to be a schoolteacher. And so my mother was a schoolteacher. I know that she worked during the Depression, fortunately during the Depression years she was able to have a job as a schoolteacher, I think maybe making—one a good year she may have made a hundred dollars a month as a schoolteacher. But she was an elementary schoolteacher. And she taught a good part of my life. We moved two or three places where she could teach one thing or another. I know one time, when we were quite small, maybe I was in the first grade or second grade, she had to go back to college for a semester or something to finish her bachelor’s degree and then she subsequently went on and got her master’s degree. And so she worked hard to try to hold the family together. People have told me that a lot of the family—it was a big family, lots of cousins and aunts and uncles—that a lot of them had told her, “Audrey, why don’t you put your kids out for adoption?” And she said, “No, they’re my boys and I’m going to raise them.” And so I know it was a heck of a struggle in those earliest days to raise two boys. In any event, she taught school, I remember, as a teacher for so many, many years of my life. And then when our family moved to California she taught here at the Orinda school. She taught in the old original just one school in Orinda. She taught there for a number of years, enjoyed that teaching experience. And after she retired and she and my father, my stepfather, they traveled quite a bit and went to a number of places.

And then subsequently I had a sister, my stepfather, my mother had a daughter during the war years. She was sixteen years younger than I, so I was off to college by the time she was getting old enough to be aware of her brothers and that sort of stuff. So my sister had an ill-fated kind of a bad marriage. But she had a girl herself, a daughter. And the daughter got caught up in the whole mess of the street people and had ran off and she had a son. And my sister was a probation officer in Alameda County and she found that her daughter, who had become a street person, had a child and it was in a rather poor situation, a foster home. And so my sister adopted her grandson and is raising the boy. He’s a fine young man now. He’s in high school.
But I bring my sister in because her daughter was doing modeling in the early years and so my mother, right after she had retired, took her to the modeling agency one day and they talked to her about whether she would like to become—doing some acting herself. And my mother decided to do so and she hired on to the agency. She had an agent, a film agent in San Francisco. And so she retired as a teacher at about sixty-five. So she was maybe about seventy when she became a member of the Screen Actors Guild and started doing a lot of commercials, occasionally some movies and things of that nature. And so my mother went on after her career in school teaching to become the oldest active member of the Screen Actors Guild and she worked clear till she was about ninety-five, I guess doing films. I remember when she was maybe ninety-three or four, she was on Jay Leno’s show showing some of the funny commercials that she had made over the years. And she was never very sophisticated in the sense of the movie industry. I remember one time she says, “I’m doing a movie in San Francisco.” I asked, “Oh, what’s this about?” She says, “I don’t know. There’s some guy there that seems to know everybody and everybody knows him.” I said, “What’s his name?” She says, “Oh, I can’t remember. I think it’s Robert William or Williams or some—“ I said, “Could it be Robin Williams?” “Oh, yeah, that’s the one.” And it was Mrs. Doubtfire. Unfortunately her little scene was cut out when the film got too long. But she wasn’t too sophisticated about the artists and the actors and the other people and everything. So she went on. She lived in a senior center out in Castro Valley and her latter years were nearby where my sister lived. One day she fell and—[public announcement]

Well, so my mother, she fell, she cracked her skull, and she was ninety-nine. And she then passed away maybe six months later. With the accident and everything had lost her memory and her ability to really take care of herself then. But she had a great long life and she was very active in her church. But her love was teaching and doing different shows that she was involved in.

Thank you for going back to your childhood. And then just another question I had that definitely moves us ahead a few years. Was your experience at Boalt Law School. So in our previous interview you had said that you had these dreams of possibly going into public office, but then when you got to law school and you met your cohort, that there was a real difference there in the background of the other students. And I was wondering if you could talk a little more.

Well, I really had anticipated, from beginning school, a law career. And so I could barely wait until I got into law school. I applied to Berkeley, Stanford, was admitted to both and decided I could afford Berkeley a little better than I could Stanford. So I went to Boalt Hall. I enjoyed the law experience to some
extent but the technical aspect of it was just a lot more than I really, really
needed to or feel that I wanted to do. I didn’t see the direction of law school as
giving me the personal satisfaction that I thought I might have. And so many
of my colleagues came out of families with law backgrounds, with parents
that are practicing law that had internships in law offices and things. And I
realized that many of them grew up in the law atmosphere. And I never had
that. And so I kept thinking more and more of somehow relating more to kids
and students. So I decided that I would really like to work in a university
atmosphere than a law office. And I had a job while I was going to school
with the university. I guess I mentioned, maybe I had before, that I worked for
the alumni association in helping them set up a summer camp system called
the Lair of the Bear, which has been now operating for, I guess, sixty-five
years or more. But I worked there and got to know a number of the people
within the university system. So I decided maybe there is a place in a
university that I would find interesting. And so I left law school after my
second year and took a degree in administration, a master’s in administration
at Berkeley.

Well, the university alumni association asked me, as soon as I finished my
degree in 1950, if I would come to work for the Cal Alumni Association in
helping to develop their scholarship programs and to strengthen the field
operations. And that just sounded like an ideal kind of thing I was interested
in getting a start in.

02-00:23:05
Kim: So it all worked out.

02-00:23:07
Dochterman: And it all worked out. [laughter]

02-00:23:08
Kim: And I know last time we kind of delved into your work with the alumni
association and then ultimately being asked by Clark Kerr to join the office of
the president.

02-00:23:19
Dochterman: That’s right.

02-00:23:20
Kim: So I actually now want to get back to where we left off in our first interview,
at least chronologically, which is around 1967 when Clark Kerr leaves the
university. And so I wanted to hear what was the atmosphere at the time? You
stay on at the office of the president.

02-00:23:41
Dochterman: Yes, I did for a while. Well, it was just like throwing a wet towel over
everything there in University Hall. Clark Kerr, to all of us who were with
him or around him or daily with him, was so totally committed to his leadership and was so supportive. And we knew that the situation in the state, there were two sides to this whole supposedly campus uprising sort of thing. Free speech, in my opinion, was not the topic but that’s the description given to the Free Speech Movement. But Clark Kerr was really the person that was holding the things together. And it happened at Berkeley but it was affecting the other campuses. Although Clark Kerr had been chancellor at Berkeley in years before, he was still the president and he was based right there in Berkeley and so he was the focal point, probably more so than Chancellor Strong of the Berkeley campus at that time. And so we all were dedicated to his kind of leadership. And then summarily they dismissed him in a regents meeting. And I remember walking down the hallway and he comes out of the regents meeting. Well, it was a personnel meeting at that time. And he says, “They just fired me.” And I couldn’t believe it. But he was a decent person. He accepted that they had that authority to do so.

So all of us kind of wondered, “What’s going to happen next?” And they appointed Harry Wellman, Dr. Wellman, who had been vice president for agricultural services as interim president. And he kind of came in and took over. We kind of kept on doing what we were doing to the extent we could. We worked with Dr. Wellman. It just seemed like we were marking time there for a while in the administration building. Things were going, still went on on campus. So some of us, we didn’t know what our future was going to be, and then they brought in Charles Hitch as the statewide president from leadership in Washington, DC. I forget his exact position. And then he brought in several other people, Sorenson to kind of head-up the public relations side of things, and we were kind of put under his direction. They reorganized the place. They moved some of us from next to the president’s office to some other room in the building and we were doing what we thought we could do in the whole of some job. I often felt, “This is just makeup work.” I forget how long it was. Sixty-eight I think he was terminated. We hung on for a couple of years. And I had a call from the Education Commission of the States in Denver and they asked me if I would come back and consider a position back there, which I did, and went back there for three years.

So you went to Denver, Colorado, correct?

Denver, Colorado with the Education Commission of the States, which was a fairly new organization. It was started by Terry Sanford, who was at one time president of Duke University and governor of North Carolina. And he had the idea that educational issues were state ed responsibilities before they really had a department of education in the federal and the federal government moving in and taking over more and more responsibilities {inaudible} way.
But each state was making the same kinds of errors, just doing things, and he said, “We ought to have some kind of a clearinghouse. Somebody would help us in legislative relations in all kinds of education, from preschool to elementary to secondary to spatial education to higher education to adult education. The whole ramifications of the education field.” And so they had forty-six states, if I remember correctly. States joined into a compact of working together and setting up a clearinghouse where they could have some consultants that would be advisors to go out to states to help them in setting up model legislation, having a clearinghouse of what other states are doing, what other districts are doing. And so this organization was started. I think when I went there they had been in operation maybe a year or two. And they needed somebody who would be kind of director of public relations and various kind of consulting areas, do some writing, translate legislation and issues into small pamphlets that legislators would read. So they asked me if I would come and take over this kind of responsibility, which I did.

We were based in Denver because we could fly to anyplace in the country at any day and come back that night generally and be consultants to legislator committees, state governors. We would bring twice a year or three times a year all the state governors of the forty-six states together for discussions and sessions and conferences and state legislators. Each state had three representatives to the Education Commission of the States and it was a very, very interesting position. Then they took over the National Assessment for Educational Progress, which at that time was the beginning of some kind of national testing of students at certain grade levels. They took over that operation and when I went there there were about five or six professional people and when I left three years later they had a staff of—I don’t know, huge staff of people working on the national assessment. So it was a great experience and I enjoyed the difference of being away from a college campus for a while and during such turmoil that was going on. I went there 1969 or ’70.

In the interim time, during the 1960s, I was teaching a class at Golden Gate University in San Francisco, an adult evening class in business administration, on the human side of administration, which was kind of right down my alley. And so I taught there for nine years as a part-time instructor in their evening program. I think they assigned me the title of professorial lecturer. But I had a wonderful time teaching. So when I went back to Denver I still had a part of a semester and so I was commuting back and forth to Denver to do my class and wrap up the work here and then move my family back to Denver.

Kim: Was that a kind of difficult move? From California to Denver?
Dochterman: No. Things had deteriorated in my feeling at Berkeley so much in what I was doing. I almost had a feeling that I really didn’t have a job. I was putting in my time doing little things that the acting president would ask me to do. But after Clark Kerr left I felt that my knowledge and experience at the university meant nothing to the subsequent administrators because Clark Kerr seemed to trust me a 100 percent in my judgment and working on problems and the subsequent administrators, they didn’t know me really. They had their own people and they brought in their own people and we were just kind of shuffled to the side.

Kim: Was it just that you were a Clark Kerr man and so maybe—

Dochterman: Probably so. Probably a lot of people thought that I was a Clark Kerr man. My loyalty was to him. I was absolutely loyal in public and absolutely honest in private. And so I felt that they just felt I was kind of a Clark Kerr man and I was disposable, too.

Kim: Before you had described your role as the heart of the university. The course that you’re teaching at Golden State is—

Dochterman: Golden Gate University in San Francisco.

Kim: Golden Gate. Is the—

Dochterman: Human problems of administration.

Kim: Right. This kind of humanity.

Dochterman: Yeah. That was the thing that Clark Kerr wanted me to do. He wanted me to do things at the university, to solve problems that were not easily fit within the rules and regulations and policies of the university, that somebody has to look at the complaints that come to the president and say, “Is there anything here that we can do that would be good for people?” To solve a problem, don’t just pass it off. No, we’re not interested. He was interested in the people, in what we did. And I felt that I was making a real contribution to whatever would come before us and be assigned. And sure we could solve problems. So that was really my role and I’m sure that other administrators did not think certainly as Clark Kerr did of what the role of my particular pigeonhole in the
organization could accomplish. And so I felt that my talents were no longer used and I was just pleased to find a challenge that was so exciting.

I was then over at the Education Commission of the States meeting with national educational writers. I remember one time we had a special announcement and I had to get it into US News & World Report and Time magazine and Life and all the major newspapers and everything. And I had developed a contact with the education writers, with virtually all of Newsweek, Time, US News & World Report. Those were the key publications that had education writers that I got to know and they trusted me that I would give them some information of what was happening, largely with the national assessment program. And so it was a real change to go to some place where you can be helpful in a legislative committee or a conference of people that you could share your experience.

We had, within our staff, the experts at virtually all levels of higher education, elementary, special education, secondary. Some really top people that came and worked within education. The head was the former superintendent of schools in Cincinnati. One man was the higher education expert, was the chancellor of Massachusetts state universities. We had another fellow for elementary education, was the superintendent of schools from Kansas City. Another man had special education. His training was in handling with special kids and special education and for handicap disability limited students. And so we had a real tremendous staff of people that had great expertise and just to work with these guys was a tremendous change for me and I enjoyed it. And I stayed there about three years.

Kim: Right. And then you returned to California.

Dochterman: I came to the University of the Pacific.

Kim: Can you tell me a little bit about your decision to move back to California and that job?

Dochterman: Well, all our families were here and my wife’s family, and she was very close to her family. We had a summer place down in Felton, near Santa Cruz in the mountains there, under the redwood trees. So I said, “We’re going to go to Denver for a few years but we’ll come back to California.” One day Stan McCaffrey, whom I had worked with at the university, called me and he says, “I’ve just been made president of the University of the Pacific in Stockton.” I said, “Congratulations.” He said, “I’d like for you to come back and work with me, help me.” I said, “No, Stan, I’ve had enough of the college campus
now for a while and I think that I will not be interested.” I says, “I am enjoying the work I’m doing now. I’m doing some writing and I just seem to be accomplishing something.” He said, “Well, come on back and take a look.” And as I talked to the family they says, “We’re going back to California sometime. Let’s go and see what University of the Pacific is like.”

And so we flew back and looked at the university. It had some real challenges, the University of the Pacific, at that time. And they had had a president for a long time, many years, one president, and he was a very, very able guy, kind of like a one-man gang. He did everything. And he raised the money, whatever was raised, and he did everything. Dr. Burns, Robert Burns. But he died with cancer and so they were left without any leadership. So Stan McCaffrey went there as president. I came back and looked and he said, “I’d like to have you come and be my assistant, my associate, and help me see what we can do here.” So we decided we would come back to California. Our kids were just at the time where you could move. One was just about ready, my daughter was ready to start high school. My son was probably in the sixth grade or something like that. We could move without upsetting their schooling system, everything.

And we came back. I had known Stan McCaffrey a long time. We’d been friends. He had first hired me to work with the alumni association back at Berkeley. So then we went other directions. Then he went back and worked in Washington, DC, and one thing and another. And came back and ran the Bay Area Council, helped to start it and develop BART and everything in the Bay Area. So he went over there and I said, “We’ll move over, help do what we can.”

Kim: How did he convince you? What ultimately—

Dochterman: Well, partly my family said, “Let’s go back to California.” We had a wonderful time in Denver and we just had a lot of time together because I didn’t have the weekend commitments that you generally have on a college campus of activities that go on and meetings and conferences and athletic events and all the things that you’re expected to show up doing. So we had a lot of time and enjoyed our experience back there. I think the family wanted to come back. So we came back and we bought a house in Stockton and our kids enjoyed the school system over there. And I just went on and on and on, able to do a lot of things for the university. Raising money, getting an awful lot of satisfaction changing the pattern that that university had of being kind of run by one person, to spread the responsibilities and authorities much further than they had ever had before. So we had good times and I spent nearly twenty years over there.
You were the executive vice president of the—

Executive vice president. We worked with the president. I worked directly with the president all the time, did an awful lot of the kind of things I did for Clark Kerr because Stan had known me as working with Clark Kerr and knowing the skills that I could bring to the office. But it was a very nice place. I raised our kids on the college campus, all the activities they could get involved in, and then they subsequently, both of them went and graduated there at the University of the Pacific and my daughter took a master’s degree, as well, in education. So she became a high school teacher in the area. Actually to the high school where she attended and then moved to a new high school, as well. So it turned out to be a good experience for us and I got very much involved in the community and president of the chamber of commerce and head of the San Joaquin County parks and recreation commission and a lot of things in the community.

When you got involved in the community, was it a combination of the fact that you lived there or did you also see it as an extension of your work since you were representative—

Well, I had the feeling that nobody had ever, from the university, had ever really made effort to get involved in the community. There was somewhat of an estrangement because, as I said, the previous president, who was an outstanding person, but he was a one-man gang. He did everything. He couldn’t spread himself that much. But I guess I probably was the first person in maybe twenty-five years that had been president of the chamber of commerce of Stockton and be a representative from the university. My son was involved. I’d spent a lifetime service in Boy Scouts and so I became the chairman of the Boy Scout Council in the area. My boy was coming along and I was taking the time with him. Then I did a lot for the United Way, the Rotary Club, the parks and recreation commission, and gradually became the chairman of the parks and recreation commission for San Joaquin County. And so I had quite an active role in the community over there.

During the course of that involvement did you see the relationship between the city of Stockton and the university become more—

Oh, much, much closer. Yeah. It was to the point where the university and gradually other people were becoming more and more involved in the university. And there would be occasions where the university would have to go before the city council in acquiring land or new projects, buildings, and
stuff like that. It was pretty easy to do activities when the university people were known by the city leaders and everybody and you knew them on a first name basis. You could accomplish something that way.

Kim: So I know just from a little bit of research, and actually an oral history you did with the University of the Pacific, that you really ended up designing the office of development for the University of the Pacific.

Dochterman: Yes, I would say that was—when I went over there, the development office was under my responsibilities and I had the feeling that they really didn’t have a very highly developed development office because the previous president, he usually did the development work. He had been a graduate of the school and worked one time in development and everything. I went to the board of regents and I looked over the giving and most of them said, “Giving isn’t a part of our responsibility. You’re supposed to get that.” I believed, “Members of board of regents have a responsibility for keeping the ship afloat and we have to have regents that are able and willing to be supporters of the university, as well as just give their opinions once in a while at meetings.” And so we gradually strengthened the board of regents. The alumni association really had no responsibility in fundraising activities. They were more to run homecoming and to do extra-curricular things. “Isn’t it nice that we can do things for alumni?” I said, “No. You go to Stanford University and the first day they talk about your responsibility for the rest of your life is to Stanford University. So learn how to give and get.” So we developed a number of major donors, bringing along a few people, recognized them, giving them recognition within the university, occasionally some honorary degrees and other things where people recognized that they then have some responsibility to support the institution or to find additional support for the institution. And it’s developed tremendously since then but I had the feeling when I went to UOP that they were playing around with nickels and dimes and you needed far more thousand dollar gifts than small ones. Had a lot of different kind of experiences of different people giving gifts and everything.

Kim: How do you develop that kind of will to give in people?

Dochterman: Well, you have to talk to people about things that they’re interested in. We have a beautiful, beautiful chapel at the University of the Pacific and one day a guy who was an alumnus at the university came to me and he says—he’s a CPA—he says, “One of my customers, a lady came to a wedding you had in the beautiful chapel in July and there’s no air conditioning in the chapel. Why don’t you people put in air conditioning?” I said, “Jerry, that would be a great thing to do,” but I said, “it’s going to cost us about $100,000 and we’re
working on expanding the library and doing things in the engineering and business schools. Putting air conditioning in the chapel is just not that high on our priority. We’d love to do it.” And he says, “What does it cost?” I says, “It cost us about $100,000.” Okay. Well, one New Year’s eve in the afternoon I had a call from Jerry and he said, “My client who went to that wedding would like to help you. If you can get out to her house before New Year’s night she will give you $50,000 towards the air conditioning.” I said, “I can be out there in a half-hour for $50,000.” He said, “She has a little tax problem and needs to make a gift this year.” So I went out and I picked up the $50,000 and I called Jerry and I said, “Wow, that’s great.” He said, “Well, where are you going to get the other $50,000 to do the job?” I said, “Jerry, I think you’re the one to give it.” “Aw, I can’t give money that—“ Well, we talked awhile and Jerry gave the other $50,000 to do the job.

Well, see, you’re talking about something somebody wants. I remember one day we were adding an extension to the library and we got a million dollars from the Holt Foundation. The Holt Foundation developed the Caterpillar Tractor company, was developed in Stockton by Benjamin Holt. And they still sell big equipment. The chairman of the committee of the Holt Foundation, we had brought him onto the board of regents. And so he said, “We’re going to give a million dollars to the library fund.” And then he told me, he says, “We might have given two million but we always have to go to one of our old members on our board of directors who used to be Benjamin Holt’s accountant and he’s an old guy down in San Mateo. Unless he gives approval, he’ll never give the money.” He says, “If you go down and talk to him and convince him perhaps our foundation could give another million dollars.” So the academic vice president, I was telling him about it. He says, “Oh, I know all the answers about the library. Can I go with you?” I said, “Sure, come on down.” We’re going down, see this man, talk about giving another million to the library. We go down, I walk into his house, and I see up on the wall was a great big oar, like for crew. And UC something or other. So it was hanging in his hallway. Beautiful, beautiful big home. And we went in and I said, “Oh, you must have been on the crew.” “Oh, yes.” “Did you know this person?” “Yes, I know this person.” “Oh, and how about this guy?” Well, all these things that I had known at Cal about Cal sports and people and alumni and everything. We talked for an hour-and-a-half about Cal sports. “Oh, do you remember the 1938 team that went to the Rose Bowl?” “Oh, yes. And this guy played left tackle and this guy was the quarterback.” We talked and talked. We finally go to lunch and he takes us to lunch. And then we’re sitting there at lunch and he says, “Oh, what did you boys come to see me about?” I said, “We’re thinking that your foundation was very generous in giving us a million to the library. We thought that maybe you might give us another million to the library fund.” “Oh, sure, we’ll do that. But let’s talk about that football game at Cal and Stanford in 1927.” [laughter] And we talked and talked. We’re finally driving home. My friend who’s the academic vice president, Cliff
Hand, he says, “He didn’t ask one question about the library.” I says, “No. When you ask for money you talk about what they’re interested in, not what you’re interested in until they ask.” And I says, “All you do is you have to find the common denominator of what makes a person feel good about giving and it’s because of a relationship you develop.” Well, that was an interesting experience for my academic vice president.

So we did develop, and Pacific has developed a much larger endowment fund now. I remember another occasion. There was a woman. People just called her the bag lady. She walked around with a paper sack and she’d go in the library every morning and read the newspaper rather than buy a newspaper. And she was always writing articles to the Stockton Record newspaper about anti-smoking and she would come and want to talk to the president about these students that are smoking on the campus. And the president, Stan McCaffrey, he wasn’t interested in talking to her. He would send her into my office and I would sit and talk to her. And I said, “Yes, Gladys, we know this and I think there’s going to be some changes made one of these days soon,” and all this and that. But she was so opposed to smoking.

Well, shortly after I retired somebody called me and says, “That Gladys Bernard, that bag lady, she just left us nine million dollars for the school of education, just out of the blue.” I says, “Well, nothing is out of the blue when you’re giving that time.” We were kind to her. And I said, “My guess is that what she carried around in that bag was Standard Oil stock that her father had given her years and years ago when you could buy Standard Oil stock for a dollar. But they said, “Well, we didn’t know she had any connection.” I said, “She had connection. She was interested. She had been a schoolteacher and she had money but she wasn’t wasting it by buying the newspapers. She read it in the library each morning and then she’d come to my office and we would have a fifty-minute chat about things that she was interested in and that’s why she gave the money.” But people said, “Oh, we didn’t know she ever came to see anybody at the university.” I said, “No, I talked to her many, many times and developed a relationship that she felt that she could confidently leave that money and it would be well-spent at the school.” Anyways, these are the ways you develop money. There’s not any magic to it. It’s finding ways and talking with people and asking.

02-01:04:24
Kim: How did you learn that skill though? How did you kind of become aware that being—

02-01:04:30
Dochterman: When I went to the alumni association right out of graduate school the alumni association had what they called the Cal Alumni Scholarship Program. It was nickels and dimes. Berkeley didn’t have any development program. They
weren’t raising the millions and millions that they raised, hundreds of millions each year. This was about the only fundraising program of alumni that they had. And they had programs like Give a Dollar for a Scholar or something like that, and they would raise money to give scholarships. I guess the awards were a couple hundred dollars a year, which would be enough to underwrite a student to live in Bowles Hall. That was where it was, up there in Bowles Hall by the stadium. And it was first started for men students that could live in Bowles Hall. And they were about two or three hundred dollars. You could live there for room and board for a year back in the forties, fifties. So that was what we were raising and we were raising it all around. And then we opened it up and they got scholarships so the girls could go into Stern Hall, I think that was the name, up there by the Greek theater. So we were raising these dollars and giving two or three hundred dollar scholarships for students to live in these two halls. And we were learning, at that time, techniques and skills of how do you get people. I was getting alumni involved. That they had a relationship and then we had a way in which they could recommend somebody from their area to get the scholarship, the amount of money they raised from their area, mostly within the state of California. And I had virtually every county, or some large cities, where they could raise so much money and pick a student from their area. So they had a relationship with the university. It was somebody that they could give at the high school commencement, a scholarship to Mary Smith who’s going to go to Berkeley and live in Stern Hall or wherever it was or Bowles Hall for a guy or something. You just learned these techniques. You’d do a lot of analysis of opportunities. The tax laws that encouraged giving and different seminars that encouraged giving and finding out how you involve people so that they feel that this is their personal commitment. Rather than give a dollar, maybe they’ll give twenty-five dollars, maybe they’ll give fifty dollars. Gradually out of that simple program has grown the large endowment program of the university.

02-01:08:03
Kim: How did you grow that at University of the Pacific? My understanding is it’s different than Cal, which already has this kind of strong sense of alumni identity. Did you feel like you were also building a little bit of like what it meant to be a University of the Pacific alumni?

02-01:08:17
Dochterman: Yeah. This was a strengthening the alumni thing, the alumni relationship. Largely the alumni association was merely you graduated, now you’re an alumnus. There was no feeling that they had a commitment, a lifelong commitment to their university. And this is something you just gradually have to build and you have to talk about the relationships that you have. You’re part of the Pacific family now. And you talk about it from the day they enter, that they create a pride in their institution, that you’re somebody special.
You’ve been admitted to this university and it’s going to be part of your life, whether you realize it or not, for the rest of your life. You’re going to refer back to those experiences you have on a college campus. Same way that relationship develops with virtually any college, or a high school. If you have a good experience, you’re brought along to realize that if you get something out of an institution or a society, organization, a family, a community, a group, a church or whatever you belong to, if you get something out of it then you have a little bit more responsibility to perpetuate it for others, that they can get the same experience that you have.

02-01:10:07
Kim: Going a little more into your time at University of the Pacific, and I think in relation to this is that you—did you start the community involvement program at UOP.

02-01:10:15
Dochterman: No.

02-01:10:17
Kim: You didn’t?

02-01:10:19
Dochterman: I did not. The community involvement program was underway two or three or four years, I think, before I actually got there. I went there July 1st of ’72. The community involvement program had largely developed in the late sixties when a whole foment of campus and society, the fact of recognizing that an awful lot of kids did not have the opportunity to go on to a four-year college right in their community, often minority students, and Hispanics, blacks, whatever groups that lived in Stockton and so the idea was to give some kind of a recognition of these people in the community, that they could get some kind of benefits tuition-wise, as well as not just throwing them into the school. But to give them some help in tutoring, in jobs and opportunities to be successful in college. And that was what the community opportunity program, was to bring some people along to help them get involved in the college right in their own community.

02-01:12:15
Kim: How were you involved in that program? Or were you?

02-01:12:17
Dochterman: I was not directly involved except in just giving it general support and helping it when there were tasks to be done and something that we could do to—but we had some good staff people running that program. Yeah.

02-01:12:38
Kim: At that time did you get to get involved with students? I know you have a love of youth and development. Did you get to kind of interact?
I tried to a lot. I tried to get involved with student groups. I used to do the freshman orientation program, much of it, of speaking to the freshmen orientation and helped to run it. I used to go out a great deal with the admissions office and talk about the university and promoting admissions and applications and that sort of thing. And I worked very, very closely with the vice president for student life. Whenever they saw a problem, they felt they could easily have an ear to the president just by calling me and we could work something out because actually there I was executive vice president. Most people never knew the fact that all the president’s mail came to me first and I would try to solve the problem before the president had to work with it. Many times mail would really be related to one of the deans or something and you’d send it off to get it done so that you don’t have to bother the president with those kinds of things. But most people never realized that he had me look at all the mail first before I sent it to him to see what I could do first or solve the problem or whatever it was.

What was your relationship like with Stan? Working relationship and friendship.

Stan McCaffrey. We probably were friends for sixty years. But we were very, very good friends. A lot of people knew him as having a very, very strong temper sometimes. But in all the years that I ever knew him, he had absolute trust in me. He never, ever lost his temper with me. He would consult with me. He would ask me what I thought before he’d make a big decision or something. But we had a very, very good relationship. He relied on me tremendously. So it was a good relationship and without that I would have never been there. He gave me some opportunities occasionally. Well, he gave me an opportunity to get involved in Rotary at a higher international level in the sense that, as president, he was invited to be the world president of Rotary International in 1982-83. And he came to me and he says, “I can’t do this.” Right then I was being interviewed for some other college presidencies. And I think I was being interviewed down at Redlands University. And he says, “If you're going to leave I can’t take this presidency of Rotary International, unless you stay, make a commitment for another year here.” So I said, “Yes, I’ll stay to give you that opportunity to be the world president of Rotary.”

So after he finished that the opportunity came to me to be an international director of Rotary and he said, “Sure. Whatever time it’s going to take you, I’ll understand.” Well, it didn’t take me that much time but it took some time. So we had this mutual relationship of friendship and respect. I think he had the same kind of respect that maybe Clark Kerr had in my career, as well. So we did a lot of things.
Kim: So eventually he does leave the University of the Pacific. Is that correct?

Dochterman: Yes.

Kim: And Bill Atchison [sic]—


Kim: Atchley.

Dochterman: Bill Atchley took over the presidency. He came from Clemson University in South Carolina. It was a very difficult time for me right then, not only that Stan was leaving but that my wife was dying of cancer. And I was caring for her and I had to have somebody with her all day long and caring for her. Very, very difficult period in my life. So I was thinking that I’d retire, take a little early retirement, a year or two, and just give it up. And then Bill Atchley came in and he said, “I’d like for you to stay on and help me get adjusted here and do some things.” And so I decided, “Yeah, I’ll not retire right yet.” And I went on for, I guess, maybe two or three years. I forget the exact time of when those, all things happened. But I stayed on, worked with Bill Atchley.

Now, he was an entirely different kind of a guy. He came out of the Deep South where a university president runs the institution fully. Pacific had been used to collaborative efforts, the faculty and the administration working things out together. But Atchley basically said, “The president says jump and everybody leaps higher in everything.” And he terminated several people. I think he had three or four wrongful termination suits against the university. But he and I got along quite well. He seemed to rely on me quite a bit. I kept him out of a lot of trouble in several occasions.

Kim: So were you working while your wife was ill?

Dochterman: Yes. It was just a tough time. Yeah. So she passed on in ’87. I mean—

Kim: Eighty-seven?

Dochterman: Eighty. Eighty-seven. Ninety eighty-seven, if I remember correctly. So I went on then until ’91 or ’92 and then decided to retire in the end of ’91, I think it
was. And I retired on a Friday night and the following Monday I got a call that
the Rotary International had selected me to be the world president. And so
with all the thoughtfulness of Stan McCaffrey, ten years later I followed him
as president of Rotary International in 1992 through '93. And he was '82 or
maybe it was '81, '82. I forget exactly now the number. But in any event he
had been the world president and then subsequently I had been the world
president. When he took over the president he says, “You know, the one thing
that’ll happen is that they’ll never come back to the same community and the
same institution ever to pick a world president twice.” So he said, “I’m sorry
that I’m taking your opportunity.” But fortunately lightning struck and I was
standing under the tree in 1992, '93.

02-01:23:06
Kim: Well, this is actually an excellent segue. How are you feeling? Do you want to
keep a little—

02-01:23:12
Dochterman: I’m fine.

02-01:23:12
Kim: Excellent. Because I was hoping now that we can finally talk about your
commitment to service specifically through the lens of Rotary, which I know
has been a lifelong commitment for you. So I know we’re talking about you
being world president in '92. But I was actually hoping we could go back in
time to, I believe, 1958, if I’m correct—

02-01:23:31
Dochterman: Nineteen fifty-eight.

02-01:23:33
Kim: —when you joined the Berkeley Rotary Club.

02-01:23:35
Dochterman: Yes.

02-01:23:36
Kim: I was hoping you could talk to me about who sponsored you, how you even
became aware of Rotary in Berkeley.

02-01:23:43
Dochterman: Yeah, okay. Well, I was always aware of Rotary International as one of the
major service organizations. Are you looking for a clock? Here’s—

02-01:23:58
Kim: Oh, no, I’m good.

02-01:23:59
Dochterman: Okay. How long do we want to go on here today?
As long as you’d like. I was hoping we could at least just get through just talking about your early involvement with Rotary because I know that this is a very big part. So we’ll probably do—

Yeah, this is a major portion of my life I’ve put into Rotary. Well, I was always aware that Rotary International was the first service club that was ever established. Established in 1905 in Chicago. And then it was basically an organization to help promote business, of people helping each other in business, particularly individuals. So that’s why, originally when they organized, they would just have one person from each business in the community or each profession. So then it moved. A guy from Chicago was out in San Francisco one day and he was sitting in a hotel lobby. He started talking to a man in San Francisco and telling him about this organization they had called Rotary and they called it Rotary because they rotated the meetings to people’s office from one week to another, and about how they help each other in business. “I’ll buy my clothes from you and you buy your groceries from him and we all help out families. We’ll have better business.” So the guy in San Francisco said, “That’s a pretty good idea.” So the second Rotary club was started in San Francisco. And then Oakland heard about it and the third Rotary club was started on the east side, called the Tri-Cities Club, Berkeley, Oakland, and Alameda, and that was the third Rotary club. Then it went to Los Angeles and Seattle and New York and on and on. And now about 34,000 communities have Rotary clubs. Has about 1.2 million members in about 200 countries and territories of the world. [public announcement] No problem. Okay, we’re back. And so Rotary is in some two hundred and plus countries and territories of the world. So it’s a huge organization.

So one time I was doing a documentary at Berkeley, a campus documentary about the Berkeley campus. And the guy who was doing the filming was John Siegel, who was a photographer and had a business in Berkeley doing documentaries and corporate films and a lot of stuff. And I had written a script and I was with him when he was shooting some shots around the campus. He says, “I’ve got to leave now because I’m going to Rotary lunch today. Why don’t you come and go to lunch with me.” At that time in my life a free lunch from anybody was good news, so I went with him. Six weeks later he called and he said, “You know, I thought you enjoyed Rotary and you knew so many people there. I proposed your name for the Rotary club. But I have to tell you unfortunately they turned your name down. They didn’t think your position was high enough in the university to be a member of the Rotary club.” I said, “Appreciate that but that’s all right.” A year went by and I was moving up. I moved from the alumni office and I was moving into the president’s office. He called me again. He says, “Well, you’ve moved up pretty good at the university and I proposed your name again. But unfortunately they turned it
down because there were too many people from the university in the Rotary club.” Every dean and every department had a member of the Rotary club because Bob Sproul had been the president of the Rotary club and when he sets the standard everybody followed up. I said, “Oh, it doesn’t bother me. I’m used to being rejected by Rotary.” A year later he calls me and he says, “They have a new system. There can be two people in the same business and we found somebody else who would propose you.” Dick Erickson, who by then had been the executive of the alumni association. And so three strikes and I’m finally into the Rotary club.

Did you want to join all along after your first—

Well, I thought it would be a nice thing to be associated with the leaders and the shakers of the town of Berkeley. The Rotary club at that time in Berkeley had, oh, maybe 235 members. Every business in town, profession, doctors, dentists, everybody went to the Rotary club downtown, the Shattuck Hotel, downtown Berkeley. And so I was pleased to go just to have the honor of sitting next to the leaders of the Berkeley community. And it was, as I say, about 230 members.

Well, five years later I’ve been selected president of the Berkeley Rotary Club and that was the beginning. I had no imagination of doing anything except going to the meetings and enjoying the speakers and associating with the membership. So that was my beginning in the Rotary Club of Berkeley.

How did you come to be club president? What is the—

It’s an open election and somebody just proposed my name to be president and I was voted in. I was one of the youngest members of the club.

How old were you at the time?

Oh, maybe I was thirty-two, something like that, which is pretty young in the Rotary club at that time. Anyway, I went on to be president. I think that was ’63, ’64, if I remember.

I have it here. You were club president from ’64 to ’65.

Sixty-four, sixty-five. So I was president then. The Rotary clubs were organized into areas called a district and the local district area at that time
went from the Bay Area up to the Oregon border in the central part of the state. So some people asked me if I would be willing to be district governor, which is leading of about sixty-five clubs. Well, I went to Clark Kerr. This was 1967. My year was to be 1968, ’69 and it was 1967. I went to Clark Kerr and he said, “Take the position.” He said, “You can do an awful lot in representing the university in northern California, of just letting people know that everybody is not some kind of a kook or something, that it’s still a university and there’s still people who are serving the community,” in spite of all the stuff that had been going on on the campus in those years when there was just so much turmoil on the campus. Actually my university title was assistant to the president and community affairs officer. It was the title that Clark Kerr had given me. So I took on the job as district governor, traveling around during the summer months when I had the time, when school was not so demanding. I made the distant areas and the northern part of Reading and way up, Tulelake and all the northern towns, and then could do things on an evening basis. I could work it in with my regular schedule pretty well. But Clark Kerr had been very understanding that it was important that some people at the university get out into the community, talk about not just Rotary. But I was talking about things that are happening in education, were happening at the university, and that everybody wasn’t some kind of a kook or marching in the street all the time, that we still had a great university and some great things are going on and classes are going on and research is going on. He seemed to be quite satisfied that I do this kind of a job. So I thought that’s about the end of Rotary activities, being a district governor.

**02-01:35:20**

**Kim:** Before we jump. I know that your career is very long in Rotary. But I did want to ask you, early on, at your first Rotary international conference, I believe in Toronto, I read somewhere that you gave a spoof speech, a speech of some sort that really caught on. Is that right?

**02-01:35:39**

**Dochterman:** Well, in my earliest days, it wasn’t just at that conference, but I had given it a number of times, too, in subsequent conferences. But in my earliest time, after I’d joined Berkeley Rotary, I did a spoof of Rotary about its history, about how it all started back with the Greeks and all the ancient people were Rotarians and they did crazy things. It was just a spoof and a fun kind of a speech. And that was very attractive to a lot of people because nobody had ever spoofed the organization before. I then started to be invited here and there in different places to speak. So I guess that’s probably why people selected me to be the district governor, because I spoke to so many places, as well as I’d often do speeches that I would subsequently have a serious part and then I could talk about the university. I could talk about things that are important in our state those days. So I became very popular as a speaker, on tremendous demand. I could speak everyday if I had the time or energy or
willingness to do so. I had invitations by the dozens to go and speak. I had
started public speaking when I was in high school on debate team, and it’s
been one thing that I enjoyed. So I had a lot of experience in speaking and
Rotary gave me so many, many more opportunities. It’s been said that I
probably have spoken to more Rotary clubs than anybody in the world,
particularly in the past years since I retired. And I used to be out three or four
times a week speaking to Rotary club someplace in the country or the world.

It sounds like you really enjoyed these public speaking engagements.

Yeah, I always enjoyed public speaking. It was a fun thing for me to do. I
have given my last speech to a Rotary club last week, I decided. It’s just not
fun anymore. It’s just too hard to get around and the moving and transport and
everything. The old body parts don’t work as much as they used to so I’ve
given up the speaking thing. But a lot of those speeches have been put in one
of my books called As I Was Saying, which is some of my favorite speeches
that I’ve given to Rotary clubs and other places, commencement speeches and
other kinds of organizations that I’ve spoken to.

What kind of drove you to keep speaking and taking on all those engagements?
What do you feel was the—

Well, I guess I enjoyed doing it. I enjoyed meeting people. I just enjoyed
doing things. I felt that I had a skill, which had been developed a bit, being
able to talk and have people enjoy it. I had a style of speaking that people
seemed to enjoy. And I guess I just enjoyed it. It’s just a personal contribution
I thought I could make to the organization and to other people’s lives. If I
could motivate somebody to do something better, it would be a worthy
enterprise. Yeah.

And it sounds like it was also both at Berkeley. Were you able to speak about
what was happening as well as spread the message of service?

The other day I’m sorting boxes and boxes of papers that I have, of all my
papers, I came on to a speech that I gave. It was dated 1964. It was about
Berkeley and it was explaining to a public group that a college campus always
has a period of disruption, upheaval because you're dealing with a lot of
young people with energy, enthusiasm, with judgmental theories and what
they can do and what they can’t do and what’s wrong with other people and
all that. So I talked about the experience and the history of the Berkeley
campus, of things that I’d pulled out of newspapers from back in the 1870s
when Berkeley was just being organized and everything. And some of these are interesting and build up the fact that the events happening in 1964 on the campus is just another part of the history of a dynamic university. And as a matter of fact, I’m supposed to give a speech next spring sometime at Berkeley to a Rotary conference being held on the campus. I was thinking of digging up that speech and bringing it up to date. That to understand a college campus and things that go on. People always thought, “Oh, those kids are rotten to the core.” No, then the next generation they’re the leaders and there’s more rotten kids coming to the campus. But those are some of the kinds of messages that I felt I could do and somehow interpret the university to the communities that I visited.

But I know you go from this kind of district governor position, where you’re, I believe, also training people. You then get the opportunity?

