

**Transcription of Oral History Interview with
THELMA OTTO**

July 13, 1998

This oral history interview is being conducted on Monday, July 13, 1998, in Hinderaker Hall with retired staff member Thelma Otto.

My name is Jan Erickson. I work in Chancellor Raymond L. Orbach's office. He is the eighth chief administrative officer of the Riverside campus.

Erickson: Thelma, would you begin, please, by telling us where you were born and a little about your mother and father and any brothers and sisters you have?

Otto: Well, I don't think that's important. I have two sisters. I came from Michigan, Royal Oak, Michigan. My mother and father are both deceased. I am married. I have three children and five grandchildren.

Erickson: Did any of them go to UCR?

Otto: Yes. My son graduated from UCR. My daughter took her master's here. The third one went to Redlands.

Erickson: Um hmm. And how about those grandchildren. Are they in line for UCR?

Otto: No, not at this point. Two of them, the older ones are up in Oregon and go to school in Oregon. The younger ones are much too young. My children started rather late having children.

Erickson: Well, how was it that you came to work at UCR?

Otto: We had move to Riverside in 1963. My husband bought a sporting goods store in town. In '67, I decided I wanted to go back to work. My neighbor was Don Edwards, who was then-Chairman of P.E. and he kept after me. He wanted me to take a job in P.E., and I went over and looked around and said that I didn't know that I wanted to work there. So that day I went over to Personnel. Sue Scott, who was then Sue Kelly interviewed ...

Erickson: I didn't know her. She must have left then.

Otto: Yes. She retired before I did. And they offered me a job that day.

Erickson: Really. It was that easy? Did you fill out several applications?

Otto: I filled out a form. You took tests then, you took spelling and all that kind of stuff. And I had never typed on an electric typewriter before. I hadn't worked for many years. I stayed home with my three children. Before that I had worked for MGM studios.

Erickson: Oh, what did you do there?

Otto: I was an assistant story editor.

Erickson: That must have been really interesting.

Otto: Oh, yes, loved that job. Actually, I never thought I would find another job I liked as well as that. But I did when I came to the University. I really enjoyed my work here.

Erickson: Was UCR one of the dominant forces as far as employment in the area at that time?

Otto: Yes, as a matter of fact someone had said later—I guess Bourns was here doing big business, I really don't know too much about it—but it was probably the largest employer at that time.

Erickson: Bourns was?

Otto: UCR, bigger than Bourns, I think while I was here, and Fleetwood was just in its infancy really.

Erickson: And what year was it that you came?

Otto: I came to Riverside in '63. I came here in '67.

Erickson: And who was the Chancellor then?

Otto: Hinderaker, most of my time was under his Chancellorship.

Erickson: Well, when you were in personnel then, and you said they offered you a job. What was that?

Otto: That was working for Dean Golino, then Dean of the College of Letters and Sciences over in Sproul Hall.

Erickson: So by that point, the University had started as a College of Liberal Arts.

Otto: Yes, the only other college was a College of Agriculture.

Erickson: Ok.

Otto: Then there was a School of Education, outside of the College of Letters and Sciences.

Erickson: So you were in the College?

Otto: Yes.

Erickson: How many people were working there, approximately, when you went?

Otto: In the Dean's Office?

Erickson: Yes.

Otto: Well, we had two Assistant Deans, later three, but at that time when I went there, it was two—George Helmkamp and Frank Way. In our little suite, there was also the student affairs office for the college. And they had a couple of people working there. I think we had three staff people working back in the Dean's Office. Things have changed a lot.

Erickson: Well, they have, yes. We have new buildings all around. What were the buildings that you remember?

Otto: Well, there was Sproul Hall, of course, and there was Watkins Hall. The Physics Building was there, and eventually they built Batchelor Hall, East or West, I can't remember. Batchelor Hall was there, and then they put a new one up there. Life Sciences was there. (pause) The Library, of course. And P.E. was there.

Erickson: Uh huh. It had been more than ten years, so had the trees started to mature?

Otto: Oh, yes. That was very pleasant on the mall.

Erickson: It was looking like a real campus.

Otto: Yes, it did indeed. It didn't look nearly as large as it does now.

Erickson: What was the city of Riverside like when you came in '63?

Otto: The city of Riverside was definitely smaller than it is now. I think there were like 120,000 people, in that area. And then

Otto: they annexed the LaSierra area, and that increased it. And of course, Moreno Valley, I guess, was part of Riverside at that time.

Erickson: Oh, is that right?

Otto: Umm. Yes. This was all Riverside. Sunnymead was separate, but what we know as Moreno Valley was just part of greater Riverside.

Erickson: I see.

Otto: Perhaps it was unincorporated. But it seemed so far away from us, I didn't pay much attention.

Erickson: When you did things like shopping, where was that in the sixties?

Otto: Downtown they had Rouse's, we had GKC and McGrath's had a lovely store down there. Lots of very nice stores downtown. Sears was downtown. Imperial Hardware was really nice, a very nice store. It wasn't a hardware store, it was more of a gift store, that kind of thing.

Erickson: Oh.

Otto: Beautiful store. And then there was Magnolia Center. It was there and there was Harris' and very little else.

Erickson: How about the schools?

Otto: My children, well—well, two younger ones went to Alcott Grammar School.

Erickson: Nodding.

Otto: Are you familiar with that?

Erickson: Um hmm.

Otto: The high school was not built at that point. My older daughter went to Gage Middle School. And then they built Poly. Poly was still downtown at that point. So then they went to the new Poly. All three of them went to Poly.

Erickson: Well, let's get back to campus.

