

Oral History Center
The Bancroft Library

University of California
Berkeley, California

Michele Perrault

*Michele Perrault: Sierra Club President 1984-1986 and 1993-1994,
Environmental Educator, and Nature Protector*

Sierra Club Oral History Series

Interviews conducted by
Roger Eardley-Pryor, Ph.D.
in 2018

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Michele Perrault

Photograph courtesy of Michele Perrault

Abstract

Michele Perrault twice served as national President of the Board of Directors for the Sierra Club from 1984-1986, and from 1993-1994. Perrault was born in the Bronx, New York on May 8, 1941, and received her B.A. from Hunter College. She worked in New York as an environmental educator with the Wildlife Conservation Society at the Bronx Zoo and as a middle school science teacher. Beginning in the late 1960s, Perrault volunteered with the Sierra Club for many decades at every level, including as chair of various local, regional, and national committees; election to the Club's national Board of Directors for nearly twenty years; and as the International Vice President of the Sierra Club. Perrault also served as a board member of Earth Team, Green Seal, and Greenbelt Alliance. Her lifetime of environmental activism includes three U.S. Citizen Advisory Commissions under three different U.S. Presidents, as well as appointment by the U.S. Department of State as a delegate to several Arctic Treaty Consultative Meetings in locations around the world.

Table of Contents

Interview History by Roger Eardley-Pryor, Ph.D.	xi
Sierra Club Oral History Series Project History	xiii
List of Interviews of the Sierra Club Oral History Series	xvii
Interview 1: October 2, 2018	
Hour 1	1
Born May 8, 1941, New York City — Nature surrounding Bronx neighborhood — Happiness and freedom as a child — Parents, younger sister — Mother, a librarian — Childhood books and play — Father's career — One bedroom apartment — Religious influences — Environmental education paper at Bank Street College of Education — First job, Henry Street Settlement — Importance of Girl Scouts — Camping during college — Family experiences in nature — Childhood gardening program — School community, childhood activities — High School of Music and Art — Commuting into Manhattan — Landscape designer idea — Among first women at State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry — Transfer to Hunter College in Manhattan — Biology major, other interests — Bronx Zoo education department, Herb Knobloch — John F. Kennedy's assassination — Zoo animals at home, on the subway — Master's program at Bank Street College of Education in Greenwich Village — Department store work — Meeting Gary Farkes, first husband — Daughter, Gabrielle Farkes, born 1971 — Adrienne Zeidner at Bronx Zoo, school visits — Filming Mr. Moto Takes a Walk — Science teacher at Pearl River School — Doris Cellarius at the Bronx Zoo — New York World's Fair — Sexism at Bronx Zoo — Vietnam War protest — Science specialist at Bank Street College of Education demonstration school — Father's death — Mother's activism in Massachusetts — Scattering father's ashes — Animal Club after-school program — Recruited to Sierra Club by David Sive — Education Chair, Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter in New York — <i>Right Now</i> , Sierra Club environmental education newsletter — David Sive work — Mentors: Nancy W. Anderson, Barbara Fegan, and Joan and Hy Rosner — Watson Ecology Workshops	
Hour 2	29
Watson Ecology Workshop, model for Sierra Club's Clair Tappaan Lodge workshop — Teaching while pregnant — League of Women Voters, Boston, training and Sludge Adjudgers — David Sive, mentor — Recruiting leaders, networking with experts — Specialization, enduring battles — Influencing government, encouraging action — Science specialist at Bank Street College, holistic approach to individuals — Childhood and the environment conference, René Dubos — First Earth Day 1970, New York City — Denis Hayes and Green Seal board — Gabrielle Farkes, born 1971 — Move to Boston — Motherhood, Boston Sierra Club, summer institutes — Importance of a woman of color, Wave Hill Environmental Center — Recruiting Mary Ann Nelson and Michael K. Dorsey, Sierra Club Board of Directors — Moving Sierra Club international program to	

Washington DC — Gary Farkes, shipping chemicals — Vice President, League of Women Voters, Massachusetts — Workshops on growth, Barbara Feagan, broken neck — Developing expertise, off-shore oil-drilling campaign — Doug Foy, Conservation Law Foundation — Committee for the Protection of Georges Bank, Nancy Anderson — Tufts University trainings, New England Environmental Conferences — Motivation, protecting, making a difference — *Seventeen* magazine, Miss Princess of New York — Motherhood as full-time volunteer, keeping children stimulated — Challenges of optimism, encouragement from youth

Interview 2: October 5, 2018

Hour 1

49

Children's writing courses at New School for Social Research — Stories as a tool — Animal Club, land conservation, and endangered animals — Environmental programs at Tufts University — Observing elk in Wyoming, Margaret Murie, Aldo Leopold's children — Visiting Japan, Ainu people — Influence of Joan and Hy Rosner — Watson Homestead Ecology Workshops, and Clair Tappaan Lodge workshops — President George H.W. Bush's National Environmental Education Advisory Council — *Albuquerque Environmental Story* and *Dade Country Environmental Story* — Social aspects in environmental education — Logistics of ecology workshops, Art Shapiro, Lee Stetson — *Right Now* newsletters — New York state advisory board on environmental education — Different viewpoints on values for land-use dialogue — California Environmental Dialogue between business and environmentalists — Initial volunteering with Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter — Pete Seeger's sloop, *Clearwater* — Marriage to Gary Farkes — Wave Hill Environmental Center program for urban children — First pregnancy, teaching — Motherhood in Boston, full-time volunteering, childcare — First national Sierra Club meeting — Meeting Phillip Berry — Mentoring in the Sierra Club, then versus now — Abigail and Stuart Avery, Ellen Winchester, Shirley Taylor — Activism in Massachusetts — Bridging the east and west chapters of the Sierra Club — Winning battles with coalitions — Introducing Ted Kennedy in San Francisco

Hour 2

78

Creating the California Environmental Network — Developing breadths of expertise, creating solutions, intellectual endeavors — Biotechnology task force, Association of Bay Area Governments and the Sierra Club — Networking with experts and bringing in new leaders, Anne H. Ehrlich, Bill Mankin — First impressions of Phillip Berry — Focus on conservation issues rather than outings — Inner City Outings program — Regional Conservation Committees (RCC) caucus and national Issues Committee caucus — Training programs, lessons from League of Women Voters, Grass Roots Effectiveness Program (GREP) Task Force — Sierra Club, a kind of family — Boston Harbor Citizens Advisory — Regional budget versus chapter — Activism on offshore oil drilling and onshore effects, Georges Bank area, '70s energy crisis — Sierra Club political activities in the 1970s — Hired by the League of Women Voters for community workshops on land use — Broken neck, car wreck on black ice — Project management skills and

growth issues — Carrying capacity and overpopulation concerns in the Bay Area Alliance for Sustainable Development — Applying academic knowledge, potential of humanities, long-term thinking — President Jimmy Carter's Coastal Zone Management citizen advisory committee — Asking creative questions, focusing the experts — Moving to California, 1978 — Phillip Berry's legal practice — Bay Area activism, League of Women Voters and Sierra Club — President Bill Clinton's Council on Sustainable Development — Co-founding Bay Area Alliance for Sustainable Development, Richard A. Clarke, Carl Anthony, Sunne McPeak — Appointment to Greenbelt Alliance board of directors — Perrault's mother marrying Burt Tinker and becoming a conservation commissioner — New England Environmental Network's citizen training, Sheldon Krinsky — Meeting notable women politicians — Lobbying — Fundraising School

Interview 3: December 7, 2018

Hour 1

113

Participants in Perrault's California coalition against offshore oil — Michael Fischer at California Coastal Commission, Perrault's work with Jane Pughe Rogers — Coalition building: gathering partners, countering the opposition — Coalition rallies with politicians — Getting information pre-Internet, late 1970s, early 1980s Work at —Berry & Berry law firm — Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund in coalition — Coalition goal: no offshore drilling ever — Trump administration's threats to drilling moratorium — Robert Redford, dialog between environmentalists and oil-companies — Conflict resolution and collaborating with "the opposition" — Countering false arguments for offshore drilling — Activism of celebrities and influential people — Clair Tappaan Lodge and marrying into history of the Club — Life purposes: protecting the beauty of nature and environmental education — Balancing economics and equity within environmental education — Attention to global issues, mid-1980s — David C. Korten, concerns about corporate power — Sierra Club Vice President for Conservation, intriguing complexity — Citizen's role, power in winning — Biotechnology Task Forces, Association of Bay Area Governments and Sierra Club — Elected to Sierra Club Board of Directors, 1981 — Financial management — Space Patrol Committee, Phil Hocker, new headquarters — Coursework in computer literacy for women, and fundraising — Local activism, Palos Colorados and Lafayette — Lobby training — Reagan revolution, James G. Watt — Speeches to chapters as President — Recruiting leaders, networking — Club growth, early 1980s — Focus on chapter chairs with Sue Merrow — Structure of chapters and groups — Former in-person meeting of issues committees, now online — Issues members versus Outings members

Hour 2

141

Annual Sierra Nevada trips — John Muir interest, museums in Scotland and Contra Costa County — Graham White, Scottish environmentalist — Backcountry Sierra treks with infants and children — Role as a mother amid environmental advocacy — Daughter, Gabrielle, fulltime in California — Horse riding — Combined family with Phillip's sons, complicated existence — Scout leader for Girl Scouts and Cub Scouts — Son and

daughter's views on hiking — Vice President of the Sierra Club, 1982 to 1984 — Personalities of the Board's Executive Committee, Denny Shaffer, Marty Fluharty, Peggy Tileston — Camaraderie with Board members — David Brower's return to Sierra Club leadership, supporting Adam Werbach — Board elections of the Executive Committee — Environmental issues of interest, land use and sustainability — Women in Sierra Club leadership, becoming President — Priorities as Sierra Club President, 1984 to 1986 — Petitions to make immigration, nuclear proliferation, and forestry as Sierra Club priorities — Slate politics — Gay and lesbian groups in the Sierra Club — Environmental versus Social causes — Nuclear issues, Anne Ehrlich on Military Impacts on the Environment Committee — Population as environmental issue — Limiting population, neutral on immigration — Concerns about Polk Street building location — Moving international program staff from New York City to Washington, DC

Interview 4: December 12, 2018

Hour 1

168

Mike McCloskey transition from Sierra Club Executive Director to Chairman — Search committee and new Executive Director, Doug Wheeler, a Republican — 1984 SCCOPE [Sierra Club Committee on Political Education] endorsements for Walter Mondale and Geraldine Ferraro — Staff unrest, Board vote on Doug Wheeler's resignation, 1986 — Michael Fischer, Executive Director, 1987 to 1992 — Disagreement over corporate partnership with McDonald's — Carl Pope, internal promotion to Executive Director, 1992 — Perrault chairing the Corporate Relations Committee, individual members — Accepting corporate funding, examples: LucasArts, Takara Sake, Clorox Green Works — Green Seal board, sustainability labeling — Work with Denis Hayes — Corporate fundraising versus individual donors like Michael Bloomberg — Corporate Relations Committee research and communications — Perrault second time as Sierra Club President, 1993 to 1994, all female Executive Committee — Women in the Sierra Club — John Muir Sierrans, forestry issues and slate politics — Protecting Sierra Club's trademarked name — Selecting priority issues — The Bay Area Alliance for Sustainable Communities (BAASC), impact, focus, 1997 founding with Richard A. Clarke and Carl C. Anthony — Three 'E's: equity, environment, economy — 1987 Brundtland Report, *Our Common Future*, by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) — "City Care: A Conference on the Urban Environment," 1978 — Considering labor in environmental issues — Use of "sustainability" in California Environmental Dialogue and National Association for Environmental Education (NAEE) — Inspiration from *Our Common Future* — Forming the California Environmental Network with Bill Noble and World College West — California Environmental Dialogue, Chinese visitors

Hour 2

195

Visits to China, including with son Matthew Berry and John Holtzclaw — Yangtze River trip before the Three Gorges Dam flooding — California Environmental Dialogue, relationships, limits, and multiplier effects like Sustainable Lafayette — Business interests on sustainability councils — Shaping and challenging capitalism — Browning-

Ferris versus Waste Management, garbage landfill issue protecting Round Valley Park with David Tam — Rio Earth Summit, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), 1992 — Attending Meetings of the Parties (MOP) to the Montreal Protocol, 1987 — Pushing the Sierra Club on energy and climate change, 1990s — Cool Cities program, lack of Club support — ICLEI (International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives), 1990 — Awareness of climate change from scientists, Stephen H. Schneider and Anne Ehrlich — Compact for the Bay Area Alliance for Sustainable Development, agreement from Sierra Club's Redwood Chapter, Loma Prieta Chapter, and Bay Chapter — Importance of sustainability for environmentalism — Criticism of Sierra Club over environmental justice, Mike McCloskey position paper on Social Issues — Faces of Sustainability — Senior fellows [International Conservation Fellow Program], volunteers' duties — Writing *International Activist*, Sierra Club International Committee's Newsletter with Jim Diamond — Importance of visioning, attention to indicators — Maintaining motivation, staying optimistic — International Vice President in 1994, after Dr. Edgar Wayburn

Interview 5: December 14, 2018

Hour 1

215

Lifelong interest in international affairs — Visiting Africa's Zulu territories with Steve Mills and Bruce Hamilton — Women's stories at World Wilderness Congress in Port Elizabeth, South Africa — Hosting visitors to the Sierra Club from the International Visitors Center in San Francisco — Extensive files of environmental concerns in various countries — Africa Focus Project with the YMCA — Networking international visitors with Sierra Club's volunteer experts — Chapter outreach with the United Nations Association — Twinning policy for Chapters' international efforts — Reasons for not allowing Sierra Clubs in other countries, except Canada — Work with Elizabeth May and the Sierra Club of Canada — Lobbying at a World Bank meeting in Berlin, East Germany, late 1980s, street protests, the Berlin Wall — Challenges publishing in *Sierra* magazine — Conservation in Antarctica with Beth Marks Clark, Jim Barnes — Serving on five Antarctic Treaty meetings — Environmentally conscious consumerism — Soviet Union visit with All-Russian Society to Protect Nature, 1990 — Cultural differences and memories of Russia — Meeting with the Prince of Monaco — Paying Sierra Club's membership in the Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition — Work with Tina Tin and outings staff expanding international work — Conservation of the Western Ghats in India, Durgesh Kasbekar — Sierra Club awards: EarthCare award, Raymond J. Sherwin award, Chico Mendes award, John Muir award, William E. Colby award — India trip led by John O'Donnell — Sierra Club International Newsletter — Leveraging International Vice President title to support NGOs abroad — *International Activist*, Sierra Club International Committee campaigns — Invited talk in Taiwan — Internship programs, networking, and training with NGOs — International internships with the Chinese environmental program — China trip with the American Bar Association

Hour 2

240

Japan trips, Sierra Club a "working NGO," Japanese women's rights — International coalition building, Richard A. Forrest — Sierra Club staff versus volunteer networking after Project ACT and Project Renewal — Networking in *International Activist* Newsletter — Visiting the Ainu people in Hokkaido, Japan — Asian wetlands work with Nial Moores via Vivian Newman — Wildlife in the DMZ [Demilitarized Zone of Korea] — Work with the Korea Federation for Environmental Movements (KFEM) — Less involvement after Sierra Club office's move to Oakland — Sierra Club Grassroots Organizing Training Manual, Chinese translation and uses — Visit to the New River in China with Norman Herterich — Bay Area-China program and Wen Bo visit — Meeting Wangari Maathai, Steve Mills activism — Conservation in the Bahamas with Ed Mainland — Talks with Disney in the California Environmental Dialogue — Assisting CEDHA (El Centro de Derechos Humanos y Ambiente) in Argentina — Senior fellows in International Conservation Fellow Program — Assisi Declaration for organized religions and environmental advocacy — Trip to Bhutan — Outings with the Club — Hikes with Norman Herterich — Connections with people — Meeting Jerry Bernardini while hiking with Vicky Hoover — Memory of 9/11 — Son Matthew's interest in history — Consequences of Sierra Club's Project ACT and Project Renewal — Transition of meetings from in-person to online — Earth Team's work with youth — Hopes for the Sierra Club — Climate change and California's future — Reflections on own legacies of environmental activism

Appendix A: Documents from Michele Perrault's Personal Archive	270
Appendix B: Images Courtesy of Michele Perrault and Vicky Hoover	293

Interview History

Michele Perrault cares deeply about environmental education and preservation. She also cares deeply for her family and beloved friends. In recent years, Michele has transitioned much of her time from leading environmental campaigns to caring for loved ones in disparate locations across the United States. This includes her nearly one-hundred-year-old mother in Massachusetts, her grandchildren in the Bay Area of California, and her partner Jerry Bernardini who lives in Rhode Island. Michele pours the same fervor into her family visits and caretaking as she did into leading the Sierra Club, all while remaining active on the boards of several environmental organizations.

Michele's regular travel between the east and west coasts throughout 2018 required scheduling our pre-interview meetings and video-recorded interview sessions across several months toward the end of that year. After a few phone calls, Michele and I first met in early September 2018 at her beautiful home, situated atop a hill and surrounded by oak trees, in Lafayette, California. As noted in her oral history, Michele often hosted fellow Sierra Club volunteers, out-of-town guests, and international representatives to dinners at her home, which she and former husband Phillip Berry purchased together in the 1980s. At our first meeting, Michele and I outlined the main topics we would discuss during her video-recorded oral history, namely, her life-long love of nature and her career as an environmental educator and activist, particularly her international efforts. Fortuitously, Michele had already drafted an autobiographical outline to better explain herself to her granddaughter (her son's daughter) who had wondered recently why her grandmother, who drove an old pick-up truck when picking up her granddaughter from school, seemed so different from her friends' grandmothers.

During that initial meeting, Michele also revealed to me her extensive personal archive, the bulk of which features Sierra Club materials from the late 1960s through the first decades of the twenty-first century. Michele's archive documents her earliest experiences in the Club's Atlantic Chapter prior to the first Earth Day; it details her ensuing years leading regional and national Club committees; it covers several years as an elected member to the Sierra Club's Board of Directors, including her two terms as President; and it runs through her years of global networking as the Sierra Club's International Vice President. Within the boxes and binders of Michele's personal archive I found historic Sierra Club pamphlets, personal speeches and Congressional testimony, as well as printed copies of Sierra Club emails and memos across many decades. Michele shared several binders from her archives to help me prepare for her video-recorded interview sessions. A small fraction of this invaluable material appears in an appendix of this volume.

Michele also connected me to six people of her choosing with whom I conducted background interviews by phone. In September and early October 2018, I had delightful, unrecorded, and informative phone discussions about Michele, in the following order, with Ed Mainland, a retired U.S. international service officer and senior volunteer with Michele in the Sierra Club's International Conservation Fellows Program; with Rebecca Falkenberry, an elected member of the Sierra Club's Board of Directors from 1990-1996; with Larry Downing, an elected member of the Sierra Club's Board of Directors through most of the 1980s and mid-1990s, including as Club President just after Michele's first term as President; with Anne Ehrlich, acclaimed environmental scholar and an elected member of the Sierra Club's Board of Directors from 1996-

2002; with Vicky Hoover, Michele's long-time friend, backpacking partner, and 2004 recipient of the Sierra Club's John Muir Award; and finally with Mike McCloskey, who served as Sierra Club Executive Director from 1969-1985. I'm grateful for their time and excellent stories. Additionally, I read several published interviews from the Sierra Club Oral History Series, including two interviews with Phillip Berry, two with David Brower, two with Michael McCloskey, as well as interviews with Carl Pope, Michael Fischer, David Sive, Helen Burke, Denny Shaffer, and Doris Cellarius.

Michele and I video-record her oral history over five interview sessions, twice in October 2018 and three times in December 2018, all at her home in Lafayette, California. Each time, Michele was energetic and thoroughly prepared, having recently reviewed her personal archives with regard to topics we agreed to discuss that day. After our first two October 2018 interview sessions, Michele travelled again to the east coast. Upon returning to California, she and I met in mid-December 2018 to complete three more interview sessions. Michele's grandson (her daughter's son), then living at her home in Lafayette, was there but remained cloistered in his room during recorded sessions. In the spring and early summer of 2019, after Michele received a copy of her interview transcript, she reviewed it carefully, correcting names and dates, for instance, but making no significant changes to the text prior to its publication. Upon mailing her edited transcript to the Oral History Center in the summer of 2019, Michele also provided photographs that are included at the end of this volume. Vicky Hoover shared additional photographs of Michele from several of their annual backpacking trips in the high Sierra Nevada, some of which are also included at the end of this volume.

With the addition of this oral history of Michele Perrault, the Sierra Club Oral History Series in The Bancroft Library includes accounts from over one hundred volunteer leaders and staff members active in the Club for more than a century. Varying from only one hour to over thirty hours in length, these interviews document aspects of the Sierra Club's diverse activities and concerns over the years, including protection of public lands and wilderness areas; safeguarding water and air quality; promoting sustainable energy and progressive climate policies; and attending to the "explore and enjoy" aspects of the Sierra Club's mission through its robust outings program. The full-text transcripts of all interviews in the Sierra Club Oral History Series, including this interview with Michele Perrault, can be found online at the Oral History Center website: <http://ucblib.link/OHC>.

The Bancroft Library also holds the archival records of the Sierra Club and several Sierra Club members' papers. It is also the repository for the records and papers of many other environmental activists and organizations. The Oral History Center of The Bancroft Library, formerly called the Regional Oral History Office, was established in 1954. The Oral History Center conducts, teaches, analyzes, and archives oral history interviews in a broad variety of subject areas critical to the history of California, the United States, and our interconnected global arena. The Oral History Center is under the direction of Martin Meeker and the administrative direction of Elaine Tennant, director of The Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley.

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Sierra Club Oral History Series Project History

The Sierra Club and the Oral History Center of The Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley have a long-standing partnership for preserving the Sierra Club's past through oral history interviews. While connections between the Sierra Club and the University of California, Berkeley began with the Club's founding in 1892, ideas for a Sierra Club Oral History Series arose in late 1969 and early 1970. Amid an upsurge of environmental activism that produced the first Earth Day in 1970, codified a suite of new environmental statutes, and inspired the United Nations first intergovernmental conference on the global environment, a collaboration arose between the Sierra Club, one of the oldest and most influential environmental organizations in the United States, and the Oral History Center of The Bancroft Library (formerly the Regional Oral History Office), one of the oldest organizations professionally recording and preserving oral history interviews. The resulting Sierra Club Oral History Series has moved through cycles of intensity and lull due mainly to the availability of funding for recording and publication of interviews. Now fifty-years old, this ongoing collaboration between the Sierra Club and the Oral History Center has produced an unprecedented testimony of engagement in and on behalf of the environment as experienced by individual members and leaders of Sierra Club.

Two separate but related events stimulated the Sierra Club Oral History Series a half-century ago. In the summer of 1969, a fortuitous meeting occurred on a long bus ride from San Francisco to the dedication ceremony for the newly established Redwood National Park. The new and then-youngest Sierra Club president, Phillip Berry, sat next to Amelia Fry, an experienced oral history interviewer at what was then called the Regional Oral History Office of The Bancroft Library. Fry had conducted oral histories with former National Park Service directors and Berkeley alumni Horace Albright and Newton Drury, as well as leading figures in California politics and natural resource management. On that bus ride north, Fry suggested preserving the Sierra Club's unwritten history through audio-recorded, transcribed, and publically available oral history interviews with the Club's leading volunteers and influential actors. Both Berry and Fry understood how written documents like board minutes, memorandums, and membership records could not possibly capture the Club's complex past and ongoing story, especially amid its rapid growth in the 1960s and its increasing complexity. Berry liked the idea of oral history interviews, given his deep appreciation for the Sierra Club's rich past, its momentous campaigns, and especially its human entanglements. After all, Berry's first Sierra Club presidency followed years of internal debate that resulted in David Brower's resignation as the Club's first executive director.

That same summer in 1969, Marshall Kuhn met fellow Sierra Club member James Rother while hiking in Yosemite Valley. Rother, then ninety-years old, shared his memories from the early twentieth century of hiking with John Muir, the famed preservationist and Sierra Club founder. Kuhn realized that, unless recorded, the reminiscences of Rother and other early Club members would soon be lost forever. That fall, Kuhn convened an ad hoc committee of Sierra Club members interested in preserving the Club's written documents as well as recording its unwritten oral histories. Kuhn's ad hoc group petitioned members of the Sierra Club Board of Directors, including Phillip Berry, who recalled his earlier discussions with Amelia Fry. In May 1970, one month after the first Earth Day, the board established a standing Sierra Club History Committee that initially included four former Club presidents and several former directors, with Marshall

Kuhn appointed its founding chairman. That September, the board designated The Bancroft Library as the official depository of the Club's written and photographic records. With that, Kuhn and his committee focused on developing a significant Sierra Club Oral History Series.

Kuhn and the Sierra Club History Committee turned to Willa Baum, director since 1958 of The Bancroft Library's Regional Oral History Office (now the Oral History Center), for advice and support in designing their oral history project. Baum, a nationally recognized authority in oral history, shared her expertise and agreed to train Sierra Club volunteers in the art of oral history interviewing. For additional assistance, the Sierra Club History Committee also hired a professional consultant, Susan Schrepfer, an environmental historian and recent Ph.D. in history then working with the Regional Oral History Office and the Forest History Society. Schrepfer designed and mailed a six-page questionnaire to Sierra Club members who had joined the Club prior to 1931. More than half responded, which helped the History Committee identify several prospects for initial oral history interviews. The History Committee, in conjunction with the Oral History Center, selected additional interviewees (narrators) from the ranks of Sierra Club leadership over the prior six decades.

Then, as now, extensive and deeply researched oral history interviews with legendary Sierra Club leaders—like photographer and former director Ansel Adams, longtime directors and former Club presidents like Dr. Edgar Wayburn, or former executive directors like David Brower—are conducted on a professional basis through the Oral History Center by oral historians with expertise in environmental history. Beginning in 1971, Sierra Club volunteers from northern and southern California, along with oral history students at California State University, Fullerton, and at the University of California, Berkeley, initiated the Sierra Club Oral History Series by recording reminiscences of early Sierra Club members. In 1974, when Susan Schrepfer accepted a professorship at Rutgers University, Sierra Club History Committee member Ann Lage began coordinating its oral history efforts. Lage, who earned both her bachelor's and master's degrees in history from the University of California, Berkeley, soon joined the staff of the Oral History Center where she oversaw the Sierra Club Oral History Series until her retirement in 2011. Lage also co-chaired the Sierra Club History Committee with her husband Ray Lage following the death of Marshall Kuhn in 1978.