Yeah, I did a lot of training programs. A lot of people say, “Well, who really gave you your chances in Rotary?” Really a very interesting individual. Rotary International has a training program here they bring the district governors from all the parts of the world together for a week and have a training program of your responsibilities. Well, I went to this training program. It was held in Lake Placid, New York. I didn’t know a soul except one person. And I have to go back to tell you when I worked in the alumni association, right after the war faculty members and people were beginning to travel. And you could travel easier around the world and a lot of faculty members wanted to take a sabbatical in Japan or in England or France or Brazil or wherever.

And so in my work in the alumni office, I had key people that I got acquainted with. My man in Paris and my man in New York and my man in Brazil and my man in Tokyo and Hong Kong.

And I had a friend that I got acquainted with, these would be Cal Alumni in different parts of the world, that I could call on. If some faculty members wanted to go to Japan I would call on George Togasaki and said, “We have a faculty member that wants to come there. Could you be helpful to line up some people in his profession?” or whatever. George Togasaki was a graduate of Berkeley campus, 1924 if I remember correctly. And he grew up in San Francisco and he married a girl from Japan. And at that time she could not become a citizen. Every three years she had to go back to Japan. And so they did this until they began to have children and the boat ride was so difficult and expensive, so they decided, 1938, to live in Japan. And so he was the editor of the Japan Times, the English-language newspaper in Tokyo. So George was caught in Japan. Well, every time he’d come to the States he would call me and he said, “I’d like to come over and walk around the campus. Can you arrange it?” I said, “We’ll have lunch in the faculty club and then we’ll walk
around the campus.” So I got a good acquaintance. Well, George, after the war, he brought the Boy Scouts back to Japan. He helped create the International Christian University in Japan. He brought Rotary back into Japan. Just a great person.

So when I went to this training program as district governor, George Togasaki was the incoming president of Rotary International. He says, “What are you doing here?” I said, “I’m one of your district governors.” And he said, “Would you like to be on an international committee?” I said, “I’m just beginning. I don’t know anything about it.” He said, “That doesn’t make any difference.” So he put me on a committee on educational teaching procedures for training programs. Our big contribution to the world. This was 1968, I guess it was. Our big contribution was that each training session should have an overhead projector. Well, that brought us into the world of technology. [laughter] And then he gave me several opportunities to do things. And George, we were great friends. Rotary has so many leaders and so many people, new people coming along every year, that it does take somebody to give you an opportunity to do things. You can’t appoint yourself to some major assignment or something. So they asked me if I would be a teacher then at future international leaders sessions, which I did a number of years. And just one thing led to another, that now I’ve probably served on virtually every major committee that Rotary ever had and many of the long-range planning committees and everything. Gradually became a director, the international director. The organization is directed by the president and a board of directors of seventeen people selected from all over the world. And I served on that and then one thing and another, I then became selected to be the president.

Well, before we get in there, I was just wondering, for that first committee, what were the kind of trainings that you were even preparing with this international committee? Was it trainings for fellow Rotarians?

It would be training for how to help Rotary clubs be more effective in their community projects that they conduct. At that time Rotary International was in so many towns and communities that they generally did just things to help their community. Make up Christmas baskets for the poor. A lot of things that welfare programs are doing today but back in the early days, in the twenties and thirties during the Depression, Rotary clubs did so much. Buying shoes for kids, buying Christmas baskets, helping build playgrounds in the community. I remember Berkeley Rotary started the first Saturday afternoon matinee movies for kids. First time they ever had it. The kids could go and see kids movies on Saturday afternoon. And so many things were just done in the community. Helping libraries, helping schools, doing things like that. And so you’re trying to help people who may not have the skills necessarily.
Rotarians have professional backgrounds in their own area, know how to undertake projects or getting ideas, how to run meetings, how to create enthusiasm, how to induct members, indoctrinate them into the service concept. This is what Rotary really was becoming, although it started out as an organization to help in business, “I’ll buy from you and you help my business and I’ll help your business,” and that sort of thing, one day somebody said, “You know, the women do all the shopping downtown. If we could keep the women downtown Chicago longer, they’d buy more. And what can we do to keep them downtown?” And somebody says, “Let’s put in a public restroom and the women won’t go home so soon.” So they built the first public restroom in downtown Chicago. And then another person says, “You know, the doctor that goes around in his horse and buggy to help our kids, his horse is lame.” They said, “Well, let’s buy him a new horse. And so he’ll be able to go around and help our kids when they have colds and stuff.” And so they did. And out of this grew the idea, “If we do things to help our community, our lives, our families lives will be better.” And that’s the concept of a service club, from a business club as it started. The idea business will be better if we serve our community and do things in which our kids and our families will have a better community. So that was the idea of Rotary. “Service above self” was the motto of Rotary. And so these are the kinds of things, of training programs, of helping people do new things, and good ideas that they could adopt in their own community.

Was it an interesting first international committee to be on?

Oh, yeah.

Were you hearing different ideas from different countries?

Oh, I learned about the headquarters of the organization, there’s always something kind of removed for most of us. Any organization. But when you go to the headquarters, the Rotary has its headquarters in Evanston, Illinois. We have a staff there now of about, oh, 800 members on the staff that carry on the daily work and we have six branch offices all over the world where they have staffs that carry on the work. So it was kind of going to mecca all of a sudden to be serving on a committee when you don’t really have that much experience in Rotary. But thanks to George Togasaki, he gave me a lot of opportunities.
Well, I think that’s going to be all for today because I know that we’ll start off with the other committees and your work with polio in our next interview. But thank you so much.
Kim: This is Cristina Kim, and I’m here with Cliff Dochterman. This is our third interview. Today is August 4, 2016, and we’re here in Moraga, California. So Cliff, as we were just discussing, I know that last time we started to talk a little bit about your long career in Rotary, and I was hoping that we could start a little bit by going back and delving in a little deeper. So you rise almost meteorically in your Rotary life, and so you join, and then you become Rotary Club president, 1964 to 1965. So I know as Rotary Club president one of your responsibilities is to really manage the programs and the speakers and the overall conversation that’s taking place. Could you tell me a little bit more, given that in that era, there’s so much happening? You know, JFK’s assassination, the rise of Barry Goldwater, the Free Speech Movement, Black Panthers, this is all happening at that time, and especially in the Bay Area. Given that, what were the interests of the Club? What were the conversations and the speakers you were trying to bring in?

Dochterman: Well, this was, of course, in Berkeley, and the Berkeley Rotary Club, and I was a very young man. Generally, people thought of Rotarians as the executive peoples of the community, the senior people of the community, and I was pleased to join Rotary just to have association with what I thought were the movers and shakers of the Berkeley Rotary Club and Berkeley. I had no big desire to be a leader in Rotary. I just enjoyed going and sitting beside people once a week who were important people in Berkeley. And the Rotary Club in Berkeley was about 230 members or so, and virtually every leader of Berkeley, owner of stores, and professional groups, were members. But I was elected to become a director of the Rotary Club, after I was in that club for a couple years, and then I was asked to become president by the nominating committee. It was a very formidable thing when they came to my home, asked me if I would accept the presidency for the club. And I said, “Well, I’ve only been a member for five or six years, but sure, I’ll do it.” I felt it was a chance to do something in the community that would give me a feeling of being an integral part of the Berkeley community, as well as in the university itself. The university, of course, was kind of a magnet for activity, and so to have a university person as leader of the Rotary Club was really somewhat of an unusual experience at that period of time. And so I felt I had a rare opportunity to interpret the university and the things that were going on at the university to the Berkeley community, and I did that in meeting with big groups and the committees, as the tradition of Berkeley Rotary was that the president meets with all the committees that plan the programs and activities of the club.
So it was a rare experience for me to be a president of the Berkeley club, and it was a very prestigious assignment in the Berkeley community. It was just at the time the Rotary Club was about to have the fiftieth anniversary. The Berkeley Rotary Club was established in 1916, '17, and so I knew that within a couple years the Rotary Club would be celebrating fifty years at Berkeley. So I initiated a committee that ought to be planning a fifty-year event, as I said, a gift to the community, and we had a committee that looked at dozens of ideas of what could we do that would be a gift to the community, and we put out correspondence to all kinds of groups in the community of what they would like to see, a need of the community of some kind. Well, after sorting all of these out, our committee came up with the idea of developing an art center, or an art and garden center, for the art and garden clubs of Berkeley in Live Oak Park, and so the Berkeley Rotary Club represented about every kind of business and profession. So we had an architect, Bob Radcliff, that said, “Well, I’ll draw the plans.” Various contractors said, “Well, we’ll help in donating this plumbing or electrical work.” Anyway, the whole project, as we developed it, was a center up in Live Oak Park in Berkeley, and it would be used as an art gallery—we would give it to the city as a contribution in recognizing fifty years of existence of the Berkeley Rotary Club.

They estimated the cost was $50,000, and in 1964 and 5, $50,000 was a lot more than it is today. And I said, “If everybody could contribute average $200 or so, we could make $50,000.” Well, we started campaigning, and I think first I had to go to Les Hink, who was the owner of Hink’s Department Store, and everybody looked to Les. You had to check with him if things would be all right. And I went to him, and I remember I was telling him about the project, and he says, “Well, boy.” [laughs] I was so much younger than the senior leader of Berkeley. He says, “Do you think you can do it?” And I said, “Well, I think I can.” He says, “If you think you can, you’re halfway there.” And so he says, “I’ll give you $500.” And that was the first gift we got, and that was the largest gift. There were a few other people that he gave $500, but those were the largest gifts, and the entire membership all gave what they could, but it would average something around $250. And we came down to one member who said, “I don’t believe in giving to a public agency. They have tax money already.” And so one of the other guys who was raising the money, he went to this member and he says, “Won’t you give $1 so that we can say we have 100 percent participation of the club?” And he said, “No, I just don’t believe in public agencies asking for money, if you’re giving it to the public.” And this member said, “Well, next week I’m going to see if we can take up a collection in your name so that we can say we have 100 percent.” He says, “I’m not sure we could get a dollar collected in your name if this is your attitude.” He says, “All right, here’s a dollar,” and he gave it, and so we had 100 percent, and raised the $50,000, built the building. Very, very difficult time, working it all the way through all the committees of the Planning Commission and the City Council and all the agencies, but we built
the building, and it was called Berkeley Art and Garden Center. Berkeley Rotary Art and Garden Center still exists.

Well, soon as we said to the city, “We’ll put no strings on this, we give it to you and it’s up to you now,” and so the committee that took it over quickly made a masthead on their letterhead with large and small words, and they just called it Berkeley small letter Rotary Art and Garden Center. So it’s now called the Berkeley Art Center up in Live Oak Park, [laughs] although it still has the sign Berkeley Rotary Art and Garden Center. And it’s still going, and it’s been a great addition, beautiful little building, which spans across the creek up there in Live Oak Park in Berkeley.

Well, that was one of the big things that we did, and I personally just had kind of a skill or ability to bring a reasonable amount of fun and humor into the meetings, and people always seemed to enjoy that, and that was a great experience. But also, we brought a lot of people in for programs, and we tried to bring people from the university, too, different deans and other people that were trying to interpret the fact that a university has always been a place where there’s young people and excitement and turmoil, and trying ideas, and that the place wasn’t just going crazy, but there were a lot of people in this so-called Free Speech Movement that were not students. Probably more of them were not students, were just there, and enjoyed the excitement of that activity. And while there may be a few hundred each day that might be walking around demonstrating, or listening to speeches or something in front of Sproul Hall, there was thirty thousand of them going to class and studying in the library, and doing things, and going to ballgames and football games and all the kinds of things that are part of the life of a huge college campus.

03-00:12:02
Kim:

Do you feel that in some ways the members of the Rotary—you’re saying they were a little older than you primarily, that your role was almost to translate or help them navigate these changing times? Was that—?

03-00:12:16
Dochterman:

Oh yeah, I think very much so. I always had the feeling that I had some responsibility, particularly as I worked with Clark Kerr, and the title that he gave me when I came there was Assistant to the President and Community Affairs Officer. And I had a role of translating the best I can to the community, to alumni, to people around the campus, and Berkeley being the closest campus community.

Subsequently, the district governor position happened a few years after that. The Rotary district, the Rotary world is divided up into geographic areas to have some kind of coordination and assistance, and a Rotary district normally has, oh, maybe sixty, sixty-five Rotary Clubs, and I had a district in Central
California, in the central part, up the Central Valley, up to the Oregon border. And they asked me if I would be district governor. I talked to Clark Kerr about it, and he said, “I see no problem, if you can work it out timewise. It’s important that the university can have a spokesman out in the public who can try to help the public understand that issues relating to a college campus have gone on for generations, and this is not an occasion that is just so unique that it’s never happened before.” I remember writing a speech at that time that talked about the many kinds of frustrations that the community had about having a great big university in their community, and that really this was nothing too unique because we had other times from the very beginning of people wondering—you know, you’ve got all these energetic young people on a college campus setting styles and setting their energy loose on a college campus. It does affect a community in itself.

And Rotary’s not a political organization; it’s a service organization.

That’s right.

That said, was there generally agreement amongst specifically your Berkeley Rotary Club politically, or do you feel like the Rotary Club meetings became a space of also discussion and debate?

Oh, there was never agreement necessarily. A lot of these business people were feeling the effects of the demonstrations. The windows of the banks were smashed open when they’d have demonstrators. Different stores and things were having to have their windows replaced, their graffiti or just the sheer energy of things happening outside the stores of Berkeley were very, very disturbing to a lot of people. And so it really took somebody who would try to keep some things in perspective. And that wasn’t always easy to do, because even those of us on the campus, I remember getting rocks through our windows there on the campus, and having people storm a building, inside some of the buildings, and walking through the hallways and everything. It was a disturbing, somewhat frightening time for a lot of the business people. And so there was a real need, I felt, that somebody that just looked like they still had some sense going on. It wasn’t just the place going crazy and rioting, that there was still a university, and it was going on and happening, and this was a little piece of the campus that was under siege or destruction, or constant foment that were happening in some of the parts of the campus. So there was some of the people on—well, there were probably, oh, maybe thirty members of the faculty and deans and leaders of the university that were in the Rotary Club, too, and I’m sure that they were looked to for what’s going on up there and that sort of thing. But so there were numbers of things that we
would do, such as comments and editorials. I would write a little editorial each week in the newsletter of the Rotary Club. Many of these were trying to interpret and keep balance of understanding that the place is not, you know, going totally crazy there, that it’s still a great university that’s happening.

03-00:18:19

Kim: Did you ever feel that your role was also to build empathy or understanding with the students that were protesting? Was there a little bit of showing their side, or less so?

03-00:18:30

Dochterman: Except for the very first days, I generally had very little interaction with the students. That was more in the hands of the dean of students. I was working in the statewide system. So I didn’t have the day-to-day interaction with students that the dean of students and those people who were intimately involved with student services and student activities and student life on the campus. You know, obviously whatever we could do was to try to keep an understanding, try to know that some of them were still our students, and some of the faculty had honest disagreements, and were serious about their concerns, and you had to respect that, to the extent you could, trying to develop a difference between those who had honest grievances with the educational processes and those who were there just to riot and just to disturb and destruct. There was a big difference. There were many, many people that were there with no educational intent at all. They were there because they enjoyed the rioting and just the disruption of the status quo.

03-00:20:25

Kim: And then before we get to your role as district governor, going back to that Rotary member that didn’t want to give the dollar because he felt that it wasn’t the Rotary’s job to give it to a government institution, that also speaks of a kind of political ideology and difference within the club. So were there ever debates that were, you know—?

03-00:20:49

Dochterman: Oh, sure, there were occasions where people have obviously far different agreements, some political in that sense, some disagreements that would be based on personal philosophy, or based on personal or maybe religious feelings. Rotary is not a political or a religious, it’s not a fraternal group. It’s not a secret group or anything like that. Rotary is an organization of business and professional people who believe that if you improve the quality of life for other people, your business and professional life will be better, too, and it’s a better community in which to live if you can do things that need to be done in the community. And so there were a lot of people that were, I’m sure, very, very supportive of the student activities. There were some that were totally negative, and probably more of those because they saw only the disruption and the destruction that was happening. So that would be a difference. But the
Rotary Club, we had a variety of members there, FBI agents who had an office in Berkeley at that time. We would have people from the religious community who were perhaps far more generous in their attitudes towards demonstration and expressing their private views. We had the business people, you know. The guy who was in the glass business, he was making money like crazy, replacing store windows and everything, and the store manager, who was having to go out and pay to have his store windows replaced, or graffiti removed, or something like that. So there was the whole range of what you find in a community. And some were, “What are you going to do about those students up there?”; that attitude, and some say, you know, “How are things going? Are things calming down?” So we still have a university that’s going, and probably 90 percent of all the students don’t even take part in walking by those demonstrations. And that’s the difference that you’d see.

03-00:24:01
Kim: And did you encourage those kinds of conversations amongst members?

03-00:24:03
Dochterman: Oh, sure. Sure. I really felt that I had an opportunity, because my loyalty had to be to the university. My dedication was to the university, and I was trying to help interpreting the facts of what was going on, that so many people said, “Why don’t they bring in the National Guard and stop all this?” [interruption; not transcribed] I don’t know exactly where we were before this interruption.

03-00:25:15
Kim: You were talking about people wanting to bring in the National Guard and that kind of discussion.

03-00:25:21
Dochterman: And there were a lot of people—you know, this was a disruption in the community, and people thought that’s the way you have to go. And I always felt that I had to try to interpret the role of the university administration the best I could in saying that may solve an immediate problem, but this thing has to be worked out, and if we have some people that might be killed on our campus, or having gunshots going on, on the campus, that’s the kind of thing that totally disrupts a community, and our Berkeley community doesn’t need that, as well. And I knew that that was the last thing that Clark Kerr wanted to happen. I knew him well enough to know that that was not his style, being a Quaker that he was, growing up as a Quaker. I just knew that that is not something that he would do very easily, and hopefully would not do at all. So there were these wide differences in the community of what ought to be done. It’s according to how it affected them individually.
Kim: So now, moving ahead, you become District Governor 1968, '69. How do you come into that role? Is that something that you have to campaign for, or, much like your presidency of the Berkeley club, were you asked to step in?

Dochterman: I was asked if I would be a candidate, and it merely entails submitting your name to a district committee, and then they have an election from all the Rotary Clubs. I guess in reality I was selected because I had been, in the several years there, speaking to an awful lot of Rotary Clubs and other groups, as well, all kinds of groups, out in the community, talking about what’s happening at Berkeley, giving speeches. And so I was fairly well known throughout Northern California at that time, at least in certain areas, and certainly in the Rotary area. And I had given several speeches that—you know, my style is having a little bit of fun with the audience, as well as try to have a message. And so it was no problem, I guess, that I was selected to be the district governor. Yeah.

Kim: Speaking of those speeches, I’ve taken a look at some, and there’s one in particular where you’re really poking fun at the efficiency of district governors. So what is the humor there? What is the role of the district governor and its relation to the clubs?

Dochterman: The way Rotary International is organized is they have an international board of directors and international president, and then it spreads all over the world, and the only contact then is that they have these regional groups called a district. And they cover a geographical area. So today there are 530 of these districts around the world. And so the district governor is the officer of International Rotary in that district for a year’s time, and so your responsibility is to visit each one of the clubs, be a friendly advisor, try to help the clubs interpret the rules and policies, encourage the clubs to take on projects, provide funds for an international foundation, the Rotary Foundation, and merely be a friendly, helpful advisor to clubs, which are all sizes. Some clubs might be fifteen members, and others might be three hundred. So it’s a wide range, and the district governor then visits each one of these clubs. For me, many times the governor is a person who is retired. Well, I obviously wasn’t retired. I had two little kids at home. And normally the governor and his spouse would visit. So I was probably the first governor that had little kids, so during the summer months, when vacation was easier, and I used my vacation time, I’d make the trips in the northern part of the district, up Northern California—Chico, Redding, Mount Shasta, way up to Yreka, and clear up the Oregon border, Montague and Tulelake. And I did those during the summer, and so my kids would go, and people were delighted to take the kids with their kids and have a day. And so it was a great experience for our
whole family to go and visit each one of these communities for a day. And then, during my working times, I could handle in the evenings generally a meeting with the local clubs, and so it’s something I could work out and still do my work at the university, as well. But also, the president recognized that here was an opportunity for me.

Kim: Clark Kerr.

Dochterman: —Clark Kerr—to help be a representative that the university is not all a bunch of crazies, but there are some people there, most of them are people that are responsible individuals, that they’re citizens just like the people in your community, and that I could interpret to the extent you have conversations, and even in my speeches, that people would have greater respect and greater understanding of the University of California.

Kim: Where did you feel that those conversations were the most needed? Was it up in Northern California that was far removed?

Dochterman: No, I think all over the area. Locally, you know, Oakland, Alameda, you know, down to Livermore, up in the Valley, Fairfield, Vacaville, Davis, Woodland. I just know the whole Valley.

Kim: And at this point, who makes up the membership of these clubs. Is it primarily older businessmen, or—?

Dochterman: No, not necessarily. At that time, sixties, it was a men’s organization solely, but that has changed now, and so the governors are men and women and club members. No, it would be a wide span. Probably the span would be every club would have some business people that were in their thirties and forties, and then it would go up to probably sixty-, seventy-year-old folks that owned the businesses and professions. So you had a wide spread, and generally we would meet with a dinner occasion and a social occasion where the spouses of the men at that time were all attending, and so you had a chance to talk to family groups. And this was, I’ve always felt, one of the nice things, because they would see you, and see my wife, and with a couple little kids, and they know that we came from the University of California, and we were just normal people, too. And all the stuff that they read in the paper, or saw on television, about that awful university and what’s going on down there, was merely a segment, a little piece of the life of the university at that time. So I felt it was a rare opportunity to be in touch with people and try to interpret the role and the quality and the greatness of the university, even going through a
period of tremendous uproar and bad publicity and everything that was happening.

03-00:36:04  
Kim: In addition to this role of translating the university as a district governor, what were some of the programs or kind of advice that you were giving clubs in terms of what they should be pursuing in order to create robust membership?

03-00:36:19  
Dochterman: Well, the Rotary at that time was going through somewhat of a transition of up until probably the seventies Rotary Clubs mostly did community activities, something for their community, providing things for children, providing recreation facilities, concerns for disabled people, concerns for poverty areas, providing food baskets at holiday times, and eyeglasses, and shoes where kids need them. A lot of these things are now covered by various kinds of governmental agency things, but Rotary did a lot of things in their community for their schools and sponsored Boy Scout groups and Girl Scouts and all kinds of activities. So I was trying to encourage clubs to expand their circle of activities. But then we were also moving into helping on international projects, and getting clubs to take on some projects across the oceans, across the borders, and sponsoring scholarships for students that could study in another country for a period of a year or so. It was a large program that Rotary was really moving into, the Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship program. Also you’re trying to encourage them and motivate them to run their club better, and to take on programs that would give the satisfaction to their own members, and still do something better for the community, and at the same time we were thinking broader into the world as our community.

03-00:38:32  
Kim: Right, so in this international turn, the Rotary concept is you build a better community and that will better your business. Was that logic being understood in the global or international context? Was there kind of international trade happening, as well, as a result?

03-00:38:51  
Dochterman: The international trade idea was really considered. This was merely an understanding that you move into helping people abroad. Each of us have some responsibility beyond our own community, that our communities grow, grow, grow, and the world eventually becomes our community, and to try to translate this, that we can do something for some other part of the world. Now, we’ve gotten into so many, many, many huge projects, like the eradication of polio, which we can talk about at another time, but at that time we were taking on little projects of helping with scholarships is one thing, but I remember one project we were urging clubs and districts to make contact with another part of the world, with some club, and see if they have a project that you can help them with. And they were pretty small projects.
I remember Berkeley Rotary Club had a project that we had contacted a club over in India—Rajkot, I believe was the name—and they conducted what they call an ear camp for people having deafness. And they would bring people together. Maybe they’d get a hundred people and get some doctors, and they would conduct surgeries and all kinds of things out in the open, under a big tent or something like that, no surgical rooms or anything like that. And they said they had an ear camp—also some of them had eye camps where they were fit for glasses and other things, but an ear camp—and they wanted something like a little piston that goes in there, made of plastic, that could replace the piston. I don’t know the technology of the ear that much, but it could be replaced, just a small thing, smaller than your fingernail, probably. And so they said these are very expensive over here in India. I don’t know what they said, maybe a hundred dollars to get one of these. And could you help us get a couple dozen of these plastic pistons in the United States? We said, “Well, we can try.” We looked to see where in the world in the United States were these being made. They were being made in Berkeley, and for seventy-five cents apiece we could get a gross of them. And so this was a big project. We got a gross, and we sent them across the ocean to India, and they thought this was a huge, huge contribution.

We also collected books and the Berkeley Rotary Club, helped create a library in some community in India, I believe it was, because they could use English-speaking books. And we sent books; and things like that were being done. And all across the district we were getting clubs to reach out and see if you could do something a little different in addition to what you’re doing locally, stretching their imagination. And that was just really at the beginning of reaching out into international affairs, which Rotary now is very, very sophisticated in its projects.

03-00:43:22
Kim: Where do you think that international impetus came from? Was that coming up from the Rotary International president? Was it a sign of the times?

03-00:43:29
Dochterman: I think it was probably part of the sign of the times, as well as some of the presidents were creative enough to see this as a future thing, but not everybody had that vision. But in the sixties we were passed the time when World War II was going on, and a lot of the—

03-00:43:58
Kim: Vietnam.

03-00:43:59
Dochterman: And then Vietnam, and Korea. And the world was trying to develop some friendships, and to extend this idea that people ought to be friends. And we had a number of kinds of projects that were developing the exchange of
students. Student exchange programs were growing up in that time of sending students from one country to another for a year’s study on student exchange programs. And that was a growing, big program, too. So it was trying to promote all of these different things, and I don’t know how well you can accomplish anything of significance in a year’s time, but each Rotary district governor tried to do something along that line.

Kim: Well, I know you yourself, as a district governor, go to an international conference and are put on an international committee, we talked about last time, with George—

Dochterman: George Togasaki gave me—well, there are so many leaders in Rotary. Each year you have another five hundred governors, with all kinds of skills, every profession that you can imagine, and some that you can’t even imagine, professional and business skills, and so they use them in a variety of ways in many, many committees. So I did have the opportunity, as I mentioned before, of knowing the world president when I was district governor, and it was a Cal graduate, George Togasaki from Tokyo, Japan, who gave me some real opportunities to get into the bigger circle. The pyramid has a very sharp curve up to the top. There’s all these Rotary Clubs right now. If you look at it, there’s 34,000 Rotary Clubs, and then the next level is a district governor. Each club has a president. The next level is a district governor, and there’s about five hundred thirty of them, and the next level is the international board of directors, there’s seventeen of them, and then the top row is there’s an international president. And so the pyramid goes up awfully fast, and unless there’s somebody that gives a person some opportunities, it’s awful easy to be lost after you’ve done a couple of these jobs, because it’s a world organization, and when they go appointing a committee they look around, and maybe we better have somebody from France on this, and somebody from Brazil, and someone from Tokyo, and pretty soon you may have a hundred excellent individuals that are just overlooked because they’re trying to make an international organization. And that’s why I often said that Rotary is one of the most international organizations in the world, because it does involve so many countries and territories, some two hundred territories and countries in the world.

Kim: So what is the common language of discussion? And I’m sure there’s so many languages being spoken, so how do the different clubs and members communicate?

Dochterman: Well, what happens is that Rotary operates with English as its primary language. However, there are, I think, six or seven other languages in which
the literature and the conventions are equally conducted: Spanish, Portuguese, Japanese, Chinese, French, something about six or seven different languages. And at an international convention of Rotary, they have translators in all of these languages, and people would use headsets, and they just are translated so that they can translate from English to the language, or if somebody’s speaking in another language other than English then it’s translated in English, of course. So people get used to hearing a good thought, maybe, in some other language, or an idea or something, or experience. So it’s kind of like the United Nations, when they get together. Everybody speaks their language, or many parts of the world have people in business and professions in many parts of the world are English-speaking these days, or certainly one of the major other languages. So they get along with the language barriers by interpreters.

Kim:

Given that the international theme in Rotary was this idea of friendship making in a time of, again, upheaval and the wars that are happening, in these international conventions where you had delegates and members from different countries, was there, again, a space of discussion to kind of talk about world affairs, how they might be impacting local communities, local business, or just kind of—?

Dochterman:

Well, sometimes they do. Rotary has had from its probably last fifty years a goal of promoting peace and understanding among the membership and among peoples. And virtually every event of Rotary, the concept of world peace and understanding is something that is promoted or encouraged or discussed in getting along. There’s no question that there is an element of nationalism in these organizations, but when you get fifteen or twenty thousand people, all having the same basic goal of serving their community, these people will treat each other as blood brothers and sisters. There’s never any conflict or display of antagonism in a Rotary event. I can’t say that it’s probably not felt by some people, but I’ve seen so many people—the Palestinians and the Israelis—sitting at the same table and greeting each other as personal friends, the same way with virtually every disputed area, although there are few from Communist countries right now—well, let me say Communist China, for example, does not allow any group to organize in there that have private meetings. However, we do have some Rotary Clubs in China, a few. Lot of them in Hong Kong, and seems like a million of them in Taiwan, but in China itself we have Rotary Clubs that meet of nationals from other countries that work in the businesses very, very successfully. And some day I suspect that the government may permit groups to meet privately, but that’s why Rotary doesn’t meet, except as nationals from other countries in the Rotary Clubs in Shanghai and Peking and a few other places.
Other than the overall mission and commitment to service that I think would help engender fellowship amongst different international members, is there something else about Rotary and the way that meetings are convened and run that kind of promotes this fellowship, you think?

Oh, yeah. Yes, say, Rotary started, and Rotary’s policies has been that a group meets once a week, and in the earliest days they generally met for a luncheon meeting; but now they meet evening meetings, they meet for breakfast meetings, whatever it is, and there’s always a degree of fun and fellowship that takes place during those meetings. And fellowship is really one of the reasons they got together in the first place, was that the Rotary Club was a group of young men who had moved to the cities from their hometowns, and they felt lonely in Chicago. As they often talked, these are lonely men that get together to help each other, and to make friends like they left when they lived in a small town of a couple thousand people, or a few hundred people, and now they’re in a big town, and how do they survive without that kind of friendship? And so friendship and fellowship was one of the primary reasons. And the idea we meet as friends, and we’ll help each other in business, and I’ll buy my stuff from you, and you buy your stuff from him, and they’ll buy from him, and we’ll each help each other, and get our families to buy from each other, and that’s going to help. And so the idea of friendship and fellowship was very fundamental in the very beginning of the whole Rotary idea. And that’s perpetuated now with people at a Rotary meeting will share their experiences as they might call, “I have a happy dollar today, or a happy buck, because my grandson was just admitted to go to the University of California,” or “My business just did this,” or “I have a wedding anniversary, my thirtieth wedding anniversary,” and share that fellowship so people respect and the feel that they can call on another person to help. And the general spirit in Rotary is if you can do something you do it. You don’t hesitate to ask, but you don’t hesitate to help a friend. And some of the closest friends I have, I’ve developed with my Rotary experiences.

Can you tell me a little bit or name a few of these friendships? I know Stan McCaffrey was in Rotary with you, but are there other people that have really shaped your experience of Rotary?

Well, I can tell you a little story. My second wife, Mary Elena, and I, we were asked to go to a Rotary district conference, and speak on behalf of the president. And it was going to be in Memphis. And the district governor that invited us there, he didn’t know me, and I didn’t know him. His name was Dr. Bob Warner. And we’d fly to Memphis, and he and his wife Maryellen met us at the airport. And he said, “Well, how is everything?” And we said, “Okay.”
And he says, “Just okay?” I said, “Well, yes, just okay, because yesterday we just got a report that my wife, Mary Elena, has lung cancer.” And Dr. Bob Warner says, “Well, let’s talk about it. I’m a thoracic surgeon, and I face that problem every day.” And over that weekend, he said, “Well, this can happen, that can happen. This will go on, that goes.” And we flew back home feeling we had received a hundred times more in satisfaction and just feeling we understood the situation we were facing. And Mary Elena continued to live for six more years. And in that time we became very, very good friends of the Warners. They’ve been to our house. We’ve been to a number of places around the world with them. And so it was just a friendship that was out of the blue, and a relationship and a contact that meant so much to us, that would never have happened. Sure, we had our own doctor, but you can’t spend several days with your own doctor in a way that you can with a friend who is also an expert in that field. So that’s kind of one of the things that one experiences in Rotary.

Another experience in the Berkeley Rotary Club: at the beginning of the year the president appoints the committees for that year, and we always have what we call a fellowship committee. A greeter or some people welcome people to the door, and see if it was a prospect or a visitor, show them around. And there was only one person that I saw that had written down on the page, “Ask everyone to tell what committee they wanted.” And one fellow, Fred Joyce, gosh, he wants to be on the fellowship committee. He sits in the back of the room every week. I’ve never heard a word from him. I have no idea. So I called him and I said, “Fred, would you be willing to be chairman?” He said, “I sure would.” He said, “I’d like to do that.” So Fred became the chairman, and he was the most energetic, enthusiastic chairman they’d ever had. One day we were going someplace and I said, “You’ve done a great job in that.” He says, “Well, let me tell you a story.” He says, “I had been in Berkeley Rotary for twenty years, and nobody ever asked me to do a job.” And he said, “That very morning of the day that you called me, my wife Ann had said to me, ‘Are you going to Rotary this noon?’” He says, “‘Yes, I’m going, but I think I’m going to quit.’” He says, “‘I sit in the back of the room. I don’t do anything. Nobody’s ever asked me to do something.’” And he says, “That evening, you called me and asked me to do the fellowship job.” Well, Fred became so energetic that the next year he was elected to the board of directors, and about two years later he was elected president of the club, and about four years later he was elected district governor. Of a guy who said, “I think I’m going to quit.” Anyway, he became one of my closest friends. If I ever had a problem, I could call Fred at three in the morning, and he said, “I’ll be there in ten minutes.” He’s that kind of a friend. And I said, “What’s your relationship in Rotary?” He says, “Well, when I was a teenage boy I grew up in Arizona.” And he says, “My father was a banker in Phoenix, and he was a very active Rotarian, and he actually became a district governor when the district was all of Arizona, and part of Southern California.” And he said, “The founder of
Rotary, Paul Harris, used to come to Arizona out of Chicago in the wintertime because of the warm weather, and my father and Paul Harris used to sit in the back of our big touring car. I’d drive them from place to place to go to lunch, and they would talk about Rotary.” And he says, “That was my first contact with Rotary.” And he says, “I was about to drop out until you called me.” So there’s a lot of stories where friendships have developed out of just an acquaintanceship.

I got a note here on the Fourth of July from a friend in Russia, who I’d gotten to know, and he just sent a letter saying, “Happy Fourth of July.” He had been an exchange professor. He was a professor of English in Irkutsk, way up in Siberia, and a professor of English. And he spent a couple years at Stanislaus State in Turlock, and I got to know him at that time, over in the Valley. And he helped to organize Rotary in Russia. But the nature of his email was, “Happy Fourth of July,” and then he says, “I know how important this date is to your country.” He says, “I’m so sorry that our two countries can’t be a lot more together a lot more than we are today.” And he had that kind of a friendship that we’ve developed, and I have the same thing in many parts of the world, friends at Fourth of July. I had another note from a friend in England who sent a Fourth of July note, and I sent back, “Thanks for your note from the colonies.” [laughter] Anyway, but these kinds of friendships all over the world that come out just because of the idea that friendship is a part of this organization.

Kim: So many amazing opportunities, it sounds like.

Dochterman: That’s a long answer for a nice question.

Kim: Well, I actually have a question now, because after you become district governor, that ends in ’69, and I know in 1970 you leave the Berkeley area to go to Colorado.

Dochterman: That’s right.

Kim: So what’s your involvement with Rotary in Colorado? Do you immediately jump in, or is this a little bit of a hiatus for you?

Dochterman: Well, it was, to an extent. Nineteen sixty-nine, at the end of ’69 and ’70, there were so many, many changes at the University of California in leadership, and I just felt I was marking time, and the opportunity came for me to join the Education Commission of the States in Denver. So we moved over to Denver,
and our offices were right there in downtown Denver. And a couple of the other people in the office were Rotarians. We all came from different parts of the country, joining in this organization to provide a central location for educational information, a clearing house, and the consulting agency for state governors. I think I talked about that once before. And several of the people would go over to the Denver Rotary Club, which met a couple blocks from our office, just as visitors. And so it was a big club. Denver only had one Rotary Club in the entire area, and they were very, very jealous of their Rotary Club in terms of we’re just the Rotary Club of Denver. But they’d been trying over the years to get another Rotary Club, or other Rotary Clubs regionally, in the smaller suburbs of Denver. And so they asked me to attend one of the organizing meetings.

They had a bright young president of the Denver club who thought he would get a new Rotary Club started. The old membership always voted it down before. So he got a group together, and I got acquainted with him just a little bit by meeting him once or twice. He asked me—I had been district governor—if I would come and speak to this fledgling group of, oh, thirty, thirty-five people who were thinking of starting this new Rotary Club. So I went, and it happened to be in the section of town in which I lived. And so I went to the Denver Rotary Club a number of times, but it was so big, and I would invariably sit in somebody else’s chair. “Charlie sat in that chair for the last twenty years, you can’t sit there,” you know, that kind of friendship. And so the organizing committee said, “Would you join this new Rotary Club? It’s out in your area.” I said, “Well, I guess so.” And they said, “Well, would you be the president? You’ve been district governor.” And I said, “Well, if they would like to be the best Rotary Club in the world.” They said, “Well, we don’t know anything about it. None of them have ever been Rotarians, so you can start from the beginning.”

So I became the president of this new Rotary Club called University Hills. Each Rotary Club has to have a geographic location, and this was part of Denver, but they did have a shopping center that had a Post Office box, and so it was called University Hills. So part of the condition with the Denver Rotary Club was that we would not use the word Denver, that we would not infringe on the Denver Rotary Club, and secondly that if anybody wanted to take members in that area, we wouldn’t object, and that we wouldn’t take any of the members away from the Denver Rotary Club. So with those three conditions, they approved it. And so we became a very, very, very good Rotary Club. As a matter of fact, some of the leaders of Rotary later on, you know, fifteen or twenty years later, when I was coming along as world president, I asked some of the staff, you know, “What would be one of the best Rotary clubs?” and they said, “Well, there happens to be a Rotary Club out in the Denver area we think is probably the best Rotary Club in the world, and that’s the University Hills Rotary Club.” And I said, “Well, I do know a
little bit, since I was the charter president.” But we had a great group, and it’s still going, and very strong and active. So I took a role there and became their charter president before we moved back to California.

Kim: Was it all collegial after the fact? Once you started kind of becoming a really robust club, was Denver collaborative with you, or were there—?

Dochterman: Oh, sure. We had some things that were very, very creative. I went and sat with the board of the Denver Rotary Club, and they said, “Well, we have a charter night. And normally you have to have a speaker. I said, “Sure.” And they said. “Well, who should we get as the speaker for this new Rotary Club?” I said, “Well, how would you like to have the World President of Rotary speak?” They said, “You can’t get him.” I said, “Well, we could try.” This was the time where nobody had a cellphone. They had a telephone in the room. I said, “Well, let me give the president a call.” I said, “Bill Wark is a friend of mine, and he lives in California.” And I called him, and I said, “You’ve been wanting to get a new Rotary Club in Denver, you’ll get one if you come and speak.” So he came and spoke to the club, and the Denver club thought that was a big coup for them, to have the world president come to their club and speak.

And then I did another little thing was I wrote to thirty-five people—there were thirty-five new members, I think. I wrote to thirty-five people I knew around the world who were world leaders, past presidents of Rotary and others that I had known serving on committees and one thing and another, and told them that they had the same kind of business that each one of the new members had. And I said, “Here is the name of a new member. Would you write a letter and send it to me, to this new member? So that night of the charter night I had opened all of these letters carefully, and I made a copy of them, put them back in, so I had the original letter. And I said, “Here is a letter from a person that you don’t know.” [interruption; not transcribed] Well, and so I got all these letters, and I printed the letters in a little book called Letters to New Members. And so that night we gave each new member his letter and his new Rotary pin on the charter night, and then we had these letters duplicated into a little book of these letters, and then at the end of the evening we gave everybody a copy of these beautiful letters from leaders from all over the world, a personal letter to each member welcoming them into the world of Rotary. And so the Denver club thought this was a great coup, and they were so happy they sponsored the club. Now there’s probably eight or ten more Rotary Clubs in Denver from starting at just kind of like getting the cork out of the bottle of the olives. The first one comes hard, but after that they come pretty easy.
Kim: Was it difficult to leave that club when you returned back to California?

Dochterman: Yes, it was. I had just spent a year with them. But I have been back there a number of times. I’ve been kept an honorary member of their club. And I went back on I guess it was the thirtieth anniversary and spoke to the club. But we had tremendous numbers of activities. But they were just a super Rotary Club.

Kim: So when you returned back to California in 1972, you moved to Stockton.

Dochterman: Yes.

Kim: So that’s a whole new Rotary Club that you have to introduce yourself to.

Dochterman: Yeah. Well, I moved when I took a position as executive vice president at the University of the Pacific. Excuse me. [coughs]

Dochterman: Well, the president, Stan McCaffrey, belonged to the Stockton Rotary Club, and then the financial vice president belonged to another club. And so I thought I would join the North Stockton Rotary Club. And so that’s the club I joined, and it was a good club. And subsequently, the downtown older senior Stockton Rotary Club, the first one, has made me an honorary member, and I’ve been an honorary member of that club for many, many years.

