

Peter Hero

Executive Director of Oregon 1975-86

Interviewer: *Maryo Ewell*

Date, location of interview: *April 14, 2005 by telephone*

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I. Think back on those early days of SAA's, when you were new in your job and the whole "field" was in formation.

A. What was the "big idea" behind the formation of the NEA and SAA's?

[tape didn't start at once] *I think the brilliance of it was that the NEA was tied to requiring the states to come up with money, and creating state arts agencies, which were concerned with all the arts throughout the country. There was a time when it [the NEA] was seen ONLY an outreach vehicle, and the issue of did they have any sense of quality was sort of bounced around. But I think that was a great idea. I think... So that's about state arts agencies.*

But in terms of creating the NEA, there's been a book written about this (damned if I can remember the name of it but I read it) - if you go back and look at the early testimony, it was a lot of conservatives who were promoting the NEA, believe it or not - it wasn't Charlie Mark's book - it was someone who wrote about the development of the arts in America - there were quotes in there, - quotes not only from Pell and Humphrey and these guys - but from quite a few conservative folks in Congress - the rationale was, and this is so interesting, the rationale was that they were proving to the communists that we had free speech, and that our artists could do whatever they wanted. Because of course what happened was, when the wall came down and the communists weren't our enemy, who did they go after, they went after the artists! It was the conservatives - when the NEA was originally conceived and developed, and even Kennedy said this, that "we live in a free society and we have free speech," and we forget in those days, back in the late 60's, the mid 60's, what an ominous threat the communists still were - we were just barely out of the 50's

, you know, with bomb shelters and everything, and that is why they were so rigorous about the government could not judge content. That's where it came from. And I had a real conservative congressman from Oregon I remember when I was in there and I went to see him to lobby for the NEA; he thought I was there to wring my hands over some troubled grant. And he said, "Peter, I know what you're here for, but you know what, the law won't let me get involved. I'm not allowed to tell them what they can approve." That was so interesting. So, that was maybe not the Big Idea, but it was one idea behind creating the NEA and state arts agencies. I didn't know it at the time, it wasn't until I read this book 5 or 6 years ago, years later it became clear to me: The symmetry of communists are there, we get the NEA, they're gone, we kick the NEA. And that's exactly when it happened, because Frohnmeyer went there in '90, and that's exactly when the wall came down. Of course, it was also Mapplethorpe, but still.

B. What was your "big idea" when you took your job – what was the situation in your state, and where were you hoping to go?

I'd had kind of a circuitous route to this job. I'd originally gone to Stanford business school, and then I was in the military, worked in San Francisco and New York in marketing and advertising - and my job just became like a game of monopoly, I didn't care how many jars of pepper I sold. I was the marketing director of Spice Islands. I went back to school to get a PhD in art history – I wanted to run an art museum. When I got out of school, I looked around, and found that a person even with an advanced degree and no experience, lo and behold, wouldn't be hired as the director, which was the job I wanted. I was offered very low pay at museums doing administrative work. A friend in Oregon told me about this job because Terry Melton had resigned, and my wife was from Oregon and her parents were very good friends with a couple of the commissioners. I went out there, and they said, "You ought to take a look at this." And I interviewed, we hit it off, and the summer of 75 they hired me. I wasn't sure what to expect, but the two or three things, the three things I guess I was most interested in, were community development (that is, how do you push these ideas about art, culture and citizen involvement out to these rural areas of the state; I'd driven all through Oregon before I took the job); secondly I was interested in assisting artists to make a living as artists in some way, knowing our society didn't put a high value on that; and third was really developing and managing and figuring out our percent for art law that had just passed (we were the second state I think after Washington and maybe Hawaii, I can't remember) and there was great angst about that – legislators were already

saying I don't want some goddam thing that looks like, I don't know what, a block of iron – I want pictures of our military people. So anyway, that was ...

C. When you left your job, do you think you had made progress in achieving your “big idea?” Or did you change your mind about what was needed?