In 1980, with considerable support from the Oral History Center, the Sierra Club sought and earned a sizeable grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) to thoroughly document the Sierra Club of the 1960s and 1970s. By that time, the Sierra Club Oral History Series included thirty-five volunteer-conducted interviews, and the Oral History Center had conducted or was completing five extensive oral history interviews with Sierra Club leaders. Between 1980 and 1984, however, the NEH grant and matching funds from the Sierra Club Foundation made possible the completion of an additional seventeen professionally conducted oral histories and forty-four volunteer-conducted interviews, totaling over 250 hours of recorded history.

Sierra Club oral histories produced during and following the NEH grant period have documented the leadership, programs, strategies, and ideals of both the national Sierra Club and the Club's grassroots at the regional and chapter levels for much of the mid-to-late twentieth century. These interviews highlight the breadth, depth, and significance of the Sierra Club's eclectic environmental efforts—from education to litigation to legislative lobbying; from wilderness

preservation to energy policy to environmental justice; from outdoor adventures to climate change activism to controlling chemicals; from California to the Carolinas to Alaska and beyond to international realms. The Sierra Club Oral History Series, together with the sizable archive of Sierra Club papers and photographs in The Bancroft Library, offers an extraordinary lens on the evolution of environmental issues and activism over the past century, as well as the motivations, conflicts, and triumphs of individuals who helped direct that evolution.

Following the NEH grant period in the early 1980s, the Sierra Club Oral History Series resumed a slower-paced routine, conducting interviews only as donated funding permitted. Between 1984 and 2019, trained Sierra Club volunteers contributed to The Bancroft Library eight new oral history interviews, resulting in two multi-volume collections published respectively in 1989 and 1996. Between 1992 and 1999, the Oral History Center conducted eight extensive Sierra Club interviews, three of which featured narrators previously interviewed. The pace of interviews slowed further in the twenty-first century. Between 1999 and 2018, the Oral History Center completed and published five new interviews for the Sierra Club Oral History Series.

In the Spring of 2018, a renewed collaboration between the Sierra Club and the Oral History Center restored life to the Sierra Club Oral History Series. Therese Dunn, the Librarian at the Sierra Club's William E. Colby Memorial Library, and Jim Bradbury, Communications Specialist with Sierra Club National, obtained fresh funding from the Sierra Club Foundation with hopes that the Oral History Center could conduct new in-depth interviews. That April, Dunn and Bradbury ventured to Berkeley where they met with Martin Meeker, the director of the Oral History Center, with Ann Lage, the retired oral history expert on the Sierra Club, and with me, Roger Eardley-Pryor, a newly hired interviewer at the Oral History Center with expertise in science and environmental activism. Since the bulk of Sierra Club oral histories conducted in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Sierra Club, the nature of environmentalism, and the natural environment itself all experienced significant changes. In an effort to address those changes while complementing prior Sierra Club oral histories, our renewed collaboration agreed to continue long-form interviews with former presidents of the Sierra Club. Each year between 2018 and 2020, renewed funding from the Sierra Club enables the Oral History Center to conduct two in-depth, multi-session, video-recorded oral history interviews with former Sierra Club presidents. All six new Sierra Club oral histories will record approximately ten-hours per narrator.

Now, as in the past, each interview in the Sierra Club Oral History Series is transcribed, lightly edited for clarity, and returned to the narrator for their review and approval to publish. Bound volumes of all narrator-approved interviews in the Sierra Club Oral History Series are eventually deposited for research with The Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley, and with the William E. Colby Memorial Library at the Sierra Club's headquarters in Oakland. A list of all published and forthcoming interviews in the Sierra Club Oral History Series follow this project history. Since the early 2000s, these transcripts are also available online for free via the Oral History Center website at <http://ucblib.link/OHC>.

On behalf of the Oral History Center of the Bancroft Library, I want to thank all narrators who, since the early 1970s, shared their precious memories in the Sierra Club Oral History Series. We also thank the Sierra Club Board of Directors for recognizing early on the long-term importance of preserving the Club's history and its evolution; to the past members of the Sierra Club's

History Committee, especially its founding chair Marshall Kuhn; to special donors who provided funding for individual Sierra Club oral history interviews; and to the Trustees of the Sierra Club Foundation for providing the necessary funding to initiate, expand, and more recently renew this oral history project. Much appreciation goes to staff members of the Sierra Club and the Sierra Club Foundation who helped make these oral histories possible, most recently and notably to Therese Dunn. A special thanks, too, to all prior interviewers, and most importantly to Ann Lage for her more than three decades of work on this exceptional project.

I remain both grateful and excited to conduct new oral histories with volunteer leaders of the Sierra Club, one of the most significant environmental organizations in history. And I deeply appreciate the narrators who welcome me into their homes, who set aside significant time to conduct these oral histories, and who, in the process, share their meaningful memories of protecting the planet for all of us to explore and enjoy.

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Oral History Center of The Bancroft Library
University of California, Berkeley
December 2019

List of Interviews of the Sierra Club Oral History Series

SIERRA CLUB ORAL HISTORY SERIES

Interviews conducted by the Oral History Center, University of California, Berkeley

Single-Interview Volumes

Ansel Adams, "Conversations with Ansel Adams," 1978.

Phillip S. Berry, "Sierra Club Leader, 1960s-1980s: A Broadened Agenda, A Bold Approach," 1988.

Phillip S. Berry, "Sierra Club President, 1991-1992: The Club, the Legal Defense Fund, and Leadership Issues, 1984-1993," 1997.

David R. Brower, "Environmental Activist, Publicist, and Prophet," 1980.

David R. Brower, "Reflections on the Sierra Club, Friends of the Earth, and Earth Island Institute," 2012.

Doris Cellarius, "Sierra Club Volunteer Leader: Grassroots Activist and Organizer on Hazardous Waste Issues," 2005.

Richard Cellarius, "National Leader in the Sierra Club and the Sierra Club Foundation, 1970-2002, Sierra Club President, 1988-1990," 2005.

William E. Colby, "Reminiscences," 1954.

Michael L. Fischer, "Sierra Club Executive Director, 1987-1992," 1997.

Richard M. Leonard, "Mountaineer, Lawyer, Environmentalist," 1975.

Norman B. Livermore, Jr., "Man in the Middle: High Sierra Packer, Timberman, Conservationist, and California Resources Secretary," 1983.

Michael McCloskey, "Sierra Club Executive Director: The Evolving Club and the Environmental Movement," 1983.

Michael McCloskey, "Sierra Club Executive Director and Chairman, 1980s-1990s: A Perspective on Transitions in the Club and the Environmental Movement," 1999.

Susan D. Merrow, "Sierra Club President and Council Chair: Effective Volunteer Leadership, 1980s-1990s," 1994.

- Laurence I. Moss, "Sierra Club President, 1973-1974, Nuclear Engineer: Energy and Environmental Policy," 2014.
- Michele Perrault, "Michele Perrault: Sierra Club President 1984-1986 and 1993-1994, Environmental Educator, and Nature Protector," 2019.
- Carl Pope, "Environmental and Progressive Politics: Sierra Club Executive Director, 1992-2010," 2014.
- Doug Scott, "Campaigner for America's Wilderness, Sierra Club Associate Director," 2013.
- Denny Shaffer, "Sierra Club Officer and Leader, 1970 to 1997: Focus on Membership, Finances, and Management," 2006.
- William E. Siri, "Reflections on the Sierra Club, the Environment, and Mountaineering, 1950s-1970s," 1979.
- Wallace Stegner, "The Artist as Environmental Advocate," 1983.
- Gary J. Torre, "Labor and Tax Attorney, 1949-1982; Sierra Club Foundation Trustee, 1968-1981, 1994-1998," 1999.
- Edgar Wayburn, "Sierra Club Statesman and Leader of the Parks and Wilderness Movement: Gaining Protection for Alaska, the Redwoods, and Golden Gate Parklands," 1985.
- Edgar Wayburn, "Global Activist and Elder Statesman of the Sierra Club: Alaska, International Conservation, National Parks and Protected Areas, 1980-1992," 1996.
- Peggy Wayburn, "Author and Environmental Advocate," 1992.
- John Zierold, "Environmental Lobbyist in California's Capital, 1965-1984," 1988.
- Single Interviews in process:* Aaron Mair; H. Anthony Ruckel; Lawrence Downing

Multi-Interview Volumes

- Building the Sierra Club's National Lobbying Program, 1967-1981.* 1985.
 Brock Evans, "Environmental Campaigner: From the Northwest Forests to the Halls of Congress."
 W. Lloyd Tupling, "Sierra Club Washington Representative, 1967-1973."
- Pacific Northwest Conservationists.* 1986.
 Polly Dyer, "Preserving Washington Parklands and Wilderness."
 Patrick D. Goldsworthy, "Protecting the North Cascades, 1954-1983."

Sierra Club Leaders I, 1950s-1970s. 1982.

Alexander Hildebrand, "Sierra Club Leader and Critic: Perspective on Club Growth, Scope, and Tactics, 1950s-1970s."

Martin Litton, "Sierra Club Director and Uncompromising Preservationist, 1950s-1970s."

Raymond J. Sherwin, "Conservationist, Judge, and Sierra Club President, 1960s-1970s."

Theodore A. Snyder, Jr., "Southeast Conservation Leader and Sierra Club President, 1960s-1970s."

Sierra Club Leaders II, 1960s-1970s. 1985.

J. William Futrell, "'Love for the Land and Justice for Its People:' Sierra Club National and Southern Leader, 1968-1982."

David Sive, "Pioneering Environmental Lawyer, Atlantic Chapter Leader, 1961-1982."

SIERRA CLUB HISTORY COMMITTEE ORAL HISTORY SERIES

Interviews conducted by volunteers for the Sierra Club History Committee

Single-Interview Volumes

Nathan Clark, "Sierra Club Leader, Outdoorsman, and Engineer," 1977.

James Moorman, "Attorney for the Environment, 1966-1981: Center for Law and Social Policy, Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, Department of Justice Division of Lands and Natural Resources," 1994.

Gordon Robinson, "Forestry Consultant to the Sierra Club," 1979.

Multi-Interview Volumes

The Sierra Club Nationwide I. 1983.

Alfred Forsyth, "The Sierra Club in New York and New Mexico."

Grant McConnell, "Conservation and Politics in the North Cascades."

Stewart Ogilvy, "Sierra Club Expansion and Evolution: The Atlantic Chapter, 1957-1969."

Anne Van Tyne, "Sierra Club Stalwart: Conservationist, Hiker, Chapter and Council Leader."

The Sierra Club Nationwide II. 1984.

John Amodio, "Lobbyist for Redwood National Park Expansion."

Kathleen Goddard Jones, "Defender of California's Nipomo Dunes, Steadfast Sierra Club Volunteer."

A. Starker Leopold, "Wildlife Biologist."
 Susan Miller, "Staff Support for Sierra Club Growth and Organization, 1964-1977."
 Tom Turner, "A Perspective on David Brower and the Sierra Club, 1968-1969."

The Sierra Club Nationwide III. 1989.

George Alderson, "Environmental Campaigner in Washington, D.C., 1960s-1970s."
 Frank Duveneck, "Loma Prieta Chapter Founder, Protector of Environmental and Human Rights."
 Dwight Steele, "Controversies over the San Francisco Bay and Waterfront, 1960s-1970s."
 Diane Walker, "The Sierra Club in New Jersey: Focus on Toxic Waste Management."

The Sierra Club Nationwide IV. 1996.

Abigail Avery, "Nurturing the Earth: North Cascades, Alaska, New England, and Issues of War and Peace."
 Robin and Lori Ives, "Conservation, Mountaineering, and Angeles Chapter Leadership, 1958-1984."
 Leslie Reid, "Angeles Chapter and National Sierra Club Leader, 1960s-1990s: Focus on Labor and the Environment."
 Sally Reid, "Serving the Angeles Chapter and the National Sierra Club, 1960s-1990s: Focus on Wilderness Issues in California and Alaska."

Sierra Club Reminiscences I, 1900s-1960s. 1974.

Francis Farquhar, "Sierra Club Mountaineer and Editor."
 Joel Hildebrand, "Sierra Club Leader and Ski Mountaineer."
 Bestor Robinson, "Thoughts on Conservation and the Sierra Club."
 James E. Rother, "The Sierra Club in the Early 1900s."

Sierra Club Reminiscences II, 1900s-1960s. 1975.

Philip S. Bernays, "Founding the Southern California Chapter."
 Harold C. Bradley, "Furthering the Sierra Club Tradition."
 Harold E. Crowe, "Sierra Club Physician, Baron, and President."
 Glen Dawson, "Pioneer Rock Climber and Ski Mountaineer."
 C. Nelson Hackett, "Lasting Impressions of the Early Sierra Club."

Sierra Club Reminiscences III, 1920s-1970s. 1984.

Lewis F. Clark, "Perdurable and Peripatetic Sierran: Club Officer and Outings Leader, 1928-1984."
 Jules M. Eichorn, "Mountaineering and Music: Ansel Adams, Norman Clyde, and Pioneering Sierra Club Climbing."
 Nina Eloesser, "Tales of High Trips in the Twenties."
 H. Stewart Kimball, "New Routes For Sierra Club Outings, 1930s-1970s."
 Joseph [N.] LeConte, "Recalling LeConte Family Pack Trips and the Early Sierra Club, 1912-1926."

The Sierra Club and the Urban Environment I: San Francisco Bay Chapter Inner City Outings and Sierra Club Outreach to Women. 1980.

- Helen Burke, "Women's Issues in the Environmental Movement."
- Patrick Colgan, "'Just One of the Kids Myself.'"
- Jordan Hall, "Trial and Error: The Early Years."
- Duff LaBoyteaux, "Towards a National Sierra Club Program."
- Marlene Sarnat, "Laying the Foundations for ICO."
- George Zuni, "From the Inner City Out."

The Sierra Club and the Urban Environment II: Labor and the Environment in the San Francisco Bay Area. 1983.

- David Jenkins, "Environmental Controversies and the Labor Movement in the Bay Area."
- Amy Meyer, "Preserving Bay Area Parklands."
- Anthony L. Ramos, "A Labor Leader Concerned with the Environment."
- Dwight C. Steele, "Environmentalism and Labor Ally."

Sierra Club Women [I and II]. 1977.

- Elizabeth Marston Bade, "Recollections of William F. Bade and the Early Sierra Club."
- Nora Evans, "Sixty Years with the Sierra Club."
- Marjory Bridge Farquhar, "Pioneer Woman Rock Climber and Sierra Club Director."
- Helen M. LeConte, "Reminiscences of LeConte Family Outings, the Sierra Club, and Ansel Adams."
- Ruth E. Praeger, "Remembering the High Trips."

Sierra Club Women III. 1982.

- Cicely M. Christy, "Contributions to the Sierra Club and the San Francisco Bay Chapter, 1938-1970s."
- Wanda B. Goody, "A Hiker's View of the Early Sierra Club."
- Ethel Rose Taylor Horsfall, "On the Trail with the Sierra Club, 1920s-1960s."
- Harriet T. Parsons, "A Half-Century of Sierra Club Involvement."

Interview 1: October 1, 2018

01-00:00:00

Eardley-Pryor: My name is Roger Eardley-Pryor, and we are in the home of Michele Perrault in Lafayette, California. This is the first session of a renewed oral history project on Sierra Club members, in partnership with the Oral History Center at The Bancroft Library. Michele, it is an honor to be in your home and with you today [October 1, 2018] to talk about your incredible life and all of your work that you've done throughout this life thus far.

01-00:00:24

Perrault: Good!

01-00:00:26

Eardley-Pryor: Let's start at the beginning, and tell me when were you born?

01-00:00:30

Perrault: I was born in 1941, May 8, 1941.

01-00:00:33

Eardley-Pryor: Where were you born?

01-00:00:34

Perrault: In New York City.

01-00:00:35

Eardley-Pryor: Where in New York? It's a big place.

01-00:00:39

Perrault: I'm not sure which hospital I was in, but it was in the Bronx. And yeah, it's funny, I can't think of which hospital it was. I know for my kids, but not for me.

01-00:00:50

Eardley-Pryor: Do you remember what it was like growing up in the Bronx? What neighborhood were you in?

01-00:00:53

Perrault: I was in Woodlawn, and I loved living there.

01-00:00:58

Eardley-Pryor: Tell me a little bit about that.

01-00:00:59

Perrault: Well, it was—I wrote in my autobiography as a child, I think it was in fifth grade or so—about loving the fact that it was surrounded by Van Cortlandt Park, a very famous park still, [and] the Woodlawn Cemetery, which was actually a park, because we would walk through gorgeous trees. It's still a very special place. We used to take lots of walks with my family through the park—just stunning. In addition to the mausoleums—we would always have to look in—but it was the trees and the beauty of it. We were surrounded by

the Bronx River on another side, and then a reservoir on another side. So I described it as being surrounded by all these wonderful places, and always loving the fact that it was a quiet community. Yonkers was at the end of it, with the last bus ride—that's where the last stop was.

So I was always very happy as a child. I could roam freely. I could ride my bike up and down all the hills and the flats. My parents could leave me outside on the stoop as a young child, four and five, and not worry about being abducted, and all those things. We had empty lots around. So it was a place—very free. I could play out in the street. I could go up to the park by myself on a bike, in elementary school. I could walk through the swamp there, and not have my parents with me. So it was a place of freedom, and I could roam. And I could go skating on a lake that—you had to cross an open space, that then became the Deegan Expressway in the Bronx—but it was a wild lake, and you'd wait till it would freeze over. And so it was just the kind of freedom that a kid needs to be able to have, which I don't see as readily in my grandchildren as they've been growing up.

01-00:02:45

Eardley-Pryor: Different time, different places.

01-00:02:45

Perrault: And I think it made a big difference on the kind of things that I was able to do and what I felt as a child.

01-00:02:51

Eardley-Pryor: Tell me a little bit about what you mean by that, what you felt.

01-00:02:55

Perrault: Well, I had a freedom to explore. I could create. I wasn't always taken places. I could take myself places. And then, of course, I had this wonderful public school where there were only twenty-eight children in a class. We went through all the grades together. It had a school garden program, where I spent at least four or five summers having my own plot of land. We'd walk across the cement top of the schoolyard, and then there was this big area, so you could have all your own plot. You could grow vegetables and flowers, and we'd carry our hose and our rakes back and forth across the playground. And so that, again, was just a wonderful experience. So I had a very happy childhood.

01-00:03:42

Eardley-Pryor: So born in 1941—[I've been] remiss. Let me say that today is October 1, 2018, to make sure that we have the date for our first session on there.

I'd also like to hear—you've described this beautiful community that you grew [up] in, this wonderful location that, despite being in New York City in the Bronx, you were surrounded by nature in a lot of ways, that you could explore.

01-00:04:02

Perrault:

Absolutely, yeah. Particularly Van Cortlandt Park. It's a wild park that had its little places where people could sit with kids, and you could climb, but then you could go into the dense parts of it. And so I always remember loving the outdoors from the very beginning, and enjoying and feeling good about it. That whole experience of growing up that way made me want to be able to help other children feel the same way. And so it was very early on I was aware that not everybody had that kind of experience.

We were not a privileged family. My father was a fireman. He later became a lieutenant and a captain. Neither of my parents went on to college, due just to the circumstances of the time. But my mother was a librarian. And so all of those experiences were part of my upbringing and made me feel privileged in a different way. But we were low or maybe middle income. I've been back to the Bronx, and it looks the same. That neighborhood looks the same. I just went back a few years ago to look at it.

01-00:05:16

Eardley-Pryor:

Tell me a little bit more about this family. You mentioned your mother and father—what were their names?

01-00:05:21

Perrault:

Raymond was my father, and my mother was Ruth, and they had met in New Jersey, in Dumont High School.

01-00:05:32

Eardley-Pryor:

And when were they born?

01-00:05:32

Perrault:

My father—my mother's now—let's see—my father would be over a hundred. He was four years older than my mother. She's now ninety-seven!

01-00:05:42

Eardley-Pryor:

So she's born 1920, 1921—somewhere in there?

01-00:05:46

Perrault:

Right, right, yeah, and then my father in '17.

01-00:05:49

Eardley-Pryor:

In 1917.

01-00:05:50

Perrault:

Yeah, that's—it's not dates I remember.

01-00:05:55

Eardley-Pryor:

Yeah, yeah, those are far off, too. So they are from New York as well?

01-00:05:59

Perrault:

So they were young, they were young. My mother had me when she was twenty.

- 01-00:06:02
Eardley-Pryor: Twenty?
- 01-00:06:03
Perrault: Yeah.
- 01-00:06:05
Eardley-Pryor: And siblings?
- 01-00:06:05
Perrault: I have a sister, a year and a half younger.
- 01-00:06:07
Eardley-Pryor: Okay, so pretty close in age.
- 01-00:06:09
Perrault: Very much so, yeah.
- 01-00:06:11
Eardley-Pryor: So you got to share this experience together?
- 01-00:06:12
Perrault: Oh, right, right. Yes. And we're very close even now.
- 01-00:06:15
Eardley-Pryor: Tell me a little bit of family background. Tell me about where your father came from, where your mother came from, where they met.
- 01-00:06:20
Perrault: Well, they met in high school, so that was in Jersey.
- 01-00:06:25
Eardley-Pryor: Did they live in New York—were their families New Yorkers?
- 01-00:06:27
Perrault: No, no, no, no. Well, let's see. My father's father was French Canadian, and so he was—his father dropped him off to an orphanage up there at some point. It's a little hazy as to why, but I guess the parents couldn't take care of him enough, so he did have some background in an orphanage. But then eventually, my father didn't go on to college because his father had bet too much on the horses, and so he didn't have enough money. And my father, I remember him talking about that. My mother lost her mother when she was sixteen, so that was tough for her. She had an older sister, my aunt, who kind of helped raise her—and that aunt was pretty wonderful over the many years.
- 01-00:07:14
Eardley-Pryor: So you got to experience this aunt as well.
- 01-00:07:18
Perrault: Pardon?

01-00:07:17

Eardley-Pryor: You spent time with this aunt as well?

01-00:07:20

Perrault: Oh yes, oh yes. She was very creative. My grandfather on my mother's side was into antiques. And he also, supposedly, originated the square milk bottle. [laughing] But again, we have no proof of all that, but that's what we understood.

01-00:07:34

Eardley-Pryor: Good family stories.

01-00:07:34

Perrault: Yeah.

01-00:07:36

Eardley-Pryor: So you said your mother was a librarian?

01-00:07:37

Perrault: Right.

01-00:07:38

Eardley-Pryor: Where?

01-00:07:39

Perrault: In the Bronx, in Woodlawn, about a block from my school. So after school we would always go there until she was finished with her time there. So I read a lot. I would take home seven, or eight, or nine books at a time. [laughing] I never had to pay fines if they were overdue, but I read them so fast. So they were part and parcel of the kinds of things that I enjoyed in my childhood, and to this day, of course, I'm reading a lot.

01-00:08:07

Eardley-Pryor: What were some of the things you read as a child that you remember?

01-00:08:09

Perrault: [laughing] Well, one of them was *Little Black Sambo*, you know, the book that—people are very critical these days. But I remember *Little Black Sambo* because I had a friend when I was like four or five, we'd sit on the stoop—stoops in New York were a big deal—and we would play. He'd be Little Black Sambo, and I'd be the lions running around the tree turning into butter, and then we would alternate. And probably within the last four or five years, this Bobby that I used to play with actually read about me and contacted me. [laughing] Because his family ran the delicatessen down the street. It was a German delicatessen with the best potato salad you ever could eat in your life. I've never had anything since. But he actually contacted me and remembered who I was. But we'd play together a lot.

Another book that was really instrumental that I looked up recently was by Conrad Richter, called *The Light in the Forest*. It was about a [white] boy who

for some reason grows up with the Indians, and he walks lightly in the forest and he does everything right, and it turns out he really loves the life of the Indians. And that was one of my most favorite books. And I have to read today—I thought about reading more of Conrad Richter. And then of course there was *Pippi Longstocking*, a very famous book. Then other books were—the typical ones that kids would read, the detective stories the girls read.

01-00:09:39

Eardley-Pryor: Like Nancy Drew.

01-00:09:40

Perrault: Yeah, oh, Nancy Drew. Yeah, all the Nancy Drew. I'm trying to get my granddaughter now to read Nancy Drew. [laughing] But she hasn't quite clicked with it yet.

01-00:09:47

Eardley-Pryor: I've been thinking that more with my daughter, too, about what are the great stories I can have her read with these great female lead characters? You know, Harry Potter has this kind of boy—Hermione is probably the coolest character in the story, but Harry gets the title. So what are the—and Nancy Drew is the one that we keep on thinking about *still*.

01-00:10:03

Perrault: Right, right. Yeah, yeah—but there are so many wonderful things for kids now, and they focus more on the female than many of the other books did.

01-00:10:11

Eardley-Pryor: I'm also picturing you as a little girl running around in this wonderful cemetery with all these trees, this wonderful park with these wild spaces, pretending as if you're a Native American for having read this forest book.

01-00:10:22

Perrault: Right, right, right.

01-00:10:26

Eardley-Pryor: Tell me a little bit about your father. You said he was a fireman?

01-00:10:29

Perrault: Yeah. Well, his very first year of work was in Sing Sing Prison, as a guard. [laughing] And my mother had the nightstick from that experience. He only lasted, I think, a year there and then decided to go into the fire department. But he always needed to have more than one job, so he painted houses when he wasn't working as a fireman. He photographed gravestones, because he was a good photographer, and he had an [enlarger] in the kitchen of this house we were living in, which had just one bedroom. So my parents lived and slept in the living room.

01-00:10:59

Eardley-Pryor: So the four of you lived in a one-bedroom apartment in the Bronx?