Otto: Yes.

Erickson: Ok. Tell me where your office was then, I am sorry.

Otto: Sproul.

Erickson: Sproul, thank you. And you mentioned that the student services area was also there. Did you have a lot of interaction with that area?

Otto: Well, Dr. Broadbent came under Dr. Golino, so we were all close. I mean everybody. We were together. If we needed help, they would come back and help us. We would go forward and help them, whatever. It was a good working relationship.

Erickson: That's nice.

Otto: And I was there until Golino became a Vice Chancellor in '69.

Erickson: What kinds of things did you do early on? That would have been '67 to '69 right?

Otto: Yes. Well, I did a lot of work for the two assistant deans. I took minutes for the Executive Committee and took care of all the new course forms so that they were all done properly and presented to the Executive Committee.

Erickson: And who comprised the Executive Committee?

Otto: Well, I can't even remember who all because they changed every year.

Erickson: Sure. But ...

Otto: Department Chairs. It wasn't like an Executive Committee for the Vice Chancellor.

Erickson: It wasn't?

Otto: No. It was not even people who were chairs of departments. They were just members and I think ... I am not sure, but I think they may have been appointed by the Academic Senate. They reviewed everything that went on in the college, and they also reviewed all the new courses.

If you wanted to drop a course, it had to go through the Executive Committee. If you wanted a new course, it had to go to the Executive Committee. And that was a pretty big job, because we had lots and lots of new courses.

Erickson: Had you worked for a university before?

Otto: No.

Erickson: So this was new. How did you and Dr. Golino set up the office? Did he work with you and ask your opinions?

Otto: No, not too often, not at that point. We did that later when I moved upstairs with him, when he became Vice Chancellor. But at that point, no, because he had his assistant deans he worked with a lot on that.

Erickson: Did somebody else have the position that you took before?

Otto: Yes, I didn't know that person. I came in absolutely cold. She took off and went some place, I don't know where it was. Her

Otto: husband got transferred, she had to leave. And at that point they were doing remodeling of Watkins Hall. I didn't mention Watkins Hall earlier. But they did remodeling of Watkins Hall, and they had all of these plans, and all of the money had been allocated, and they just said, "Here."

Erickson: And gave that to you?

Otto: Yes, brand new.

Erickson: Oh, my gosh!

Otto: No one else in the office apparently knew anything about it. So I really had to dig in, and it was good for me.

Erickson: Well, you learned a lot.

Otto: Oh, yes, because I got familiar with the whole accounting procedure, found out what went on. That was the first time I had been aware that if you had a minus sign, it was positive money. I thought it was the other way around. But anyway that was probably the most difficult thing I had to do when I first came there. But you know, you learn.

Erickson Well, you sure do.

Otto: Yes.

Erickson: Well, let's see, so you were working with architects in our A&E?

Otto: A&E.

Erickson: A&E, thank you.

Otto: Architects and Engineers.

Erickson: Was that Dick Rust at that time?

Otto: Dick was not the one I worked with at that time. I worked a lot with Dick later when I had more control of money, and then we had things going on. But I worked with Dick a lot, and I worked with the department chairs who were having offices remodeled and all of those kinds of things, over in Watkins Hall. And that was interesting.

Erickson: What were they trying to do. Was it because the campus was growing. Is that why?

Otto: The campus wasn't growing too much at that point. They just needed different facilities. And they had brought in a new chair of economics, Jim Earley, and wanted to provide different things. And they were increasing that faculty, and that was another thing to provide more office space.

Erickson: I see.

Otto: So they did quite a bit of remodeling. It was nothing compared to all of the things we did later, you know.

Erickson: Your day just sounds so full?

Otto: It was.

Erickson: Describe a typical day in those first couple of years.

Otto: Oh, goodness.

Erickson: If you can, I mean.

Otto: It's very difficult. I was always a prompt person, so I was always there, you know.

Erickson: At what time?

Otto: 8:00.

Erickson: 8:00.

Otto: Yes, we worked from 8:00 to 5:00. And there were just so many things to do. And there were a lot of things that weren't terribly important to us, but just helping out and learned a lot about student affairs at that time. Just going back and forth, just immersed myself in it. And it stood me in good stead through the years. But we didn't work much overtime. We did one interesting thing that happened. It was actually the beginning of the Black Studies.

Erickson: So when would that have been?

Otto: Well, that probably came into being ... I was there in '67, '68. It probably didn't come into being until probably '69. My dates probably I'm wrong on, but anyway.

Erickson: But just close.

Otto: Yes. What we did was meet with groups of people who were vitally interested in Black Studies. And some people were a little strange.

Erickson: And were they all campus people that you were talking about?

Otto: No, no. There were community people, some who were not even in the community who were from other areas and got involved in it, and some students, some quite bright students. And this worked out. It took a long time. It took meetings. We met every week, sometimes we met in the evening, because it was convenient for some of the people who worked, and this took a long time. And the campus finally decided, I guess, that we would go into the Black Studies. And that was the first ethnic studies we had.

Erickson: I see. Was the program itself then formed after that, or with that?

Otto: Yes. It was not a department. I'm trying to remember, I think we just called it a Black Studies Program, and eventually it became a full-fledged department.

Erickson: Um hmm.

Otto: With the different people they recruited for it. They had some good people. But that was interesting.

Erickson: Oh, I'm sure. Especially to see a program develop from the ground like that with all of the support from so many different groups.

Otto: Yes, it was. It was an interesting experience, I found it interesting anyway. And then we moved upstairs, and the breakup of the College was in the works.

Erickson: And what was the plan?