When I left the job, did I change my mind...well, making progress, yes. When I left 10, 11 years later, we had a wonderful staffed and competent network of local arts agencies – at least half a dozen of them, and we got help from the NEA and others doing that. We had a wonderful guy named Angus Randolph, who worked for me, and he was out there driving around the state. Our percent for art program blossomed enormously, because despite the economy in the late 70s and 80s there was a great deal of state building, and we did I think some innovative things. And artists in schools did well...we had that wonderful Gary Young (you know he died, he went to Connecticut and ran their arts council – right before I came here in 1990, or so I think – we started the Gary Young Award. He went jogging in New York and they found him at a bus stop on a bench, dead). The Artists in Schools program was a great one.

D. What were you proudest of having achieved during your time in office?

I think it is the network of local arts agencies; they continue to grow and created a whole new level of participation. I think, secondly, we led the creation in the early 80s of Oregon Advocates for the Arts, which is a statewide advocacy organization; and in really tough budget times in the early 80's when the interest rates were really high and nobody was building houses, they were really instrumental in keeping the legislative foot to the fire in terms of funding. And I guess maybe again the percent for art program was really quite spectacular when all was said and done. We changed a lot of minds about art, and what is art, and did some great things.

E. What was most frustrating to you?

The most frustrating part was this terrible economic downturn we hit in the middle of my term, about 1980, when the economy was in the tank; we had the oil crisis, the timber industry was just flat out; it really limited our growth in terms of available resources at a time when we trying to implement the good

ideas we developed in the first part of my time there. And the other thing, the endless squabbling between big and little organizations – this whole debate about populism, quality, all this thing – the big guys saying “We’re the flagships” and the little guys saying “We’re overlooked” – it was so hard to get people on the same page.

F. What was most surprising to you?

The most surprising to me ...well a couple of things. One was the enormous appetite for the arts in rural areas. I was really surprised. And in what some might call redneck, areas, but people would drive 3 hours to a concert and 3 hours back and think nothing of it – it was just remarkable. The ticket went out the door as fast in Brothers or Baker as they did in Portland, Oregon. It was just incredible to me that there was this great hunger for, interest in the arts. And sponsorship, and patrons, and ranchers who put money in. Really quite exciting.

Secondly how threatened by art were legislators (I can tell you a story about that further down) – how absolutely they cringed at having to get involved with it – whether they’d have to be asked, “Well what is art?” and “Is that art?” And they just didn’t want to deal with it which was so interesting.

And then finally most surprising – this whole populism-elitism argument – I couldn’t understand why those were antithetical. Recognizing that resources were limited, I’ll always remember the analogy of Joan Mondale at a NASAA convention said, “We think there is this great conflict, or dichotomy between popular art and great art; she said you know, just because there are thousands of basketball hoops on garages and money poured into youth basketball leagues doesn’t mean we don’t also have the greatest basketball teams in the world.” That’s fabulous – I’ve used it since (well, I used it then, I haven’t had to use it since). But that’s exactly right. To me, there wasn’t necessary a split, it wasn’t either or, it’s and, also, and avec... so anyway.

G. What was your agency’s relationship with the NEA like? With other SAA’s? With ACA? With local arts agencies?

I would say it was excellent. I know that some were frustrated by the NEA’s sort

of patronizing tone in some ways. I arrived when Nancy Hanks was still there, and Michael Straight was the deputy chairman. I'll always remember – you've met Michael probably before he died, or heard him. Well here I was: it was the summer of 1975, I'd been on the job for 3 months, and my chair said "You ought to fly back to Washington and meet everybody at the NEA." So I said OK, and I flew back to Washington in the dead heat of summer. Just boiling. And they were over at Columbia Plaza. And I went in, I thought I'd start with Nancy Hanks. So I called ahead and said "Can I see Nancy Hanks?" And they said, "Well, she might have some time at 10:00" so I went in, past Michael Straight's office. He was looking out at the time, and I said "Hello!" and he said "Who are you?" "I'm Peter Hero from Oregon!" and he said, "Of course you are!!" It was such a great response, I've always wanted to use that. I mean, she was I thought very interested in the states, I served on the theater panel. She seemed very interested in our views. I don't know, she didn't always agree with Jim Edgy or whoever was there, but I thought she was great. I thought that after she left, I think things deteriorated under the late Liv Biddle. I think he was not competent, I think he didn't know quite what to do with the states and that was a rough period. And Carter was not particularly supportive of the arts. But with Frank Hodsoll coming in, who we all worried was some draconian conservative Republican, I think a lot of deadwood was cleared away– you could disagree with him, but he said what he meant and he did what he said. I always found those relationships very healthy and open and I didn't have any problem. He was still chair, I guess, or he was just leaving and Frohn Meyer coming when I came to this job. But I think they've been well served. Frohn Meyer had a hard time, but I think Jane [Alexander] was interested in the states. I don't think she was well advised by Sandy and that other guy there... But I would say, long-winded answer, my relations were always great. When I needed something, AB, Ruth Maleus (sp?), the old guys there were very accessible.