01-00:11:02

Perrault:

Right, yeah. It was one of these houses, kind of old, that's still there, that had a dumbwaiter. They'd ring the bell, and you'd open this little door in your kitchen, and you'd put your garbage on this little thing and the man would hoist it down. And it had this clothesline over the kitchen table. They would hoist the clothes, put them on and pull it up to dry. You know, just a lot of things that people don't have, necessarily, anymore. And then our bedroom was where she would hang out the wash, and then we would throw bread out to the birds because they would land on a garage roof outside where the clothes were hanging. And we had a fire escape where I used to try to grow vegetables in window boxes on the fire escape.

01-00:11:45

Eardley-Pryor:

So you mentioned the garden program. You brought that home?

01-00:11:48

Perrault:

Right, right, in addition. In addition to the garden program itself.

01-00:11:54

Eardley-Pryor:

Tell me about your sister. What's her name?

01-00:11:55

Perrault:

Claire.

01-00:11:58

Eardley-Pryor:

And Claire, you—

01-00:11:58

Perrault:

She's a little different. [laughing] She was always a little different. We just did our different ways, yeah. She didn't have the same interests that I did. She just was more into writing. She has a remarkable memory about everything that happened to us in childhood. Every conversation, she recalls it all. I don't remember a lot of that detail.

01-00:12:22

Eardley-Pryor:

Was religion an important part of your life?

01-00:12:24

Perrault:

It was for me. My parents—my father had been an altar boy in the Catholic Church. In fact, I asked my mother recently, "Did he have any problems?" She couldn't remember that he ever said anything about problems in the Catholic Church, being an altar boy. But they were not—my mother was Episcopalian, but in the end we were—I was brought up Methodist and in a church, but my parents didn't really go. But I liked it all, and so I went up towards confirmation and got confirmed. I still have all the things where I answered the questions right about God and God's world. I was the prize student, and they gave me a cross. They didn't give anyone else a cross. And I thought well, there's something wrong with—why should I get the cross and all these other students didn't get it? Because I could answer questions about God and

the Bible better? And somehow I just kind of lost a bit of the need to go to church anymore after that.

Although the upbringing was important because we talked about God's world, and I associated it with nature. And I liked the hymns that talked about nature and God's world. I also liked the aspect of doing unto others as you would have them do unto you kind of thing. So I was always very people orientated and cared about people. And I think that had a thread that ran through a lot of what I did later in life.

01-00:13:44

Eardley-Pryor: Even that story about the cross—that not everyone got this, and even though you earned it, but it wasn't something that was shared. It kind of turned you away from [organized religion], it sounds like.

01-00:13:49

Perrault: Right, yeah, yeah.

01-00:13:53

Eardley-Pryor: What other kinds of things did you do in childhood that was maybe an organized way of getting into nature?

01-00:14:01

Perrault: Well, I remembered the experience in the garden program, as being one that all children should have the same love and care, that it was a special thing. And so in my mind, I translated that into maybe wanting to do something later in life.

But my first love before that was archaeology, because—I ended up, in college, with a minor in geology/archaeology—because I was really turned on to the sphinxes and the pyramids and all of that. In my autobiography, I happen to mention that I really wanted to be an archaeologist. I learned by all the readings I was doing at the time that there was a profession that dug things up.

01-00:14:40

Eardley-Pryor: This is your sixth-grade autobiography?

01-00:14:43

Perrault: [laughing] Yes, right. Yes. When I went back over it—I didn't want to be in landscape architecture, which later I did, based on the garden experience—but I wanted to be an archaeologist. And so I did paintings of sphinxes and all of that kind of stuff.

I had a great experience in Girl Scouts. I went to a Girl Scout camp, and that had a big impression on me because I had never been in a tent on a platform, and I loved it so much. I think it was probably only a week, but it had a lasting impression. One of my favorite badges was, of course, gardening. But I also liked basketry.

But that [camping] experience later showed up when I was doing a paper in my college program, in the Bank Street College of Education. I found a document, which was a program I wrote, about camping and outdoor camping for kids. I always felt strongly about the outdoor education program, and that, of course, was part and parcel of a major thread that ran through my life, on trying to encourage environmental education in a broad way for all schools. And at the time, people needed to be encouraged to think about environmental education or outdoor education. In some cases they were separate issues, but they were really one and the same. Some people who would do outdoor education didn't really think of environmental education as opposed to the issues of pollution, the broader things—clean air, clean water. The outdoor educators just knew it was important to get kids out. And of course, I was a big believer in that because I grew up that way. I knew what it can do for children. So I did a paper on camping and the outdoor experience for kids as part of my Bank Street College of Education program. And I found that paper, was able to read all of it.

In it, it mentioned that when I was sixteen, [I had] my first [paid] job—which I thought was a volunteer [position] but when I looked back over my receipts of my former jobs, I found out I got paid \$100. That was my first job. I guess they took me in from the Henry Street Settlement. It's a program for children—well, the Henry Street Settlement took care of disadvantaged children in New York City. I cannot recall how I connected to them, to actually be placed in a job. But I do remember arguing that I cared so much about camping, and that I'd had a good experience myself. So they took me on. And I found a reference in my paper that I wrote about the camp and education program. In it, it said, "I remember the children in the Henry Street Settlement as they got on the bus and they left the city, and they couldn't believe how many trees were all together in one place as they drove out of the city." And that had such an impression on me, that these children had *no* idea what was out there, because all they saw were tenements and very little in terms of parks around their community. But I have that written down in that paper that I wrote for my MA in education.

01-00:17:58

Eardley-Pryor: Remembering this, your first job with the Henry [Street Settlement]?

01-00:18:00

Perrault: Yeah, that I remembered that impression at age sixteen about how—and I don't remember much else about the experience, except I did learn how to be a counselor, and I was sort of in training.

01-00:18:10

Eardley-Pryor: So your first job really was in environmental education.

01-00:18:12

Perrault: Yeah, absolutely.

01-00:18:14

Eardley-Pryor: At sixteen. Tell me a little bit more about Girl Scouts. That sounds like it was such a fundamental experience for you. Were you doing this with your mom, with your sister?

01-00:18:22

Perrault: No, I don't know how I got into it. I cannot remember any of my Girl Scout leaders. But I remember getting the badges and liking them, and liking the whole accumulation of the badges. But each was learning. And I remember also that it was an international institution, because I actually painted the chalet—some chalet, I think, in wherever girl scouting started—and I was impressed by the international aspect of it. But I don't recall that I did anything further with it. But I did some badges around it.

01-00:18:59

Eardley-Pryor: Outside of Girl Scouts, was hiking in the mountains or taking trips to the mountains a family thing?

01-00:19:04

Perrault: No. The real hiking experience came later on when I had a boyfriend that I had met in skiing—oh, actually had met on a geology fieldtrip out of my college, out of Hunter College. He took me to camp out, and so I loved it. And that became my really big drive, because it was the first time I'd done it since Girl Scouts. And so we went to the Catskills, and we had a lot of good experiences outdoors.

01-00:19:37

Eardley-Pryor: I remember seeing in some of your—the papers that you shared with me—that there were some trips that also left an impression on you, trips to Long Island out to Jones Beach or to a pool somewhere?

01-00:19:47

Perrault: Oh yeah, my father, because he had this fireman's job where you work two days, then you're off, and then you work nights—he was able to take us to swim in Yonkers, which was right on the border of the Bronx. It was a famous pool. In fact, [James] Patterson mentioned Tibbetts Brook [Park] in one of his books. This pool was gigantic! And my father would take us there a lot of times to get us out of the city. Then we went with my father and my mother on some trips down to—I guess it was the Smoky Mountains once. We went a lot to the Catskills, to Bear Mountain, picnics, lakes, that kind of thing.

01-00:20:36

Eardley-Pryor: So there were family efforts to get out of the city.

01-00:20:37

Perrault: Yes.

01-00:20:38

Eardley-Pryor: And into mountainous areas.

01-00:20:39

Perrault: Yes, right, but Bear Mountain was about the only mountainous area, and maybe the Smoky [Mountains] area. Not a lot of travel, but outdoors picnics were big.

01-00:20:51

Eardley-Pryor: And who would you have picnics with, just the family?

01-00:20:52

Perrault: With the family, right. We'd go out and we'd pick violets. Violets grew wild. We always had bunches of violets, and berries, and things like that. I remember that.

01-00:21:02

Eardley-Pryor: What did you grow in your garden program that was so influential?

01-00:21:05

Perrault: I don't remember exactly—I guess the easy things. Probably string beans came up easily, you know, and maybe lettuce. But what I remember the most, and I always talked about, was the smell of the soil. I really liked soil. And it was interesting, eventually—my former husband Phillip Berry's stepdad was a soil scientist, world-renowned. He would make paintings of soil! And so I had this kind of relationship with him because I remembered loving the smell of soil. So it was a big deal, yeah. He was at UC Berkeley actually. Hans Jenny. Yeah, he was a very—he was a special man.

01-00:21:49

Eardley-Pryor: You mentioned growing up in this public school in the Bronx that was very close-knit. You went through the same classes together with the same people.

01-00:21:57

Perrault: Right.

01-00:21:58

Eardley-Pryor: What did you take from that experience of elementary school, of having this community that you moved with?

01-00:22:04

Perrault: Well, I just remember little parts of it. I remember being dragged into the first grade to tell everybody fairy tales, because I was so good at just telling stories. I'd make up fairy tales, and they would bring me into the first grade to tell them. And I remember being the class president each year as I was growing up, because I liked to create games and things for kids to do after school. So I was always running—"Let's go do this after school. Let's play Joanie-Rides-a-Pony"—Johnny-Rides-a-Pony was one of those games, and—"Let's go meet here, and let's go do this, let's go do"—so I was always organizing kids after school to do stuff, when I didn't have to go meet my mother at the library.

01-00:22:47

Eardley-Pryor: In elementary school you were already doing this?

01-00:22:48

Perrault: In elementary school. And then came the sixth grade, and I remember some new girl came in. And she was pretty special, so she ended up taking over. [laughing] But I just had this ability to make kids feel good and have parties—invite them all to my birthday parties, and things like that.

01-00:23:10

Eardley-Pryor: Was television a part of your life growing up?

01-00:23:13

Perrault: No. In fact, we didn't have a television. But a neighbor got one where we could run over and see *Howdy Doody*. And that was about all that I recall from that. But no television.

01-00:23:25

Eardley-Pryor: So it was a lot of playing outside, reading books.

01-00:23:27

Perrault: Right, right.

01-00:23:29

Eardley-Pryor: Was radio a part of your—?

01-00:23:29

Perrault: Yes, a big part. Yeah. I do remember listening to many, many programs—the *Green Hornet* and programs—mystery stuff like that, yeah.

01-00:23:45

Eardley-Pryor: In high school—you began high school around 1955 to 1956.

01-00:23:50

Perrault: I went to a public school. I tried to get into a specialized school for music and art: the High School of Music and Art—now called the High School of Performing Arts because they eventually combined with a performing arts school, but [it was] just music and art at the time. And I didn't make it the first year. But the second year I got in. So I went to Evander Childs, which was a regular high school in the Bronx, where my sister ended up graduating from. And then I got into [the High School of Music and Art] the second year. So then I had to go into Manhattan, so I took a bus and a subway to get there. I tried to get in on the drums, but they had too many drum players, so they gave me the French horn, which in the end was lovely. I took extra French horn lessons, and the school song was Brahms's first symphony. And when the principal retired, we played that. And I was the second hornist sitting there to be part of that program. And of course, that's my favorite symphony, Brahms's first symphony, because the school song came out of that.

01-00:24:46

Eardley-Pryor: Tell me a little bit about [the High School of] Music and Art. What was the experience at this—so not only getting there, but then once you're there, what's it like?

01-00:24:52

Perrault:

Right. Well, I didn't have a lot of socialization because I had to get back to the Bronx. So I just—there were certain people there—the classmate that was most famous was Erica Mann [Jong], who ended up as a writer. She was one of our classmates. So there were people from Manhattan, and then there were people from the other boroughs. I also had a boyfriend. He would sometimes travel from Queens. My friends were mostly people that I would associate with on the train going back up. But no other real socialization in the high school itself.

01-00:25:27

Eardley-Pryor:

What about the experience *in* school, this performing school of music and art?

01-00:25:31

Perrault:

Well, we had a lot of orchestras. And so I was able to play the French horn in an orchestra, and you got a chance to stand up there and conduct. And so it was just a lovely background experience. And I continued my piano—to this day, at the age of seventy-seven, I still take piano lessons, in this case with a woman who was a child of the Sierra Club families that hiked and participated in a lot of the outings of the Club. It was somebody that my husband Phillip Berry had recommended. And she became the piano teacher for my kids as well.

01-00:26:06

Eardley-Pryor:

And you're continuing?

01-00:26:06

Perrault:

I continue with her, yes.

01-00:26:07

Eardley-Pryor:

Have they continued, your kids?

01-00:26:10

Perrault:

Well, no. My granddaughter now [does]. So my piano teacher recommended the one that my granddaughter uses because it's closer to her home now.

01-00:26:20

Eardley-Pryor:

And if I'm remembering right, this Music and Art school in Manhattan—?

01-00:26:25

Perrault:

It's—they did a television program called *Fame*, because there was something about these creative kids, both in the art side and the music side. Although we didn't associate so much with the art side. If you were a music student, you just did that. And I do remember in school being very interested in the basketball program. And so I became like a—every time I would go to watch the basketball game with a friend of mine who also loved the basketball games, but he didn't play, they would call me like a mascot, because they'd win. And we ended up going into Madison Square Garden as a team—Music and Art and a basketball team? So I remember that, but we didn't win in Madison Square Garden. But we went and it was kind of special.

- 01-00:27:09
Eardley-Pryor: What was it like being in Manhattan? Did it feel like a different world?
- 01-00:27:14
Perrault: It was—not exactly, but we did have to have a policemen on the—there was a long, long staircase from the subway up to the school, because it was on the City College campus originally. Now it's at Lincoln Center. But they had policemen on the landings of the staircase because it was dangerous potentially. You could be mugged in the park, because it was a long—
- 01-00:27:35
Eardley-Pryor: Were there stories?
- 01-00:27:37
Perrault: —staircase from the train up to the school. And that's all I really remember. Other than that, there was no knowledge of Manhattan per se. You didn't get to see much of Manhattan. You just went back and forth on the train.
- 01-00:27:51
Eardley-Pryor: I'm thinking also—so you begin school, high school, in '55. The ruling on *Brown v. Board [of Education]* comes out just earlier. And so the South is in a process of forced integration. New York is a very different experience. What was your experience like in New York in the high schools that you went to, with regard to integration?
- 01-00:28:11
Perrault: Diversity?
- 01-00:28:11
Eardley-Pryor: Yeah, immigration, diversity.
- 01-00:28:14
Perrault: I don't remember it ever being discussed. Certainly, in my neighborhood there was no diversity. In my yearbook for Music and Art, there was *some* diversity, but not a lot. It wasn't something that ever entered my mind. And even when I was at the Henry Street Settlement, I can't remember what the racial diversity was for the camp. I just remember they were poor.
- 01-00:28:47
Eardley-Pryor: When you were moving towards the end of high school—this is getting towards the end of the fifties, around 1959, I think, is when you graduated?
- 01-00:28:53
Perrault: Yes.
- 01-00:28:54
Eardley-Pryor: What were your thoughts as to what the next steps were? Neither parent had done college. Here you are, the oldest daughter in this family.

01-00:29:02

Perrault:

Right. Well, that's when I decided I would, based on my garden experience in elementary school, that I was going to want to design cities for kids and just make the city-living more beautiful for everybody. [laughing] And so I went up to forestry college [The State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry]. They had to find another woman to take me in.

01-00:29:24

Eardley-Pryor:

Wait—tell me what do you mean by that?

01-00:29:25

Perrault:

Well, they were all men, in the forestry school. It was on the Syracuse campus, but it was the New York State College of Forestry. So they found another woman, Stephanie, and we roomed together. And so I took botany, which, of course, I love plants and so I excelled in it. I did not excel in organic chemistry or in drawing board explosions of things. I remember saying, "Oh, I don't really think I should be a landscape architect. I really don't want to sit at a drawing board. I really like *people* better. And I don't like Syracuse because it's very dismal, and it's foggy and rain and cold. And I miss New York City, and I love New York City in the fall." So I decided to make a transfer.

Oh, plus they wanted me to go to a camp with all boys, all—it was a forestry requirement, that you had to go away to, I think, Saranac Lake in New York. And I didn't want to go. So—and plus, I think I was having some trouble keeping up my rating in the college because of these problems with organic chemistry and mechanical drawing.

So I went to Hunter College at night to build up my background, to allow me to matriculate for daytime. And then I ended up completing—ended up on dean's list in Hunter College eventually. But it was a time when I remember the difficulty of leaving the forestry college. I remember crying to my father about, "Well, what do I do now?" And he says, "Well, you could always become a stewardess, an airline stewardess." And that made me cry further. "No, Dad, that's not what I want to do." So people have obstacles in their life, and you go from—it wasn't like a perfect life all the time. There were little handicaps and things I had to overcome. So I went to school at night, took some classes, did well, and eventually was able to matriculate.

01-00:31:20

Eardley-Pryor:

I want to unpack a little bit of this experience at the New York State College of Forestry, because you were the first woman to go there, am I correct?

01-00:31:30

Perrault:

Well, they—I don't know if ever in their history, but I believe so. Because they just didn't have any women in the college, and they said, "We'll find a woman for you." I had wanted to go to Cornell, and I wanted to go to the agriculture school, because I liked all the courses you could take there. And

they said, "You don't have any farm experience." How would you have farm experience if you grew up in New York City? So that was the end of Cornell. So then I found this other forestry college thing and applied for it. I know in the first year that I was there they showed three women on the staircase. I don't know who the third woman was—they must have found her after they found us. But I also looked at all of the teachers, and there was one woman. All of the other professors in the forestry school were men. So—just something I reflected on recently.

01-00:32:24

Eardley-Pryor: That doesn't sound like the most friendly place to learn and flourish.

01-00:32:26

Perrault: [laughing] No, right. But the one thing that was nice is that there was a student there who was a senior, and it turned out he'd gone to Music and Art [High School]. So he became my boyfriend. So that was kind of pleasant, so I had a good experience there.

01-00:32:42

Eardley-Pryor: A little sense of familiarity.

01-00:32:42

Perrault: Right, right.

01-00:32:43

Eardley-Pryor: And then you come back to Hunter College. This is around 1960, the beginning of the sixties, to finish your college degree?

01-00:32:51

Perrault: Right.

01-00:32:53

Eardley-Pryor: And you mentioned this love of taking these botany classes. What did you focus on at Hunter College?

01-00:32:57

Perrault: Biology. I did biology, but also a geology/archaeology minor.

01-00:33:02

Eardley-Pryor: So you were still interested in where that was going to go?

01-00:33:04

Perrault: Right, so I took a field trip. And I loved paleontology. I did a fossil trip across the Catskill area, and it was really quite fun. And then I had to, of course, work. So that's when I decided to—oh, a friend of the family, Herb Knobloch, he's passed away since then—he was head of the education department at the New York Zoological Society, now called the [Wildlife] Conservation Society. And he said, "You know, you could like animals as much as plants, so come work at the zoo." So of course I did, and I ended up liking animals a *lot*. And so I did a four-year stint at the Bronx Zoo in the education

department, which meant that I could create programs for teachers, Scouts—I did a lot of television outreach, made a movie about a monkey visiting animals from A to Z, did a lot of press. I worked at the World's Fair in a booth for the zoo.

01-00:34:09

Eardley-Pryor: I want to talk a lot about that, because that sounds like a powerful experience, but take me back to college. So were you working at the zoo while in college?

01-00:34:16

Perrault: Yeah, yeah, because I took classes at night. I remember I was living in Greenwich Village at that time because my family had moved up to Rockport, Massachusetts, because my father had retired at age forty-five to become a lobster fisherman.

01-00:34:35

Eardley-Pryor: So even—so you come back from Syracuse, back to New York, and that's when your mom and dad retire and move out to Massachusetts?

01-00:34:43

Perrault: Right.

01-00:34:43

Eardley-Pryor: So you stayed in the city.

01-00:34:44

Perrault: I stayed in the city. In fact, I remember that John F. Kennedy, when he was shot, I was on a train coming back from the zoo work. I remember being on the train.

01-00:34:55

Eardley-Pryor: What was that experience?

01-00:34:57

Perrault: Well, that—like a lot of people, you were just numb. You sat on the train and just looked at everybody and felt very sad. But I was living in a settlement house for young women, so I was able—I actually recently found a letter that—I would bring animals home from the zoo, because they were babies sometimes. They needed to be taken care of. So, for example, I had a kangaroo. And the kangaroo would sit in a little apron pouch on the subway train. And it would poke its head out and look at the people, and people would go crazy because I had this kangaroo! [laughter]

01-00:35:33

Eardley-Pryor: You brought a kangaroo on the New York Subway?

01-00:35:35

Perrault: Yeah. And then—I also had a civet cat. The kangaroo needed an apron, you know, like where his mother would have him in a pouch, so that was easy. But the civet had to be in a little box. But I found a letter from Mrs. Wiggins, who

headed the home for women. I used to bring the civet there, and so she wrote me a letter saying, "Michele, I know you care a lot. I know you like animals, but it's not going to work to have him in the house." [laughing] I would keep him in a room. But I remember the civet was so darling. It's like a little cat, but it's a wild animal.

And there was a woman there that liked him so much that she wanted to see him all the time. And one day Mrs. Wiggins walked in our dining room and said that woman had jumped off the subway and killed herself on the train. And I just remember her as this very tall, tall German woman who—the thing that she loved the best was this animal that I would bring home to visit. It was just a very sad time. Yeah, it was a very sad, weird situation.

01-00:36:44

Eardley-Pryor: Tell me about living in Greenwich—

01-00:36:45

Perrault: Greenwich Village?

01-00:36:45

Eardley-Pryor: Greenwich Village in the early sixties. What was that like?

01-00:36:49

Perrault: Well, I just remember it as being a lovely place. I remember going to places for Brandy Alexanders, and listening to music and going to the Blue Note, and jazz and good restaurants and stuff. And Bank Street College, where I eventually ended up working on my master's program—that was close by, before they moved up to the Columbia campus. So I remember a lot about Greenwich Village in terms of my work there in Bank Street College while it still was in the Village.

01-00:37:23

Eardley-Pryor: So at Hunter College you're mostly working during the day.

01-00:37:26

Perrault: Yes.

01-00:37:27

Eardley-Pryor: Before you had the zoo opportunity, what kind of work were you doing in the city?

01-00:37:34

Perrault: Well, I had jobs, and worked for Alexander's Department Store in the lingerie department. I worked at Patricia Murphy's Restaurant in the gift shop. And Macy's, I had some work there. Bloomingdale's was another place—I worked in contact paper and housewares. [laughter]

01-00:37:54

Eardley-Pryor: Department sales.

- 01-00:37:56
Perrault: Yeah, so I had to always help support what my family supplemented.
- 01-00:38:01
Eardley-Pryor: Were you sending money back up to the family in Massachusetts?
- 01-00:38:04
Perrault: No, no.
- 01-00:38:05
Eardley-Pryor: This was for you to maintain life in New York.
- 01-00:38:06
Perrault: Right, yeah.
- 01-00:38:07
Eardley-Pryor: What was your sister doing at the time?
- 01-00:38:11
Perrault: She was out in college in Ohio, yeah. I forget which college it was, but—
- 01-00:38:18
Eardley-Pryor: I have a note here that you won some sort of conservation award from Hunter College. What kind of conservation work were you doing?
- 01-00:38:26
Perrault: From Hunter?
- 01-00:38:27
Eardley-Pryor: Was it related to your zoological work?
- 01-00:38:31
Perrault: No—I don't remember the Hunter College one, no. I did work and get awards later when I was teaching in Pearl River, which was after the zoo experience.
- 01-00:38:47
Eardley-Pryor: Also, I have a note here that you met your future husband while at Hunter College.
- 01-00:38:52
Perrault: Oh, we met—yeah, we were taking classes at night. So that was Gary.
- 01-00:38:56
Eardley-Pryor: And what's Gary's full name?
- 01-00:38:56
Perrault: Gary Farkes. Yeah, and that's—my daughter Gabrielle, it's Gabrielle Farkes. And so I had her, I guess, when I was thirty.
- 01-00:39:09
Eardley-Pryor: So around 1971 then. But you'd met Gary earlier, in college in the early sixties?

01-00:39:15

Perrault: Yeah, yeah.

01-00:39:18

Eardley-Pryor: So had you and Gary just maintained a friendship and connection through that? Or [were you] kind of in and out of each other's lives in New York?

01-00:39:23

Perrault: You mean—?

01-00:39:24

Eardley-Pryor: From the sixties until you had Gabrielle in '71.

01-00:39:31

Perrault: Well—yeah, I can't recall exactly what went on in between, because he had to go into ROTC, and he was gone some of the time. He didn't finish at Hunter, so I'm not sure. He then went to become a distributor of chemicals internationally, by shipping them different places. And of course, that was always a kind of problem for me.

But I remember I got involved, in that time period, in the Sierra Club, because he met somebody else at one of these conventions who [also] had a wife who was involved in the Sierra Club's international program in New York, and they both said, "Oh God yes, the Sierra Club, they're always so busy with that *thing*." [laughing] He was never too thrilled about the amount of time it took me to be involved with the Sierra Club—so he meets this other husband who had the same problem.

01-00:40:23

Eardley-Pryor: I want to revisit this time period of working for the New York Zoological Society, Bronx Zoo, because that just sounds amazing!

01-00:40:33

Perrault: Oh yeah. In fact, my best friend to this day, whom—a woman I met, Adrienne, and we're still the closest. She worked for the photography department in the zoo, and so we met all the time for lunch. And it was just one of those long term—she's the very best friend that I have.

01-00:40:53

Eardley-Pryor: What's Adrienne's full name?

