

Interviewer: Caitlin Brennan

Interviewee: Laura Bock

UO in the 1960's

Brennan: First of all for the record, do you want to tell us about when you were at the University of Oregon, what you were studying.

Bock: I started September 1963 as a freshman looking at dorms. We had to live in a dorm for the first year and I actually lived in a dorm for the first two years. Almost immediately upon moving into the dorm—I didn't know anybody up there—I met a young woman like myself who was a political as I was. It was such a great feeling to have that kind of connection. Her name was Carolyn McFadden and I have lost such contact with her because at the end of that freshman year she went off to Cuba to be a part of what we call the first Vince Aramos brigade. There were others after that and those were people mostly, I think, American college students who went down to help reconstruct Cuba, to help build things and care for children and build houses and do stuff for the revolution. She wanted me to go and I wanted to go, but I didn't go. And that's a story that if you want me to tell you I will. But we had that first year sort of as political buddies and friends. She was from Oregon, but I don't recall where in Oregon she was from.

It was a heady semester. During that first semester the free speech movement in Berkeley, California at UC Berkeley erupted so since I was from the Bay area I was real active in trying to get the information about what was happening in Berkeley to faculty and students at the UO so that there could be at the very least statements of support for academic freedom. I mean, it's basic, right? We also both together joined the student chapter of CORE, the converse of racial equality. So we were really active and, you know, we were taking classes too.

Also then it was good to have her there because the day that Kennedy was shot and killed, that was like, everything on campus stopped. People were sort of swarming to the SU, we called it the SU, student union, listening to television, listening to radio, just sort of finding people to hug, whatever. And I couldn't find Carolyn. I knew that I wanted to be not just with anybody, but somebody who had my politics so I rushed back to the dorm. I found her there and we just stayed there, listened to the radio and watched TV and talked and so forth. It was so supportive to have someone like that. Really, the rest of the people in my dorm I didn't relate to. I just didn't relate to very well. I related to the other students in CORE and in the other activities. So that first semester was really a heady time.

I didn't go to Cuba because my parents, who were revolutionaries in their time, were worried about their only daughter and convinced me that I shouldn't go. And I as an only kid did a really good job in taking care of them so I didn't go and I lost track of Carolyn. We never again connected. I've wondered if she had stayed in Cuba, where she had gone. But I returned for my sophomore year after that and continued. So that was '64-65.

Instead of going to Cuba I was part of the Freedom Summer so I ended up on Chicago working for CORE in a Freedom House there. Again, I wanted to go to Mississippi, but mom and dad said, you could get killed. We're very worried. Could you at least go to Chicago, which was still kind of—I was the only white girl in the Freedom House. It was a ghetto and all of that and had its issues but it didn't have the kind of level of violence, certainly, that people had to go through in Mississippi. So I did that.



I came back from my sophomore year and started working with the Young Democrats on campus. Wayne Morse was Senator and we just idolized him. He was one of only two senators who came out early against the war in Vietnam, he and Fulbright. I was so proud. I wanted to be an Oregonian so bad. I knew I was a Californian so I knew that was never possible because I hadn't lived down California—it is first, right? But I was just so proud. We worked for Wayne Morse and we worked for a local candidate who was running for congress from Eugene. I forget his name. He was also very progressive. We went door-to-door. We did the usual kinds of campaign stuff, and I worked within the Young Democrats. They were fairly middle of the road, but it was a time where students had strong passionate feelings and opinions so a number of us helped the Young Democratic Club to sort of move a little bit left. It was still fairly broad spectrum, but to move a little bit left so to get involved in some ways with the civil rights movement as an ally, to get involved in anti-war things. Not just concentrating on electoral politics, but to do some of these other things.

So I was still really, really active my sophomore year and going to a lot of meetings and helping with demonstrations. We formed the faculty/student committee against the war in Vietnam and that became very visible. There were faculty people and students who came on board to start organizing. We did frequent noon-time events at what was then called the Free Speech—right in front of the SU, the Erb Memorial Union. There was a big patio out in front of the fish bowl and then there was a path up to the front door and there was green grass in front of it. Then there was a Free Speech pedestal. We had lots of rallies there, also organizing teach-ins because there was so much media that we felt—it's so similar to today that I can't believe it—was in support of the war and that was not telling the truth. We had speech-ins where faculty members would talk about history, all sorts of that, and they were well attended. It was sometimes volatile with other students who were disagreeing and so forth, but we were very visible. We also organized demonstrations, marches to downtown, to the civic center or park, and starting to do work in the community of Eugene, residential communities, not just on electoral politics but going door-to-door about war.

Then that summer there was going to be an international peace congress in Helsinki, Finland and I wanted to go as a representative of the Young Democrats of the University of Oregon. There was quite an energetic meeting about this. Some of what were sort of the old line democrats—we're electoral politics, let's stay in the middle—did not want to give me any kind of documents or have me represent them because these international peace congresses were categorized by conservative and right wingers as communist led, communist front. So the Young Democrats of the University of Oregon did not want to be affiliated in any way. I think they were probably afraid of losing their accreditation from the university, whatever, they were fearful. I was absolutely adamant. I said that I have been working really hard. There were two factions, two positions. The upshot was that I did get my papers and I also was very careful to remember who I was representing. I have, and I think it's in my collection, a letter from the Young Democratic Club of the UO saying that they are authorizing that I represent the Young Democrats of UO.

I was telling the, what prestige you will have, that the Young Democrats of the UO will have a representative in Helsinki. I'm paying the expenses. The group I was going with were a collection of other college students from around the United States and we were going as a group. You had to represent somebody. The others were representing far left groups. There was a group called the DeBoy's Clubs of America and that was sort of





communist youth. There probably might have been SDS (Students for a Democratic Society) students. Then there was Laura, from the Young Democrats. Many of my fellow students in that group were suspicious of me because of my credentials, but literal and figurative. Am I a plant? Why would the Young Democratic party send somebody from the University of Oregon—where the hell is that sort of thing—to be a part of us who come from the DeBoy's Clubs and SDS and really radical left winger far out, whatever, to a peace congress? It was a very uncomfortable position for me. I had to fight like hell to get my credentials from the UO and I was not accepted by the very people with whom I shared politics because I maintained that since I was representing the Young Democrats of the UO I had to represent them and not myself. So when it came to votes or discussions or what have you, I had to represent them, which was I cannot say that I'm voting absolutely for the National Liberation Front of North Vietnam and support that they win the war. I can't. I would personally, but I felt really obligated to represent my constituents. That made my group members at the peace congress suspicious of me, of who I was. So it was really a funny kind of dilemma. But I did go there and it was incredible.

I met people from all over the world, students, young people, and activists from every single continent, all over the world. We had meetings with both the National Liberation Front and the North Vietnamese people. Lovely friendship meetings where I just wanted to cry because here we'd be sitting around a conference table drinking tea or whatever and here were these people that I considered, and I still do consider, absolute victims of our oppression and our imperialism or what have you saying, we understand there's a difference between the American people and the American government and we're not angry at the American people. I just wanted to cry because it's like, how could a people who are so beleaguered be able to have that kind of understanding and not just see all Americans as the enemy? I thought that was really poetic. It was amazing for me. Then after that our youth group was invited to a number of countries as guests of their youth groups, which included the Soviet Union, East Germany, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia. So we were sort of partied around. Then I came home, back to the UO, to continue work against the war.

Brennan: Going back a little bit, how did you hear about the international peace congress in Helsinki?

