Transcription of an
Oral History Interview with

The Honorable Mayor Ronald Loveridge

August 5, 1998

Erickson: Will you begin by telling us a little about your family, please?

Loveridge: I was born and raised in the Bay Area, born in Antioch, spent a few years in Pittsburgh, and basically grew up in Concord in the East Bay, a town of 5,000 when my folks moved there in '41, and somewhere over 100,000 now.

Concord is part of the suburban growth coming from Oakland as well as coming over the hills from the industrial development along the Sacramento River.

Erickson: What did your father do?

Loveridge: He was a civil engineer.

Erickson: Oh.

Loveridge: One thing Dad told me was, "Whatever you do son, don't become a civil engineer."

Erickson: Oh he did.

Loveridge: And I remember that instruction.

Erickson: Why do you think he said that?

Loveridge: Dad's avocations were more important to him than his vocation. I think he was really trying to signal "do something you really want to do, not something that merely pays the bills."

Erickson: Well, how did you become interested in political science?

Loveridge: Well, the first time I really saw the title called, "political science" was when I received my applications from colleges, and they ask in what you want to major.

I remember thinking that I was interested in social sciences. History seemed sort of old. Political science seemed more current. I actually enjoyed that and did a great deal of reading in high school and so forth, trying to evaluate history versus political science, one seemed more up to date and one seemed a little old.

Erickson: Do you have brothers and sisters?

Loveridge: One, a younger brother, is five years younger. He's an attorney in Sacramento. He is Vice President of what used to be Sutter Health Corporation. He does legal affairs for Sutter.

Erickson: And where did you go to school, Ron?

Loveridge: I went to school in Concord—first Clayton Valley Elementary School (1-8) and then Mt. Diablo High School (9-12). And then I went to University of Pacific in Stockton.

Erickson: And how about Marsha? When did you meet her?

Loveridge: We met at Pacific. We were both undergraduates. Marsha is my wife, and in those days, they gave you a choice of a class between a marriage and family or philosophy class. And I wasn't to be caught dead in taking a marriage and family class.

(laughter)

Marsha also opted out of the marriage and family class, and that was where we met. Interestingly, that was the only class at Pacific in which I got a B. It was the only class in which Marsha got a C. We were not quite sure what that relationship was.

(laughter)

Erickson: And where did you do your graduate work?

Loveridge: Stanford, I went directly from graduating from the Pacific to Stanford, starting in the fall of 1960. I went on a three-year National Defense Act Fellowship.

So my first year I was essentially a Soviet scholar and wrote an M.A. thesis on Soviet Personnel Policies and learned enough Russian to pass the language exam.

And my second year, particularly ... in graduate school you are inspired by professors you work with. I shifted from Soviet Studies to American Studies.

And there was a scholar named Heinz Eulau, one of the leading professors in political science. He later became president of the American Political Science Association. He was my tutor, advisor, and he more than anybody excited me about the kind of concepts and research and thinking about political science.

Erickson: And did you also get your Ph.D. at Stanford?

Loveridge: I completed an M.A. in ‘6l and a Ph.D. in ‘65. I looked at places where you want to go next, and there were only two campuses that I looked seriously at. One was North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the other was UC Riverside. I flew down here and had a wonderful conversation with Francis Carney and Tom Jenkins, among others.

Erickson: How did you even know about Riverside? And was their an advertisement for the position?

Loveridge: No, somebody had called one of the professors at Stanford and said, “Do you have anybody you would recommend?” So he
Loveridge: told me about the opening here at Riverside, and it was through that ... It might have even been a Mike Reagan phone call to Stanford. It was not an advertisement, it was a professor sort of

tapping you on the shoulder and saying, "Would you be interested?" And I said, "Well, yes."

Erickson: That's a nice compliment. What was the department like when you came?

Loveridge: Well, UC Riverside was not a campus of 10,000, but a campus of 3,000. It was a relatively small department with maybe eight, nine professors. A number of people had been here since the campus beginning. There was a very strong core of the faculty, with a commitment to teaching, a commitment to place, and a commitment to politics.

Another professor who began the same year was John Stanley. He and I were really quite excited by what we found. It also was the most tumultuous political time in the life of this country, the late 1960's. It was an interesting time to be on campus, to be a faculty member.

Erickson: What were some of the confrontations or events that happened during that time?

Loveridge: Well, this was the Vietnam period. I was deeply involved in the decade of the '60s and especially what 1968 represented. I was emotionally and personally committed to Bob Kennedy's campaign here and still remember very vividly the event ...

Erickson: You were working on his campaign?

Loveridge: He came to Riverside a few days before the June primary and came through the Eastside. In those days they did something they don't do now.