01-00:40:53

Perrault: Adrienne Zeidner. Z-E-I-D-N-E-R [spells]. And so in the zoo itself, it was—I had so many things I could do there. I could imagine and create programs. I could do TV. I could do radio. It was constant creating and visiting schools. Every day a school would pick me up and take me to visit the public school systems, where I would bring a bird, a reptile, and a mammal. So usually the bird would be an owl, or it could be a—what do they call it? A falcon—it's like a falcon bird. And these were rejects that the zoo had, so they allowed us

to bring these things in boxes. A mammal—usually I took a monkey, Mr. Moto. Or I took Mrs. Moto. She was very sweet.

But Mr. Moto was like almost—a baboon, he was a kind of baboon—and he got to be very big. I took him for four years to schools. And he—the thing about Mr. Moto was that you never looked—you don't look them in the eye, because that's a threat. So I never looked him in the eye. We had a relationship that was hard to describe. He knew who I was. And I would take him out of the box, and he would just jump up and down and go "Whoo, Whoo," and the kids would laugh and they would love him!

What happened finally—one day I took him back from a school, four years later, and he wanted some meat. He used to live in the basement of the lion house, and he wanted meat that was out for the lions. And he went to—and I said, "No, Mr. Moto." I had a jess around his waist, and I held the jess, and he screamed—and he was strong. And I just threw him in the cage and knew that was that. I would not be able to trust him anymore, because he was—it's amazing that I had him that long. And we made a movie about him, *Mr. Moto Takes a Walk*.

01-00:42:48

Eardley-Pryor: Well, tell me about this.

01-00:42:48

Perrault: People can still get it online, but they've dubbed my voice in different parts. But I'm still there, in my twenties walking with Mr. Moto, in this movie, around the zoo. So that was kind of sweet. And then there was a Mrs. Moto. I forget how—she was a gentler type, and I didn't take her as much. She was sort of skittish. But I would also take hedgehogs, skunks, you know, just so that you had a bird, a reptile, and a mammal and talk about it.

Eventually, I realized that I wasn't reaching the whole child. I was not getting at the children with a one-shot deal in a big auditorium full of kids, that I really wanted to influence them much more to care about the environment. So I decided that I would go into education. And because I was at the zoo and was known for being a good educator, I was hired by the Pearl River Schools in New York state, because they wanted to bring excitement in the classroom. And they said, "We will take you, even though you have no credentials *yet*." They knew I was going to Bank Street College, as a student. They said, "We will take you in as long as you continue to work on your master's program." And so I became a science teacher in the Pearl River School.

01-00:44:14

Eardley-Pryor: While also taking courses at Bank Street College of Education?

01-00:44:15

Perrault: At Bank Street College, right. And so I did that for three years, teaching the science in a team-teaching arrangement with the person that did math, the

person that did English. And my very dear friend, to this day, is the English teacher that now lives in Maine, and I see her a couple of times—Kathy DeSilvey. She and her husband had originally been at Rockefeller Institute in New York.

One of the interesting things that I didn't—and I meant to say—is that while I was at the zoo there was another zoo lady there named Doris Cellarius, and Doris Cellarius eventually married Dick Cellarius. And when I married Phillip Berry, it turns out that Dick Cellarius and he had gone to school together in California. So Doris and I go back a long way.

01-00:45:13

Eardley-Pryor: So you and Doris Cellarius met in New York?

01-00:45:15

Perrault: In New York.

01-00:45:16

Eardley-Pryor: At the zoo?

01-00:45:16

Perrault: Right.

01-00:45:17

Eardley-Pryor: You were both zoo ladies?

01-00:45:18

Perrault: Yes, right.

01-00:45:20

Eardley-Pryor: And then ended up being out in California working with the [Sierra] Club?

01-00:45:23

Perrault: Right. Actually, they were the ones in the Rockefeller Institute. My friend DeSilvey, I can't remember just exactly when I first—no, they were not in Rockefeller. It was the other ones, it was Richard and Doris [Cellarius]. So yeah, that was just like coincidence, kind of a neat thing.

01-00:45:42

Eardley-Pryor: That's a great overlap.

01-00:45:42

Perrault: Right.

01-00:45:43

Eardley-Pryor: You'd mentioned television appearances, including the World's Fair?

01-00:45:46

Perrault: It was New York World[']s Fair. I forget what year it was.

01-00:45:48

Eardley-Pryor: In 1964.

01-00:45:50

Perrault: Yeah, and so we had a booth there, and I know there were press clips.

01-00:45:52

Eardley-Pryor: "We," of the zoo?

01-00:45:53

Perrault: Right. The zoo had—yeah, so we showed animals there. Yeah, I think we had an otter. I think there's a picture of us with an otter in one of the press releases. But it was just the kind of thing that—we were always out showing the zoo and bringing people in.

01-00:46:12

Eardley-Pryor: It seems kind of like a dream job, and pretty amazing.

01-00:46:12

Perrault: Oh it—yeah, it was pretty amazing.

01-00:46:16

Eardley-Pryor: You mentioned wanting to reach the whole child. Was there anything else—was the decision to leave the zoo a difficult thing?

01-00:46:22

Perrault: Well, I would have stayed longer in the zoo. But when I went to get a raise, the director said to me that I was "biologically viable."

01-00:46:33

Eardley-Pryor: What did he mean by that?

01-00:46:35

Perrault: Well, he meant that I was going to get pregnant, and why should he give me a raise? There was no #MeToo then, no #MeToo generation people. And so I said, "Don't think that I'm running out to have a baby right away." And I didn't, for many, many, many years after that. But I decided to leave.

And so that's when I went to the Pearl River School and got the job there. Which I then eventually left that one when they wouldn't give tenure to one of the social studies teachers because he was trying to show there were two sides to the Vietnam War. And the school didn't like him saying there were two sides, because they were very much in favor of the war. So a number of us, including my friend Kathy DeSilvey—we left en masse.

01-00:47:18

Eardley-Pryor: You left in protest on behalf—?

01-00:47:19

Perrault: We left in protest. Yes, we wouldn't stay with the school because they wouldn't give him tenure. That's when I then looked around for a job, and it turned out that there was a job in the school I was getting my master's program in. So they took me on as a science specialist in Bank Street College of Education. And so I was able to—it was a demonstration school for

teachers, but they also had children there, a children's school. So I ended up the science teacher for that.

01-00:47:45

Eardley-Pryor: Take me back just a little bit, because there's this rich, rich time period in the sixties. There's time in New York where you have these very influential, remarkable opportunities for work that you're doing while studying at the same time.

01-00:47:58

Perrault: Right.

01-00:47:59

Eardley-Pryor: Another event that happens around this time—so you're at the zoo until the mid-sixties, 1966 or so. You're about twenty-five years old, so still in your young twenties. And your father, who had just moved—retired at forty-five, moves to [Massachusetts].

01-00:48:14

Perrault: He died at forty-nine, yeah.

01-00:48:15

Eardley-Pryor: Your dad dies in 1966.

01-00:48:16

Perrault: Cancer, right. They never took a lot of protection for firemen. They didn't wear masks. Nowadays, they're realizing that a lot of firemen had died—who knows what the connection was for him, but he had a lot of fires and smoke inhalation and all of that, and no protection.

01-00:48:34

Eardley-Pryor: And you're twenty-five years old living in New York. They're up in Massachusetts. What was that experience for you?

01-00:48:41

Perrault: Well, it was tough, because it left my mother a widow at forty-five. And so I had this sense of, "How will she manage?" And he didn't have a big pension from the fire department. He could either take a lump sum or not. So she had to work there. But she liked living up there, and I knew she was going to be okay.

01-00:49:02

Eardley-Pryor: She stayed up there?

01-00:49:03

Perrault: She did, yeah.

01-00:49:05

Eardley-Pryor: What did she end up doing to make things work for herself?

01-00:49:06

Perrault:

Well, she worked in a department store. Interesting for her, she got involved in caring about the environment up there, and it was with the League of Woman Voters. And she said—actually, the League wanted her to be involved. But she said, "But I don't have a college degree." And they said, "It's okay. We would like you. You're very smart." So she got involved with them, and she got on the Conservation Commission for the town of Rockport, Massachusetts. And she stayed on that for probably ten, eleven years. But I had to encourage her! "Hey, Mom—you can do it! You'll be okay." [laughing]

01-00:49:42

Eardley-Pryor:

Did she have the interest in conservation? Did you help steer her that way?

01-00:49:44

Perrault:

I helped steer that, yeah. And there was a famous naturalist that lived in Rockport named John Kieran. And John Kieran wrote [A] *Natural History of New York City*. And my mother knew John Kieran, and he signed my book that I have, [A] *Natural History of New York City*.

01-00:50:04

Eardley-Pryor:

That's wonderful.

01-00:50:04

Perrault:

Yeah, a very famous writer, naturalist writer.

01-00:50:08

Eardley-Pryor:

I have some sort of work here that—and you had mentioned to me about scattering your father's ashes in a lobster boat? What's the story behind that?

01-00:50:15

Perrault:

Well, when he went—when he retired, he decided he would be a lobster fisherman. So he bought a boat, and he did that for those years that he was up in Rockport.

01-00:50:31

Eardley-Pryor:

That just seems like—

01-00:50:31

Perrault:

Yeah, and then he knew the harbormaster. So the harbormaster took us out in October, I remember, because my sister was pregnant. She was on the shore and watching us go out there. Yeah, that was a very difficult situation, of course, with my father, and he was young.

01-00:50:50

Eardley-Pryor:

It's also a point of transition for you. You're leaving the zoo at this time.

01-00:50:54

Perrault:

Right, yeah, I don't remember all the transition aspects of it all. But they were kind of separate from the private life. And I just went on to do things.

Now, while I was in Pearl River, New York, I taught twins of David Sive. And David Sive was an environmental lawyer—kind of a field that I didn't know existed. If I had known about environmental law, I might have gone into that field, but it wasn't like a big field at the time. But he was an environmental lawyer, one of the best.

01-00:51:26

Eardley-Pryor: He helped create the field.

01-00:51:28

Perrault: Oh yeah, yeah. And so he said to me, because I had an animal club for the kids—

01-00:51:34

Eardley-Pryor: At Pearl River?

01-00:51:34

Perrault: In Pearl River. And so this was an after-school program. There was a big empty lot area behind the school, and we hung popcorn out for the birds, and we did all kinds of stuff. I took the children to teach in other grades. The animal club would come visit them with—I don't know how they got animals. I don't remember whether we had real animals, but we went and talked to children. So I was originally going to do my master's thesis on kids teaching other kids using animals as the drive, because it attracts kids so much to nature. They love animals. So David Sive said, "Well, you know"—and we were also were trying to *save* the land so the school could have it. And so we actually ended up doing some video with the owner of the land, to try to see if we could—they let us use it for the animal club, but in the end we didn't get it for the school. But I remember the activism aspect of trying to save that piece of land for the school.

So David Sive said, "You know, you're really good. You really should join the Sierra Club." I said, "What is that?" And so he brought me in to the Atlantic Chapter of the Sierra Club in New York, and made me the education chair for the Atlantic Chapter. And I remember the very first thing I did. There was a woman named Nancy Matthews, and she had me stuffing envelopes. That was the very first thing I did. And then David said, "Look, I'm going to make you education chair, and I hope you forgive me for this, because it's a big role." And that was my first activity in the Club.

And as a result of that—because I had been doing a lot of things with education at the school in Pearl River—I began to do a newsletter for teachers called *Right Now*. And it had all kinds of experiences of how you could get kids involved in the environment—take them to real hearings, take them to things that are happening that they could make a difference, just the way I'd been trying to help them save some of the land near the Pearl River School.

- 01-00:53:42
Eardley-Pryor: Tell me more about what kind of things were in this newsletter, this *Right Now* newsletter for the Club.
- 01-00:53:45
Perrault: Well, it talked about what other schools were doing, what—there was some legislation that was being promoted at the state level that had an effect on the public's and citizens' right to speak out. So we did three years of issues of *Right Now*. And I have all the copies. Of course, nobody has them in the Club. I have them all. But they were really part of—which does lead to an interesting thing about how much of the Club's history, including the Atlantic Chapter, nobody knows about because nobody cared enough to ask.
- 01-00:54:19
Eardley-Pryor: To keep those records.
- 01-00:54:20
Perrault: And so I've kept these all. So I'll have to think of what to do with them.
- 01-00:54:22
Eardley-Pryor: Well, I hope you donate them to The Bancroft Library as a part of the Sierra Club Collection.
- 01-00:54:24
Perrault: Oh! Yeah, I think that would be terrific. And so all of those issues, of course, they were about five or six pages each. And so they describe things that teachers could do, things they could learn about, what they could read, what kind of events were happening in different places. So, yeah. I'd have to go over each one. You know, they're very rich with all kinds of stuff.
- 01-00:54:49
Eardley-Pryor: It's just a very rich time for environmental realizations. You know, I'm thinking Rachel Carson makes this wonderful splash with environmental issues in 1962 with *Silent Spring*.
- 01-00:54:59
Perrault: Yeah.
- 01-00:54:59
Eardley-Pryor: And things just continue to roll from there.
- 01-00:55:01
Perrault: Right, and environmental education as a *field* was not very big. I do recall I had been asked to do some guidance on environmental ed. in the state of New York. And at that time, I have a letter from Nancy Ayers that mentions—because I was put on an advisory board, which was like the beginning of my life of advisory boards, because for years thereafter I was on so many. Many of them having to deal specifically with environmental ed.

01-00:55:34

Eardley-Pryor: I would love to talk a little bit more about David Sive and the role that he played in bringing you into the Club, but also the role he played within the Club itself. You'd mentioned he was who recruited you first.

01-00:55:48

Perrault: Right. He did most of his work, as I recall, with the Natural Resources Defense Council, NRDC. I don't remember as much in the Club, except for the Atlantic Chapter, yeah, of which I was never the chair of. I was only the chair of their education committee.

01-00:56:04

Eardley-Pryor: I see. I have a record here that David Sive *was* the chairman of the Atlantic Chapter, at least for a time in the sixties.

01-00:56:09

Perrault: Right, yes, yes, that's—but then later on we didn't see as much of him because I think NRDC got hold of him. [laughing]

01-00:56:15

Eardley-Pryor: I see. Yeah, because he was on the board—the Sierra Club Board of Directors—just for one year though, it says in '68 to '69. So it didn't sound like he served the full term. But one of the things that came up as well is—

01-00:56:27

Perrault: And he passed away in the last few years, and one of his sons contacted me because I had written—I forget how it came about that I learned of his death, and so I wrote something. And then the son contacted me—one of the twins. And they said, "Oh, we always had a crush on you." It was really cute. [laughing] And I said, "Well, your dad was one of my first mentors," of which I had a number of mentors over my life.

01-00:56:55

Eardley-Pryor: Who else comes to mind when you think about mentors?

01-00:56:59

Perrault: Nancy [W.] Anderson, who was a big mentor in Tufts University in Boston, when I was living in the Boston area. Also in the Boston area was a woman who was with the League of Women Voters. She was Barbara Fegan. She became one of the leaders for coast walk [Coastweeks], the creators of the first coast walks for cleanup. And she was my mentor in the League of Women Voters.

Now, even earlier than that were the Rosners, Joan and Hy Rosner. When I was in New York City, they became aware of me and my *Right Now* newsletter, and my involvement with what schools were doing. And they asked me to come teach in their summer programs for teachers in New York. The Rosners ran a program for educators. It was called Watson Ecology Workshops, because they would go to the homestead of [Thomas J.] Watson, the electricity guy—he had a place in Painted Post, New York, near the Finger

Lakes. So I became their teacher for stream ecology. I guess because of my biology background I liked streams a lot, and I liked finding little caddisfly cases and caddisflies and all the kinds of things in the stream. And so I taught with them for many, many years.

Joan and Hy eventually became recognized for stories they wrote wherever they lived. They lived in New York, and they did the Alley Pond Story, which was a booklet on teachers caring about this area in New York City. They eventually moved to Albuquerque—they moved first to Florida. They did the Dade County story, environmental story. Then they did the Albuquerque environmental story. I have all those booklets.

And the [Sierra] Club never recognized them enough for what they were doing. Because what we finally did, after we finished these ecology workshops in Painted Post, New York—and I had eventually moved to California—they said, "Well, let's do a California environmental program for teachers." And so we created one at Clair Tappaan, which is the Club lodge in Norden, California. And so we ran thirteen years of workshops for teachers—I did, I was the teacher there. But they were my mentors for doing these programs for teachers. And they had dancing, they had cultural programs, they allowed children to come, and we provided educators for the children of the teachers. And so their model I then took and put into the Sierra Club. And of course they were very active in the Education Committee of the National Sierra Club. I brought them into that.

01-01:00:03

Eardley-Pryor: The Rosners were? You brought them into the—?

01-01:00:04

Perrault: Yeah, yeah. Joan and Hy Rosner, right.

01-01:00:06

Eardley-Pryor: So the Watson—

01-01:00:06

Perrault: And they were recognized in Albuquerque for being [such] very special educators, particularly with the *Albuquerque Story*, which was a story about how you could teach teachers to study a whole community to learn about their environment—where you meet all of the different people from the business community, from the education community, so kids could learn about where they lived.

I took that model, and when I was teaching at Clair Tappaan for the Sierra Club, we studied the whole Lake Tahoe region. And there would be a whole day of the seven-day program where I would take teachers around in different groups with the different staff that I had, and we would study the Lake Tahoe region. We'd interview people in the social services, the heads of the agency that was regulating Lake Tahoe. We talked to biologists—just getting a sense

of the whole community. So when people went back to their schools—and they were from all over the nation for this class—then they could do similar stories in their community, like the Rosners had done for Albuquerque and Dade County.

01-01:01:23

Eardley-Pryor: That's beautiful. So it's a teach-the-teacher—the Watson Ecology Workshops were a teach-the-teacher program. They brought you in to start there?

01-01:01:30

Perrault: They brought me into it as a teacher in my twenties, while I was pregnant. I remember that, because I was trying to hide it because I didn't want them to not want me to teach. But I was pretty pregnant and people noticed it. And so then when the class ended they gave me a Virgin's Bower to wear on my head, which was one of the plants. [laughing] Because I was kind of hiding this thing, but of course, everybody knew. So I do remember that. Eventually, I would take my daughter with a babysitter to the other summer programs in the Watson/Painted Post area, the Finger Lakes.

And also, I remember an interesting thing in the Finger Lakes program there had been a big flood in—Steuben Glass was in Corning, New York, and they had a terrible flood. And we went as teachers from the workshop to Corning to help the people with the flooding, and we did some service there. So again, it was this kind of relationship of not just studying ecology and the environment, but what was it doing to people and how were their lives affected?

01-01:02:44

Eardley-Pryor: That seems to me like such a cutting-edge way of doing things in the sixties, as the ecology-movement people are just learning what ecology is.

01-01:02:52

Perrault: That's right. It really was.

01-01:02:54

Eardley-Pryor: Where were you getting your readings and understanding for how to think so holistically about an entire social and environmental system?

01-01:03:02

Perrault: A lot of it came from when I moved from New York to the Boston area. I joined the League of Women Voters there, and they had a very broad sense of citizenship. It was not just the environment, but it was all of the other things that affect civic life, including politics, although they didn't get into endorsements. But it was just that you looked around you at what was happening in your community, and how could you benefit it? And I remember the training I got from the League of Women Voters was so critical, that I had not gotten that same kind of training in my Club work at that point. And so I remember the model of that—so it was very influential. So I took solid waste

special courses. They sent me down to Washington, D.C. for solid waste training.

01-01:03:57

Eardley-Pryor: The League of Women Voters did?

01-01:03:57

Perrault: Yeah. And they had—the women were so involved in looking at all the details, to study an issue. And so we had a section called the Sludge Adjudgers, in which we were trying to understand sludge, because it became a problem for—what to do with the sludge so it didn't go in the Boston Harbor. And so we formed this group called Sludge Adjudgers. So I found in all of these various things that I would do in Massachusetts, after I left New York, I got involved in so many issues. So I suddenly was knowing about solid waste, I was suddenly knowing more about air, more about water—so all of the conservation issues. And of course the big ones being the offshore oil drilling, which is—

01-01:04:46

Eardley-Pryor: But with a sense of the role of civic duty, and this is—

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Perrault: Civic duty and educating oneself about it. So I was an educator, even in the Massachusetts chapter, which eventually got me so engrossed in the details of issues that I became an issue expert.

01-01:05:05

Eardley-Pryor: Let's take a little bit of a break here, if you don't mind, and then we'll revisit this time. I want to go back a little bit and talk about, obviously, the time in New York.

01-01:05:11

Perrault: [laughing] Yeah, because we're missing—[interruption in recording]

01-01:05:14

Eardley-Pryor: All right, Michele, let's get going again. I want to go back and talk about the person who recruited you into the Club first, David Sive.

01-01:05:20

Perrault: Right.

01-01:05:21

Eardley-Pryor: And some of the work that he did historically in environmental law was the Scenic Hudson v. Con Edison case in 1965 [Scenic Hudson Preservation Conference v. Federal Power Commission, 354 F. 2d 608 (2d Cir. 1965)], which for the first time gave environmental litigants standing to sue in federal court. It eventually allows for you, later, to be a part of the Sierra Club suing the federal government on behalf—to have standing in court as an environmental group, and not something that has economic damages but has broader *environmental* damages.

01-01:05:46

Perrault: Right.

01-01:05:48

Eardley-Pryor: So David is historic—in not only bringing you into the Club, which is historic in its own right—

01-01:05:52

Perrault: Right.

01-01:05:53

Eardley-Pryor: —but also in helping seed what became environmental law.

01-01:05:55

Perrault: Right. I was very much aware of the fact that he was a famous person. He was just a very gentle, special man. And I loved his kids, they were terrific.
[laughing]

01-01:06:06

Eardley-Pryor: The twins here?

01-01:06:07

Perrault: Yeah. But he reached out to me and pulled me in. And I don't know if that's part and parcel of why my experience in the Club has always been to reach out to bring in new leaders. And as I thought about my history in the organization, and I look back on my record of doing things, I knew so many specialists, so many people in the Club. I knew what they were good for. I could refer people to them. I could link them to other people, in a way that David picked *me* up, you know, because he brought me in, and I was able to then connect and do other things. And it was kind of a mentor-mentor relationship that was always very special in my own mind.

And to this day I think of people who have passed, and what they were, and how special they were, and what they were good at—because I was more of a generalist. I knew a lot about many, many things, but I also knew who was the expert that I could pull in. And so my own expertise turned out to be more within the environmental ed. area, eventually in certain specialized parts of the conservation movement. But I was always very aware of who were the special people that you'd go to when you really needed to make a difference. Who could you ask to come in on your side?

01-01:07:33

Eardley-Pryor: The networker.

01-01:07:33

Perrault: Yeah, the networker, and being parts of coalitions that were broader than yourself.

01-01:07:40

Eardley-Pryor: The way you talk about your role in bringing people in, finding the expertise to get something done to move a coalition forward is just—I have to make mention, there is an environmental historian, his name is Robert Lifset, and he wrote this book called *Power on the Hudson* [Robert D. Lifset, *Power on the Hudson: Storm King Mountain and the Emergence of Modern American Environmentalism*, (2014)] that makes mention of some of the work that David [Sive] did to help protect Storm King Mountain. And one of the arguments he makes in this book is similar to what you're saying, that that movement to preserve Storm King, this battle that lasted from '65 till about 1980, was a microcosm of how the environmental movement became more professionalized: it became more specialized.

01-01:08:17

Perrault: Yeah.

01-01:08:17

Eardley-Pryor: In order to get the work done, they had to hire ecologists—because if you're going to make an argument on behalf of preserving striped bass in the water, you need to have ecologists to say, "Here's why their Storm King development for this hydropower plant will be bad." So that transition itself, this specialization that's pulling science in, that's pulling experts in—you were a part of that. [Perrault laughs] You—in a way, right?

01-01:08:39

Perrault: Yes.

01-01:08:40

Eardley-Pryor: He [David Sive] pulls you in because you were an expert in education, and he says this is what we need. And you also then play this role of pulling in experts to get things to move forward.

01-01:08:48

Perrault: Right.

01-01:08:48

Eardley-Pryor: And that's a powerful story, I think, in the environmental movement at a national scale. That is a microcosm of your experience in New York, but becomes the story of the movement broadly.

01-01:08:59

Perrault: Right. And also it's—as I think back on some of it, it's how—where do you get that sense of wanting to fight a battle? I guess it comes from knowing what's the right thing, and then going and making it happen. But you have to have a belief system in what you want to cherish, what you care about. And then you have to have the stamina to keep it going, because sometimes, as it turns out, these battles can last *years*. And as we know too, unfortunately, you work on those battles for ten—twenty sometimes—years, and then you have to fight them over again when the political scene changes. And then

somebody wants to change everything that you fought for all those years, and you have to do it all over again.

01-01:09:47

Eardley-Pryor: Yeah, and sometimes things work in your favor for those battles. In again, this microcosm of the battle for Storm King Mountain, the energy crisis happens in the early seventies, and it makes the Storm King Mountain project less profitable in the business model that Con Edison is trying to work. And so in some ways it was less of a political-context change and more just a broader economic change that changes the battle for the environmental movement.

01-01:10:15

Perrault: Right.

01-01:10:16

Eardley-Pryor: And I imagine that happened through the eighties, in different times that you were working, especially in the Club, at a very high level.

01-01:10:22

Perrault: Right, and there were times I remember in New York, and I can't remember specifically how I got into it—it may have been through my *Right Now* newsletter, which was for action—but I remember reading things about radiation, and about radioactivity and waste. And when I read the documents about how we were going to control something like waste, I remember being very amazed that it was so complex, and that it was so detailed, and that you needed to understand it better—and that you weren't getting the right responses from government. And that I remember, over that issue—I can't remember all the details of it, but I remember saying to myself, "The government is not listening. They're not following through, and all these people are saying these things."

01-01:11:06

Eardley-Pryor: And even this time—I'm thinking from even the time in college, but through the sixties and when you're teaching, you're at the zoo and then you're teaching [at] Pearl Middle School—this debate on atmospheric nuclear explosions happens up until around 1963 or so. So was that an issue too, about what to do with fallout, and how fallout moves through an ecological system?

01-01:11:28

Perrault: I don't remember specifically on the fallout. But I just remember that I was doing some readings at the time on waste and how do you deal with the waste.