Bock: I can't tell you specifically. I can tell you that my family, my mother and dad were labor organizers. My mother was a Communist, my dad was an anarchist. There were interesting conversations in my house. I'm proud of all that they were. My aunt, my mother's sister, was also a Communist and a journalist. She was going to Helsinki as a journalist to cover the peace congress and she may have told me that the Russian-American Friendship Committee here in San Francisco headed by Holland Roberts who was a venerable peace activist here in this city, wanted to organize a country-wide youth group to go to that congress, and that I should get in contact with him. I think that's what happened, but there were college students and people from all over the country that, I guess, the Russian-American Friendship Committee organized. Then I brought this to the Young Democrats. But I had a lot of supporters.

The following year the Faculty/Student Committee Against the War in Vietnam again was very, very active. We had wonderful faculty people involved, David and Kathleen Averle. I think subsequently, I understand, got divorced, but they were some of our actual faculty sponsors. We did get recognition from the university as a faculty/student





organization. They were very progressive people and very active activists. There were others as well in many different departments and there were a lot of students. It was really nice to have that kind of working together on that level, between faculty and students.

But there was one time when I was sitting at a table outside the fishbowl on that patio area. We had information tables every day about the war. We were talking with students and distributing literature. And also remember this is the time of the draft and there were a lot of university students who were scared to death and trying to figure out what the heck to do, the young men, and a lot of them were coming to us. We were helping to refer them to draft counselors that were set up to discuss with them options. It was a life and death kind of thing. That's how it felt, and indeed, I think that's how it was, particularly for the guys who were faced with the draft. You could get a student draft, of course, but you had to keep your grades up to retain that, and that was sometimes an issue. You could apply for a CO, conscientious objector, but you really needed draft counseling about all of this. So we were out there every day.

Kathleen Averle came by and said, Laura, don't you have class in like, 5 minutes. I said, I do but I just can't leave the table. Here was our faculty advisor, and a real radical herself and she said, but you know, this lecture that your professor is going to give you will never be given again. You'll never have the opportunity to hear this lecture again. That was interesting, her point of view. She was a professor and she was an activist and she was like, how to advise me. I didn't go to class because my priorities at that point were the work I was doing.

I didn't flunk out of school. I still went to most of my classes, but that was really important. One class I took then, I think it was an education class. Kids took his because it was seen to be, maybe an easy pass grade. It was taught by a very much of an experimental educator. He was a neat guy, not in any way a prosaic conventional teacher. It was a large lecture class and then we broke down into small groups and the group itself stayed together during the class, studying together, talking about the information—we didn't have a TA—and we had to do a group term project together. It had to be absolutely cooperative. So you were cooperating with people whom you might not have liked or what have you. There was this one guy who just didn't lift a finger. He didn't cooperate at all. He was in it, I think, just because it was going to be an easy grade. At the end we had to grade ourselves, and we knew this, and that's why a lot of kids thought it would be easy. We had to grade ourselves and the professor would take the grade. So we were sitting in our little group and we knew that he did not do much in this class at all and certainly wasn't part of our little group in any tangible way. We came up with a dilemma, that our inclination was not to give him a passing grade, but we knew that if we did not he would lose his draft status as a student and would probably be sent to Vietnam. Many of us were activists against the war. So again, how do we reconcile our politics with our standards as academic students? He would have gotten a D. We would have given him a D, and that was not enough to help him retain his exemption. We had long discussions and tormented about this. We decided to pass him. We gave him a C.

Brennan: Did he ever know or realize what you guys did for him?

Bock: No, and I don't ever regret that decision because it was a sacrifice. It was not true, but it was a life and death thing so we gave him a C.





Anyway, the war and the situation with drafting kids came right in the classroom. There was not a separation. It was personal. It wasn't just political. It was personal and political, and it affected us right in a very concrete way.

I knew I had to buckle down and go to more classes and really start working really hard because it was sort of the second part of the junior year and senior year and I wanted to go to graduate school and so forth. So I really did a lot of that, still continuing against the war in the Faculty/Student Committee. At some point in maybe around '65-'66, a lot of the students that I'd been really active with started dropping out, taking LSD, doing a lot of pot. I wasn't into that and I was really resentful that they were doing that because we then missed their bodies, their minds, their activities, their earnestness, their commitment, their solidarity, their support, but that was just a lot of what was going on. There was an SDS chapter that had been formed and I joined that as well. And then kids started dropping out, just sort of LSD and smoking all the time. I wasn't in on that path, although, certainly I tried pot a few times and I thought it was okay, but I didn't want to turn inward. I wanted to keep turning outward, to do something. That was hard, because we had become friends. We'd all been a community of friends.

Then I started buckling down and really worked hard my senior year and graduated at the end of '67, not in June when I was supposed to, but the end of '67, and came down and lived in Berkeley for a couple of years before I went to graduate school in Massachusetts. As soon as I arrived in Berkeley there were all sorts of stuff around what we called the People's Park. There were huge activities in Berkeley then. That was to protect a park instead of having it constructed into a parking lot. It was a park where a lot of people congregated. There were homeless people. It was a green place in the middle of an urban area. That became a huge dispute with lots of police and lots of tear gas and National Guard, and I was involved in that. So my life continued.

Brennan: Going back, you were a part of CORE and SDS and Faculty/Student Committee. Do you want to give me a laundry list of what you were involved in and how you were involved in each of those? I guess what we can do is separate them into the civil rights movement and then the anti-war movement. It sounds like you were more involved in the anti-war then the civil rights. Is that accurate? Or your attention started somewhere and just kind of shifted?

Bock: Didn't shift, but in 1963 I graduated high school. I was very active here in San Francisco in CORE, in civil rights issues. It was the issue among progressives of the time. The war had not heated up. I mean, it was early. So when I got to the UO I wanted to continue that work and there was already a CORE chapter on campus so I joined that. That was the most important issue. There were marches going on in the South. There were sit-ins at lunch counters and restaurants. The bus boy cut has already happened, but it was like a momentum. It was like, Martin Luther King. It was a momentum that was building. It was both the culture and the politics. We were part of it. We sang the songs. We had support marches in Eugene for the Congress of Racial Equality, for CORE, trying to raise money to send to prepare to Mississippi Summer, helped as supporters to do that. It was the big issue of the day. I know that also there was controversy on campus because, I mean, Wallace came to speak, for crying out loud. That was during that time. It was like a match to fire, having him come to campus. He was at that time the epitome of a racist in power.

Brennan: Right. Alabama Governor.





Bock: Right. So here he was coming to campus. We didn't want him to come and then, of course, people wanted to set up information tables against him and picket and have a rally against him and so forth. Actually, his visit stimulated a lot of activity and interest and conversation which ended up being useful. That was all that first year before Mississippi Summer, when we were doing the very organizing to try to take down people of his kind in the South and to help support people working in the South, those people indigenous to the South. That was the issue. The Mississippi Summer was shocking. People died. Kids died, were shot. And the work went on. SNICK (Student Nonviolent...) was founded and the Black Panthers came about. There was radicalization of kids after Mississippi Summer and certainly within the African-American youth community, which took lead, I think, after that.

So I came back in Chicago, that was September of '64, and continued doing that but there wasn't the emphasis that I recall leading up to Mississippi Summer. By that time we had been sending what we called advisors to Vietnam. They weren't advisors. They were advisers who weren't wearing uniforms, but they were working for the CIA or what have you to try to do what the government wanted them to do in Vietnam. Those of us on the left who were reading not just the Register Guard or the Oregonian but some of the left—I. F. Stone's—was a weekly, a wonderful little like, newsletter that came out every week. It was not in Oregon, it was national. I. F. Stone is no longer alive and he was remarkable. He was a journalist and actually brought back information and quotes like, "so and so said this then and now he's saying this now." It was like, there's a disconnect here. We were able to get information from a number of sources that was absolutely a whole different kettle of fish than what we were getting in the mass media. So having that we started to organize against the war.

