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An Interview with Larry Henley

An Oral History Conducted by Laura Plowman

The UNLV @ Fifty Oral History Project

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Claytee D. White, Project Director Director, Oral History Research Center University of Nevada Las Vegas

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Preface

Larry Henley was born in Portland, Oregon, in 1957. The family spent one year in Wisconsin, and then moved to Las Vegas in 1973 when he was 15. His schooling was mostly in Oregon, though he graduated from Chaparral High School in Las Vegas in 1975.

Larry enrolled at UNLV in 1975 and was a student there off and on until 1980, the year he earned his theater degree. It wasn't until around 2002 that he got his master's.

Mr. Henley started working at the concert hall at UNLV around 1977, doing lighting design work, then moved to Colorado Springs for three years. He opened the Pike's Peak Center, acting as stage manager and lighting technician, and eventually joined the stagehands' union. While in Colorado Springs, he was married, and he and his wife had a son.

The Henleys moved back to Las Vegas so they could be closer to family, and Larry began working part-time on the stage crew at UNLV. He was listed as a classified employee, and this segued into a professional staff position in 1988.

Today, Larry is the director of artistic programming and production at the Performing Arts Center. He schedules all performances in the theaters. He also does contracting and billing, works on the Master Series, and recruits speakers for the Barrick Lecture Series. He has made a 20 year career out of bringing entertainment and culture to the Las Vegas scene, continuing a tradition started by other directors.

ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH CENTER AT UNLV

UNLV Oral History Project @ Fifty



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This is Laura Plowman. Today is May 23rd, 2007. I'm in the Ham Hall lobby with Larry Henley.

How are you today?

Fine, thank you.

When did you first come to Las Vegas?

We moved here in 1973, in March of 1973, my family.

Where were you born?

Portland, Oregon.

How old were you when you moved here?

I was either 15 or 16. I think it was 15. Yeah, I was 15.

What do you remember about your early years in Portland?

Oh, I loved Portland. It's a beautiful city. I just loved it. It was rainy. But what do I remember about Portland? Portland is just a fantastic city. I went to school there. Lots of parks. Baseball, I discovered baseball there. We used to go to a lot of minor league baseball games. I had a lot of friends. It was the 60s, so music was huge. I have a lot of memories of pop music and the British invasion and all that kind of stuff.

What was your family like when you were a child? Did you have any brothers or sisters? Yeah. I have three stepbrothers. Only one was living at home.

What were the age differences?

John was in high school. So he would have been I guess -- I don't know. I was probably seven and John was probably 15 or 16. He was born in 1951 on Christmas, and I was born in 1957, 24 days before Christmas.

John was the only one to move to Las Vegas?

No. He never moved here.

So it was just you and your parents?

Yeah. We all moved to Eau Claire, Wisconsin, for one year, which is about an hour and a half from Minneapolis. It was my first experience with four-foot-high snow. That lasted a year and then we ended up here. This was my first experience with hundred-degree weather.

Big change.

Yeah.

What brought your family to Las Vegas originally?

Well, my dad retired from the U.S. Bank -- he was a vice president in Portland -- and took another job with a friend's bank group in Wisconsin. That didn't work. That was only a year. So he ended up coming here, working as a vice president for Nevada National Bank, which is -- Lord knows who bought it and what that bank is now. I think now it's part of Wells Fargo or something. I don't know. That bank has long gone. All the local banks here were sucked up by the big corporations in the last decade or so.

Can you tell me what you and your friends did for fun or entertainment both in Portland and Las Vegas when you moved here?

Well, I mean rock and roll music was a huge part, going to concerts, watching sports on TV and going to parties. You know, it was high school.

Do you remember any specific concerts that you went to here or back in Portland?

I don't think I ever went to any -- I think I was too young. Here, oh, I saw everybody -- Chicago, the James Gang, whoever were popular back then. I saw ZZ Top. You know, we were just big into the rock music of the era. I still listen to it a lot.

Can you tell me about your school life, all the different schools that you've gone to?

Well, I went to Catholic school. I did not go to kindergarten, but I went to a preschool kind of thing, which back in the early 60s was not all that common. Then I went to a Catholic school and I did first and second grade in one year. My mom married my stepfather, and then I went to public school in third grade through eighth grade. There were no junior high schools or middle schools in Portland, Oregon, back in the 60s. I went to Grant High School. I went to Alameda Elementary School in Portland, Oregon from 1965 to I think 1971, and then I went to Grant High School in 1971-72.

We moved to Eau Claire, Wisconsin. I went to Eau Claire Memorial High School for one year. It was my sophomore year. We moved here at the end of my sophomore year. No. Wait a minute. I went to a junior high. I had to go to a junior high for a few months in Wisconsin because their high schools were only 10th, 11th and 12th grades. You went to junior high instead of spending ninth grade in high school. That's what you did. So I went to Central Junior High for

a few months, and then I went to Memorial High School.

Then we moved here. I went to Valley High School for about three months. I hated it. Chaparral High School had just opened, so I was in the first graduating class of Chaparral High School. That was 1975.