01-01:11:34

Eardley-Pryor: On power plants, on nuclear energy plants?

01-01:11:37

Perrault: Yeah, yeah.

- 01-01:11:39
Eardley-Pryor: Yeah. "The solution to pollution is dilution," I think is the government idea. "We'll just put it more and more into the water."
- 01-01:11:47
Perrault: Right. But along that time period I remember that you *had* to influence government, that they didn't always have the right answers—and that was like a big awakening. The government doesn't always know to do it the right way. And so whatever I was reading at that time, that was part of the reason that I got the kids involved in real-life stuff, so it wasn't just in a book, but they could go to a hearing, and they could make a difference, and they could speak up.
- 01-01:12:15
Eardley-Pryor: Action learning. Yeah. Experiential learning.
- 01-01:12:18
Perrault: Yeah. And that's why the magazine had this big hand on it, and it says *Right Now!* That was what we called the newsletter. [laughing]
- 01-01:12:28
Eardley-Pryor: When you're in New York City, you're recruited to be part of the Club. You're getting more and more involved, from paper stuffing all the way to leading the environmental [education] committee and doing this newsletter. You're also working, eventually, from Pearl Middle School, when you mentioned you left because of the protest.
- 01-01:12:45
Perrault: A protest—they wouldn't give tenure to a really good teacher.
- 01-01:12:51
Eardley-Pryor: And what happened after that? Where did you find work after that?
- 01-01:12:52
Perrault: Well, that was at Bank Street. They were looking for somebody when I happened to look for teaching positions that I could go to. And I said, "Oh! It's the school I'm doing my program in." And so that's when I interviewed for them, and they took me on as a science specialist.
- 01-01:13:06
Eardley-Pryor: So you went from being in their education program to teaching?
- 01-01:13:10
Perrault: And I continued being in their education program *while* teaching in their science school for kids, which was a demonstration school for the other teachers, too, who were getting their degrees. It was only a master's program in education—one of the very fine-rated schools for education. I actually knew the founders: Barbara Biber was one of them, and Charlotte [B.] Winsor. So I was privileged to go the school at the time the founders were there.

And the school itself was a believer in early-childhood education that looked at the whole child. All the courses were around being able to look at a whole classroom, and see each child separate for what they were and what they could do. And you had to do special studies to learn how to focus on a child, and then think of the whole classroom with each child—not just a mass of kids, but kids with their own problems, with their own thoughts, their own needs.

One of the teachers there that always impressed me so much, she had a third grade. They had blocks—like normally you would do in a kindergarten or first grade—and the children learned how to create a city with the blocks, and to create laws about how the city would operate in their block city. She did—she was just wonderful with the third-grade kids, because there was a whole school there for the children. And I was just the science person, but I loved her class because she did the whole—study the community. You can't do the environment separate from the rest of what you're learning. And what are the laws, and how do they interact? How do they interface? And how do the different entities within a city work together, whether it's sanitation or it's water or it's air? And she did that with blocks.

01-01:14:57

Eardley-Pryor: That's beautiful. In the late sixties. I can also see your influence, your interest in wanting to design cities in an environmental way—from that early landscape architecture, and then here to this educational way of actually being able to do that with young kids.

01-01:15:08

Perrault: Right. And they, of course, knew that I was involved in environmental concerns, and with the Sierra Club as well. And so they involved me in a program focusing on the environment, in which we brought in René Dubos, the famous writer, *Only One Earth: [The Care and Maintenance of a Small Planet]*, co-written with Barbara Ward for the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, Sweden]. He was the major presenter, and I was one of the organizers for the conference with him.

01-01:15:31

Eardley-Pryor: What was the conference around? What was the theme of the conference?

01-01:15:34

Perrault: Well, it was around childhood and living in environments. His speech mainly talked about creating places for kids [with] all kinds of stimuli—the ability to choose, to have variety, to not just be in one place where everything was static around them and where they weren't in control. And so we had a big paper on this whole issue of free will and being able to make choices, and how the environment would influence them. He talked about how children growing up in Japan, for example, had a different kind of a life around them, including more light stimuli than their parents had had, and how it influenced the way they grew and survived different than their parents' life. And then we had many individual programs that focused—I had, it was a workshop on

environment and children, specifically in-[the]-classroom stuff. I remember that I was organizing the program and how would the whole thing look.

It was around, also, that time period of Earth Day, and the very first Earth Day. And we ended up having a Bank Street program out in the street for Earth Day in New York City. And so we had our own booth, and I had the kids there, and I organized that and wrote about that in the Sierra Club *Right Now*—so it's clear that I remember it through that [newsletter] as well. But we played a role in that.

01-01:17:18

Eardley-Pryor: These are historic moments, as far as the environmental movement in the U.S.! New York City was a million people on Earth Day! I think the mayor, [John] Lindsay, shut down most of Midtown Manhattan for people to walk in the streets and be there.

01-01:17:26

Perrault: [laughing] Right, right.

01-01:17:29

Eardley-Pryor: So you were a part of that?

01-01:17:30

Perrault: Oh yeah!

01-01:17:30

Eardley-Pryor: What do you remember seeing? What are your visions that you remember from that?

01-01:17:34

Perrault: Well, mostly we sang songs and danced around and had some visuals and books that people could read or get, and we had some pamphlets from the college that talked about it. That was one of my memories. But one of the children, Daisy, there in the children's school, helped me with my daughter when I went to the Painted Post Watson workshops. She took care of my daughter Gabrielle at the time, and she was pretty neat. She ended up being a teacher herself.

01-01:18:06

Eardley-Pryor: Inspiring multiple generations. Yeah. René Dubos—at this time he had just won a Pulitzer Prize for some of his writings on environment and organisms living within it. I'm struck—you talking about these different environments, that kids can grow up in Japan—that he talks about. I remember learning about how the family system that you live in can also change your political ideology. In the United States, so many kids have these little rooms to themselves, right?

01-01:18:35

Perrault: Right.

01-01:18:36

Eardley-Pryor: And that is *their* room, and it fosters kind of an "I-am-*the*-person" individualism. Whereas other families that live together, for example my wife, her siblings—she shared a room with her sister. You did the same. And there's a different sense of social importance, and "we're-all-in-this-together" kind of identity that can come out of that. And I'm wondering is that something that you think about? Is that something that has been an influence for you?

01-01:19:02

Perrault: Not that I'd put my mind on that specifically. No, no.

01-01:19:08

Eardley-Pryor: Earth Day, New York. That is an amazing time. Do you remember seeing any of the stars around? Margaret Mead is giving speeches, Dustin Hoffman, and Paul Newman, Ali MacGraw.

01-01:19:17

Perrault: No, I don't remember that, no. I eventually met one of the organizers of the Earth Day—he wrote a book on energy issues.

01-01:19:30

Eardley-Pryor: Denis Hayes?

01-01:19:31

Perrault: Yeah, Denis Hayes. Because when I was in Massachusetts helping run, as a volunteer, the [Sierra Club] office there, Denis Hayes came in one day and I met him. Eventually, knowing and meeting him, he became, down the road, one of the key leaders for Green Seal—a board I ended up on—and then he went to the Bullitt Foundation. And then I saw him after the twenty-fifth anniversary of Green Seal board. He came as a speaker, and I got to meet Denis again. And of course now he's working on the great big celebration for the next Earth Day. So he was a friend through the movement. And the many, many friends over time from these various connections.

01-01:20:22

Eardley-Pryor: Yeah, they cycle back in.

01-01:20:23

Perrault: But Denis was a big one, yeah.

01-01:20:26

Eardley-Pryor: Earth Day happens in April 1970. It's around this time, I think, when you realize you're pregnant with Gabrielle, in '70-'71?

01-01:20:34

Perrault: Yeah, because that's why I was using one of the students from Bank Street to take her to the summer workshops, right.

01-01:20:41

Eardley-Pryor: So my understanding, too, is that shortly after she's born you move.

01-01:20:44

Perrault: So we were living in a part of the Bronx, Riverdale, and my husband got a job up in Boston. And so we moved up there, near the aquarium and right down very close to the Sierra Club office on Joy Street.

01-01:21:07

Eardley-Pryor: Oh, right in the heart of Boston?

01-01:21:07

Perrault: In the heart of Boston, yeah. So we lived right on the waterfront.

01-01:21:12

Eardley-Pryor: That was your first move out of New York. I mean, you had spent this time in Syracuse and said, "I miss New York." How was that transition to Boston for you?

01-01:21:20

Perrault: Well, in the summers after my father had retired I would go up to Rockport, which was outside of the Boston area. It was an hour away. And so I knew that general—I would drive up a lot from New York—and so I was familiar with that area. That was fine. It was not a big problem for me.

01-01:21:43

Eardley-Pryor: What about motherhood? You've spent so much time with children, educating children, but being a parent is very different than working with young kids.

01-01:21:52

Perrault: Right.

01-01:21:53

Eardley-Pryor: How was that transition for you?

01-01:21:53

Perrault: Well, I didn't have to work when I went to Boston. So I was able to take my daughter all the time to the office, to the Sierra Club office. We'd walk through the [Boston] Common, and I took them to meetings. But I didn't really have sitters. I was able to handle it all on my own.

01-01:22:15

Eardley-Pryor: So Gabrielle grew up in the Boston [Sierra] Club?

01-01:22:18

Perrault: Pretty much so, yeah. Well, we were right next to the aquarium, so there were things for her to do. And I didn't have to work, and they had a pool, and it was in this big—right on the harbor. It was a lovely existence for her as well. And she had playgroups with other parents. And then she was able to go to a school, a private school that was there. The Park Street School? [No,] the Park School. And so I had a lot of help from other mothers too, when I needed to go to meetings or do something where she couldn't come.

01-01:22:51

Eardley-Pryor: Like you've mentioned these summer institutes? The Watson—

01-01:22:53

Perrault: Right. I always took her with me to those summer institutes.

01-01:22:56

Eardley-Pryor: There were other summer courses that you taught as well, is that right? Even back in [Bank] Street?

01-01:23:01

Perrault: Before we went to Boston there was a program—one of the professors at Bank Street College had told me about this program at Wave Hill Environmental Center in the Riverdale area, and said, "You'd be a good teacher for it." So they were going to hire me to direct the program. And then I was notified by this same professor—would I mind if this woman who was of a racial background, would I let her be the director? Because they were trying to bring diversity into the programs. And I said, "Okay." [laughter] And so—her name was Ossie, I forget what her last name was. I have pictures of her in my albums of teaching together. We got along fine. And it was fine with me. I just believed that that was an important thing, to increase the ability of people of color to move up in professions. So that was the first time that that had come into my background, and that was an important thing to do.

01-01:24:05

Eardley-Pryor: Has that come up again?

01-01:24:11

Perrault: No, but the whole issue of opportunities for people of color was a big thing for me. The [Sierra] Club didn't have enough people of color. So the first two people [of color] that ever became directors the Club were because I brought them in. They were people of color.

One of them was from the office of the Sierra Club in Massachusetts, Mary Ann Nelson. And I said to the Club—at the time I was doing big things in the national Club—"You should meet Mary Ann Nelson." And so I brought her—I forget who paid her way, but she was brought to the national Club. And she had been doing some work on environment stuff for both the [Massachusetts] chapter and—I guess I met her through some of the League [of Women Voters] work I was doing as well. So she came on the board, the first person of color, by bringing her in.

And then the other one was Michael [K.] Dorsey, who became a board director. I met him through my work on President Clinton's Council on Sustainable Development when I headed the education section for that effort. And I said, "Michael, you really need to come to the Club." And so I brought him in. And so it always made me smile when people started talking about, "Oh, we have to enrich the Club with people of color." Well, you know, you bring people in! Michael Dorsey had been a child of the Club all along, and no

one had ever brought him in. Of course, once he came in, he wanted to run for the board right away! [laughter] And we had our ins and outs over the years, but we've always been kind of close in many ways. So the first two ever people of color [on the Sierra Club Board of Directors]. And I never talked about it much. People don't think about it.

01-01:25:59

Eardley-Pryor: Back in Boston, so you move up there in the early seventies, around 1972. This is also a point when René Dubos and Margaret Mead are—and who's the economist [Barbara Ward]—but they're really involved in the Stockholm Conference, right? This 1972 international—?

01-01:26:15

Perrault: Right. That was, yeah. And the Club at that time, in its international program, was based in New York. Eventually, we moved [the international program] down to Washington DC during my presidency in the Club. Because we realized—at least the Club felt—the UN was one place to do work, but that was not the best place for the Club. The Club really needed to deal with all the committees that were part of the US government in Washington, DC.

01-01:26:42

Eardley-Pryor: So the international—this was in the eighties when you moved it?

01-01:26:45

Perrault: We moved it down, right.

01-01:26:47

Eardley-Pryor: To DC?

01-01:26:47

Perrault: But it was very big in New York at the time with Pat Sharlin.

01-01:26:52

Eardley-Pryor: During your time with the Atlantic Chapter in New York, did you have any international intersections?

01-01:26:55

Perrault: No, no, I don't recall any of that.

01-01:26:57

Eardley-Pryor: It was still really just getting off the ground at that point there?

01-01:27:00

Perrault: Right, right.

01-01:27:01

Eardley-Pryor: Do you have any recollections of the Stockholm Conference happening? This was in the summer of '72.

- 01-01:27:07
Perrault: I was just aware, over time, of its influence when I began to do more international work.
- 01-01:27:15
Eardley-Pryor: You mentioned that [your then husband] Gary's job in Boston was shipping chemicals, [in] the petrochemical industry. Did that create tension for you guys?
- 01-01:27:22
Perrault: Yeah, it did. I didn't know how he—because he wasn't really—It was okay to do chemicals and ship them around the world. People need chemicals. But he was doing some bad ones at the time. [laughing] And so we would have some discussion about [how] some of them weren't so good. And so there was some stress there.
- 01-01:27:43
Eardley-Pryor: And this is also [when] the chemical warfare issue is being played out in Vietnam with Agent Orange.
- 01-01:27:48
Perrault: Yeah, no, I don't recall any discussions on that point.
- 01-01:27:52
Eardley-Pryor: When you move up to Boston you're also close to your mother who's also staying there. Did she have a role in helping raise Gabrielle?
- 01-01:27:59
Perrault: No, no, no. Not really. I mean, we would visit her. But no.
- 01-01:28:07
Eardley-Pryor: So you mentioned a couple of things right away in Boston you get involved in, is the League of Women Voters and also in the [Sierra] Club.
- 01-01:28:13
Perrault: Right.
- 01-01:28:14
Eardley-Pryor: Those kind of became home bases. Had you been part of the League of Women Voters before?
- 01-01:28:18
Perrault: Not in New York, no.
- 01-01:28:19
Eardley-Pryor: What brought you in, in Massachusetts?
- 01-01:28:23
Perrault: I'm trying to think about how that happened. I guess I just bumped into some people doing things in the Club. I can't remember how that—I remember a lot of good people that were in the program, but I can't remember just what was

the first connection. But I do remember I was vice president there. They did a lot of workshops that I had participated in. But thinking back on it, where was my first contact? I don't know quite how that happened. But I remember being enriched by them.

And then of course I ran a very big program eventually, where they hired me to do workshops around the whole state on growth issues. And so I was paid a salary to run them, in conjunction with the community colleges, under a grant from [Massachusetts Foundation for] Humanities and Public Policy, in Massachusetts. And that's where one of my mentors, Barbara Fegan who became very big on the coastal walk cleanup issues—she was very big in the League of Women Voters board. And so she became a big mentor for me in helping me run and pull these things together, because we did them from all kinds of issues. [For] each community college, we had to focus. One was on air, another would be on water, another one would be on land use and growth issues—because the state of Massachusetts was going through a whole program on better growth for the state. And how would they do it? So I ran different ones in each place.

The only problem that happened to me during that time is that I broke my neck! I actually was in a car crash over black ice, and I fractured my second vertebra. So I had a halo that I wore, and I was doing all these workshops. [Michele sees a bird outside]—a hummingbird. I was doing all these workshops, and I could only fit in certain cabs [laughter] because I had these spokes on either side of my head. But I finished the program. And it got me into so many issues around growth and development. We had another one on agriculture in the state. So each community college was a special issue.

01-01:30:49

Eardley-Pryor: So it sound to me like there's a ton of overlap between the work you're doing with the Sierra Club [and] the work you're doing with the League of Women Voters: it's around issues of growth, environmental safety, health, environmental health.

01-01:30:59

Perrault: [laughing] Yeah, all the issues.

01-01:30:59

Eardley-Pryor: All these issues intersect, and it makes me wonder how do you—and this is also the time where environmental realizations are suddenly exploding onto the scene of concern at a national and even international scale. How do you decide where you're going to focus your energy to become an expert on a particular issue? I mean, you have everything to choose from. There's this realization: "The environment—what *isn't* the environment? So wow, we need all these things to be dealt with." How did you choose the topics that you went to go become an expert on?

01-01:31:31
Perrault:

Well, in the League itself, I remember that the sludge issue was picked by them. I didn't pick that one. In the case of offshore oil drilling, because I was in the education department of the [Sierra] Club and the Club wanted to get involved in saying, "Hey, you don't drill in Georges Bank fishing grounds," I became an expert trying to get educational materials about that issue, and reading up about that issue, [so] that all of a sudden I became an expert on offshore oil drilling.

In addition to which, the Conservation Law Foundation was in the same building on Joy Street as the [Boston] Sierra Club office. And Doug Foy, who was very big with the Conservation Law Foundation—I would run down the stairs, because they were up above us, and I'd say, "Oh, Doug, did you find a way to sue?" [laughing] And finally one day he comes down, "Michele, I found a way." And that was to sue Secretary [Cecil D.] Andrus, at the time the [U.S.] interior secretary, for capricious action. Because he had made a statement that area should never be drilled, and now all of a sudden he's an interior secretary and he wants to drill. And that was against—there was a piece of law called capricious action; he couldn't claim it should never be drilled and then try to go drill it! It was wonderful.

But up until the time that Doug Foy found that, we were doing a big public outreach—get the fishermen together, get the government officials together. We worked with fishermen's wives in Gloucester, Massachusetts near where my mother lives. We hung big fish out the window—big, big—we'd go to the market. And that's where Nancy Anderson—who was my other mentor, she was very much involved with Tufts University—and so we'd go get these big fish and hang them out the window, and then we'd get press coverage for it. We'd run meetings and educational briefings. We read environmental impact statements, we analyzed them, wrote about them, we testified. Many, many—and I have the testimony for all the different things that I said on behalf of the Club. But I became an expert on understanding what was involved in oil drilling and the impacts on the coast itself—what effect would it have on the in-shore needs, to take care of an industry off the coast?

And because of that actually, in my present life, just last year, since I do so much work visiting in Rhode Island and Massachusetts in the last nine years, I was able to—well, not testify but speak at a hearing that the government was running under the Trump Administration, where they want to open up that [Georges Bank] area again, as well as the rest of the country for offshore drilling. I was able to testify in Rhode Island at a hearing just to not have it happen, both in Rhode Island or off the coast of Massachusetts again.

So it's—you never get rid of these things, even though your history of activism may lessen because you're involved in so many things related to your own family, or your needs, or your own aging and what you do with your life as you age. You can't forget your contribution you have to continue to make

when these things come up, particularly if they want to undo what you fought for in your early years, and now the battle has to happen again.

01-01:35:04

Eardley-Pryor: Bring back the—

01-01:35:04

Perrault: And you have to support the people that are now taking the place, carrying out what *you* used to do. You need to be there for them too.

01-01:35:17

Eardley-Pryor: Tell me a little bit more about this Committee for the Protection of Georges Bank. Is that where, [with] the oil drilling issue, where you begin to educate yourself?

01-01:35:23

Perrault: Right, actually formed the committee with Nancy Anderson, the two of us.

01-01:35:29

Eardley-Pryor: How did you come across meeting Nancy? She seems like that gave you some media savvy, she was connected to Tufts—what's the story there?

01-01:35:37

Perrault: I'm not sure how we got connected, but we decided we'd have to form a committee of activism, and she was involved with Tufts. And Tufts had an education—a program for environmental education. And Nancy Anderson—I forget when she started to run them, but she ran environmental training workshops for the region, for New England. It was called the New England Environmental Conferences. And so we did a lot of coverage of offshore oil issues during her conferences as well. But I don't quite remember how we first connected, because she became a very big mentor for me until she passed away at a young age.

01-01:36:27

Eardley-Pryor: What were some of the things that Nancy taught you that you hadn't known before? You'd already had all this experience in environmental education doing activism, doing action oriented—?

01-01:36:34

Perrault: Yeah, she was extremely connected to experts of all sorts, people that I didn't know, and so I got to know many people through her. She was also a wonderful organizer, and she had the resources of Tufts to back her up, to pull a lot of these things—she was good in getting grants. She was very detailed in the way she pulled things together. And she was excited all the time about making a difference. She just put me in connection with more people than I had even known before that, on issues as well.

01-01:37:16

Eardley-Pryor: People you've put me in connection with, as a part of learning more about your life, have—almost across the board—they've all said similar things about

you. That you have this incredible energy, just nonstop [Perrault laughs], that you're super organized and [have] this vibrancy in the midst of continual challenges—like you mentioned that you're still fighting these battles. Where does that come from? Where do you get this lift?

01-01:37:44

Perrault:

I think it comes early in believing in what's right to do, and what you love, and that what you love has to be protected. And I guess it just comes from knowing—like no one could ever have done anything to ruin Van Cortlandt Park. That was a special, special place. It was set aside. I would assume that had anybody tried to do anything when I was a child, it would have made an impression on me. But that was part of it, I think.

It's just—you have to come from a place [where] you care, and you have to feel immersed in it, and the caring drives you. I don't know where the drive comes to stick with a battle. You know, that kind of thing? But I do know that each battle that I've been involved with makes me stronger for the next one. And there have been many local battles, of course, that I've fought.

But also, when you can make a difference and see a change in a battle, because either you or other people have done something, then that reinforces you for the next one, that you can make a difference. It's just knowing, I guess, knowing that you can make a difference. And that came early on when I'm sending kids to hearings, and very young, and knowing that there's a place where you go. And if you educate yourself enough to know what's going to happen there, you can speak up about—like at one of the hearings I would send kids to in my *Right Now* newsletter was for air pollution issues. Wow! You can stop what's going on.

Also, I knew early on that you shouldn't smoke. I'd read that in *Seventeen* magazine, [on] how to be a pure person. There was always this purity, living the good life. And I, in part, got it through that—which had a funny aside, because *Seventeen* magazine ran, as I'm going through my stuff, they ran a thing for Princess of New York. And I became a finalist in that, and I still have this little charm [from] *Seventeen*. You know, I didn't win Miss Princess of New York, but I got to go to a big event, and it was just one of those little kind of asides. But I remember their magazines and reading all about how to be the right kind of person: clean, don't let anything hurt yourself, be healthy. [laughing] So I never did smoke.

And then of course there were all those battles later on that were very impressive, in how the tobacco [vs.] anti-tobacco campaigns worked, and how they made a difference in changing people, which is a model that you would hope you would be able to use in all environmental issues. But they were lucky that they got so much change in that battle. That was fascinating how that worked.

01-01:41:03

Eardley-Pryor: Would you take me a little bit back? I'm fascinated that you're doing all this work—you're so active, you're so deeply involved in all of this—and a full-time mother! You have a young daughter, you're taking her to these meetings. Can you talk a little bit about what that experience is like, being a mother, a mother that's bringing her daughter into these places while still being so active? How did you manage all of that?

01-01:41:25

Perrault: Well, I didn't have to work a full-time job, so that—

01-01:41:31

Eardley-Pryor: Mothering *is* a full-time job. I mean, it is hard work.

01-01:41:33

Perrault: Right, but I was a full-time volunteer, in a way. But I was always aware, with my background in education, I was always, as my son said, "putting things in front of them." You know, knowing that it was important to keep introducing ideas. And if I had to take them to meetings, making sure they had things they could do, being aware of what was important for them—not just being bored at some kind of meeting. And in filling their lives with other things, like my daughter had a tremendous amount of horseback lessons. My kids all had piano lessons. My son was out on [backcountry] trips. We wrote journals. We wrote things about—we bought postcards and made booklets. So I knew how to raise kids by constantly making sure they were stimulated, that they had introductions to lots of reading, ideas, and all that kind of stuff. And they all had art materials all the time. So it's not hard if you keep the child in mind while you're doing these things. Maybe there was a little suffering along the way [laughing], you know, with too many meetings. I don't know. But they don't seem to feel that I did them any damage. [laughing]

01-01:43:01

Eardley-Pryor: Did becoming a mother [create] a different sense of the world that you were giving them? Was that a role that influenced you in some way? What world am I creating for the next generation?

01-01:43:13

Perrault: I don't think I thought like that. I have, certainly for my grandchildren, thought about what is going to happen. Because things are so bad, and it's hard to know how to stop some of the damage that goes on because there's a lack of political will in so many cases. And I try to stay an optimist, but there's an overwhelming aspect to it, particularly if the wrong people are in politics. [laughing] You know, you get a little depressed, and then you see the rest of the world and how difficult it is for people to just eat and have a living—how are they going to take care of their environment?

When it telescopes out for the whole globe, I worry about the long-term future. I can see my own children are okay, they're doing okay. It's the ones in the next generations down the road—your daughter, for example. There's so

much that will happen between now and then that is so difficult to control. But there are young people that are much more aware, in larger numbers, than we had when we were growing up. And that's encouraging.

01-01:44:32

Eardley-Pryor: I think, let's end this session, and we'll take things up again on Friday.

01-01:44:35

Perrault: Oh, okay.

01-01:44:36

Eardley-Pryor: Thanks, Michele.

01-01:44:36

Perrault: Good.

Interview 2: October 5, 2018

02-00:00:00

Eardley-Pryor: Today is Friday, October 5, [2018]. We are in Michele Perrault's home. We are in the second session of an oral history as part of the Sierra Club Oral History Project. My name is Roger Eardley-Pryor from the Oral History Center at The Bancroft Library, UC Berkeley.