Kim: So is there some work that you do—? I know in 1979 it’s kind of a big year for you because you’re asked to join—

Dochterman: Excuse me.

[break in interview]

Kim: This is Cristina Kim here with Cliff Dochterman. This is still our third interview, but tape two. It’s August 4, 2006, and we’re in Moraga, California. So before we finished that last tape we were talking about your time at the North Stockton Rotary Club. So are there any memorable times there? Do you rise to presidency there, or are you more—?

Dochterman: No, I was just a member there. I took an active part, took part. And, oh, I visited the other Rotary Clubs, frequently would be speaker at some of the
clubs and one thing or another. And I was involved in some different ways there, still kept involved in Rotary, but having assignments on international committees and things like that.

Kim: University of the Pacific is part of the Stockton community?

Dochterman: Yes, it was somewhat, but it hadn’t been as close as it really could and should be, it seemed to me. As a matter of fact, subsequently I joined the Chamber of Commerce representing the University on the Chamber. Nobody had really taken much interest in the Chamber of Commerce and been a part of the community, and this was one of the things I was trying to do as I did in Berkeley of relating the campus to the community, and in short time I became the president of the Chamber of Commerce. And it was the first time in, oh, maybe twenty-five years that anybody from the University had ever been a president of the local Chamber of Commerce. And that gave me a chance to get more involved with the community and things that are going on, and meeting the people who were the leaders, businesspeople and that sort of thing. One experience that I often remember was they had each year, Thanksgiving time, Thanksgiving week, all of the Rotary Clubs in the area would meet together. I think there were five Rotary Clubs in the immediate area. They’d all meet together for a joint Thanksgiving luncheon. And so it was held at some big hall where they could have three or four hundred people, and maybe more than that, come to this luncheon. So I was there one year. It would be ’76, because that is a significant date, 1976, because I sat down and was starting to eat my lunch, and somebody came over and says, “Can we talk to you a minute?” I says, “Okay, I’ll meet you after the lunch over there by the door.” And they said, “No, we need to talk to you right now.” And I says, “Well, what do you have in mind?” He says, “Our speaker didn’t show up. He’s coming from San Francisco.” I don’t know who it was, whether it was the mayor or somebody like that. “And we don’t have a speaker, and we’ve got four hundred people here in the room. Can you give a speech?” And I says, “Well, as a matter of fact, I’m working on something. Let me run over to my office, which is just three or four blocks away, and I’ll get my notes.” And so I gave a speech. It was the anniversary of the Constitution. And so it was a speech I was writing more like an essay, and I gave this speech, and I always regretted that, because I’d already paid for my lunch. [laughs]

And so in any event, that particular speech somebody sent in to the Freedoms Foundation in Valley Forge, and I was awarded the George Washington Honor Medal from the Freedoms Foundation for public speeches relating to the centennial, of the nation. But it was a speech that I had prepared, or an essay that I used at that particular Rotary Thanksgiving Day luncheon. But I was involved in Rotary to a reasonable extent. And that was that experience.
I know in 1979 you were asked to join the Health, Hunger, and Humanity Committee, the 3-H Committee.

That’s right.

So who asked you to join that committee at that time?

I’d commented before that up until that time Rotary activities were mostly done by individual clubs. There was no major corporate program of Rotary as a world organization, or doing something bigger than any clubs or districts, or even a group of clubs could ever do. So the international president was Clem Renouf. Clem Renouf asked three people. He had the idea that perhaps Rotary International could do something bigger than any clubs could do. And he called the committee Health, Hunger, and Humanity. The one person from health was a doctor from Arkansas who was a physician and also a professor at the University of Arkansas. Hunger was a professor from the University of Tennessee in economics and agricultural food production. And then he asked me to represent humanity of the various kinds of projects relating to, other than health and food, to human causes and human concerns around the world. And he says, “I’m just having the three of you do this and see if you can figure out a way that Rotary could do things bigger than any clubs, to expand Rotary service.”

Well, we met, and it was a difficult thing for the three of us. It wasn’t too difficult for me, but the other two had the difficulty of thinking beyond what Rotary had been. Rotary works in the community. We don’t work as a big corporate project. I said, “But we could.” It just happened that we designed a program in which we felt we could encourage clubs to reach out and help larger groups. And this was not well received by the Rotary world. A lot of people felt that Rotary should stay just as it had always been, Rotary just works in the community. We don’t have corporate projects, worldwide projects. So it happened that this was in 1979. Nineteen eighty was going to be the seventy-fifth anniversary of Rotary. And the president, Clem Renouf, had asked Rotarians, “We would like to do something in the world, and we’re going to try to raise a fund, asking Rotarians to send in $15, and see if we could do something as a celebration for the eightieth anniversary.” So we had a little money. And so we sent a letter out to Rotary in the world and said, “If you had some money, like a million dollars, what kind of project would you undertake?” And we got not an awful lot of ideas, because people weren’t thinking that big, but we got one from the Philippines which said, “We have the highest incidence of polio in the whole Pacific Rim in the Philippines, and if we just had the money to buy the vaccine, we could immunize the children.
We could mobilize the Rotarians and the health workers and everybody to immunize all the children in the Philippines.” And knowing that this project was not thought of very well by some of the old leaders, because they thought we just do things in their community, so I said, “That would be an immediate success story, and we maybe keep this program going.”

So we selected that program as the first project. And I said, “Once we have it done, you can look at it and point to that as a success.” And so that’s what we did. We approved the project. We bought the vaccine. And that was the beginning of polio immunization by Rotarians. And so, consequently, when we went to the companies that sold vaccine, they gave us other kinds of vaccines: tetanus, measles, whooping cough, all kinds. And so we got into a little program asking places, “Do you need vaccine?”, particularly down in the Caribbean. We had a number that said, “Oh, we could take tetanus vaccine. We could take measles vaccine.” And so we really realized that Rotarians, you don’t have to be a skilled physician to do this health immunization kind of a project. Many vaccines can be given orally, and you don’t have to give them in a shot, or if you do have a shot you get working with the health agencies in your area. So that was the first experience we had. We got the vaccine, and I think there were, if I remember correctly, something like six million children in the Philippines were immunized, just like that, as soon as they got the vaccine, and they mobilized the people, and got the job done.

Were you able to visit the Philippines? At the time, I believe the person that wrote that proposal was Dr. Benny Santos, is that correct?

Dr. Benny Santos, whom I knew quite well, and also M.A.T. Caparas, who became a director and subsequently a world president of Rotary International, they worked together in doing the grant. I did not go over. This whole committee was under tremendous disfavor by a lot of the Rotary world because they said that that’s the wrong way to go, we don’t do corporate programs. And so we took a pretty low profile in that committee. However, with the success of the polio immunization, and a few other projects, the 3-H program got going, and it became a major direction for the Rotary world after that.

Given the lack of favor in the greater Rotary committee, how did you raise the funds? It was through that eightieth—

Through that eightieth anniversary fund was when we first started. And so we had that money that we could use, and we didn’t have to raise it. We just used what was donated because it was being raised as a 75th anniversary gift. The
Rotary Foundation, which was the pilot program—even when we got started, they didn’t have any part of it. They said, “That’s not part of our program, the polio program,” and until the legal counsel got to them and says, “You’re the only ones that can accept money for Rotary, so you’ve got to incorporate polio donations in your organization.” So—

Kim: After the polio vaccination, immunization of the Philippines is such a success, were you part of the actual unrolling of the more, let’s say, marketing or branding of it to show the other Rotary members that it was successful?

Dochterman: Well, it became known that Rotary had immunized, but at that time there was no real direction that they go any farther in immunization. I don’t know whether we’d covered this or not, but the next step was two years later we had another committee. Did we go through that one?

Kim: No, the New Horizons Committee?

Dochterman: The New Horizons Committee.

Kim: We’re going to jump into that—

Dochterman: Next time?

Kim: —next. No, in a little bit. But before we jump into that—because I know that’s where the larger polio project comes to a head—in that initial group were you particularly invested in seeing this global shift, and, more specifically, polio and this—?

Dochterman: No, not particularly. At that time, I did not have any great standing in the Rotary world. I had not been an international director. I’d led some committees, but I hadn’t been a director of the world organization, so I wasn’t that well known as an originator. So I had a pretty low profile. And we had kind of a program called Be Wise, Immunize, because we learned in that program experience that it was possible for Rotarians to promote immunization, and that pharmaceutical companies were perfectly willing to help in giving vaccine and purchasing vaccine at a good cost. If communities wanted to promote a vaccination for polio or any of the childhood diseases. So that was about as far as the thing went until a couple years later when we got the New Horizons Committee developed.
Kim: Right, so I know that Steve McCaffrey, who at that point is the—

Dochterman: Stan McCaffrey.

Kim: I’m sorry, Stan McCaffrey, who at that point is the president of Rotary International—

Dochterman: Yeah, 19—

Kim: Eighty-one.

Dochterman: —’81, ’82, he became the world president.

Kim: And he asks you to join the New Horizons Committee.

Dochterman: And he appointed this committee called the New Horizons Committee to take a look at the future of Rotary, where it was going, what was going to happen, and what kind of things could Rotary look forward to in the years ahead. And we sent letters out that people could suggest new projects, and there were hundreds of letters came back about projects that were kind of pet projects of individuals. And I remember I was chairing that committee. We were meeting in Evanston, and I said to the committee, “We ought to be thinking bigger than two or three years, what we’re going to do, but think in terms of the hundredth anniversary.” I said, “That’s coming up in 25 years, and we probably ought to see if there is something we could do in the world, make a significance on our hundredth anniversary in the year 2005.” This was in ’81. Excuse me, I’m going to— [sips water] so I said, “We have a letter here from a gentleman in Washington, D.C. who’s a physician who suggested that maybe we could buy vaccine for other countries of the world. And so wouldn’t that be an idea, that we could buy vaccine for everybody? We were successful in the Philippines. Why can’t we be successful in the whole world?” And I said, “That’s a good idea. Let’s write that one down.” Well, the Board accepted that idea, and it was among the probably thirty recommendations of this New Horizons Committee, different ideas that came out of that committee that women ought to be members of Rotary, and a lot of other ideas.

Kim: What was the purpose of that committee, really?
The purpose was to have people stretch their imagination a little bit more than they had up to that time of whether or not there is a bigger role for the Rotary in the world. And Stan McCaffrey’s theme of the year was “world understanding through Rotary.” And so we’re really thinking, you know, what is Rotary’s place in the world in the next foreseeable future, or the horizon. And so that was really what we were doing, trying to stretch the imagination of our leadership at that time. And so that was really where we were going with that particular committee. And so we had the idea of Rotary buying the vaccine for the entire world, and the Board adopted it, and it just sat there then for two or three years.

Was there something about polio for you specifically, or for other club members, that was personal in its impact? I know that you had just mentioned your Aunt May.

Yeah, Aunt May.

Was she in the back of your mind, or was it the fact that—?

Well, I just felt that I’d known the impact of polio. My brother’s two children had polio. And how my sister-in-law had to work, work, work with these kids to get their arms to work again, and their legs. And the tragedy of their lives being affected by polio, and I just knew it was something that had a real impact. And if we could say that Rotary provided the vaccine, at that time we weren’t thinking specifically of Rotary being the instigator of total immunization or total eradication of polio, but we were just an instrument of immunization. So that was our thinking largely at that time. We called the program Polio 2005, because that was the goal, something by the hundredth anniversary of Rotary that we would buy the vaccine, and we had no idea what it would cost, or how long it would take or anything. We were just pretty naïve, but it sounded like a good idea, and it would give us a goal for the hundredth anniversary, a goal of making a gift to the children and the mothers of the world that we could protect their children.

So you say after this initial proposal is voted, it’s a go, that there’s a pause of two to three years. What caused that stall?

Yeah. Well, each year you get a new leader of Rotary, and some of them have their own goal, or it just was one of those things that nobody really thought about how do you get it started, and how complex, and what’s it gonna cost,
and that sort of thing. And it sat on the books for two or three years until Dr. Carlos Canseco, who became the President of Rotary from Mexico City. And Dr. Canseco was an allergist, and he knew some of the problems, and he said at one time he had worked with Dr. [Albert] Sabin for a little while. So he said, “Why don’t we call him and ask him was it possible to come and talk with us?” So he called Dr. Sabin to come to Evanston, and Dr. Sabin was a tough guy. And he had gone through a lot to get to where he was. And he said, “You guys don’t really know what you’re talking about.” He says, “Just to get started, you’d have to immunize 500 million children, and just to buy the vaccine to get started you’d have to have $100 million just to get started.” I thought, boy, this is a crazy idea that we’ve got, but we’d already said we’re gonna take it on. So we decided we’d move ahead, and we hired a company to come to Evanston, and to take on our leadership. And our goal was $110 million. I think we—yeah.

03-01:45:26
Kim: I’m sorry. What company did you hire? What was the role of this external company?

03-01:45:30
Dochterman: Oh, it was a fundraising agency, and a public relations—I’ll have to think of the name of the company now.

03-01:45:39
Kim: That’s fine.

03-01:45:39
Dochterman: National. It was the community—I’ll have to think of the name. In any event, they took on the leadership of this fundraiser. We set the goal at $110 million, because we thought, well, if we fall short maybe we’ll still get $100 million that Dr. Sabin said we needed, and we needed also to pay for the fundraising expense of this company. So the Rotary Foundation, which is the fundraising agency, would have none of it. It doesn’t fit our program. It doesn’t fit our procedures and methods. And so we just set up a separate office in downtown Evanston, not even in the Rotary office headquarters, and we got some volunteers that started to run the office and collect the money, set some goals, with the help of the fundraising agency.

03-01:46:54
Kim: What were some of the strategies, and who were you getting money from at this point?

03-01:46:58
Dochterman: Well, we were getting money from the Rotary Clubs, and at that time all the money came just from the Rotary Clubs. We gave them a goal, and these goals were just, to them, exorbitant. People said, “We’ve never raised that kind of money. We’ll never do it. Your club has to raise $20,000. We can’t do
that. We’ve never raised that kind of money.” But once we got started, and we had several people that gave an awful lot of time and speaking on the subject—I did a lot of speaking on the subject—and several other people, and Dr. Joseph Serra, who was a physician in Stockton, he talked to many, many clubs, because he got involved and went to Africa and helped some of the polio victims. He was a physician. And he helped some of the victims in surgery for—he was an orthopedic surgeon, and so he had some experiences of the real seriousness of this issue worldwide. And the fundraising agency says, “You got this thing called Polio 2005. What’s that mean?” I said, “Well, that’s our goal is that in 2005, our hundredth anniversary, we’d like to complete this project.” They said, “Well, people can’t understand that.” They said, “How about PolioPlus?” And I says, “What does that mean?” They said, “We don’t know, but it sounds better than 2005.” And that’s how they got the name of PolioPlus, because occasionally when you give vaccine you can give multiple kinds of vaccine at the same time, or at least that was the theory. In some countries it did work out.

So we got this company. We started. We set up an office, and the money started coming in from clubs and clubs and more and more people got excited, because of the key thing is that virtually everybody in the 1980s knew somebody in their family or their neighbors or their school or somebody who had polio. It was universal. They estimate at that moment there was maybe 350-400,000 cases of polio in the world every year, and at least 10 percent of them died immediately. Many of them were left with paralyzed arms or legs or lungs or something, and people living in iron lungs, and every person knew somebody. So after we got started it was a fairly easy fundraising task. Two years, the campaign went on from ’85 to ’87. Nineteen eighty-seven, at the convention in Philadelphia then, they had a report of the fundraising activities, and by then they’d raised I think it was $240 million, something of that magnitude.

Kim: Right, I read that.

Dochterman: And so there we were, in the middle of a program to eradicate polio. So we had to go to the World Health Organization then and say, “We want to go to work.” Yeah?

Kim: Before we talk about the World Health Organization, I just wanted to talk a little more about that strategy of fundraising, and clarify a few things. So PolioPlus, previously Polio 2005, that becomes the fundraising body, because the Rotary Foundation, which is the fundraising arm of Rotary International, did not want to partake in this project.
Dochterman: No. It didn’t fit in, because the Rotary Foundation program is that the money is deposited, and it’s not spent for three years. In the interim three-year period, the income raised from that money is used to operate the foundation, so that all the money is eventually spent on projects, humanitarian and educational projects, but we were talking about getting money and buying polio vaccine right now and starting the program. That doesn’t fit.

Kim: More immediacy.

Dochterman: So we had this office, and the money could come in in shoeboxes, and notes on the backs of envelopes, and everything you can imagine. The money was coming in to Polio from the clubs, because they were trying to meet their goals. And many of them far exceeded the goals that we gave them, because people knew the horror of this disease, and knew people who had it.

Kim: So that comes to my two next questions. So the Rotary Clubs are given goals from Rotary International to fundraise X amount of money. Are they raising just within their club circle, or they’re going out into their communities and doing kind of local event fundraising?

Dochterman: Oh, they were doing every conceivable kind of fundraising, you know, all the way from having fundraising events to asking individual club members to donate to having cake sales and anything that people could raise money on, crab feeds and bicycle rides and Walk For Polio all kinds of fundraising, according to different parts of the world. And, you know, it wasn’t just in the United States, but all over the world, places that were not used to giving were now getting caught up into this idea that maybe we can eradicate this disease, and maybe we can do something for our kids. And there were so many unique kinds of things, people selling stuff, raising money, and it was a very, very interesting thing. I don’t know whether I told the story—did I tell you the story about Marysville Rotary, me going to Marysville?

Kim: I don’t think so.

Dochterman: This was a story up in Marysville, north of Sacramento. I was in Stockton. They called me, “We have a man here that we are going to try to get $25,000, and that would really help our club make our goal, but we’re all afraid to ask him. Would you come up and go with us to ask him about this.” And I says, “That’s awful difficult. My wife is dying of cancer. I’ll do it. I’ll come up, but I can only stay an hour, because I’ve got to get right back home.” So I drove
an hour and a half from Stockton up to Marysville, go in the office, and it was the newspaper publisher, and a tough old guy. He was a Rotarian, but everybody kind of gave him his full space. And I sat on the office, and there were three or four guys from the club with me, and I said, “Now, tell me what you’ve got here.” They said, “Well, we’ve got this proposal for $25,000, and we hope he’ll come up with $25,000, but we’re scared to ask him to do that, and we thought you might be able to help us.” Okay. So I looked around his office while we’re sitting there, and I saw a picture of him standing in front of the Eiffel Tower, and over here standing in front of the Taj Mahal and everything, and I said, oh, this guy’s got some money and must be enjoying traveling. So we finally go in his office, and we sit there with about two minutes of small talk, and he finally says, “Okay, what do you want me to do?” And I said, “Well, we’re here to tell you about the polio program.” And I told him a little bit. He said, “Well, what do you want?” I said, “We’re going to ask you to give us $100,000.” And, “Oh, I can’t do that.” I said, “Well, I just thought I’d tell you about it, because those who give $100,000, we’re going to have them go to someplace that they select in the world and help donate vaccines to individuals.” Well, we talked a while, and he came up, and he agreed to give us $100,000. I thought these three guys from the club when I said $100,000 were going to faint right on the spot, but they couldn’t imagine we got $100,000 from this man, and eventually sent him to some national day of immunization—I don’t know where it was. But for anybody that gave $100,000, we had blocked off a plan of how we could send them to a National Day of Immunization someplace in the world, and this guy finally agreed to give us $100,000.

But there were all kinds of experiences. Some people went out speaking to dozens and dozens of Rotary Clubs, telling them the story of what we can do and how we can do it, some with video, pictures of different kids that are crippled with polio and other things. So it was a massive, massive fundraising effort, particularly in the United States, because over half the money, I think, was raised in the United States of that $240 million.

03-01:58:30
Kim:
You sort of answered my question here, but I wonder if we can expand a little more.

03-01:58:36
Dochterman:
Sure.

03-01:58:36
Kim:
I know in fundraising, when we talked about it, it’s all about making people care, but also feel like they have a stake in the matter, or that they’re individually interested in it, right? That there’s some kind of gain. So in this instance, with the newspaper man, you know, you were able to read his office, and provide him with an experience that would—
Dochterman: Fulfill his—

Kim: —fulfill his individual needs or interests.

Dochterman: Sure, that’s right. That’s what you’re trying to do.

Kim: Given that, and the fact that you’re already having resistance from Rotary Clubs because this kind of fundraising isn’t going to be trickling back into their own communities, but rather going abroad, did the Rotary International provide clubs with any kind of strategies for kind of cultivating that kind of giving, or convincing people that a global campaign could, in fact, have local repercussions?

Dochterman: Well, by the time we started the fundraising and took on the project, and that Rotary was seriously going to help eradicate polio, a lot of the resentment to the 3-H corporate program had disappeared. From the time we first started the 3-H program in ’78, ’79, till the time eight years later, or six years later, most of the objection disappeared—when people began to see what could happen, like the polio in the Philippines, eradication there, and other places, and some of the other projects that we undertook, longer-term projects under the 3-H program, the objections and the people who were objecting finally kind of disappeared in their public objections. So by this time, when the board undertook the polio fundraising, the Rotary world was pretty much in tune that this is the way. We didn’t have much objection. Matter of fact, tremendous amount of support at that point came from the board and the presidents and everyone at that time. As a matter of fact, Dr. Canseco got the program moving by bringing Dr. Sabin in. The next two presidents both had been very much involved in the polio selection process, so they were very supportive. One of them, incidentally, in 1995, ’96, was M.A.T. Caparas, who had been involved in the original Philippine program, along with Benny Santos. So he was very, very supportive of this, and gave a lot of encouragement and leadership. And then the next man was a guy who was very, very supportive of the program. So the tide had turned a great deal in that five-, six-, seven-year period, from the opposition. And most people let it go, and they knew this was pretty much inevitable.

Kim: So we’ve reached that time—it’s about 12:30—that we had agreed upon. Next time we’ll start off with the World Health Organization, because I know that that’s an interesting collaboration that is initially perhaps not as—
Dochterman: Oh, they weren’t very enthusiastic to start with.

So we’ll delve into that next time, but if you wouldn’t mind, I have kind of one last question to kind of wrap up this session, and it’s kind of a more general one, but it’s definitely specific to your experiences. So you had mentioned even when you had to go to Marysville to talk to this journalist that this is in a time of personal turmoil. Personal things are happening, with your wife being ill. But I’m sure that both in that instance and at many times in your Rotary career, you’re balancing both family and work obligations. Personally, how did you maintain that kind of dedication to Rotary and balance all of those interests and responsibilities?

Well, it is a very, very significant question, because balancing was what I had to do. I was still working. I had responsibilities at the university. I had responsibilities at home, and Rotary was high on my list, but it wasn’t number one. And I probably, as people have said, have spoken to more Rotary Clubs than anyone in the world, but I could only do this because of the fantastic support my wife gave me, and my kids, my family gave me. They understood. They enjoyed Rotary. They took part in Rotary. My kids went with me on so many places around the world, that they understood that Rotary was my primary volunteer activity. And so they appreciated it. But I’m sure there were times that I probably neglected the family, you know, not intentionally, but you can’t remake the calendar and go back. But we were all very, very supportive. We were committed to this goal. We were committed to achieving certain things. And I tried to balance my life with family, work, and volunteerism. Not always easy, because I had other things. I had my church. I had other commitments. I had family obligations. I had aging parents, and a lot of other things that I was balancing my life. And I tried to do my best to keep some kind of stability and sanity [laughter] in all that. But I was fortunate that my superiors in work and friends were generally very supportive of the kind of thing that I was doing, and they recognized that it was important to me, and was hopefully important to society, as well.

Yeah, so what kept you going? I mean, so many people, I think, especially now, might not be willing to even strike that balance. Like, Rotary would be just an obligation they can’t take on. So what was the drive? What was the impetus there?

Well, I guess that was my primary volunteer activity. I didn’t spend time playing golf, or fishing, or having a boat, or doing a lot of things that my friends did. My volunteer time, or my non-working time, was with my family,
or generally with Rotary, some other community volunteer activity. And that was just our family’s way that volunteerism is a part of your life. You’ve got to make room, to eat, to watch TV, to sleep, and to give a little of your time to some cause that’s bigger than you are.

03-02:08:13
Kim: Thank you so much, Cliff.

[end of interview]
Interview 4: August 10, 2016

Kim: Hello.

Dochterman: Hello.

Kim: This is Cristina Kim. I’m here with Cliff Dochterman. This is our fourth interview. Today is August 10, 2016 and we’re here in Moraga, California. So when we last left off, Cliff, we were talking about several things, but chronologically in your work with Rotary we were talking about PolioPlus. You told me that by 1987 Rotarians were able to raise $240 million—

Dochterman: That’s right.

Kim: —which is an impressive sum. But I actually wanted to start off with something that you had mentioned with your work with the World Health Organization.

Dochterman: Yes.

Kim: Could you tell me a little bit more? I know you had mentioned that they weren’t necessarily looking for your help or very appreciative.

Dochterman: They weren’t enthusiastic about Rotary. They thought of Rotary as just a group of people that went to lunch and did things in their local community and couldn’t understand or believe that we really had a commitment to do something about polio in the world. The World Health Organization, just at that time, had been considering and making some decisions that there was a great necessity, since we did have the vaccines available then, that there should be a real push around the world to eradicate polio. At that time, in 1987, I think there were about 125 countries that still had polio endemic in their countries, although a number of countries had already pretty well eradicated polio, like certainly North America and much of Europe. So world health officials were not enthusiastic until we talked about the fact that Rotary operates all over the world and that we have lots and lots of volunteers. A million volunteers that would help in mobilizing their local countries to carry on the volunteer work of distributing the vaccine. And since it was the Sabin vaccine it could be given just by drops on a youngster’s tongue, compared to the Salk vaccine, which required an actual a shot. So we said, “Look, we have volunteers and we have already raised $240 million.” And that made all the
difference in the world with the World Health Organization, that they thought we could be a useful partner in this program.

Actually, the two other partners with the World Health Organization and Rotary were UNICEF, which is also a part of the United Nations as is the World Health Organization. UNICEF was actually the unit that did the purchasing and distribution of the vaccine through their organization. And then the United States Centers for Disease Control was the fourth partner, maybe third partner, with Rotary. So we finally developed this working relationship and Rotary had a lot of money to start with. So we could actually buy the vaccine, whereas the World Health Organization had a much more complex structure for raising money or spending money or allocating money for the purchase of vaccines.

So who or what gave you the sense that they weren’t enthusiastic and how and who got them on board?

Well, I personally was not one of the negotiators but the Rotary leadership went to the World Health Organization over in Brussels and sat down with them and they said, “Well, we have all the experts in health and immunization and everything that’s needed. We don’t need a service club that goes, a bunch of at that time, old men that go to lunch.” And we said, “Well, we have volunteers and we have some money to start purchasing vaccine.” And so they said, “Come on in and be a partner with this.” I was not personally involved in negotiating with the World Health Organization. Those were some of my other colleagues that were working on the program.

So 1983 to ’85 you’re a Director of Rotary International?

One of the seventeen directors from all over the world. Yes.

So what was your role in that position?

Well, it’s a two-year assignment. The first year I served as a director. And the board of directors makes most of the major decisions for Rotary International of all types of things relating to the operation of individual units and districts and zones and complex things to carry out the bylaws and operations of Rotary. But the second year I was also the Vice President of Rotary. This is a position that you stand ready to step in for the president, if something happened because of illness or sickness or disability. So the Vice President is ready to step in for the President. [Interruption] So I was the Vice President of
Rotary and worked very, very closely with the Rotary International President, who was a physician from Mexico, Carlos Canseco. And a very, very good friend and we worked very closely together and were both very much involved in the concept of getting this polio immunization project back on to track. The board several years earlier had actually approved the idea that we would purchase vaccines for all the children in the world by the year 2005. It had just kind of sat on the books and Dr. Canseco said, “If we’re going to get this done by 2005, we’d better get started,” and that’s when we moved ahead.

So what was the process of moving ahead? This is a really large project.

It is.

So I’m sure you had to break it down.

Well, the first thing Dr. Canseco says, “We have to talk with Dr. Sabin.” And he said, “I worked with him for a short time on some project.” Dr. Canseco was an allergist. And he knew Dr. Sabin somewhat. And so he called him and had him come to the headquarters there in Evanston, Illinois and sat down. So we said, “We want to do something about polio.” He says, “Well,” he says, “I don’t know whether you people have the capability to do anything successful.” All we had at that time was an idea and a commitment. So he said, “You just have to immunize. Just to get started you’d have to immunize 500 million children.” He said, “I don’t think you can do that. And just to buy the vaccine for that first 500 million children it would cost $100 million.” We were taken aback somewhat by the magnitude, beginning to think of the real magnitude of this idea of eradicating polio in the world. Actually, we probably weren’t even thinking that far at that point. We were thinking of buying the vaccine and letting people go ahead and have it available. We had already made the commitment we’re going to do something but it really was a strain at that point to say, “Gee, can we do this?” And so that was the turning point.

We often talk about the father of the whole program and I would say Dr. Canseco, we were working together, really had the vision that maybe we can. He was a physician. He knew the urgency of getting something done. So that’s when we took the bold step of going out and finding a fundraising agency that would help us in that program.

I know we spoke a little bit of that last week. So once you raised the money, it seems like initially you wanted to donate the money, perhaps buy the vaccine and give it to other organizations. What changes in these kinds of national immunization views?
Well, as we went ahead in the fundraising period, a two-year period, we realized maybe the World Health Organization is pushing and pushing towards the eradication of polio. And we, perhaps, just naturally moved in that direction, that there’s more to this than just buying the vaccine. There is the possibility of eradicating and that we could be one of the partners in this effort to eradicate polio in the world. No group other than a governmental organization had ever undertaken anything of this magnitude. So consequently it was a huge, huge step to think of Rotary doing this kind of an effort, undertaking the effort. We just kind of gradually moved. One day we were talking about we’re going to eradicate polio along with the World Health Organization, and we can be part of that. We can be part of that and we can carry on this program. And then we’d never really talked that much with the World Health Organization. We just thought we would move ahead and get in on the program. And so after we raised the money we had a little leverage that we could become a real partner.

So what were the terms of that partnership? It wasn’t just giving money. I know a lot of Rotary members, yourself included, participated as actual—

The World Health Organization had the real strength of the organization because it was made up of health officials from dozens and dozens of nations and they had the mechanism to negotiate certain days of national immunization, to work with health agencies of how they were going to conduct immunization within their particular country. Rotary was more the partner, the finance partner to a large extent. After we got in it, then we realized that we had a role, because we operated in many countries, of encouraging our national countries to step forward and support polio immunization as a worldwide effort and allocating funds to buy the vaccine. There have been millions of dollars now. Our $240 million that we started with has been overshadowed so many, many, many times by not only what we continued to raise but—I can’t remember at the moment—but two or three billion dollars has actually been spent on this particular program.

And then we had a number of other things as we got into the program. We found out there was more needed than just the vaccine. We needed little things like jackets or little kinds of cloth vests for workers so that people would realize that the person with the vaccine is a legitimate individual. We had a lot of caps we bought that said, “Polio immunization,” and things like that. We had to buy boxes, plastic boxes, Styrofoam boxes, that could keep the vaccine cold. Oh, we bought various kinds of bicycles and motorcycles and things that could be distributed around the world to help deliver the vaccine in remote areas. We bought thousands and thousands of little leaflets in the various languages that people could describe in their neighborhood a certain day to go
to a location on the actual immunization day. These were kind of what we called PolioPlus partners program. My friend Bill Ives was one that actually supervised the PolioPlus partners. And different Rotary clubs, different Rotary groups would say, “We will buy the jackets,” or the caps or the t-shirts or whatever was needed for the workers who would go out to immunize people. So there were so many, many, many different kinds of additional expenses as we moved ahead in merely carrying on the volunteer side of mobilization, to get a whole country mobilized.

When you bought the motorcycles and these kind of essential logistics of actually implementing this program, were you giving that money to the World Health Organization and UNICEF or directly to partners located in the countries receiving?

Normally we would work through the local health departments and what they needed. But it wasn’t just a single type of program. It varied from country to country, what they needed, what kind of help it was possible to just get in and work with the people. There’s many aspects of the program. I know we’ve talked about going into China and they would not take the vaccine. Did we talk about that one? They would not buy it from a western nation. And so we said, “We’ll buy it in China from wherever you make it,” and they says, “There’s nobody that makes polio vaccine in China.” And so we said, “We’ll build a factory, a pharmaceutical plant to do it.” And we actually allocated ten million dollars to do this task and started on the building process. And as soon as we started the building the Chinese says, “Now we know you’re serious and we’ll take it from anywhere in the world.” And we built the building and no polio vaccine was ever made there. But they immunized all the children in China and bought the vaccine from wherever we got it around the world. So there’s all kinds of things that you had to do.

I know we had a committee that would meet, oh, every three or four months that would allocate the funds. The World Health Organization would come to our committee and say, “We need $100,000 for this country. We need 400,000 here. We need here.” And we would look at the programs. We would allocate Rotary funds, judging how much we could give towards each one of those. Sometimes, I know, sitting on the committee it was a difficult thing to sometimes look at what looked like ballooned requests, expanded requests. You’d say, “Isn’t this too large an amount of money?” And then you realize that you’ve got to adjust what you’re doing to the country that you’re working in. If you want to get immunization to happen you’ve got to work on their philosophy and not our philosophy of North America. In some instances, I said, “Aren’t we buying the help of the national health agencies?” They said, “Well, you’ve got to realize that some of these people haven’t been paid for
months and if we want them to work on polio we’ve got to make it possible for them to put some time when they’ve got all kinds of other health problems in their country or have too many other demands, that polio is not their highest demand.” You work within the framework of how people operate in individual countries that differs so much from the way we operate here in North America. And I know some of the members of the committees over the years, as they came in and out of the committee, had difficulty in understanding. They would say, “Well, that’s a bribe, isn’t it?” I said, “No. That’s the way you work to get something done worldwide. You give, you take, and you have to achieve the objective.

And that’s what we’re after, is the objective.” And there would be people that would be injured. Some of the local people would be helping us and sometimes there would be some deaths and injuries. There was a little fund setup, I think it was administered by the Centers for Disease Control, and this was for the families of people who lost a family member working on our program. And I said to them, “If someone was killed, what would you do?” Said, “Sometimes we would give up to $500 to the family.” I said, “That almost sounds like it’s immoral.” They said, “No, there’s places in the world that a person would give up their life if they knew their family could have $500, that they could buy things that they need or perhaps help a child go to school or something.” So we’re dealing in a world situation, not just looking from the eyes of the United States or North America and you're looking into the activities of people that work in their own culture. And this was a big stretch for some of the people that were working on the program.

04-00:23:42
Kim: I can imagine. And it’s interesting because I feel like a theme I’ve seen in your life is that you’re often translating issues or impacts of other communities to—

04-00:23:53
Dochterman: That’s right.

04-00:23:54
Kim: —Rotary. You're very much a translator. How did you do that? How did you get people to understand that?

04-00:23:59
Dochterman: It’s not easy for some people to accept the fact that we are now a world organization. You have to think, try to think in the perspective of these other parts of the world. That’s not easy for some people. It’s kind of a learning prospect, of knowing that if you want to get something done you have to deal in the culture of that particular part of the world. Money is looked at a little differently in North America, in the United States, if the people want to make an allocation, Congress makes an allocation and that’s it. I don’t know where
it comes from. It goes under the debt or something. But in other areas of the world they don’t think necessarily that way. “We just can’t buy it. We can’t pay for it. We know that it’s a horrible disease but that is not our highest priority.” Malaria, measles, tetanus, all kinds of other diseases that we don’t even think about are so prevalent in some parts of the world. Polio, so a child is paralyzed. A child dies. So? But that’s not the way we think and so we think in terms that there’s value to every child, every family. And so as you work on these kinds of committees in a world organization, you just have to kind of learn how to think differently about health and allocations and personal needs and what are the values that the culture has in terms of life, in terms of mortality and that sort of thing.

04-00:26:40
Kim: Are there any particular experiences in your own life that you think made you particularly open to thinking in this way and to being this—

04-00:26:52
Dochterman: No. I don’t necessarily think so. I just think that you probably can gain this as you travel the world, as you see other places, as you see the poverty, as you walk through the poverty streets of certain parts of the world, as you go into Africa and walk through huts and people cooking as they have for generations outside their hut. Or you just begin to see what are their values. They’re living from day to day to day. Our families, kids here and young people, they’re thinking about five years from now I’m going to be in college and I’m going to do this and that and I’m going to be an attorney, a doctor, a fireman, whatever, businessman. But so many parts of the world they’re getting along today not knowing what tomorrow brings, except the same thing. Try to find some water; try to find their food to keep their children from starving. It’s awful easy to say you begin to think internationally but this is basically my belief that people have to learn what global living is and try to understand the poverty that exists and the tremendous wealth that exists in some other parts of the world and the differences in governance, the differences in the way people approach a problem. All different kinds of things that you learn. I remember going into hospitals in certain parts of the world, India, having a canvas, dirty piece of canvas hanging down as the doorway into a ward, with people two to a bed or people all over the place. And it’s just beyond comprehension when we think of, oh, you go to a hospital, you check in emergency and you go in and you’ve got a room. “You mean I can’t get a single room? I have to have a double room?” And these are things that are unheard of in many parts of the world. Or they even have the availability of a hospital anyplace. Thousands and thousands of people without really any kind of healthcare or education. So really the thing is that I think people have to become aware and it’s a learning process of being global thinking.
Kim: Well, I know that you traveled a lot because of PolioPlus and you actually attended several national immunization days. Could you describe either your first or a very memorable one and what they actually looked like when the program was implemented?

Dochterman: Well, try to describe a couple. One was in India and they had a national day of immunization. Well, the whole country had been aware that on this particular day people would get polio vaccine. Streamers across the street, billboards, every conceivable means of announcement. Radio, television, everything says this is the national day of immunization. So I remember my wife and I were taking part in that particular day. And probably about six o’clock in the morning we arrived at the home of the head of the health department, the national health director, whatever his title was. And it was a very important thing. They had television and it’s starting the day with the head of the Indian health department. And then they were bringing in all the kinds of equipment and they were allocating it. It had been spread all over the nation of India in different locations. At a certain time the people would get their vaccines and go out into the neighborhood and look for children. What they would do would be have a little kind, like an ink bottle or something, and when a child got the vaccine they would put a purple mark on their finger so that they would know that that child had received the vaccine. And I forget the exact number. I guess it was 125,000 children were immunized in one day. Maybe it was much more than that. But it was a huge, huge number. We went out and there were people having parades down the streets and they’d have elephants and they’d have animals and they’d have people with loud speakers on motorcycles or on cars and telling them to get their vaccine today and everything. It was an amazing kind of a demonstration. Every place you go this is what they were doing, giving vaccines. And we thought it would never be possible to get India to be polio free. But constant year after year going back, and time and time again, going just down streets and looking for children and getting the parents to bring them out. “Any children in this house? Bring them and we’ll give them polio vaccine.” So it was an amazing kind of a demonstration. Very, very exciting to walk down the street and have different stations. We would give polio vaccines and it would be a part of a visual thing that they could tell the story of Rotary doing this and people from other countries were there to help give vaccines. And they had the whole place mobilized with health workers and youth workers and police, all kinds of groups that were volunteering to provide the vaccine.

Kim: Were local Rotary groups also involved?
Dochterman: Oh, very, very much because they were the ones that were doing much of the promotion, the publicity, and getting people out. Huge banners and things that they would be walking in the streets to get people to go and get your vaccine today.

Kim: And you said that you went with your wife.

Dochterman: Yes.

Kim: Was this Mary Elena?

Dochterman: Mary Elena. She enjoyed doing this, as well. And we often talked about the fact that here’s a person from another country, a stranger handing their baby to you and you holding it and putting a couple drops on their tongue. What faith these people had in these strangers coming to their town. Of course, in certain areas of the world this became a difficulty, largely because of religious concerns, at least the clerics like in some of the Muslim countries, there was the word going, “Oh, they’re going to sterilize your children with this method and don’t let them do it.” And so we would have some occasional, some resistance. But in the process of immunization you say, “Well, maybe you didn’t get every child.” Well, generally speaking, polio is passed from child to child in the broadest sense, because it’s largely through the stool that it’s passed on, and out of the colon tract. And so that’s why they closed swimming pools, various things. So if you have five kids and four of them are immunized, the odds of that fifth one are reduced materially of getting polio. So that’s the theory of immunization to a large extent, is that even though you want to try to get everybody immunized, and the larger the group that is immunized reduces the potential for other children to not be able to spread it or to get the disease. The viruses.

Kim: Going back to your involvement in immunization day in India specifically. As wonderful as they were, I’m sure it was also emotional and could be potentially draining.

Dochterman: Well, yes. There was so much satisfaction when you see Rotarians from all over the world. In some, you can handle the language, some are different. I remember one day I was down in Argentina and we were having a day of immunization. And I sat on a big rock by the side of the road and Rotarians were out rounding up children and they would bring them in, stand in a line, and we’d give the polio vaccine to each of these little youngsters and then
give them a little piece of candy or something, which was the enticement to go get in line, because they’re going to get something at the end. So there were a lot of different kinds of little stunts. I just remember sitting there seeing these youngsters and knowing this child will probably not have to face the horror of paralysis or death or a lifetime of disability because we gave him the vaccine at that time.