Loveridge: They used outdoor loud speakers, and there were people on the Eastside cheering Bob Kennedy's arrival in Riverside. He then went to the Municipal Auditorium.

Hank Carney was the County Chair for Kennedy's campaign. There were many people at the Auditorium, and when Kennedy

spoke, they pushed forward toward the stage. We were part of a group that wanted to get closer.

After his talk, Kennedy was in front of the Mission Inn with his wife, Rafer Johnson and several others. Marsha remembers that as we walked by that Bob Kennedy reached out and shook her hand and wished her good luck. She remembers him reaching over a number of people. So our last images of Bobby Kennedy are those of the Mission Inn and his reaching out his hand.

Erickson: Yes, that's quite an image. Was the Mission Inn open then?

Loveridge: For a while, the Mission Inn became an outpost for the University. We had students who were living down there for a year or two. Yes, it was open. It was struggling, but it was open.

Erickson: It was functioning as a dormitory or as a residence hall.

Loveridge: It functioned partly as a dormitory, however it didn't work very well. Then it became an apartment complex which it wasn't really constructed for. It was surviving. It wasn't thriving, but it was surviving.

Erickson: But you came actually in '65, you said, didn't you?

Loveridge: I came in the fall of '65. My first day on campus, I parked outside the Humanities building and went up to the department. It was a very hot day, very similar to today, probably well over 100. I didn't see a soul on campus. I didn't see anybody.

Erickson: Is that right.

Loveridge: After I sort of checked into the department, I came back to the car, and I had a ticket, a parking ticket!

(laughter)

There wasn't anyone else on campus, except for me. And there was my welcome on the first day--$20 or $10, I can't remember what it was.

Erickson: That's what makes it memorable.

Loveridge: I remember that.

Erickson: What did they ask you to teach, Ron?

Loveridge: Well, I was really in American politics. The first course I taught was some kind of course in administrative decision-making. Among the students was a person who later became an Assemblyman from this area, Walt Ingalls. He is now dead, but was in my initial class I taught.

Erickson: I was going to ask about your first class.

Loveridge: And one of the members of that first class has taught for a number of years and is still teaching at North High School. Her name has changed a number of times, but it was Linda Graham when I first taught her in 1965.

Erickson: And do you remember how many students you had, approximately?

Loveridge: A little over 30.

Erickson: Oh goodness.

Loveridge: Classes were generally small for the first 15 years. Most classes were under 40. These small classes created a kind of faculty-student relationship, allowing you to know people by name, to call on people and to talk to them in class and outside of class. If the class pushes much beyond 40 students, it is much more difficult to develop, I think, personal exchanges.

Erickson: And has it grown steadily?

Loveridge: Well, yes, it depends on the classes obviously, but at least in the more popular classes, the numbers have gone much beyond 30 to 50, 60, 70.

Erickson: What are those popular classes?

Loveridge: Well, political science. The largest class I taught was a Public Opinion class.

The American Presidency always had a large number.

Every political science student initially thinks that they may be attorneys, so the judicial courses have large enrollments. Some courses obviously related to who the faculty members are and the kind of excitement they bring to the classroom.

Erickson: Well, you've been able to maintain a special relationship with a number of graduates, haven't you over the years?

Loveridge: Well, I've found it interesting personally and also intellectually in wanting to talk to students. Some of that is simply taking them seriously.

I remember the third year here I worked very hard, not simply to say, "You've now got your BA, good luck," but just tried to connect students with some kind of place outside UCR, whether it was a graduate school, whether it was a law school, a Coro Fellowship, and Assembly State Fellowship.

Loveridge: I just got a note from a fellow named Walt Mix, who graduated here in 1982, and he was just selected by Governor Wilson with the title of Commissioner of Financial Institutions. Don't ask me what that is. The State Office is located in San Francisco. After graduating here, he went to Rutgers in the Eagleton Program.

I particularly worked hard with students I had in classes to see if I couldn't connect them with something that gave them an opportunity. For Walt, going back to Eagleton changed his life.

Erickson: Well, there's an internship program at UCR. Were you the one who established that?

Loveridge: There are two forms of internships. One is the local internship for students placed in the greater Riverside area.

Then the Spring Semester of 1966, a student named Frank Usher came to see me and said, "I'd like to be an intern." It was not a concept I was initially very familiar with.

We talked for a while and I placed Frank with John Wentz, who was City Manager in Riverside. He later became City Manager of Phoenix and President of the International City Manager Association. Frank Usher was essentially my first intern. He's now the Assistant City Manager, I think, of Diamond Bar.

Erickson: Oh, uh huh.

Loveridge: That was the start of a local program. Over time we developed a very systematic intern program in terms of both its academic credentials and in terms of placement. We averaged about 15 to 18 students a quarter.