So Michele, for our second session today I'd like to revisit some of the issues that we didn't get to address last time, especially around life in New York before your move to Boston in 1972. The first thing I want to go back to is actually to stretch all the way back to when you were just twenty-three or twenty-four, and this is 1964-1965 in New York City. After your zoology degree from Hunter College, while working at the Bronx Zoo, I have a note that you took some children's writing courses at the New School [for] Social Research?

02-00:00:46

Perrault: New School for Social Research.

02-00:00:47

Eardley-Pryor: Can you tell me about that?

02-00:00:48

Perrault: Well, I always felt that I could be a better writer. I never called myself a good writer. And I wanted to also write children's books. That was just an idea. They were offering children's writing at the New School for Social Research, so I took a course. And I actually did a draft, which I still have—I never made it into a book. It was about animals and their tails, and it was really for kids that were up to about four. It talked about all the different things that different kinds of animals, like a beaver, could do with this tail, or skunks would do with their tails. I still have the copies of it. I just never got it to publication because too many other things came up in my life, I believe, and I didn't pursue it further.

02-00:01:33

Eardley-Pryor: Tales about tails?

02-00:01:34

Perrault: Yes.

02-00:01:36

Eardley-Pryor: What was the drive for going back for children's writing? If you're interested in writing, why was this focus on children's writing for you?

02-00:01:41

Perrault: I can't remember exactly. It's just that I worked in the zoo, and I was involved with young people. And I had learned so much about animals because it wasn't something I grew up loving, and so it just kind of came to me. In the children's writing course, you had to pick something, and so that seemed close

to what I understood and could do. So that was my first draft, and that's all I remember of the course. [laughing]

02-00:02:07

Eardley-Pryor: Yeah, well—I guess the children's writing course, that was the focus: on children's writing.

02-00:02:10

Perrault: Yes.

02-00:02:10

Eardley-Pryor: So even then, you had a sense this is the audience you want to be reaching?

02-00:02:13

Perrault: Right, because my big thing was a focus, of course, on education. And the later interests in conservation and science came gradually and built up.

02-00:02:28

Eardley-Pryor: From the drive in education?

02-00:02:28

Perrault: Right.

02-00:02:30

Eardley-Pryor: Part of the reason why I wanted to start with that is I think it gets at part of what we're doing here. We're creating a narrative. You are telling your story of your life and the role that stories and storytelling plays in environmental activism.

And so I'm wondering if you could talk a little bit about how storytelling might have been a tool for education, even to build communities, a means of activism to encourage social change—any of those ways in which stories, storytelling in particular, is a way to bring people together and motivate them towards a cause or to help them understand something.

02-00:03:06

Perrault: Well, I would say I wished I'd known that stories would be a better tool. [laughing] I mean, I didn't really *use* them. I tended to use—well, if I used stories in any way, it would have been related to things that were happening in the environmental area or the movement.

02-00:03:22

Eardley-Pryor: What do you mean?

02-00:03:23

Perrault: Well, for example, when I was teaching in Pearl River for the middle school—because we had an area outside the school and because I liked animals and I like nature—I was able to help them create a sanctuary and make trails through the sanctuary, and hang out food for the animals. And when the snows came, we could then go and look at footprints to see who

came to the food. We had had a teleconference with the owner, which turned out to be Uris Company, a corporation that owned the land. We actually had a teleconference with the owners to see if it was okay if we used this area outside the school to do these things with the Animal Club. And so all of the things [we did in] this Animal Club that I formed was because kids love animals. I guess in a sense that it was the story about animals and being aware of them and doing things with them that kind of got me into that whole thing.

But as a result of doing the Animal Club, we then got into some of the political aspects of trying to save land: Who owned it? Could we use it? Would it be there as a sanctuary forever? What would our role be? And of course, I was never there long enough—after only three years when I left Pearl River—to have ever tried to fight for that area to be part of the school grounds. But it was, again, something that took us into some activism. At that time, to do an interview with kids [and] teleconference with the owner of the land? That's pretty neat.

02-00:04:55

Eardley-Pryor: That is really neat. This is around the time you are also starting to get—I'm going back to the Pearl River time, the story you are just telling—when you're getting pulled into the orbit of the Sierra Club itself. David Sive has already reached out to you at this point or around this time.

02-00:05:09

Perrault: Because I taught his sons, the twins.

02-00:05:12

Eardley-Pryor: And they were in—part of this Animal Club?

02-00:05:13

Perrault: And they were in, they were part of—well, I think they may have been part of the Animal Club. I looked at pictures to see if they were. I'm not sure. I think they *may* have been. I just can't recall. But they were in my classes, because I taught science, sixth and seventh grade.

02-00:05:25

Eardley-Pryor: So you were already moving in this world of thinking about land use, conservation, before you even began working with the Club?

02-00:05:36

Perrault: In a way, yeah, because the conservation part came out in protecting animals. The zoo was an institution that was highlighting the need to think worldwide about them. They had Père David deer that didn't really get along anywhere else in the world, and they were going to have a place to show, in the zoo, how they could be taken care of. So it's that kind of thing, where I was aware that animals were in danger. Endangered animals was always a big focus that I kind of used to think about, eventually through my whole career in terms of worldwide. I had this throughout my career, this thing of collecting information because there was so much out there.

One of my files had to do with all the endangered species in the world and who was taking care of them and who wasn't. My former husband [Phillip Berry] had a big interest in tigers, so we had a whole issue of looking up: Where were the tigers in danger? Where could they be found? What could you do for them? And that was for many kinds of species. So I always had this thing—to this day—about the plight of particular animals.

And of course you can't worry about them unless you also worry about the land they're part of. So then that gets you into what's happening to the land? What's happening to the climate that's changing where the animals move? And so every little subject or every little animal, every little country, would take you into another issue area that you'd have to get up on. [laughing]

02-00:07:09

Eardley-Pryor: So I'm thinking of the role that animals played for you in the way that you talk about land being a part of concern for animals. It makes me think about the land ethic in Aldo Leopold's writings, from the forties, [*A Sand County Almanac*]. Was that something that was on your radar around this time, or had you crossed his work then?

02-00:07:28

Perrault: No, because my training had not been in some of those aspects of the environmental movement. That came later when I was introduced to free programs at Tufts [University]'s environmental program, where they took environmental activists. You applied to a program, they let you take courses that began to show you all of these highlights. And of course, I bought books about these things and began to read them more.

When I was in the zoo, there was a moment when I had an opportunity to go out west. The zoo had some knowledge of a woman who was studying elk, and there was a cabin, and I got to stay in it alone. I did that while I was in the zoo. I remember going there and getting up with her in the early mornings to look at the elk with her through binoculars. There was a relationship there to the Aldo Leopold Center and her relationship to it. So that's how I sort of, I think, probably got into more of that kind of philosophy and ideas about people.

02-00:08:37

Eardley-Pryor: Oh, that's interesting.

02-00:08:38

Perrault: It's also another family that was very important there. Well, actually, Leopold's the one that had all the kids—Luna and—right? [Aldo and Estella Bergere Leopold had five children: Starker Leopold (born 1913), Luna Leopold (born 1915), Nina Leopold Bradley (born 1917), Carl Leopold (born 1919), Estella E. Leopold (born 1927).]

02-00:08:52

Eardley-Pryor: I think so.

02-00:08:52

Perrault:

Yeah, yeah. That was the family, because I got to meet some people there. And years, years, years, years later, I met one of the Leopold daughters in Japan when I went up to the island [where] the Ainu people lived, and she was running—I forget what her name was now—but she was running the program for the US government in an office there. But it was this interesting connection and link.

And as an aside, the Ainu had not yet been recognized as an indigenous people. And while I was there in Japan, they *did* get recognized. And it just—that's like a story that I don't want to get lost, because they gave me this beautiful Ainu instrument that they play, which I have in a folder and never quite knew who to give it to, who would care to keep it and save it. But it was given to me for the Club, and I still have it. It's like a little flute, but it's a tiny thing the Ainu people played. And they were recognized as an indigenous people while I was there in Japan.

02-00:09:59

Eardley-Pryor:

With—?

02-00:09:59

Perrault:

On a tour. The Japanese had invited me to go—but I can get into that more when I talk about my international work.

02-00:10:06

Eardley-Pryor:

Yeah, let's revisit that story. That's wonderful. I want to go back to—that you mentioned going west. Where did you go west that was this elk-viewing experience?

02-00:10:14

Perrault:

It was in—I think it was in Wyoming. All I remember from the experience was going with her to look at the elk in the morning, and there was a big stream there. And I discovered caddisflies, which build homes out of rocks and stones or twigs, depending on what kind of caddisfly they are. They were in the stream there, and I collected them in a little jar and took them back. And that had a big impression on me, because I ended up being the stream teacher for the programs at the Watson Ecology Workshops and the Clair Tappaan Lodge workshops they eventually created in California. So I was always known as the stream person in those teacher workshops, because I had a big thing about the streams. And it began—

02-00:10:58

Eardley-Pryor:

And that's where your introduction was?

02-00:10:59

Perrault:

Right, just sitting and looking at streams while I was on that trip. It wasn't a very long trip. I probably was gone for about a week. But I had a need to just get away out of the city, and the zoo offered this experience to go there.

- 02-00:11:12
Eardley-Pryor: Had you ever been west before? Had you traveled much to—?
- 02-00:11:15
Perrault: No, no. No, I don't think so, because I remember I had to fly Frontier Airlines, and it was a terribly bumpy ride, and I hated flying. It was like one of the worst trips I ever took flying-wise. So yeah, that was like a beginning of my going somewhere on a plane.
- 02-00:11:29
Eardley-Pryor: And gosh, this was the early 1960s, if you're at the zoo.
- 02-00:11:33
Perrault: Yeah, that's right, right.
- 02-00:11:35
Eardley-Pryor: Had you really done any—much travel beyond New York?
- 02-00:11:37
Perrault: I'm thinking the woman's name was Margaret Murie, M-U-R-I-E, possibly—the woman who did the elk studies. She would be known for that! Yeah, I'll have to look that up, Google it. [Margaret Thomas "Mardy" Murie.]
- 02-00:11:48
Eardley-Pryor: But that was your first time really getting out of the New England, East Coast area?
- 02-00:11:52
Perrault: Yes.
- 02-00:11:53
Eardley-Pryor: That experience had to be pretty powerful for you, in being out west.
- 02-00:11:58
Perrault: Well, I remember it as a segment of my life. It wasn't like, "I have to go back, I have to be there again," that kind of thing, because I was living in Greenwich Village at the time when I came back. So I had other things I was dealing with in my life. [laughing] I remember it was beautiful.
- 02-00:12:19
Eardley-Pryor: I'm wondering if this kind of storytelling aspect you talk about with animals, and then helping the kids see the story, if that ever really became a part of your activism later. [I'm] thinking about the way you frame a political issue to get members or citizens to think about something in a different way. Was storytelling around politics and activism part of things?
- 02-00:12:41
Perrault: Well, it's hard to say, because I became so engrossed in and surprised by the scientific expertise one had to have to fight to protect the environment. And so I was kind of almost overwhelmed as I gathered materials as an education committee chair, in Massachusetts for example, because I was also an

education chair in New York. But gathering material for issues for people to fight battles, I remember being very surprised at how detailed it was. And how detailed the laws being proposed were, and the regulations, and how you had to be very up on all of these things.

So the part about stories might be when I had to try to approach the public. When we went down to the fish market to advertise the fact that they were trying to drill off the coast and impact the fishing community for Georges Bank, a very pristine area that should never be touched with oil drilling. And I wanted to get a fish skeleton. We were going to hang this big skeleton up, so the public and press could get an idea. Well, they didn't have any skeletons, so they gave us a big perch. I looked that up. It's a perch, a gigantic fish. And we hung it—we had to hang it outside the window because it would get smelly. And so we would hang it out the window every night, but then we would take it down to the Boston Common and have this big fish. And we got good press coverage. So in a way, that might be what you're talking about.

02-00:14:08

Eardley-Pryor: Yeah, framing a story.

02-00:14:09

Perrault: It's stories—finding a way that gets people interested enough, yeah.

02-00:14:15

Eardley-Pryor: And other people that make mention of stories that were also a huge influence in your life are Joan and Hy Rosner—and you made mention of them the last time we spoke. But I'm wondering if you can just flesh out a little bit more about who they were and their importance to you?

02-00:14:29

Perrault: Well, Joan was a science teacher in New York City Public Schools, and Hy was her husband. And he was very supportive of everything she did. He had been, himself, involved in education but in a different sphere. He wasn't a teacher, per se. I don't recall exactly what Hy did.

02-00:14:49

Eardley-Pryor: I think he might have been doing social work.

02-00:14:50

Perrault: Social work, that'd make sense.

02-00:14:51

Eardley-Pryor: It could have been around educational issues.

02-00:14:52

Perrault: That's possibly right. But a very supportive. And Joan discovered me doing these things, because I would go to be picked up by schools every day from the zoo to show animals. So then she learned about me, possibly through one of the schools I went to that she knew. And I guess I also was involved with a science teachers association of some sort, where we would be in contact. So

she said, "Why don't you come and be a teacher in my summer programs?," which she ran out in the Finger Lakes area of New York State.

02-00:15:22

Eardley-Pryor: And this was the Watson—

02-00:15:23

Perrault: Watson in the summers. Watson—

02-00:15:24

Eardley-Pryor: Watson Ecology.

02-00:15:25

Perrault: Watson Homestead Ecology Workshops, because it was the home of the famous Watson of electricity. [Thomas J. Watson, CEO of IBM] It was his former—and it was turned into like a convention area or center. So that's why it was called Watson Homestead Ecology Workshops. And we did that, I believe from my records, about 1970-'71 she took me on, and I did many, many summers.

Eventually, when I ended up moving to California, I said, "Well, we have a lodge." The Sierra Club owns a lodge called Clair Tappaan. So then we decided to do the western summer program and the eastern one. And for a while, I think maybe one or two times, I went and did both. But for the most part I had to direct the one in the west. And so I did over thirteen years of the west one, modeled on the program that Joan had set up in New York. And that program always had a stream person, a person who read the landscape for forestry issues, someone who'd help with geology, and a very—Harry Betros was a head of the Staten Island wildlife area, and he was one of the teachers. So we all had our little role. And then the program itself also involved people in social gatherings. So we had square dancing, we had communal food and service. We all helped with the chores there. And it was just a family gathering. She was so—she and Hy were so good at that, and they were role models as a husband a wife. Very, very special people. Later on, of course, they continued—they did a big program with Alley Pond Park [The Alley Pond Environmental Center (APEC)] to bring attention that the teachers had to use it in New York.

02-00:17:14

Eardley-Pryor: Oh, this is in the Little Neck [New York]?

02-00:17:16

Perrault: Yeah. And so there's the Alley Pond story. But—I have it somewhere in my folder. I have to try to find it, put everything together, of their life. It's probably in Albuquerque [*Albuquerque's Environmental Story*]. But then they moved to Florida—I forget the order. It was Albuquerque and then maybe Florida. But they did the Dade County one [*Dade County Environmental Story*] along with a very famous environmental educator, Pat Suiter, who was a dear friend of theirs as well.

- 02-00:17:42
Eardley-Pryor: Take me back into the story of—so Joan is the one who finds you doing work and said—?
- 02-00:17:49
Perrault: Yeah, right.
- 02-00:17:50
Eardley-Pryor: And pulls you into this orbit that takes you into the Watson Ecology Workshops group?
- 02-00:17:54
Perrault: Right.
- 02-00:17:55
Eardley-Pryor: And from what I'm hearing you were the stream expert—is that [right]?
- 02-00:17:57
Perrault: Yes. [laughing]
- 02-00:17:58
Eardley-Pryor: So you taught on the streams there. How long did these workshops last?
- 02-00:18:01
Perrault: A week.
- 02-00:18:02
Eardley-Pryor: Just one week. And how did people come to them?
- 02-00:18:05
Perrault: They were advertised in newsletters. I advertised them, actually—I believe, in *Right Now*, the newsletter for teachers that I did out of New York Sierra Club. Yeah, and then of course eventually down the road, Joan ended up on the National Environmental Education Advisory [Council] under the senior Bush, that I was part of. We were both on it together, in different capacities!
[laughing]
- 02-00:18:26
Eardley-Pryor: I guess that would be the late eighties, early nineties under George H.W Bush?
- 02-00:18:29
Perrault: Right.
- 02-00:18:29
Eardley-Pryor: You both served on this Environmental Education National Advisors Committee?
- 02-00:18:33
Perrault: Yes, right.

02-00:18:34

Eardley-Pryor: Oh, that's great. Tell me a little bit—on this topic of storytelling, you made mention that they retired and moved to Albuquerque. And I'm not sure when that would have been—in the seventies or eighties?

02-00:18:46

Perrault: Yeah, I'd have to check, because the Albuquerque Story [*Albuquerque's Environmental Story*] would mention that, what the dates were on that. But when she passed away, she was living in Florida at that time. So I believe they did Albuquerque first, and then they went to Florida.

02-00:19:01

Eardley-Pryor: You just made mention of the name there, the Albuquerque *Environmental Story*—?

02-00:19:06

Perrault: What was important about that—and again, what was important about the workshop philosophy—was that you didn't just do environmental, but you combined the social aspects of how living was more than just the environment. It was—what did you do for a profession? What was the school situation around you? Who were the makers of policy in the community? Who cared about transportation issues? Who cared about whether people had livelihoods? It was the *whole* rounded—what we then later began to call more a sustainable livelihood. And they didn't use the word *sustainable*, but that was really what they were doing.

And so when Corning, New York—I think I mentioned this earlier, when they, Corning, New York—had a flooding, we went as a whole group of teachers, and we spent a day in Corning helping them, the people, with the flooding and doing what we could do to help them repair or get back some of their life. And I don't recall exactly how we did it, and what we did—we probably picked up trash. We probably did all kinds of things that happen when people have had a flooded area.

That, later, I adopted in the Clair Tappaan Sierra Club version of the workshops, by doing a study. One day out of the seven, everybody went to Lake Tahoe. And then they decided to break up into areas—which aspect of the community life around Lake Tahoe did they want to study? Then they would come back and we'd all brainstorm together, so that we ended up with a picture of a community and what people were facing in it, and how were they doing their things? And of course Hy always wanted to go and study the social services of the community around Lake Tahoe, of the gambling community and what was going on there. I was interested in the purity of the water, and what are the agencies doing to deal with it? And so the idea there was the teachers could go back, when they went back to their communities, they could do something sort of similar to the way that Joan and Hy had done for Albuquerque or they had done for Dade County—or that we had done for Lake Tahoe.

- 02-00:21:18
Eardley-Pryor: That's beautiful. Even the idea of having that kind of sustainable, broad, social *and* environmental integration seems pretty darned cutting-edge.
- 02-00:21:27
Perrault: Well, it was cutting edge. And not only was it cutting edge—
- 02-00:21:29
Eardley-Pryor: At this time.
- 02-00:21:30
Perrault: —it was the whole focus on the importance of environmental education for citizens growing up anywhere, whether it was our country or other countries. Even when I was working in the Atlantic Chapter, and I was serving on an advisory for the state program, I have some letter showing and recalling for me that even in New York State they were trying to find a way to make environmental ed. more important, to make people understand that it wasn't just a single subject that you had to fit in anywhere. It was something that you could teach as part and parcel of *all* of the activities. There wasn't a lot of material for teachers [on] how to do that, in addition to which they weren't really trained. So if they didn't go to a program like Joan and Hy were running, where were they going to get that kind of training of integrating with all of the various subjects?
- 02-00:22:25
Eardley-Pryor: It sounds to me like Joan and Hy also would visit your western ecology workshops when you did them later.
- 02-00:22:30
Perrault: Oh, once we established the Clair Tappaan one, then they came to each one of them there. And so we had the lodge—we had the dancing in the lodge, we had the study of the community. We actually increased, also, study of the pioneers that had lived below the notch, in Norden, where the Sierra Club's lodge is located. It's above where the pioneer family that got stuck in the snow.
- 02-00:23:00
Eardley-Pryor: Oh, the Donners?
- 02-00:23:01
Perrault: The Donner family. That was part of our day of studying communities, because the museum was right below the area we had to take, the road down to get over to Lake Tahoe. So we'd stop at the museum, we'd learn about the Donner Party and what they went through, and look at the museum. And then we'd head out to Lake Tahoe.
- 02-00:23:22
Eardley-Pryor: That sounds like just a wonderful workshop. I wish I could attend those kind of things.

- 02-00:23:25
Perrault: [laughing] Oh, people loved it, you know. And then, eventually, that particular one I was able to get people credit at Hayward State [California State University, East Bay (CSUEB), in Hayward, California]—college credit for taking the course, if they chose to.
- 02-00:23:38
Eardley-Pryor: Oh, like a continuing education credit for teachers?
- 02-00:23:39
Perrault: They got credits, continuing ed. credits, right.
- 02-00:23:42
Eardley-Pryor: The ones in New York, the Watson Ecology Workshops, what happens to these people that come in and do the training? And who was coming? Is it directed at teachers?
- 02-00:23:52
Perrault: Oh, definitely for teachers, right. And also, if they wanted their families to come, quite often we provided a counselor, so people could come with their children. And I did that in Clair Tappaan as well, for the Sierra Club.
- 02-00:24:03
Eardley-Pryor: So it became—again, the whole person is there, the family is there, everything that's a part of their networks.
- 02-00:24:09
Perrault: Yeah, so we gave a counselor for the family, and they could do artwork, and [so could] some of the teachers, when they weren't doing their course. And all the teachers, by the way, were not paid. We were never paid. We were volunteers.
- 02-00:24:21
Eardley-Pryor: Well, that was another question I was going to ask, is about funding. Were Hy and Joan providing the capital to make these workshops possible?
- 02-00:24:28
Perrault: People paid to go to the course. Basically, nobody took a salary, so it wasn't very expensive in that respect. People paid for their own transportation.
- 02-00:24:36
Eardley-Pryor: It was just, in part, to be there. So the Rosners, in some ways, were kind of conveners?
- 02-00:24:38
Perrault: That's right.
- 02-00:24:39
Eardley-Pryor: They helped bring people together for this. Where do you think they got their—especially Joan, where did she get this, at the time I would think,

radical understanding of a holistic approach to environmental issues and social issues? Where was she coming from?

02-00:24:53

Perrault:

Yeah, I think just being a teacher in New York City and seeing—I never really had a big conversation with her [about it]. We were also organizing the next meeting or the next program. I guess just because she was into science teaching, and she had other people around her. So I'm not quite sure where she picked it up, but she had it pretty solid. [laughing]

02-00:25:18

Eardley-Pryor:

What other memories do you have of the Rosners as they went about their lives? You had moved west, but you still maintained this contact. What happened with them?

02-00:25:27

Perrault:

Well, they eventually got old and eventually passed away. But I followed them all, for most of their life, even when we weren't doing workshops anymore. And Joan, of course, and Hy were involved in their community many ways and doing service, but I wasn't familiar with all the service. But she was removed, you know, far away. But we wrote, and I have correspondence that I've kept from all those years.

02-00:25:57

Eardley-Pryor:

I love your ability to save all of these things to help spur your memory and also just to have a record of that for history's purposes. I also want to talk a little bit about the workshops. You've described them a little bit in terms of how they were organized by day, at least how they were later. With the Watson workshops it seems like they were thematically organized. Maybe you'd have a day of streams, and somebody would have a day of wildlife. Is that correct?

02-00:26:26

Perrault:

Well, and forestry—it depended on the expertise of the various players. But she had—I guess each time we'd get about six staff that she knew. She had a really wonderful teacher. But he got hit by a car once, so he didn't last a long time with our programs. He was a very special guy. And then she had a number of teachers that I then took for my program in Clair Tappaan in California. They would travel, and I would pay for their travel to get to use the same staff. So we never—we didn't have to have very many meetings about what to do. We all knew what we did, and we did well. And so it was really pretty easy to run a program like that.

And then, of course, I picked up this *wonderful* teacher. Art Shapiro, to this day, is a world-renowned butterfly expert. He grinds them up for nucleotides to see how climate change is affecting the butterflies. He wanders around Davis with his butterfly net. He doesn't have a car. His wife pushes a shopping cart around. I think they probably still do that. But he always was grateful to

his sixth-grade teacher, so that he—and in addition to which, one of his study areas was below the Sierra Club's Clair Tappaan Lodge—so he came every year. A gem.

Another person—well, two different people that play John Muir would come. Because when I ran the program, I was running it on behalf of the Sierra Club. And so we would have various people that played John Muir—[Lee] Stetson—and they would come and perform for the people. So it was a very rich program and very fun to design.

02-00:28:04

Eardley-Pryor: Yeah, especially for Sierra Club members, being at the lodge and then seeing Muir enacted.

02-00:28:09

Perrault: Right. And then there was a little lake up above the lodge. You could walk up to this wild lake, and people could go up there and swim and look for stuff. And then we would look at the petroglyphs that were on the cliff down towards Donner Lake. And people could still find—well, you didn't find them, but you could find grinding bowls out across the meadow where Art Shapiro did a lot of his butterfly work, in some of those streams. That's how much—the pioneers used to come up across the meadow that was in front of Clair Tappaan Lodge when they were on their way, once they'd made it over the pass.

02-00:28:46

Eardley-Pryor: I want to make sure we don't leave the New York experience behind just yet. The Atlantic Chapter, you became very quickly involved in, deeply involved in. And particularly, you mentioned your *Right Now* newsletter.

02-00:29:00

Perrault: Yes.

02-00:29:00

Eardley-Pryor: Can you flesh out a little bit of what was in those newsletters, and where you were getting your information, who your audience was?

02-00:29:05

Perrault: Well, I was getting them from newsletters that I saw as a teacher to announce certain kinds of programs that were happening that a teacher could be part of. I would get them from announcements, environmental kinds of awareness announcements that came from—I don't know where—but I got a lot on air pollution, water pollution, laws that were being discussed in the state itself. And I don't recall all of them, but if one goes through the issues, one can see that there's a whole variety of things. Certainly Earth Day was in the '70 issue, and where you could go and what you could do.

02-00:29:50

Eardley-Pryor: Were they annual issues? Was it once a year?