That year, the second year, I was in the Young Democrats. My father, the anarchist, used to say, work from within. Don't become a fringe far out radical group that nobody listens to. Work from within. Become part of the more mainstream and try to convince people to have open minds from there. So that's why I joined the Young Democrats, because they were already a well-recognized group on campus and there were links with the Oregon Democratic Party, which was mainstream sort of. So I did it that way.

It wasn't until, I think, my junior year. I can't remember being really active in the Young Democrats before that. It was more the Faculty/Student Committee to end the war. Whatever seemed effective, I mean, I stayed in an organization and tried really hard and worked with people as long as it seemed like the purpose for which the organization was formed was being met. If more the energy and time was going into perpetuating the organization or infighting, then I didn't want to do that. I wanted to work on the issues and the Faculty/Student committee was working on the issue of the war. It was, where can we do the most effective work? I wasn't interested in perpetuating an organization.

Brennan: So you didn't have much interest in war before that? Were you active in the situations in the first Indochina war before American bombarded themselves...

Bock: When the French had occupied Vietnam, I knew about it and I thought it was a bad thing but I was in high school and wasn't interested. I was more interested in working against Barry Goldwater for president—I refused to date someone once because he was for him—and the civil rights stuff. The civil rights stuff really started going in the late '50's and here I was in high school between '60 and '63 so that was where the activities were.

There was also, here in San Francisco something called the House Committee on Un-American Activities called HUAC and they were meeting here once. We organized to go demonstrate against them. There was a big union strike against hotel workers here. I mean, the high school students were active but it was still the French put in their puppet basically in Vietnam, until Bien Ven Phu so it wasn't really ours. But when we started hearing about these advisors going to Vietnam and it was a secret that the French had pulled out and that we were sort of taking over then that shifted, but it wasn't that then civil rights were no longer important. The civil rights movement that the people who were active—me and a lot of others—got our feet wet learned how and what the mistakes were and how to do things in the civil rights movement. And then we could use those lessons in the anti-war movements, in the feminist movements—second wave feminism. The civil rights movement was our school and it underlies everything.

And I was really active in the Feminist movement. That was, again, after I came back from OU. Second wave feminism hadn't hit Eugene. In 1967, women in the movement, we were still licking envelopes. I mean, the boys were making the speeches. The boys were doing the media press stuff. The women were just, you know. So I think that that's why a lot of the second wave feminism came about, because of the dissatisfaction of many of us within the anti-war movement, and somewhat the civil rights movement, the position that we as young women were given and the things we were assumed that we would do and would not do. I don't remember the negative feelings about that when I was doing it but in retrospect it's like, oh yeah. Well, I guess I didn't have to assume that I would not be the one that would not be giving the speeches and talking to women, but that's the way we were.

Brennan: One could argue that a lot hasn't changed.

Bock: I don't want to hear that.

Brennan: But we're still fighting the fight. You mentioned Wallace and I have done some research on that. I'm really curious about that because from what I can tell he was actually invited there by the ASUO president at the time, Phil Sherbourne. Do you know anything about how that came about?

Bock: No, because I was just a new freshman. What was the month he came, do you remember.

Brennan: He came in January 1964.

Bock: So that was just starting my second term, I guess. I don't have any memory. I think I joined CORE and they certainly, the people who were not just new freshmen, they would have had history on this. I didn't know anything about it. All I knew was that he was coming, that we were organizing and that we had, I guess, requested that we have an information table right in—I think he was speaking in MacArthur Court. Is there still Mac Court?

Brennan: Yes there is.

Bock: So we wanted a table right inside the court with out literature. It was denied if I recall, wasn't it?

Brennan: It was. It was actually the senate...



The civil rights movement was our school and it included everything. The scope in the anti-war movements, in the feminist movements—second wave feminism, were active—and a lot to others—got our feet wet learned how and what the middle class rights were no longer important. The civil rights movement that the people who pushed out and that we were sort of taking over then that shifted, but it wasn't that then. It wasn't about these activists going to Vietnam and it was a sector that the French had possibly in Vietnam, until then I can't say it wasn't really true that when we started, the high school students were active but it was still the French but in their proper manner, against them. There was a big anti-war strike against hotel workers here. I remember. Vietnam called HUC and they were meeting here once. We organized to go.

And I was really active in the feminist movement. That was again after I came back from OLC. Second wave feminism built a lot. Because in 1967, women in the movement were still looking mostly at the boys were making the speeches. The boys were doing the media press stuff. The women were just you know, so I think that built a lot of the second wave feminism came about, because of the dissatisfaction of women of it within the anti-war movement, and somewhere the civil rights movement. The position that we as young women were given and the things we were assumed that we would do and would not do. I don't remember the negative feelings about that which I was doing it but in retrospect it's like, oh yeah. Well, I guess I didn't have to assume that I would be the one that would not be giving the speeches and talking to women, but that's the way we were.

Question: One could argue that a lot hasn't changed.

Block: I don't want to hear that.

Question: But we're still fighting the fight. You mentioned Wallace and I have done some research on that. I'm really curious about that because from what I can tell he actually invited them to the ASU president at the time. Phil Spickard, do you know anything about how that came about?

Block: No, because I was just a new freshman. What exactly month he came, do you remember?

Question: He came in January, 1968.

Block: So that was just starting my second term. I guess I don't have any memory. I think I heard CARR and was certainly, the people who were not new freshmen they would have had better on this. I don't know anything about it. All I know was that we were coming that we were organizing and that we had. I guess, requested that we have an information table right in—I think he was speaking in MacArthur Court. Is that right? The Court?

Question: Yes there is.

Block: So we wanted a table right inside the court with our literature. It was denied. I recall, wasn't it?

Question: It was. It was actually the security...



- Bock: The senate met and we were denied.
- Brennan: It was put to a vote and it was approved, 11-10, and Arthur Flemming came in and for one of the very few times, as I understand in history, the President of the University said, no, and reversed it.
- Bock: Yet, in some ways, if I recall, when the anti-Vietnam war stuff happened the next year and the next couple years, I don't think he subverted it. I mean, he was seen as a fairly moderate kind of guy. I mean, he was republican, but certainly an upholder of academic freedom. Our point was academic freedom is the exchange of ideas. Now, I suppose he thought that our having a table in Mac Court was inflammatory. I don't know, did you ever get an idea of what his reasoning was?
- Brennan: They said it would be too dangerous, that the place where I guess the table was going to be located would have caused a bottleneck and just too much interaction. Then there was an argument or request to have the table moved outside of Mac Court and they said that there would be too much friction there as well. Then I think what Arthur Flemming's compromise was, was to have a speaker and kind of an open discussion happen on campus somewhere after Wallace's speech. That's where my information kind of stops. I couldn't find anything in the Emerald. It's all this leading up to it and then there wasn't really any kind of follow up. I don't know if the students either through CORE or other organizations ever put on a follow up.
- Bock: We were active all the time so I'm sure that we did. I'm not remembering specifically. We would have had something going on at the same time. It didn't say that we were allowed to picket at some distance or have a rally or anything that night?
- Brennan: No.
- Bock: You said you had found the name of the person who was the head of the CORE chapter on our campus. I think you had said that.
- Brennan: Yes.
- Bock: I forget his name. He'd be more likely because he was an upper classman.
- Brennan: Neil Goldschmidt, does that sound familiar?
- Bock: Yeah. He might have remembered. Neil Goldschmidt, wasn't he actually ASUO president?
- Brennan: Yeah, Neil Goldschmidt was the ASUO president.
- Bock: No, it was another person who was head of CORE, I believe. Anyway, so I'm not remembering what we actually did, but we felt pretty betrayed by Arthur Flemming. It was supported by the faculty and a lot of work went into trying to get that faculty vote, a lot of talking to people and reassuring them that we weren't violent. Really, a lot of lobbying went into try to get that faculty vote to put themselves on the line for civil rights, and for freedom of speech, to let us speak to an academic freedom issue. Then to have Arthur Flemming step in was a real insult to them as well.