Loveridge: The second internship program was a quarter-away program. Here we would send students to D.C., or Sacramento, with a few to San Francisco.

Ivan Hinderaker introduced me to a fellow who was the UC representative, or lobbyist or advocate in Washington, and he told me we ought to send interns to his office. He said the best time to do it would be in the winter quarter, for students are like locusts during the summer. A sort of renewal begins every winter, it's a good time.

We sent a young woman, named Liz Zepeda, as our first quarter-away intern. And she went to Washington in the UC office. This was again under the tutelage initially of Ivan Hinderaker. He was the Chancellor of UCR.

Erickson: And what kind of positions did some of those students then achieve after these internships?

Loveridge: Well, for the local internships two things—one is academic, a chance to test ideas and concepts, not simply by reading books, but by observing and trying to see how these concepts work outside of campus. I've had any number of students who indicated the local internships redirected and redefined who they were.

And then when we send people ... I just saw one former student the other night, who was a local intern in a couple of political offices ... he is now working for Dave Kelley, in charge of Dave Kelley's home office in San Diego.

But beyond the testing of ideas, there's a testing of the student. A student is also able to make contacts and hear about opportunities, and so internships often lead to other kind of choices. For students, it forces them to simply not be a passive member of a class, where you can sit and largely sleep.

Loveridge: In an internship, you really are the professor. You take charge of that time and space. And what we also try to do in the local program is not only assign students, and that's just in some ways a small part of internships, it's creating an academic framework and continually asking students, "What are you learning, what do you find, how's this working out, what do you find interesting?" What internships allow, I think, is a kind of tutorial exchange …

Erickson: Yes.

Loveridge: ... in ways that a large classroom lecture cannot. And one of the reasons you develop relationships with students, it is face-to-face, it is over time. For the local internships, we had books we assigned, we had a quiz, we had journals, we had a field paper.

I met with all of the students individually, and I met with them several times as a group. We always had a dinner at my house

where we invited the students to come and to spend three hours pursuing the question, "What do you now know that you didn't know before, or what have you learned, what do you find important about the intern experience?"

I think one of the misconceptions some faculty have is that they see students simply collecting easy credits. The student goes out and spends some time and comes back and collects a unit. I saw that an academic framework was essential.

Erickson: Well, what kind of time commitment did the students make for the quarter one and also the local one?

Loveridge: Well, the actual local internship time was two four-hour time blocks. The concept of this was that they were students, this is not a work assignment. They are full-time students. That was the intern field commitment, but there was also class and office meetings.

Loveridge: If there was a protest from students, it was that they thought the amount of time it took to be an intern combined with academic work was greater than a regular class.

Erickson: Did that happen often, where they challenged you?

Loveridge: No, as one of the reflections … sometimes they would make … I saw the local internship as a serious academic class. It was not fun and games, but rather something that needed to be framed and understood.

They all read a common text book, so we tried to create concepts and languages which they could then do comparisons across the internships.

And we asked questions of not only what is, but if you could be King for a day or Queen for a day, what changes would you make in the political process or the political system as you find it?

Erickson: That's interesting.

Loveridge: So it's not only a description, but it forces students to think in value terms. What changes or reforms or what differences would they want to make based on what they experienced as an intern.

So in brief, a local internship as I defined it and tried to frame it was a rather intense exchange. I knew most of those 15 students very well at the end of the quarter.

For the quarter-away internship, you were able to identify those who excelled as local interns. I had this premise that to be a quarterly intern, you had to be a local intern.

Erickson: Oh I see.

Loveridge: You had to be tested. The quarter-away assignment was really committing your reputation, the department's reputation, the campus's reputation, and in some sense the University of California's reputation.

We wanted to be very careful with the students we selected to be quarter-away students. And I had a number of people who reported that UCR students were the best of any campus, UC or otherwise.

And besides being careful who we selected, I always attached a grade to both the local internships and the quarter-away internships. This was not a pass, no-pass assignment.

Erickson: An actual grade?

Loveridge: But there was a very, very kind of careful academic evaluation that was done. And for the quarter-away internships, the students had to read five books carefully and review them. And then they had a major field paper to do at the end of the quarter.

Erickson: Based on the work they were doing or based on an academic subject?

Loveridge: The field paper at the end had to draw upon the assigned readings and to deal with an issue or question that they found in the internship. It was not an analysis of the office but some kind of policy issue or policy question that they're asked to examine.

I received some brilliant papers from students because they got excited about an issue or question and what they had read and what they had seen.

One of the intellectual difficulties facing students, at least in my judgment, is that they spend too much time in their own peer culture.