Otto: The plan was to break up into humanities and social sciences, a division of undergraduate studies, for those undecided who didn't know what they were going to do. Mack Thompson did that. He was the Dean of that. That was very small. And then they combined ... no, then there was a College of ... I am trying to think of its exact name. It was a sciences college, physical sciences, and Don Sawyer was the Dean of that.

Bob Gleckner became Humanities Dean. The first Dean of Social and Behavioral Sciences might have been Jim Earley. And they all changed. But that was a lot of doing. We had to get funding from systemwide, because we had the new positions for deans and new facilities for everybody.

Erickson: Now, were you involved in that?

Otto: Yes.

Erickson: In the budget part of it?

Otto: Not the budget part of that so much, as just involved in the work that needed to go into, all of the policies and everything that had to be done for the Academic Senate. I worked with the Academic Senate quite a bit too.

Erickson: So Dr. Golino would ultimately come up with a policy then. Is that how it worked, and then it went to the Academic Senate?

Otto: Well, it doesn't quite work that way. What you usually have is that dreaded word "committees" who worked on it and presented it to the Dean. And then they would work on it together, the Dean and the committee. And eventually it would

be presented to the Academic Senate for approval. They approved everything like that, and they still do, I'm assuming.

Erickson: Oh, I'm sure they do.

Otto: Yes.

Erickson: Well what were the students like in those days?

Otto: Well, we started to have some problems, quite a few problems, I think. There was a lot of unrest. During the Berkeley things, and all of this, every place seemed to have this. And we had our share, but on a much smaller scale.

Erickson: Can you compare it to today's student? I mean were there demonstrations here?

Otto: Sure, sure.

Erickson: Would they march into your office?

Otto: Sure.

Erickson: That too.

Otto: Oh, Yes. We had a sit-in in the Chancellor's Office and all of this kind of thing. It wasn't nearly on the level of UCLA or Berkeley. The other campuses, I don't think they had as much, but we had our share, but I think it was on a much smaller scale. We got along with the students okay. They were not quite as—there were a few who were pretty strong in what they felt—but most of them, I think, were just kind of, "This is what you do."

Erickson: Sure, just part of the experience.

Otto: Sure, the '70's.

Erickson: Well, Dr. Broadbent was still here then?

Otto: Yes, did you know him?

Erickson: Yes, I did.

Otto: A lovely man.

Erickson: Yes, he really was. Well, how did he, in your view, how did he try to intercept and quell these things?

Otto: It didn't affect his area very much really. He was not Dean of Students at that point.

Erickson: Oh, what was he?

Otto: He did student affairs. I am trying to think of the exact title. He was the Assistant Dean to Golino, and he did the things when students would come in and petition for something, and have all of the grades and all this kind of thing. He was in charge of that. He was not Dean of Students. The Dean of Students was—I can see him, isn't that funny. I'll think of his name.

Erickson: It'll come, sure.

Otto: Yes. He was a nice guy, and he took the brunt of everything. He finally retired. I think there were a lot of problems. He didn't retire, he was too young for that, but he did leave. I'd have to try to go back to think of his name. Isn't that funny.

Erickson: That's ok.

Otto: That's ok? Ok.

Erickson: Tell me what Dr. Golino was like to work for.

Otto: Dr. Golino was a very temperamental Italian.

Erickson: Well, I guess I might have guessed that.

Otto: Sure, sure. And was very strong willed too in things that he wanted and things that he did. He had been a professor at UCLA before he came.

Erickson: Oh, I see.

Otto: That's where he came from, UCLA. And he had been under a vice chancellor who was very, very reluctant to give any authority and kept tight control of all the funding and things, and I think he kind of liked that. So he was more or less that way with the funding that we had.

I didn't do a lot of budgeting work with him. I did some but not a lot. I learned a lot. I knew what was going on, and before he left to go to Massachusetts, I did a lot of stuff that he was not around to do. So I would just do it the best I could. I didn't have the authority to do a lot of things like that, but people started figuring I could take care of things, so I did. And I learned a lot that way.

Erickson: Oh yes.

Otto: And as I said, when Van Perkins became a vice chancellor, he had a different style.

Erickson: He followed Dr. Golino?

Otto: Uh huh, in '73 when Golino left. And he was there until '78.

Erickson: I see. Well, how did it happen then that you came to work for Vice Chancellor Golino?

Otto: I moved up with him from the dean's office to the vice chancellor's.

Erickson: Was there a search committee to establish that?

Otto: (shaking her head no)

Erickson: No. He was just asked to be that?

Otto: Oh, you mean to be ... I thought you were talking about me to move up. Umm. Oh sure. You know, I was not involved with that. I don't know that there was a search committee. I am sure there was. The Budget Committee would have something to do with that. But then Vice Chancellor Jenkin and Hinderaker were the only two up here, and I think there were just so many things going on, they needed another person, and so he became V. C. for Academic Affairs.

Erickson: They just added another position?

Otto: They added another position, yes. He didn't replace anybody.

Erickson: I see.

Otto: And then eventually Jenkin went back to Poli Sci and there was just the two of them, Golino and Hinderaker. And then, of course, Business and Finance. I don't know what they call it

Otto: now, but it was Business and Finance originally. And then the Dean of Students was in this building.

Erickson: And this is now Hinderaker Hall.

Otto: Yes.

Erickson: Was it the same structure, you know, four floors?

Otto: Yep. This was a big conference room. (Ms. Otto was referring to the room where the interview was being recorded, 2108A). This was our biggest conference room.

Erickson: Well, they have divided it now and there is a smaller conference room over on the other side. I will show you where it is.