Relations with other state agencies....oh, I think that was good. I was chair of NASAA for several years, that was very collegial.

Early on, it [WESTAF] was helpful to kind of get the lay of the land. I'd never worked for government or for a state arts council, and meeting my colleagues who included Bob Sheets and Ruth Draper and Terry Melton, it really ramped up the learning curve. So that was great. I think that Executive Directors make terrible board members, and I think WESTAF was kicked like a football around and around; we had very uneven leadership; we had Dick Collins, then Rich Harcourt (sp?), we had Bill Jamison who moved the office to Santa Fe to suit

his interests (I mean, I like Bill, we were friends), but I felt it was kind of an organization in search of a mission, it was fed by the NEA to do dance touring. And while it did some interesting projects, like the writer awards and the visual arts exhibitions that that toured, it didn't seem to institutionalize those ideas or capitalize them, it didn't have enough presence, enough connections to big foundations, to major donors; it was always just working through the states. And the state arts agency people by and large weren't very good fundraisers. And we tried to bring corporate people on and they were bored and didn't know what to do. So I was always sort of frustrated. But we loved going to Santa Fe, and we had great dinners and we drank a lot so it was a lot of fun.

ACA I had nothing to do with.

Local arts agencies – I think was good, certainly in Oregon, but we didn't do much with NACAA.

- H. [this can be a probe question from g above] What was the single biggest issue or challenge the SAA field had vis a vis the federal government, the regionals, other states, the local arts agencies?

Probably this underlying debate about whether the states had any quality or not – that we were just outreach vehicles, that we were just there to flush money to the congressmen's' district. So there was always this sort of inferiority complex that we had. I think another big problem was Liv Biddle, I think he just didn't know what to do, and didn't do what he said he was going to do; I'm not picking on him, but he just wasn't a strong leader. The lack of presidential leadership if you talk about states versus federal – Nixon with Nancy was probably the last president that really stepped up to do something about the arts – in fact Reagan – it's the republicans who do more than the democrats – but I always regretted that no one in the white house really used the NEA, or the state arts council network to be a priority; it just wasn't a big enough fish to pay attention to. And finally, after I left, when Helms was on a rampage, this issue of, well should all the money, should 50% of the money go to the states – I'm not sure it was a challenge, but it was a big issue.

- I. Can you think of an anecdote that tells us something about the arts in the political climate of your state at that time? Can you tell us who – if anyone – was a special political ally to you in those days (the governor?)

A legislator?)