Loveridge: Internships force them out of their peer culture. I always emphasized that they had a license to ask questions. They are not threatening. No one really asks most people what you are doing or who are you or what you are about. And if students ask somebody, most people are flattered to be asked. And in doing so they can learn a great deal about different policy areas.

Erickson: Interesting. Are those all undergraduates for those programs?

Loveridge: In effect, yes. We have had a few graduate students, but mostly they were undergraduates. Locally, they could do it twice, taking a local internship for four units. And for the quarter-away internships, it was twelve units. Later, the campus set a limitation of 16 units for internships, counting toward graduation. I'm not sure what it is now, but I think it is the same number.

Erickson: Well, we'll switch subjects here a little bit. What prompted you to run for City Council and when was that?

Loveridge: I suspect that the internships we are talking about had something to do with it because they provided a window into the City and County in a variety of issues that I wouldn't have had otherwise.

I also taught campaign classes which always had a major field component.

The heart of what I sought to do as an academic was to have students leave the campus and do field work, to develop an understanding of how you take research approaches and classroom concepts and apply them.

One illustration – when Ronald Reagan was first running for Governor, he came to Riverside. I divided a class, where everybody was assigned a certain part of his campaign steps that they were going to look at, even to talk to reporters, talk to staff, talk to people in the audience, and read what was said. It

Loveridge: was to try to give a more comprehensive analysis at what an appearance of a Gubernatorial candidate represented.

So, I worked very hard to connect students off campus and in working hard to connect students, I might have also connected myself.

The City had a charter review committee that was set up in 1968. Somebody asked, "Do you want to participate?" I said, "Sure." So I think that was my first city committee.

Most faculty stayed on campus. There weren't many faculty, with a few exceptions, who went off campus.

I taught a campaign class one time when John Tunney was running for the U.S. Senate. The fellow who was chair of the county campaign asked if I would come down to his office once a month or so to give him some advice.

And as an academic, I was happy to give him some advice. I showed up the first time in early June, and he said, "Here are the keys to the office, I'm going to North Carolina, and you are now in charge of Tunney's County Campaign."

(laughter)

Erickson: So did you accept it?

Loveridge: I took the keys and somehow ... in part because that is what I taught, looking for firsthand applications. Internships provided a window. Political campaigns gave you connections with the community.

I also became very much interested in environmental politics in the late '60s and early '70s. I was asked to be a charter member of the City's Environmental Protection Commission.

Loveridge: Much of my EPC life was fighting with the existing City Council. And as a result, I began to get immersed in city issues. One thing led to another. We also moved from the Greenbelt to Downtown. My wife wanted to have a home in the historic part of Riverside. If we had not moved, I would not have run for the City Council. It was a series of accidental steps.

Erickson: It sounds very natural too, as you were mentioning all of those things.

Loveridge: I was asked by a fellow who was active in Jess Unruh's office, when Unruh was Speaker in 1970, whether I would run for the Assembly against Craig Biddle.

And they offered some money if I said yes. However, that's not who I am or what I wanted to do.

At the same time, I was involved in some of the political decisions of the city. I sat in the critical meeting trying to convince Bob Presley into running for the State Senate. There were seven or eight of us, and I remember doing everything I could to convince Bob that it would be a good idea for him to run.

Erickson: And he had been what … Sheriff, at that time?

Loveridge: He had been Under Sheriff. Ben Clark was Sheriff and was expected to run again for Sheriff. I think as far as Bob was

concerned, he was not going to become Sheriff in the near term, and this therefore was a possible opportunity.

Erickson: Did he say yes at that meeting?

Loveridge: Well, he was cautious, as Bob tends to be, and then near the end of the meeting, Bob said, "Well, I think I could run if I could be sure I had enough money." –at which point the group

Loveridge: I was in broke up. The money people went with Bob, and I stayed back.

(laughter)

I was never quite sure of what happened in that discussion.

Again, I was connecting students for campaign classes which I taught at UCR. I assigned everybody in the class to a particular campaign. The only way you can do that is to make contact with the campaigns and ask if they would accept students.

In my public opinion class, I required students to do field work, to interview at least ten people. Their papers highlighted community opinion. Most courses I taught required some kind of connection or understanding of the community.

Erickson: Did you have students involved in Senator Presley's campaign too, then?

Loveridge: Among others. The difficult time was in 1968 when almost everybody wanted to work in the McCarthy campaign. The leader of the McCarthy...

No, I am confusing the two dates. No, this was the McGovern campaign of '72. And the leader of the students for McGovern, from Palo Alto, was Eric Haley. He was recently appointed to head the Riverside County Transportation Commission.

The campaign class had about 75 students, and more than half of them wanted to work in McGovern's campaign.