Otto: But this, right here, was the conference room. It was quite large. We had lovely old chairs and things like that.

Erickson: Oh, did you?

Otto: Yes. And we had lots of big meetings in this room. Anyway, that was part of it.

Erickson: Where was your office?

Otto: Fourth floor. I think the Chancellor is in the area where we were.

Erickson: Yes.

Otto: Down at the opposite end.

Erickson: When Rosemary Schraer was Chancellor, I think they just switched.

Otto: They switched, yes. Actually, my office was that little glassed-in office to the side there. That's where we moved. We first moved in up here and had this little tiny place off the stairway. I mean, it was really bad. And that lasted for a little while. Then we moved to the middle of the hall. They gave us a larger space and I hired somebody else to work for us, too. Then we moved down at the end, which is where we wound up.

Erickson: Well, were you hesitant at all or were you anxious to go with Dr. Golino in his new position?

Otto: You know, that's a funny thing because we moved up on July 1, and I had so many things I wanted to wind up down in Sproul Hall. I didn't move up here with them, and I didn't move up the second day. He finally called me and said, "Aren't you ever going to come up here?" (chuckle) So I said ok. I liked my job, and I liked everybody down there.

Frankly, when I came back to work after being home for twelve or thirteen years, I really didn't think I wanted to have a long-term commitment. I just wanted to earn some money, and sit in a corner some place. But I didn't.

Erickson: You didn't do that! (chuckle)

Otto: No, I didn't bank on my own ambition and my own wanting to get things done right, you know. After I came up, there were a lot of hectic things going on, and there were some frictions between people up here, which I didn't care much for.

Erickson: Among staff people?

Otto: Oh, staff and other people. But that finally smoothed out after some time. That was harder to deal with than anything because we had all been so well served with each other in Sproul Hall. But anyway it all worked out fine, and I enjoyed it tremendously.

Erickson: Well, let's talk about how you and Dr. Golino organized that new office.

Otto: Well, we organized it—Frank Way came up as an Assistant Vice Chancellor. He's a super man. Have you interviewed him, by the way?

Erickson: Just last Friday.

Otto: Did you?

Erickson: Yes, he's wonderful.

Otto: Yes. One of my very favorite people. We had Academic Personnel in our suite. And then we hired ... we didn't hire--we brought up ... (pause) Golino wanted to emphasize research more and we brought up Van Gundy. Do you know Van Gundy?

Erickson: I do. I didn't realize that he had been working there.

Otto: He had been head of research, the Research Office. So he came, and I think that he was an Assistant Vice Chancellor then and

brought up somebody with him. He was responsible for proposals and trying to get more funds, frankly. As you well know, that's the name of the game.

He worked with government agencies and other agencies. He was there for a while, and his main gal came up and worked there, too. We had a receptionist, me, and we had a secretary. Anyway, that's how it was organized then.

Erickson: Were you ... I don't know if this would be your title, but were you the office manager then?

Otto: Yes. More or less. I didn't have that kind of title but it was recognized that's what I did.

Erickson: And did they all come to you ...

Otto: Uh huh.

Erickson: for what kinds of things? Approvals?

Otto: Yes, for approvals. For information, for problems they had. And I worked very well with Van Gundy and Way. Way and I were very close, and we have a great deal of respect for each other. And he was really ... well, he helped me a tremendous amount because at that point Golino was being courted by Massachusetts. And he did finally leave and became ... I guess they called it president there.

Erickson: But now this was in ...

Otto: This was in '73.

Erickson: And you came to this new position in '69?

Otto: Uh huh. And Frank's position, he reviewed all the academic personnel recommendations from the Budget Committee. He worked with the Budget Committee. You are aware of the Budget Committee?

Erickson: Well, I believe it's now the Committee on Academic Personnel. Correct?

Otto: Yes. We used to call it the Budget Committee. Don't ask me why.

Erickson: Actually that's who I share this room with.

Otto: Oh, is it?

Erickson: Yes. They hold their meetings here, yes.

Otto: In this room?

Erickson: Well, I'll take you upstairs after we end.

Otto: This is such a small room. How many are on that committee?

Erickson: Oh gosh. I don't know. I haven't been here at the same time they have. But there is renovation going on in the Chancellor's wing on the fourth floor, and there was a conference room there. Actually it's not a lot bigger than this, but maybe a bit. And there was a conference table there that they all met around. So sometime this week I think they're bringing that table down here. But it will be very tight as you can see.

Otto: Yes. Because I am trying to remember how many we used to have on the committee. Five or seven.

Erickson: Well, that's probably what it is now.

Otto: As I said, why we called it the Budget Committee, I don't have any idea. Because it wasn't a budget committee per se. It was on academic personnel. But I guess it started because we had so much money from the state (Berkeley) for academic promotions and merits, and that was money that had to be doled out. We had X number of dollars and that was it. Maybe that's how they started calling it that. Anyway, that was the Committee on

Academic Personnel. Frank Way worked very closely with them, and I learned a lot about academic personnel and the ins and outs. That's a fascinating subject, too. I wanted to work on it.

And then I got to know everybody on that committee—a lot. They changed yearly. I mean, usually one guy was the chair, and he was usually chair for two or three years. I don't think they served any longer than three years. They were appointed by the Academic Senate. We didn't have any say on who came on the committee.

Otto: They gave their reports through Frank to the Vice Chancellor. And then there were approvals, and he would take up anything with Hinderaker if there was any discussion of “should we” or “shouldn't we.” You know, they pretty well went along with the Academic Personnel committee recommendations on almost everything, but there were other things.