Then in 1975, of course, I enrolled here at UNLV, and I was a student here until 1980. I got a theatre degree here in 1980. I got my master's degree here many, many years later. I think 2002.

Could you tell me what it was that you hated so much about Valley?

Oh, have you ever been there? You can't find anything. All the classrooms are like -- the hallways are all honeycomb-shaped. It's like the classrooms are all these hexagons. Everything is hexagonal. I couldn't find anything. I didn't like the school. I liked Chaparral just fine. Everything was rectangles, right angles. Put me at a right angle in a hallway, I can -- with first floor, second floor, okay, the 100 room numbers are at the -- you know, and then the 200s, I can find that. At Valley High School I couldn't find anything.

Could you outline your work life for me beginning with your first job that you can remember?

I started working at the California Club, one of the downtown hotels. I think it's still there. The Boyd group still owns it. I worked out in the parking lot. I would sell the parking tickets to the people with the RVs, and I was working graveyard. That was during college. So I would go to school during the day and then I had this horrible graveyard job, trying to stay awake from ten to six. I remember coming to school for an eight o'clock class after that. It was just brutal. So I only did that for about a year.

Then I started working -- I was an art major. I decided I was going to be an art major, and that lasted about two years. Then I discovered theatre. In theatre you could make more money, meet more girls and whatever. I thought this is cool. So I started working over there as a student worker.

Then eventually, this place opened in 1976. I think this was open for a year before I started working here. I started working here the second year that this place was open, at the concert hall. We could get paid, so it was great. I was learning a new trade and getting paid for it.

Then I started doing lighting design work over there, and there was money in that, too.

I graduated and did a lot of freelance lighting design work. I was working for the Nevada Ballet theatre, which in the old days was Nevada Dance theatre. I did their first couple of Nutcrackers.

Then I picked up and moved out of town. I was in Colorado Springs for three years. I opened a facility there called the Pikes Peak Center. I did similar work there. I was the stage manager and the lighting guy there. They had an electrician who did all the lighting for all the road shows and all the local arts companies that played that building. That was a union job, so I joined the IATSE, which is the stagehands union basically. So that's my early work history.

Could you tell me about the application process for your current UNLV position?

Basically, I got married while I was in Colorado Springs, and my first son was born -- well, I only have one son. My son was born. My wife hated it up there. It was a little conservative for her. You think Colorado is liberal. It's not, not all of it. This wasn't Boulder, right? She thought that there was a lot of sexist kind of attitudes there and she didn't like Colorado Springs. She wanted to come back here where our families were, so we did that.

When I came back here, I worked part-time on the stage crew here. My boss, Rick Romito, was really the only professional employee here running the building, and he needed help. So I think I started working -- well, I became classified basically. They passed a law in the mid 1980s where you could only work a certain number of hours. That law is still in the books. It was like 480 hours. If you worked anymore than that in a year as a part-timer, then they either had to make you a classified employee or get rid of you. You couldn't work any more until the next calendar year started over. So there was a conversion process there and I became a classified employee.

I don't remember the application process a whole lot back then.

Then in 1988 Rick got a bunch of professional staff positions approved here. A couple of us who were already working either classified or part-time became professional staff, and I've been professional staff since 1988.

I want to go back. Tell me how you first met your wife.

Well, she was a student here. She was in the acting program here, an undergrad theatre student, and I was an undergrad technical theatre student.

And how old is your son?

Ryan is 22. He's going to be 23 in July. He just graduated with a degree in architecture from the University of Southern California. So we're quite proud of him.

What were your first impressions of Las Vegas when you came here?

Hot. Well, it was in March. I really shouldn't say that. It was just kind of desolate in a way just because there were tracts of housing and tracts of little shopping centers and things, but there were a lot of pockets of desert in between everything. And you know how windy it is here? I still don't like the wind. It was just dusty. It still is that way, kind of.

But, obviously, a lot of the desert has been filled in now. We thought we were way out in the suburbs. That was out east on Flamingo near Mountain Vista Road where we lived, near Boulder Highway. Of course, now I guess you would call that urban or something. Chaparral High School was sort of the Green Valley High School of its day. It was the new high school out in the suburbs, and now it's in the middle of the city I guess.

Do you remember who the president was at the university when you first came here?

Don Baepler was the president here. By the time I graduated Pat Goodall was here. I remember the honors convocation was held in this building. Pat Goodall was the speaker and the president and shook all of our hands and all that sort of thing.

Then I left, and when I came back Bob Maxson was the president. Bob Maxson was the president till -- what? -- '92? '93? We had a year with Kenny Guinn in '94, and then Carol came in '95. That was a decade, and now we're on DBA, David Ashley.

Are there any major contributions you remember from any of the presidents?

Major contributions? Well, you know, Bob Maxson and Carol Harter built so much. What building started with who is open for debate and all that because, you know, it takes many years of discussing a building and trying to locate the funding and planning a building before one is actually built. But, obviously, three-quarters of the campus was built during those two--is "reign" the proper word? -- those two presidencies. So that's the main thing I remember them for.