- 02-00:29:51
Perrault: No, they were almost monthly. When I look through them, yeah, I believe they were monthly. I'd have to look back and see, but I think I've got them all, and I've got them for two to three years' worth.
- 02-00:30:03
Eardley-Pryor: It sounds like it was information that was coming to the Sierra Club chapter, and you would take that communication and put it into your newsletter?
- 02-00:30:10
Perrault: Well, not necessarily the chapter. It was just coming to me as an educator, a science educator or science teacher. Because I would read different teacher magazines, related magazines. I just don't remember all my sources. It's kind of far back.
- 02-00:30:25
Eardley-Pryor: Who was the audience you had in mind? Were they other teachers like yourself?
- 02-00:30:28
Perrault: Teachers. They were teachers, yeah.
- 02-00:30:30
Eardley-Pryor: Any opportunities or connections that came out of the *Right Now* newsletter?
- 02-00:30:35
Perrault: Thank-yous from people. I have some thank-you letters, "I saw your [news]letter, how nice." Or "congratulations." Even some agency people wrote that it was really very fine.
- 02-00:30:46
Eardley-Pryor: Agency?
- 02-00:30:47
Perrault: Well, you know, an agency would see it, that was doing environmental ed. laws or looking into environmental education. And somehow they would get hold of this newsletter—I don't know how they got it.
- 02-00:31:00
Eardley-Pryor: Like a state or a—?
- 02-00:31:00
Perrault: I do have some thank-you letters from people that were not teachers, who were involved with the broader aspects of teacher training that said it was a great newsletter, it was very helpful.
- 02-00:31:12
Eardley-Pryor: So like a state agency in education kind of a thing?

02-00:31:13

Perrault:

Right, that's right, yeah. Because I was at that time, too, serving on an advisory to environmental ed. activities in the state of New York. And so I have a letter from Nancy Ayers, I think was the name, that says I'm appointed to this committee, and that New York doesn't understand enough to get good environmental ed. in its system. And so I was put on an advisory board for that.

02-00:31:41

Eardley-Pryor:

A state level advisory board?

02-00:31:43

Perrault:

Yeah.

02-00:31:43

Eardley-Pryor:

Do you remember the work that happened on that?

02-00:31:45

Perrault:

Uh—no. [laughing] I have the letter that tells me I was on it. I remember more of my work when I was on advisories for the state of California, because I was put on there for a number of different curriculum-development programs, like for air and for comparative risk. And again, I don't remember the details of the work, but I have the letters appointing me to these things.

And of course we were always trying to enhance input in the school and to encourage teachers to not—if they didn't have a special program, we weren't saying you had to have environmental ed. as a program. You had to find ways to integrate it into the rest of the work that you did. And a lot of teachers weren't creative enough to do that. You had to find ways to help them with that. But that was kind of always the push. How do you get it into a school that already has too many things they have to cover? How do you make it easier, so that it's part and parcel of everything they do? Like the woman in Bank Street who did the blocks in third grade where they taught laws to run a community, with the blocks.

People don't always think about that; they just think we have to do math, we have to do reading, we have to do—and they don't necessarily think about well, how do you bring the environment into it? Because kids love field trips. They love going out in the environment, and people are often surprised—I remember just many times people, when you show them what you could do by taking kids out—oh, they got so excited! Oh! They were so happy, sure, because it was natural for them. I would take my kids looking for rocks. We didn't just study minerals in a little box in the classroom—we went out and we looked at rocks. We climbed rocks, we felt rocks, we immersed in rocks, so that it wasn't just—you know, if the kid doesn't feel something for rocks, why do they care which rock is which? So you're trying to get them feeling like a kid running through the wilds. I used to say to people, "Don't just analyze a field. You know, here's how it grows, here are the kind of grasses—let them

run in it." Let them feel themselves run through a weeded—an area with just tall grasses and just feel part of it. Then get into the details about what the ecology is of it.

02-00:34:08

Eardley-Pryor: How does that relate to your work, your career, through activism then? That is, I can hear the stories about environmental education and getting the kids out there. What about, let's say, volunteers or staff members that are working on environmental issues?

02-00:34:23

Perrault: Well, you always take them to the site. [laughing] You take them to the site or you take them to meet key people that might make a difference—take them to meet the governor if it's a problem with the laws in the state. Or you have meetings where you bring in a variety of people and you let them hear from different viewpoints.

So that was kind of the program when I eventually went up to Massachusetts and ran a program for the League of Women Voters, with a grant from the Massachusetts Foundation for Humanities and Public Policy up there, because they wanted people to have an understanding of the environment from a humanistic viewpoint, so that people could talk about values and how they thought about the land or ownership of the land. What were the problems that they faced in their community for their own health?—those kinds of humanistic kinds of things.

And the difficulty often was, in those programs when we did an analysis, is that the humanists teaching programs in college didn't know how to relate to some of these issues even in those conferences. We had to do more training of the humanists to talk about how to talk to people about values. And the other problem was that—in these workshops we did for the League of Women Voters in land-use issues, the eleven in the community colleges—there wasn't enough interaction with the kind of people that were affected that were of different viewpoints. So the humanists didn't have any conflicts in the room when they were all kind of the same kind of people. And the people analyzed it later and said, "Well, they would have had more discussion about values if they had different ethnic groups, if they had people from different economic levels, if they had more young people." So there weren't enough people talking about the problems they had and they faced over land-use concerns.

So there was a whole review that we did. And it was very interesting, because that was in part and parcel what the grant was for, too: to understand, how did you get people talking and thinking about the various aspects of land use, which are quite complex.

02-00:36:36

Eardley-Pryor: You need to have it not just be an echo chamber of the same ideas.

02-00:36:38

Perrault:

And it's not just an environmental matter, using the land properly. Where were the businessmen? They wanted to talk to more businesspeople, which was really good for me in the long term, because in the end I did various programs later in my career trying to bring more businesspeople in, including a big program in California called the California Environmental Dialogue, which was where environmentalists met with businesspeople.

02-00:37:04

Eardley-Pryor:

To bring these different viewpoints.

02-00:37:05

Perrault:

And I represented the [Sierra] Club in that California Environmental Dialogue group.

02-00:37:11

Eardley-Pryor:

I'm surprised to hear that the humanists were the ones that had the greatest struggle in talking about values. It seems like they would be—

02-00:37:16

Perrault:

Because they were in their niche, their little box of the subject they taught, so it didn't span into the issues of values. And one of the programs that I took for a course in Tufts, when they opened it up for citizens to take these courses, was on values. Sheldon Krinsky may still be there. I saw him in 1993 because they had a reunion of people who had taken the courses, back in the seventies I guess?

02-00:37:42

Eardley-Pryor:

Yeah, '76 I think is when you started.

02-00:37:45

Perrault:

Yeah, and so I went to that, and Sheldon was still involved with values. And the kinds of things on value was issues like, did trees have standing? That was also legal, because the questions of the legal world became important, and I had never had a lot of training in that. The whole legal area was like an eye-opener. "Wow, you could win battles if you understood the law." And then I had this regret inside, "Well, gee, I probably would have been an environmental lawyer if I'd known about that field and could have followed in the footsteps of David Sive." And it just never occurred to me to go study law.

02-00:38:23

Eardley-Pryor:

Before we leave New York again, I'd love to just get an image of what the New York chapter was like. So when you mentioned your first time there, they brought you in—

02-00:38:30

Perrault:

I was stuffing envelopes, right.

02-00:38:31

Eardley-Pryor: Yes! Where was this office located, what was the vibe there, how many people?

02-00:38:36

Perrault: Well, it was small. It was probably small.

02-00:38:40

Eardley-Pryor: Was it in Manhattan?

02-00:38:41

Perrault: Yeah, it had to be in Manhattan, because I was living in the Village.

02-00:38:44

Eardley-Pryor: Oh, you were in Greenwich?

02-00:38:46

Perrault: Yeah.

02-00:38:47

Eardley-Pryor: Are you walking up some narrow stairwell? Is it in the middle of nowhere?

02-00:38:51

Perrault: I can't remember that. All I can remember is being there stuffing envelopes. And a lot of the work that I did was probably done at home. I didn't have to go in there to do my work as a conservation education person. I could do it at meetings—you know, that's when we would connect. But I did have a team of people, because it's mentioned in my *Right Now* newsletter. But I don't remember in great detail how we got it all together. But I do have the original layout plans—somebody had to help me lay it out, because I didn't know how to do that. And so I had this big piece of the *Right Now* layout. Somebody was good and technical. I was not what you call a technical person, so it was hard for me to have produced that hard copy of the newsletter. I was good for the content.

02-00:39:39

Eardley-Pryor: To make a zine, yeah, that takes some work. Do you remember what the chapter's main focus was, the Atlantic Chapter? I imagine the Hudson probably played a big role, but maybe not. I mean, you were so focused on the education points.

02-00:39:50

Perrault: Well, I think at the time, the state was doing things related to air and water and saving land and stuff like that. But I just don't have a recollection, because I wasn't so much in the conservation side of that. I was young at that time, and I was basically just trying to work a full-time job and do this extra work. And it was kind of new to me because it was the first real volunteer work, other than when I was sixteen and almost volunteered—the little pittance I got for a salary in the Henry Street Settlement Program. But this was my first engagement of a real volunteer and feeling what it was like.

- 02-00:40:31
Eardley-Pryor: You'd made mention to me the last time we spoke that Pete Seeger was somehow involved in some sort of Hudson River work, or "Save the Sloop?"
- 02-00:40:40
Perrault: Right, the *Clearwater*. He had a—
- 02-00:40:43
Eardley-Pryor: What was this?
- 02-00:40:43
Perrault: It was a boat that brought attention to the problems of the Hudson River. I just have a flyer that I framed from him. And I remember at the time—I can't recall if I was on that boat, but I sent people to see it. And of course he played music, and there was much music that related to the Hudson River, as I would think, from his boat—and I think there was a song on the *Clearwater* itself. [Pete Seeger launched his sloop boat *Clearwater* in 1969 as part of a campaign save the Hudson River from pollution.]
- 02-00:41:07
Eardley-Pryor: Oh neat, so Pete was involved in some of these campaigns coming through the Atlantic Chapter?
- 02-00:41:12
Perrault: Well, I don't know if it's through the chapter. It was his own thing, because he cared about the issues, yeah.
- 02-00:41:18
Eardley-Pryor: Well, you eventually became chair of the Atlantic Chapter of the Sierra Club? Is that right?
- 02-00:41:21
Perrault: No, no. David Sive was. I became chair of the region. Yeah, I was not chair of the Atlantic Chapter. I was only chair of the Education Committee of the Atlantic Chapter.
- 02-00:41:30
Eardley-Pryor: Oh, I see.
- 02-00:41:32
Perrault: That's why I didn't know all of the details of the whole working of the chapter.
- 02-00:41:37
Eardley-Pryor: I see. So as we're moving forward through time, around 1970—I think by the end of 1970, you and Gary decide to get married, you and Gary Farkes. Am I saying that name right?
- 02-00:41:47
Perrault: Yes, yes.

02-00:41:47

Eardley-Pryor: Farkes. What was the wedding like?

02-00:41:51

Perrault: Oh, we just went to the judge. We didn't have a big wedding. I was never one for big weddings. I was never one for pomp and spending all the money and all that. So we just got married.

02-00:42:03

Eardley-Pryor: Went down to the courthouse and—?

02-00:42:03

Perrault: Yeah, had a friend, a couple vouch for us, and that was that.

02-00:42:08

Eardley-Pryor: Yeah. I'm just thinking about life transitions [with] that. Were you and Gary living together, or did you have to find a new place to live? How did all that work?

02-00:42:13

Perrault: We had a place in Greenwich Village—I had a place. And then, yeah, he moved there. And then soon after that, he got a job up in Massachusetts.

02-00:42:21

Eardley-Pryor: In Boston. That's what brought you?

02-00:42:22

Perrault: Oh, well even before. We left the Village and went to Riverdale, to Whitehall. Riverdale is part of Manhattan, the end of Manhattan before you get to the Bronx. And Riverdale is where Wave Hill actually was. Wave Hill was this program that public schools and colleges worked on together to encourage more of the urban child to have an experience in the outdoors and to learn science by being immersed in the outdoors. And so I was asked by my professor, one of my professors at Bank Street College, would I run the program up at Wave Hill for the summer? I said yes, and then eventually he asked me, would I be a second person in charge, because they wanted to increase the ability of a person of color, a woman, Ossie, to be able to be in charge. And I said that was fine with me. [laughing]

02-00:43:12

Eardley-Pryor: And it was probably pretty neat for a lot of the students of color that were participating in that—

02-00:43:17

Perrault: Oh, there were many, many children, right.

02-00:43:17

Eardley-Pryor: —to see a leader who was also a person of color.

02-00:43:19

Perrault: Yeah, right. And I have wonderful photographs of the experience.

02-00:43:22

Eardley-Pryor: How long did that Wave Hill experience last?

02-00:43:25

Perrault: It was a summer program. I don't remember how many weeks it was, but it was a paid position.

02-00:43:29

Eardley-Pryor: Yeah. And in some ways, that gets back to your discussion that happens later with the League of Women Voters and the symposiums—of having different voices in the room to create a different perspective.

02-00:43:39

Perrault: Right, right. And the need for that, right.

02-00:43:44

Eardley-Pryor: You also made mention that while you were at the Watson Ecology Workshops that the Rosners were leading, that you were pregnant at the time.

02-00:43:50

Perrault: Right, and I tried to kind of hide it, because I didn't want people to think of me as any different than anybody else. And so I was hiding it under a vest at the time. But they all knew, and—yeah, gave me this Virgin's Bower—it's a plant that has pretty little fuzzy white things all around it, and made a halo for me when the course was over. [laughing]

02-00:44:10

Eardley-Pryor: Did you experience any other challenges, particularly with regard to work when becoming pregnant? At the time, I think you're also teaching at Bank Street?

02-00:44:16

Perrault: Well, I don't know if I recalled that, when I left the zoo, it's because I wanted to have a raise in salary after being there for four years. And the director of the zoo said, "Well, I can't give you a raise because you're biologically viable." And I said, "Well, do not think that I like men so much that I'm out to have their children right away." And I didn't have them right away. I didn't have my first child till I was thirty. And so I left the zoo. I couldn't stay with somebody who had that attitude.

02-00:44:43

Eardley-Pryor: What about Bank Street? When you eventually left Bank Street was it in part because you had become pregnant?

02-00:44:49

Perrault: Oh, Bank Street, I actually taught—my daughter was born in December [1971], and I taught until June of that year. And I had someone take care of her, and I would rush home to feed her and all that. I didn't like it. I didn't like being removed from my daughter. So I didn't have to work after that, because we then, soon after that, moved up to Boston. And so Boston is where I then

became more of a full-time volunteer to the extent that I could bring her with me to the office and just push her carriage all the way up from where I lived on the waterfront, the harbor, Boston Harbor, up to Joy Street where the Sierra Club was located.

02-00:45:29

Eardley-Pryor: That sounds like you—when you speak of the early times in Boston, there's a nice gleam in your eye about that time.

02-00:45:37

Perrault: Oh yeah, yeah! [laughing]

02-00:45:37

Eardley-Pryor: It sounds like a neat time to be there.

02-00:45:38

Perrault: Yeah, we were right next to the aquarium. And I quickly got immersed in a lot of different things around environmental issues and became the education chair for them—and then helped them with their office activities, so that I could get some free phone and free typing, because I was never a great typist, and so they would help me out.

02-00:46:03

Eardley-Pryor: And you could do that with Gabrielle?

02-00:46:03

Perrault: Yes, right.

02-00:46:06

Eardley-Pryor: I was going to ask what did you consider—

02-00:46:06

Perrault: And then Gabrielle had many play groups too, in the Harbor Towers we lived in, which was a famous two [towers] by this architect Pei, P-E-I—very famous.

02-00:46:15

Eardley-Pryor: Oh, I.M. Pei?

02-00:46:16

Perrault: Yeah, right. It was his towers, these two towers that still exist there, right next to the aquarium in Boston, on the harbor. And so I was able to leave her with other parents, so she had playgroups and stuff.

02-00:46:28

Eardley-Pryor: That's great.

02-00:46:29

Perrault: I had a lot of free time to do an enormous amount of things related to water-quality issues, in offshore drilling, and land-use matters, and that's when I got very much involved in the League.

02-00:46:41

Eardley-Pryor: Yeah, your work diversified pretty greatly by the time you're in Massachusetts.

02-00:46:45

Perrault: Yeah, it surprises me when I look back at all the different things that were going on. [laughing] I don't know how I handled it all.

02-00:46:49

Eardley-Pryor: Well, I was wondering if you had any inclinations to go back to the classroom. You were already doing so much education work also in Massachusetts, but did you consider returning to the classroom at all?

02-00:46:59

Perrault: No, no.

02-00:47:00

Eardley-Pryor: Why?

02-00:47:01

Perrault: Well, because I got so involved in the environmental stuff. In fact, for the degree I was supposed to get my—I had all my credits from Bank Street for a master's program, all that you needed. I had to do the thesis, and I just never quite got to the thesis because I became an activist. I never had time to finish writing up, and I wasn't a great writer, so I never got the full MA. I just did the thirty credits, which was wonderful because they gave me what I needed in terms of my understanding of children and the ramifications of it.

02-00:47:29

Eardley-Pryor: And it opened so many doors for your activism, too.

02-00:47:32

Perrault: Right. And so originally I was going to do a thesis based on children using animals to teach other children. And I had done some of that with Pearl River, where I took the kids in the Animal Club, and we went in and they taught kids in the younger grades as part of that program. And then I switched—then my thesis was going to be on education for sustainability. And so I got very involved in the sustainability movement, particularly after being appointed by President Carter to his commission for six years. And I was also involved in the education component of President Clinton's Council [President's Council on Sustainable Development]. So there's always the theme of the education running through.

02-00:48:17

Eardley-Pryor: I want to go back to the early seventies. After moving to Boston you dive full-on into your work, both with the Club and the League of Women Voters. And your Sierra Club work moves soon to a regional level—it's not just focused at the chapter and doing work locally.

- 02-00:48:31
Perrault: Right, right. The chapter at that time was more than Massachusetts. It actually was all the New England states.
- 02-00:48:37
Eardley-Pryor: Oh, so each state didn't have their own chapter then?
- 02-00:48:38
Perrault: No, no.
- 02-00:48:40
Eardley-Pryor: But the headquarters was Boston?
- 02-00:48:41
Perrault: Yeah. And then the region also included Pennsylvania at the time. But then there was a position, of course, for regional vice presidents to go to San Francisco for the national Club. But I actually went to San Francisco before I became regional vice president. I went as Education Chair and Council delegate. Somebody told me in the New England Chapter, "They need to know about you in national"—particularly for my education work that I did. So they sent me as the council delegate to San Francisco for meetings, because every chapter could send a delegate for the council.
- 02-00:49:23
Eardley-Pryor: And you represented the—?
- 02-00:49:23
Perrault: New England Chapter.
- 02-00:49:23
Eardley-Pryor: The New England Chapter. Was that the first time you'd gone to a national Sierra Club event?
- 02-00:49:27
Perrault: Yes, yes.
- 02-00:49:28
Eardley-Pryor: What are your memories from that? Where—it was in San Francisco?
- 02-00:49:30
Perrault: It was in San Francisco.
- 02-00:49:32
Eardley-Pryor: And this is probably '73, '74?
- 02-00:49:33
Perrault: And that's when I first met my husband Phillip Berry. [laughing]
- 02-00:49:36
Eardley-Pryor: That's when you met Phil? Well, let's talk about that!

02-00:49:38

Perrault:

Yeah, right. By being exposed to him there. But unfortunately, I was still married. But I just became enamored of him. And he was interested in all the kinds of things that I liked, whereas my husband was not, to that degree—a very fine man, but he just wasn't interested in things like that. And so we [Phillip Berry and I] became attached at that point. And that created a little bit of a difficulty from the distance, because there was no way that he could move—he had a law practice. Eventually my husband at the time said, "Well, go out and try it out, and see if you like him."

And so I went out, and he [Gary Farkes] immediately filed for my daughter, so that became a difficulty. So we ended up with a very—we didn't go through courts. We had an amicable breakup, and we agreed we would share her. Whoever had her one year at home would—the other one would get all the holidays. And so then we reversed that back. Eventually my daughter chose, in sixth grade, she wanted to stay with me. So I ended up getting more years. And then he eventually married and had four more kids by his second wife. So that worked out that I got a lot of her years here.

02-00:50:56

Eardley-Pryor:

Take me back to this first time coming out to San Francisco. Had you been to San Francisco before?

02-00:51:00

Perrault:

No.

02-00:51:00

Eardley-Pryor:

What were your impressions?

02-00:51:01

Perrault:

Well, you go right into a meeting, you don't really get to see much. And if you're really dedicated you don't go playing around out in San Francisco, unless somebody says, "Well, we're going to go have a dinner before we—" My memory was mostly based on the meetings. And it's hard to say. I got engrossed in understanding who was in charge, and how do you do things. And because we didn't have—when I went in there—we didn't have, like many people do now, a student coalition. You know, there's a student section, a Sierra students' section [Sierra Student Coalition] that got created eventually when Adam Werbach became president—or before he became president he was like a leader to bring in young people.

But the young people became, in that situation, isolated. I was never isolated from any of the mentors that were older in the Club. So I got to see the Bill Futrells of the world, the Kent Gills, the—all these wonderful people that were very strong and solid, doing good conservation work. We were surrounded by experts that also came—because they knew more about nuclear, or they knew more about air, or they knew about water. And I just remember being immersed with all of these kind of semi-mentors in a way,

which doesn't happen quite the same way now. And so some Sierra students, after the coalition was formed, might have had some contact. But they were mostly with themselves, whereas I was lucky to be able to be with these people that I recall now.

Many of them, of course, are gone, but I remember the influence they had on my life. Even in Massachusetts, Abigail and Stuart Avery were big—they were activists in Massachusetts, and they loved animal life. Ellen Winchester was big on energy, from Florida. She was big on concerns about nuclear. She was just a wonderful expert and a good person. And Shirley Taylor, who was on coastal issues. While I was in Massachusetts, I became part of her Coastal program. She chaired the national one. We had meetings in Washington, DC about coastal zone management projects. She ended up being on the National Coastal Zone Management Advisory with me under [President Jimmy] Carter as well. So my mentors ended up in some of these places that I was, too.

02-00:53:43

Eardley-Pryor: So these amazing mentors that you're mentioning, you really came to know them from your time in San Francisco, as a national delegate?

02-00:53:50

Perrault: That's right, oh yeah, very much so. Yeah, Shirley from coastal—I met her, yeah. That's right. Yeah, Ellen Winchester, big, big name just—I can just think of so many of these people. Many of them, of course, have passed away, they were very influential because they had these fields that they worked in. And of course, when I went eventually into California, I got to know all of the activists in the state and became very active on state issues in California. And of course you saw many of those people because they were close to the national headquarters. They would come quite often, and you would meet a lot of them.

02-00:54:31

Eardley-Pryor: Or even that state work—you, earlier, brought that back to Massachusetts and had gotten very involved in the state-level work there, after being at these [Sierra Club meetings] as a national delegate.

02-00:54:42

Perrault: Right. So at the state level, because I got to know many people, I ended up being appointed by Governor Dukakis for his coastal advisory, under the environmental secretary of Massachusetts, Evelyn Murphy—

02-00:54:48

Eardley-Pryor: In Massachusetts?

02-00:54:49

Perrault: Right, Governor Dukakis. So I knew him because he was concerned about what was happening in Boston Harbor at the time that we were trying to decide what to do about the wastewater. I was involved first through the League with Sludge Adjudgers, because sludge was the thing they had to

figure out what to do, then with the Boston Harbor Associates, and then chairman of the Boston Harbor itself—we had an advisory of citizens and I chaired that. Each little thing that I began to learn in terms of these special issues, and all the people that were connected to them, I became part and parcel of the whole who's who in Massachusetts environmental concerns—and actually New England as well, because the chapter and the Tufts environmental program related to all the New England states. So I knew people from Massachusetts and Maine and Vermont and New Hampshire and Rhode Island, and served with them on these various conferences that were run. It just occupied almost every day.

02-00:55:52

Eardley-Pryor: Yeah, it sounds like it was all-engrossing. I'm wondering as you went to this—?

02-00:55:55

Perrault: And a very funny story.

02-00:55:56

Eardley-Pryor: Please.

02-00:55:56

Perrault: Really great stories. When later on I met Jerry [Bernardini], who's my dear friend, we had met at a Sierra Club hike that Vicky Hoover had run.

02-00:56:09

Eardley-Pryor: This is probably the 2000s you're talking about? Mid-2000s?

02-00:56:09

Perrault: Yes. So we went camping in Cape Cod. And a dear friend of his was there, his very close friend, Mike Kraback—and we're at a picnic table, and we're camping out in tents in Cape Cod—and he says, "Oh, Michele Perrault?" He was from the Sierra Club, the Rhode Island part of the New England chapter. He had been in my home in Boston. He said, "I was in your home!" And this is—I can't tell you, like thirty, forty years later! And he said, "Are you the Michele Perrault whose home I was in?" It was just one of those kind of connection points. It was just weird. And of course I don't remember him at all, but I was running a meeting in my home and he had been at it! [laughing]

02-00:56:53

Eardley-Pryor: That's wonderful. You have such unique stories.

02-00:56:54

Perrault: And they're Appalachian Mountain Club people, the two of them.

02-00:56:59

Eardley-Pryor: Your story really bridges the east- and west-coast stories of the Club and interactions so well. I think that's a super neat aspect.

02-00:57:06

Perrault:

And other groups, because everything we did, even when we did the offshore oil drilling, that was a committee to protect it [Georges Bank]. So you worked with Friends of the Earth—all of the groups that were concerned, the Natural Resources Defense Council—all of the people, the Conservation Foundation. We had a coalition. And that coalition is what helped save Georges Bank from being developed—along with the expertise, the wonderful expertise of the Conservation Law Foundation and Doug Foy, who was a lawyer at the time. But it was all of these efforts: the fishermen's wives from Gloucester, the legislators who cared, the politicians who would speak up. We'd bring them all together. And we became very powerful in fighting for what we were doing.