And every once in a while ... Hinderaker was wonderful about this and somebody he wanted to promote or something ... he would do it in an off-handed manner—a speech in front of somebody and say, “And now we are going to have our new professor, full professor.” And then everybody had to go along with it.

Erickson: Oh, that's interesting.

Otto: Yes, yes.

Erickson: He's a tactful man.

Otto: Oh, he's a doll. He's really nice. I really liked him a lot, too.

Erickson: Well, how was it, Thelma, that you came to handle these budget matters?

Otto: Well, this was after Van Perkins came.

Erickson: So it was after '73.

Otto: Yes. He came in the spring of '73, he came before the end of the fiscal year. And I had worked with him when he was working in the Graduate Dean's office. He was the assistant to Bob Hewitt. Do you know Bob Hewitt?

Erickson: No.

Otto: Well, he's deceased, of course. But he did a lot of work there, because Bob, during that last year he was there was really in a bad way. He had severe diabetes. He had had kidney transplants, and they had been rejected. So he had been in and out, and Van had to really take over. And that's how he came to Golino's attention. He had done a lot of work there, and Golino recommended him to the search committee and they finally settled on him.

When he came up, his idea was that ... He said, "This is your job. You do it and take care of it. Period. You are going to take care of the money in this office. You are going to take care of the money that goes out to the colleges. And that's it."

Erickson: And had you done it before?

Otto: I knew pretty much. I pretty much did a lot of things, but not quite as ... you know, bluntly as he told me to do it. Because before, when Golino was not available, I would have to take care of things, and I did it. And I always tried to include him in. I never did it unless I said, "Hey, this is what's needed. We've got this much money, and I think we ought to do this." He'd say, "Ok." So then it was his decision.

Erickson: Now, forgive my ignorance here.

Otto: That's ok.

Erickson: Who were you working with to determine how much money you had allotted for these different things? I mean, were you working directly with Office of the President or ?

Otto: Oh, when the money came on campus, the budget office ... You didn't get money. What you did ... Do you know how money works? I mean, do you know how you get money on this campus?

Erickson: No, I probably don't.

Otto: Unless it's changed, this is how it used to be. The first two months of the fiscal year, you got two month's worth of your twelve month's allotment. After that you had to draw the money. Systemwide then would give you the money on a monthly basis. That's how money came on the campus.

Well, they sent you your budget. There's a big book and it says you get so much for academic personnel, you get so much for administration, you get so much for this and you get so much for that. And our office had access to all that. We knew and we were ultimately responsible because the Office of Budget and Planning reported to our office, and so we were in charge, more or less. They did the transfers and kept track of everything, you know, did all of that. But we made the allocations.

Erickson: Um hmm.

Otto: We had so much money in our own office that was ... not "free money" ...

Erickson: Discretionary money:

Otto: Yes. Discretionary funds. If people left, according to university policy, you downgraded that position.

Erickson: Oh, just automatically?

Otto: Oh, yes. If you had a full professor who was at the top of the scale, and let's say it was at that point \$50,000. They would downgrade it to associate professor III, and that extra money would come into the office.

Otto: Well, technically that money was supposed to go back to systemwide—we never sent it. Just didn't. Nobody said anything to us, so we kept it. And we used it to upgrade other things, to hire lecturers, to hire TAs and all this kind of thing. And that's how we did that.

We had a big book on policies of using money, which was systemwide. In the beginning, when I first started working with it. (We called it systemwide. I don't know what they call it now.)

Erickson: We still call it systemwide.

Otto: Ok. They, especially on academic personnel, wanted to be in charge. They looked at every piece of paper on academic personnel. You know, the employment papers that you do. They had to be sent a copy, and they went over and they would do things like, "Well, you've got too much time here." Or "That's not correct. You've got to take care of it." Well, that's when Angus Taylor was Vice President for Academic Affairs (Academic Personnel) at that point, and he was the one who wanted to keep control of everything.

Erickson: Do you suppose they did that for every campus?

Otto: Oh yes. Oh yes. And actually our Budget and Planning Office interpreted rules and regulations in a certain way, and they were definitely going to keep them that way. And I had a few run ins, because I did things that I thought were within the policy, and they were.

Erickson: They were within the policy?

Otto: Yes. So I started doing a lot of things that they never had allowed people to do. There was a huge Academic Personnel Manual. I don't know if you've ever seen those.

Erickson: I've never read it, but I've seen it.

Otto: I had read it probably as thoroughly as anybody. I don't remember a lot of it now, because I just put it out of my mind.

Otto: But there were so many policies where they said, "You can't do this or that." You can do an awful lot of things if you just do it and not make a big thing about it.

Erickson: Um hmm.

Otto: So I learned to do a lot of things that way. And Van and I funded an awful lot of things that people didn't think they could get the money for. And let's see. One of the biggest things we had ... The first year after Prop 13, we had to give up a million dollars, and that was a lot of money in our budget at that point. But we did it, and we didn't fire a single person.

Erickson: Great.

Otto: I found pockets of money here and there and everywhere and just started to digging in to where this money was, you know. And we did, we got rid of a million dollars and never fired a person. So I thought that was pretty good.

Erickson: Well, again, I am amazed at how much responsibility you had. Were you still the office manager at that point when you were also doing the budget?

Otto: Um hmm.

Erickson: What was your title?

Otto: Analyst. It was just called an analyst, not a budget ...

Erickson: Just the general term.

Otto: Um hmm. I worked very hard, very long hours. Van was a workaholic, and I would come in here at 7:30 in the morning, and I would not leave until 6:30 at night. I didn't take any breaks. You know, I went to lunch, but that was about it.