Of course, all the fundraising they did, the capital campaign, was major. You remember Carol for being here when that big capital campaign started. But Bob Maxson was a really active fundraiser, also. I guess he was probably the first really major fundraising kind of president. That

may not be fair to say because the university has grown in scale so much. I think relatively speaking those early presidents were good fundraisers.

But the city was very small. The casino industry was not -- I don't know if they were terribly interested in donating money in the early days. It was mainly the local business leaders that helped the presidents get the funding to build this campus in those days. I rambled a little bit there.

That's okay. We like that.

Well, the education building was new. This building was under construction. Judy Bayley
Theatre was only three years old at the time. Ham Fine Arts was not even thought of. That was a
parking lot. Obviously, this was a parking lot, the garage. The foundation was a dirt parking lot
until five years ago. I'm trying to think of what else we had. The library I thought of as a fairly
modern building, the Dickinson Library, which is now the law school. It was the library until -what? -- four years ago? Five years ago? The humanities building was in those days really kind
of a cool, modern-looking building we thought. Now it's going to need a lot of restoration or they
need to get rid of it, one or the other. It's looking kind of long in the tooth. The student union was
here.

Everything was new in 1975 when you think about it. Grant Hall and Frazier Hall, those were the old buildings, and Grant Hall was an old building even then. That needs to go, in my opinion. But everything else was new.

Do you remember any other staff members on campus when you first came? Did you make friends right away with other staff members?

Well, I was a college student. So I remember the faculty. We had some terrific faculty. Some are still here. I remember Virko Baley in the music department. He's still here. Ellis Pryce-Jones from theatre, unfortunately, passed away two years ago. Fred Olson, Paul Harris -- all the theatre faculty.

Tom Holder over in the art department is still here. I don't see too many of them. But Bill Leaf is still here. Mike McCollum was here. He was the first dean of the college of fine arts when it split off from -- we were a part of liberal arts.

In the old days it was arts and letters. Tom Wright -- do you know Tom Wright? -- Tom was the dean. He was our dean when I first started here as an actual employee. That's the whole thing. Then they split fine arts off, and Mike McCollum from art was the dean for a few years. Then Jeff Cope from theatre took over. He's been there since -- I don't know. What? Twelve years now Jeff's been the dean? I'm trying to remember.

It was mainly just the theatre faculty because I got so involved in theatre. And you can't be involved in theatre as a student and not be completely involved with your faculty. Theatre is a way of life, basically. It's not separate from your education. You're always doing something. Theatre students are here from eight in the morning until midnight, six days a week a lot of the time because they're involved in production. We were always involved in productions or building the next production or on the running crews for another production.

So I just mainly remember the theatre faculty, some of whom are not here anymore like Joe Falsetta, a technical director. There was Ed Swift. Rick Romito, my old boss, was also the technical director over at the theatre for a while. Larry Kuhl, K-u-h-l, is no longer with us. He was actually a graduate dean at one time before he came to the theatre department. I could tell you lots about the theatre department if you really had time.

Do you remember any of the productions you were a part of as an undergraduate?

Oh, heck yeah. Well, the first one I did was Threepenny Opera. It was a magnificent production.

Carol Kimball from music was one of the stars in that. Virko Baley from music was also the conductor of that show. Rick Romito, my old boss here, was a grad student, and he was a great singer. He played Macheath or Mack the Knife in that show.

They had a grad program here in those days, and then they stopped for many, many years. There was no grad program here. Glenn Casale was a grad student in those days, and he is now a big New York director. I don't know if you know that, but Glenn Casale is really a big-time director. He came out of this program here.

Do you know why they stopped the grad program for theatre?

I really don't. I'm sure there are a couple of people over there -- if you could hunt down Jerry Crawford. Paul Harris is still around as an actor, also. The theatre is named after him, Paul Harris Theatre. Paul Harris is the one that started the department, and Jerry Crawford came maybe a year

or two later. This was in the late 50s, early 60s, when the theatre was a little room in Grant Hall called The Little Theatre, which today I don't know what it is. I think they use it as an art studio or something.

I remember doing lots of little studio productions. We had no black box theatre. We had no Paul Harris Theatre. The Little Theatre in Grant Hall is where we did all the little children's theatre shows and all the student productions and all those things. The Judy Bayley Theatre was reserved for the main stage stuff.

The first summer I worked here we did summer rep. We used to do summer theatre here. We did a huge production of Peter Pan that I'll never forget. It was just a massive production with the flying and the whole thing. That was exhausting. We did a lot.

I just remember doing Christmas Carol over there. We had this crazy old actor named John Macue, who was a local businessman. He was just kind of an old lecherous sort of a fellow. But he had a great sense of humor. Just a real crotchety old guy. You always remembered his performances. He was always the same character no matter what he played, but it was always funny. I could go on for days about different productions and actors and directors.