Book:

The scenario and we were denied.

Interview:

It was put to a vote and it was approved. 11:10 and Arthur Flemming came in and he said one of the very few times as I understood in history, the President of the University said no and rejected it.

Book:

Yet in some ways it I recall when the anti-semitism was still rampant the next year and the next couple years. I don't think he anticipated it. I mean he was seen as a fairly moderate kind of guy so I mean he was republican but certainly an upholder of academic freedom. On your own academic freedom is the exchange of ideas. Now, I suppose he thought that our having a table in Main Court was inflammatory. I don't know, but you ever get an idea of what his reasoning was?

Interview:

That said it would be too dangerous that the place where I guess the table was going to be located would have caused a backlash and not too much interaction. Then there was an argument or refusal to have the table moved outside of Main Court and they said that there could be too much friction there as well. Then I think when Arthur Flemming's compromise was to have a speaker and kind of an open discussion happened on campus somewhere near Wallace's apartment. I mean where no information kind of stop. I could find anything in the transcript. It's all this leading up to it and then they would really any kind of follow up. I don't know if the students either through CORE or other organizations ever put on a follow up.

Book:

We were active all the time so I am sure that we did. I am not remembering specifically. We would have had something going on at the same time. I didn't say that we were allowed to picket at some distance or have a rally or anything that night?

Interview:

Not at all.

Book:

You said you had heard the name of the person who was the head of the CORE chapter on our campus. I think you had said that.

Interview:

Yes.

Book:

I forgot his name. He'd be more likely because he was an upper classman.

Interview:

Not Goldschmidt, does that sound familiar?

Book:

I can't remember. I can't have remembered. Not Goldschmidt, wasn't he actually ASUO president?

Interview:

Yes. Not Goldschmidt was the ASUO president.

Book:

Well, was another person who was head of CORE. I believe. Anyway, so I am not remembering what we actually did but we felt pretty betrayed by Arthur Flemming. It was supported by the faculty and a lot of work went into trying to get that faculty vote to get talking to people and convincing them that we weren't violent. Really, a lot of talking went into it to get that faculty vote to put themselves on the line for moral rights and for freedom of speech. So for us speech is an academic freedom issue. Then to have Arthur Flemming step in was a real insult to them as well.



Brennan: Can you talk any more to the specifics of the lobbying and anything like that?

Bock: I can't. It's just one-on-one talking. I think that faculty were talking a lot to faculty, like people like the Averle's probably. This was also at a time when the free speech issues were happening in Berkeley and we were trying to get support for freedom of speech on campus, on a college campus where there's supposed to be free exchange of ideas. All we heard about at UO was, well, we had Gus Hall, head of the Communist Party. He was here last year and the year before, but then we need to be there with out information, our slant, not just to have a racist on campus, in a way, yelling fire in a crowded theater. He was inflammatory just by who he was and what he represented as well as the words he was saying. So I think it was mostly at that point, I don't know, the older CORE members, the older upper classmen and people who weren't just lowly freshmen, they may have been doing lobbying that I didn't know about or can't remember. But I'm sure that there was a lot of discussion. I mean, I talked to a lot of professors around Berkeley stuff that semester finding out who the progressives professors were, can you bring a resolution up in the faculty senate in support of freedom of speech in Berkeley. You know, signs of support, being an ally so that there was faculty talking to faculty about politics coming in to the campus, not just remaining on the edge. I don't remember what I did to bring along that boat. Again, maybe the fellows were talking to the faculty but I don't remember as a young woman doing that.

Brennan: I have a list of some of the people that came to speak. George Wallace was in there and Gus Hall was in there, and then George Lincoln Rockwell, the leader of the Nazi Party was there. As far as I could tell the way these speakers came to the UO was just a free for all. I mean, staff and faculty could invite them, students. Can you talk a little bit about that? Was there any time this uproar against having that ability to invite all these people? Or do you think it was used as a system, I mean, having people like George Lincoln Rockwell and George Wallace looking back, I mean, the leader of the Nazi Party or forerunner in segregation. Obviously, we look back and say, Oh my gosh, terrible people! I guess what I'm asking is were they invited there, do you think, as this eye opening thing or maybe to sway people in a direction? Do you feel like there was any purpose, or what those purposes were?

Bock: Is this a question to me as a 60-year-old now looking back or trying to just put myself back there as 18?

Brennan: Actually, I think it would be more revealing to look back. What do you think?

Bock: I think that the UO had a real commitment to expression of ideas, and what I had understood at the time, although I hadn't been there yet, was that when Gus Hall was invited there was a hue and cry—huge, both university and Eugene, you know, the city, criticism. Not just criticism, horror and threats of all different kinds. And the university was severely pressured to rescind the invitation, but he came. So when I arrived at UO I had this sense that and had heard, I mean I didn't know anything about before, that the UO really will stand up for the principle of expression of ideas no matter who is giving them. I can't remember as a CORE member when I was 18, that I was horrified that Wallace was coming, but that I was very angry that we were not given an opportunity to express our ideas in reaction to his visit, at the very time of his visit. Not at some later time in some different venue, because it seemed contradictory to me. Yes, bring controversial people but have it as a forum. So I was real surprised then given the history

with Gus Hall, and they withstood the pressure to disinvite him. And some of that pressure with the university is often refusing funding and so forth, it's economics. They withstood it.

So when Flemming did not support our expressing of our ideas it seemed like a real betrayal. And the academic senate did support it because basically academic senate—if faculty doesn't support academic freedom and freedom of speech then what's the point of a university campus. You might as well go to—what is the name of one of the fundamentalist Christian colleges. I mean, it seems like it's one of the roots of a public institution, this expression of various ideas. Looking back now, I think that vicious racist or misogynist ideas can not be legislated out. So we hear them and we need to be given the opportunity to dispute them.

Brennan: I wish I had been back then to see this, to hear this, to be there.

Bock: I did get my degree by the way, even though I did all of this.

Brennan: In what?

Bock: I started off in English. I love literature and I love that, but I wasn't happy and I think that it had to do in some ways with what was happening in the world around me. The way English was taught then—I don't know now—was, you looked at a piece of literature in a vacuum. You barely knew about the author. You didn't much see the context of his or her time, mostly his time, a little bit her time. You did literary criticism line by line and it wasn't working for me. So in my senior year I switched to history, American studies. Now I still got my degree in English. In American studies I got an integrative approach where you look at a piece of literature, let's say, and you know that it is a subjective. It's not the truth. It's a subjective work written by a person generally a white man, because those were the people who had access to printing and to being published, a person of mostly his (but sometimes her) times, what were the times, what was it like. So it brought in history and sociology and psychology and economics and politics and so forth and that piece of literature was in a context. I loved it. I did graduate with a BA in English, but I did my graduate work in American cultural and intellectual history with a focus on 19th century reform movements in this country.

So I think that I was dissatisfied and it had to do with my broader view of how I saw the world. I couldn't be in a little ivory tower looking at some classic that an English profession had decided was part of the academy that this was worthy of reading. I wanted to read something like Sinclair's "The Jungle," which was horrible literature but incredibly significant and he was fascinating. We never found out that any of the authors we were reading were gay. We never found out—nothing about them. Didn't like it.

Brennan: It's cool though, how the activism really influenced.

Bock: My criticism of my education, and I remain with that criticism. I can't remember if I'm called now a neo modernist or what. God knows what I'm called but I was able to critic, and I still agree with it today that the kind of education I was getting within the English Department was isolated.