I think I told you another story over in Ethiopia, which was one of the huge days of immunization. Ethiopia is one of the poorest countries, if not the poorest country in the world. In Addis Ababa we had a big event, going to be the first national day of immunization in Ethiopia. So we got up early in the morning. Mary Elena and I had flown over there and we were going to be part of this national day of immunization. The United Nations has a headquarters building in Addis Ababa. So we were there in this building and the president of Ethiopia was there, which was a big deal. A lot of TV and radio and everything, commentators. Big crowd of people. And the president was going to give the first doses of polio vaccine. They had about a hundred little children. And we had Rotary polio t-shirts, and gave them to all these little kids, they went down the aisle, looked more like a dress than they did a t-shirt. They all put on their t-shirt and came down in a row and in the front of the auditorium there was the president giving them their polio vaccine. And this was mostly the kickoff of the polio day. The theme was soccer because the idea was kick polio out of Africa and so soccer was the big sport in the area. And then just as the little kids were getting the vaccine from the president, over on the other side of the room was about, maybe, twenty-five, thirty little youngsters, all in crutches, wheelchairs, braces, whatever they could try to stand up and sang a song to the president of their country. Something like, “It’s too late for us but don’t let other children get polio.” And we looked over there and saw these youngsters. And they were all eight, ten, twelve years old. “And do you realize,” I said to my colleagues, a few other Rotarians with me, I said, “that’s why we’re down here in the middle of Africa, in Ethiopia, because there’s kids like that that we’re going to prevent from having to use a walker or a wheelchair or crutches, whatever, steel braces on their legs.” So then we all got in cars and went out into the remote bush country. All over the country this was going on, Rotarians distributing vaccines. And my wife and I, we were carrying these boxes of vaccines, going out into the little huts, kind of muddy area, the occasional rainfalls. Went into this building, a little building. Maybe it was, oh, twenty by twenty, and it had open areas up in the top. No glass windows but some open areas. And they had some logs laying around there and people were sitting on the logs. And we’d go by and each mother had a child or sister, whomever, grandmother brought a child, and they were standing in line outside, but then they’d come in, sit down and you’d give them each one, the polio vaccine. My wife says, “What kind of a building is this?” They said, “Oh, this is our school.” No paper, no blackboards, nothing, no desks, just logs that they were sitting on. Some of the poorest
areas of the world and here we were with all these smiling faces of little kids, hoping that they can have a little brighter life than those that we’d seen earlier in the day that had polio. So those are the kind of experiences that have gone on all over the world. So many, many places that we’ve been part of these national days of immunization.

You had mentioned that some health workers had died in the process of giving the medication. Was there ever times when you were in dangerous places?

No, I never felt I was in any danger at all. However I remember them telling me about was a team of local workers were distributing the vaccine and they had to walk across the stream to get to an area to immunize children in this rather remote area. And they told me they had to carry all the boxes and things over their head as they went through the river. It was getting towards evening and they were going back to their truck or whatever they were in. And one guy was carrying more than he could handle going through the water. He left part of it on one side and came back to get the second bunch of stuff that he was carrying and an alligator grabbed him and bit him in two. And I says, “Well, what did you give to that family?” He said, “I think we gave maybe $500.” That’s the kind of story that they had told me before. And other people in some of the warring areas been shot. Different kinds of dangers. People have distributed this vaccine on the backs of camels, in canoes, in boats, rafts, motorcycles, bicycles, scooters, any way in the world, all over the world, that they could travel to the remote areas of the world to give vaccines. And this, of course, is the great tribute we have to pay to the local health agencies, which really were not enthusiastic at the outset. And they had to overcome a lot of local opposition, not because they didn’t want the vaccine. It’s opposition because of clerics would say not to take the vaccine or perhaps, “We just have other problems. We can’t bother with polio.” And so to see nation after nation become polio free after a period of a year and then normally it takes three years after the last case to be able to declare a nation polio free. And so that is the kind of thing that’s going on still in many parts. But we’re down to just two countries now, Pakistan and Afghanistan. And there you’ve got wars going on and there’s been several people that have been victims in that particular area.

Just to get a timeline sense, ’85 is really when the program picks up again?

Yeah. Eighty-five was when we said, “We’re going to do it.” That’s when Dr. Sabin came and sat down with us and said, “Here’s what you have to do.” So that’s when we got into a high level with the Rotary organization, of saying, “Dr. Sabin said we need $100 million, so we’d better have a goal of 110 or
120 million so that even if we fall short a little bit we’ll be able to carry on the program.” So that was how we got started.

So is it by ’87 you’ve raised the money and then the national immunization days really begin shortly after that?

Yeah. That’s when we became partners with the World Health Organization and got started in high gear of really carrying on the program. And we got this international PolioPlus committee put together and it was led by an outstanding gentleman, Bill Sargent. Bill Sargent, a volunteer, ran the program committee and the allocation of funds and virtually everything else for, it must have been, at least a dozen years. Very, very able guy. His professional position was he was head of security for the development of the atomic bomb. He was a kindly guy but very, very tough. He was not afraid to say, “Look, this request is not appropriate,” or “We cannot give that money for what you want.” Unfortunately he’s passed away now. But I have to give credit to him for running the program from a volunteer standpoint once we got actually involved in nation after nation and the World Health Organization would send a representative to explain each one of the requests from nation to nation of what they wanted. And we would sit there and determine how much money we have that we could give. So those were difficult kinds of meetings but well-handed by an individual.

So these meetings were how you chose which countries were receiving Rotary money when?

The World Health Organization would give us a request about every three months of which country they’re going to work on for national days of immunization and Rotary would allocate $100,000, $200,000, whatever it was, because by this time we were continuing these programs from the initial $240 million. We kept getting more and more programs. And in the last half a dozen years, perhaps, it’s been that the Gates Foundation has put some challenges to Rotary and Rotary has met those challenges, I think, three or four hundred million dollars that the Gates Foundation has challenged Rotary to raise additionally, and we have continued this program now from the eighties when we started the campaign. So it would be thirty years nearly or twenty-five years that we would have carried on the fundraising efforts within the world of Rotary. Because our role of raising money and lobbying, so to speak, encouraging nations to give more and more additional funds for the program to help keep it alive.
And then in addition to just giving the immunization there’s another side of the program and that’s the element of determining when a nation is polio free. Not just the number of cases but you have to do a lot of testing. And this hadn’t been set up to any great extent and the World Health Organization and Centers for Disease Control has done a tremendous job of setting up testing to determine when somebody might have, a child have an illness, to determine whether or not it was polio or something that may have equally serious muscular defects or physical defects. That you have to determine is it the polio virus or is it something else. The testing process is a whole other gamut that had to be developed but this was largely done through the World Health Organization.

So PolioPlus is this giant success in so many ways.

It’s also that first project or program that brings Rotary into this kind of global thinking that you’re talking about.

Yes. Until we got involved in polio we’d never had any, what I would call, a corporate program for the Rotary world. Now we’re working in so many other areas, which all grew out of that original committee we talked about in 1979, of the 3-H committee, and those were health, hunger, and humanity. And so we have so many programs that have developed in clean water and providing clean water and helping nations and helping Rotary clubs develop water supplies and sanitation, improve sanitation, building sanitation toilet blocks in communities and other kinds of clean water projects where the water’s just gone into streams and then they eat or drink the water or then the fish eat the sewage down the stream. But there’s so much in the water and sanitation going on. A lot in food preparation, helping areas develop a better food growth and distribution of various techniques that are necessary. Educational programs, so many, helping Rotary clubs or helping in the development of education.

In my opinion, probably the most needed task in the world is the education of girl children. So many of the problems of the world could be solved if girl children could have the education universally that we have in the western part of the world. But so many places the girl children have little education. So the girl children are largely going to be responsible for the next generation of peacemakers, the next generation of nutrition for their children, for education, for health concerns. All the concerns of society depend upon an educated homemakers. And until we have that universally it’s a great problem, I think,
in the world. People will often ask what I think is one of the greatest needs of the world and my answer is universally education for girl children in places of the world where that doesn’t exist. Maybe two or three years of education, of schooling, or four or five. But really that’s to me a tremendous need in the world.

I think I read somewhere that either when you were vice-president or perhaps director you were very encouraging of education programs through Rotary. Can you tell me a little more about them? Were they international or were they also focused within the United States?

Well, largely my concern is the lack of education in many parts of the world. I know Rotary has been very helpful in some parts of the world in the development of schools, in the development of providing educational resources. Not enough, of course, but I think that there is such a need in education in all of its forms. But Rotary’s educational projects, the ones that we hear more about and we see more readily, are education programs at the college and university level. For years and years Rotary’s provided scholarships for graduate studies in another country and it’s grown since 1947 when we first starting having some. Thirteen, I think it was, the first year, called Ambassadorial Scholars. And now we have thousands of students around the world that are on various Rotary supported scholarships.

We have another program called Peace Scholars. The idea some years ago was that maybe Rotary could have a university. And so the idea just did circles. Every few years was, “Wouldn’t it be great to have a university which Rotary could sponsor which would be emphasized as peace and world understanding?” Well, that went on, that kind of talk, for years and years and years. And then about nineteen ninety maybe seven or eight, the Rotary foundation chairman says, “We’ve been talking about this long enough. Let’s either scrap the idea or do something.” So he appointed me chairman of a committee and we had about six or eight educators, scholars from various universities.

And we got together to discuss what are opportunities in the area of world peace and understanding a Rotary could do? As I met with the committee, I knew that you would just do a lot of talk and nothing would happen. So I outlined a series of options. One at the edge of the scale was a university of peace and goodwill and understanding and negotiation and that type of thing. And then to the other specter of just occasionally have a meeting on the subject. One was where you might have a think tank, an actual group of individuals with great experience and knowledge would meet periodically each year or something and talk about it. Another one, that you might have
just seminars around the world and talk. Another one was have some students, my thought was ten students, at five universities or six universities be selected and they would have an actual curriculum for a master’s degree or some type of a two-year degree program. And a couple other solutions.

After all the debating and everything we finally came on the idea of ten scholars at six universities, I think it was, or five. Five and then they added another because somebody insisted their country be represented. Anyway, there was one in England and France and two in the United States and one in Australia, one in Japan, and one was somewhere else. I forget where it was. And one in Argentina. So these are going now, called the Rotary Peace Scholars, and there are ten of them selected each year. I think it’s ten. I may be wrong in my thinking, now as I think about it. But in any event, each of these universities were highly selected. We put the word out to the educational community. Who would have a program that they would develop? And we had about 110 universities that wanted this program to come, have some students, ten graduate students, fully paid, pretty good background. They’d all have AB degrees to start with or BS degrees. So that’s the program that’s going on.

One of them was at Berkeley and we carried that program on for about four or five years. Then they removed it from Berkeley because it was the most expensive program of the entire group and frankly the university wasn’t that interested in peace and developing a special program for them. And the director of the program retired and so the program didn’t go very far.

Anyway, we’ve got these at various other universities and they are very, very popular. We now have quite a few students. I think I may have been wrong in my numbers because I think we had five at each university but we had two years. So there would be ten in the second year and there would be ten students at each university after the second year or after the first year. So these were great programs and they’re going.

And then we have a short program in Thailand. It’s more of a modified concentrated program. I think it’s six or eight months or something over there. So that’s another area of education in which we got involved. I was glad we could get the idea, something get started because we’d been talking about it so long. When I met with the group, having some options, and they knew that the idea of a university, just start-up costs was phenomenal to start a university of any quality, even to develop a library, to develop a clearinghouse of information and everything, any faculty and administrative staff…It’s just too huge of a task.

Kim: What years was this happening, these meetings where you’re creating these?
I guess I was the incoming trustee, so it would be about 1998, probably about that.


After the presidency. I was the trustee of the Rotary Foundation then and this was after I had been president. The chairman of the trustees asked me if I’d chair this committee to get it going, which I did.

Well, in this case, let’s go back in time a little bit because I know we’ve been speaking a lot about polio, which is the late seventies throughout the eighties until now really. But I know that around that time you’re part of the New Horizons Committee and that one of the main topics, and something that we’ve talked about, even with your wife’s involvement in your trips, is this idea of women becoming part of Rotary.

Yes.

So I was told by Fred Colligan that you had actually quite a strong role in shaping the committee that really started talking about the inclusion of women.

Well, yes. There was some people that were very, very… Rotary, having started in 1905, women just were not involved in the business and professional community. And so it was just the normal practice that Rotary was a men’s organization. And there was other women’s organizations and there was a women’s kind of Rotary auxiliary called the Inner Wheel, which largely was started in England and that sort of thing for the wives and female relatives of Rotarians and still goes in many parts of the world. It started in the 1950s, some proposals that Rotary ought to be considering women. And it would come up to the legislative session of Rotary, which is held every three years. And it’s called the Council on Legislation, in which they would consider and review rules and regulations and policy of Rotary. So that would come up and would be debated a while and then it would be never passed. I guess you have to say it was a group of guys changing their own rules. They just never change very fast.

In the 1980s, there was a Rotary club in Southern California called the Duarte Rotary Club. They admitted a couple women. And so Rotary, because the bylaws say the organization was for male members only, the Rotary Board just naturally had to take the position that they had admitted women, which
was outside the bylaws. So consequently Rotary had to disqualify that Rotary club. So the whole thing went up to the California Supreme Court and the Unruh Act, I think here in California, determined that you could not discriminate in any business activity for reasons of sex or religion and a lot of other things. [public announcement] So the California Supreme Court ruled that Rotary could not discriminate or could not eliminate women from the Rotary club. So in California women could become Rotarians or any other place where the laws prohibited discrimination. So that went all the way to the US Supreme Court and it was upheld because they said that there was enough of an activity that it was a service club but it also had business relationships because people were selected by their business or profession. And that they would often have discussions of business topics or things of other interest, so it was a rational decision. So technically then you could not prohibit women from becoming members. But that didn’t solve the problem. The bylaws of Rotary still had this. And so it had to go to the Council on Legislation. And the Council on Legislation debated it. I remember I spoke rather strongly on the whole issue at the Council on Legislation, on this issue that it was time for Rotary to make a change that women were a vital part of the business, industrial, and service community. And so it was finally approved in, I think it was 1989.

I think the Supreme Court case takes place in 1987. So maybe—

Yeah. It was a couple of years.

—afterwards.

Nineteen eighty-nine the Council on Legislation approved, It’s been twenty-five, twenty-six years now, that Rotary would accept women. So to me that was one of the really great strengths of Rotary to finally make that change. It was not universally accepted in a lot of those countries or where people still hung on to old ideas but by and large it’s been accepted and now we’re approaching, I think, 20 percent of the members. I think that the last I heard of statistics, that there’s probably, out of the 34,000 Rotary clubs of the world, there’s maybe six to seven thousand that do not have women in them, largely in countries where women have not assumed positions in business and professional society. Japan, all of that’s changing rapidly now. In Korea. Some of the Latin American countries. Brazil, Argentina. Well, many of the Latin American countries. But it’s changing all the time and I think it’s just a matter of time till people will never even imagine that it was once a male organization. The subsequent legislation has made it equally open for women. That women who have perhaps left the business or professional world to raise
a family are eligible for the business or profession which they were in, and various other people who are largely volunteers in their community service, volunteer with youth groups and community groups and other groups that are supporting the quality of life of a community. And so there’s a lot more opportunities now and I think we’re seeing good progress happen.

04-01:20:27
Kim: You said you spoke strongly at the committee or at the voting council.

04-01:20:34
Dochterman: Yes, the Council on Legislation.

04-01:20:36
Kim: So what were your driving motivations? What were you seeing? Why did you see it as so important?

04-01:20:40
Dochterman: I just thought the time had come, that you can’t continue to hold on to ideas that no longer exist. That women are taking a larger and larger role in the business and professional life certainly of most countries. Japan, up until recent years, was not nearly as open for women opportunities. But I just felt that now is the time. The time had come. And that these are things that should be happening, that women contribute so much, probably a lot more than many men do to the life and the professional life of the society. Lot of changes have happened to the organization since women have come into the organization. I facetiously said on many occasions I have been in Rotary maybe thirty years and until women came into Rotary I never saw on an agenda of a conference planning committee “table decorations.” [laughter] Plus the fact that the women, they get things done. You say, “Oh, Charlie, oh, he’ll get it done in a couple of weeks.” But women said, “Give it to Jane and she’ll have it done tomorrow.” [laughter]

04-01:22:40
Kim: Well, I know in your speech, Rotary Members Growth, you mentioned that people need to have what you call informational sessions or even start new clubs if clubs are hostile to including women.

04-01:22:52
Dochterman: Yes.

04-01:22:53
Kim: Can you tell me a little bit more. Two questions really and you can answer them however you’d like. So the first is did you have any informational sessions with other Rotarians where you really felt you had to explain to them the need for Rotary clubs to accept women?
Dochterman: Well, yes, I did. When I was president there would be opportunities to speak to Rotary clubs. In a lot of my talks I talked about the opportunities of bringing women leaders of your community to strengthen your Rotary club. And I had a few Rotary Clubs that said, “Our club does not take in women. We do not permit women to join our club.” And I know that I would write back to them, this was before email and everything. I would write back to them, said, “I’m sorry that you wrote to me that you prohibit women. If you prohibit women I have only one option. We have changed our bylaws and I must now declare your club to be out of Rotary. If you do not take in women merely because there are no women in your community eligible or some other reason, I can understand because we do not insist that you have women. But you cannot prohibit women.” They quickly changed their tune a bit on that. I never removed a club because that was the role that I personally would take, is that if they, by their own club bylaws, prohibited women, I said, “That’s against the new rules of Rotary.” So I felt that I had to support this program because I believed in it.

Kim: And you were president at this time when you were writing these letters?

Dochterman: Yes, I was president when I would take this kind of action.

Kim: Were any new clubs started because—

Dochterman: Well, one of the things in the legislation, because in order to get this thing passed at the outset, we had to put a phrase which I think went something like, “The admission of women does not prohibit a single gender Rotary club,” because most of the men said, “Okay. My club, we can still get by if we don’t have any women in it.” But what they didn’t realize, that shortly after that we began to have all women’s clubs develop, particularly in Japan and several areas in the Far East, where they just had not been used to having women. Those clubs, many of them, are very old. The adoration of the aged was so important in some of those clubs that, the men were getting old, and that’s what they did and they didn’t change easily. So we made that accommodation. But they never thought that there could be created an all women’s club. And many of those now have merged. But it was a difficult time because you’re changing people’s thinking, thinking that they had had for seventy-five years. So you have to just understand a little bit that thinking that was going on in their minds. There were a lot of Rotarians that said, “Oh, you bring women into the Rotary and I’m out of this club.” And some of them dropped out. I remember one club told me one of their members immediately dropped out at Rotary because they were going to admit women. And a few months later he
showed up at the club again. And he says, “Why are you here?” He says, “Oh, I belong to a neighboring Rotary club.” And they says, “Well, don’t they have women in that club?” He says, “Yes, they do and it’s pretty nice.” [laughter] And I remember another story told about chartering a new Rotary club. When they charter a club there’s about thirty, forty members. Each of them stood up and said a few words. And about half men and half women in the new club. A girl stands up and she says, “My father was a Rotarian and I’m so pleased to be a Rotarian.” She says, “My father used to take my brother and me to the Rotary Christmas party and we’d go to the Rotary park and do all these things. As a girl, my brother and I had so much fun in Rotary. And my father, who’s long passed away, would be so pleased to know that one of his children is now in Rotary. But he’d be absolutely appalled to know which one.” [laughter]

Kim: What was the opposition to having women? What were some of the arguments that those who were opposed had?

Dochterman: Well, it’s just that we’ve always done it this way. That’s the main thing. We have always done it this way and why change. In many cultures, there was such a difference. Particularly, Japan, I would say, was one, was a good illustration. A lot of other countries, too. Where the women took a different role in society, not as a professional, but as the housekeeper. And so consequently the members just thought, “Well, that’s not Rotary. Rotary is businessmen.”

Kim: But I know that both your first and your second wife were active—

Dochterman: Both.

Kim: —and incredibly supportive—

Dochterman: They were.

Kim: —of Rotary. So what was their roles before? Did Mary Elena end up joining later on?

Dochterman: [sneezes] Excuse me.

Kim: And even before you answer that question, what was their role before?
My first wife was very, very supportive. Dorothy. She would go with me to all the Rotary events and she traveled with me when I was district governor. They respected her as the first lady of the Rotary district. She was a very outgoing person, very fun-loving. And she helped mold the women together that were there at these meetings and everything. Took a very active role. I know she spoke at one of the international conventions on the role of women, how we can be supportive. She wrote a little booklet, *So Your Husband is a Rotarian*, of what things the wives can do to be supportive of Rotary. So she was very much involved in Rotary. She knew she was dying. She was in the hospital one night and she said to me, she said, “I’ve only had one regret.” She said, “I always thought that someday Rotary might select you to be the world president but they won’t do it now because they’ve never had a president without a wife. So you go out and get married again real quickly so Rotary might select you to be their president.” That was her spirit. She enjoyed Rotary. Everybody knew her and enjoyed her, too. I told her that was not even a slight condition of my thinking and not one of my priorities.

However, that was a subject that did come up when I was selected to be the world president. “You can’t pick him. He doesn’t have a wife. We’ve never had a Rotary president that doesn’t have a first lady.” And one of the people on the committee said, “Does a person have to be penalized twice for something that they didn’t have any cause of?” And they said, “You’re right. Let’s vote.” So that was the thinking of Rotary. A great deal was that the wife was standing by the side of the Rotarian. Well, I was a widower, as a matter of fact, my whole term as president. I, of course, was alone. And my daughter traveled with me. That’s why I gave you the phone number of my daughter, Claudia, because she traveled with me a great deal when I was president and did all the social things that the first ladies would normally do.

So what are those rules? What is the first lady supposed to do?

Well, at that time the first lady would always put a tea on for all the women who were wives of the district governors. They would always help to be there to greet people and see that the social things are done when you have a banquet. Help select the menus and all the kinds of things that are helpful. The spouse would try to make the president look good. A guy doesn’t know that it’s really the women that make you look good. You can’t do it on your own. But in any event, my daughter, she was a high school teacher. She took a leave of absence for the year and traveled a great deal. Not all the time but when I would take overseas trips and there would be social things for her to do and visiting some of the heads of state and other things that she would enjoy doing.
Then, when I finished my term as president, Stan McCaffrey here in Moraga, we’d been associates for years, fifty years we’d been friends, he said, “We have this lady we’d like for you to meet.” I said, “I don’t have time to meet women. I’m saving the world.” He says, “Well, when you finish saving the world we’ll introduce you.” So we went out on a blind date one night with Stan and his wife. That is how I met Mary Elena.

04-01:35:20
Kim: What was your first impression of her? Were you open to starting a relationship?

04-01:35:23
Dochterman: I was not really involved in thinking of anything serious, just a little friendship. But after a year we decided that we might as well enjoy each other’s lives together. And we had twenty years then together. She died three years ago yesterday. So that was a great period in our lives. I remember the first time we went out. I asked her, “Do you know anything about Rotary?” She says, “No, not really.” And so the second time we went to dinner I gave her a book called The ABC’s of Rotary and she opened it and saw that I had written it, so she thought she’d better read it. Then she realized that her brother had been a Rotarian for a number of years, twenty years, I guess, and she became interested. Finally somebody had asked her from a neighboring Rotary club, “Would she join their Rotary club?” And I said, “Well, if you’re going to join any Rotary Club, you’ll join mine. We can’t spread our energies and our money towards two different programs.” So she joined the Moraga Rotary Club and subsequently became president of the club in Moraga here. And then she took a great interest in travel. She was very much interested in the polio program and did a lot of things with me around the world. I was a trustee then for six years and eventually Chairman of the Rotary Foundation Trustees. And so she really was a very outgoing person and helped rally the Trustees’ wives and took care of the wives activities when I was on the board of trustees. She got very much involved and subsequently received one of Rotary’s special honors, called the Rotary Service Above Self Award. The Rotary Service Above Self Award. She was very much involved in Rotary and enjoyed it and took a big interest in traveling to all the international conventions and special events.

04-01:38:30
Kim: And she was able to be a Rotarian. Because Dorothy was also incredibly involved. She wrote a book. So did you see that once Mary Elena was allowed to be a Rotarian, that it was a little bit different?

04-01:38:48
Dochterman: Oh, it was a little bit different. Dorothy, at that time, she never even thought about being a Rotarian. She just thought that she was as much a Rotarian as anybody because she was actively involved with me and we did everything
together. So she and our kids, we were involved in every kind of Rotary activity. Yeah.

Kim: When I was reading back through our past interview, you talk a lot about Rotary is family. We ended our last interview talking about balance and striking a balance between your responsibilities. But it does seem like you were able to really incorporate your family, both your wives, into Rotary.

Dochterman: Because they became interested. Everybody has their levels of priority interest. Some people are deeply involved in their church, in their church activities. Others are involved in the country club or others are just totally entwined into their profession. And some people don’t do anything, ever give an inch of their time or energy. But by and large my thinking was that we will be involved together of the things that we like to do. I took a great interest in all my kids’ activities and I brought them into the Rotary experience, too. Everybody knew them and would be glad to see them. When we’d go to conferences and things we’d take them with us a lot of the times.

Kim: So I know in the same speech that I mentioned earlier, going back to just this kind of making Rotary more inclusive, which I know you played a big role in, in that same speech you said about looking to the future to also include ethnic communities and making sure that they were a part of Rotary. Was that something that you saw or have seen roll out or is it still something that is slowly happening?

Dochterman: I think I see more and more of it happening. I think I have to recognize that in the earliest days of Rotary, Rotary was probably far more selective in terms of the executive level of the membership than they are today. A person would not just sell cars, they’d have to own the distributorship generally. That little bit of difference, that it would be the owner of the company, not just an employee. And so there was consequently fewer opportunities for women to get into Rotary in that particular sense. So it was pretty natural that there wasn’t that part of the equation that we have today. It’s changed substantially now.

Kim: Do you find that Rotary Clubs now have an investment or a goal to be diverse, to include women and people of color?

Dochterman: Yes. As of yesterday, a biggest change that would come, I would say, is that we have the second African person selected to be the world president of Rotary. He comes from Uganda. And Sam Owori, good friend of mine, was
selected to be the president two years from now. They select them two years in advance. So that just happened. That’ll be for the 2018-19 year. We had more and more ethnic groups involved. We’ve had presidents from Japan, Thailand, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, Taipei, and we’ve had presidents from India.

[coughs] Excuse me.

Kim: Within clubs in the United States, they’re so locally based. Is there diversity within clubs? Not so much internationally but within?

Dochterman: We’re trying to bring this about. Some areas have developed separate clubs. Down in Salinas, for example, there’s a Rotary Club that are all Spanish speaking. We have another Rotary club here in the area, they’re Chinese speaking Rotarians in Chinatown, although I think they conduct their meeting in English. It’s all Chinese heritage. There’s a Korean Rotary club in the Bay Area, too. And this happens in some places. But more and more clubs are open, quite openly selective across the border. Religion, cultural basis. Well, Rotary does prohibit discrimination because of sex and—

Kim: Race and ethnicity.

Dochterman: —ethnicity. For any religious, racial. Same way with sexual orientation. Our bylaws prohibit any kind of real discrimination. We’ve had trouble, sometimes the clubs, of bringing in people from different orientations. But there’s, to the best of my knowledge, virtually no real overt discrimination by any club that I would know because Rotarians are just taught to abide by the fact that we’re an open organization.

Kim: Open and your mission is towards peace. And I imagine that that peace is both within nation and outside amongst nations. This is just kind of more of a logistical—.

It’s interesting. Initially, that there’s women groups, right, all women groups happen and then you’re telling me that also there’s also, in Salinas, a group that does all their meetings in Spanish and then in Chinatown. So these different groups, and I guess this is more of a structural question about Rotary club, do different clubs interact with each other? I know the district governor is—

Dochterman: Oh, yeah. The only reason there’s a group that’s largely Spanish is because it’s in a section of town that everybody there are Spanish speaking or heritage.
Many of them are young people, businessmen and women who are the second generation out of the fieldworkers. And I remember going down. They asked me to come down one day, one evening, and just talk to them about Rotary in the world and everything because they were just a new group. Virtually every one of them told me that as children they worked in the fields alongside their parents and everything and here now they have a whole generation and then their children will be two generations removed from the fields, into the business world of that part of Salinas. Most of these are mainly the groups that find a greater satisfaction working in their particular area. We have Rotary clubs in China, mainland China, in which no Chinese can belong because the government does not permit them. But the members of the Rotary clubs are nationals from all the other countries that live there or have business and professions there in China and so they have organized into Rotary clubs. So there’s various variations around the world. I don’t know of any club that overtly would discriminate against a person just because of some racial or nationality or whatever the differences might be. Most clubs are looking forward to involving people of other races in their club just to have a little more balance and recognition of the racial makeup of their community.

And I know we’re coming to our end of our session today so we won’t get to jump into your presidency. So just to wrap it up in terms of what we’ve been talking about. What do you think is the future of Rotary now? We’ve been talking about the great changes that really happened when you're actively involved in the leadership, both with the international turn, the inclusion of women, and this kind of new goal to include people of all races, ethnicities, creeds. So that’s already a big movement. But now in 2016, I know you’re still involved, where do you think the future is of Rotary? What are some changes that you hope for or see?

Well, I’m seeing some changes. There were some changes made at our last Council on Legislation last April. That’s held every three years. The loosening—that may not be the right word. The expanding of the base of Rotary to people. As we used to say, the member must be the proprietor, owner of the business or a primary manager or something of that executive nature. But, now Rotary rules are a little less stringent, men and women who are active citizens of their community and volunteer work and community leadership and this type of thing. I see Rotary does not have nearly the requirement of regular meetings. People would go to any length not to miss a meeting. Once a week they would go and take great pride in 100% attendance. I know myself personally, I have fifty-eight years that I have not missed a week of going to a Rotary club meeting. Now, that used to be a matter of great pride and recognition. But it’s no longer the case because business is different today. People don’t have the freedom of, “I’ll be back in a couple hours,” after
lunch or whenever it is. The demands of business and profession, of the electronic world, “We need an answer in thirty seconds. Yes or no? Are you going to buy or not buy?” Whatever it is, people are in constant demand by their phones and electronic communications. You can’t get away from it. And consequently people are having more difficulty keeping up kind of records of attendance or going each week. And Rotary’s loosening these requirements considerably that used to be the things that people would live and die on. My gosh, people would get out of the hospital so they could go to the Rotary meeting and keep their record of attendance going and all that kind of stuff. I see Rotary, as we come to the conclusion of the polio program, Rotary’s going to be probably embarked in something major because we have such a heavy network now and many, many, many humanitarian groups around the world are asking Rotary to be their partners in undertaking their mission because they see that when Rotary made a commitment we stuck with that commitment. I don’t know what the next project will be, or there probably won’t be a single project. My guess is that there’ll probably be a number of projects that Rotary will take on. Water. Sanitation. Food. Hunger. Education. All of these are things, with a dozen diseases that people want support on for their eradication. So I think that Rotary has a tremendous future. It’s going to be changed from a lot of what the old-timers thought were the Bible of Rotary. I think this will change into a much more flexible kind of an organization and that people won’t feel they have to go to a meeting every week. I’m not so sure yet whether these will be positive changes or not because the discipline of Rotary commitment and the commitment to Rotary as a regular weekly activity is a very, very significant thing in the past and whether or not people will have that same commitment with lesser demands, it’s a big question and probably it’ll take us ten or fifteen years to see whether it will lessen the significance of Rotary service or perhaps strengthened it. We don’t know yet.

Kim: Thank you.
Interview 5: August 24, 2016

Kim: Hello. This is Cristina Kim and I’m here interviewing Cliff Dochterman. This is our fifth interview. Today is August 24, 2016 and we’re here in Moraga, California. So, Cliff, as we were just discussing, today I was hoping we could really delve in and you could tell me about becoming Rotary International president, or the president of Rotary International. I know that you served from 1991 to ’92. Is that correct?

Dochterman: Ninety-two to ninety-three.

Kim: Ninety-two to ninety-three. But ’91 is when you first get elected, because there’s two years of preparation?

Dochterman: Yes, yes. There’s a couple years. You’re correct.

Kim: I wanted to hear just exactly what that preparation entails.

Dochterman: Okay. Well, let me say just a word about how one becomes the president of Rotary International. It’s something that I never had the slightest thought that I would ever become when I joined Rotary International in 1958, to go to the top position in the world for this worldwide organization. In any event, after you serve at various steps, as a club president, then a district governor, and then on many committees, and then the possibility you might be selected to the international board of directors, which is made up of seventeen people selected from all over the world. They rotate the geographic locations of where they come from. In any event, the idea of becoming president, you have to have a term, as a director of Rotary International, which I did in the 1980s, ’83 to ’85. And in ’84-85, as one of the directors that’s selected, to be named the vice president of Rotary. Just in case something happened to the president, the vice president would move in into that position. But it’s not a normal rotation into the presidency, being vice president. In any event, the nominating committee meets each year and selects the president. There is a rather complex process of how the nominating committee is selected, by voting of people geographically and that type of thing. In any event, the nominating committee meets and they go over many times dozens of names of people who have been directors of Rotary International and finally come to the selection.

I might mention just a little background going up to this point. When my wife, who had traveled with me as a director of Rotary International, we went to
many parts of the world and she was very, very interested and active. This was my first wife, Dorothy. And she loved Rotary. But this was before women became members of Rotary. She was dying of cancer and I remember in the hospital one night she said to me, “One of my biggest disappointments is that I thought someday Rotary would select you to be the world president. But they’ve never had a president that didn’t have a wife. So you go out and get married again real quickly so Rotary might select you to be the next president some year.” I said, “That’s the furthest thing from my imagination, of getting remarried or being selected President of Rotary.”

In any event, when the nominating committee met, that was one of the first questions that came up, is how can you be a president of Rotary because you don’t have a first lady? And there happened to be one of the members of the committee from England who stepped forward and said, “A person should not have to be penalized twice for something that they had no cause to be involved,” and they said, “You’re right, let’s just go ahead and vote.” So I was the first president without a spouse and so my daughter Claudia traveled with me a great deal when there were social occasions, she took a leave of absence from her school, she was a high school teacher, from her school, and she traveled with me many, many, many parts of the world and did the things, the social things that the women used to do in the Rotary world.

In any event, you’re selected a little over a year in advance and the nominating committee announces the nomination. And then there’s a period of time, several months, in which the Rotary clubs of the world may oppose the nomination if they wish to do so. And if enough object to the choice of the nominating committee then they take it to a vote of the membership, which would be by Rotary clubs. So you pass that period of time and then they declare you’re the President of Rotary International.

So at that point is there any bit of campaigning that’s going on so that people from different clubs know who you are?

No. Basically Rotary avoids campaigning. They accept the nomination and that is the candidate. Sometimes there are other people who have, over the years, certainly indicated they would like to have that position. But basically Rotary’s policy is that you should not have a campaign itself. So you start out just getting different ideas and you start going to the meetings of the board of directors. You sit on, as they call it, the back bench. You don’t have anything to say because you’re not technically a member of the board. But you sit in all the meetings and join in the discussions and this sort of thing.
The headquarters of Rotary International is in Evanston, Illinois. Now they have an apartment for the president-elect, as well as the president there. At the time that I was president they did not have an apartment for the president-elect. So I had a closet in the headquarters building I kept my suitcases, but stayed in a nearby hotel. And you begin to see and develop ideas that you would like to see implemented. You become aware of details. You travel a great deal just meeting Rotarians, talking with them, looking for people that you would like to appoint to key committees. It’s a real orientation process for a year, year-and-a-half before you actually assume the duties. You go to conventions, to a lot of regional meetings to meet the leaders of Rotary in different parts of the world.

Of course, by the time the nominating committee actually selects you, you’ve been awfully deeply involved in the integral acts of Rotary itself, serving on many committees, meeting people from all over the world, because part of the nominating committee is just how well is this person known. Can they fulfill the responsibilities? Is their health sufficiently strong to go the rigors of day to day activity when you become the president of Rotary? So those were all kinds of things that I would be working on in that year-and-a-half in advance.

Were there other potential candidates in case, for example, you proved not to be well known enough or there was any opposition?

Oh, yeah. There were a number of people that were very, very strong candidates. I had a number of very good friends. One of the selection processes, or traditions, is after the committee meets to make their selection, then they call the individual and each member of the committee, the seventeen people all speak to the nominee and wish them good luck and success and that sort of thing. So two of my very closest friends, either one could have easily have been selected to be the president. One of them told me later, he said, “I was looking forward to getting the phone call.” And he said, “I was in my condo in Hawaii and I thought maybe they couldn’t find me.” [laughter] So he said, “I called another friend who was also a candidate in Texas and I said, ‘Have you heard anything?’ and all he said was, ‘I wasn’t selected and neither were you,’ and he hung up.” [laughter] But he said, “I called to congratulate you because we’ve been such close friends for so many years. It’s a pretty selective spot to be selected the world president of an organization with a 1,200,000 members in 200 countries of the world. It is a rather choice position for anybody to be given this opportunity.

So you prepare a lot of things. You start working on themes, a theme that you would like to emphasize. I finally decided a theme that I would have would be
“real happiness is helping others,” because this is the essence of Rotary. It’s helping other people. Service. Service to others. And so I had thought so many things about my own life, about working with young people on a college campus and the happiness you have as an administrator to be able to help somebody that really needs it. And helping another person is some of the greatest satisfaction you can have. And so many places that I had worked on humanitarian projects over the years, I realize that so much comes back to the individual when you give of yourself, when you give your life, your resources, your time, your energy to others. So much comes back and your life becomes so much more beneficial, rewarding, satisfactory. So that was the theme that I picked and then the governors, those would be the local regional governors from all over the world, when they meet for their training program, called the International Assembly, the president picks a jacket and they all get a jacket. Well, I picked a red coat and a lot of people thought, “That is going to be an awful thing. Who’s going to wear a red coat?” I picked that because it demonstrates the theme that I was trying to emphasize, that in many cultures of the world red is a happy color. You wrap a gift in something red. Red is a symbol of happiness and excitement and joy and pleasure and so I thought the red coat represented the happiness which comes from service. Well, it turned out that everybody finally really was totally enthusiastic about these red jackets because the jacket itself is a unifying thing, a uniform, a band, a military unit. Any kind of a team they wear uniforms because it molds the group together, and that’s the only value of having this jacket idea. And so it really did mold, in the group called the “red coats,” then for years after became a very close-knit group of leaders that have kept in touch with me for all these years since that time. So that’s kind of the build-up you have.

Then you have a training session and you outline some of the special goals and things that you would like to do. Some years they have a lot of new things. I was just emphasizing some of the things that Rotary had that were very well-known and trying to strengthen some of the programs without introducing anything really new.

05-00:16:22
Kim: So all of this is done even before you become president?

05-00:16:25
Dochterman: Yes, before you become president.

05-00:16:27
Kim: So when they finally nominate you, that’s when you create your theme and you choose the jacket color, because the jacket has always been tradition.

05-00:16:31
Dochterman: Jacket and set some of your plans and committees and you start building your travel schedule, which is unbelievable. Well, I was gone from home every day
for that year except four or five days. I was home four days for Christmas and one day to see my tax attorney. Other than that I was in Evanston or traveling around the world.

Kim:

I wonder if we can go back—[public announcement] I wonder if we can go back a little bit. There’s all these other candidates, some of them are your good friends. What do you think it was about you or the actions you took that made you the successful candidate?

Dochterman:

Well, this, of course, seems a little presumptuous, I guess, but that I had been given many opportunities in the world of Rotary to serve, chairing so many of the committees of Rotary, knowing so many people around the world. I was well known. I had been a speaker and people had called on me time and time or all over the world to come and speak. And I just had an awful lot of high visibility in the world of Rotary. And I think the committee had recognized this that I would bring a new enthusiasm to the organization in my skills speaking, in my skills as planning and directing activities. It could have been easily just passed on because there’s so many good people, leaders in every phase of life. And a lot of it is just sheer luck, that the membership of the committee was well aware of you as an individual. The actual committee is seventeen people. And before they can actually make a decision there has to be a majority of ten, a minimum of ten people that have to agree. Sometimes the committees has spent two days debating candidates and going back and forth and eliminating people for simple little thoughts and ideas. I don’t know. I know that I was selected in about the first hour of the committee meeting. And it was the only time I’d ever applied, put my name in as a possible candidate because I was retiring from the university and would have the time. I retired on a Friday night at the University of the Pacific and Monday morning I got the call that I’d been selected the world president. Very short retirement because I worked harder after that than I probably did when I was on a payroll.

Kim:

I know you mentioned that you not having a wife at the time was seen as a possible kind of—you couldn’t be president because you didn’t have a wife. How much were you feeling that, even in the campaign process? Because I know I spoke to your son and he described Dorothy as—and I really like this—part Roseanne Barr, part Margaret Thatcher. She was the life of the party, just really able to be a friend of everyone.

Dochterman:

Yeah, she was. Well, everybody knew Dorothy in the world of Rotary because I’d been a director and we’d traveled many, many, many places. I’d been so involved in conventions, in meetings, and everybody knew her. It’d have been
fabulous if she were still alive and could have traveled with me. She would have had a wonderful time. Conversely, Mary Elena, when I was married after I finished the presidency, if she could have been my wife at that time because she did travel with me as a trustee for six years. She didn’t know a stranger. She enjoyed every minute traveling around the world. So I was so fortunate having two fabulous marriages. But Dorothy was very outgoing. It was disappointing knowing that she wasn’t there. She died in 1987, so this was four years, five years afterwards. And the loss had pretty well settled in by that time. And I was living the life of a widower.