Well, I would say 2 things. One, because – well ... I don't think I really had a special political ally. I found that, I think that the most dispiriting thing was, when we had a great advocate in the legislature, it would always turn out that they were doing it to get to the arts donors, and to look cultured, and not out of using up any chips in the legislature. That's a damning indictment, but I believe it's true. We didn't really have good support. We had a governor for 8 years, starting in 78, almost the whole time I was there, Vic Atilla (sp?), a former – well, he was an Iranian, he had a rug business actually. He was a very conservative republican, very scared of the arts. And our percent for arts got rolling under his leadership. And we built a big new wing on capitol, a huge new addition that involved hundreds of thousands of dollars for art. And a large bronze abstract sculpture was created after all the usual contests and everything, on the back part of the capitol over a large doorway there. He was furious, just furious, that this was being done. He wrote a letter to the entire Oregon legislature and said, "You may not have seen this disgusting thing that's being put on the capitol, but if you go look at it you'll be as outraged as I am; and if you have views, would you and please write Peter Hero at the Oregon Arts Commission!" Well none of them wanted to touch it, so I didn't hear from anyone till one day a Senator near Portland called me up, a real backwoods, down home guy" and he said, "You know, I got this letter from Atilla, are you Peter Hero?" I said Oh yes," and he said, "I got this letter from Atilla, and I went out and looked at this thing, and I looked at the model, and I said, you know, it reminds me of a deer's hind leg." And I said, "I don't think anyone's ever told me that, what do you think of that?" and he said, "Why, I think it's pretty good!" He said, "I really liked it." So I wrote a letter to Vic Atilla, and I said, "Governor, I need to report to you that so far the responses to your letter have been 100% unanimous in support of the artist and the sculpture and the 1% for art program." He was just amazing. Just so weird.

I think the strangest thing that happened in Oregon out of misplaced support for the arts was, we had that arts checkoff passed in 1984, I think, and I fought it and fought it and fought it. I said, "You know, this is ridiculous, you wouldn't fund the Highway Patrol or the state university system by this mickey mouse mechanism, letting people allocate part of their tax refund," and they said "Oh, but Lou Harris says..." and I said, "Oh no." And they said, "But Lou says that 70% of population would pay \$25 more in taxes if it would be for the arts..." And I said to this legislator, who was actually friendly towards us, trying to help us, I said "We all use those statistics but none of us believe

them.” I said, “You mustn’t,” but damned if she didn’t get it passed. And instead of 70% giving \$25, about ½ of 1% gave \$5 or less on average,” so what sort of message did that send? And sure enough, just as I thought, every other cause got on the form and the arts groups were supposed to promote it and it was a disaster. I mention it because support for the arts is an inch deep, and even knowing the drawbacks to it they passed it anyway and it was a real damper on appropriations because the legislators would say, “Oh, well you’ve got that other thing, you’ve got that percent” – which brought in about \$100,000. So there’s something about the arts in the political ... particularly Vic Atilla.

J. How did you use your time:

1. Can you describe a prototypical day?

[Q: Was there such a thing?]

I don’t think so. I think it was a combination of administrative stuff because, you know, of the bureaucracy, meeting with arts groups – sort of site visits, lobbying the legislature – that’s what stands out.

2. In a typical year at the beginning, can you give a general idea of how your time divided (in percents, roughly):

grant administration 10%
advocacy/lobbying with public 20%
field/constituency communication 15%
agency strategic planning We didn’t do much, 5-10%
program development 25%
fundraising 5-10%
partnership building (with other government agencies,
with other types of nonprofits, with private sector, with
arts/cultural agencies at other levels of government) 10%

We had great partnerships, but I didn’t go out my way to do that, I just wasn’t really on my – it was so hard to deal with these other agencies, so bureaucratic.

3. Did your time use change in any noticeable way from the

beginning to the end of your time at the SAA?

Towards the end of my time, when we were cranking Oregon Advocates for the Arts – OAA - I spent a lot of my time in my last two years, maybe half my time, kind of breathing life into that, and left them behind as a good resource for the arts.

K. What else – information, stories – can you tell us that you think people in the future ought to know about your agency, or the SAA world in general?

Well I talked about the income tax checkoff, which was a disaster, and Lou Harris – absolute nonsense.

I do have a funny story, though. Nancy Hanks told me all about how she would tell members of Congress in advance about grants to their constituency, and asked them if they wanted to call and say, “This is Senator so-and-so, and I just wanted you to know that your symphony is going to get \$10,000 from the NEA.” So I thought I’d try that in Oregon – this is great - so the first time I tried it, I called this senator out in rural Oregon, and I said, “Would you be interested in telling your local theatre that they’re going to get a grant a grant of \$10,000 from the Oregon Arts Commission?” He said, “They are?” I said, “Yeah!” He said “Damn! That’s pretty good, all right, I’ll call them ” so he called them. He got somebody on the phone and they said “What!! \$10,000! We asked for \$25,000! See, all the money goes to Portland, we never get any money out here!” So he called me back and he said, “What the hell, why aren’t you giving us more money.” Anyway I told Nancy about that, and she said, “Well, that’s the way it is in America.” It’s a great story.