Brennan: Do you think that was a pretty good indication of the times?



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 Department was flawed.
 Do you think that was a really good indication of the times



Bock: Unfortunately, I think in the academy it was. But the times were changing because events were coming on to campus, because students were involved and affected, and because of the draft, literally affected. There wasn't a strong barrier between this academic world and life out there as much as there had been in the 50's, I suppose, and in the early 60's. And I think that was a good real good thing.

Brennan: Instead of going to Freedom Summary, you went to Chicago and worked in a Freedom House. Can you talk a little bit about that experience?

Bock: It was pretty scary because I didn't know anybody. I mean, some of my friends were going to Mississippi. My parents were so freaked out, even though in their earlier years they had put themselves in equally dangerous positions as revolutionaries or union organizers or whatever. So I agreed to work in Chicago. I got there and after orientation I was put into the south side. There was Freedom House on the north side, the west side, and the south side. I went into the south side which was the biggest ghetto and I was the only white person in that Freedom House. It was a ramshackle house right in the middle of the ghetto. They wanted me to organize a children's center and run a children's center for the neighborhood children.

I did that but I was also a little dissatisfied because the black kids—it was all kids—were doing tenant organizing. They were going door-to-door into all the tenements trying to organize a particular building of residents into an association to lobby for improvements in their tenements, to set up like maybe escrow accounts to put their rent into until the improvements were made, to have a voice. I thought that was so cool.

I understand in hindsight that it would not have been all that great for a white girl, I mean, I'm not sure how effective I would have been. I'm a white girl from San Francisco of working class parents, but grew up basically middle class privileged going into a black ghetto trying to organize black tenants. So I only got to do that a couple of times so that was a little bit frustrating. I also felt like I was out of my element a lot because I am who I am and a lot of the kids there at the Freedom House either were street kids or black college kids wanting to be part of the streets. I was just out of my element. As a group we lived on donated food, so we never quite knew where the meal was coming from, and so forth, and I had never experienced that.

It was sort of a culture shock in a way. We would go down to do demonstrations against Mayor Richard Dally downtown in the loop. The Freedom Houses from all the three areas would march to lobby, in terms of civil rights issues, for Chicago. So we would do those and that was good. But I remember once I took a couple hours off and I just got on the bus and I went into this area. It was Hyde Park, and it was so beautiful. In a way it was a relief from the stress of the ghetto and also from the stress of being the only white person, and it was also weird to have that kind of two worlds living right next to each other. Hyde Park in Chicago is where the University of Chicago is. It's just a real different neighborhood than the ghetto.

At one point CORE had different fairly wealthy supporters and I was told at the Freedom House that one of the supporters was going to be out of town for the weekend and offered us their classy apartment to stay in. So we left this ramshackle ghetto house to go stay in this rich person's apartment. It was a disconnect, really a disconnect, for me.



Unfortunately, I think in the academy it was. But the times were changing because there was coming on to campus because students were involved and affected, and because of the draft heavily affected. There wasn't a strong barrier between the academic world and the non-activist as much as there had been in the 50's I suppose, and in the early 60's. And I think that was a good test good thing.

Instead of going to Freedom Summer, you went to Chicago and worked in a freedom house. Can you tell a little bit about that experience?

It was pretty crazy because I didn't know anybody. I mean, some of my friends were going to Mississippi. My parents were so freaked out even though in their earlier years they had put themselves in equally dangerous positions as revolutionaries of union organizers or whatever. So I stayed in work in Chicago. I got there and after orientation I was put into the south side. There was Freedom House on the north side of the south side, and the south side. I went into the south side which was the biggest ghetto and I was the only white person in that Freedom House. It was a neighborhood house right in the middle of the ghetto. I had wanted me to organize a children's center and run a children's center for the neighborhood children.

I did that but I was also a little distressed because the black kids—they were doing things that were exciting. They were going door-to-door into all the tenements trying to organize a parents' building or residents' association to lobby for improvements in their tenements, to set up libraries, to organize accounts to put their name into the improvement workbooks, to have a voice. I thought that was so cool.

I understand in hindsight that it would not have been all that great for a white guy. I mean, I'm not sure how effective I would have been. I'm a white guy from San Francisco. I went in there pretty much, middle class, pretty good going into a black ghetto to try to organize black tenants. So I only got to do that a couple of times so that was kind of frustrating. I also felt like I was out of my element a lot because I was white and a lot of the kids there at the Freedom House were street kids or black college kids wanting to be part of the streets. I was just out of my element. As a group we lived on donated food so we never knew where the meat was coming from, and so that, and I had not experienced that.

Instead of a culture shock in a way. We would go down to the demonstrations against racism. Richard (John) down here in the top. The Freedom House from right there. There would be a lot of right ideas, but it was a lot of right ideas. So we would go down there and that was good. But I remember once I took a couple hours off and I just got on the bus and I went into Chicago. It was Hyde Park, and it was so beautiful. In a way it was a relief from the stress of the ghetto and also from the stress of being the only white person, and it was also weird to have that kind of two worlds having right next to each other. Hyde Park in Chicago is where the University of Chicago is. It's just a real different neighborhood from the ghetto.

At one point CARL had different (white) allies supporters and I was told at the Freedom House that one of the supporters was going to be out of town for the weekend and offered us their class apartment to stay in. So we left the same hotel to go stay in this rich person's apartment. It was a disconnect, really a disconnect for me.



It was scary to be there. I was naïve. I didn't know all the politics that were happening. There were issues and there was some infighting and issues and politics between people within CORE in Chicago that I didn't know anything about. I basically was this naïve white kid running a little children's center outside of this tenement building so that the parents could do their thing.

Brennan: What was the neighborhood response to you being there? Were you ever threatened? Did you feel unsafe?

Bock: I sometimes felt unsafe in the house, as a woman. There were other women in the house, but it was definitely more guys and they were sort of running it, as usual. I don't recall ever feeling unsafe in the community. I loved the kids and I think that their parents were glad that there was a safe place for their kids. They wanted me to do that because they had known that during high school I had worked as a volunteer here in San Francisco during the summers being a volunteer teacher at children's centers, working with kids like, 3-12. I would be the assistant to other teachers. So they thought, well, I had this experience so that's why they wanted me to do that there, whereas I really wanted to do the tenant organizing stuff.

So yeah, there were times when I was scared and then dazed at how different life is here, and I didn't know the rules. I didn't know how to conduct myself. So I think there were times where I just kind of—I don't know how to explain this—turned off my thoughts, went into some sort of, not quite an altered state but I wanted to be there, I wanted to do the work, but I pushed aside some of the things I may have been seeing or hearing that would have been scary. So I pushed them aside so I could do it.

When I came back to San Francisco I told my parents that—I had driven out there with some other people going to Chicago—I didn't want to fly back because I knew I needed time to transition, and so I took the train because it had been a very profound experience in both positive and negative ways and I just couldn't spend a couple hours on a plane and be back with mommy and daddy, you know, in this house in San Francisco. I couldn't do it.

Brennan: From that experience when you came back to the UO, were there other people from UO that had the same experience as you, doing the Freedom Houses?

Bock: I think there had been some that went to Mississippi and Alabama and so forth, and had stories to tell. I'm not sure I ever told—I think the only stories I ever would have told would be the work that we did and not how hard it was for me, how the way I got through it was to not think too much.

Brennan: Why didn't you tell them that?