Kim: But was it difficult to campaign without a partner by your side?

Dochterman: Well, we didn’t really campaign. We just presented our background and let the committee pick and choose from that point. But the fact is that everybody knew her, everybody knew me. At least the people that were on the committee had told me it wasn’t too difficult a selection.

Kim: Do you remember how you felt when you got that call right after you retired? Where you were, how you felt?

Dochterman: Well, I had mentioned before my friend Bill Ives. Bill Ives was a great friend. And he said, “When you retire come on back to Michigan.” He lived in Detroit. And Bill says, “Come on back and spend a week or two at our summer cottage with us.” And so I retired on a Friday. I think it was Sunday I flew back to Detroit and we went to their cottage. And so we were sitting there right after breakfast and all of a sudden we get the phone call. I had frankly forgotten that that was the day the committee was meeting. And they had tracked me down. My office knew where I was going to be. And so the phone calls started calling. All seventeen people talked to me at that point. And Bill’s wife, Mary Louise, she had a tablet there, writing down who all called. And I think by the end of the day there had been maybe seventy-five people that had called me from all over the world with congratulations. The word gets around very fast in the Rotary circles. So then we talked a little bit about it. And the president always selects an aide. The aide, relating largely to the need of the individual presidents, do a lot of special things and sometimes travels with the president, helps at big conventions and other kinds of things. And so I finally said to Bill, “Well, would you folks be willing to be my aide for the year?” And Mary Louise says, “We thought you’d never get around to asking us.” [laughter] So they were such great friends and so they were my aide and they traveled with me for a number of trips and just helped at various meetings and things like that, where the president is kind of under constant
demand to do things. So they were my greatest friends to help me during that year.

Kim: Do you have any very memorable memories with them where they were crucial in helping you navigate a meeting or just your time?

Dochterman: Oh, yeah. I remember at the international convention the president and the president-elect have offices because there’s dozens of people that want to see them and talk to them. My predecessor did not seem too enthusiastic about having visitors in his office. He was the president, of course. And so Bill Ives said, “Gee, nobody’s coming to see you.” And he goes out and checks and he sees that they had blocked off the hallway because the president didn’t want to be bothered. And Bill says, “Anybody who wants to see the president-elect can come right now.” We had a string of people that was constantly coming in and Bill was a tremendous help in helping us just plan things, do things. After the international convention that I planned, which was held down in Melbourne, Australia, Bill, Mary Louise, and Claudia and I, we took a trip on the return to the U.S. It was for about three weeks through Europe, of some of the countries that I had not had a chance to visit in Eastern Europe. And we went through a lot of different places that we kind of wanted to go and see.

Kim: My understanding is that the international convention in Melbourne was kind of at the tail end of your presidency. Is that correct?

Dochterman: Oh, yeah. The convention is normally in the month of June. The Rotary year is July 1st to June 30th. The international convention kind of culminates the year and then the new president is basically introduced.

Kim: So before we talk about that, because I think we should definitely jump into what happens next. You name Bill Ives as your aide. You are in this cabin retreat right outside of Detroit. But I’m sure all of a sudden things are set in motion and you’re expected to just jump right in.

Dochterman: Yeah.

Kim: So what happened afterwards? Did you have to move to Evanston?

Dochterman: At that time they did not have an apartment for the president-elect, so I would go to Evanston for two, three weeks at a time. And they have an office there, an associate that works just with the president-elect. And you have an office
and you have access to the whole staff. Staff at that time was probably seven, eight hundred people there in the world headquarters. And you start working on your ideas and you start working with the publication, the monthly publication about introductory edition of the Rotarian magazine that comes out during the beginning of your year. And then you have an editorial each month and you start working on those types of things. You start working on calendars, of places that you’re going to visit. I set up a series, I believe it was sixteen meetings around the world, to emphasize different programs of Rotary. One would be youth exchange programs. One would be the Rotary Foundation. Another would be vocational service activities. There would be programs on the Rotary Foundation, on Interact, which is the high school program and Rotaract, and all the different programs of Rotary. I tried to set up meetings in different parts of the world where that would be the primary emphasis, and give recognition to some of the leaders. Normally the meeting would be at a place where the program may have initiated or had some special relationship. And so I was beginning to set up who we call on in these parts of the world to be the chairman of that particular planning committee, talking with the board members of what kind of things they want to emphasize or to do.

And then you figure out what parts of the world do you want to visit, where are places where the president has not recently visited. There are certain places you go every year, the big cities, but there are a lot of areas of the world where I wanted to visit to give them a feeling that the president of Rotary International respects their part of the world. And you just go to a lot of little countries. So you start working with the travel service of places that you’re thinking about and how these schedules could be worked out, travel from one place to another.

And then you have your board meetings. Board meets four times a year. Just dozens of committees that come to Evanston. And you don’t meet with all of them, unless you can. You often greet the people and give some ideas and thoughts to the committee and let them come up with their own thoughts, with their own report. The magnitude of this organization as a world organization is almost beyond conception. When you have to think in terms of cultures, of languages, you have to think of national days of celebration, whether you’re interfering with some religious period visiting a country or something like that. All these things go into the process and all the time I was constantly thinking of things, of speeches that are worthwhile. How do you motivate people, particularly if you’re not speaking in their language, so that it can be interpreted reasonably well and they can get the message.

Another responsibility is each district, and there’s now 530 of these districts, each of them have an annual district conference. And the president of Rotary sends a representative. The president can’t attend them all or can’t attend any
of them really. But he picks a person in the world to go to each one of these 530 different conferences. Sometimes they just turn it over to an aide or somebody to make those selections. But my theory was I wanted, if they were going to represent me, somebody that I felt could do a very, very significant job, particularly having capability of representing me in the language which is the native language of the people. So to find somebody that would go to a couple of conferences in Japan who speaks Japanese or Korean or German or Portuguese, trying to find a leader who has something to say who can say it was a difficult thing. But I spent an awful lot of time trying to make those representations. You have to ask the people for suggestions and advice.

And at the same time you’re building these committees. There probably are fifty different committees you build. Some are continuing committees and some you have to rebuild each year. So there’s just a lot of little detail.

I remember one day a group of the staff was meeting. I said, “You get so many visitors here at the world headquarters. Every day there’s people coming there and they all want to come up to the president’s office and sit at the president’s desk or something, get tours around the building.” I said, “Do you give the people anything?” “Oh,” they said, “sometimes we have a little button we give them to pin on their jacket or we give them a little miniature banner or something.” I said, “But don’t we have any Rotary literature to give? Something that tells the story of Rotary.” They says, “Well, everything we have has been written by the legal department and nobody could understand it.”

Then the editor of the Rotarian magazine said to me, he says, “When you were in Stockton you used to write a little article every week for your Rotary club newsletter.” I said, “Yeah, for our bulletin, something about Rotary.” He says, “Do you have those?” And I said, “Well, I’m sure my secretary has them.” So I called back and she says, “Oh, I’ll send you a copy of all those articles you wrote.” And so I gave them to the editor of the magazine. And two or three weeks later he comes back in my office and he says, “Well, here they are.” I said, “What’s that?” He had a couple of big boxes. He said, “They’re the ABCs of Rotary.” I said, “What’s that?” He said, “What you wrote, we put it into a book. We collected about eighty or ninety little paragraphs, stories that you had written for your Rotary club newsletter in Stockton and we put them into a book called The ABCs of Rotary.” And I said, “How many do you have?” He said, “Well, we had to print a thousand to get started.” And I said, “I don’t know what we’ll do with a thousand.” Well, people started getting copies when they’d come in and then they’d write back, “Can you send us fifty copies? Can you send us twenty-five copies?” And pretty soon a friend of mine in Mexico City says, “Well, we’ve translated the ABCs into Spanish,” and another friend in Paris said, “We now have a French version of the ABCs.” And one after another, in Portuguese, in Japanese, I’ve now seen that little booklet, The ABCs of Rotary, and it’s gone through dozens of remakes. I’ve
seen, I think, twenty-three or four different languages. People have sent me copies of it.

05-00:39:54
Kim: I’ll admit, I’ve also read it.

05-00:39:58
Dochterman: Yeah? Have you read the ABCs?

05-00:39:58
Kim: I did. I found it.

05-00:40:00
Dochterman: In any event, I remember a friend in Russia sent me a copy. He was an English professor at a Russian university and I had known him. He was here on a scholarship, or Fulbright scholar for a year or two and I had gotten acquainted with him. So he took the book back and he sent me a copy of the Russian version. And he said, “Check my accuracy of my translation.” And then I’ve seen some of them in various kinds of languages that I couldn’t even imagine what they were. But there’s dozens and dozens of editions now. That was an interesting little book. It’s probably the largest selling book Rotary has now.

05-00:40:54
Kim: And it’s so interesting. I was going to ask how your time in Stockton and Berkeley had prepared you for this presidential role. Because right when you’re talking about everybody wanting to come into the president’s office, I’m reminded of when you were the vice-president of Stockton, everybody was sent to your office and you made sure you spoke to people. And, again, with the thought of like give them literature. You’re so mission driven. But I really see how your skills translate. Your son called you an activator when I talked to him. So you make things happen. First of all, just to put this on the record, he’s adamant that you would downplay your role in PolioPlus. He says that you were the activator, that people were pretty much sitting around the dining room table drinking cocktails, being like, “Let’s eradicate polio.” And that’s all great ideas, everybody’s a great thinker, but that you were the person that really set things in motion.

05-00:41:53
Dochterman: Yeah. Well, I’ve always had the attitude you can do just about anything in the world if you’re not doing it for personal credit. If there’s a good thing to be done, you can do it. But if you do it for the wrong reason then you’ll have an awful lot of objection and difficulty. If there’s something that’s good to be done, let’s do it. It’s not on this subject at all, but here in Moraga the Rotary club, which I belong to, is having its fiftieth anniversary next year, 2017. And I said, “We ought to do something to celebrate fifty years of service in the community. Why don’t we build, in one of the city parks, build an area for
youngsters with handicaps and disabilities, those who are in wheelchairs, those who have perhaps mental deficiencies or unable to accomplish things that other kids, the special kids that need help?” And so we got started on that. I says, “Probably for $50,000 we can do something.” Well, we’ve got a committee now that the project is now up to over $300,000 and the committee said to me, “It’s beyond our capacity.” I says, “I don’t think so.” I said, “There’s enough people that have become interested in this that I think we can raise that money.” Well, tonight I think is the night the city council is approving it for the parks. And we’ve got a fundraiser. We’ve probably raised $30,000 already without having announced it, just by letting people know this is something that we’re going to try to do. And I says, “You don’t have to back off. You just have to work a little harder to accomplish.” I’m sure we’ll have this and it’ll be the only one in the area for children that can be all access, whether they have difficulties, special kinds of things that they can feel tactiley, touch to play with or to make music with bell like kinds of things, or swings that a wheelchair can set on, other kinds of equipment where the kids are strapped in, held in a safe way. All this special kind of equipment. I didn’t even know it existed, some of the things that they have planned. But it’s just one of those things that if you really have a desire to do something, you ought to do it and I think we can. And anyway, the attitude I’ve generally taken is let’s understand what the project is, let’s cut it down to its lowest common denominator, and then work on the pieces of how to get it done. And that’s the way you do things.

Before we step into actually how you do many, many things in your presidency, when you first started I’m sure you have a vision of how you want to leave the presidency. It’s your time to kind of shape aspects of Rotary in the largest scale possible. So did you set any goals, whether outwardly or just kind of within yourself? That you wanted to see Rotary change in certain ways or move towards certain kinds of projects or themes or anything like that?

I did not start with some big personal monument that I was going to build during the year. I just thought we had a lot of programs going and I would like to see these programs strengthened as much as we possibly could. So that was where my emphasis was, was strengthening the programs and giving them recognition, giving them encouragement. And recognizing some of the people that were working so darn hard in keeping certain programs going. I remember up in Maine one night, I guess it was in Maine or Massachusetts, someplace up in New England, and I remember it was a snowy night, we had what we called an emphasis on Rotary Fellowship groups. A Rotary Fellowship group is a group of people who have a common interest. They have, oh, dozens of these different groups. They may be the tennis players or the people that go share their homes, a recreational vehicle group, or they may
be the fisher people or the golfers. All kinds of special interest groups. And so this particular night I had some certificates made for people who had recommended to me these are really some of the movers and shakers of this area of Rotary. And I thought I would try to give some recognition to these people. I remember that particular night I was recognizing a guy who had been head of the music fellowship and these were people that played musical instruments or sang or were in choirs or just loved music. And I gave him a piece of paper, a certificate, and I know he said, “You know, I started this program twenty-five years ago and this is the first time somebody has ever said thank you for the fun and the fellowship and all the activities we’ve had.” Nobody ever bothered to say thank you. And I saw this many, many times.

I remember going to Australia, flying to Australia, and I was recognizing what we call the RYLA group, R-Y-L-A, Rotary Youth Leadership Awards. And it started in Australia years and years ago. And this is a kind of a recognition of youth leaders and it started because one of the young princesses from England, I forget which princess, was visiting Australia when she was a young teenager. And the people of Australia wanted to make her feel good and they got a group of what they called Rotary youth leaders and to give them an opportunity to visit with the princess. They started this group and now it’s all over the world and they often run summer camps, a weeklong camp for high school student leaders or short-term. Do all kinds of recognition for student leaders. And so this was one of those sixteen recognitions of the RYLA program. So I got off a plane. I’d flown all night. And the Rotarian who was meeting me, he said, “If you don’t mind, before we go to your hotel—“ I’d arrived there probably six o’clock in the morning or something. And he says, “We want to make a stop first.” I said, “Yeah.” He says, “One of the guys that we had recommended for a certificate, who helped lead this program down here, is in the hospital and let us go by. We’re not sure that he’s going to live. Certainly won’t be at the banquet tomorrow,” or whenever it was. And we went to this hospital. I was dead tired. And I gave him the certificate. I’m not sure that he was even really awake. But his wife and a couple daughters were there. And to see the look on their face when I recognized their husband. He had been there with a gallbladder attack or something and just gone through an operation. They didn’t think he was going to survive. But to see the look on the family’s face, that I would take the time to come to the hospital and present him the certificate, whether he knew it or not, was worth every ounce of my energy that I gave that morning. And all the other recognitions down there kind of were pale compared to that little moment where you touch the life of somebody that was worthwhile.

So I never hesitated to go out of my way because I was too tired or too busy. I always had time to see somebody. I’m sure I probably took time away from my family and kids doing things for others but I hope they forgive me.
Kim: This is so interesting, though. That’s your theme in so many ways. You start off wanting to recognize the people that make Rotary in these kind of sometimes thankless or just—day-to-day you’re giving your service but it’s seemingly small. And this is kind of a big meta question. How do you define recognition? Like what is that? It obviously goes beyond the certificate and is this exchange between people.

Dochterman: Yeah. Well, it’s just the fact that so many people do so many wonderful things just because they’re motivated, they’re captured with a vision of goodness or satisfaction or something. And so many times nobody ever bothers to say thank you. That people spend their whole life without anybody ever giving them an ounce of recognition. And so I just feel that sometimes I’ve been to meetings where I see somebody in the audience and when I’m sitting at some head table, sometimes just to recognize them from the podium. I was talking here a short time ago with a fellow whose father is a long-time Rotarian. He said, “I never forget what you did for my father.” I couldn’t remember. And as he talked a little further I remembered that his father was in the audience. He was in a wheelchair. He was going blind. And I just mentioned the fact that, “There’s so many heroes in Rotary and here’s one, Jerry, in our audience tonight and what he’s done around the world and shared his resources and his help.” The son said, “You don’t know what that meant to Jerry that night, just somebody recognized that he did something worthwhile and that people appreciated it.” Recognition doesn’t have to be a plaque or anything. Sometimes just a pat on the back, just little things that are worthwhile. Because so many people in the world go their whole life without one word of appreciation for their life and what they’ve done. And it’s so little sometimes. Such a small little thing to recognize a person. It’s nice to give them a big plaque or something. I’ve gotten a lot of them. But sometimes a little thing, just a note. I think I showed you a note that I had from Clark Kerr when I worked for the president. It just said one line, one sentence. “Good job last week. CK.” I don’t know why I kept it but I had it in some papers and I must have just slipped it in my file folder because at that moment it meant something. And so I think this is part of just my makeup, is that I truly believe that recognition, if it’s sincere, recognition, if it’s honest and given freely, is a trait that a lot more people could adopt. [laughter]

Kim: Thank you. I know that was a kind of meta question but it’s fascinating to see that come through.

Dochterman: Maybe. Some of these things are hard to describe without feeling that you’re massaging your own ego or something like that. It’s the way I operate.
Kim: It doesn’t sound like you're massaging your own ego at all, so don’t even worry about that. But I do want to make sure that we talk about today something that I know ends up in many ways defining or being a large part of your presidency, is your involvement in providing humanitarian aid to refugees in Bosnia, Croatia, all the former Yugoslavia.

Dochterman: Okay. I’ll tell that story. I may have told some of it.

Kim: Yes, tell me more about it.

Dochterman: But I’ll try to start. One day in my office I got a letter. This was before emails and faxes and everything. But I got this letter from a gentleman by the name of Ernst Ragg, R-A-G-G. Ernst Ragg was one of the district governors that was working during my year from Austria and the surrounding countries of Austria. And he says, “There’s a civil war going on in Bosnia and Herzegovina and people are pouring out of the country with just what they can carry in their hands into Croatia. This is part of my district and we’re trying to do what we can to help these refugees. They stay in any kind of camps that they can and we’re trying to get them blankets and food and clothing and medicine and anything that we can do to help them.” And he says, “Is there anything that Rotary International can do to help us?” Then he had a PS on his letter. “If you can’t help, I’ll understand. But please don’t appoint a committee.” [laughter] So I thought, “There’s a need here to do something.” And so I called the travel service and I said, “I want a trip to go to Austria tomorrow.”

Kim: Wow.

Dochterman: So I called him back and say, “I’m going to be over there. Let’s see what we can do.” So I arrive in Austria and we get another plane to Croatia, to Zagreb, Croatia. And Air Croatia. I thought, “Wow, this sounds like a good one.” [laughter]

Kim: I know this is a bit of an aside but these were small planes, correct?

Dochterman: Yes, yes.

Kim: And I know your son said that you’re a little claustrophobic. That’s not your—
Dochterman: Yeah, I’m very.

So what was that experience like? It’s already such a charged situation.

Dochterman: Fortunately it wasn’t a private plane because Rotary would not let me fly in a private plane and that was a good thing for me. A lot of people said, “I’ll send my plane to pick you up.” And I says, “No, I can’t fly. Rotary has an insurance policy on me which prevents me from flying in private planes.” So it was a commercial plane. If I could sit on the aisle and towards the front of the plane, I’d learned to get by. So we fly to Zagreb, Croatia, and there’s a little Rotary club there and they had arranged for us to go down along the border where all these refugee camps—many of them were in kind of a park or commercial areas or tent-like places. One of them that I spent the most time, a group of farmworkers lived in these shacks and then they had some large kind of the semi-trucks or the truck part of the semi where they were cooking and living. They were just living all over, about maybe 3,500 people all together. And they had a communal dining room and they would eat on shifts. Little shacks and there are mattresses all over the floor where they could sleep. It was mostly women, older men, and children. The middle aged men were out fighting a war, civil war against each other or something. I went in. We had lunch in a communal dining room, bean soup or something, whatever it was, and we visited these spots. The United Nations had some cars that we could go down with some help, supposedly secure. They were marked cars. I had no concerns. I’m just naive in everything. So I said, “What is needed?” They says, “Everything. We need food and blankets and clothing and just everything. The people have left everything at their homes.”

Before I left Evanston I said to the Rotary Foundation people, “Can you handle this?” and they said, “No.” The Rotary Foundation process and policy was you deposit money, it’s held for three years and then it’s expended. And in that three years the interest earned helps to operate and so we can say that every dollar that goes into the Rotary Foundation ultimately is spent for humanitarian causes or educational causes. I said, “Well, I’ll have to figure something out.”

So when I got over there I said, “Now, this can’t be handled through the Rotary Foundation. What can we do?” I said, “Can you set up a bank account here in Austria that we can ask Rotarians to send money?” And I said, “If they set up a bank account, how in the world will you give me assurance that this money will be fully accounted for and spent for right purposes?” They said, “We will meet somebody right after lunch.” Well, after lunch we had gone back to Austria, if I remember correctly, and we were discussing how we’re going to do this. And they had three guys that came in. If you had to go to
central casting to get the most steely eyed bankers that you could find, these were them. Big, high white collars and everything. And they said, “You can count on us. We will account for every nickel or dime that comes in.” And they did. In a matter of four or five weeks, when I sent out the word, I think there was something like eight million dollars that flowed into this bank account to help people. And every dollar was accounted for. So that was one side of it.

While we were in Zagreb, let me mention another thing. Newspaper reporters were there to meet and talk about it. And one of the reporters said to me, “Who are you people helping? Are you helping the Bosnians? Are you helping the Croatians? The Muslims? Who are you really helping?” And I says, “I don’t know who we’re helping.” I said, “When you see a little child that’s cold and is hungry, you don’t ask them what their nationality is or what their religion is or anything. You help them because they need it. And that’s why Rotary’s working here. We’re trying to help people that need help. We don’t care who they are or where they come from. We’re going to be doing what we can for these refugees.”

05-01:09:27
Kim:
So how is this program implemented though? So you raise the money? And in so many ways—

05-01:09:31
Dochterman: Well, what I did, I came back then after a couple of days over there and I put a word out to all the district governors around the world. And I said, “Here’s a great need. And they need everything that you can imagine. They need clothing and blankets and food and medicines. Whatever you can give. And they need money to buy stuff that you can’t get for them otherwise. And here’s a bank account in Austria that you can send money to, not to the Rotary Foundation. And then you can collect things and see if you can get them there.” Well, Canadian Airlines says, “We will deliver stuff that you collect.” And Canada probably collected more than any other place and it was delivered to Zagreb airport by Canadian Airlines. Boxes and boxes of stuff went over there. A group of German Rotarians collected stuff and they had ten Mercedes vans that they filled to the roof and they drove them all the way from Germany, all the way across Austria, across Croatia, all the way to Zagreb. This little Rotary club, maybe twenty members or so, the German Rotarians said, “You keep the vans. And they’re yours. And you use them to deliver stuff that comes into the airport to the refugees.” It was this kind of a feeling. Did you ever see an article? Did I ever give you such an article?

05-01:11:56
Kim:
Is it about your time from the Rotarian magazine? About this?
Dochterman: Yes, the Rotarian magazine article.

Kim: I read it. Yes.

Dochterman: Yeah. In any event, I think that it was described as, except PolioPlus, the single most significant humanitarian project Rotary had ever accomplished, of a single nature to help somebody.

Kim: And in some ways I feel like PolioPlus laid the groundwork for this kind of mobilization.

Dochterman: Well, before we had PolioPlus and the 3-H committee, Rotary never thought that you could reach out and do something worldwide. You did things in your local community. You met local needs. Rotary really, until we had the Three-H program, never expanded as a worldwide organization that you could reach out to everybody and say, “Hey, can you help these people right now?”

Kim: So I know in PolioPlus you worked with the World Health Organization, the CDC. Who were your on the ground contacts within—

Dochterman: It was largely Ernst Ragg and the Rotarians in Austria. It was that whole district. And the Rotarians in Zagreb. We didn’t have any outside agency. Frankly, I hate, again, to say this but I had such a good relationship with the district governors, that when I sent out a letter to them they wanted to do something, not just for me but because the need was so great, but also the fact that they respected the approach that I made. “Here’s a need. Can you do it? If you can’t, no problem.” But people wanted to help. That’s how they got the Canadian Airlines. “We want to help. We’ll help you do this.” And some other airlines that went from different parts of the world. This was a totally Rotary project. It just caught on. People got excited that we can do something.

Kim: So where were the funds going? I know it’s mostly to Croatia.

Dochterman: They went over there and then working with the local people they would buy food to deliver, too. There were about thirty-four of these refugee camps along the way, if I remember correctly. And they would deliver stuff using these vans that the Germans had given, everything that would keep coming in. Or if they had to buy stuff they would take the money from the bank account that was in Austria. And it just was an amazing demonstration of people coming
together that wanted to help. And we didn’t have the Red Cross or we didn’t have World Health Organization or refugee people or anything else that was working. We’re just doing this because one man said, “Can you help?” And that’s how it worked.

05-01:15:52
Kim: It’s a civil war. It’s so divisive. It’s an entire nation becoming separate republics.

05-01:15:59
Dochterman: Yeah, fighting.

05-01:16:00
Kim: Genocide is declared there.

05-01:16:02
Dochterman: Difficult time.

05-01:16:04
Kim: Given all of that—you mentioned this earlier when the reporter said, “Whose side are you helping?” Was that on your mind? The fact that it seems like Rotarians are distributing, deploying the money and the supplies. You wanted to help but were you and Rotary ever conscious of trying to make sure you were helping everyone?

05-01:16:26
Dochterman: Well, no. In my mind I didn’t think of the war aspect. I thought of the refugee side of the problem. And I thought we are meeting the needs of the refugees. We’re not supporting a war. Either side of the war, we’re supporting people that are in dire need of some food or dire need of someplace where they could stay or a blanket to keep warm because the winter was coming. This was in the fall of ’92. So the winter was coming and it was going to be snowy and everything else in these camps and we had to do something right now. I guess the value was you could have said, “Well, let’s think about it, what can we do?” But maybe I was just too naive and I just said, “Let’s do something. We can do it. And I’ll go over and see what the situation is, how the need is, and then we’ll come back and see what we can do to help.”

05-01:17:47
Kim: And mobilize. Activate.

05-01:17:51
Dochterman: So that was pretty much that program. The conclusion, of course, is that the end of the year the refugee program of the United Nations Refugee, whatever the terminology is—

05-01:18:08
Kim: UNHCR? Yeah.
—sent us a letter thanking us for the effort that Rotary made to help the refugees out of Bosnia-Herzegovina and that they would estimate that the work we did in those several weeks saved the life of a hundred thousand people from starving or freezing to death in the winter of ’92. And so that was the story.

At the convention then in the following spring—

In Melbourne. I invited Ernst Ragg to come to the convention, which he did. And my theory was that everybody attends the first session of the convention. So I put the strongest pieces that we would have right there. And I told the story of Ernst Ragg calling and what we did and what they did and gave him the recognition before the whole convention. It was hard to see a dry eye when he told how they touched the lives of people. Unfortunately Ernst Ragg died the next year from cancer and passed away. But he was a very nice guy. I asked him when I was there, I said, “What’s your business?” He says, “I’m a printer. I make playing cards.” I said, “You mean playing cards? Poker? Bridge?” He says, “Yeah.” He says, “I have one customer in the United States.” I said, “You only have one customer?” He says, “Yeah. Hallmark Cards.” [laughter] He said, “They’re one of my bigger customers.”

That’s a pretty big market right there.

Good market. I said, “When you got that one, you only need one.” In any event, that was the story of that project.

It’s interesting. And I know you’ve been wary of massaging your own ego but as an outsider that’s had the privilege to interview you, it does seem that you are a major—and you’ll have room to comment if this doesn’t feel right to you. But it does seem that you are a major player in the international term. You’re part of the 3-H, you’re part of PolioPlus. PolioPlus in some ways, and again, correct me if I’m wrong, is the first time that it’s not only global but that Rotary starts to understand that they can fund projects without the foundation, that there’s another way of getting projects done that isn’t through the foundation. You do the same here with your aid to the refugees in Croatia. And you lay the foundation I think for what happens. In 2001 Frank Devlyn sets up a bunch of taskforces and what you see is global vision, AIDS, water and sanitation, all these large coalition initiatives, if you will. Do you see a chronology? Do you feel like you left resources for people? Was that a plan?
I’m sure that I’ve probably been given more opportunities than almost anyone in the Rotary history in terms of being able to take the lead in some things. A lot of people have said that I have probably influenced the direction of Rotary as much as anyone. I know that’s awful braggadocio, but it’s a fact because I know that I have been the leader of virtually every planning committee that Rotary’s had for a good many years. Just to give an illustration, it’s just the way I work, is that they had a committee appointed for the hundredth anniversary of Rotary and a celebration of the hundredth anniversary for one year. They had started it and they met and talked and talked and talked. So the next year I was appointed to that committee. Maybe I was made chair. [public announcement] I was chairing that committee. No, I wasn’t chairing it. I was a member of the committee. The next year I became chairman. But I said, “Well, what’s the plan? What have you planned for the centennial celebration?” “Well, we’ve talked about this, this, this, and this.” Oh. Well, I went back to my hotel room that evening and I sat down and I wrote a plan of ten things to do for the centennial. And I brought it back the next morning and I said, “I have a list of ten projects for us to accomplish during the centennial year.” And I read it and they says, “Fine, fine.” So that became the plan for the centennial of Rotary. And it was just like they needed somebody to put a focus, to give a direction because they all talk, talk, talk about this, this, and this, and they all approach the organization from their personal perspective of their nation, their city, their town, their something, without thinking that it’s an international organization and what can we do that makes it an international program.

I often said that probably the most difficult task the president of Rotary really has is to maintain an international organization. There’s so many centrifugal forces pulling us apart. Nationalism, regionalism, religion, monetary funds, civil strife, all of these things are tending to pull a world organization apart because each person looks at it from their perspective. And so somebody’s got to look at this as a big organization and certain things you have to downplay and certain things you have to emphasize in keeping it together. So that to me is probably one of the big challenges of the presidency, of having something that you can see from a global perspective and not just from your local perspective.

For example, the centennial project. I said, “We need something like the Olympic torch going around the world.” Every Rotary club has a bell that they start their meetings. Why don’t we have a centennial bell? So one was created. I’ve got one. My wife bought me one. It must be in my storage locker. In any event, we’ll have a bell and we’ll have a case made and we’ll send it around the world and we’ll have it signed or some plaque there that everybody sees what countries it’s visited and end up—well, that was one of the ideas for the centennial. A parade in the city of Chicago. Big city parade. Sure. We would
have each community develop some centennial project that they could label. And there were over 8,500 communities did a Rotary centennial project. We have a playground here in town. So these are some of the kinds of things that you begin to think globally rather than we’re going to have a big banquet in our town and that’ll be it. We had developing twin cities. Find a city in another part of the world that you could twin with, like a sister city program. And some of these kinds of things so that you’re thinking globally and not just thinking as your own neighborhood.

Kim: I mean, theoretically that’s really groundbreaking, this idea of local groups, local people thinking globally through actions that are interconnected. So like the red jackets, the bell is this unifying symbol. But it does actually change the way people think about it.

Dochterman: People think of it. Yeah.

Kim: In the local. So the global becomes local and the local becomes global or international.

Dochterman: Yeah, that’s right.

Kim: It’s mimicking so much of what’s happening economically, as well. So it’s fascinating to see Rotary almost as a mirror to the greater economic trends that are happening, this flexibility and this transitioning between different scales of economy. But going back to something that you kind of briefly mentioned. One of the challenges you faced as the world president, you said, is negotiating and managing nationalism, regionalism. Everything that’s pulling you apart. I think in some ways you’ve already discussed what are some successful strategies through these symbols, through these actions. But do you have any particular memory or example where you really felt that in your role as president you had to kind of bridge different groups or different ideas, where you really took a mediating role?

Dochterman: I remember one occasion. My first meeting as the president. Essentially the president takes over right after the International Convention, the new president. And so you have a meeting of the board of directors of one year and then a week later you have a meeting of the board of directors of the incoming year. Half of the members continue and half of them are new. We had a decision made by the board. We had a Rotary office up in the Nordic area up in Sweden. And this was serving all the Nordic countries, an office where they could buy things and keep records and just do a lot of—staff of maybe eight
or ten people, something like that. And they were feeling that this office could be closed and so they made a study and decided it ought to be closed up there and transfer it to the Zurich office, which handled Europe. So they finally debated and debated it and they voted, “Yes, we’re going to close the Nordic office.”

The next week, when I have the new board, me presiding as president, one of the newest members of the board just coming on was from Sweden. We convened the meeting and he said, “I’d like to raise a question. Could we reconsider the Nordic office closure?” He says, “I’m from Sweden and it’s important to this, this, this,” and he gave a very persuasive argument. And we debated it a bit and finally we said, “Well, we’ll vote on it again.” And the vote was eight to eight and the president only votes when there’s a tie. [laughter] And I said, “I heard all the arguments before.” And this man had sat in the back bench and heard the discussions the previous week because the new members were invited to sit in on the discussion. And so I said, “I have to vote and I’m going to have to support the action that was taken last week. However, I will be the one who will come to Sweden and I will sit down with the staff and I will be the one to tell them what the action is.” I said, “That’s only fair. I understand, you being from Sweden, you have to face your country people.” But I said, “I feel as the president I can take a position on behalf of the world organization. And I’ll be as fair—and we’ll try to replace those people and we’ll offer them opportunities if they want to go to Zurich to work in that office and everything.” And I did. So I went up to Sweden. But the key thing was that I had a feeling of what the sentiment of regionalization of that particular part of the world in a way that other people—it was just another action, yes or no. But I felt that I could take that responsibility myself and not feel that I’m pushing this off on some unknown person that had to take it because we are an international organization.

There were several occasions, if I remember, I can’t remember specific details, where I felt that I had to operate as an international leader, not just a man from US, looking at broad perspective to some other part of the world. And it doesn’t make any difference to me. I don’t live in Sweden or I don’t live in Europe or Asia. I’m sure many of my other colleagues that have served in the presidency of Rotary looked a lot more from a standpoint of their own country appointing people to committees and other tasks.

I had another occasion. I had to appoint a person to the Rotary Foundation trustees, a very, very significant appointment. Lots and lots of people would just love to serve on the trustees of the Rotary Foundation. I had two openings on that to be appointed. At that time one of them had to come from Europe, because some of the trustees had to be geographically appointed. So I had one other appointment to be made. And there were so many people that wanted to have that appointment. But I looked at the trustees and that there was one
member of the trustees who was going off the board of trustees from Japan. I would have loved to have appointed one of my friends, because it at that time was a six-year very prestigious appointment. But I said, “If I don’t appoint someone from Japan we’re going for six years without that spot being filled and Japan is one of the highest donors to the Rotary Foundation.” I said, “We count on Japan being very, very generous in their support and I feel that they need to have a member on the board of trustees.” And so I overlooked all of these friends of mine that wanted me so much to appoint them to the trustees and I went to a past president of Rotary in Japan and I said, “Who is the best person in Japan?” And he told me the name. I said, “I know him just vaguely but I’ll get to know him. I’ll find out and have a chance to meet him a little bit more.” And I subsequently appointed him in that open position so that Japan, I felt we needed a person from Japan as my appointment to membership on the board, because of the leadership they have in their financial support of the trustees. I’m sure a lot of people would have picked their very closest friends. I would have liked to have appointed any number of my friends. But I felt that was my obligation to the Rotary world as a world organization, to put somebody there that was, I felt, best for the world organization—and subsequently he was one of the finest trustees we’ve ever had because he had an insight. He could speak English. He’d studied at Columbia University for a graduate degree or something. He had good command of English and everything and was just an excellent person. So sometimes you have to take a broader look than, “My old buddy, Bill. I’ll appoint him.” But at least my perspective was I’ve been given this assignment and I’m going to try to do what I feel is the best for the organization, not just for my personal friends. I’m sure that’s not the view of all of our colleagues that have held this spot but it was mine.

05-01:39:57
Kim: You left your mark in that way. We’re nearing up around noon but I was wondering if we could talk a little bit more, just get you to the end of the presidency. Are you feeling—

05-01:40:11
Dochterman: Okay, sure. Let’s talk a little bit longer.

05-01:40:14
Kim: I had one question in particular before I kind of move us towards the Melbourne conference, which I know is in some ways a capstone, an overview of your presidency. But I know that as president you organized a series of presidential conferences of goodwill and development that took place in Barcelona, Johannesburg, and New York in the UN.

05-01:40:37
Dochterman: There were sixteen of them.
Kim: There were sixteen. For some reason, these three, though, really jumped out at me given the years in which you—

Dochterman: Yeah, yeah.

Kim: I know Barcelona was just about to host the Olympics. The end of apartheid had so recently happened in South Africa and then the UN. I saw some kind of relationship.

Dochterman: Well, what was happening there was that Rotary had scheduled an international convention in Barcelona and it was just to be the year after they held the Olympics there. And they told us that all these resources they were going to have at the Olympics would be available and then they subsequently said, “No, this hotel is going to be used for something else,” and this and that and a lot of the space. So they had to move the convention that particular year. And the Rotarians in Spain were very upset that they were moving the convention and postpone it for two or three years. Actually, six or seven years. So I just thought we ought to do something in Barcelona to show them that we still have good faith and to bring some event of significance. These three conferences were additional to the sixteen that I had originally planned. And so we went there and held this conference, which was a very, very good conference.

Kim: What were the purposes? So if these were three additional ones, what were the goals?

Dochterman: These were to bring attention. I think that one we were largely moving into a higher stage of polio immunization. This would be in 1993, if I remember correctly, in the spring. Yeah, I think it was early February/March, somewhere along in there. But in any event, it was to emphasize giving a greater push on the PolioPlus, getting people involved and getting it moving. And I think Dr. Canseco came over there, who had really been one of the keys in moving the program on. And I think the Spanish government health department gave him a major recognition on that occasion.

Then I think the one in England was, if I remember correctly—

Kim: Was it South Africa? Were those the—
South Africa. Oh, yeah. The one in Johannesburg was just an effort that I was trying to make to see if we can stimulate Rotary a little bit more in South Africa. And particularly the fact that they were going through the ends of apartheid program down there. And President de Klerk was president of South Africa. And we wanted to bring Rotarians into South Africa, hoping that we could give a better feeling for what Rotary was in South Africa. It was an interesting—[cough] excuse me—conference because there were people coming from all over Africa as well as all over the world. And President de Klerk put a notice out to their immigration service that anybody comes and does not have the proper passport or visas or anything, but could identify themselves as a Rotarian, you let them come in. And we had people that had no passports, anything, that came to this conference from various parts of Africa.

Then we had a meeting and President de Klerk actually came to the meeting and spoke. And afterwards he said to me, “I’d like to meet some of these people.” We had a lot of youth exchange students from South Africa were around. “I’d like to meet all these young people or anybody else but my security won’t let me wander around out there. If we go into this room here and you bring a few at a time, I’d like to meet as many as we can.” He said privately to me, “For years the world has turned their back on South Africa and many have cut out their investments. They’ve done a lot. But Rotary’s always stayed with us.” And he said, “That’s why I came here. Because Rotary was a world organization that still worked in South Africa and helped in doing so many good things for the people. Brought exchange students here, Rotary projects, and helping us.” And he said, “I will always support Rotary projects.” And that’s why he put out the word that anyone said they were Rotarian, they could come into the country and attend this conference. And it was a great, great experience how graceful he was to all of them.

And then at the evening we had home hospitality of the Rotarians. All the Rotarians in South Africa at the time were white persons. They had home hospitality, inviting the people that came to the conference to their various homes. And some of the black Rotarians from other countries said, “This is the first time I’ve ever been inside the home of a white person.” And he said it was all possible because Rotary invited us to come to this event and we saw what could happen when we could walk into a home without being one of the hired workers or servants.

So are these black Rotarians from other African countries or also from the United States? Just all over?

Yeah, just all around the world.
Kim: Was there any tension given that so much of the disinvestment had been because of a critique of the apartheid nation state?

Dochterman: Oh, there was no tension. At least if there was, it never got to my attention. But I didn’t see any kind of a tension. We had a good crowd, wonderful people. But it opened a door to a feeling that there is something that we could be doing of a greater nature in Africa and all the parts of Africa. Since then we had one president of Rotary International from Nigeria and a year from now we will have another president from Uganda of Rotary. Both black Africans. So it’s been a long time but I see a gradual strengthening of Rotary. As a matter of fact, on another committee that I served, I had suggested that we have some kind of a permanent committee reaching out to Africa to see what we could do to strengthen Rotary in Africa more than we have in the past. And that committee is still working. Called Reach Out to Africa Committee. ROTA. R-O-T-A. Everything’s an acronym.

Kim: And then just lastly, if you want to discuss the New York UN meeting, which was also additional. Was that also in the service of PolioPlus or different?

Dochterman: Well, we have had a Rotary Day at the United Nations for some time, for several years before that. This was our Rotary Day at the United Nations. But it was expanded a little bit. We had a number of meetings, tours of the United Nations. When the United Nations was created in 1945 in San Francisco Rotary was a large part of it. Something like over forty delegates to the United Nations in San Francisco were Rotarians. And the first president of the General Assembly was a Rotarian from the Philippines. And so Rotary had always had longstanding relations with the United Nations and we do have some kind of a special membership on the United Nations as a nongovernmental agency. And so we had tours of the United Nations, speakers and programs and activities. Some leadership, I forget who, were all speaking on that occasion. But leaders from the United Nations talking to Rotarians. And at that time we were partners with World Health and UNICEF of the United Nations, as well. I think that was the first time I spoke in the United Nations General Assembly auditorium, that occasion.