Do you have any special anecdotes about any of the productions or any interesting stories? I'm sure I could think of it and maybe write it down for you. Just sitting here in front of a microphone, I can't. If I think of something later in the interview, I'll interject a story or whatever.

Do you remember what the attitude was on campus and throughout the community about UNLV when you first came here?

Oh, I don't know if a lot of people knew we were here. But really it was fairly positive. We were a very young upstart kind of a university. Nobody was ever going to confuse us in those days with being the Harvard of the West of anything like that. We were called "Tumbleweed Tech" by a lot of people. I remember my high school teachers referring to UNLV as "Tumbleweed Tech."

I remember my brother coming here when he and dad moved here. My mom and I were -- I was finishing school. So they came out here first. John took a look at the place and he was going to Southern Oregon University in Ashland, Oregon. He took one look at UNLV and said he didn't want to come here.

It wasn't even 20 years old. It was just literally a young upstart. I think the school was 16

or 17 years old at the time -- 15 years old. The school was only 15 years old.

So, obviously -- you're hearing this over and over -- we really got people's attention with the basketball team because that is the first thing that really took the school and brought it into the national spotlight. It was after that that more money started coming into the university. But the theatre department, believe it or not, even in the early days, had several productions that went to the American College Theatre Festival in the Kennedy Center in Washington. They really did some high quality productions in this theatre in the early days. So the arts kind of -- I can't explain why -- but the arts were kind of good here from the beginning. I don't know if it's just because they brought great faculty in. A lot of these faculty members that they brought in were from places like the Yale school of drama and some other big programs. I think that there was an effort early on to jump-start the arts here.

Did I digress there? What question was I supposed to be answering there? The attitude of the community. Well, I mean I think people liked it. But I think we were young. Reno obviously was the old university in the state. We kind of maybe had a little bit of an inferiority complex in the early days. I don't think we have to have that now. I think they're equal if not in funding, certainly in academic and definitely in the arts.

You had also mentioned the basketball team. What was your view of the team when they were winning the championship?

Well, it was fun. It was fun for everybody. I didn't go to many games. I went to one game at the old Convention Center Rotunda. By the way, you asked about concerts. That's where all the concerts were; that little 6,000-seat arena at the Convention Center, which no longer is there. But that's where all the Rebel games were. I saw us play Louisville. We were down by about 20 (points) at halftime, and we came back and beat them by 10. That was the first time we went to the Final Four. I think that was 1977.

It was a lot of fun for everybody. The games were on TV. I remember seeing some of the games on TV. There was just a lot of excitement generated by it. Of course, they generated so much excitement that they decided to build the Thomas & Mack Arena here on campus. That was built when I was gone to Colorado. I think that was open by the time I got back. But I mean it was hard to get a ticket at the Convention Center. It was only 6,000 seats. So you either knew a

friend with season ticks or something like that or you didn't go. Obviously, it became a lot more available for more people when they moved into the Thomas & Mack.

How did Las Vegas differ from the other places you lived?

Well, it's very unusual, and I still feel it's very different than anyplace else that I visit. I visit a lot of other cities at conferences and things like that. There is really no place like Las Vegas. There isn't. The first thing, of course -- I'm sure you hear this over and over -- is that everybody, especially in the early 1970s, really was from somewhere else. The population here until 1960 was probably less than 50,000 people I think. When I moved here I think there were 350,000 people, and that was one of the first big explosions of populations, and of course, we thought, oh, growth. It's nothing compared to what happened in the late 80s and early 90s. Then it happened again in the late 90s and in the early part of this millennium. But we've had these three or four huge growth spurts that I've seen.

I don't know. Las Vegas was just very different. And, of course, there were a lot of retirees here. There wasn't a lot to do for young people. There still really isn't. That's one thing. Culturally we're starting to play catch-up, but there's a lot more to -- I think most of the cities that I see are much more advanced culturally than we are. Certainly, nobody else has all this free parking. That's another thing. There was cheap food at the buffets in those days. I remember that. I don't know. It was kind of like a smaller version of Los Angeles in a way just because everything was relatively new here. There weren't a lot of old buildings. There wasn't a lot of old culture here.

It was basically this casino culture and everything was sort of built around it, which is the great thing about UNLV because UNLV is one of the few things we have in this city that didn't sort of grow up around all that. This is sort of like what a lot of other universities are like, especially now that we've got more students coming from out of state. I'd say that UNLV was very different from a lot of other universities because so many of the students were living locally. They went to high school here like I did, and now I think that's changing a lot.

But this was always kind of an oasis and it still is. I think one of our great strengths is that we are so very different from the rest of the country, with the attitude and the culture and the rest of the city.

(End Tape 1, Side A.)

-- will continue to be an alternative place for people looking for something more like what they have had in the other cities that they came from. We're kind of an oasis still.

That's why I'm really hoping that this Midtown UNLV thing happens because at that point we'll be our own district here. You know what I mean? A lot of cities do have sort of a distinct university district. Where my son went to college, they have the University Park neighborhood down there in downtown L.A. A lot of cities have that. There is sort of a whole separate little culture built up around the university. I think that's what's starting to happen here. I'm really, really looking forward to that.