I limited the number of students that could work in any one campaigns. Their participation was not as partisan troops but rather as analytical ventures.

Erickson: So at what point were you elected to the City Council?

Loveridge: I ran in 1979. I understood from reading and teaching about campaigns that you just don't announce and expect people to vote for you. And I followed fairly closely a text book campaign of how you are supposed to run for office.

Erickson: Do things work that way?

Loveridge: Well, they help frame a campaign. You need to begin a year in advance. You need to take a poll, you must have a campaign organization. You must have some money. I decided I needed to raise $5,000. …

You don't want to go into a campaign where you would likely lose. It is too tough on your family and your friends.

And I looked for themes.

In the first campaign I walked the ward and talked to perhaps 3,500 to 4,000 voters. I wore out one pair of shoes.

Erickson: Is that right?

Loveridge: I understood from academic studies the importance of face-to-face contacts. Of all the ways you can contact someone in the campaign, the most important is face-to-face.

I tried to walk the entire district. You don't get everybody because people are not home, and you don't go to apartments, but I walked most of the First Ward.

We had over 50 coffees, another way to get people to ask their neighbors. Attendance might be modest, but the testimony of

inviting people is important. We had a map of the ward, and every time we had a coffee we stuck a pin in it, so we had well over 50.

Loveridge: We tried to pick a different kind of yard sign. I had seen one that looked like a stop sign in Stockton, California. So we took that idea and used it.

Very few people from the UCR had run for office, and apparently no professors. I thought there would be some difficulty in the community in seeing a professor as bomb-throwing Troskyite.

Erickson: How did the University react to your running? Did you have to check with the Department Chair? How does that work?

Loveridge: Well, I don't recall vividly, but I suspect I went through my colleagues, department chair, dean, Chancellor, all the way.

Erickson: Oh, all the way.

Loveridge: I remember ... What years was Tomás here as Chancellor?

Erickson: '79 to '84.

Loveridge: I remember in my conversation with Tomás about running for the City Council. He said, "You should listen to me, but you should not necessarily follow my advice."

And the story he told was a story of a young Henry Cisneros coming to him and asking him whether he should run for the City Council. Tomás's advice to Henry Cisneros was: Do not run for the City Council, develop a career first. If you run, you are running against an incumbent. You're not likely to win. Don't do it. He said Henry Cisneros shook his hand and said thank you very much , donned a suit and tie, knocked on doors of this conservative district in San Antonio and won overwhelmingly.

(laughter)

Loveridge: So Tomás's advice to me was don't pay much attention to what I have to say, and he used Henry Cisneros as his example.

Erickson: Do you and Marsha have two daughters, right? Did they help on your campaigns too?

Loveridge: Campaigns are like a sponge. They ask for all the time, everything you have and demand more. The family, whether it wants to or not, is intimately involved in the campaign.

Marsha, since she kept the books and kept the schedule, and as you know when there is no one else to talk, there's the wife to talk to, who also can give very direct advice.

And I think you depend, really as a common effort … and then my younger daughter, in particular, helped and walked in some precincts.

Erickson: You should tell what your daughters are doing too.

Loveridge: Well, my younger daughter is in counseling and testing at RCC. My oldest daughter is in child care. And now they are no longer young. They are now in their '30's.

Erickson: Adults. And then you transitioned from City Council to your position as Mayor. What made you take that step?

Loveridge: Well, years intervened between one and the other. I ran for City Council in '79. I saw my limit as four terms at most.

And then there was the question to serving two more years on the Council and going back and teaching or taking in another kind of challenge, another kind of risk, another opportunity.

I was weighing that and made the decision to run for Mayor. I was on the Council 14 years, from '79 to '93. I have now been Mayor for 4 l/2 years. I was on the Council, relatively speaking, a long time.

Erickson: I was going to mention, too, historical preservation. At the time you were a Councilman was that one of the focuses that you put some training on?

Loveridge: Yes, Riverside is divided, as many larger cities are, into wards, that are called districts. I represent the First District, which is the downtown. It is Northside, it is the Wood Streets and some of the river-bottom neighborhoods.

It was the old historical part of Riverside and so, as a Council member, some of what you do is framed by what district you represent. I became deeply immersed in the question of historic preservation.

Riverside, unlike most cities particularly in Southern California, is an older city. It started in 1870, incorporated in 1883, and so there's an architecture which flows with the history of the city, particularly as the archetype citrus center.

I worked very hard as the Council member to try to preserve the downtown and the concept of historic preservation. But it was one of the things that was framed by ... to revitalize downtown, wanting to preserve the character of the city, and maintaining the older neighborhoods. These were the three things you particularly worried about as Council member from the First Ward.