Kim: Were you speaking about PolioPlus in particular?

Dochterman: Well, we’re probably speaking about everything that Rotary was doing but really the key thing in our minds was the PolioPlus program because we’d just started it in ’87 and here it was only five years and it was a big struggle to keep this thing alive and well and keeping it moving. And so we need to
motivate Rotarians to keep up the work and we’ve had to do that on numerous occasions because it’s gone on for thirty years and it was awful easy to lose interest if we didn’t keep the momentum moving of PolioPlus, the necessity to keep the job. That we had made the promise, now complete the job.

05-01:53:49
Kim: Right. And it’s ongoing, like you said.

05-01:53:53
Dochtman: It sure is.

05-01:53:54
Kim: So now I wanted just to kind of put a wrap on your very long—I mean, only a year, well, a year and a few, but very full presidency. I know that it ends with the conference in Melbourne you’ve already mentioned.

05-01:54:07
Dochtman: Yeah, that’s right.

05-01:54:09
Kim: So can you just tell me a little bit more about your role in that conference? I’m sure you gave some kind of—

05-01:54:13
Dochtman: See, the president generally has a major role in putting on the convention every year. You don’t select the location. That’s generally selected four or five, six years in advance. So I was just fortunate when I became president that I knew that my convention that I would be responsible for would be held in Melbourne. We had a local committee that works on it and then you have an international committee and there’s certain responsibilities of the local committee, certain responsibilities of the international committee and of the board of directors and the president. And ultimately the president has the final word on any aspect of it, except for specific details of when the bus runs and when it doesn’t.

So we had a covention committee. And an interesting thing happened. The local committee had a chairman. And the president appoints the local chairman to the international committee. So I appointed the local chairman that they had had working for a couple years before I became even president because they knew that they were going to have the conference down there. And so I went down and I met with the local chairman and local committee. “You’ve got a lot of ideas and you’ve done stuff. However, you have to recognize that you have certain responsibilities. The international committee has certain responsibilities, the president has and the board of directors. And we can’t overlap and just understand where we’re going.” Well, they had a chairman of the local committee who became, after having served two or three years, very domineering. And the local committee terminated him as the
chairman and appointed somebody else. And then they called me and said, “We have terminated the chairman because we just can’t work with him anymore and we want you to take him off the international committee.” And I said, “Well, I can understand but I cannot take him off the committee.” I said, “This would kill this man. He has worked so hard and he’s done so much. You’re perfectly all right to remove him of the local chairman but,” I says, “I’m not going to take him off this committee because it would just kill his spirit as a person. And I’ll keep him there and you appoint a new committee and we’ll work it all out.” And we finally did. But you have to have a little bit of empathy about people.

It was the first big convention, worldwide convention that Australia had had and so they really went all out. They did some wonderful, wonderful things down there. We just had a great convention. It was held in the big tennis court, where they play the Australian Open. And that was the auditorium where they had it. It was beautiful, big facility. And the whole town had just gone all out. The businesspeople were posting signs, “Welcome, Rotarians,” and giving them discounts. The transportation system, if they have a Rotary badge on, they can use the streetcars and buses. It was just a very, very open and generous convention site.

As I said a little bit earlier, my theory was that everybody comes to the opening. We had two opening sessions. And everybody comes to the opening session. There’s where I wanted to put on the biggest impact and the biggest emotional feeling that the people would have there. One was I had Ernst Ragg talking about the project in Bosnia and Herzegovina and then I had Carlos Canseco. People always called him the founder of PolioPlus because he really took the lead of getting it started again after it just sat on the books for a while. And I said, “The earliest days when we started the program Dr. Sabin had said, “You’re going to have to immunize 500 million children just to get started.” And so I said, “We’re going to immunize the 500 millionth child on the stage of the opening convention.” And so they picked a child from the Philippines and Dr. Canseco came out in his doctor’s white coat and sat down. And the mother and father brought this little girl out and gave her the drops. And Carlos Canseco told me many times later, he says, “Of all the experiences, even of his presidency,” he says, “that was the greatest moment I ever had in Rotary, immunizing this little child that we called the 500 millionth child.”

And then I had another person. We had a program called Gift of Life. Gift of Life started by a guy in New York City who was reading a Sunday paper one day and read an article about a little girl in Uganda who had been seriously mauled by a hyena. And he said, “We should do something.” So he arranged for her to be brought to a hospital where she could get all the free plastic surgery operations, dozens of them. And that started a program which now well over 10,000 little youngsters have been given special operations, free, by
medical doctors in the United States and Australia and various other places in the world. Gift of Life. And I says, “I wonder where that little girl is today.” And they went to find out about it and they found out that she was in Australia and she was a nun in a convent there. It was a teaching convent. And I said, “Let’s get her to come to the program.” And we told the story. And I had this fellow from New York, Tony Zino. “Tony Zino,” I said, “We’re going to recognize Gift of Life. You’ve never been recognized as starting the Gift of Life program and I want you to do it.” And so he came out and we told the story of this little girl, Marigret Illikol from Uganda, and he said, “Where is this little girl today?” and then she comes out onto the stage, badly scarred face and everything, but she is a nurse, a teaching nun.

And those three illustrations in the opening session of Rotary at work in different ways, you didn’t have a dry eye in the house that night. The people were so thrilled. So that was what I really wanted to accomplish, is to let people have a satisfaction that work done well is important, that you get happiness out of helping other people.

05-02:04:04
Kim: You demonstrated your theme.

05-02:04:06
Dochterman: Well, also what I did in the opening, at the end of the session, the evening session on the opening night, I said, “We have the theme ‘Real Happiness is Helping Others.’” And I don’t know that you’ve seen that picture, the theme of a bunch of people holding hands. They came out onto the stage and there was the theme picture of the theme right there on the stage because we had hired a theatrical group down in Melbourne to take a look at that picture and get people that looked just like it. And some of them had to dye their hair or do other things but the colors and the clothes, and they came out holding hands as the theme showed. It was very, very impressive. And so that was the way. And the whole conference just had thrill after thrill.

I remember after that opening session that I just described, the next morning there was a letter under my hotel door from a boy. He says, “I’m an exchange student here in Australia and I come from South Africa,” I think it was. Can’t remember exactly. But he says, “I just wanted to write and say that I’ve never thought that people could do much. But having gone to that opening session I’ve learned that there is sun on the other side. I’ve seen things in my country and now I know that there are people that are working on the other side to make life better for people all over the world.” So that was kind of the thing. Although there was one other thing at that session that probably had more interest, and I’ve heard more comments than anything else.
The preliminary part of the opening session I had a boy’s choir, the Australian Boys Choir, and they had about forty little boys, beautiful voices and everything. But they came out and went up on the risers there and their conductor came out. They had a keyboard, not a piano. They had a little orchestra up there playing music while people were finding their seats and filling the auditorium. And the guy who played the keyboard, it was his, and so he had a habit of just reaching underneath. They had a switch there, and turned it off. Well, he had turned the keyboard off. And this accompanist came out to the keyboard and nothing happened. Nothing happened. And people began to start looking around the cords and wires and crawling around on the floor. And I knew well enough that you can’t leave probably 20,000 people sit there and wonder. We had so many people with different languages that they never know what’s going to happen. And if somebody got up and chairs fall over or something, you could have a lot of problems. So I went out and I started talking to the group. And mostly just humorous stuff about my life and growing up in a log cabin or something, all this crazy stuff. And I must have talked for, oh, maybe ten or twelve minutes, until somebody finally found the guy who owned the keyboard. He had gone for coffee in the back. And said, “Just switch the switch.” And they finally got it. By then I said, “Well, now it’s time to introduce the Young Men’s Choir of Australia, no longer the Boys Choir they’ve been standing here so long.” This was the first session. You have normally at these conventions two sessions, one right after the other. But most people would come back to the second session just to see if we’d do the same thing. [laughter]

No, it was a great convention. I had a great deal of satisfaction from being there. Then we had an orchestra. The Melbourne Symphony. And they said to me, “Well, we’ve got this very distinguished conductor and everything.” And I said, “Well, what music is he going to play?” They said, “Oh, he’s a very distinguished conductor. You can’t ask him what music. He plays what he wants to pay.” I said, “Just a second. We’re paying him $50,000 for the performance. I want to find out what he’s going to play. We’re in the last session of the convention.” And I said, “I’ll work up a repertoire of music and he can select from this.” I said, “I have to decide what we want because I want not something so esoteric. You’ve got people from all over the world with different interests.” I said, “I want something from Broadway musicals. I want something in opera. I want something in jazz music and I want the whole bit.” So they put together a fabulous program with some tenors singing, opera, and show tunes. You’ve got a group of people from all over the world with so many different interests that you’ve got to put some music that some people will feel they’re talking to them. And so it was a great concert.

Anyway, that’s probably enough of that, huh?
Well, I’ll just ask you one last question to round it out, because I have a full understanding of Melbourne, and thank you for that. I just wanted to know how you felt at the end of your presidency, when it was time to step down. Well, how did stepping down even feel? But also looking back at what you had done, was there anything you were particularly proud of or were there any regrets or work that you felt was undone?

No. I felt totally satisfied at the end of the year. I felt I’d given every ounce of energy I possibly could to the job. I felt that we accomplished a lot. I’m sure there are a lot of things that could have happened that didn’t happen. But there was nothing that I felt left on the table. I felt so satisfied personally. I was perfectly happy to pass the baton to the next person. Some people, “I want to do this more.” But I had no feeling of regret. This is an organization that’s built on short-time leadership. When you pass the leadership it’s gone. It may sound like a silly little thing. I remember I got in the taxi, my stuff had all been shipped home, lots and lots and lots of gifts that I had been given all over the world. All of it was shipped home. And I got in the cab, went to the airport. My last day, July the 1st. No, June the 30th because the apartment turns over to the next president on the next morning. So I left. And then I thought, “Oh, golly.” I had to call back. And I still had my Rotary phone card. And I went to make a phone call to the President’s office and they’d already canceled the card by that time. And then they do have a tradition that the president’s picture hangs in the office wing of the headquarters, the eighteenth floor of where the headquarters is located. And on June 30th at midnight they have one of the staff persons there that changes the picture to the new person and you’re all over. And so your picture’s hung with the past presidents. It just ends. But I was totally satisfied that I had made every effort that I could. I’d given all my energy and effort. Starting immediately I had a six-year term as a trustee of the Rotary Foundation and that, I knew, would end being chairman of the Rotary Foundation Trustees. So that, I knew, was the beginning of another chapter.

Perfect. And that’s actually the part of the chapter we’ll begin with next week. Thank you so much.
Interview 6: August 31, 2016

06-00:00:01
Kim: Hi. My name is Cristina Kim. It’s August 31, 2016. We are here in Moraga, California, with Cliff Dochterman, and we are here in our sixth interview. So good morning.

06-00:00:12
Dochterman: Good morning. It’s nice to see you again.

06-00:00:15
Kim: So I know we discussed last time, after the interview, that we wanted to go back outside of our chronology. I know we were at the end of your presidency as the Rotary International president. But if we could just take a step back to March 28 through the 30 of 1963. So this is, again, when you were working for the University of California, and you were assistant to Clark Kerr. And I was wondering if you could talk to me a little bit about your experiences as the conference director for the Conference on Space, Science, and Urban Life, which took place in Oakland at the [knocking] Dunsmuir House. [door opening]

06-00:01:02
Dochterman: [laughter] That was a very special assignment. When the [National Aeronautics and] Space Administration was created, one of the conditions of the space administration besides President [John F.] Kennedy saying we are going to the moon by the end of the decade was that all of the knowledge and technology that was developed through the space program should be transferred to the private sector, of the business and corporations of the United States. Well, the director of the Space Administration, Mr. [James E.] Webb, was more interested in getting—well, I shouldn’t say “more,” but he was really interested in meeting that goal of getting to the moon. And so there hadn’t been much attention given to that segment of the laws that said how to transfer the knowledge to the public sector.

So there were several individuals that were interested in this. One was Wayne Thompson, who was the city manager of the city of Oakland, and Wayne Thompson had the interest of the mayor of Oakland, Mayor [John C.] Houlihan. And then he, of course, interested [University of California] President Clark Kerr. And the Stanford Research Institute was also involved, plus they said, how do we finance it? And they got the Ford Foundation involved to do the financing. So these four or five elements, and it was just the time that Oakland was doing many, many things in the development of the city. Oakland was really on the move. It was developing a new museum and a new airport and athletic fields to bring baseball and football teams in a professional way to Oakland. So Oakland was really moving ahead under the great leadership of City Manager Wayne Thompson.
So Wayne Thompson asked Clark Kerr, “Is there somebody at the university that we could borrow to conduct and plan this kind of a conference, of bringing many of the national leaders of business and professions together to talk about how this information coming out of the Space Administration could be developed?” So Dr. Kerr said, “Well, I’ll lend Cliff Dochterman to take over that. I’m sure he would do the job.”

And so for probably—I guess it must have been eight or nine months, I worked in prep—[beeping]

So I was loaned to the city of Oakland, and I took an office down in the Oakland City Hall, in the mayor’s office, and was doing both jobs, running back and forth from Oakland to Berkeley trying to cover my job at the Berkeley office, at the university, as well as working and planning this kind of a conference that we would hold. So I spent an awful lot of time drawing up an invitation list of the major corporations that were involved.

And so the whole concept was that the Space Administration was developing so much new technology that this had to be transferred somehow to be used by the whole public. Such things as miniaturization of communications that could be in the space capsules, food technology of what they eat, materials, ceramic materials that would cover the space capsules, communications of long distant communications that would be very miniaturized, physical and health materials that would meet the needs of a person who was in space. Just dozens and dozens and dozens of new materials and new technology was being developed out of the Space Administration.

And so we developed an invitation list, and then we started in the process of inviting these business leaders, manufacturing and corporations from all over the nation, to Oakland. Just at that time, there was a beautiful estate out in Oakland, the Dunsmuir House.

This was when Oakland was just getting the Dunsmuir House, a beautiful estate up in the hills that had been given to the city of Oakland. And it was built way back in the early part of the century, and by the Dunsmuir family, and it was a beautiful big house with beautiful gardens. At the same time, they asked me if I would help put together some kind of a proposal that this could get a grant to perpetuate it as a permanent garden for the city of Oakland. So we were going to use this beautiful mansion as the site for this conference. And we kept the delegates out by the Oakland airport and bussed them up to the mansion.

So that was the site, and all these pieces were being put together, and I found it a great challenge, but I was working with some wonderful people from the
Stanford research center and the city of Oakland, and we all worked together to pull it together. And then we working a great deal with the Space Administration itself, both the local agencies that were down at Moffett Field [Moffett Federal Airfield] and down the peninsula, and then with the Space Administration in Washington. I knew for several times I would go back and meet with the head of the Space Administration, Mr. Webb, and sat in a number of the conferences that they were having back there, of astronauts and others talking about going to the moon. Most of it was totally foreign to me, but I learned an awful lot, and I learned about some of the things that they were developing just for the space capsules and for survival, and various kinds of cloth materials for making the space uniforms, and every conceivable part of the thing, of the space capsule, generally had to be a new kind of material. So it was a fascinating experience. The more I learned about it, the more I felt more confident in seeing that this could be a useful thing.

And so the conference finally was held. We had some of the real great leaders of the industrial complex of the United States there. And ultimately, a very extensive book was written, at how that could be translated and used, and it was distributed by the Space Administration. So that was pretty much the space project that I was given the chance to work on.

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**Kim:** So my understanding is the conference was a way for NASA [the National Aeronautics and Space Administration] to work with universities and private industries to translate all the space age technologies that were being developed in order to address urban issues, or local, regional issues.

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**Dochterman:** Yes, that’s right. Both translate and transmit of ways that that information could be transmitted into the private sector from the government sector.

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**Kim:** I had a chance to kind of take a look at the book that was created out of this conference, and it’s interesting, because I read a review of it as well, a 1964 review in the *Technology and Culture* journal. And the reviewer says—and I’m going to quote it to you and ask you what you think. He says, quote, “The emerging changes in the relations among industry, government, and the university are hinted at by some of the speakers, and with some considerable disquiet, it might be added.” So was there a tension there that you noticed among—how these very different actors with different missions were going to work together, share knowledge?

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**Dochterman:** Well, it was something rather rare for people to have a lot of knowledge and information, and each of them have to interpret their product, because there was such a wide, wide range of new technology. And I am sure many of these
people, they were friendly people, but they were all—I suspect were somewhat guarded about their products and how that knowledge would be used in their particular instance, and how—I suspect; I don’t know this as a fact, but I suspect that many of them were anticipating how that knowledge could be transferred into specific products that they developed, and obviously get their own patents and whatever with using that as a base. But the Space Administration legislation made it very clear that the knowledge itself should be transferred and transmitted to the private sector to be ultimately used by the private sector.

Is there anything that came out of that conference—before we move on—from that conference that you see now did in fact get transmitted to the private sector, and specifically in Oakland and the Bay Area?

Oh, dozens and dozens of things that were discussed. I see now all kinds of medical equipment that they can run a camera up a vein and see something in the heart or internally. All of this miniaturization of instruments to be placed in space capsules and of cameras, of various types of miniaturization of high-tech equipments, much of that came out of the Space Administration discoveries. Because there’s so much new technology was necessary for every little bit of that space capsule, to get them to the moon and get them back, and then to go outside and be on the moon, and to have the things that would operate. And medical, communications, all kinds of communication technology. In ’63, that was basically well before the expansion of computerization for normal use. Now, also, the transmitting of communication in such long distances, and batteries that would continue, or batteries that could be renewed themselves with solar power, and all kinds of amazing things, as well as just surface materials. Ceramics: things that I have seen in cookware that’s been developed of the same kind of ceramic materials that they covered a spaceship, or similar, adapted to cookware. And various kinds of cloth and things that were made for space suits. The technology used in the development of other kinds of plastics and plastic materials, and just amazing what kinds of things were developed out of that program.

And finally, in your role as conference director, did you face any challenges gathering people from different industries or working with difficult personalities? Anything—

No.

—is that stands out?
Dochterman: I never felt that at all, partly because we had the Ford Foundation behind us, and we had the University of California, and Stanford University. Mills College was also involved. Our problem, probably, was there were so many people who wanted to come, and we had certain limitations. And so most people were most anxious to want to be there and take part, and be very cooperative, because it was the opening of a door for many of these companies and corporations, of something that had never really been tried before, of having the government transfer knowledge into the private sector. It was generally—probably, I would say—the reverse before. The private sector was the developer, and the government was the receiver. But this was a converse to that.

Kim: That’s interesting. Well, do you have anything else to add, or do you want to—

Dochterman: No, I think that kind of covers that little—

Kim: Fantastic.

Dochterman: —segment. It was just kind of a period of great interest. It was historic in a sense that the Space Administration was big news every day, of whether we were going to the moon and everything. But most people didn’t think of that other side, of the value of all of that technology besides just saying we are going to the moon. But the value, the tremendous contribution of new technology to the private sector, to states and governments and cities, and hospitals and colleges, and materials and everything had an impact on society—all coming out of the Space Administration.

Kim: Yeah. It’s fascinating. It’s such an interesting kind of private/public collaboration that you see people talking about it like it’s novel today, but it clearly has some historical precedents.

Dochterman: Yeah. Well, I just happened to be—

Kim: —some historical precedents.

Dochterman: —in a good spot at the right time.
And before we jump back to your role as a trustee for the Rotary Foundation, which is what happens just almost immediately after your presidency, I know you had mentioned you wanted to talk a little bit about the historic moments that aired in Stockton? Is that correct?

Dochterman: Well—

Kim: Do you want to tell me a little bit—

Dochterman: Yeah. The little radio shows that I used to do.

Kim: Exactly.

Dochterman: Well, at a period in Stockton, I was getting ready to retire, and one thing and another. And so the Bank of Stockton was a very old, old bank which prided itself on being a historic bank that helped in the development of the Central Valley. And it was a private bank, not a corporate bank. Or not held on the market, but it was a private bank. And the president, general manager of the bank, CEO [chief executive officer] of the bank was Bob [Robert] Eberhardt. We’d often talk together about a series that the bank had of early history of the Central Valley in their promotions, as a commercial, and it would tell stories of the early history. Well, that series had disappeared, and had claimed to be owned by the radio station. And so the bank had no opportunity to use them again.

And we were talking one day; I says, “Why don’t you have a new series?” And he says, “Well, I don’t know how we’d do it” or something. I said, “Well, I have had a long history in historical activities.” I said, “Would you like for me to put together two or three samples of a new kind of a series called ‘The Way It Started?’” And let’s talk about names and places and things, of The Central Valley that’s served by the Bank of Stockton. And we put them into a little three-minute little vignette, and you have a new series that the bank could sponsor.” “Well,” he said, “go ahead, if you would be willing to do it.” And so I put together some samples. And I went to the radio station there at the University of [the] Pacific, and the young man recorded them. And then he was kind of a music buff, and he would use a synthesizer and compose some music behind them, and made them available for the radio stations in Stockton. And they put in commercials.

So we tried them. Mr. Eberhardt said, “Those are great! Let’s do some more.” So I guess I made—I don’t know—maybe 150. So I enjoyed just researching
certain things in the libraries, of names and how things—basically, all the
names in California come to four different sources: the Spanish; the Indians;
the forty-niners; or the railroad. And virtually everything was developed by
the early Spanish settlers, or Indian names of prominent Indians of the Valley,
or forty-niners often brought names of places from places they lived in the
East. And I think, offhand, just, Ripon, California, is named after Ripon in
Wisconsin. And many other places carry the name of a place that people lived
back East.

Or then there was the railroad: 1868, when the railroad came across the
country—I think it was 1868—when the railroad came across the country, it
would have to stop maybe every thirty, forty miles to get water and—of steam
engines, to get fuel—coal, if there was coal, or some burning substance,
primarily wood if the coal was not available. And then every place it stopped,
gradually, little villages developed around, and pretty soon those little villages
became towns. And so there’s so many places like that in California and
across that came about by the railroad. And that they had various ways they
named.

One that comes to my mind was in the area of—Manteca. Manteca was
originally called “Mantequilla.” The people that settled that area, many of
them were Danish and Dutch, and they had a lot of dairy farms. And so they
just called it “Mantequilla,” which would—meaning “butter” in the Spanish
language. And so they finally decided to print some tickets so people could
get on and off the train there. And so the tickets were printed “Manteca”
rather than “Mantequilla”—“Manteca” meaning “lard.” And they finally
decided it was easier to change the name of the village than it was to reprint
the tickets. And this was, of course, the story of how that little town got its
name from the railroad station idea.

Other places like French Camp, which, just south of Stockton, was French
settlers. French hunters used to hunt up in Canada in the summer, and then
they would come down and stay in this area, and these were the French
settlers and hunters. And they just kind of settled in that area, and now
named—Chinese Camp another place up in the Valley. So there are so many
of these little stories that were developed. Stanislaus, an Indian name, which is
the county seat in which Modesto is located. And some of the rivers, and
Calaveras, Spanish; was a Spanish name, because the Indians, they found a lot
of skulls there. So I wrote all these little stories called “The Way It Started.”
And those were printed. They were broadcast as a commercial for the Bank of
Stockton for several years.

Then, finally, we concluded that phase of my little broadcast career. The San
Joaquin County Board of Education had local history as, I think, the
curriculum for the fourth grade. It might be third. But I think it was third or
fourth grade. And so local history, they took all of these tapes that I had and put them on a CD. And then they made a huge book. They printed all of the tapes out. And so they made this into the teacher’s manual, and that became the curriculum for the children in San Joaquin County. And it’s a big book for the teacher’s manual, as well as the tapes that they had. So it was a fun kind of thing, what happened to these stories that I wrote and broadcast.

06-00:30:06
Kim: Thank you. I know we always talk about those, those broadcasts. I know you had mentioned we should get it on the record. So thank you for stepping out of the chronology, and for sharing that.

06-00:30:16
Dochterman: Just another little phase of life.

06-00:30:19
Kim: I’m going to try and find those, and see if I can give them a listen.

But now we’re actually going to go back into your Rotary years. So in our last interview, we had left off with a rather kind of humorous anecdote of your last day, when you are leaving Evanston, they have already—I believe you had a phone card that they’ve decommissioned—but you are by no means going back to no Rotary. You immediately jump into the role of being a trustee for the Rotary Foundation.

06-00:30:50
Dochterman: As I completed the year as president, and the president-elect and the president nominee, all these two and a half years, the next task is generally the past president is appointed to a term on the trustees of the Rotary Foundation, which is the major fund-raising side that receives funds and disperses them for projects all over the world. And so I was given a six-year term on the board of trustees of the Rotary Foundation. And so I started pretty much right away with working on different aspects. The Board of Trustees is made up of seventeen members.

They meet two or three, four times a year, and have a number of assignments you do. You travel a lot around the world promoting the Rotary Foundation, giving encouragement, looking at projects, seeing the kind of things that have been funded, checking on the quality of the funding and whether the funds were spent correctly. The trustees have certain fiduciary roles, of making sure the money is spent correctly. And so you check projects out, and you see prospective projects that they are requesting money for. So that became a whole new series of activities around the world. I traveled a lot of places around the world during those six years that I was a trustee. Then, on the fifth year, I became the chairman of the Rotary Foundation, and there you have
even broader experiences and responsibilities for the conduct of the Rotary Foundation.

06-00:33:46
Kim: So I know in the past, the Rotary Foundation wasn’t able to fund, for example, PolioPlus, and some of the other—I think also included your work in Croatia, right? It wasn’t able to kind of quickly mobilize funds.

06-00:34:03
Dochterman: That’s right.

06-00:34:03
Kim: It operates differently. When you were a trustee and then chairman, did you try and ever change the way it worked?

06-00:34:12
Dochterman: No. It is one of the unique foundations in the world, and one of the top foundations in the world, the Rotary Foundation. Because in theory, every dollar that’s given to the Rotary Foundation is spent for humanitarian activities. And this is possible because the general policy of the foundation is that the money that is received in one year is deposited, and the interest earned on those deposits provide the administrative expense for the operation of the foundation, so that they are not spent for three years. So the money we raise this year will be spent three years later. And in that three-year period, the income earned by the dollars become the administrative organ for the conduct of the work of the foundation, the staff, the travel, and so many, many, many other things.

06-00:35:32
Kim: So as a trustee, though, you are one of the people that gets to choose what projects get funded more quickly, or even at all.

06-00:35:41
Dochterman: Yeah.

06-00:35:41
Kim: So when you were both a trustee—or perhaps more as a chairman—all foundations have kind of trends or shifts where they are really going to focus on one part of the world or one kind of theme. What were some that you were really passionate about emphasizing?

06-00:36:00
Dochterman: We had a lot of projects that were still under the program called “Health, Hunger, and Humanity.” And these were pretty large projects: $100,000 projects, and much, much larger than that. And some of these would be in sanitation. Some of them would be in developing for a community, a remote community, sanitation facilities. Latrines and all kinds of water supplies, and bringing water from a distance, where people always carried it two or three
times a day from a stream somewhere. Water; medical care; the distribution of medical equipment around the world.

Places I remember going to: Russia, and in St. Petersburg, going to a hospital. I thought the hospital must have been closed down. Grass growing all around and everything. And they said, “No, this is operating. This is the largest children’s hospital in Russia.” And we went in, and they had so little stuff. This was, of course, just a few years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, and we could go pretty freely in Russia. And we went into one room, and there were all these incubators for little children, and for newborns. And I says, “Oh, this looks like very nice equipment that you have here.” And they said, “Without Children’s Hospital [Oakland] in Oakland, California, we would be closed down here. We get so much equipment from them, when they get new equipment and we have taken so much, and Rotarians have seen that it’s distributed over here and everything.”

And so it’s just amazing how you find things in different parts of the world. A lot of places would have food products: helping people develop new foods; getting seeds to developing agricultural lands; irrigation processes. And just the help necessary to get processes started. Many areas, we were working with schools, getting school supplies, and getting all kinds of things for orphanages. People see a need, and they work through the Rotary Foundation to help achieve it, by putting up part of the money and getting a grant from the foundation—that type of thing. And the foundation works with the 32,000 Rotary clubs around the world, and helping them with the projects they are sponsoring.

As well as it has a whole other gamut, side, is the educational program, with various kinds of scholarships—hundreds of scholarships, mostly for graduate studies, they were called at that time the Ambassadorial Scholarship Programs. And Rotary would have many of those scholarship programs, and then we subsequently developed what we called the Peace Scholar Program. We selected a half a dozen universities in the world, different locations, where ten students a year would be sent for a two-year period. People who have been out of school for some time, generally working in some form of agency, governmental agency or health, or humanitarian organization, but working in the area of peace and conflict resolution, and give them a degree in some area of conflict resolution. And that program now has gone for quite a few years, but it was something that I helped develop at one time. As a matter of fact, we had a program at Berkeley for, oh, probably ten or twelve years. It’s no longer there because it could not continue for a variety of reasons, largely financial.

In any event, these are the tremendous number of kinds of programs, and we just would try to look and support these programs through the resources of the Rotary Foundation.
Kim: I know that one of the roles of the trustees, as you mentioned, was to go and see how the money was being allocated, and if it was being used properly as the grantee winners had said they were going to use it. At any point did you and your fellow trustees have to intervene because money was being spent not wisely, or perhaps in a way that didn’t adhere?

Dochterman: Many parts of the world do not have the same kind of—maybe I should call it “ethical principles.” And there are a lot of people in all parts of the world that are perfectly willing to take advantage of a foundation unless you closely look at them.

I think of one project where we had—it was—I can’t remember exactly which country in the Far East. But in a very, very poverty-stricken area, we were trying to put in some water systems. And it was supposed to be a certain kind of metal piping to be used. And we found that they were using a much lower grade plastic pipe, which was costing them far less than what the grant was intended. And we had to come to grips with that kind of a problem. And it’s hard to do, because you’ve got people that are working to do a humanitarian thing, but there’s always—you can find people who are willing to take a shortcut, or take advantage of funding that has been given to them.

Kim: In that instance with the plastic pipes, how did you and your trustees face that situation, mediate it, so that—

Dochterman: Well, we have to generally try to mediate the program, particularly if the project is completed or nearly completed. Often, we would just not give a grant to that area of the world for a while. You just say, “You have to follow the policies that are established, and what you say you are going to do you have to do.”

And I remember one: we had a program called the Group Study Exchange. And this would be a group of people from one country, and generally a developing country, coming to another country for two or three, four weeks, and studying the businesses of their particular profession. And being given opportunities to see how things or new processes or new things are done in the host country.

Dochterman: In any event, the Group Study Exchange Program gives a chance for a group of non-Rotarian young persons who are in various professions or vocations—maybe all in the same profession and trying to learn something more about their profession. I remember we had one that when I got the word, that group came from—it may have been India, over to Iowa. And they came over, and
they were there a day or two in Iowa, and then the group disappeared. They normally move from one town to another, and meet people, and somebody called around: “Is the group in your town?” “No. Is there a group over there?” “No.” They couldn’t find where the group was. About three days later, they show up again, and they say, “Where in the world have you people been?” They said, “Well, we got here to Iowa, and we looked, and all we could see is corn growing every direction. And we were looking for those big tall buildings, and we all got on a plane and went to New York. And we’ve spent all our money now, and we don’t have any money to live on.” And they had to beg some money from the local hosts.

It was a violation of the program. The program is set up in one way, and I just had to go and tell that district that we’re just not going to fund another Group Study Exchange from your district for the next three years. And I always remember after I made the decision and advised the district, I happened to be in India shortly afterwards, and somebody called my hotel room, said there’s a delegation down here in the hotel wanting to see you. And I go down, and if you called central casting, if you were trying to find some of the toughest-looking people in the world ready to tear you apart! And they said, “You took away our Group Study Exchange team.” And I said, “Yes, I did.” And they said, “Well, the man who was in charge of that we have thrown out of Rotary, and we want to have the program back again.” I said, “Well, it’s not just a person. It’s your district that didn’t follow the rules.” And I said, “I have some responsibilities, too: that I have to administer a program that is fair. Fair not just to you, but to everybody. And you hadn’t played the game fair, so I have to make the decision. And that’s what it will be.”

And they finally accepted my judgment, but sometimes even in a volunteer organization, even when all the people are volunteering their time to carry on an activity, you still have to have some discipline of having to follow the rules. Even though in many countries of the world, rules are considered in different ways. They are guidelines or something. They are not hard and fast. And so we just have to accept some of these things in the world, of how people work. But you also have to have some strength to say this is not right, and it’s not within the framework of what we are doing. And most people, ultimately, they respect what you are trying to do.

But is it difficult? So even though you are understanding that in other parts of the world or in other districts with different needs, you are seeing—

Sure it’s difficult, because many of them are Rotary friends. And they just have gone to the edge and went over the edge of the rules and the regulations of programs. Merely because it is a volunteer organization, you still have to
have respect for the rules and regulations. And if you’re going to be a leader of an organization, you have to be willing to make some tough decisions sometimes. It’s awful easy to say, oh, that doesn’t make any difference. It’s tough to say it does make a difference. And there are consequences. When the rules and the regulations are no longer followed, then you have to make some other judgments. So there is a way in volunteerism that you have to recognize it’s not just anything goes. There has to be some kind of respect for the processes if you want the organization to have the longevity and the dignity of the respect that it needs to receive, or to accept that kind of—I guess it would be just kind of the dignity of the organization.

Kim: I know that achieving peace is one of Rotary’s major principles. So with that, I am sure that the projects that you are funding, both with the 3-Hs and sanitation and food, are in pursuit of this greater hope and push towards peace and world understanding. Just on a very meta level, for you and for what you see as Rotary’s mission, how are you defining “peace?” How does one achieve peace, according to you specifically, in the context of Rotary?

Dochterman: Well, I’ll give you an example, the way I think. Shortly after it was announced that I was going to be the president of Rotary International, a reporter called me from New York. I don’t remember whether he was the [New York] Times or what paper it was. I don’t recall that at this moment. But we talked about what Rotary does, and what Rotary is. And he said, “You people, you talk about peace and good will and understanding.” I said, “Yes, that’s one of our goals.” He said, “If that’s the case, what are you people plan to do about the situation in the Middle East?” I said, “Well—” Sometimes the questions got tougher than that. But I said, “Rotary does believe in peace and good will and understanding in the world. But we don’t have tanks and battleships, and soldiers, and all the weapons of war. Those are the “weapons of war.” Rotary works through the “instruments of peace.” Meeting human needs. So that people don’t have to fight. Providing food for those who live in poverty and hunger. Providing education for those who have no education to understand, get along. Providing medicine for those people who are sick, and no longer able to think of peace.” And I said, “We meet these basic human needs for people, and that is our belief in what we think of as the instruments of peace. Not the weapons of war.”

I remember talking with a friend in Africa once. And I said, “You have so many little civil wars. This tribe and that tribe, and this group and that group, all these civil wars. In the Congo, and Sudan, and every place.” I said, “Why?” He said, “Well, when you have people that are living in hunger and poverty, and they see somebody that has just one thing that they don’t have, they are going to try to get it, because they are trying to do something for their children
and their families. And when you have nothing, you are willing to fight somebody else to get something.” And he says, “You don’t understand it when you have this kind of poverty among tribes, that people just live on what they can get each day. And so you have these little warring civil wars, and trying to take something back, or get something more, or enhance your family’s life.”

So as you go around the world and talk with people, you get a better understanding of why there’s these wars, and people who’ve lived next to each other, live together, have to strike out in civil strife. That’s about my thought on it.

Thank you. And this is just something that I was thinking about while you were talking. So Rotary International is made up of people from all over the world, obviously coming from different cultures, like you were saying, that maybe spend money differently, or have different needs that are pressuring them to spend it differently. Or just are coming from places where their communities are disproportionately suffering from hunger or poverty, more so than one might thing from Rotary districts within the United States, or, say, Moraga here. Given that everyone’s coming from such different backgrounds, even though Rotary is a professional organization, within Rotary, how are these differences—are they acknowledged? How are they impacting—

Well, you have to acknowledge them. But by and large, Rotary, it started out—and still is, to some respects—Rotary is an organization of the leaders. Sure, we have people of all economic levels. A lot of people that are middle class; some very, very wealthy in some countries—and some of the poorest countries in the world have very wealthy people, and they have very poor people. By and large, Rotary itself is made up of business and professional people. And so we are really dealing probably with more of a common denominator of middle to more higher income level people than we are—And those people, then, are trying to do something for those who are at the lowest ends of the economic level. And I guess that’s about the best way I could explain it. All Rotarians are not wealthy people, by a long shot. But you don’t find many in the poverty level in Rotary. So you are really having the middle to upper middle, to more wealthy or higher economic level people who are the members of Rotary, and so they, by and large, understand, get along.

But there are just differences in cultures that some people think of a sharp business deal as a real good deal. I don’t know what a “sharp business deal” is, exactly, but just cutting the corners as a way you get ahead. Other cultures, that’s the furthest thing of what their judgment of what is good business like.
I guess that’s what’s interesting, right? Because it’s a global organization made up of professionals, but who may view or practice “business”—as this big kind of umbrella term—differently. So does the Rotary ever promote a certain consensus of what “good business” is, or “good business practice” is?

Well, yes. I think by and large, Rotary has had an emphasis upon good business opportunities. We call that area in the Rotary world “vocational service.” And “vocational service” means basically “he profits most who serves the best.” And this whole term of “service above self” is kind of a description of the activity side. However, “he profits most”—or “she profits,” or “they profit most who serve the best” is more of a statement of some of the philosophical background. Rotary also has a statement that we have adopted called the “four-way test” of the things you say and do. Is it the truth? Is it fair to all concerned? Will it build better friendships? And is it beneficial to all concerned? These are basically the kinds of things that Rotary has talked about over the years as the criteria.

We have some statements of basic business and professional practices. And so many Rotary clubs still talk about business practices and what is fair at their weekly meetings sometimes. How do you handle difficult business situations? Certainly, a lot more in the earliest days of Rotary. They would actually bring products to their Rotary meetings and people would discuss them, whether they’re good or bad, or fair priced, or whatever. And so there’s always been the element of some ethical principles that has stood the test of time in the world of Rotary.

This is my last question on this, but at the international conferences—say, for example, the one that you hosted in Melbourne—in all these different sessions, is there an emphasis places on having different districts, different groups, different Rotary clubs, different Rotary members from all over, come and talk business? Like talk about business strategies, or, quote/unquote, this “good business” idea?

Yeah. At these kinds of meetings, we would often have group professional sessions. And we have a lot of booths set up in what’s called the “House of Friendship.” A hundred, 200 booths that would be different kind of professions. People that are interested in the law, or interested in music, people who are interested in handicapped persons—all kinds of different professions. Medical and dental, medical programs. And they have opportunities to meet and talk with other people, as well as all kinds of groups, of recreational groups and things like that, that they come and talk with each other about common topics, and share their experiences with each other. It’s a
very important part of the world of Rotary, is the vocational element, and what is the proper vocational life.

As a matter of fact, when the first law case came up of whether or not Rotary was discriminating against women, it was here in the state of California, down in the little town of Duarte in southern California. And the issue there that went to the California Supreme Court was, is Rotary a business organization or not? Or does it have a business element to it? And under the California Unruh Act [Unruh Civil Rights Act], it was determined that yes, the mere fact that they discuss business, they discuss their professions, people are represented in Rotary by their business or profession, it does have a business and professional element to it that brought it under the Unruh Act, which says that men only was a discrimination. And so Rotary had to change its policy, and then ultimately went to their council of legislation, changed the policy that it was a both men and women organizations. That's a little over twenty years ago, twenty-five years ago. Yeah.

06-01:07:37
Kim: So I’m going to bring us back to your role as a trustee. You served from 1992 to 1998; 1997 to ’98, you are the chairman.

06-01:07:50
Dochterman: That’s right.

06-01:07:51
Kim: So just looking back on those six years of your life, as a trustee and chairman of the foundation, what sort of legacy do you feel like you left, with your fellow trustee members, of course, but in your time period, how the foundation shifted, or what mark you left on it in the projects it funded and the way it operated?

06-01:08:12
Dochterman: Well, one thing that I feel that I was a prime mover was in the Peace Scholars Program. They had been talking about this program for many years, of maybe Rotary setting up a “peace college” or something like that. And so I chaired a committee to actually determine what we’re going to do about that. We had some educators get together, and I outlined a whole program of options. One was setting up a college, which I said was going to be so expensive it was almost beyond comprehension, all the way to just talking about peace in conferences or seminars. One option that I gave the committee was having a think tank of people that would get together from time to time and talk about peace and conflict resolution. Another one was to have a program at some university where we’d send students.

The one that we finally decided was my suggestion of picking out a half a dozen universities and send ten students to each of these—so that would be
sixty students a year—and give them a two-year program, so that we would actually—after the second year, we would have 120 of these students all over the world—and pick these out of colleges. We had about, I think, well over 100 universities in the world that asked to have the program come to their university. And we had to select which ones.

So that was, I think, a very, very significant part of my contribution to the Rotary Foundation at that time. Beyond that, I was just trying to see that we could raise enough money to expand the funding of the foundation, so that we could develop some things.