What would you describe as being some your major accomplishments during your career at UNLV?

Staying employed for 20 years for starters. What year did I start here? 1986. Did I say that? '85-86. So 20 years now, right? Yeah. Continuous employment for 20 years; I think that's a major accomplishment anywhere. Don't you?

Yes.

I don't know. Just the fact that I've been able to make a career here, bring lots of entertainment here, and continue a tradition started by some other directors before me, including Charlie Vanda, is a major accomplishment.

I don't know if you guys have heard much about Charles. Oh, that's a whole other interview I guess. But our Master Series is still named after him. Charles was a CBS radio executive and then he became a television executive. He started in Philadelphia and New York, and when he retired he moved from Los Angeles to Las Vegas. He was a very close friend of Marjorie Barrick, who died recently. We had her memorial service in this lobby yesterday.

Charles had all these contacts in entertainment. There was no place to go and hear the symphony or see the ballet. Nevada Ballet Theatre was Nevada Dance, and they were very young when they were over at that theatre. But there was no place you could see a touring ballet company. They did little shows at Las Vegas High School and things like that. So he's the one that recognized that void here and teamed up with the president of the university to start the Master Series and to start the fundraising campaign for this building.

He's the one that literally went out and shook all the hands and went door to door at Regency Towers where he lived and got all the heavy money people to get behind building a symphony hall. He started the symphony series that we still have. It's 31 years old now. Vanda also was buddies with Marjorie Barrick, and he convinced her to start the Barrick Lecture Series.

Charles died in 1988. So for the first decade or so, this was Charles'. Charles did all the artistic programming and all that sort of thing. He's very much responsible for what happened here culturally.

Can you describe the UNLV students you've worked with either as an undergraduate or in your 20 years of employment here?

Oh, just some great young people, people that have gone on to do other things. I mean there have been some idiots, too. Don't get me wrong. But UNLV has produced a lot of great students. I was one of them, right?

Did you ever teach any classes?

I've done guest lectures and things like that. I'm involved in the IAAM, which is the International Association Assembly Managers. We do a lot of professional development and that sort of thing, so I've done a lot of panels and sessions for them. It's a national organization of people who do convention centers, stadiums, arenas and performing arts centers; public facility managers, basically. I've done a lot of that sort of thing.

Can you tell me about your current position and what that work entails?

I'm the director of artistic programming and production at the Performing Arts Center. I'm one of the co-directors. We have another director. She's the director of finance and guest relations. I schedule everything that's in the theatres and try to referee all the battles over who gets to use what when. It's a fairly full schedule, so there's a lot of competition for dates and things like that. Of course, there's a hierarchy. The college of fine arts comes first, and then you've got the ballet and the symphony and yada, yada, yada. So I'm kind of like the person who referees a lot of that.

I do the contracting and the billing for all the people that do the rentals and all the spaces and things like that. I also am kind of the lead person on the presenting series that we do, the Master Series and the New York Stage and Beyond and our little classical guitar series that we've started up now. That's a whole other job.

So it's really kind of like having two or three jobs in one. We're a pretty lean organization. We do a lot with a little. So, yeah, I'm involved in a lot of that.

UNLV receives over half of its funding from donations. Do you think this is a good way to run a university?

Well, I think it's a necessary way. Let's face it. It all runs on money. We can't do things without money. I deal with the Barrack Lecture Series. I help recruit all the people who speak on that and do the contracting and all that. I've seen the exponential rise in speaking fees and artists' fees and things like that. Things are becoming really expensive.

Construction-wise, you know, it took almost as much money to put two additional floors on that garage as to build the entire structure the first time around because the price of construction materials and glass and steel and all these things are rising. There is a lot of competition to acquire building materials.

So the university needs the money. I we're going to continue to grow, yeah, I think we have to operate that way because I think there is no doubt -- if you read the newspapers here and have been here for any length of time, you know that the taxpayers here just are not interested in funding any more than they have to. Obviously, the room tax and a lot of the other things go back into the entertainment and the casino industry.

Tourism and the resort industry is king here. We haven't really diversified the economy that well as yet. Let's face it. A lot of colleges are supported by a lot of those other kinds of industries, things involved in science and tech and engineering computers and software, health care. We still are reliant on that one basic industry for most things in this state, so we're not going to get rich off tax money here. It's a necessary evil, really.

No, I really think that the citizens of the state and the industries that make fair fortunes and their livings here in this state ought to be the ones that support education. Is that realistic? No, it's not realistic. It isn't going to happen anytime in our lifetime I don't think. So, yes, we have to go out and partner and fundraise and do all the things. We're doing pretty well in the last few years on campus.

You had mentioned recruiting for the Barrick Lecture Series. How do you go about doing that?