Erickson: And you formed sub committees too, didn't you to work on?

Loveridge: What you find in politics is you're only effective when you get others involved, and so both as a Council member and particularly as Mayor, the notion of being a facilitative leader is central to results.

So it is not command and control business. We try to identify things that make sense and get others involved and empower them.

Erickson: Does it feel as though you are campaigning all the time?

Loveridge: In Riverside the terms are four years, so it's not quite what Congressmen find themselves doing, essentially running all the time. And campaigning is really quite different from what you do as normal folk—a life style of governing.

But for the Mayor there is no ... you are maybe out four or five nights a week. The day begins early and ends late. There are any number of different things you do during the day which are interesting. You carry the flag of the city.

Erickson: I was going to ask you, what do you consider the most important thing that a Mayor does for a city?

Loveridge: Well, personally, it is one: getting people to work together, and the second: is having some vision of where a city can go.

I heard somebody say that 90 percent of the time you should be thinking about the future, and 10 percent to what's happening today. I'm not sure about the ratio, but I think the call is important.

The job, I think, of the Mayor is not simply to do the ribbon cutting things but try to envision the future and get others interested in these visions for the city.

Erickson: What would you say are some of your biggest challenges since assuming this position?

Loveridge: As Mayor?

Erickson: Uh huh. Or go back to Council too.

Loveridge: Well, to follow those two, one is civility to get people to work together. That means members of the Council, the staff, community groups. I see civility as very important. It's a

Loveridge: process thing, but it is very important for a city. I take some pride for the most part. I think civility has characterized politics over the past 20 years.

The second is this kind of quest for vision. When I campaigned for Mayor, I used the language of safe streets, good jobs and great neighborhoods. And I think they are the three central measures of a city. Safe streets being how safe is a city? Good jobs is the kind of economy of a city. And great neighborhoods are where people live. What cities do is they compete continuously for business. They also compete continuously for residents. There is serious competition of people making choices all the time. You worry about and frame reasons of why people want to live here or do business.

Erickson: As the Mayor, you are non voting?

Loveridge: Well, in political science terms, the role of the Mayor is a fairly modest office. That is, you don't vote, you don't hire or fire staff, and you don't appoint. But you are elected by the entire city. You are full time. You have a staff. The office of Mayor carries with it a kind of status that I, at first, didn't realize.

I use the illustration of talking to a young man at Nordstrom's who asked who I was, and I said I was a Professor of Political Science at UCR, and had no reaction. I told him I was a City Council member in Riverside, and had no reaction. I told him I was Mayor, and his eyes lit up, and he went out and got the head of the section to say he was dressing the Mayor of the City of Riverside.

The title provides … you can lose that advantage, but a certain advantage.

But your strength is very similar to what we talk about in political science. It is the power to persuade. You work closely with the City Manager and staff.

Loveridge: The bargain I had, at least initially with the City Manager, was that I wanted to do the best job I can as Mayor. He wanted to do the best job he could as City Manager. It is in my interest to work with him, and his interest to work with me, and ...

Erickson: You reach a consensus.

Loveridge: You reach a consensus. But the City Council members, they run for good reasons. They have their own interests. One tries to be supportive of that.

I think the advantage of an academic allows you at times to not take things personally. People tend to beat you up for different things, and as an academic you understand why these sort of criticisms tend to go with the territory.

I tried to use the illustration in a campaign class, if you get 60 percent of the vote, that is a wonderful margin. But it really means if you have ten people lined up against the wall, you have six for you and four against you.

(laughter)

And politics is not unanimity. It is a search for agreement and consensus. Some argue that you should never compromise. The reason you compromise is to try to forge agreements, try to get enough people to agree in a direction so it can happen.

Erickson: How would you describe the linkage between the University and the city of Riverside?

Loveridge: That's an important question. You've talked to others about the history, and how this University was located here.

My sense is ... when I first came there was a kind of culdesac view of UCR. It was here, and it was nice to have, but it was not seen as the preeminent place, the preeminent definition of the city.

Loveridge: I think that has changed. I think most of the community leadership recognize that the best signature of this community is the signature of UCR.

I was part of a group for a while which was an organization of mayors of communities which had UC campuses. They organized to beat up on the University of California. They came out of Davis and Santa Cruz, Berkeley and Santa Barbara.

We were different in that we did not have the same grievances as the other cities. Some of these were very small. You think about it, Davis and Santa Cruz especially are very small places with a large University of California presence.

Erickson: Um hmm.

Loveridge: What you have seen over time, and I think it's been a very self-conscious decision by the campus leadership is to create ties, goodwill ties with the community. And they've been successful.

There is a general good feeling. It is very difficult to find some antagonist or critic of the campus. I just don't meet them.