Another area that I took some lead in was establishing an endowment fund within the foundation called the “permanent fund.” And this was not well understood in many parts of the world. And some of the trustees, my fellow trustees, says, “You mean you’re not going to spend the money? You are just going to hold it?” They said, “That’s just hording money, isn’t it?” I says, “No. It’s developing a plan where people can give into a fund, and then that fund will grow and grow, and the interest of it will be used to help fund the program.” Because you never can get enough Rotary donors each year, and if you had a few hundred thousand dollars coming in from investments, an investment fund, which we’d finally put together—and we now have the permanent fund. And we have a lot of people that have put in endowments and created actually a funding processes for different kinds of programs. For example, we have some people that are funding a Rotary Scholar, a Peace Scholar, and made an endowment that would help to fund that on a permanent basis. So the development of the permanent fund I think was a major step, even though in many part of the world, they don’t think in terms of those kinds of investment funds.

Certainly, your experience at Berkeley and also the University of the Pacific make you an excellent fund raiser, and that’s essentially your expertise.

I’ve had a lot of experience.

So in terms of this permanent fund, in some ways, you did actually change the way that the foundation was operating. So it’s in addition to the kind of yearly goals of—

Yeah. We had the annual—

—finding funders?
Dochterman: —fund, and then we have the permanent fund.

Kim: And the annual fund still sits for three years accruing interest to run the office—

Dochterman: Yeah. Sure.

Kim: —the actual deployment and dissemination of these funds. The permanent fund raises money continuously but is not touched, and then the interest there—

Dochterman: The interest will be used—or is being used now—to help support other programs. Goes into the operation of other grants.

Kim: Interesting. And so that permanent fund, will it ever be used, or is it just kind of like a security?

Dochterman: No. It’ll be a perpetual endowment investment fund, and hopefully as it grows from people adding to it, you’ll have more and more money going into the operation to give and support grants—and many of those permanent funds people have created. I think I have about a $400,000 permanent fund, which, when I left the presidency, a lot of people wanted to put into a fund, and they created a fund in my name. And I think that’s grown to about $400,000 now. And most of—or a good many of—the more recent Rotary International presidents since my time have had these funds developed by their friends, and in their name. And mine is used to fund additional matching grants for humanitarian things. Some of them fund scholarships. Some of them, the income is used for specific types of programs, for blindness or for some kind of polio immunizations, or something like that.

So I can’t remember what the amount was of a goal for that fund. I think $100 million was our first goal, because the program was so tenuous in the minds of some people, we couldn’t set a goal bigger than that. I don’t know how many hundreds of millions are in that fund now.

It would be better if the interest rates were a little bit better these days. It would make a lot more money.

Kim: Well, that’s an amazing kind of legacy you left, then. I mean, you really did re-imagine the way that future projects will be funded.
Yeah. I think that’s something that will help them in the long run.

So I know we just asked your kind of “legacy question,” but just one last question that I had that escaped me for a moment, is, when you are fund raising for the foundation, you are obviously not just raising money from fellow Rotarians. You are also pursuing other funders. Is that correct?

Well, you do when there are possibilities. For example, there are certain foundations that have supported the Rotary Foundation. The [Bill & Melinda] Gates Foundation has put in a lot of money because of the PolioPlus program, and they have helped make major grants to the PolioPlus program. And so there are other funds, but by and large, the Rotary Foundation is funded by Rotarians and Rotary clubs, and clubs have fund-raising projects many times each year. And they’ll allocate a certain percentage of their project for local expense, and so much for Rotary Foundation expense. And so some clubs give very, very generously to the Rotary Foundation. Some, just very little, it’s not in their makeup. They just don’t think of it in that light.

So I know after you leave the chairmanship, or that position’s over in ’98, you get a little break from what seems to be the upper echelon of Rotary, and you become a Rotary member again. But of course, that’s quite brief, because in 2001, you become chairman of the Rotary Council on Legislation.

Yes. Every three years, they have what they call the “Council on Legislation.” And the Council on Legislation brings one person from every Rotary district in the world—that’s about 530 delegates—plus the trustees and the board of directors, and a few other Rotary leaders, and this group meets for a week. And they consider dozens, maybe 200 or so, proposals; the Council is the only place where you can change the rules or the bylaws of Rotary International, the constitution and bylaws, or make resolutions asking the board of directors to consider this issue or that issue, or develop a proposal for this change. It’s the legislative organization.

So that particular year—2001, I guess it was—

It was.

—I became the chairman of this group. And I spent a lot of time getting prepared, because they have hundreds of suggestions coming in. They have to be written in certain formats and everything. And we get together, and
sometimes you have to ask a club or district to change the material for the format, or sometimes there’s the same proposal from various districts. You see if you can get them to join together into a single proposal. So there’s a lot of detail, and then you run the Council like a legislative session. You run a week’s-long meeting of a lot of people. This is generally conducted in about six languages, and so everybody wears a headset with different languages being translated in the language they can understand the best. And so it’s constant interpretation. And there’s certain rules and regulations of parliamentary procedures that you follow, not necessarily Robert’s Rules [of Order], but similar kinds of things how they conduct the work of the council.

Kim: During your time, do you remember anything that changed in the bylaws that was—a proposal that—

Dochterman: Oh, yeah.

Kim: —demanded something?

Dochterman: Every year, there is a few things changed. Always, they have to review the policy on finances and policy relating to dues, to the membership. Each year, you see somewhat of a broadening of the policies of Rotary itself, and the year I was chairing, there was—I don’t know; I think there were about 600 proposals that came up. Everybody thought there was no way we could ever get through them, but I worked out pretty much a plan of how we could combine some and everything. And we did finish within the time limit, but there were a lot of simple little things, little proposals in the rules of Rotary.

As an illustration, generally speaking, a person who is supposed to attend each Rotary meeting. And that isn’t the policy today. You have to attend 50 percent of the meetings. But then, that there was a way, under certain circumstances—health reasons and other things—that you could be excused from your regular attendance. That sounds like it’s playing schoolboy, but it’s the way the organization was set up, is that Rotary was always considered a participating group, not merely one that you had your name on the list. And so they had this concept that members should [clears throat] attend the meetings each week. This particular item, we had a proposal to change the bylaws to provide an excuse for missing a weekly meeting. There were special reasons where it could be accepted as excuses to miss a meeting. You could be excused for any good cause your club felt was satisfactory. And everybody approved that, just open it up, broaden the scope, and cancel all these little simple exceptions.
The next item that came up was an item by the Japanese Rotarians that you could be excused from a meeting if you were attending the funeral of your spouse. And the group voted it down. And I could see the Japanese were very, very upset about this. So I told the sergeant at arms, the leaders there that were running the details, I said, “I want to talk to all the Japanese right after the meeting. Would you have them all meet in a separate room, and I want to go talk with them?” And so they all got together, and I brought a translator. And I said, “I know that you are very, very upset about this. But I wanted to explains why the vote was the way it was. The item just before said that a club could excuse a member for any purpose that is a good and legitimate purpose. And the council felt that attending the funeral of a spouse was the highest reason that you would not attend. And so—“Oh! Oh!” Now they understood it. And then they all were happy, you see? And there were two or three times when I felt compelled to go and meet with a group personally right at the time, and explain what happened. Because they were hearing something in English being translated, and didn’t quite get the fact that what they said was perfectly acceptable under the new policy.

Some were big items, and different kind of membership, I think. We had the idea that a person who had been a strong community leader even though not a member of the head of a corporation or business could become a member. That was the kind of thing that we would be looking at. But I felt as chairman, you had a big responsibility to make sure that you didn’t let certain little segments feel that they were put down, or that their opinion was unimportant or something. And so I would generally—as I did with the Japanese on that occasion—say, “I’ll talk with them,” and see if we could make sure that they’re not unhappy. And so that was just my style.

Kim: When we talk about the broadening of Rotary principles on a general level, it seems like it’s a bit of a loosening, right? An attempt to accommodate different work styles, just different economy, different realities that future Rotarians might be experiencing—

Dochterman: Sure. Well, the main thing—

Kim: —in the workplace?

Dochterman: —was the recognition that the business and professional life of communities has changed markedly in the last 100 years; at that time, it was the last eighty years or something, almost ninety years. Business used to be conducted by a man or person who owned a business and ran it himself on Main Street. And you could walk down Main Street; take Berkeley, for example. Hink’s
Department Store, Radstons stationary store [Radstons Office Supply]; you go down the street, and Roos/Atkins owned by local people. The Penney’s store always had a leader who—the founder, Mr. [James Cash] Penney wanted to be a Rotarian. And each store was owned by somebody who had a stake in the community. They lived in the community. But over the years, a business may be owned by somebody on the other side of the world. They no longer have the stake in the community. And so this has changed the business world. You don’t have private ownership and longtime ownership. A person, if they have a better job down in the next town, they’ll be there next week. And there is not that concept where a person hired on to a business and spent their whole life there. And this is one of the changing features of Rotary that it’s attempted to adapt.

And secondly, technology. We used to go to Rotary club, and you’d send a letter out in the morning, and you expect in two weeks you’d have an answer back. And now, you want to put something on the internet, and you expect in thirty seconds to have a “yes” or “no” answer. And business holds people in their offices, in their place of business, in a way that it didn’t in earlier years. People would say, “I’ll be back at two o’clock, after lunch.” And nobody cared. That’s the way business was conducted. But it’s changed so much. And so Rotary has had to make these changes in its operations, in the conduct of its membership, and the opening of membership as well. So those are the kinds of things that the Council on Legislation has to take into consideration.

Kim: So I don’t know if this is a bit of a stretch, but obviously, 2001, 9/11 happens. How does this kind of big event in the United States—but also a global event—change anything within Rotary? The conversations being had? It was a very hawkish time…

Dochterman: I don’t see too much in the way of the world situation, in the Middle East, really making a huge impact upon Rotary, which is interested in doing humanitarian things. There’s just parts of the world where there’s hardly anything you can do. And we don’t do anything [laughter] there, really. Rotary has to work where it can work.

We have a thing, a president a few years ago, and I worked with him about reaching out to Africa. So many needs there. And that there are opportunities for Rotary clubs who want to do something. Reach out to Africa. There’s so many places. Well, there’s poverty in the United States as well. And everywhere in the world, practically, except maybe Japan. Korea, you don’t see it very much. But there is poverty, there are needs, there’s people uneducated, people unfed, hopeless, and we have to look to those areas and see, can we do something there? And you can’t really say that we can do
something everywhere. Because politics and wars, and everything, philosophy, religion, and everything makes it almost impossible.

But we have Rotary in Russia; it’s still fairly strong. But still, we’ve got international issues related to Russia.

So we have to recognize that we can do something in some places. But there are probably places that, at this time in the world, we are not able to do it, do something. As I mentioned, the reporter from New York, we don’t have the weapons of war. We have to work with the instruments of peace. And that’s where we can work, I think.

06-01:34:57
Kim: So after your role as chairman of the Rotary Council on Legislation, what is your involvement with Rotary after that?

06-01:35:07
Dochterman: I continued just doing things locally. It’s been said that I have spoken to more Rotary clubs than anybody in the world. And I probably was in huge demand, and I would be traveling so many, many places. And I served on some additional committees, largely some of the committees of Long Range Planning, and the subsequent presidents generally asked me to chair committees on Long Range Planning, Dreams of the Future Committee, the Strategic Planning Committee. So many different committees that I served on. And I would just do what I could do. Generally or often, I would be asked to speak at the International Assembly, which is the training program, a week long, for all the district governors that we mentioned before. And the Zone Institutes. These are little training conferences around the world. The District Conferences. And so I just kept doing little things, as though they were big and important. And they were, a little bit, to someone.

06-01:36:56
Kim: Did you keep going to Rotary meetings at your local Rotary club?

06-01:36:59
Dochterman: Oh, yeah. I haven’t missed a meeting in fifty-eight years. Once a week. That only says that I have some pretty regular habits. But I never made a passion to it; it’s just, I enjoy Rotary, and it’s become such a big part of my life that that’s what I do.

06-01:37:28
Kim: And you joined a Rotary club here in Moraga, California?

06-01:37:31
Dochterman: Yeah.
Kim: So how long were you with the Moraga Rotary club? Or have you been?

Dochterman: Well, I came to Moraga when we got married in 1994, and so I joined shortly after that. I still have honorary memberships in Berkeley and in Stockton, and various other places, I have memberships. But I try to go to Berkeley a few times a year, or generally have been asked to speak at Berkeley each year. And I go the same way to Stockton, just to recognize their thoughtfulness in carrying me as an honorary member of the club.

Kim: Was it strange to go back just as a member after having been—

Dochterman: Oh!

Kim: —such a prominent speaker, president—?

Dochterman: Yeah. You know, you are at a point where you are on the top of the mountain, and all of a sudden, you’re just a regular member of the club. But I have to say that just being the world leader of Rotary, I never felt I was any different than any other member, than when I was just a regular member of my own club. It just seemed to me that I was just being very fortunate to have been given a rare opportunity to lead a world organization. And so I never felt that I was any more important. I just thought, what a surprising thing that I had this opportunity. And that was the big story, I guess, is I think about that presidency, I think I was the biggest surprised. Most surprised, rather.

Kim: So I know I really want to touch upon your long Boy Scout career, which in some ways is longer than your Rotary career, because it starts right on your twelfth birthday.

I’m sure we’ll continue to talk about it a little bit in the following interview, or a final interview, but just, you’ve been on committees where you are looking at the future of Rotary, where you are doing these long term planning. We have talked about the changing workplace environment, the changing way of work. So for you, now, what do you hope for the future of Rotary? What changes, if you were president again, right now, would you really hope to implement, not so much on the global level, but structurally within Rotary?

Dochterman: No, I think that Rotary has a pretty good structure. One of the big difficulties, in my opinion, is the sharp apex that we have. We have got 1,200,000 members, and those go to 32,000 clubs—or 34,000, rather. And those go to
530 district governors. And the district governors go to a seventeen-member board of directors. And that goes to one president. And that’s an awfully sharp apex to achieve of having an opportunity to really get the feel and make the impact upon the membership itself. So I don’t know exactly how do this very well, but I have a feeling that there is a greater need for the orientation of the membership into the real purpose and values of what Rotary is and can be. That it is not just a social organization, it’s not a Chamber of Commerce or business, it’s not a religion, it’s not a political party; it’s none of these. It’s a unique kind of organization, of men and women who believe that they can do something in the world, that will make the world a little better, and by working together, they try to do it.

So I guess if I could do it again, I suppose that I would give a lot more thought to what is the mission that we can fulfill the best in the world today, of a non-profit organization not controlled by governments or any other outside group, but having as their core the leaders of communities? And is there a bigger role, a bigger purpose, that this group can play in the world? Perhaps there is. I just haven’t thought enough about it to feel that I had an answer. It would be something that I would really have to consider a long time, of what is there that I could do that would make it a stronger organization with more value in the world?

Because the world has changed so much from the days when the organization was founded. It was founded by a bunch of lonely men who moved to a big city, most of them from small towns, and were looking for friendship, looking for ways to improve their lives and their business. And then out of that, improve the life for their families and their children. And that was the mission. Now, there are other demands of business and technology and communication and pressures on young people. Today, the pressures upon young businessmen and women are just beyond comprehension compared to the days when Rotarians had time and didn’t have the demands of technology. There was no television; there was hardly any radio; people talked to each other, and people met each other on the street and said hi, and all kinds of stuff. That was the intercommunication. And now people are punching little phone books and smartphones, and everything you can imagine, talking to people that they don’t know, and they don’t know them. [laughter]

06-01:45:55
Kim: Right. No, definitely. The way that one experiences time has changed really rapidly due to technology, and the expectations one is expected to do, and in the timeframe that they are expected to do it in has also accelerated.

06-01:46:11
Dochterman: Oh, it certainly has.
But in some ways, this is, strangely, a perfectly segue to your life as a Boy Scout, because Boy Scouts, and scouting in general, is a little bit about taking yourself out of business and going out into nature, and skill building, and very different, but very related to Rotary’s values. So I know we discussed earlier that you—in our first interview, I believe—you joined Boy Scouts in 1937. It’s 50 cents. It’s your twelfth birthday. And then you are very eager to catch up with your older brother, and become an Eagle Scout.

So I was just wondering, of your early Boy Scouting memories, which then becomes a larger career—of participation and volunteerism—do you have any fond memories as a—I know you were a camp counselor, I know that you have to pass a series of different exams even to be an Eagle Scout. And it’s all within the context of the Great Depression. Do you have any formative memories of early Boy Scouting? Of what it was that attracted you to it?

Well, maybe I didn’t know much about it, except my brother was a Scout, and I wanted to be one. But I just enjoyed doing the things—going places, taking hikes, camping out—things of that nature that they were doing. And so once I got into scouting, I was gung-ho to go and pass the tests, and move up the ranks, and one thing and another. And making merit badges, and I was just sufficiently competitive and drawn into it that it just kind of met my needs at that particular time.

Was there any merit badge or exam that you had trouble with, that you really had to try your hardest as a child?

Well, I think my toughest one, maybe, was the last one that I had before I got Eagle, was lifesaving. We didn’t have a pool, or there wasn’t an opportunity to take lifesaving classes or something. I did some of that at summer camp, and swimming, and learning the skills. And I eventually passed the test for lifesaving in the water.

So that was a difficult one. But by and large, most of the merit badges and the tests were pretty simple for me to handle, and I didn’t have much difficulty with any of it. But I just enjoyed the outdoor activities, and I enjoyed my first experience of getting a job. I think I was probably—my second year attending summer camp. I went as a camper once. Then after that, I got a job working on a camp staff. And then I did that all through high school, and every summer, I’d go to summer camp and work on a scout camp, succeeding different levels of responsibility.
And so I just enjoyed all of that activity, the leadership opportunities. We had a very good scoutmaster. He was also a high school teacher. And I remember he had always promised that anybody in the Boy Scout troop that became an Eagle Scout, he would take them on a canoe trip. And I remember, for two or three days, going with him on a canoeing trip around some lakes in Ohio, where I grew up. And I felt this was a rare experience, to be able to show off some of my scouting skills at canoeing, and all the things that I had learned in summer camps before.

But it was not a very large troop, but it was a good troop, with a good leader. Our scoutmaster was a very, very good leader for me. And Bernard Miller was his name. Bernard Miller was the scoutmaster. And he was a good influence, I think.

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06-01:51:42
Kim: It sounds like he plays a pretty pivotal mentorship role, right? If that canoe trip is memorable.

06-01:51:50
Dochterman: Yeah. He was a very, very memorable guy. And he taught woodshop in the school. I thought he was an old guy then, but he was probably in his thirties.

06-01:52:09
Kim: In one of our first interviews, you talked about growing up in a single-parent home, and really being drawn to the structure YMCA [Young Men’s Christian Association], and now the Boy Scouts. So do you feel like both Eagle Scout and working at camp, and this amazing mentor that you have, Bernard Miller, who takes you on a camping trip and it’s just the two of you, reflecting back, do you think that that plays a role in you learning how to, quote/unquote, “Be a man?” Or just what kind of—

06-01:52:41
Dochterman: Oh, sure.

06-01:52:43
Kim: —development role it plays in your life?

06-01:52:45
Dochterman: —of course, by the time I became a Boy Scout, my stepfather had come into the picture, and had adopted my brother and me. And he was a good influence, and he gave me a lot of opportunities, and I felt very close to him. So scouting was a major aspect. I would have probably kept involved in the YMCA, but we had moved to a town which did not have a YMCA, and that’s why scouting was the next step after being involved in the YMCA program of learning, being with other guys and everything.
So those were difficult days, because we had moved to a new town, and I was getting adjusted to a new town. And I was just driven by some achievement that I could make and everything. I was a good student, and so I was rather competitive—reaching the top was always, to me, one of the best things that I could do.

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Where do you think that that kind of motivation and drive comes from? Is it from your family, or from a—

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Well, I think it was—

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—desire for recognition?

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—partly my family. I recognized the fact that my mother worked awfully hard to keep her two boys together. But it was just, I didn’t ever think that I was doing anything beyond what everybody else did. That achievement was expected, and if you were going to do something, you do it the best you can. And you reach out to do the best that you possibly can, within the parameters in which you live. We didn’t have an awful lot of money, but everybody else didn’t have much money in the thirties, either. And so scouting was one of my major activities at that time.

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So I know in a speech that you gave, you noted that Boy Scout truly prepares someone for, quote, “quality citizenship.” So can you talk to me a little bit about what “quality citizenship” means to you, and how the Boy Scouts kind of builds that?

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Well, the scouting program gives a person a chance to self-achieve. Nobody is going to do the work for you. In some youth activities, physical strength, physical agility, personal physical development at a young age are very, very important. If you are going to play in sports, they pick the tallest, the fastest or best coordinated to be on their team. In scouting, you can be the shortest, the slowest guy in the world, but you can be the best camp cooker.

But in scouting, a boy can be the best hiker, he can do anything better than anybody else, and he doesn’t have to be the strongest or the fastest, or the tallest, or whatever. And so this is what I always felt. I was a pretty short little guy in those years, and it was a way for me to reach some achievements.

And so I always felt that in scouting, there was an element of personal achievement, but also the importance of God, and country, and that there was
an acceptance that being a good citizen was an important part of a person’s life. And I didn’t think that there were any options. I think that was what you did. You were a good citizen. And I always thought that scouting gave me and all the boys that I worked with an opportunity to demonstrate their basic appreciation for the country we lived in and the freedoms we have. And that scouting was, from that standpoint, a very worthwhile organization in which to be a part.

And in so many ways also, because you are all able to achieve differently, right? You are all able to achieve greatness through different means, which really engenders respect, and the ability to see that people’s worth isn’t just if they are the football captain. One type of skill isn’t valued over the other. Which also translates, I think, quite nicely to citizenship, where you have to be a citizen of a very diverse populace.

Well, in the scouting program, there is probably well over 100 different merit badges you can achieve. And it can be as diverse as hiking and pioneering, and lifesaving and boating, and archery, and music, and reading, and just about anything a person can do, there is an opportunity. Whether you’re a stamp collector, a coin collector, or you play chess, or whatever you enjoy. Citizenship in your community, citizenship in your state, and citizenship in the world are three of the requirements, of knowing something about your community and your state and your nation, and that meets a test that before an adult leader signs off that you have met those kind of qualifications. So there is a lot of skills or interests of this variety that can open the door for kids a great deal.

So what happens after Eagle Scout? And you participate all throughout high school.

Yeah.

Is that correct? What is your involvement with the Boy Scouts during college, or even when you move out to California? In the early years?

I was, during my college years, so busy, and I didn’t have much time for scouting, except occasionally, I would help kids, and occasionally would be a counselor for merit badges, or things like that. But it was probably after I got out of college and I started taking some interest again—or a greater interest—in the scouting program. And learning about the local scout camps, and the
scout leaders, and share some experiences from time to time. But then when I had a son of my own.

But my son became interested, maybe because I took an interest. And as he joined a local scout troop, I again volunteered to serve on the council of the regional Boy Scout, called the Forty Niner Council, over in Stockton. And there, I became active on the committee, and the local troop, and would help the boys, and volunteer an awful lot of time to help the boys on different fund-raising projects, and taking them camping, and going camping with them, and that type of thing. And more and more, I got involved, and subsequently then became the president of Forty Niner Council.

And in that respect, I got involved in the regional area, which is the Western Region. And they were talking about the Jamboree. Well, I had never had a chance to go to a Boy Scout Jamboree as a boy. We just couldn’t afford the money to go, and so I thought, well, I’ll give my son that chance, if he wants to go. And so I volunteered to be a leader, and so I became the assistant camp chief of the Western Region, and that is—oh, it was all the western states, from about Utah west, and Arizona, and California, and Oregon, Nevada, Idaho, Washington—oh, just the whole West. And I think Hawaii.

In any event, we had about 5,000 boys in the Western Region that were in the camp. And so I went as the assistant camp chief for that group, and we had a team of leaders, and each unit had their own area where they slept. Camp Western Region had its own camp. In any event, I had a good time, and my son enjoyed it. And so—

06-02:05:39
Kim: I actually wanted to go back really quickly to your presidency at the Forty Niner Council. So it sounds like you joined because your son is now a Boy Scout, and this is a way for you to participate—

06-02:05:52
Dochterman: Take part with them.

06-02:50:55
Kim: You’ve often spoken about being the recipient of opportunities given, but I had the opportunity to talk to Brian Thiessen, and he said that you actually really gave an opportunity to Bob [Robert] Mazzuca.

06-02:06:11
Dochterman: Yes.

06-02:06:12
Kim: —early on. So do you want to tell that story? Because I know—
Bob Mazzuca became the chief scout executive. Bob Mazzuca was looking for a spot which would be the head of a council, and he had been an assistant at several areas. And Bob Mazzuca applied in the Forty Niner Council to be the council executive. I was on the committee while I was council president, and we hired Bob Mazzuca there to come to work with us. And he worked for a few years, and then was moved to a much larger area, and eventually ended up in—I think he went to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and then eventually was selected to be the chief scout executive down in Fort Worth—the headquarters is in Texas. And so we were always good friends, and he always kind of recognized the fact that I had a little faith and gave him a chance to be a first scout executive.

Which I think it’s important to reflect on, right? You have brought people up along the way, and you—

Yeah, this is important to do: give other people the chance that I was given.

Just a question before we talk about the Jamboree, and then maybe we’ll wrap it up for today, and start with Boy Scouts, since I know we have gone for a little over two hours. But so many dads, especially if they are already Rotarians and active in the university, might agree to be a scout leader, or chaperone. What drives you to join the Forty Niner Council? Why did you want to participate at that larger level?

Well, primarily because my son was involved. I didn’t have lots of time on my hands, but I felt that I could give some time and help out, because scouting had been such an important part of my younger life that I thought that I could maybe give something back to the scouting program, and enjoy the leadership with the people that were volunteering, I also enjoyed the other professional leadership. And I just enjoyed having an opportunity to take kids up to the summer camp, and take part in the activities. And my wife was equally enthusiastic and involved. And so we were very, very involved in just helping our kids, both of our two kids. Yeah.

Well, why don’t we leave that for today. Thank you so much. We’ll start off with more Boy Scouts next week, in our final interview. But thank you so much.
Hi. My name is Cristina Kim, and I am here with Cliff Dochterman, in our seventh and final interview. Today is September 8, 2016, and we are here in Moraga, California. How are you doing today?

I am doing well. Looking forward to another visit.

Fantastic. Well, I know that last time, we had kind of stopped talking about, or ended our session talking about, the Boy Scouts. But we hadn’t gone and talked about your role as the camp chief of the Western division during the 1981 National Scout Jamboree, at Fort A.P. Hill in Virginia?

Yes. It was Camp A.P. Hill in Virginia.

So I would love to know what a Jamboree entails, and what your role was in it. Because according to your son, you were a bigwig at this event.

Well, I am not sure it was a bigwig, but it was a lot of responsibility. The Boy Scouts of America have had, every four years, what they call a “Boy Scout Jamboree,” and this is the bringing together of Boy Scouts and scout leaders from all parts of the United States. And the United States is divided up into regions, and we are in the Western Region out here. And each region then has a large campsite, and the campsites are, oh, approximately 5,000 boys in each campsite, and there’s generally about eight or ten campsites. So there’s about 40,000 to 50,000 boys brought together for a ten-day event of the Jamboree.

And so I was the camp chief. One year, I was the assistant camp chief, and the next four year event, I was the camp chief the next Jamboree, which was four years later. The camp chief is the one who is basically responsible as the chief leader of all of the scouts from your area of the country. So the Western Region included everything from Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Utah, Nevada, Arizona, California, and Hawaii. And so we had a lot of boys. And they all sleep in their pup tents. Fortunately, those of us who are heading the camp, we did have cots and a larger tent, and a dining room tent where we had our meals cooked by one of the scout leaders. But the boys would cook their own meals, and they were under a local scout master.

So it’s an amazing experience of a whole city being set up and everything is worked out. And they need a large space where they can have to set up everything that you would need in a community: water systems; and disposal
systems; and all kinds of sanitary and health to care for this many boys. And there’s always going to be a few accidents, and a few illnesses and things with that many boys all at once.

So it’s a great experience; as I think back, a tremendous responsibility that you have all these anxious young guys. Most of them would be probably in the fourteen to sixteen-year age group, because to go to the Jamboree, generally, a boy would have to be probably about at least fourteen, thirteen or fourteen, and have achieved certain levels of achievement within the scout program to be selected to go from their area.

07-00:04:54
Kim: What is the purpose of the Jamboree, the overall kind of mission?

07-00:04:57
Dochterman: Well, the Jamboree is for the boys to learn additional skills. They have all kinds of crafts, and various athletic skills, and swimming, and canoeing, and all kinds of outdoor skills that the boys participate. Every hour, there’s new things happening all over the campsite, and boys participate to the level of their proficiency. And they have evening programs, which would be a huge program that everybody would enjoy. And so it’s just a great experience for the boys as well as the scout leaders, too.

07-00:05:47
Kim: Given your experience with camping as a child, and then with the California alumni association, and all your work in Rotary, do you feel like you left a legacy, or made any changes within the way that the Jamboree was organized?

07-00:06:01
Dochterman: It’s had such a long tradition and things are going very well, but we had really no great problems within our Western Regional group. And we had some great adult leaders that were working with each one of the troops, and the troops would be, oh, generally about thirty boys, if I remember correctly. And a lot of local adult leaders are very important in making the success of this event go on.

07-00:06:44
Kim: Well, I know that Boy Scouts has always been a part of your life, so much so that there is a Silver Wheel Award of the International Fellowship of Scouting Rotarians that is actually dedicated in your honor—or rather, it’s the Cliff Dochterman Rotary Scouting Service Award that is named after you. So it’s always been happening at the same time, these two kind of services.

So I know I spoke to your friend and colleague Brian Thiessen, and he said that what he really wanted to hear was your experiences when you were traveling with Rotary, the intersections that you got to see scouting worldwide. And I know he had mentioned a particular story—when you were visiting
Nigeria—that was of particular note, if you want to—I would love to hear that story.

Dochterman: Oh, yes. Frequently, where I’d go around the world—and as Rotary president—there would be Boy Scouts of that particular country, and I often meet these boys and spend a little time just chatting with them, and trying to learn about their experiences, and the things that they like about the scouting program.

But when I was in Nigeria, they decided that I ought to become a member of the Nigerian Boy Scout movement. And so one day, they said, “We have a special event going to happen today, and you are going to be made an honorary Boy Scout of Nigeria.” I said, “Wonderful!” So we go out, and it was probably at least 110 degrees outside—hot, hot day. But Boy Scouts always seem to have to have a fire. And so they had this big, big fire blazing, and they were all sitting all around the fires, as people often do—normally, in the evening when it’s cool. But they were all around the fire, and presented me with a special kind of neckerchief or a scarf-like arrangement that the Boy Scouts of Nigeria wear. And we had a lot of fun as I would greet each one of the boys and ask them a few questions, and one thing and another. But Boy Scouts don’t seem to be able to do anything without a bonfire—a big one. And it was an interesting and a rare experience, and I always valued that neckerchief that they gave me on that occasion.

Kim: Did you get to interact with other scouts from around the world?

Dochterman: Various places. I remember I was in China, and there were some Boy Scouts that were helping, and I remember getting a bunch of them together, and several of them were trying to try out their English, and I had to have an interpreter to help me on the other side. I remember I have got some pictures of scouts in several other places around the world.

Another occasion was when I was in Sweden. And they had an audience that I was going to have with the king [Carl XVI Gustaf]. And I said, “Yes, I think I met him at the Jamboree in Virginia a few years ago.” I had been several years back. And so I had put in my packet a picture, the king and I, when we were at the Jamboree. He has been a very, very strong supporter of Boy Scouts in Sweden, and he had arrived with a group of Boy Scouts from Sweden to the United States Jamboree, and was there, and I had gotten acquainted with him, as one does, and meeting a little bit, short time. And when I visited with him, I showed him the picture that we had taken together, and we chatted about a number of things, and a great deal about youth programs that he was so much interested in.
So those were various interesting ways in which scouting and Rotary came together. As Brian Thiessen may have mentioned, there is this award called the Cliff Dochterman Scouting Leader Award, which is a little bit embarrassing when they’ve asked me to present it to people, because it has my picture on the certificate, and it seems to be a little overstated, I am afraid. But it is an award which is approved by the Boy Scouts of America, with a specific little pin or badge that’s put on a uniform for those, primarily of Rotarians who have had an interest as a scout leader, not only of Boy Scouts, but Girl Scout youth leaders. And it’s given all around the world now, this particular award. And I have been asked to present it a number of times.

I remember one occasion; I think I was at an international convention, it may have been, in Salt Lake City. The award was established in 2005, because it was at the centennial of Rotary International in Chicago. And so several years later—maybe two or three years later—I was in Salt Lake City for a Rotary International convention, and a man was coming down the hall towards me, and he kept looking at my badge that I was wearing, as they always do, a personal identification. And he says, “Cliff Dochterman? Cliff Dochterman?” He says, “I have a scouting award called ‘the Cliff Dochterman Award.’ I thought you must have been dead years ago!” And so I said, “No, they were very kind to recognize my scouting activities in naming this award for me.”

Well, I heard that initially, when they asked you could they name the award after you, you were hesitant. You declined, that is what Brian told me.

I was a little bit reluctant, quite a bit reluctant. That just wasn’t a big deal for me, and it seemed a little bit presumptuous. But they prevailed and said, you are one of the leaders of Rotary who has had a long scouting experience.

And a lot of people did not know that in the earliest days of Rotary, youth activities was one of the primary activities. And particularly since Rotary in its earliest years was a male-only organization, the support of Boy Scout units was a very important part of the Rotary program. And in the United States, more Boy Scout troops were sponsored by Rotary clubs than any other organization. Now, that is no longer the case, because there is a lot of churches and other groups that now use the scout program as a youth program, too. But Rotary and scouting have had a long, long, close history, and the leaders of Rotary and the leaders of scouting—because Boy Scouts came to the United States in 1910, and consequently the two organizations grew up together, and the leaders were friends. So it was rather natural that Rotary clubs in the early days were sponsors of scout units.
I know in my conversation with Brian Thiessen, he noted that internationally, scouting looks quite different. So in some countries, scouting is co-ed. It isn’t “Boy Scouting” and “Girl Scouting”; it’s just “Scouting.” What is your experience? Did you see those kind of scout programs, and do you think that Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts—is that the future in the United States?

Well, I think I’ve seen some of these programs, how they do differ. I wouldn’t pass a judgment one way or the other, except for the fact that the age in which we are talking about, of a boy coming into scouting, and girls going into Girl Scouting, is normally twelve, thirteen, fourteen years old, and there is such a difference in the growing process at that period in a child’s life that I think there is a certain value of having the separate organizations. That’s just mainly because that’s the way I grew up, and seeing them. But I think there may be a lot of benefits in some cultures.

But generally speaking, I have felt that a boy can achieve something in the scouting program. He doesn’t have to be the strongest, the most coordinated, the tallest, the whatever. Each youngster can achieve in certain areas. And that’s what I always liked about the scouting program: that youngsters could achieve at their level and their level of interest. Now, my kids were also involved in sports, and baseball, Little League, and that sort of thing. But by and large, the kids who are the most coordinated, who are the strongest, the tallest, the biggest for their age group are the ones that got to play the most, and the others kids were there for—warm the bench a bit, or something like that.

In any event, so that’s why I have always thought there is a bit of difference between the various organizations, and why I have been so involved with the scouting program. I thought they were a chance for every kid, because as a kid, I was a very small kid, and I wasn’t very tall or anything. We didn’t have the organized sports programs then in the same way we do now.

So what do you think is the future of Boy Scouts? What would you to see?

Well, Boy Scouts—

Or Girl Scouts.

The scouting programs have been going through a difficult period, largely because of some of the policies of the scouting program. Scouting is based upon certain principles: that part of a growth of a youngster is a belief in their
nation, in their country, of patriotism toward their country; and a belief in god of some kind. And so the scouting programs have been challenged a great deal by atheist groups, by people. And generally speaking, scouting has had a policy of—which is kind of—I don’t know what the proper words are, but essentially anti-gay policies. And these have influenced the program. And certain corporations that used to sponsor scouting programs backed off because of what was seen to be the political appropriate way to show their feelings of total openness and everything. The scouting program has changed somewhat. They have made some adjustments in the policies.

But there are certain things that I think were pretty standard in the scouting philosophy that, to me, are still important. And I think one’s responsibilities to one’s country, one’s religion—of whatever it may be—are things that young people should at least be exposed to. And to try to wipe the slate clean, that so many things don’t make any difference anymore, I think time is going to tell whether that’s a good philosophy or not.

07-00:22:39
Kim: For the future of Boy Scouts, do you just hope that they become more open, but that they preserve certain policies?

07-00:22:44
Dochterman: Well, they have become more open. I suspect this will all work out well. Certain people backed off and disavowed the scouting program for a period of time. But a lot of these people have come back now that they have, I guess, somewhat relaxed the hard and fast policies that they have had for a long time.

07-00:23:18
Kim: And now really just to talk about the honors that you’ve received in the scouting world. So we have mentioned that there is an award named after you, but you have also been the recipient of the Silver Beaver [Award] and the Silver Antelope Award during the Jamboree?

07-00:23:33
Dochterman: Yes. One, the Silver Beaver, is given by the local scouting council. And then the Silver Antelope Award is a recognition for what you have done in the larger region of scouting. And these are presented at some court of honor.

And there was one other award that is given, which is called the Distinguished Eagle Award. This, of course, is, without a doubt, Rotary’s highest honor. And it’s given to somebody who was an Eagle Scout, and, I often jokingly say, you stayed out of jail throughout your lifetime. A major committee, I guess, selects the recipients of the Distinguished Eagle for some substantial contributions that you’ve made to society. Not necessarily to scouting, but to society, and had been, as a youth, an Eagle Scout. It’s basically presented by a recipient who has received that award. And this was presented to me in
Stockton by Jim [James Arthur] Lovell [Jr.], who was the astronaut, and came out to Stockton for a community banquet, that gave me that particular award that’s—

07-00:25:31
Kim: This is the highest award in all of Boy Scouts?

07-00:25:34
Dochterman: Yes, I would think so.

07-00:25:35
Kim: And do you remember what it was like to receive that award in 1991?

07-00:25:41
Dochterman: It was humbling. I look at my life, and I just say, well, it’s just the life which I’ve tried to do good things. I’ve enjoyed my life; I’ve been fortunate, fortunate to have so many opportunities that have come my way. And being able to, because of my family and the people that I have worked with, have been so generous in providing me time, that I have always felt very honored to be receiving some recognitions and things like this. And before your peers, an award of the scouting program was a very, very humbling—but very much appreciated.

07-00:26:45
Kim: Do you remember the award ceremony and what it was like?

07-00:26:48
Dochterman: Oh, it was a large community banquet, and it was in Stockton. I certainly remember all the detail, but there were probably, like, lots of other presentations, too.

07-00:27:10
Kim: Well, I don’t think everyone gets Jim Lovell, so—

07-00:27:12
Dochterman: No, he was certainly very, very attentive, and having a great background, and his achievements are legendary. And to have him come out and make the effort to present that award personally is part of the tribute to the award itself.

07-00:27:41
Kim: Well, I know that you are always very generous with giving gratitude and thanks to other people for the opportunities that they have given you. But in large part, that’s because you have been very generous with your time, and have always been part of your communities. Because I know we have talked about Boy Scouts and Rotary, which of course are local, then national, even global organizations. But you have also had continued service throughout your life. In Stockton, you were on the board of directors at the YMCA [Young Men’s Christian Association], as well as United Way. So—
Dochterman: My leadership on the board of directors of the YMCA was in Berkeley.

Kim: Oh, it was in Berkeley?

Dochterman: When I was still in Berkeley.

Kim: OK. In the sixties, then? Fifties?

Dochterman: And I was on the board of the YMCA of Berkeley, and enjoyed that. They had an excellent Y program at Berkeley.

Kim: Well, I know that early on, you had the opportunity to join the Y, actually due to a benefactor.

Dochterman: Yes. I felt a little bit of responsibility to share some of the experiences that I had of joining the Y as a young kid, because it was an important thing to me at that time in my life. And to have a chance for somebody to give me and my brother a membership to the Y, and we learned an awful lot—games, and swimming, and activities, and how to just do things—at a physical YMCA building, where we learned a lot in the pool and in the gymnasiums and in other activities. I have always been a modest monetary supporter of the Y. Even though I hadn’t, in my later life, taken that much role, I was glad to be a part of the Y in Berkeley.

The other activities, when I went to Stockton—

Kim: Well, before we move to Stockton—so I just have a question about your time—I didn’t realize it was in Berkeley, but when you were on that board of directors, do you think that your experiences with YMCA—which I know in our interviews you have said were kind of pivotal, right? I think in the words you used, you could have been just another guy on the street, just another kid in the street. Given that, what were some of the decisions you made on that board that you think helped shape it?

Dochterman: Well, I am not sure that I made that much contribution. I just was willing to help, and did a bit in trying to raise some money, which all youth organizations have to have to keep going. And I actually took a part in the adult program there a little bit. But I was pretty much of a junior guy at that time, in those years at Berkeley. And so I don’t think I contributed that much
there, other than a little bit of time, and my experience. And just tried to do something that would be worthwhile for them. Yeah.

Kim: It sounds like it came full circle, so that’s really nice.

Dochterman: Yes, I did. It was, to know and see some of the kids. And sometimes the Berkeley Rotary club, when I was leading there, we had a chance to help in sponsoring various activities—I don’t remember exactly, but some of the activities, and providing them new games and equipment that they needed to replace some of their athletic equipment. These were just things that we naturally did to help the Y a little bit.