Well, I work with agents just like all the other shows, but the speaking industry is a little different. There's a great demand for good speakers. Corporate America is very event-driven these days. So the money that they're paying -- it's very similar to what you experience with entertainers here. The money that the MGM Grand casino will pay for an artist is sometimes almost double for the Las Vegas show on a Saturday night compared to what some of the artists are making in other cities on other concerts. The casino industry wants that attraction to get people in the casino. Well, Corporate America is doing the same thing for their conferences and their conventions. That has sort of driven up the fees for speakers.

Would you be able to give us an example?

What question was I answering?

How you go about recruiting the speakers.

Well I work with agents who work with the management and the offices of the speakers. Let's face it. Most of them are in New York or Washington, D.C., because the Barrick Lecture Series has always been about national affairs, international affairs, politics, journalism and those kinds of things. Most of them are in those two areas. They are in New York and Washington. There are two or three big agents back there that really have a lot of connections with those kinds of speakers.

Would you be able to give us an example of speakers' fees?

Well, I mean they can range anywhere from 5,000 for somebody you barely know to 150 or even 200,000. So most of the people you know and would say, oh, let's get X for the series because that will draw and be a really big name, a lot of those people are upwards of \$100,000 now for one speaking engagement. Many of them want a private jet. If they don't, they want first class, often for them and an assistant or maybe even their spouse, significant other or whatever. So, yeah, it's become an expensive business.

How important would you say sports are to a university?

Well, let's face it. My son went to USC. Football is king there. You can't deny that there's a big connection between keeping the alumni interested in the university and fundraising that you can do and courting corporate partners for the university by bringing them to a special event and making them feel special and seeing what kind of special things you have going on the campus.

Sports are certainly a major part of that at most universities.

I mean you try and say, well, our first mission is to be academically sound in education and all that. But after that you really do have to look at all those things that are traditionally part of campus life that keep the people with the money and the support involved in the university. So I wouldn't deny that that's -- I've seen it at other schools. It's very important.

How do you feel about the satellite campuses?

Well, I would like to keep everything here personally, just because I'm attached to this campus. This is the one that I first came to 30 years ago and I'm rather attached to it. However, as the valley fills up and housing is in more disparate parts of the valley, it's harder for students to get here. Going back to that funding thing, we can't keep up with the roads and the freeways and the traffic. It's really hard for a student who lives in the extreme northwest part of the valley to get here. It probably takes them at least an hour if they don't hit a traffic accident.

Do you think there are any other solutions for rapid growth other than satellite campuses?

Well, a lot of people are putting stock in distance Ed and things like that, no pun intended. I'm not really plugged into all that, so I don't know. I think that satellite campuses are great for specific types of applications. They've talked about a tech park and the health sciences campus being closer to UMC and being downtown or whatever. That's all fine I think, but I wouldn't want to see another major campus where the college of liberal arts has their office. I think the major stuff should remain here. If that means we have to acquire land around us or go up and add floors to existing buildings or whatever we have to do, I think that's what we should do.

The other thing that a lot of people talk about is the fact that we have no stadium here on campus for football and whatnot. That's part of a big thing on some of these other campuses; the fact that they've got a football stadium right in their campus. Conversely, I would hate to lose having the arena here. There seems to be a movement towards perhaps the Rebels going off campus someday to a major off-campus arena. I would hate to see that happen. I would really like to see if they have to build another arena, then maybe they would build it really close to the campus. I would hate to see that go.

So, in other words, I would like to see a stadium built here on campus for football. I'd like to see the Rebels stay here, as well. I don't know if there's room for that. I don't know how

realistic any of that is. I'm not one of the planners.

I would also like to see mass transportation like the monorail and something of that nature. If they're going to take it to the airport, how much more is it going to cost them just to have a stop here? I would really love us to be connected to the rest of the city that way.

What does having a Research One Institution mean to a city like Las Vegas?

There's a certain amount of legitimacy that comes with that title. UCLA and ASU -- you think of those cities and part of what you think about that makes those cities are those great institutions. So I think it is something we aspire to, and I think it is something that we will achieve. I don't know if it will be before I retire or not. I've got another 15 years or so. Perhaps we will do that before I retire.

What was the follow-up question?

Oh, you answered it.

Do you think the Millennium Scholarship is enough, or is there something else we should do for Nevada students to ensure quality education?

That's a loaded question. That's a hard one. I mean the Millennium Scholarship is a pretty great thing. I don't know how many states have anything similar. Obviously, you can go out and try and establish more private scholarships, which is the only alternative to that.

But, yeah, I think that they should try and keep as many good students here as they can. The best way to do that is to have programs that students want to stay here for. You know what I'm saying? So keep the scholarship, but build the programs up here so a student is less likely to want to go to MIT or wherever it might be. That's your greatest attraction for good students--your faculty and the reputation of your departments or programs.

In 1957 the only building here was Maude Frazier Hall and the school became the Southern Regional Division of the University of Nevada. What are some of the major changes that have taken place since then?

Well, it didn't exist before that. So I'd say everything's pretty major relative to that question. But I don't know. We were just an extension of UNR in the early days. That's how colleges everywhere start.