Otto: I came back in the nights and worked, because he wanted me to see absolutely everything that was in the office. I had to read all the academic personnel files. That's a very long time consuming ... and I did have a couple of people working on academic personnel at that time plus another assistant.

Van tried to do everything himself when he first came, but then we had to hire another man for the vice chancellor to do academic personnel. He just couldn't do it, but in the beginning for the first couple of years, he wanted me to read absolutely everything.

So I worked Saturdays, I worked nights ... and it was a long haul. But I enjoyed my work so it wasn't too bad. I learned a tremendous amount.

Erickson: Oh, yes. Absolutely.

Otto: Yes. And we had some very good times. Hinderaker was wonderful to work for. He did not ever direct anybody. He said, "This is your job. You do it. If you do it wrong, you'll lose your job. If you're doing it right, I won't interfere." And he never did. He was really ...

I remember one time a student came in and was complaining. I can't remember what the heck he was complaining about, whether it was a grade ... And he went to Hinderaker and said, you know, that this is wrong and blah, blah, blah. Hinderaker walked the kid down the hall to my office and said, "You'll have to talk to Mrs. Otto." He said, "She knows more about this than I do. And whatever she says, that's the way it'll be." He left him and took off.

Well, I didn't have any authority to change grades or anything like that, but I was able to tell him what he could do and how he could go about doing it. And he went away satisfied.

Otto: But that's the kind of a man he was. He just had confidence in the people who worked for him and he was very good that way, so it was a joy working for him. And he was always accessible. If you wanted to talk to him, he was always there. If you had a problem, you could go to him. He was just a wonderful person to have around.

Erickson: Was his day scheduled with meeting after meeting?

Otto: Oh, yes. Well, both community and campus. He was very, very busy that way.

Erickson: But you would just find a way to squeeze in between meetings?

Otto: Oh sure. He always knew, you know, there was always time, and he'd find room for you, that's for sure. A funny thing, he didn't want ... he didn't believe in having a lot of extra people around. And so he tried to make do with just the smallest number of people he could have in the office. Finally, I guess we convinced him that he just had to get somebody else. I mean, one poor gal was answering the phones, was taking his dictation, was trying to make appointments and was frantic, you know. So he finally gave in and hired somebody else to help her. But he was very frugal that way. I think both he and his wife probably are like that. Have you met her?

Erickson: Yes, she's lovely.

Otto: Yes. He's a super man, too. I really like him a lot.

Erickson: What was the Chancellor's area like? There was just one staff person working with the Chancellor until this new person came. And then how was it divided? When did we get to the concept of the receptionist? Do you remember?

Otto: Well, I don't know what you mean by that? I mean, this poor receptionist was doing the filing and doing everything and there just wasn't enough time in the day for her to do all of this.

Otto: And they got another young woman who took over a lot of stuff and eventually they got a couple of gals in there.

Erickson: That's what I was getting at.

Otto: Yes. And there were just so many extracurricular things that he had to take care of. You know, he was the head of the university campus here, so he had to do all these things. And he had to have somebody who was taking care of all these things when he was gone.

Erickson: Sure. How did it work under Chancellor Hinderaker with the vice chancellors? Did they all meet together as a group?

Otto: Uh huh.

Erickson: And what was that called?

Otto: I think that was called something like the Chancellor's Executive Committee, something along that line. I don't remember exactly what it was called. But they did have meetings. They tried, I think, to meet once a week, but I don't think they always made it.

And then the vice chancellors had their meeting with the deans. It was once a week, Monday morning, if my memory is right, they would come and have a meeting and discuss any problems that anybody had, you know, budget matters, academic matter, anything. And I did sit in on those meetings.

Erickson: On both?

Otto: No, just the vice chancellors meeting. I don't think anybody sat in on the chancellor's one, just the members themselves.

Erickson: Did someone take notes during these meetings?

Otto: Sometimes I would take notes. If there were notes to be taken, I would just ... If somebody had a question that needed answering, if I didn't know the answer right then, I would write it down and get in touch with them and let them know. We didn't keep minutes of those meetings, per se, because it was just to take care of problems and get rid of them and on their way again.

I continued to do that when Mike Reagan became vice chancellor after Van. And after him came Carl Bovell. Carl took his own minutes and kept minute notes ... everything. You know, he was very meticulous.

Erickson: What were some of the issues you can remember that went on during each of those individual's tenures?

Otto: Well, each one was such a different personality, and each one had different things that they wanted to do. And you know, it's really strange. They all kind of blend together and I'm trying to separate them out.

Van was trying to do absolutely the most that he could. He wanted to increase the faculty, of course.

Erickson: Now this was Van Perkins?

Otto: Yes. We were always, it seemed like the first years we were up here, we were always losing faculty, gaining faculty, getting the FTE allocation for the money for them. And they would say that well, you've got to cut this many faculty. The following year they'd give you a bunch of them, and then they'd cut them back again. This went on for quite a while, back and forth. And then towards the end, we didn't get any cuts like that. But we were having problems with enrollment.

Erickson: I was going to ask about that. Tell me.

Otto: The enrollment, no matter what we seemed to do, enrollment seemed to go down. Everybody had a different idea of what we should do about increasing enrollment. And we tried so many things and nothing seemed to do well. I mean, we went up to ... oh, 6,700, something like that at one time. And that's the time when we got 87 faculty members, FTE. We were just thrilled. They hired and they started the School of Engineering, and that never got off the ground.

Erickson: It is now though.

Otto: Oh yes. Yes. They tried and worked for years to get a School of Law, and there were plans and local lawyers. And Hinderaker wanted that so bad—everybody did. We made proposal after proposal to systemwide, and they didn't pay any attention to us.