II. Have you stayed in touch with the state arts agency field since you left your position as Executive Director?

[No – but he commented on these questions anyway. What he said first is below under the “If not...” question. Then:]

A. If so:

1. From your experience, how has the role and the activities of SAAs changed since you began your career?

2. From your experience, what skills/competencies do you think are most important to incoming SAA staff? To SAA leadership?

Having some knowledge and skills working in government would be useful. I took me quite a while to figure out how government works, how decisions are made. You need to have enough arts experience or credentials that they have the respect of the arts groups, they can't be just administrators you know; I think they have to have a union card, you know what I mean in the arts.

3. Would you pursue a career in SAAs/public arts management today if you were starting out?

No, I wouldn't. I think it's sort of a marginal existence. I think it's hard to maintain, or sustain accomplishments; they get washed away by the political tide. And what you build up and work so hard on gets eliminated. We, for example, had a wonderful and very well funded program in the state penitentiary where they had been making this big, ugly, awful steel furniture that no one wanted; we had a furniture designer in there, and before long we had a whole line of wooden tables and other things that were selling like mad and the inmates were pleased; and so forth. You can argue whether inmates should be part of the picture, but we thought they should. And then it got swept away by the next legislature; same with Artists in the Schools. I mean, how many schools build up something and then get washed away. So maybe you just have to be happy with process and not product. It was sort of frustrating. Plus working for government – the liability - I could swoop in and swoop out, but I would never stay as long as I did. I stayed way too long – I was there for 11 years. Everyone thought, "Well, that's what you do." But you know, I wasn't Mary Regan or Denny Wilson, I didn't want to stay there forever.

4. Has the field lived up to its promise? Why or why not?

I think so. The arts are much more available, I think state legislatures and governments have been sensitized to the idea that there needs to be some arts presence in some way; though recently in some states, Colorado, California, Oregon, there have been real efforts to dump them, but they are still hanging in there, so you hope that some day there will be a revival. But maybe not ... after I read this, after I wrote that down, I thought, maybe not. Maybe 10 years from now, maybe 20 years from now we'll look back at this era from the 60's to 2000 or whatever as the time when government experimented with the arts and went in and out. We're in a culture war that hasn't abated since Helms. Moderate

republicans are being voted out of office at every level, this vituperative, vicious right wing is pushing moderates out like Mark Hatfield, or even Bob Packwood supported the arts, so who now will support the arts, and why? Dana Gioia is a wonderful guy, we've gotten to be great friends, and he is doing a wonderful but, but also a job that is focused on high-quality safe things. Maybe that's OK, but at the state level, I think the state arts councils are under real duress. And while they haven't been eliminated, as far as I know, once one or two are, and some "substitute", some meaningless state effort, through the libraries or something will be sent to replace it, that will give states courage in other places to do the same thing. So I'm a little bit saddened by that, but maybe change...