Kim: Was there ever any kind of scholarship programs, like the one that you and your brother received during the Great Depression?

Dochterman: No, I don’t think of that as a program that they actually had. They were pretty generous in, however, of helping boys. And then they also had, in addition to the downtown YMCA building there in downtown Berkeley, then they had a West Berkeley branch or something where it was a little more community-oriented, down in the west part of Berkeley.

Kim: Thank you for answering that.

And, so, yes. So now, in Stockton. So of course, this is much later, in the seventies and eighties, but—

Dochterman: Yeah. Experiences over there, as a member of the university community, we felt that we had a responsibility in the community, and that we ought to be doing things in the community. So I was asked to be on the board of the Chamber of Commerce. The University of the Pacific was merely a token member: we paid our dues, and that was from the University of the Pacific. We were a community group, and so we belonged to the Chamber of Commerce. But then they said, “We haven’t had anybody from the university for a number of years on our board. Would you come on the board?” And I realized that it had been quite a few years, before we got there, that we were just a dues-paying member of the Chamber of Commerce. So I said, “Yes, I think it would be a good thing for the university to be represented on the board of directors.”

Well, a couple of years later, I don’t know—it just seemed to be time, and they asked me if I would be president. Well, I think they had a president, and I
was incoming president. And the gentleman who was before me as president, his company transferred him, and all of a sudden I was sprung into the presidency of the Chamber of Commerce.

Kim: Which is pretty early on, right? That’s ‘77 to ‘78, I believe?

Dochterman: Yeah. That’s true. And so I had only been in Stockton—well, I went there in ‘72, so it was half a dozen, a little less than half a dozen, years. But I felt that it was a real opportunity for the university to demonstrate that they are a part of the community, not just an institution sitting up in the northern part of the town, and that we were a real part of the community. We had a number of programs in which we were giving opportunities to local students to come to the university. And we had a community involvement program in which we were picking some primarily minority students that would not have an opportunity to go to a university and bringing them along. So we had a number of programs working with the community, as well as the athletic program was very, very strong in the community, of the university’s athletic program. And UOP had received a lot of support, financial support, from the community.

So there was many reasons that I felt there was a role for the university in the Chamber of Commerce. And so I had a good experience, and tried to give whatever kind of leadership I could.

Kim: Well, I know that was important, because the role that you play at the University of the Pacific is really institution building. So I’m sure that being both on the board but then the president of the Chamber of Commerce was important for the connections you were making, not just demonstrating the programs, but actually—were you able to, through your relationships made, create new programs, or—

Dochterman: We were just trying to keep the Chamber of Commerce a strong organization in the community. And so I did my best to show up at things, like the opening of new businesses in town, and going to events in the community. The kind of things the Chamber does is cut ribbons for new stores that are opening, and all kinds of things. And be supportive of the business and professional community of the city.

Kim: What did the Chamber of Commerce of Stockton look like at the time? Who was on that—
Well, we had an excellent board, of some of the real leaders of the town, the business and professional people. And they were very, very supportive of trying to give strength to the community. And we had a very able manager; was the professional CEO of operations. And so I was quite involved for a period of time in the Chamber activities.

Well, then I know that after that, you also are on the San Joaquin Parks and Recreation Commission. And of course, in true Dochterman spirit, you then become the chairman. And so what was your role there, and what were you really hoping to do?

Well, the Parks and Recreation Commission for San Joaquin County involved—I don’t remember the specific number, but my guess is twelve to fifteen individual parks around the county. And some of these were fairly large; some of them are quite small, just small parks. Or some marinas along the rivers there. Excuse me.

So the parks, we had a wide variety of different kinds of parks and recreational areas in the community. Certainly, the experiences that I had had in camping for so long, I had a reasonable amount of opportunity to know some of the issues relating to the operation of camps, and campsites, and parks, and various large parks. I tried to visit all of the different parks so that I knew them personally, where they were located, and what the issues were relating to the various parks, and—

How did you get involved? Did you seek out that opportunity, or were you asked to join?

No, I think that they had an opening on the parks commission, and that you had to submit your name as a candidate to be selected, and then the Board of Supervisors of San Joaquin County actually selected the people. And then the board itself elected the president, who would be leader for as long as they would stick on. And so I was the chairman of the parks department, on the volunteer board, until I actually moved out of Stockton and came to Moraga.

Oh, wow! I didn’t realize that.

So there, I was there for quite a few years on the Parks and Rec—well, yeah. No, I think until I became the president of Rotary International, which would be in ‘91. I said, I’ve just got too many irons in the fire, and so I resigned from
the Parks and Recreation Commission. So those just seemed to be parts of life; that I never felt that they were unusually demanding or anything. It’s just you take on some civic responsibilities if you are going to be a citizen.

Kim: A lot of people don’t take on those civic responsibilities. So how do you define not only “civic responsibility,” but also “community”? Because you seem so involved everywhere you move. You make community, and you become part of the civic fabric that makes that community.

Dochterman: Well, I remember here a few years ago—I guess three years ago—I was selected Citizen of the Year of Moraga. And we had to make a little speech as I received the recognition at a community banquet. The thing that I talked about was the difference between a “resident” and a “citizen.” And a lot of people just are residents of their community. They feel no obligation that they have to do anything about it. They pay their taxes, they keep their house clean and their yard, hopefully, cleaned up, and they are just—they live there. They park their car on the street; they come and they go. But they don’t have any feeling at all that that community needs their support and their encouragement, and their physical activity. The mere going to a community event; to occasionally, if there is something of interest, go to the town council meeting. If you have something to say, speak up. And if there is something worth doing, volunteer to do it. And I think that’s the difference between a lot of people who just live in a community and the citizens who take a responsibility for the health, the welfare, the progress of a community.

And so that’s just been my personal philosophy: that if you are going to live in a place, you ought to give a little bit of your time, and your effort, and your energy, your resources. And that’s kind of the philosophy that I expressed that particular night.

Kim: And did you learn that from your family? Were you seeing that with your mother, who was a teacher? With your grandparents, who were so involved in the religious community?

Dochterman: Not necessarily. Maybe all of these things together. Studying political science; working with the city of San Francisco; working with the university; working with students, some of which were involved in their university, some which couldn’t care less. The different kinds of roles that I have had, it just seemed to me that if you have anything to contribute at all—and everybody has something—you ought to share those talents with your community. I don’t begrudge somebody who doesn’t do that. That’s their way. They just don’t care about doing something for somebody else. But in my life, I just had a
feeling: I’d like to know what the town is doing. I’d like to be part of it, and I’d like to be a citizen, a volunteer citizen person. So those are just kind of the personal philosophy that I developed, I guess, over the years from many influences that I had. And—

Kim: I do wonder—and this is just a question, so please wrestle with me if it’s not correct—but I wonder if World War II isn’t a little bit of a turning point for you. Because I know that you had wanted to join the service, but are unable to. But just looking at your professional opportunities, you don’t let that stop you from going and working on the shipyards, and getting involved, and then remaining involved throughout.

Dochterman: Yeah, I guess that it probably had some influence. I had never stopped to realize where thoughts came from at the outset. But there were just a lot of things. I always, from my earliest days—that people can give of themselves; that there are certain kind of people that are giving people. And then there’s an awful lot of people that are just taking people. Take all they can get, and begrudge those who have something else that they don’t have yet. But I realize that this is what the world is made up of, giving and taking people. And I have just felt that in my life, I would rather be a giving person than just a taking person.

Kim: I agree, but it can have an emotional toll. If you have seen that the world is made up of givers and takers, how do you go home and not feel taken advantage of?

Dochterman: Oh, you do sometimes! There’s a lot of times I did work on a project and I wondered, why in the world doesn’t somebody pick up a shovel and help? How can people stand by and watch somebody give, give, give, and never do anything themselves? But that’s just human nature, I think.

I used to think of my brother-in-law, whom I loved and enjoyed dearly. But he went to work every morning, came home every night, sat down and watched a ball game, having a beer or two, and next day went to work, come back home, and sit. Well, I guess when his son was playing baseball, he would donate some time to the Little League and go to the games. But really, I never thought of him as a citizen of the community at all. I would be surprised if he knew where the town council met, or the city council, whatever it was. He just was not a giving person. But I thought none the less of him. It’s just, that was his personality and his style. So he would go fishing for three weeks every summer, and that was good.
There are times when you wonder, why don’t some people help? But you realize that’s just not in their makeup. And—

Kim: This just reminds me: what does an average day look like for you? He was going to work, coming home, having a little bit of leisure time, relaxation, starting again. So what was an average day for you?

Dochterman: Well, I would say my time, I was up in the morning going to the university. There would be things that people wanted, needed my help, and I would do it all day long. And I would probably go to some community meeting at lunchtime: a Rotary club or a service club, or the YMCA, or United Way, or some luncheon would usually happen about every noontime. Or at [University of California] Berkeley, I’d just go up to the faculty club and sit and talk with some faculty members. And evening, I probably spent far, far too many away from home from my family’s standpoint. But so many evenings, things to do, places to go, going to some meeting, or something like that. In retrospect, I probably should have been spending a lot more of my time with my family. But it was just, they were involved, too. We all were interested in what we were each doing. So—

Kim: Would you have done anything differently, looking back?

Dochterman: Oh, I don’t think so. I may have spent a lot more time with my family. But I was so fortunate to have Dorothy [Dorothy Jane Dochterman, née Coset], who enjoyed being with the kids, and doing things with them. And she was a great support to this family; held the family together all the time. And so they gave me the time. And I don’t know what my kids thought of the—if I was still the same guy that came there about every day or not. But I was doing an awful lot of things, too. But we tried to do things together, too, and involve them, and involve the family.

Kim: I know, and this is actually a perfect segue, because I wanted to spend more time talking about your family. We have talked so much about your professional career, about all your volunteer and service. And we have heard your family, of course, threaded in there, because how can you not? But I was hoping we could spend some time and just talk about each family member, and some of the memories that are happening simultaneously, concurrently to all the other kind of business/public life activities that you are engaged in.

So I know we have talked a lot about Dorothy, but I’d love an opportunity just to hear how you first met, and who she was, and what your first impression
was of Dorothy when you met her, I believe in 1951, in Berkeley, if that’s correct?

07-00:54:36  Dochterman: Well, we actually met a little bit earlier than that. She was a student at Cal [University of California, Berkeley] from—I guess it was 1948 to—or ’47, maybe. Yeah, it was ’47, till she graduated in ’51. And we actually met at the student center of the Methodist church there, called the Wesley Foundation. And it was connected with the large Methodist church there, right next to the campus, across the street from the men’s gymnasium. And she would occasionally stop in there and take part of student activities. And I was a graduate student, and I just went there because I didn’t know too many other people on campus. I had done my graduate work at Ohio Wesleyan University, and came out then, and went to graduate school. I was enrolled in Boalt Hall at that time, the law school [University of California, Berkeley, School of Law].

And so we met there at the center, and I would see her around the campus, and so we finally went out on a date or two, and became very close then. My graduate work I completed in 1950. And she had a number of friends. She belonged to a local sorority there on the campus; Utrimque is what I think it was called. It was primarily for sorority girls that lived at home. And they had some place on the campus where they met.

But we would go to the social events there at the Methodist Wesley Foundation, and that’s how we got acquainted. Then—

07-00:57:26  Kim: Can you paint me a portrait of her? What was she like when you first met her?

07-00:57:30  Dochterman: Oh, she was always just a lot of fun; bubbly kind of a person. She was a little bit older than the average freshman student. She started in ’47, and I came in the fall of ’47 to Berkeley. And we probably met somewhere in that period of time. But she had worked in the war industry over at the Alameda Naval Air Station—I think we mentioned this—because she was a Rosie the Riveter person working on airplanes. And so she was probably three years older than most entering freshman. I would suspect, because she graduated from Oakland Technical High school in ’42, and so she started at college in ’47. So that made a little bit different that she was a little bit older, and we were about the same age. We just had wonderful times together.

07-00:59:12  Kim: Was she as dedicated—I mean, it seems like she was a Rosie the Riveter, so she also had this sense of service in her.
Oh, yes. She was always very, very dedicated to being willing to help and do things for others. She had a sister and a brother. Her brother was a career Navy man. So she had the same basic principles of hard work, and patriotism, and care for country. And we had the same religious background.

Was that important to you?

I think so. I think so. It was at that time. As years went by, it became less important, because when Mary Elena [Mary Elena Dochterman, née Washburn] and I were married, then, she was a totally different religious preference. She was Catholic, and I was Protestant. And so that was the basic difference, but I, I guess, mellowed a great deal more.

But no, Dorothy and I, we had wonderful times together. And—

What’s one of your favorite memories of Dorothy?

I could walk into a room and know whether she was in the room, even if there were 500 people, because she always had a very distinctive laughter, and a lot of smiles. And she just was a very, very pleasant person all the time.

She was a teacher, and she taught in Oakland, and she taught in Walnut Grove, which is up on the river, Sacramento River, about probably forty miles, fifty miles. And we used to meet when she was up there—this was before we were married—we would meet in Antioch once a week. She would come home on the weekends to Oakland. But Wednesday nights we would meet for dinner in Antioch. She would drive halfway down, and I’d drive halfway up. And just to have a chance to be together.

So we had a great partnership.

Were you supportive of her working as a teacher?

Yeah. She worked as a teacher, before we got married and had children. And then we were married in ’54, on the fourth of July. And—

Why on the fourth of July?
Dochterman: Well, we were both giving up our independence. (laughter) As a matter of fact, we had the framed Declaration of Independence on our wall in our earliest days of married, just because we both felt we were both giving up our independence.

In any event, we traveled quite a bit, mostly in the United States. And then, as we had the two children: Claudia [Menutti, née Dochterman], and then Cliff [Dochterman], Jr. And so when Claudia was born, we decided that she would not work, and she would be a stay-at-home mother. Which she did. And that’s why I guess I have often thought she was the one that raised the kids. And I was working like crazy at the university. And a university can take every ounce of your energy if you let it, because there is so many things happening all the time. But we used to go to all the ball games, and when the kids were old enough, they would all go along, and we would go to the football games. And she was not that much interested in basketball, but I would always take Cliff with me and we’d go to the basketball games. And activities of the university, she was always ready to go and take part.

Kim: I hear she loved to tell jokes, and had an amazing delivery.

Dochterman: Oh, she had a great sense of humor. And she could tell stories and make them funny, and she had this great sense of humor, and a lot of fun.

Kim: I also know that she loved Christmas. That was her favorite holiday.

Dochterman: Yes. Christmastime was our big event to our family. I had a little interest in developing outdoor Christmas decorations, and I started small, and each year we would add to our Christmas outdoor decorations, one after another, after another. And I’d draw these little snowmen figures, about four feet high. I’d draw them, and then paint them, cut them out of plywood, and made a whole village of snow people. And most of them I would mobilize with little motors so that they would move, and their arms would move, or the little train, the wheels could go around, and all this kind of stuff. Bells would go, move, and it was very elaborate.

And so we used to enter the Christmas tree decorating in the city of Oakland, and usually win first prize—

Kim: Oh, there was a competition?
Dochterman: —in the city of Oakland. A lot of competition. And then one year, the San Francisco Examiner had a contest, and we got first prize in the Bay Area for Christmas decorating. And the kids always enjoyed to put it up. And then we’d have a lot of visitors, and a lot of cars go by and see them. And the school bus, Dorothy would tell me, would always stop by, and so she would go and snap on a couple of the areas where the electric would make the little figures move, and things like that. And she enjoyed that, too.

Kim: Well, I heard that you would also run out every morning before the school bus came to change the countdown to Christmas.

Dochterman: Well, we had a little sign with a little character there, and each morning, the character would put how many more days till Christmas. And so the kids would tell us if we hadn’t changed the sign from the day before. And so we’d try to get out in the morning and put the one day less till Christmas or something. Well, I would generally start about September each year, and build some new characters, and paint them. And it was very elaborate, with lights, and we would have music playing, and all this kind of stuff.

One night, we were away; all the decorations were operating. We had just gone out for the evening for a couple hours. We came back, and about half of the little figures had been stolen. All the lights were stolen. And this was stuff it had taken me ten years to build, each year a little bit more. And that stuff was just taken by somebody. And I never decorated outdoors again after that. And the pieces, they just deteriorated. And that was the end of my Christmas decorating scheme.

Kim: What year did this happen?

Dochterman: Even the trophies we threw away finally. (laughter)

Kim: Well, this is a sad end to that story, but—

Dochterman: Yeah, that’s the sad ending of Christmas decorating.

Kim: But I know, just speaking from Claudia, that the years that you did decorate were really memorable to her. And so that served a purpose.

Dochterman: Oh, yeah. We had a lot of fun.
Kim: You created a lot of spirit and magic—

Dochterman: They had a lot of fun.

Kim: — and Christmas carolers came. And I think it’s nice that it was Dorothy’s favorite holiday, that you could create this almost snow globe in your front yard.

Dochterman: Everybody would be there, and we would always take the kids down to Capwell’s department store in Oakland to see Santa Claus, because the real Santa Claus was there. And this happened to be a friend of ours, who was a retired minister that had known my parents. And so when our kids came, he would call them by name as they came up to see him. And so they knew that this was the real McCoy. That was the real Santa Claus.

In any event, that was fun. And I had kind of continued the Christmas tradition for the last twenty years here in Moraga, at the country club. I have been the Santa Claus for the children at Moraga Country Club each year, and had a lot of experiences with kids. I’d give them a lot of time, and we’d talk to each one, and spend some time. I don’t know whether I ever mentioned this in these interviews before or not. Have I?

Kim: Which?

Dochterman: My Santa Claus here in Moraga?

Kim: No, not at all. Not at all.

Dochterman: Oh, there’s a couple stories that come to mind. It’s that I would always talk to the kids about leaving a couple carrots out for Santa’s reindeer, and some cookies for Santa Claus, and Santa Claus’s favorite were Double Stuffed [Double Stuf] Oreo cookies. And I would talk to the kids about bringing Double Stuffed. Well, the next year, a little girl brings four Double Stuffed Oreo cookies in a little baggie, and gives them to Santa Claus. And we enjoyed it so much, we hung those little four cookies in our Christmas tree at home for several years. And that was probably fifteen years ago, because I did this for over twenty years. Up until last year, I was doing this Santa Claus. They had a ninety-year-old Santa Claus. But I would always do it every year.
And so about three or four years ago, there was a young lady who had given Santa the Oreo cookies, who was in college, or maybe just graduated from college. Her grandparents lived here in Moraga. And she was visiting them, and she said to them, “Do you happen to know who Santa Claus was when I was three or four years old, five years old? I used to go and see Santa Claus.” She says, “Yes. It’s one of our friends here in the country club.” And an hour later, the doorbell rings, and I go to the door, and here is this now young lady who brought me a bag of Double Stuffed Oreo cookies.

07-01:13:13
Kim: She remembered you, too, then.

07-01:13:15
Dochterman: Yup. And we had a lot of fun with the kids. I remember one little kid; they would give them a list, or a piece of paper, and they’d write down what they wanted from Santa, and I would look at their list and read it, and check with them. One little boy a few years ago, he had his list: a football; and a wagon; and a bicycle; and all this stuff. And down at the bottom, I could tell in his mother’s writing, it says, “All I want for Christmas is to stop wetting my pants.” But we used to have a lot of fun, and so I was Mr. Santa Claus for twenty-some years in Moraga.

07-01:14:12
Kim: I wonder if you’ve met some of my friends, then—

07-01:14:15
Dochterman: Probably have.

07-01:14:16
Kim: —that have lived there.

07-01:14:49
Kim: Oh, it was a good disguise, then.

07-01:14:51
Dochterman: Yeah, it sure was.

07-01:14:52
Kim: I wonder if we can step back for a second to 1969, which I know was a pretty big year in your family, according to Claudia. And I am thinking about some
specific things. Obviously, the moon landing, but that’s also the year that you took your in-laws to Disneyland?

07-01:15:10

Dochterman: Disneyland.

07-01:15:11

Kim: And I would love to hear that story, because Claudia kind of gave me a glimpse into it, and I’d love to know your perspective, since I know that was really a gift for Dorothy’s mother and father. Mother specifically, your in-law, really wanted to see Disneyland. So we’ll just start there, and then I know there’s another big trip.

07-01:15:29

Dochterman: Well, Disneyland was—I don’t know—it was just recently opened, and a short time—I forget what year it was opened, but we had been there a couple times. And Dorothy’s parents, her mother and father, had talked about wanting to go there. And so I said, “Let’s do it. We’ll take the kids and grandparents,” Dorothy’s two parents, and we went down to Disneyland. And we drove down and back. We must have been a full car. And we stayed, if I remember, two days or three days down at Disneyland, and we go to see everything, and they were just thrilled to have that chance to go with us.

And I remember that one thing that we had to get back home for a special event. It would be a Sunday afternoon or something, because that was the schedule of the moon landing. And so we got back just in time to see the moon landing. I would be surprised that the kids would remember that, but maybe they were far more impressed than I realized. You do so many things, and you don’t know which are things that kids remember, or which are things that kids were impressed by.

I know my grandson, a couple years ago—well, it would’ve been half a dozen years ago now—he said that they spent a week in Yosemite [National Park], because we used to always go down, and generally go down to Yosemite for a week, and sometimes we would take Dorothy’s parents with us, too, as well as her sister and brother-in-law. So I was talking to my grandson, and I said, “Well, how did you like Yosemite?” “Oh, yeah. We had a great time. And we went rafting, and we went hiking, and did this and that, and everything.” And I said, “Anything you didn’t like?” And he says, “Yeah.” I said, “What was that?” He said, “We hiked up to Vernal Falls.” And I said, “You didn’t like that?” “No, that’s just too long a hike, and it’s all uphill and everything.” I said, “Well, why did you do it, then?” He said, “My father said you made him hike up there, and he was going to make me hike up there.” So you don’t know what influences you have on your own kids of things that they remember of the family doing together.
Kim: Well, I know another thing that happened in ’69 that Claudia definitely remembers, and actually credits for helping her later on in her career as a teacher, was the big trip you all took as a family to Asia. Let me see if I can get all the countries; there was quite a—Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Philippines, Thailand, and, amazingly, Cambodia. Which is about to explode into war. So can you tell me a little bit about that trip?

Dochterman: Well, this is the year, 1968 and ’69, that I was district governor of Rotary. And the international convention was going to be held in Hawaii. And a travel agent from Berkeley travel service, said, “We’d like to have a tour, and have you be the guide. And go to Asia, and then wind up at the international convention in Hawaii.” I said, “Why?” He says, “All we want is your name to advertise the tour. So if you’re, as governor, going to be the attraction.” I said, “Oh, I don’t know enough about running a tour.” He says, “You don’t have to know anything. You just go. We’re just using your name. We’re sending a tour director with you.” And I said, “Well, I’ll be glad to do this.”

And so I said to our family, I said, “Well, let’s all go on the tour together.” Clifford was probably in the first grade, and so Claudia would be in about the fourth or fifth grade, I would gather. And so we went on this trip, and it was surprising how well all these people accepted the fact there were two little kids on the trip with them. And pretty soon, they began to adopt the kids, and wanting to sit with them on the planes or the bus, or whatever. And they had a great time.

And so we went to some unique spots. And to all the places you mentioned: Hong Kong; to Japan; to the Philippines. And we went to Cambodia. And Cambodia was a place which was still pretty unknown at that time. It was the kind of thing you only saw in a National Geographic magazine, or a Look magazine. Look was the big picture magazine at the time.

In any event, the kids got along very, very well, and we just had a great time. It was a stretch for us to go on that. The tour had paid for our way, but not the kids, and so we said, well, we’ll stretch and pay the kids’ way, and everything, which, we were at a period of time in our life where we were not at a very high salary range at work. And so it always was a stretch to make something like that work. But the kids had a great time, and they learned a lot. They did some work while they were there, and making notes, and had to write a story about their trip to Asia and everything. But they got to see some places that few kids at that age would have been able to see.

Kim: And what was your takeaway from that trip? I’m sure it was—
Well, it was great to be able to have the family, and to have them all together. And we met with Rotarians a lot, since I was the district governor. And we did a lot of special things that would only happen because I was a leader of Rotary at the time.

So now I want to just really quickly get a sense of who your children are. I’ve had the opportunity to talk to both Claudia and Cliff, Jr., but in your own words, Claudia is born in 1957, and Cliff, Jr. in 1962. Little boy, little girl; it’s pretty idyllic. Can you paint me a portrait of who they are, and some memories you have? Maybe first with Claudia, and then with Cliff?

Well, with both of them, I am very, very proud of both kids. They have been good kids, and never gotten into trouble of any substance. But Claudia is about as close to her mother, in terms of physical and thought-wise and attitudes, and has much the same contagious laughter and smiles that her mother had. People often said, “If you believe in genetics, you can only tell that in the Dochtermann family,” because Claudia would be very much identical to her mother in physical as well as personality. And Cliff, my son, has been taken from me so many, many times. People will say, “Oh, I saw you in someplace, and then I realized that wasn’t you, and it was your son.” Because we look an awful lot alike. We’ve got a picture over there when he was getting married.

In any event, Claudia, she was very much involved when she was in college in politics, in collegiate young Republican group, and was a statewide officer, and went to the inauguration of [Ronald] Reagan, I believe it was. And went to one of the conventions, I think, in New Orleans, as a delegate or something. So then she went back to Washington, and worked for a local congressman back there for a year. So she’s had some interesting experiences. And then she decided that she was going to be a teacher like her mother. And went back and got her master’s degree. And both the kids have always been out anxious to earn money, of their own money. And so when she was in college, and particularly graduate school, she always seemed to have a job. But I think she worked at Macy’s or something, and some other places. And Cliff as well worked.

I’m very, very proud of both of them. We’ve talked every week, at least once a week, on the phone, and just to say hi and keep in touch. And so—

And what about Cliff? What was he like growing up, and college?
He was probably so much like me that it was kind of scary. But we not only had some appearances that’s the same, appeared much, but he was always responsible. He became an Eagle Scout, and went with me to two Jamborees, and one thing and another. He was always interested in sports. He is not very big, just like me. I was never very tall and physical. But he would still participate. Loved football, baseball, and everything. When I was working at Pacific, he used to volunteer to help with the football coach. And so he would go around and do jobs around the locker room, pick up all the towels and the dirty clothes and everything, and enjoyed—and everybody treated him like a little brother and everything. I know Pete Carroll, who is the coach at the Seattle Seahawks, was a player at the time, and many of the players thought of Cliff as a little brother at that time. Some of the other guys as well.

So he became interested, and both the kids went to the University of the Pacific, primarily on the condition that they would stay on campus, not at home. Because one of the conditions was that family members had free tuition, so that made a big difference in the kids going to school. And then afterwards, Cliff, he worked for a little while while he was getting some money. He worked in a store selling computers and TVs, and all kinds of—I forget which one it was, but he was very good at selling.

Then he decided he was going to go and get a master’s degree in sports administration, because that was his real interest. So he went down to the college, sports administration—I forget the technical name. Perhaps it was the sports academy. But it’s down in Alabama. And at Mobile. And one of the conditions of working for a master’s in sports administration was to have an internship. And so he got an internship, followed by a paying job, at the University of Michigan as an assistant coach on the football team. And was an aid to the legendary coach [Glenn Edward] Bo Schembechler back there. And worked for three years at the University of Michigan.

It was just that time that we found out that Dorothy had cancer. And so he gave up the job at Michigan to come back and become assistant athletic director at UC [University of California] Santa Barbara, so that he could drive up each week if at all possible and see his mother, who was dying at this time, Dorothy. And so he made his career then in sports administration, and had several different kinds of positions. He is currently the athletic director at UC Santa Cruz. So he worked in football when the National Football League had a division called the World League [of American Football], which was kind of a special level of a separate league. He worked as assistant manager of the team in Sacramento, the Sacramento Surge, and they won the national championship.
And then he was just then getting married, and they moved to the team to Germany, and he decided he would not go to Germany. And so he took on a few other spots. He went to the University of California at Riverside, and was there for quite a few years as Assistant Athletic Director.

You’ve already mentioned this, and I know we’ve talked about, but in 1987, of course, Dorothy passes away from cancer. Did she give you any advice at the end? I know we’ve talked about her joking, saying, “Go find yourself a wife, because you are going to be a Rotary International president.” But you spent a—

Well, it was a tough, tough thing. She had colon cancer. And it just kept going on, and step by step getting more difficult, and more difficult. And finally, it came to the point where she had to be bedridden all the time. Well, Claudia was still at home. And she was teaching, just started her teaching career. We had brought a hospital bed, which can be moved up and down, other equipment that could lift her up out of bed to change the bed and everything. I had a nurse come in every day, and for the day time, when I wasn’t there. And then I would be there sleeping on the couch, next to her bed in the family room, for many months. It was tough to see her just gradually going away, till finally she became to a point where she was comatose most of the time.

So Claudia was there. She helped when she could. And I did the caretaking at evenings, and the morning till the caretaker nurse came in in the mornings. And, no, those were very, very difficult times. Because she had always been such a happy person and happy-go-lucky, and just enjoyed every minute of her life. And then to see her just disappear as a person, that was the end.

I had pretty much decided then that I would do something. That I would take an early retirement, and just leave the scene somehow, and do something—I didn’t know what. But it was just then that the president of the University of the Pacific, Stan [Stanley] McCaffrey, retired. And they brought in a new president, Bill Atchley, from Clemson [University]. And Bill asked me if I would stay on a while; I told him I was planning to retire, take an early retirement. He asked if I would stay on a while, and work with him. So I decided I would do that rather than just—I didn’t know what I was going to do. I just felt that I had lost such a part of my life.

But I stayed on, and we struggling along. Claudia was still living at our house. And so I went on for a couple years with Bill Atchley. And then decided to retire when I hit sixty-five. And I retired on a Friday night, and was selected president of Rotary, and that changed my whole life again, on the following Monday.
So that was a difficult time. I thought getting remarried is the last thing in the world that I would do. I thought there’s no way. And then—

07-01:39:06
Kim: It happened.

07-01:39:07
Dochterman: —seven years later, I was introduced to Mary Elena. And she was very happy-go-lucky, and very pleasant, and was just a lot of fun and everything, too.

07-01:39:25
Kim: Were you a little bit afraid to commit to a relationship with her?

07-01:39:29
Dochterman: Sure. I thought, no, nothing will be like it was with Dorothy. Because we had been together—been married, I guess, thirty-two years, and had been together four years before that. So thirty-six years of my life, we had been together. And I was alone for seven years in-between. And I had thought, that’s probably not going to work. And after a year, we decided we would have a merger.

07-01:40:16
Kim: So what changed? What gave you the confidence to—

07-01:40:20
Dochterman: Well, we seemed to be very compatible. Got together. She enjoyed many of the things I did; I enjoyed a lot of stuff that she did. And I knew that she had a base here in Moraga, and I was just as soon giving up my house anyway, over in Stockton. Although I kept it. I said, I’m not going to sell the house. If it doesn’t work out, I have to have a retreat plan. And so I kept my house in Stockton for ten years, just as part of the retreat plan. My daughter lived in it and rented it, and then subsequently she bought it, she and her husband. She got married subsequently. And she and her husband bought my house, and they live there now.

07-01:41:30
Kim: Oh! It stayed in the family, then. That’s nice.

07-01:41:33
Dochterman: Yeah.

07-01:41:34
Kim: So I know that Mary Elena has children of her own? She has two daughters?

07-01:41:38
Dochterman: Yes. Two daughters.

07-01:41:39
Kim: Elena, who is married to Chris Toochy? “Toochy?”
Dochterman: Yes, Toohey.

Kim: Toohey? And Karen, who is married to Mark Orwig.

Dochterman: Yes.

Kim: So, of course, you have your own kids. Was there a blending of families that went on?

Dochterman: Pretty much so. Mary Elena was very, very willing to share her life with Claudia and Cliff. And we would have a lot of events—holidays or dinners and stuff—together. And then Elena and Karen and their husbands, they started to have kids. And so I largely became the only grandfather that their kids knew closely. And so they generally treat me just like a birth grandfather. When they come home from college, they call me and want to have lunch, and let’s talk it over, and how are things. I treat them as my own kids, to the extent possible. And I always do the things that grandparents should do: send birthday cards; and Halloween cards; and Easter cards. And having known what it was like when I was in college, my grandmother would occasionally send me a note with a dollar or two in it. At that time, you could have a whole weekend on a dollar. Go to a movie and get a Coke, and everything else. So I knew what twenty bucks would mean in a kid’s life out of the blue on a college campus. And so I send them the cards, and do the Christmas stuff with all of them, and—

Kim: Do Cliff, Jr. and Claudia have children?

Dochterman: Yes. Claudia has two stepchildren. Bill [William Menutti] had been married, and so he has two stepchildren: a son and a daughter. The girl Malessa is a graduate of Davis, and the boy Michael is a graduate of Santa Cruz, UC. Then Cliff, he has two children. The older is a boy, and the younger is a girl. The older, Michael [Dochterman]—and he has the name of “Michael” because Dorothy had a nickname that all her life, she has an uncle that used to just call her “Mike.” And so their whole family picked that up, and she was known as “Mike.”

Kim: Dorothy was?
Dochterman: Dorothy was known as “Mike” through her school, and through college, and the rest of her life. Her mother always called her “Mike.” And so Cliff named his son “Michael” in memory of his mom. And then Michael is now a sophomore at UC Santa Cruz, in the engineering program. And Wendy [Dochterman] is a junior in high school. And Wendy and Virginia [Dochterman] are still in Riverside, so Cliff has an apartment in Santa Cruz, or Ben Lomand I guess it is. And the expense of buying a place or getting a place in Santa Cruz is almost astronomical. So we’re kind of thinking they will stay down there till she finishes high school. She is very active in some groups, and one thing and another. And it’s so difficult to change schools. I think it’s particularly difficult for girls to switch high schools, where friendships are harder to make at that age.

Kim: So do the grandchildren all know each other? Have you—

Dochterman: Oh, yeah. They have all gotten together—

Kim: —fostered a big family?

Dochterman: —and we used to all get together each year. And the grandkids are all about the same ages and everything. So they’ve blended as much as you could expect, I think. I’ve often said a person is fortunate to have one very good marriage and family, but doubly fortunate if he can have two of them. And I feel that I have had two of them.

Kim: One last thing I’m going to ask, and then we’ll kind of start wrapping it up. But I just want to make sure we also get a sense of Mary Elena. Who was a big part of your life, too. And—

Dochterman: Yeah. We had nearly twenty years together.

Kim: So just, do you have a favorite memory with her in particular that you think back on?

Dochterman: Well, she was just a lot of fun. She was a fun person. And she enjoyed life. We traveled lots and lots of places. She grew up in San Francisco. Her father was a physician and surgeon in San Francisco. They lived up in the Sea Cliff district of San Francisco, up on the outer side of San Francisco Bay, out towards the waterfront, up there in a very, rather exclusive segment of San
Francisco. And she then went to Smith College back in New Hampshire. So she grew up in rather an affluent family life compared to what mine was.

Her family had a cottage up at Lake Tahoe where she and her mother and brothers would go up there all summer long. Her father would come up on weekends on the train. Because he was the chief surgeon for the Southern Pacific Railroad, and so he would always travel by train. And this was because they had a pass that they could use on the train, and so she would always bemoan the fact that when she went to college, she had to ride the train across, and all of her friends from the West Coast would fly home and have two extra days, and she would be on the train. And plus the fact that everybody on Southern Pacific knew her father, and so there was no ways that she could sneak a beer or two in the club car. They all knew her father. In any event—

But we had wonderful times together. And she traveled with me. We went to many parts of the world. I remember we were doing polio immunization for the Rotary’s big polio program. And we were in Ethiopia the first time that she had ever been in a Third World country, other than in a major hotel. And so we looked out the hotel window, and she saw all these—looked like miles of just shacks, awful places. And she began to see the squalor of Ethiopia, one of the poorest nations in the whole world. And we get in the car going to the United Nations headquarters in Addis Ababa, and the car stops for a traffic light. And there is a woman outside begging, and she had leprosy, and her fingers had all dropped off, and she was just holding the stubs of her hands out there for begging. And the driver says, “Don’t look at her. Don’t look.” And she kept saying, “I see this woman every night when I go to sleep, begging for something to eat.” And then we went into some of the villages giving polio vaccine. And it was just a whole new adventure for her to see this kind of part of the world.

She was commenting as we went through some of these awful villages. And we were in this little building—just a shack-like place—and she said, “What’s this used for regularly?” There were just some logs laying around the room, and the mothers were sitting there with their babies. And they would hand you the baby, and you would give them the polio vaccine on their tongue. And the people were so trusting. Here were strange white people, and (coughing) she was just touched with it. I says, “You think this is bad? Next week, we’re going to be in India, and it’s just ten times magnified, and you see the poverty when we get to India.”

But all of this was a major effect on her, understanding the world and the life that I was having. And she became a Rotarian, and became president of the Moraga club, and took a great, great interest. Everybody loved her. All the
leaders of Rotary, when we would go to conferences and things, they were all curious of what this new wife of the past president had. But they were very pleased, and she was the same kind of an outgoing person that Dorothy was.

Yeah, we had lots of experiences together all over the world. And I always tried to encourage her to do something with her girls each year—a week or so alone. One time we won a trip for two to Paris. They called from the Oakland Symphony; that our contribution had won a prize, and two trips to France. I says, “I’ve been to France enough. You go to France, and one of the tickets will take your daughter, and buy the other ticket for your other daughter, and you spend a week or so there with your girls.” Another time, I said, “Take the girls and go to Spain.” That’s where their family—her mother—had grown up, or about seven generations earlier. They had lived here in California seven generations. But their early family had come out of Spain. I said, “Go and look up some of the traces of the old family.” And so she took the girls. This was shortly before she died—maybe the year before—that she took the girls. But I had always encouraged them to go and do something, because that was your life before we got married. And the girls need you to be their mother, in a way that I felt was important.

Did you do similar things with Cliff and Claudia?

Well, not so much, because they had their own lives pretty full and everything. But I would call Cliff and Claudia every Sunday afternoon, and we would visit on the phone if we hadn’t gotten otherwise together. But no, I felt it was important to keep in touch with the children, as well as the grandchildren as well.

So those are the kind of ways, and that was the kind of person Mary Elena was, was that we just seemed to fit together at a time in both of our lives when we still had enough time to enjoy each other, and before she got cancer. And it had lasted for about six years, she survived it. And then it got to the point she just couldn’t breathe anymore.

But it was lung cancer. She had been a smoker in her earlier days, when we met. I came to her house, and one of her girlfriends was there. And she says, “Oh, the house has got a little smoke in it. We just had a cigarette.” As I left that day, I says, “This affair is not going anywhere. Because I can’t handle somebody who is a smoker.” I said, “I don’t believe in it.” I said, “It can cause all kinds of problems in your life.” And she says, “I’ll never smoke again.” And I know that she never did. She was that honest with me. And she never did. All of her friends were absolutely appalled that she had been a smoker
and quit that day, and never smoked again. But unfortunately, the cancer had
c caught up with her just the same.

So those were difficult days again, because it got to the point where we knew
her end was coming, and we didn’t know how long it would be, but— And
that was the time that I met Dr. Bob Warner and I think I told you the story
before, about how he made an impact on our lives in a very strange,
unexpected way.

So, a person is lucky to have two super marriages, and have a life as full and
as active as I have had. And I guess probably, the best part is that I still have
enough of a memory that I can recall almost ninety-one years. (laughter)

No, and I want to thank you so much for spending time, being generous with
your time, telling me, and letting me ask questions so that I have a better
understanding of everything, and all the people, and all the worlds and
communities that you have touched. And as we are wrapping up, I have just
two last questions for you. And one is, looking back on your life, what are you
most proud of, and what do you think your legacy will be, both to the Rotary
community, but also your family?

Well, I hope the family won’t think that I neglected them too much because of
doing other things. There is nobody that ever came to their last days and says,
“I wish I had spent more time at the office.” You often think, I wish I could
have spent more time doing the things that seem to have some importance at
the time, with family, with people that share your life.

And I am proud that I was given the opportunities to do some things at the
University of California, at the University of the Pacific, and touching the
lives of a lot of kids that probably needed somebody at one time or another.
And you were able to step forward. Of being able to make a contribution to
Rotary International. I clearly believe that I provided some of the leadership in
a form that they have never had before, of providing a vision, providing
motivation, my abilities to visualize the future, to be able to speak and speak
to groups in motivational ways.

I just hope that I have had a life that my family would be proud of. But also
that I have in some way justified my space on Earth; that I have taken all this
space and had all this clean air and everything else, that it’s all been worth it.
And I have really no regrets of any great concern, except the fact that two
great loves of my life had to pass away with the horrible disease of cancer.
And so I have no regrets. I am just pleased to be able to say I have been given
so many opportunities, and I hope I haven’t wasted too many of them.
And then finally, kind of talking to future generations, for people who are looking to be more involved, or just don’t know how, or just want to but aren’t doing it, what is your advice and hope for the future generations?

Well, find your passion, and feed your passion. If it’s in some profession, if it’s some avocation, if it’s some hobby, if it’s some cause, if it’s some group in which you can associate with, find the things that you love and do them, and do them the best you can. Everybody’s got their own skills, their own strengths. And all of us have a lot of weaknesses, too. But if you can find something that you are willing to give a portion of your life to make happen, do it, and I would say you’ll have a pretty successful life.

Thank you so much for all your time.

You are most welcome.