The School of Engineering was something they had decided we would probably do, and that was about the time that Engineering went down the tubes for a while. Here we were sitting with the Dean of Engineering and nobody else.

Erickson: Now who was that?

Otto: Seymour Calvert.

Erickson: Calvert. I don't know that name. What did they do then?

Otto: Well, he stayed on in ... I believe it was chemistry for a while. I think that was his field. And then he kind of disappeared. He probably went some place else. Isn't that funny, because I remember when he came, and he was here for a few years. He got a job some place else, and everybody just breathed a sigh of relief, because he came as a tenured professor. So they had to do something with him.

During Van's time, we worked very closely with establishing the Biomedical Sciences Program. That was a big thing, and

Otto: Mack Dugger worked very hard on that. That was a lot of work in getting the money for that and learning a whole new way of treating people who were M.D.s. You had to pay them a lot more money, and there was a whole different way of doing it. They had percentages which were really kind of strange, but they got paid a lot more money. That's the only way you could get them.

Erickson: I see.

Otto: That's what they do at UCLA and any place else that has a med school. You can't expect a doctor to come in on what the professor made, or they wouldn't come.

Erickson: During the period when student enrollment was really low, what kind of magical things did you do then?

Otto: Well, we didn't do anything very magical because we didn't increase the enrollment very much. Bob Herschler was involved. You know Bob?

Erickson: Sure.

Otto: Ok. Bob worked on this for a while, trying to get student enrollment up. They went out to schools and ... Mainly, I think it was just contacting people and inviting people here and holding big seminars for students to come to say, "Wouldn't you like to come here." We did all that.

Then for a brief time, we had a young man named Ken Suid, who had been with ... (pause) I am trying to think where he came from... He came from Chicago, but I don't remember what company he worked for. I think it was a textbook company. He had some bright ideas. I think we had people here who were immersed in the "old school," and he was a little too flashy for them.

Erickson: I see.

Otto: And they did let him go. But actually he had done quite a bit to help. When they sent people out, up north, every place where they thought they could get people interested in coming here.

Erickson: Well, I was referring to your magical ability. How did you manipulate or make adjustments so that you didn't have to fire people if you weren't getting ...

Otto: The funding?

Erickson: Yes, the funding.

Otto: (Pause) As I said, we had this budget, and there were places in your budget that money wasn't being utilized, so you just kind of pulled that back. And it was soft money, a lot of it, where it was ... you could easily ... not soft money, that isn't true, because that's not hard money—19900 funds—is what they wanted back. For all these funds we kept getting back from downgrades, because we had a lot of turnover of faculty who were being recruited by other schools.

So we would just save this money, and we had quite a lot of money that way. And if we didn't spend all of our merit and promotion money, we could keep that, and this kind of thing. So we managed. You know, now that I think back on it, I think, "Gosh, how did we give up a million dollars?"

Erickson: Um hmm.

Otto: One time we had to cut back on the Academic Senate money. Somebody up at systemwide was ticked off at the Academic Senate for some reason I don't remember. They cut the funding partially. So they could only have half a secretary or something to that effect. We found the money in our office to fund the other half, so she was on the books as half in the Academic Senate and half in our office, but she worked full time for the Academic Senate. That's all right. We had to have

Otto: it. It was impossible to work that way. Anyway, we had lots of fun doing things like that ... and getting around systemwide.

Erickson: Um hmm.

Otto: And the Budget Office at systemwide was pretty good at working with you. They really were. Really nice people. And I think most of the people up there were pretty good, and I never had any real problems. They know we're all one university.

Erickson: Would you say Riverside fared as well as the other campuses?

Otto: No. In all honesty, because our enrollment was so low, they had to take care of the others where the enrollment was rising, because they had the students to take care of and we didn't. So they were justified in keeping our funding low and not increasing it. But they were good. We got lots of money for buildings.

You know, we got the life sciences building. It was put up at that point. And Batchelor Hall East or West, whichever one it was. And they were pretty good about that. We had extra money that was soft money from overhead from contracts and grants, too. That was useful for a lot of things that we couldn't do with 19900 money.

Erickson: I see.

Otto: That's what we used that money for. I don't know whether you know how they worked the overhead for contracts and grants?

Erickson: No, would you

Otto: It's a very high percentage. When a professor gets a grant for whatever kind of money, the university gets a percentage of that. I don't know what the percentage is now, but it's always been high, because we have to pay for his retirement, taxes,

Otto: everything that we would pay for out of 19900 money—our portion of social security would have to come out of the contract and grant money, the use of all of facilitates. We had so much more facility use, so much more laboratory use, so much more instruments, this kind of thing. So all of that would go back into

the university as overhead money, and it was part of what you used to budget.

Systemwide knew how much we could take in, so they would cut our 19900 money by xxx number of dollars knowing we had this overhead money coming in. But it wasn't all free, because they cut our 19900 funds that way. But, you know, that's only natural and it's good management on their part.

They said they had other campuses who were growing and needed money, too. I understand that they get a lot more money now, because there is such a high increase in their enrollment, so they get a lot of positions. And that's the way it ought to be.

Erickson: Well, Chancellor Hinderaker retired in 1979, right?

Otto: I guess. I was trying to remember whether it was '78 or '79. It was '79.

Erickson: I thought it was, but either one.

Otto: It doesn't matter to me. I mean, I'm not sure. I know it was before I left.

Erickson: That's what I was getting at. Who was the next person that you worked with?

Otto: At that point, I was working for Mike Reagan. Michael Reagan became the Vice Chancellor at that point and the new Chancellor was Rivera.