B. If you have NOT stayed in touch with the field, why not?

I really haven't. I think I went to one NASAA meeting. Well after I left there, in 1986, this is interesting – it has to do with what advice you'd give a young person - I remember talking to Neil Goldschmidt, who had been Mayor of Portland, and he was later on Governor of Oregon. And I went to see him, I'd been in this job too long, I wanted to run an art museum or a major cultural group. I'd been the #2 in several big searches in the northwest, for the Portland Art Museum and for other things. He said: "Peter you can't stay in government too long, soon you'll be seen as a government person." And I talked to friends I knew on the search committee for these places. In one instance they hired an absolute nincompoop from Alaska who lasted about 18 months, and they fired him, she said, "You know, Peter, if you were from somewhere else, not just down the road in Salem, and had done something else, besides working for the State, we'd have hired you." And I said, "You know I can do – I've got a business degree, I can run an organization, I can hire, fire, you know," and she said, "Yeah, but that's not what you've been doing. We see you as the state arts agency director. Period." So I said to my wife, I said, "You know, to get another job, related to the arts or nonprofits, I have to leave the northwest, have to go somewhere else, and then maybe I can come back but I can't stay here unless I change careers." So I took a job as president of the Maine College of Art in Portland, Maine, back there with my friend Denny Wilson. Anyway, so I went back there, my family hated it, it was freezing cold, and they said "What the hell are we doing here, we live on the west coast" but I was president of this college of art. We had about 1,000 students in downtown Portland, gave a BFA and we started an MFA, and then after about 4 years I came to the foundation. In a way Neil was right. I'm not sure I would have gotten this Foundation job if I hadn't gone to this college and broken out of government.

Anyway, I haven't stayed in touch. But I have been involved in the arts – I've been on the National Council, I'm currently on on the board of IMLS (Museum and Library Services) – “W” appointed me to that; I'm on the board of PBS, and I just started for them, for the board the PBS Foundation. It's going to be cool. They're under the gun from Congress. So I've stayed involved, and I was on the local arts council board for a while. In the Silicon Valley there's a regional arts council, the Arts Council of the Silicon Valley.

[Restates question] No, I haven't really. Why not ... the reasons why are, just new directions beyond art. I just sort of outgrew that, and I'm really interested in civil society, civic engagement, building community. I've been doing some work in central and Eastern Europe, around there, helping with an emerging network of community foundations in former communist countries. Fascinating, really interesting. And I've also done work of a similar nature in S. America, Australia. It's really interesting. The seeds grow better in the formerly barren soil of communist countries, because people are so eager to reinstate citizen involvement and stability for their lives. But at a time when the language, even now, 10-12 years later, is still corrupted by the communists – I mean you can't say “volunteer” because communists used that as in “You will volunteer to clean up the museum this weekend.” And “leadership,” a very suspect word. Why do you want to be a leader? What's your real agenda? Even in the face of that in Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, it's just remarkable what has happened. And there now dozens of real community foundations, even in small areas, and they have endowments, and they're connecting with each other.

So, while I'm still interested in arts, and doing stuff nationally, PBS and the Museum Services board and so forth, and we fund a lot of arts things (my foundation gives away about \$75 million a year, about \$1.5 million a week, and 15% of it goes to the arts, and most of it is in this region but not all of it – about 1/3 of our funding goes out to other institutions, including arts institutions, around the country or around the world because our donors have interests elsewhere. So I just find this work, which involves raising money and giving it away, and trying to build a community in an enormously diverse region where there is no majority ethnicity and people across the street speak a different language – it's wonderfully challenging and interesting and that we're ... anyway... My colleagues in the field, except for Mary Regan, Ellen and Denny maybe, I just lost track of, didn't stay in touch with after 2-3 years; plus with the turnover most of them went off and did something else.

III. Think about the time when you were starting your work with SAA's. What Have you changed your mind about, if anything, from then to now?

I guess I was very idealistic when I went in, and I thought we could actually create institutions and structures in society that would go on fostering the arts, getting more people involved; and going back to what I said a little while ago, I found that not to be true. It was very ephemeral, and no matter how good the program, it was just at the mercy of the winds or the legislative or the school system winds. I'm not at all sort of dismayed or dispirited about my experience. I think we improved people's lives. I can point to some things that were saved and continue, like the % for art law, but much of what we did, now looking back on it, seems not as high impact as we thought at the time that it might have been. It cycles. It helped Oregon, and we did have that deer's hind leg; although Vic Atilla didn't learn – because, sure enough, his last year in office a large fountain sculpture was placed in front of the capitol out on the grounds, on the green, the lawn there, through rigorous competition, international and all that. And he hated that! He would stop his limousine going to the capitol often, he would shake his head, and get back in again- this was reported to me by people. So finally he had an idea: as soon as the thing with the water was turned on, and had been inaugurated – he wouldn't come to the inauguration or whatever you call it – the dedication – as soon as the water was turned on, he got people from General Services to go out and scuff the aggregate so that it was too slippery, that the thing ought to be shut off and covered! Nobody did it, but we joked about it – it was the “slippery test” And he was out there, with the head of General Services, he said, “Well try a different pair of shoes!” It was just great.