I go to the Shakespeare Festival up in Cedar City. That school, Southern Utah University,

started out as a normal school. It was a two-year school to train teachers or agricultural students. It was an agricultural school, also. It became one. Then they became a four-year school in the 60s. In the 70s or the 80s they became a university and they were doing graduate degrees there. So it's a very common thing.

So the question you asked me: What are some of the major developments? I mean like I said it didn't exist, so everything is major. Just the fact that Las Vegas has a major university is kind of miraculous. A lot of people don't believe it. They think that all we are is gaming and the resorts and the Strip. They have a university there? Some people are still like that. So it's really kind of a little miracle here that we have been able to do this.

So I'd say just the fact that we have what we have and you look around here 49 and a half years later and see all this, it's kind of amazing. It's a very young institution.

What do you see as the next needed improvement for the campus?

Well, who doesn't tell you parking? Have you run into anyone yet that didn't say parking? That's what all the students say.

Well, we need more parking garages is one major thing.

As someone who is here with the arts, we need to renovate the theatres. These buildings are now 30 and 35 years old. It's now time to do major renovations and keep our performance spaces updated so that we can -- we're training students to work in the industry. Well, we should have everything that the industry has here. Some of that is starting to happen. The college of engineering and the college of fine arts have teamed up with this entertainment/engineering program. They need to stick with that and not lose that. So those are some things that I think are major.

Again, I think it's time to go back to the older buildings and modernize them and maybe even expand them, make them large enough to reflect what we have in terms of the size of all the programs that they are meant to accommodate. But I also think, in terms of the infrastructure and the things in the neighborhood, we need to sort of help reinvigorate the neighborhood around us. That's another thing.

I can't think of one specific new amazing building that we need. Here's the science and tech building. That was a major need. That's coming up. The journalism program is now --

communications are now getting theirs. I'm sure there are still programs that need a building like that. I mean maybe the geosciences -- that Lilly Fong building is ancient. They probably really need to do something.

I think they need to take the old buildings and bring them up to current standards. By doing so they can further beautify the campus and they can also enrich the programs that are meant to take place in those buildings. That's my answer.

Those are all the questions that I have. Did you have anything to add, Claytee? I just have a couple of follow-up things.

When you first started here you were doing lighting design. What is that? Could you explain?

Yeah. Theatre call lighting design -- well, when you go see a show, it's not just -- when you see the symphony, it's usually just white light, right? Okay. You just made the lights brighter. That's it. Well, when you go see a musical or the ballet, the lights are changing all the time. It's colorful. There's isolation for smaller scenes. For big scenes it's big and bright or colorful. There are patterns. The lighting is meant to support the action in the play and the script. You want to change the lighting from when you have a scene that's on a Pacific Island in daylight as opposed to New York in the evening in the winter. The lighting is a huge part of the atmosphere in entertainment in shows and in theatre.

And we train students to do that?

Oh, yeah. Yes. We certainly do. It's done with computers now. It was all done with manual controls when I was a student. In fact, there were some that were so ancient that you would get electrocuted when you touched it, some of the crude stuff that we worked with in The Little Theatre. But it's all computerized now. Lights move now. They didn't move before. The technology in entertainment is just astounding, the things that are done now days.

That's kind of complimenting the answer that I just gave you about facilities. Here we are in one of the entertainment capitals of the universe. We absolutely have to equip these theatres the way that these kids are going to be expected to function when they get jobs, when they go out to the Strip, when they go to New York or when they go to Los Angeles. We absolutely have to do that.

And do we have a lot of students working on the Strip?

Yes, not only working backstage but in box offices and in the wardrobe department and at Cirque du Soleil. Yes. A lot of grad students - even undergrads - have to work now. Well, we always worked I guess. But now with student loans...

When I came to school here I complained about having to come up with 3 or \$400 for my tuition for a semester. Can you imagine now?

That's just what a student spends on books.

Right, and I am a parent. So I see it from the other side, too. I've got a son who just graduated and two girls who are going to -- thank goodness for scholarships. It's just horribly expensive.

Being in fine arts what do you see as the other connections with the Strip in addition to what you just talked about? Do you see the Strip as having a special impact?

Obviously, we have arguably the number one hotel school in the U.S. We're constantly sending interns out there. Entertainment is a huge part of the casino business, so that's the obvious one to me.

Also, there's a convention business. There are people who can do direct shows and play music and record music and do lighting displays. It's also a part of the convention business, too, as well as the entertainment business. That's huge in this town.

So I think the logical thing to do is to have connections between the convention center and our hotel school and build -- I've always said this. I think they are now working on something called Innovation Village, which is like a mini hotel convention center right here on the campus. I've always said -- about seven or eight years I've been saying this -- they need to have something like a convention center or a conference center.

Add that to that last answer. That is something else we need. We need a big conference center. A lot of universities have a place where people can come and hold their mini, little convention. Obviously, we can't handle National Association of Broadcasters or COMDEX or Consumer Electronics here, but maybe little subsets of them. But smaller meetings -- we could have an entire convention here on the campus if we had a facility like that. The hotel students could do all the catering and all the food service. You could do some of your internship work here.