Erickson: And then Michael Reagan went back to his department, right. And then who came in then?

Otto: Carl Bovell.

Erickson: Oh, that's right. I'm sorry. Ok. You did say that.

Otto: Right. Uh huh. He came in ... Reagan left when I did. No, that's not true. I had told Reagan I was going to retire before that and then he decided to retire, and we got Carl Bovell. Carl called me because I had known him. He was on systemwide at that point.

Erickson: Oh? As what?

Otto: He was involved with the Academic Senate. I'm not quite sure what his position was up there.

Erickson: Well, he was later, too.

Otto: Yes. He went back.

Erickson: Uh huh.

Otto: He had been Chair of the Academic Senate before he went up there, and I don't remember exactly what his position was.

Erickson: Sure.

Otto: But anyway, the committee selected him, recommended him, and so he came down. Of course, Rivera was here already. He came when Reagan was here.

Otto: But anyway, I had told Reagan I wanted to retire, because I wanted to have some time at home before my husband decided to retire. And I had a mother who was ill.

Erickson: Was she living with you?

Otto: She was living close. And finally she was in a home in Santa Barbara. She had Alzheimer's.

Erickson: Oh.

Otto: So I was spending a lot of time driving to Santa Barbara on Sunday and driving back. I had Sundays to visit her. Then I

found a place here, and I moved her down here. She needed ... I needed to be with her more than she needed me. But anyway, I told Mike I was going to retire. I had said it would be in six or eight months. I've forgotten how long a lead time I gave them. Carl called and said would I stay another year? I talked to Howard, and we talked about it, and I said, "Sure." So I did. I guess I stayed another year and a half. And I did retire in '83.

So I did have a chance to know Rivera and work with him a little, but not as much as I had with Hinderaker, since I had known him so much longer. Rivera was a very pleasant man to work with. He was different.

Erickson: Different from Hinderaker?

Otto: Oh, yes.

Erickson: Was his style totally different?

Otto: Well, Hinderaker had come from Irvine. I think he had been at Irvine before he came here. I think Hinderaker ... No. 1, was a man who was a macro manager, not a micro manager, and I think in some ways so was Rivera. But Rivera, I think, thought that he was chancellor so that he had the ability to make any decisions. And, as you well know, with academics, you don't. Anything to do with academic matters is theirs—and that's spelled out in everything. So I think there was some friction there. I think he thought he could tell a student, "I'll admit you to a graduate program." He couldn't do that, and I think that caused some little problems. But he was a very pleasant man,

Otto: and it was a very sad thing. You know, a man as young as that to have the problem (heart attack). I understand his wife is still living in town.

Erickson: She is and she's actually very active in the campus and the community.

Otto: Yes, I know she is. I was very pleased that she intended to stay. What happened ... he did change his office. One of the girls

who was in Academic Personnel, the second girl in the office ... the Chancellor's office was looking for somebody. And Mary ...

Erickson: Was it Mary Vargas?

Otto: No. Mary Vargas did work there, but this was Mary ... her husband ran for local council ... anyway, she got the job. She was very fond of him and worked very well with him. And he believed in getting more help, of course, than Ivan had. (chuckle) And so I think that all worked out very well.

Erickson: How did it work with your area, your budget area with Dr. Rivera? Did you have meetings with him?

Otto: No. Van and then Mike and then Carl, of course, would talk about this. But he didn't interfere that way in the budget. Finally, Rivera transferred Budget and Planning from our office to his office, and they reported directly to him.

Erickson: Directly to the Chancellor?

Otto: Yes, but actually they still worked with us, and there wasn't any problem at all. It worked out just fine.

Erickson: So have you enjoyed these retirement years?

Otto: Yes. I'm playing more golf and just all kinds of things, and I have a chance to play with my grandchildren.

Erickson: Oh, good.

Otto: And that's always fun. We enjoy that tremendously.

Erickson: Is there anything else that you would like to talk about?

Otto: I can't think of any right now. You know, it's been so long since I had even thought about it.

Erickson: Sure.

Otto: You know, I don't come back on campus very often. When I first left, I did. I did some stuff up to the fourth floor because nobody else wanted to do it.

Erickson: Now what was that?

Otto: Going through a lot of papers. Everybody was afraid to do anything with them, and so they asked if I would come back and look at the stuff, and I did that. I served on a couple of committees, but then after that, I haven't done too much.

Erickson: You are a member of the Retirees' Association?

Otto: Yes. I'm not active in it. I'm not a joiner that way. But, you know, they've done a lot, I guess. Sal has been good for them.

Erickson: Sal Martino?

Otto: Yes.

Erickson: Yes, he's so enthusiastic.

Otto: Yes, yes. And it's great to have somebody like that, you know. So I do occasionally play bridge with them. It meets the third Monday of the month or something like that.

Erickson: Well, I thank you very much for participating in this interview.

Otto: Ok.

Erickson: It was very interesting.

Otto: Well, I don't know that I've helped you too much. You know, one of the people that would be wonderful to interview, but she's not really competent to do it now is Helen Freeland, who was here practically from the beginning.

Erickson: I do remember her name.

Otto: But Helen is in her middle to late nineties now and not doing well.

Erickson: Oh, that's too bad.

Otto: Ten years ago you could have interviewed her. She knew just everybody and it was really kind of fun. I see her once in a while. She was gone when I came here, but I met her afterwards and so I see her quite a bit. But I don't see her much any more. She doesn't get around.

Erickson: Well, thank you.

Otto: Well, you are very welcome.

END OF INTERVIEW