Bock: It was very—I don't think I've ever mentioned it until this moment. As a white activist I don't think it would have been okay for me to be critical of black activists. I mean, I was a visitor. It's their world. So what if I was uncomfortable. It's their world, and what if it had inflamed people against the movement or...I don't know, and I didn't have Carolyn to talk to any more because she hadn't come back from Cuba or wherever she was. I didn't have a really close person at that time, a buddy, when I first came back, I think, from my sophomore year, to talk to. And basically, I think I just pushed all of that stuff really far back into my mind, because that's how I could get through that summer and do



some work. I was disappointed I wasn't in Mississippi, and some way relieved a little bit because it was scary down there. But there were scary things going on in the Freedom House or in the ghetto, or whatever, that I couldn't deal with. I didn't know how, and I felt very alone. So the only way for me to survive was to push those thoughts and ideas and those awarenesses way back in my mind, and that's where they remained.

And we did good work. I mean, with whatever infighting there was that I didn't have a clue about or whatever CORE was going through fighting with whatever, we still did pragmatic work, especially with tenants, tenants councils being formed within buildings and stuff.

Brennan: I've a question and it's really kind of random. What made you choose the University of Oregon? After being here in San Francisco, what drew you to UO?

Bock: I was an only kid. I knew in high school, like junior year or whatever in high school, that I needed to be away from my parents, that I was so dependent on them and so in awe in some ways of them, and so tied in with their fears of me, and being a good girl and not doing anything to frighten them. I knew I needed to get away from my life, but not too far. So I thought, what, 700 miles. I thought that was doable. That was not too much fear. I could manage that. It was scary but I could do that. I just really knew I needed to be away from them so I could find some sort of independence, something of myself to rely on, because I grew up with a sense that when these two marvelous and amazing people died what would become of me. They were 40 years older than I. So I went to Oregon. It was great.

When I first got there, too, there was this whole controversy about the cross on—what's the hill in Eugene? There was a lighted cross on the top of this hill. That was one of the first things when I first arrived. I think I found out that there was controversy about this cross—it was on public land—that should be taken down. It was in the Register Guard all the time and so forth. I can't remember the name of the hill, but it will be in the papers of the time. So Eugene was not unfamiliar with—people before my time had already been bringing up in terms of separation of Church and State, those issues.

Brennan: Did you get there in Eugene and see this and say, I can do this? I can do Eugene. This will work.

Bock: I was scared. It was the first time away from home, an only kid and I was scared. But it was so pretty and I met Carolyn so I didn't feel so alone. I mean, that was just wonderful to have a friend with whom I could share my actual background. I mean, a lot of the time the fact that my mother was Communist and other relatives were Communists and anarchists and all of this, I didn't share a lot because I'm a kid of the 50's. I was a little kid in the 50's during the McCarthy period. I don't know if you guys have heard of that. So you didn't talk about these things even though as a kid I was afraid that someone would come to our house in the middle of the night and arrest my parents, take them away and I would be alone. And indeed, that was happening to friends of ours, and relatives of ours. So I did not tell more than one or two people all the time I was at the UO that my mother was a Communist, my dad an anarchist.

My uncle actually, was the head of the Communist Party of the United States. That's the thing I didn't tell, Eugene Dennis. And my favorite aunt, my mother's only sister, was his wife. It was so ingrained that I wouldn't talk about that. I would say my folks were





activities, they were union organizers, but I just didn't—I think I finally told my best friend with whom I lived a couple years with in Eugene about it, but asked her to keep it secret. It was just like I didn't think I could.

Brennan: I know that there was at least one professor who was fired from the UO for being accused of being a Communist.

Bock: Did you get the name? I mean, during the 50's all sorts of people were being accused when there was absolutely no justification, because they may have signed a petitioner, you know, for civil rights or whatever and they were being accused all over the place. It was hideous. So yeah, there were loyalty oaths that many universities were requiring their faculty to sign—loyal to the United States. I will not do anything to further the overthrow of the United States government, whatever, before they were allowed to teach.

Brennan: I had two names in my notes, Angela Davis.

Bock: She wasn't at the UO, was she? She was down here.

Brennan: And then Bettina Addicker, she was the daughter.

Bock: She was Bettina Abthecker. She now teaches at the University of California, Santa Cruz. Wonderful teacher and her father, Herbert Abthecker, was a Marxist historian, American History. Wrote a lot about slavery, black history, really a great guy. He's not alive anymore, but Bettina is alive and kicking and lives down in the Santa Cruz area.

Brennan: Can you talk a little bit about the campus and how it dealt with or how it received Communism?

Bock: It wasn't an issue when I was there because Gus Hall had already been there and left. So I wasn't there for that period and I think that's when that issue was huge. Now, when I was there the issue was not communism. I didn't consider myself a communist. I considered myself as a democratic socialist so I didn't see the Soviet Union particularly as a great paragonic virtue as my mother did. I was new left. Old left saw the Soviet Union as the hope, but not the new left.

Brennan: Can you talk a little bit about the new left movement?

Bock: It wasn't a monolith. There were all sorts of different parts of us. The new left included folks who were into the boys clubs, who were more communist oriented, folks who were in progressive labor organizations, while we were called more Trotskyist—there were conflicts in the new left, literally. Those of us who were sort of social democrats and working on issues rather than on isms, and I was more of that. I considered myself a socialist left-winger, but I was interested more in the issues. There was SDS which was very attractive to a lot of us because it was both theory and action, a lot of theory. I mean, Tom Haden and all of those folks they wrote a lot of good theory as well, but reaction as well. I was a new left and we were very critical of the old left, our parents. Although, I had a lot of respect for my parents. Before they had me, anyway, they were very very active.

I've lost my train. Would you repeat your question?





- Brennan: You were talking about the new left movement.
- Bock: It felt like a community to be involved in. It felt like a family to be part of the new left. It felt like it was supportive. I mean, we had our infights too. We had our controversies within our organizations and so forth. But it also felt like a home where there were people who on some level were like mine, even if we had some differences. It was primarily white so I must say that in that way it was racist but comfortable to be white in that kind of place. I'd say mostly middle class, again, which was class-ist, but again comfortable for those who were comfortable white middle class. It wasn't until the feminist movement where there was some more diversity and one had to learn a little bit more, not be as arrogant about what we knew. There was a lot that we didn't know. But it felt like it was home. I mean, at one point our address—let's see the main street coming up to campus at 13th?
- Brennan: 13th runs through campus. There's Agate.
- Bock: And there were stores on, I mean, is it still a shopping street?
- Brennan: A little bit. The hospital's on it.
- Bock: If you're standing on campus looking right at 13th, at the edge, to the left, is that 14th? Which way to the numbers go up?
- Brennan: To the right.
- Bock: So it would be 12th to the left?
- Brennan: Um hum.
- Bock: So our house was on 12th and it was about a block and a half from campus, and it got to be known as a real radical hang out. It turned out—and I don't know why I remember this or how I know this—that there were documents gotten by somebody much later, maybe through the freedom of information act, I don't know, but the local police had tagged that address as political radical and hippy. There were three apartments in it and Joanne and I were on the first floor and upstairs in one apartment our friend, Case, was in it, and the other apartment was Bruce. We were there both from my junior and senior years. The whole house had a party at one point. It was like a kid's party, it was loud, music, whatever. It turned out later that the police had known about it. They had been watching it and had known that at that address we were having some sort of a political party that night and so forth. There was one guy who I wish you could find, Jerry S., who was very much of a radical activist and published a radical newsletter on campus. It may have been called Aspect. I think there may have been a couple that I saved and put in my collection in the library.
- Brennan: It sounds familiar.
- Bock: So Jerry at one point was absolutely convinced that his garbage was being gone through. Now, we pooh-poohed it and later found out that, indeed, the government that was part of "cohen telpro" (?), that was part of a plan by the FBI to find and look for radicals, to look through garbage. So at the time we really thought he was paranoid, but later found out that many peoples' garbage had been gone through as a result of cohen telpro.