Entertainment is very interwoven into the fabric of the resort business, as well, so that's another connection that I would cite there. It's all related. Over in the hotel college they have classes in event management. We're a lot more connected to that industry than might meet the eye. So that's the way to connect it there, I think.

Build another theatre for the mini conference center. We could do all kinds of things. We could have another theatre as part of Midtown UNLV because right now the theatres are so full that it's --

Our mayor is talking about a performing arts center downtown. Would that compete with what we're talking about, Midtown?

Well, they're not only talking about it. They're fundraising for it. But, again, going back to what we said about the cost of building things, it's going to take them awhile because it's a huge building. They want to do it right and they want to build something world class. Well, that takes huge money. I see the performing arts centers that are built in other cities, and I see the price tags. The price tags keep going up, up, up, up. So by the time they get ready to build that -- I saw something yesterday saying that that was going to be \$300 million. Well, they've got some of that money, but they need a lot more. That's going to take awhile.

What was the question? How do we relate to that?

Yes.

Well, my boss, the dean of fine arts, is always saying that we're not training people to work here. We're training people to work in places like that, in places like the Strip. So I would imagine you might develop some internship. I would think that there would be some relationship. Obviously, some of the shows we do here now will go down there and will part of that in 2011, 2012, whenever that is that they can get that done. But that will leave us with more opportunities probably to do things that will help the students have careers.

But, again, without renovating the facilities and making it possible to do a real opera here -- we have an opera program.

(End Tape 1, Side B.)

As I was saying we can't do things like that. We can't do the Nutcracker in this building. We have to do it in the little Judy Bayley Theatre with no live orchestra because the orchestra pit is not

large enough for the size of orchestra they need. We can't handle the big scenery and flying different scenes in and out because we don't have the fly house built onto the concert hall. So how are we training students to do those kinds of productions if we don't have that? So anyway, that's me on my soapbox again. That's something that I think is going to have to happen in the future.

Earlier you mentioned the term "black box." For someone listening to this who doesn't understand --

Experimental theatre. It's a small black room, flexible space. The seating is done on risers with chairs that can move, and you can move things around. You can set things up either with the audience only on one side of the performers, on two sides like an "L," on three sides like a "U," and all four sides as an arena. So you can actually have the audience surrounding the action in the show. Many, many, many performing arts centers especially in colleges have such a space.

And my last question is -

A small space. Intimate. Go ahead.

- how do you respond when someone says there's no culture in Las Vegas?

Well, they're not paying attention. They're just not paying attention. Sometimes I feel like it's hard for us to rise over the noise created by the rest of the city in what they offer out there. The fact is in the last decade the Strip has incorporated in its showrooms many, many shows. If you go to another city, those shows would play at the local performing arts center. The hotels here in Las Vegas are the venues. In other cities you have the hotels and then you have the venues.

Advertising is very expensive here. Obviously, the local media know where its bread is buttered. That's where they make their money, so they're going to get the attention. It's hard for the university and other nonprofits to afford to really compete with all that buzz.

It has improved, though. The R-J and the Sun are doing a lot more with reporting on the local arts in the last three or four years than they had done for many years prior to that. So it's improving. But I would say you're not looking. That's what I would say to that person.

Now, yes, there are things -- you can't go see Wicked here. But you can see Phantom of the Opera now in Las Vegas, can't you? Another example of the hotels providing a venue is Stomp Out Loud. There are so many examples of those kinds of things that we take for granted that the Strip is going to provide some of that. A lot of pop artists and rock artists, the older ones, have adapted

to performing arts centers around the country. But here they play at the hotel because that's where the money is. It's a no-brainer.

So, yeah, I think the university has to do a lot of work to try and keep up with that. There is a lot we can do. I think the Midtown UNLV concept, by making us a separate entertainment district, can help us a lot. They can build what they are going to build downtown. They can build things on the Strip. But we'll have that. I think that will be a huge help to the university.

This has been wonderful. Thank you so much.

So what do you do? Do you transcribe everything and put it in Special Collections in the library? Exactly. We are trying to turn this into something really special for the 50th anniversary.

That would be great. A book or something? Or even an on-line --

Yes. We want to do something really great and maybe have that 50th logo. We have a website already. Some of these will be put on the website.

You can put all this on line. Now, how much work -- I know because when I did my master's thesis I had something like 750 pages of interviews that I transcribed and it took me -- do you have machines that help with this kind of thing?

We have people. We have professionals who actually have a contract.

Like court reporter types?

Yes. As a matter of fact, the one that we're using -

That's a lot better than me doing it.

Yes. That would be so time consuming we would not be able to handle that. We plan to get a copy of this to you eventually.

That would be great because we're involved in all that 50th anniversary business next year. We're going to have some definite involvement in all that.

Well, thank you.

Thank you for the opportunity, guys. I do appreciate it.

Thank you so much.

It has been wonderful.

Great information.

Try and catch up with more of the people in the arts if you can. Obviously, I'm going to promote

the arts.

(End Tape 2, Side A.)