And the current Chancellor, Ray Orbach, has made a decision to commit University resources to the other side of the freeway, and perhaps in ways that past UCR chancellors have not. This commitment is recognized and valued by community members.

Erickson: When you are promoting the city, does it help to say that Riverside is a college town?

Loveridge: You ask the question of how do you describe where you live? There are two things about Riverside that you talk about.

Loveridge: You talk about its history as the citrus capital of Southern California, and what was here as Riverside began the Twentieth Century.

As we end the Twentieth Century, it really is a community of colleges and universities, and its best cards to play are UCR, RCC, LaSierra and Cal Baptist. UCR is obviously the overarching institution.

But it's now ... I've tried to make the argument that Riverside has the educational advantage. What we have here you can't find elsewhere.

We're a big city, and the universities help define who we are and what we can be.

Erickson: Um hmm.

Loveridge: And that's now understood. Art Pick, head of the Chamber of Commerce, has been emphasizing that future calling it a "New Paradigm" and identifying its importance. I don't think when I came that people saw the colleges and universities for their economic and cultural promise.

Later we did something called "The Year 2000 Plan" for the city. This was done ten years ago in 1988. What the plan said about UCR was that it's nice to have it as an amenity. It's good to have colleges and universities in your community. They now view things much differently.

Erickson: That's interesting. Do you think that UCR should play a role in K-12 as well as far as eligibility for young students?

Loveridge: Well, education doesn't simply begin when you go to college. I think the University of California has a very major responsibility in trying to raise the level and pay attention to academic excellence in K-12, and I think particularly that we
Loveridge: have the responsibility to try to change the lousy numbers as far as going to college.

I think one of the reasons to cheer the Riverside Community College's Passport to College is to help raise the expectations and increase the number that will go to college.

Whether or not they come here is not as important as raising the expectation and the interest in going to a two year school or a four year school.

Erickson: As an insider in both areas actually, what does the campus need to do to maintain its relationship with the city and the region—to strengthen it?

Loveridge: Well, UCR is doing a number of things. In the immediate neighborhood, I think UCR recognizes its self interest.

If the Eastside doesn't work, it puts some real stresses and strains on this campus, and so Ray Orbach has chosen to get involved in a number of Eastside initiatives including the University Eastside Community Collaborative.

The professional schools become important for this campus. The School of Engineering and the School of Education all have their outreach efforts, and this campus has worked hard to get high school students to come here as sort of the "Show N Tell" of this place.

The University works hard on the Citizens University Committee, which is sort of a leadership stratum with the community which the campus addresses on a regular basis.

It was said when the campus was started many years ago, faculty were encouraged to join service clubs as the way to make connections.

Loveridge: Well, we have gone beyond the quest of simply joining service clubs. Ray Orbach has talked a lot about new economic connections. I think the University Village is another statement that we can't simply stay on this side of the 60 freeway.

One of the points sometimes not recognized is that most of the campuses of the University of California are located in the garden spots of California—LaJolla, Santa Cruz, etc.

Erickson: San Diego.

Loveridge: San Diego, Santa Barbara and even Berkeley. Most of the campuses—Irvine or Newport—are lined up on the beach cities of California.

There are only two inland campuses--Davis and Riverside, and Riverside is a large city where Davis is largely a university community.

I think for this to be seen as a good place to go to school, for faculty and staff to live, you have to worry about the health of the immediate community as well as the health of the region.

But that's one of the difficulties UCR has. New Haven has been a very difficult community, and it's harder to recruit faculty and students to come to Yale, because Yale is located in the center of New Haven, which is in many ways a troubled community.

Erickson: Um hmm. How do you feel about partnerships such as professional schools, research parks, that sort of thing?

Loveridge: Well, we've been talking about a research park for …

Erickson: A long time.

Loveridge: More than a decade. We are close to essentially identifying land, but as a staff person said—then the real work begins. We haven't even got the land yet. I think professional schools are very important.

Erickson: Ron, do you continue to do your academic research?

Loveridge: Once I ... the Mayor's job is sort of ... it's very hard to put the exact hours to it, but …

Erickson: It's very time consuming.

Loveridge: It's probably a twelve hour day, seven days a week. I am now on leave, but I teach one class during the academic year.

Erickson: Which one is that?

Loveridge: It's one that Frank Way designed, who was the former chair of the department, for public policy majors: "Local Leadership in California." I've taught that ... in part because the Chancellor teaches one course a year, so I thought the least I could do was teach one course.

But I don't do it for money, I do it for fun.

Erickson: Well, it does keep you involved in the campus.

Loveridge: It keeps you involved in the campus. Teaching makes you conceptualize and understand, and then it gives you a chance to continue to talk with students.