So we had this big party. All of us in that house were activists to some degree, or at least progressive thinking, and at one point Bruce lost his deferment and had to decide whether or not to go to Canada. It was horrible because this was personal. He was talking to draft counselors. He was deciding what to do, and going to Canada was not easy decision. It was illegal. He would have to leave and leave no trace with his parents, his friends, going to who knows what up there and take care of himself who knows how. He ended up going drafted, and I don't know what happened to him. So we gave him a party. But it was horrible, really horrible.

Brennan: Speaking of military, I know that the ROTC building was burned twice during this time. Can you talk a little bit about that?

Bock: I don't remember. Do you remember the dates? Can you tweak my memory at all?

Brennan: I can look for them.

Bock: I'll repeat. I left at the end of '67, and in '68 things heated up in Eugene quite a bit. You're talking to me about the burning of the ROTC building in '69. I wasn't there. I'm not surprised all of that happened. It was happening everywhere because as the war escalated and as the lies continued and proliferated the feelings of frustration and fear and anger grew commensurately. So there were activists who once had been satisfied with being part of a nonviolent resistance, ala Gandhi, ala Martin Luther King, were veering off to another direction, and that is in terms of property damage, because this country seemed to have more regard for property damage than for peoples deaths, for living human flesh dying. I mean, people could be sent over to Vietnam and be fodder, but "Oh my God," destroy a building and that was a horrible crime. So there were people who were joining groups called like, the Weather Underground" and a few other groups where there were young people who were starting to go into where weapons were being manufactured or tested and doing property damage as symbolic. Throwing fake blood or sometimes animal blood on the grounds of a weapons tester, like the Lawrence Furthermore laboratory down here.

So I'm not at all surprised, and it was a tactic. Most times people were very careful that no human beings were anywhere near the property. I think some people were a little crazed and probably didn't do—I mean, I'd like to think that if there were people who were injured, they were inadvertently injured, although I think there are crazies in every movement.

Now, I want to say also though, and I don't know that this has anything to do with the ROTC burning, but at the very same time this was happening there were what we called agent provocateurs. That is individuals who were hired by FBI and other government associations to infiltrate the new left, different organizations, and to spark and lead violent events, activities, as a way to throw great suspicion and judgment about the motivation of those organizations—to discredit. That sounds paranoid and it was confirmed later with information from the freedom of information act that it was actually people were sent in to stimulate, to get people to do violent things to discredit the work, and thereby to support the administration's positions in Vietnam or in Cuba or with Chile—the ways in which the United States government was trying to overthrow elected governments in some countries and support despots in others.





But I think there were also friends of mine and people who I know who would go into the Weather Underground. I didn't do that, but I understood the inclination to bring it home, take it off the campus, bring it into the community. People are dying. Heinous things are happening. Take it to the weapons producers. Take it to Boeing. Take it wherever and cut the chain link fence and go over and stage a demonstration in the building. Father Berrigan (sp), well, the Berrigan brothers, they were Jesuit priests, not in Oregon, but they were activists and did some of this in terms of going into draft centers around the country sometimes and pouring fake human blood over the files, or destroying the files of the people who might be drafted, their names, their numbers, to try to save lives. So there was direct action that was happening and I had left Oregon just before I think that had started in Oregon. It was happening all over the country.

So it was a shift. There were still people who were active nonviolent in terms of using nonviolence as a tool, as a technique, as an organizing tool and as an effective way to create change and to induce change. But then there were people who were finding that too frustrating, needing what we call direct action.

So I can't tell you about ROTC because I wasn't there.

I feel like, in a way, that when my parents were being hounded in the 50's it was like, you were called before a committee and asked to name names. It feels like I'm naming names, but I just thought of another one. There was another really wonderfully active faculty member in our faculty/student committee and she was fabulous. Her name was Joan A., and her husband as well as really great. I think she was in Political Science, I don't remember. Anyway, she was great.

Brennan: One of the things I just saw in my notes from earlier was Walworth's and how CORE put on Walworth's. I think it was a lunch counter.

Bock: In Eugene?

Brennan: That's what my notes say.

Bock: Do you know the year?

Brennan: I believe it was 1964.

Bock: Before my time there. 1954 or 1964?

Brennan: 1964. It was one of the things that I guess.

Bock: Woolworth's was being targeted around the country. It was a cool place. I liked Woolworth's a lot. It was a variety store, you could get everything there. It was being targeted around the country because black people could not sit at the lunch counter. There was a lunch counter there but it was far more than that. You bought everything there. I'm not remembering, unless you can come up with something in your notes to tweak me. That happened my freshman year. I don't recall demonstrating at a Eugene Woolworth's. I don't recall sitting in there. The only time I only demonstrated at a lunch counter was actually in Kansas City when I was on the way to Mississippi in the summer, in Chicago. We thought there was a big civil rights conference. The boys clubs had a conference,



But I think there were also friends of mine and people who I know who would go into the
 Winter Underground. I didn't do that but I understood the inclination to join it some-
 times it's the common thing into the community. People are dying. Harsh conditions are
 happening. Take it to the weapons industry. Take it to Boeing. Take it wherever and on
 the chain link fence and go on construction a reconstruction in the building. Right?
 December 1961. Well, the teenage protesters they were Jesus people and in Oregon but
 they were activists and did some of this in terms of going into that center around the
 country, sometimes and pouring like human blood over the floor or destroying the floor of
 the people who might be disturbed their names, their numbers in to save lives. So there
 was that action that was happening and I had left Oregon just before I think that had
 started in Oregon. It was happening all over the country.

So it was a shift. There were still people who were more into terms of using
 non-violence as a tool, as a technique, as an organizing tool and as an effective way to
 create change and to induce change. But there were people who were thinking that
 too peaceful, needing what we call direct action.

So I can't tell you about ROTC because I wasn't there.

I feel like in a way that when my parents were being harassed in the 50's it was like you
 were called before a committee and asked to give names. It looks like I'm naming
 names but I had thought of another one. There was another really wonderfully active
 family member in our family, student committee and she was fabulous. Her name was
 Joan A. and her husband as well as really great. I think she was in Biological Sciences. I
 don't remember, anyway, she was great.

One of the things I just say in my notes from earlier was *Whitworth's* and now *COOP* but
 no *Whitworth's*. I think it was a black corner.

Black: In history?

Blackman: That's what my notes say.

Black: Do you know the year?

Blackman: I believe it was 1964.

Black: Before my time there, 1954 or 1964?

Blackman: 1964. It was one of the things that I guess

Black: *Whitworth's* was being targeted around the country. It was a real place. I liked
Whitworth's a lot. It was a really good, you could get everything there. It was being
 targeted around the country because black people could not sit at the lunch counter. There
 was a lunch counter there but it was far more than that. You bought everything there. It
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 I talked to my freshman year. I don't recall demonstrating at a *Whitworth's*. I
 don't recall sitting in there. The only time I only demonstrated at a lunch counter was
 actually in Kansas City when I was on the way to Mississippi in the summer. In Chicago
 I thought there was a big civil rights conference. The boys club had a conference.



actually, in Kansas City and we all went over to this lunch counter—a very segregated city—to sit in. So I don't recall Woolworth's being involved with that. I would have.

I never was arrested. I was not one of the ones arrested while I was in Eugene. That was a shame. I was ashamed of that because of who I came from. My parents had both been arrested many times and that was a source of pride. My dad spent 6 months in jail as a labor organizer. Under California law he was charged and tried in Alameda County by the District Attorney of Alameda County, Earl Warren, who eventually became Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court. It was a very celebrities trial. My mom had been arrested. So I was really ashamed, but I was kind of scared. I'll tell you something which is very personal and I guess I want to tell you this because I'm anticipating this tape will be with my collection.