IV. Do you have a single piece of advice for a young person entering the field of public sector arts administration today?

Skills to work in government, have your art credentials, don't stay too long.

V. Information about you:

A. Education

1. Educational Level (has, ba, some grad, ma, PhD)

MBA Stanford, MA in art history (never finished coursework to get a PhD)

2. Major/field

Business, art history

- B. What skills/competencies did you have did you bring to your leadership position at an SAA? How had you acquired these skills? (Experience, professional development training, formal degree education)

[above]

C. Work Experience

1. Specific arts management experience vs. non-arts management Experience
2. Did you work for a SAA either before or after your time as Executive Director?
3. Did you work for a public sector agency – not an SAA – either before or after your time as Executive Director?
4. It may be necessary for us to just ask them to make a list of their work experience in chronological order – no need for years - including the SAA, and then for us to categorize – jotting one of these categories after they have named the job:
 - private sector management
 - government agency management
 - gallery/performance group
 - fundraising/grant administration
 - performer/critic/writer
 - lobbyist/advocate
 - nonprofit sector experience
 - elected office holder
 - arts education/teacher
 - academic

-service organization experience: national or other

Work Chronology:

MBA

*Air traffic controller in Marine Corps (which marvelously focuses the mind to
Learn to pay attention to what you're doing_*

Advertising in New York

*Marketing in San Francisco – Marketing director of Spice Islands (it had been
Purchased by a start-up specialty food company; but I just decided I
Literally didn't care how many more jars of pepper I sold, and then I
Made a change.*

OAC

Maine College of Art

Community Foundation of the Silicon Valley; I've been here 16 years

D. Do you pursue any art form? Which?

*I've been taking drawing classes for several years, it's wonderful, it really
focuses the mind, sort of like being an air traffic controller. You have to really
pay attention. It's sort of taught me to look at the world, because you can't
draw something unless you really look at it, put down what you are seeing, not
what you think you're seeing. That's a good exercise I write a good deal – but
it's not novels or poetry. It's mostly writing about community development,
essays, I've been published – some have been published in Europe. I try a little
poetry now and then, but I'm really working on drawing. It's the hardest thing,
but I'm getting better. A lot of fun.*

E. Demographic information:

1. Gender *M*
2. Age range *62 in 2005*
3. Geographic region he or she lives now *San Jose, CA*
4. Political/partisan identification *Independent, a middle-of-road
person. I have to be careful – I've got everything from Mormons
to people who live in trees – I've got to be careful.*

We have taken positions on bond issues and things, in fact I insisted we take a position on funding the Boy Scouts, which we don't, because I don't think in California, or anywhere, you can discriminate that way (so we've had some wrestling matches with our donors). But that isn't a flag of my political persuasion.

I have a really good article that Fortune Magazine did on our Community Foundation, and I'll send it to you because that would give a really good sense of what we are doing. Show it to your community foundation!

By the way, when I came here, one of the first things I did was a very large \$12 million arts initiative, as a shared endowment among our 10 largest budget arts groups, and a big piece going to arts council for distributing to smaller, and midsize groups. It was the first thing I did – I had all these arts groups send me their plans, and I put them up on the wall and I realized that all these groups were going after endowments, and we don't have endowment funders here. I called them all in and I said Look – and I showed them each other's plans, which sort of freaked them out, and I said, "You're all going to meet each other in lobby of Packard Foundation, and one of you will get funded!" I said, "Why don't we all do something together," three years later we had done it. It was a great ride. It was sort of like the Arts Stabilization Fund, only it was peer-driven, so there wasn't this top-down "You must do this, must do that," but rather, they all had to acknowledge each other's warts (?), and who had deficits and who didn't, and get in bed together and say, "We're still going to do this."