We have a number of students who are interning in the Office of Mayor. They're doing this because of the class I taught. I just got a note from Andre Quintero. He's going to go up to Sacramento next year.

Erickson: Did he finish at UCLA?

Loveridge: He's getting both a law degree and a public management degree. He's not yet finished the public management aspects.

Erickson: We should mention that he was a UCR Student Body President a couple of years ago.

Loveridge: Three years ago. Nice guy. He recognized that we won the All American City award. In the class I taught, I had Andre study the City of Monrovia.

They have a great Mayor, Bob Bartlett, the arch type of what we call a facilitative mayor. Monrovia in 1995, when Andre was studying it, won the All American City award.

There are only three cities in Southern California which have won the award since 1990: Westminster, Monrovia and Riverside.

And he was reflecting on his time in Monrovia when he was doing his field work paper and talking with Bartlett.

Erickson: Do you have plans to come back to UCR?

Loveridge: Well, I'm committed to completing this second term which now has about three and a half years left. And after that I anticipate that I will return. Age in some ways begins to catch up with you.

(laughter).

I'll be 63. When I came here in '65, I was 27. So many years have passed. I arrived here in Riverside on a very hot summer day in the summer of '65.

Erickson: Would you mind giving your view of UCR in, say the year 2,010?

Loveridge: Let me give it both internally and externally. The internal challenge for UCR is to maintain its special faculty-student relationship which characterized the first 20, 25 years, and that's not an easy quest, particularly as class sizes increase and separations divide students and faculty.

I see that as a difficult quest facing UCR. There's no question that the academic excellence in terms of achievements and research is here internally.

If I have any anxiety about the campus in the year 2010 it is that students will say that this is a campus which cared who I was,

and there were faculty who at least knew who I was and valued my presence here.

From the point of view of the city, I would like to see in the year 2010, University Avenue connecting downtown with UCR, and people who would take that route feel good about driving and feel good about the city and what they see in terms of the commercial side as well as the residential side.

I look for the continuing enhancements of engineering, education and management. And the law school will help tell the tale of this campus.

It is not only the research that's important, but the greatest product is our graduates. For the future of Riverside and the greater inland area, we should recognize that and keep as many students as possible here.

I think we need to be attentive to the residential choices students are making. There is a concern that the single family areas behind the University may move from owner occupied to rentals, and as much as I like UCR, male undergraduates—I'm not sure I'd like four or six living next to me in a family environment.

Loveridge: I think the neighborhoods around this campus are important. UCR and the City need to be attentive and respectful.

You look for exciting kinds of ties, cultural ways, athletic events, but 2010 is not that far ahead. It's really 12 years, and I go back 12 years, that's '86 which seems like just yesterday.

Erickson: It does, it really does.

Loveridge: The campus now understands that it must connect itself with the immediate community and with the Inland area.

The kind of honors that your husband has received are indicative. They are a message that UCR doesn't only worry about itself, but it also worries about the greater community.

Erickson: Thank you very much. Is there anything else you would like to bring up that we didn't talk about?

Loveridge: Well, the evolution of this campus. I've been here for a good portion of UCR's history. In many ways you see it through the life and times of the Chancellor.

I think as an insider you see it through the life and times of a department. That's where you work, that's where you live, that's where your colleagues are. That's the richness in your time here, it's the colleagues that you have.

Erickson: And your department has changed.

Loveridge: Well, yes, it's gone from a small department to a major department, and in the last several years you have a large number of people leave, and there's a redirection for the department.

Erickson: A whole turnover, yes.

Loveridge: You have a new chair, and he has an obvious mission. Academic life is a good life. You read what you love and are able to schedule yourself. Together then, the life and times of a professor and the life and times of a local elected official have been closely connected.

Now I am largely an elected official, but I think once a professor, always a professor. It gives you a perspective, it gives you analytical tools, it allows you to examine serious questions.

I said earlier it gives you a perspective on conflict. You understand why conflict occurs.

I've enjoyed very much my time here, the students, my colleagues, and I'm proud of the University of California, Riverside.

As Mayor, and I'm not sure I can take credit, but the relationship between the City and the campus is as good as any in the UC or CSU system.

Erickson: It's really been special in that way, hasn't it?

Loveridge: I feel I've been a part of that, and I feel good about that. I do think that if the City of Riverside collapses, it would put immense strains on this campus. So it's in the self interest of UCR to have a City that is alive and well. And it is clearly in the self interest of the City to have a campus that's alive and well.

Erickson: Well, it's a nice partnership. Thank you very much.

Loveridge: Yes. I forgot about the time.

END OF INTERVIEW

Text has been edited by Professor Loveridge.

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