Along with being an activist, I was a very shy person, scared, and I was very self-hating because I was fat. My worst fear—and this may sound funny, and it is in a way—would be—I really thought about this—I thought, what if I were arrested—a lot of us would go and sit in. Go down to Eugene, the park, the civic center, whatever sit in. What if the cops came and couldn't lift me up, because I was so fat. I would be mortified. And the press was there constantly on us. I was so scared of that, that when it came time for arrests I would sort of move toward the back, and I never would tell anybody, even my best friends there, that I had deliberately chosen not to get arrested, and why. I couldn't. It was just too personal. So I never got arrested and I was ashamed about that, because I came from a family where—you know, you don't get arrested for drunkenness, but you get arrested for fighting the good fight if you're going to do that, and I never was arrested there, and other people were sitting in and getting arrested all the time. So I don't remember Woolworth's as a specific sit in. I remember there were sit ins other places, but not there.

I guess I want to say that being an activist at the UO in the 60's was not a phase in my life. It was not because I was young and because I was idealistic, because I got to college and I was an iconoclast, and then once I graduated I went into business, made a lot of money and my politics changed. No, it wasn't a phase, and for many of us it wasn't a phase. It wasn't just youthful rebellion. It was a reaction to very real politics and analysis of very real politics. It was a university setting which encouraged us to question, and isn't that what a university is supposed to be? Right? To be skeptics. I kept my politics and I kept my activism for the rest of my life. I'm now 60. So that's important for me, for posterity to know that.

As I've aged, and as life has happened I am far more limited in what I can do. When I was in graduate school I became legally blind and when I go out and about in the world now I use a white cane/red stick, what you're familiar with what blind people use, which means that now since that's happened, and it happened in like, the last 30 years, when I go to demonstrations, which I still go to, I go with a buddy. I don't go by myself. So that if things are happening like, either demonstrators are getting real angry or cops are getting real angry I have someone there to say, okay, let's go to the right. Take my hand because I'm not going to be able to tell which way to go, depending on what I want to do. If I want to avoid confrontation, I need someone to help me do that.

So now that I'm legally blind, use a white cane, I still have the politics and I still do at the age of 60 what political activities I can do with the 60-year-old person that I am and the body that I have today. I'm learning how to adapt so using a buddy at demonstrations is





what I do and that's actively against the US invasion of Iraq, actively going to demonstrations to save the live of ? Jamal, for general peace and social justice demonstrations and events I go to when the body allows. I am not any more an activist in an organization. I haven't done that in decades because, again, I decided that I didn't want to spend—I'm glad that there are people who are willing to spend time and hang in and help to build an organization. I'm not one of those people. I'm an issue person so I haven't been in an organization since I was in college, since I was in the UO basically. I certainly vote all the time and I'm active in some campaigning, certainly not the way I did when I was younger, electoral campaigning. I am a registered Democrat and really an unhappy Democrat, very unhappy. I'm just disgusted with the powers of the Democratic Party and the democratic elected officials. I'm just so disgusted and so tired of being taken for granted.

But I guess that, backtracking a bit, when I went to graduate school in Massachusetts in 1971. I worked for McGovern for Presidency when I was in graduate school that first year. I lost my eyesight in June of 1972 and when I returned to Amherst, Massachusetts after a hiatus of recovery of six months what I found out as a legally blind person was that there was nothing on campus that was set up for disabled students, no consciousness, no services, no nothing. So I started agitating for the Commission of the Blind in the State of Massachusetts to at least have a support for disabled students and got that going in that area of western Massachusetts that included the University of Massachusetts and Amherst College, Mount Holly Oak, and Smith and so forth. So that even then I had to do something. If I had a need I needed to figure, we might have to organize something to fulfill the need one has.

When I came back to San Francisco from Massachusetts in '73, still, my interests were in politics. My graduate work was in history, but my interest was always in social justice movements, people, writing, and literature involved in social justice movements so I did research in a magazine that was published by Ambrose Bierce here in California in San Francisco called, "The Wasp." It was a satirical magazine that was responding to the politics of the day basically. I also did a lot of research in Paul Robson who was a African-American singer with a glorious voice, actor, activist of many decades who was blacklisted during the '50's. I did a lot of research on him as well when I was still in Massachusetts and so my interest in academia was sort of dovetailed with actually writing history of the unknown, the history of then people and the events have been written out of the history books because history books were always written by the dominant. So wanting to fill in the blanks, for my own sake I was interested, fill in for the holes. It was like Swiss cheese.

In San Francisco I started getting involved with the feminist movement and I got involved in a consciousness raising group, which in the early '70's was how white women primarily were beginning to talk to each other and finding out that our personal histories were not idiosyncratic, that a lot of our self-hatred and our experiences were shared by so many other women and that meant that there was something political that was happening, there was some system that was in operation for which the consequence was our self-hatred and so forth. So I started getting involved as the second wave of feminism came about in San Francisco in organizations and groups here and demonstrations and "take back the night" marches, which was a big thing about trying to take the streets back so that women could be safe. Getting involved in that in organizations and so forth.



what I do and that a society is against the 1.2 billion of poor people living in
democracies in the first of January, for general peace and social justice
formation and even to go to when the body blows. I am not any more an activist in
an organization. I have a job that is because, again, I decided that I didn't
want to go - I'm glad that there are people who are willing to spend time and being in
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never. I spent in an organization since I was in college since I was in the US basically. I
usually vote all the time and I'm active in some campaigning, certainly not the way I
and often I was younger, electoral campaigning. I am a registered Democrat and really an
outgoing Democrat, very unhappy. I'm just disgusted with the politics in the Democratic
Party and the democratic elected officials. I'm just so disgusted and so tired of being
taken for granted.

that I guess that backtracking a bit, when I went to graduate school in Massachusetts in
1971, I worked for McNamara for 1969 and when I moved to Amherst, Massachusetts
I had my first year in June of 1973 and when I moved to Amherst, Massachusetts
with a class of twenty or so months when I found out I was a legally blind person who
that there was nothing on campus that was set up for disabled students, no computer
no services, no nothing. But I started studying for the Commission of the Blind in the
State of Massachusetts to at least have a support for disabled students and got that young
in the area of western Massachusetts that included the University of Massachusetts and
Amherst College, Amherst College, and Smith and so forth. So that even then I had to do
something. It had a need I needed to figure, we might have to organize something to
build the need one day.

When I came back to San Francisco from Massachusetts in '73, still my father was in
poor. My graduate work was in history, but my interest was always in social justice
movement, people, writing, and literature involved in social justice movements so I did
A study in a magazine that was published by American Black Party in California in 1974
I remember called "The Wave". It was a political magazine that was responding to the
politics of the day basically. I also did a lot of research in Vietnam who was a
African-American singer with a glorious voice, noted activist of many decades who was
disappeared during the 70's. I did a lot of research on him as well when I was still in
Massachusetts and so my interest in activism was sort of discovered with actually
writing history of the movement, the history of black people and the events have been
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books that was like 20 years later.

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histories were not always because that a lot of our self-interest and our experiences were
shared by many other women and that meant that there was something political that
was happening. There was some system that was in operation for which the consciousness
was our self-interest and so forth. So I started getting involved in the second wave of
feminism came about in San Francisco in organizations and groups born and
feminism and "take back the night" marches which was a building coalition to
take the streets back so that women could be safe. Outing in that in
organizations and so forth.



I haven't lost my politics. I am much more restricted now in terms of physically what I can do, and that's sometimes very frustrating but if it was a phase in college, the phase is lasting a hell of a long time, and I expect it to go on.



I have even taken my politics. I am much more restricted now in terms of physically what I can do and that's sometimes very frustrating but it is what it is. I was a player in college the place is getting a hell of a long time and I expect it to go on.