So when I think of these battles—a battle like that offshore drilling one, which I then later took and immediately formed one for California, because they were in the same situation that I'd just finished with in Massachusetts—we did the same thing. So we got the people involved in recreation—and it wasn't just me, but it was all these people in the coalition. But the idea that we could do it and win with a coalition was where I was of help. [laughing] Because I had such a good memory from the one in Massachusetts. And talking about the East Coast/West Coast—when Ted Kennedy came to speak, he was speaking in San Francisco.

02-00:58:35

Eardley-Pryor:

When was this?

02-00:58:36

Perrault:

This was in—I guess the eighties, when we were fighting to protect the California coastline. And he came to speak to us right in the center of San Francisco. I was chairing the coalition to stop oil drilling off California, and I said, "Well, I'll introduce him." And they said, "No, you can't, because you don't sound like you come from here." You know, because I still don't sound like I come from California. People still say, "Oh, you're from New York," when I talk and I'm excited. So I convinced them that I had to introduce him. So of course when he came, he said, "Oh, hi Michele!"—because he knew me from Massachusetts. And that was the big joke, that only *I* should introduce him. That was very funny. I said, "What do you mean I can't introduce him? What do you mean I don't sound like I come from here? What does that have to do with anything?" [laughing]

02-00:59:27

Eardley-Pryor:

That's great. You sound more like you're from his part of the world. And who better to introduce him out here, right?

02-00:59:30

Perrault:

Right. And then you get, "Hello, Michele." We all knew each other back when we were fighting those battles in New England.

02-00:59:39

Eardley-Pryor: Again, I'm trying to piece together chronologically how this works—

02-00:59:45

Perrault: I left in '78.

02-00:59:45

Eardley-Pryor: Working as a [national Sierra Club] delegate, even back to the early seventies. And you get to Boston, and you really dive into your Sierra Club work there and League of Voters work—especially the Sierra Club work. And rapidly it sounds to me—in part because Boston was part of this broader group, it wasn't just the New York chapter, it was a regional area—that you radiated out. Your work became over a broad area, and so there's more people.

02-01:00:07

Perrault: Right, with the help of mentors like Nancy Anderson from Tufts. Because she ran the New England Environmental Network, and she did that for over ten or more years. I forget when she started that—in '76, something like '76, through Tufts. It was a citizen effort at Tufts.

Eventually, because of her work in running those conferences, she said one day when I moved to California, "Well, Michele, why don't you have one out there?" So with another guy, Bill Noble, I created the California Environmental Network, modeled on Nancy Anderson's New England Environmental Network. And we ran workshops down in Southern California and Northern California. We created the California Environmental Network.

02-01:00:58

Eardley-Pryor: In the eighties?

02-01:00:59

Perrault: Yeah, yeah. So that's a whole other thing. I think we may have run it for a couple of years. It was sort of difficult to pull off. We didn't have the resources, enough resources like Nancy had with the various grants she was able to get through with Tufts.

02-01:01:15

Eardley-Pryor: Through Tufts.

02-01:01:15

Perrault: Because we were doing it with World College West, but we didn't—there were various things, but we did run some good workshops!

02-01:01:22

Eardley-Pryor: It sounds like there was a lot of taking what worked well on the East Coast and saying, "Why not do this over here on the West Coast?"

02-01:01:30

Perrault: Yeah, yeah. That's right.

02-01:01:31

Eardley-Pryor: Expertise is an issue I want to talk about. You have such a breadth of different expertises, and that's something, as people—I've done background research, and everyone just speaks so highly of your knowledge on this vast swath of areas. You have detailed knowledge in these multiple different domains.

From the story I've heard you tell so far, education was your really original domain—and it was around, especially, zoology—but education, environmental education. And it soon moved to become coastal. I'm wondering if being at these national meetings in San Francisco, your first time coming and seeing the broad national scope, and these people coming from Florida who have an expertise, let's say in nuclear energy, or people coming from different areas and they bring their expertise, and they're kind of known for that thing. You were known for the education thing then?

02-01:02:23

Perrault: Right, because I became chairman of the national Education Committee for the Sierra Club as my first big position nationally.

02-01:02:29

Eardley-Pryor: So this comes back to this issue of how did you build all of this breadth of *expertises* that came from this one expertise? You soon became this coastal expert and served on national committees for those issues.

02-01:02:43

Perrault: Right. Well, I read a lot. I was fascinated by the details of things. For example, when I was doing the work in Massachusetts on sludge—because the League of Women Voters was concerned about, "We don't want to see the harbor all filled in. We don't want an incinerator there with the air. We don't want to be told secondary treatment is the only thing you can do in the harbor. We want some bypasses on some of that." They sent—I remember going to a solid waste training program for the League in Washington, DC. And so I got into solid waste, which you know, was a new area for me. So of course that impinges on a lot of other things.

And so then I go back up to Boston and I say, "Well, you know, instead of an incinerator, why don't we look at the possibility of mixing the solid waste with the sludge, because the sludge is wet, and then we mix it all together." Well, it turned out that was something that they started to look at, and it was a creative idea. I liked being creative about stuff. The problem was that it was technically possibly feasible, but not feasible in terms of which laws were governing which thing. [laughing] So in the end we couldn't do it.

But I loved creating solutions to problems. I would read about these projects, and I would say, "Well, it makes common sense to do *this*," or "Why is that law so isolated that you can't do this particular solution?" And so I loved finding solutions to things. That was sort of an extra. It had nothing to do with the environmental—it was the idea that you didn't have to *have* these

problems. You could fix them. But I didn't know how to fix them all because I wasn't an expert in each of the areas. But if I could find somebody who knew what they were doing about it, great. So it was sort of an intellectual endeavor at the same time that it was a cause.

And of course all of these causes meant the environment would be better if you could figure out how you get rid of the nuclear waste; it would be better if you could figure out how to clean the air. And all these laws were coming about in US environmental law-making. So, water and the air and—they all kind of relate to each other, even though there were separate laws. So you *had* to know some of the answers to these things.

So, I don't know. I'm sure there are many other people that would have a breadth of stuff, [although] they may not have acted on it. But if you're an intellectually interested person, you're going to find out more about these things.

And the same was—like with biotechnology. That was sort of a new field. And when I came west, I somehow got appointed to the Biotechnology Task Force of the [Association of Bay Area] governments that was looking at it in the Bay region. I wasn't an expert on biotechnology, but somehow I had an interest in it. And they recognized me as from the Sierra Club, and so I got appointed. And the next thing I knew, I began to carry this theme through my understandings of the Club and helped them form the first biotechnology committee in the Club.

02-01:05:57

Eardley-Pryor: When was all—when was your biotech work?

02-01:05:57

Perrault: That was soon after I—I represented the San Francisco Bay Chapter, got appointed to that. And I actually have the final report, and I have all the background work that was done in one of my files. I have all that information.

02-01:06:14

Eardley-Pryor: Was this in the early eighties, as biotech is just kind of starting to grow?

02-01:06:16

Perrault: Yes, yeah, yeah.

02-01:06:20

Eardley-Pryor: Oh, that's very early on.

02-01:06:20

Perrault: The Association of Bay Area Governments wanted to make it a big deal, like begin to attract people into the Bay Region. Of course there were always questions about biotechnology, and what was good and what was not. Eventually, I made good contacts with experts in other environmental groups that were working on biotechnology and was able to correspond with them

when an issue would come up in the Club. You know, "What do we do?" and "How do we take a position on such and such?"

02-01:06:50

Eardley-Pryor: Yeah, constant learning and being a networker.

02-01:06:53

Perrault: And then moving it into—yeah, to the Club forming [a committee]. So I went to the first meeting of the Club's newly formed biotechnology task force, because I had found these other people in the Club that cared about that issue.

The same with the Military Impacts [on the Environment, a national committee] of the Club. There's a group that needed to come together and work on it. So I found them a leader, and that was Anne [H.] Ehrlich, and she would chair it. So it was always trying to match people to the solutions that needed to happen, because they knew what to do.

02-01:07:26

Eardley-Pryor: Thinking about people and matching—?

02-01:07:28

Perrault: And that's the same thing when I was president of the Club, by the way. It was, "Who were the experts in the chapters? And who were the leaders in the chapters?" I was always looking for leaders. "Who could come up?" I'd go to visit a particular chapter when I was president.

One of the key ones was—I remember this young man in Georgia, Bill Mankin. We go out in a canoe—or we went in a rowboat. He wanted me to go out and look at the moon and stars, and he wanted to talk about his concerns about satellites and debris in space. So I went out. And in the end, he became one of our top international workers for forestry issues, because that was also of interest to him. But I kind of developed—when he told me about this space stuff that he was interested in—so I tried to bring him in and get him involved. And I don't know how he went from space to forestry, but he became a great activist for us internationally on forest matters.

Just finding people when I would visit around and see what interested them, and how do you hook them in? How do you make your own organization more powerful by finding these people who can do these things? And how do you make a place for them to come in, because lot of people don't know how to, sometimes, to penetrate an organization. Where can I go? Who do I speak to? That's sort of the role of somebody who cares about the movement, is to—bringing in new people and not having to be the leader yourself in everything, but who can you put in place?

02-01:09:02

Eardley-Pryor: Hearing you talk about all of these, this range of issues, I love how your mind moves back and forth through this, [through] all these different experiences. And there's so much to cover. I want to go back to—and speaking of people-

networking and bringing people together that became a powerful connection—is your first time meeting Phil [Berry]. You became such a powerhouse couple in the Sierra Club for so many years. What were your first impressions? What were your first memories of seeing him and meeting him?

02-01:09:28

Perrault:

Oh, that was just a wonderful attraction. [laughing] He plainly was really kind of gorgeous! And also, he's kind of bright, yeah. So I think there was a really, very quick—"Oh... Oh! Let's go have some lunch." [laughing] So it blossomed very quickly.

02-01:09:47

Eardley-Pryor:

Was that an influence—over the next few years until you moved out to California in '78, but from the early seventies on, from when you first met until '78—you were very involved in the Sierra Club. More and more so.

02-01:10:00

Perrault:

Right.

02-01:10:00

Eardley-Pryor:

Was that a part of that? Was that a way of maintaining a connection through Phil for your relationship to keep growing?

02-01:10:09

Perrault:

I'm not sure of the question. I mean, I was going to—whether he existed or not—I was going to be coming and doing this work. He was just a nice addition to the whole thing. [laughing]

02-01:10:22

Eardley-Pryor:

That's the question I was going for.

02-01:10:25

Perrault:

And of course everything that he did—he was an outdoor person, he loved hiking and camping—all the kind of things I was wanting to do that my first husband didn't want to do. "What do you want to do that for?" So it was something I really loved.

02-01:10:40

Eardley-Pryor:

Were outings a part of the Boston chapter at all? Were there trips up to the White Mountains or anything like that?

02-01:10:45

Perrault:

I never got involved in the outing side [at that time] because I was too much in the conservation side. I respected the outing side. I thought it was good, but I didn't do much. [But] I was very engrossed in what the Inner City Outings people were doing, always following and respecting and admiring the kind of work that Inner City Outings did reaching out to children.

02-01:11:07

Eardley-Pryor:

The Wave Hill work do you mean?

02-01:11:09

Perrault:

[No,] this was a [Sierra Club] national program on Inner City Outings, and it was a great program. So I remember always keeping an eye on what were they doing, how were they doing leadership training [to] keep that program alive.

But personally for trips, I didn't need to go on any outings because Phil was my outing leader. He was the one who had always been on trips everywhere, so we never needed an outing leader. And then, when we were apart, Vicky became my outing leader because Phillip wasn't there. Phillip said, "Well, here's all these videos of maps." I'm not very good on maps. I really need a map person with me. I know how to read contour lines and stuff like that. If I was alone I figured I wouldn't—I'd manage. But I didn't really like it that much. Vicky knew where to go. We cross-country [off the trails] all the time, we don't use trails much. And she's just got a compass in her head. Phillip was the same way. We could go anywhere cross-country and not get lost. So yeah, I kind of married a trip leader.

02-01:12:12

Eardley-Pryor:

The outings weren't a part of life in the East Coast then? Outings really became a western experience.

02-01:12:17

Perrault:

No, no, not like they are now. Because I go back [east] visiting Jerry [Bernardini] who is involved with the Appalachian Mountain Club. And so we do lots of things with them because they're more outdoor-like. I don't do the conservation work there with them. [But] I do speak up at conferences related to oil drilling that recently happened under the Trump Administration. Then I'll speak up, and I'm on the list for people to call me. And we did go to—the [reforming] Rhode Island Chapter, which is trying to build up, and we went to their meeting quite recently to try to help them beef themselves up. That's another story though, because—well, they were getting a little bit more involved in inner-city social aspects and missing some of what we felt was the conservation stuff we were familiar with. But that's another story about "Where's the Club?" in some of these issues now.

02-01:13:12

Eardley-Pryor:

Well, let's get to the history of where that comes from for you, the Regional Conservation Committees, these RCCs.

02-01:13:18

Perrault:

Right. And the Issues Committee caucus. The Issues Committee caucus was a group of people that was specialized in issues—so that the transportation guru, or the biotechnology guru, or these various people also came to their caucus. They would meet once [or twice] a year.

02-01:13:39

Eardley-Pryor:

Were the Issues caucuses regional?

- 02-01:13:40
Perrault: National.
- 02-01:13:42
Eardley-Pryor: Oh, they were a national—?
- 02-01:13:42
Perrault: It was a national [caucus] that brought in leadership like the Ellen Winchesters on energy in Florida, or the Shirley Taylors on coastal, those people that were specialized in a field. The regional vice presidents were more broad. They were representing conservation of all kinds of issues in their region, and they came together as the RCC caucus.
- 02-01:14:04
Eardley-Pryor: So there are two separate caucuses that meet at a national level?
- 02-01:14:07
Perrault: Yeah, at the same time, at a national level. Right.
- 02-01:14:09
Eardley-Pryor: But they're regional in their origins?
- 02-01:14:12
Perrault: The RCCs were. The Issues Committees were specialized because they chaired a committee in the Club of that special interest.
- 02-01:14:22
Eardley-Pryor: Oh, I see. So they were committee chairpeople of that issue?
- 02-01:14:25
Perrault: Yeah, that's right.
- 02-01:14:25
Eardley-Pryor: And then all of the chairpeople would come for this Issues Committee caucus?
- 02-01:14:26
Perrault: Right, and then chairs—yes. That's right, that's right.
- 02-01:14:30
Eardley-Pryor: So were you involved in both the RCCs and the Issues Committees?
- 02-01:14:37
Perrault: I was—Issue in the sense of the Education Committee could be considered part of that. And I just don't remember the caucus meetings as much as I do the Regional Conservation meetings.
- 02-01:14:46
Eardley-Pryor: Well, let's talk about the RCCs. What was it—I mean just even understanding they don't exist anymore, correct?
- 02-01:14:51
Perrault: Right, right.

02-01:14:52

Eardley-Pryor: But they were a huge part of your coming up through the Club at a national level.

02-01:14:56

Perrault:

Right, that's right, because through a region—like let's say in the New England area—you had a budget. [...] You crossed boundaries where many issues cross boundaries—they're not just isolated to a particular locality. So we worried about things that were happening—like say in the Northeast Regional Conservation Committee. We worried about what's happening in Canada and what was potentially coming down through our area. What were the concerns about projects near our border? I forget all the different issues. There were transportation concerns for a large part of the region connecting down to DC, so you couldn't separate them out. So it was [a management level.]

At that time, there was not a lot of focus on training people at the chapter level. Gradually, because of my work at the League of Women Voters and I saw how much training they had provided me, I asked—I forget what year it was—but I was given some credit for raising the matter that chapter chairs were [an important] management [level] at the Club. And they should be trained better. And so they created a chapter-chair training program, and I have some [correspondence] thanking me for creating the idea. But it was such a natural—I said, "They're our managers. They're at the most local level. Let's have a training program for them." Because the Club never had, until a certain time period, much training for people. They just assumed they would come in and they would be conservationists. And what I saw in the League of Women Voters was heavy training, training workshops, much more of an attention to having people come up as good experts, learning how to ask the right questions, how to know where to go for material, and all of that. I said, "The Sierra Club should have something similar."

Eventually, they did have more training programs. They had a thing called Grass Roots Effectiveness Task Force I ended up on at some point in my career of many committees on the Club. And that was to try to find a better way to make people more involved and better at what they do, whether it was training for financial management of their organizations, or training for fundraising, or—not so much the conservation part. I think that came later in some isolated areas where they would bring people to train, like the climate program—they were certainly doing more training of the local people on those specialties.

02-01:17:41

Eardley-Pryor:

The Regional Conservation Committees, since they don't exist now, I'm wondering if—because the Club has grown so, almost exponentially since this time in the seventies when you're first getting involved in the RCC in the Northeast region—if now the Club has grown so much that *chapters* are big

enough that they can be at managerial levels, so you don't need the RCCs? Is that—do you understand the question?

02-01:18:07

Perrault:

Yeah. Well, the chapters are still more local. I mean for example, if you just look at Massachusetts, you can't really think of it in isolation of other things happening in New England, where pipelines might be proposed to come down across all of the territory. You could set up a project where they might relate to each other.

I think what happened when the RCC—a lot of the presidents of the Club came out of RCCs. People *met* more often. Now [they] meet more—I get the sense, and I don't know for a fact, but I get the sense that—staff meet, that they get trained much more. Where do people see who the [volunteer] leadership is in the Club, who knows on the broad scale a lot of different things, which the RCC people did? They seemed to be more broad than a single issue within a chapter. Now, chapter chairs—and depending on the chapter and what they do, they can certainly be as good as any of the other people that were in the RCCs. [...]

02-01:19:12

Eardley-Pryor:

So it was about that—the RCCs provided a network.

02-01:19:13

Perrault:

A network.

02-01:19:13

Eardley-Pryor:

A broader network.

02-01:19:14

Perrault:

Right. And then we could—we had more meetings. Of course when they had to economize, they decided, "Let's lop off these meetings because they cost too much to hold," and so then people lost a sense of who was who. Because when I was education chair and went out to California, people again would say, "Oh, that's who that is. Oh, there's a potential for some leadership in the Club." But if you don't see anybody, you don't meet—

02-01:19:42

Eardley-Pryor:

And it stays local. Then you don't get a chance to meet.

02-01:19:44

Perrault:

Yeah. Now the chapter chairs—I don't know how many of them meet anymore, if the council delegates would represent their chapter. But those council delegates weren't necessarily the powerhouse of a chapter. The chair might be, [but] not necessarily so. It depends on who was going to be chair. So it's just the sense that, just knowing where our leadership came in the past, where does it come from now?

02-01:20:09

Eardley-Pryor:

And it came from the RCCs.

02-01:20:12

Perrault: That, or sometimes Issues chairs. But more RCC, I think. I never saw a survey of it. Yeah.

02-01:20:17

Eardley-Pryor: In your experience, certainly. But that was where you came from.

02-01:20:19

Perrault: Yeah, sure, right.

02-01:20:22

Eardley-Pryor: The RCCs, they're all volunteers. Is that correct?

02-01:20:26

Perrault: Yeah. California, by the way, maintains a very strong RCC still. They have a Northern and Southern California one, and they run regular meetings. But for them, they just stayed strong. And they're close to the national headquarters; they're in California. But they're still strong. And they still need to meet, because they have to take care of the whole state in terms of what do they want to talk about regarding what happens in the state of California, where there's a lot of leadership that goes on across the nation through the work that we do with the legislature. And so they pay for a staffperson who runs the office at the state level in California. Not every chapter had, necessarily, a staff person. They couldn't afford it [...]. But for California, the RCC system works.

02-01:21:16

Eardley-Pryor: But it shattered out east. I'm wondering—being a chapter delegate, going out there, having this national experience and coming back—what did that mean to you personally? What was that experience? I mean, it certainly opened up doors for your career through your work. But personally, what was that like for you?

02-01:21:42

Perrault: Well, I always think of—the Sierra Club, it was like a family, in a way. It was—I had allegiance to the whole organization. There was a sense of "Wow, it's one of the best." And when you carry the name Sierra Club and you do your work, it makes it even easier because people say, "Oh, well, we need a Sierra Club rep. We'll pick you." [laughing] You know, and so I was able to get into more things because of being associated with the Club. So I carried kind of that association—it was like a badge of excellence, that it was part of what I did, and then gradually stayed more with the Club than I did with the League. Although when I did move from east to west, I still joined the League in California. For a while I was very active in my local League on different kinds of committees, representing them on some land-use issues. But the Sierra Club, you just—you get to know more of the people, you get involved, you had similarities, just, I think—I remember that. That part, being part of that kind of a family.

02-01:22:46

Eardley-Pryor: Family is a nice metaphor. From going for these regional and these national scopes and bringing them back to Massachusetts, to your work in Boston, another theme that I've seen throughout your life is you're always active at almost every level—from the international, to the national, to the regional, [Perrault laughs] but also the local. And so coming back to Boston, I think you even made mention of this, being a part of the Boston Harbor water quality management issue—

02-01:23:12

Perrault: Right.

02-01:23:14

Eardley-Pryor: What brought you into that work? Was it the Sludge Adjusters?

02-01:23:18

Perrault: The League had the Sludge Adjuster committee.

02-01:23:20

Eardley-Pryor: And then you brought the League work to the Sierra Club?

02-01:23:22

Perrault: I got my positions on the Boston Harbor Citizens Advisory through my League work, probably more for the work I did on Sludge Adjusters. And then got to know more about the [Section] 208 water management process, and I cared about—and I didn't want to see an incinerator. I like Boston Harbor. I didn't want anything to happen to it. But since I was both a Sierra Club member [and League member]—I have some mixed testimony I did for the Club, some I did for the League. But I learned how to speak at hearings, and the League got me out there. I was the natural resource chair for the League.

02-01:24:03

Eardley-Pryor: Was that part of the training that the League gave to you or provided for you?

02-01:24:06

Perrault: Well, it was just being put into a position of natural resource chair. They knew I was from the Sierra Club, so I was big on conservation. So then I become the natural resource chair for the League—because I know so much, because I'm from the Club—and then the League sends me out to speak on behalf of the League at hearings. And it got all kind of combined together.

02-01:24:24

Eardley-Pryor: Yeah. Well, the seventies was this time where the environmental movement, at least in the United States, really had begun to shift beyond preservation issues to including issues of pollution and the social aspects.

02-01:24:35

Perrault: Right. Yeah, because the laws also became such—in the United States, you had the Clean Water Act, you had the Clean Air Act. How do you implement them all? And so people began to pick parts of those out.

02-01:24:46

Eardley-Pryor: It sounds to me like—

02-01:24:46

Perrault: Resource recovery, you know, everything.

02-01:24:48

Eardley-Pryor: The Regional Conservation Committee, although conservation is the name, the nominal focus of the Regional Conservation Committee—that the issues were more...broader.

02-01:24:57

Perrault: Sure. Transportation, of course a big one. Energy issues. We ran conferences in the New England chapter on transportation to bring together people to understand the ramifications for better choices in transportation law. We did the same thing for secondary educators. We ran a conference for them. But you could run more conferences, because you had a budget to sort of pull them together as well. You had a larger budget when you're a region than when you were, I think, a chapter, because you got some of that money from national. [laughing] That was helpful, too.

02-01:25:32

Eardley-Pryor: Yeah, to have all these different levels that you can tap into. Another thing that was local, bringing some of this experience back to your grounded life in Massachusetts, was you made mention of Governor Dukakis [when] serving on this coastal zone management issue. Is that correct?

02-01:25:47

Perrault: I was on an advisory [committee in Massachusetts] for coastal zone management because of my work on offshore drilling.

02-01:25:52

Eardley-Pryor: Well, maybe that's—

02-01:25:53

Perrault: That stimulated—and there was a Coastal Zone Management Act that they were then implementing in Massachusetts. And so part of the coastal zone program, you wanted to make sure that you didn't have offshore drilling. That would put the impacts of onshore siting of plants along this pristine coast, and so I was very big on, "Hey, you can't have—" It's not just the fishing grounds, but it was the impacts of the whole industry that would impact the coast. So somehow I got involved, in being appointed to that.

- 02-01:26:24
Eardley-Pryor: But it came out of—the offshore oil and the onshore effects—it came from the oil-drilling work?
- 02-01:26:28
Perrault: Right.
- 02-01:26:28
Eardley-Pryor: How did you get involved in the oil-drilling experience?
- 02-01:26:30
Perrault: By being the head of the [Sierra Club New England Chapter's] education committee and having to provide background materials so the activists could be more informed.
- 02-01:26:36
Eardley-Pryor: On oil issues?
- 02-01:26:37
Perrault: Right. And as I gathered it together, I became more informed. And so then I became an activist! [laughing]
- 02-01:26:42
Eardley-Pryor: Because you became an expert.
- 02-01:26:43
Perrault: Because I saw all the stuff and I read it, and I knew I had the answers for what are drilling muds, and what are all these aspects of drilling, and what are the multiplier effects when you bring an industry like that onto the coast? So I became very informed to the degree that I wasn't just educating people—I had educated myself. And then I became more active because I understood the matters.
- 02-01:27:08
Eardley-Pryor: Do you remember what some of the—at the time—what were some of those multiplier effects that was a concern in the seventies, at least, for oil drilling?
- 02-01:27:15
Perrault: Well, there was—there were some laws that were being suggested at the federal level that would have impeded a broader look at what impacts could be. And so I remember that. We were studying some of that. It was going through the Congress, and we didn't want to see it diminished. We wanted to be able to have as broad an ability to look at what impacts might be down the road for things. And I remember there were laws we had to look at and speak to.
- 02-01:27:47
Eardley-Pryor: It sounds like they were about externalities that were being shaved off from the whole picture. And they said, "No, this is just the economic issue." And you wanted to say, "No, these aren't externalities. These are broader issues we need to consider."

- 02-01:27:56
Perrault: Right, right. And then of course it was tied into, "Do you really need the oil?," as far as the energy question came into effect. So you had to think broadly. But the main thing was it was too pristine an area to risk.
- 02-01:28:11
Eardley-Pryor: What was the area?
- 02-01:28:12
Perrault: The Georges Bank area, and the coast.
- 02-01:28:14
Eardley-Pryor: Tell me about Georges Bank. Where is it? Why is it important?
- 02-01:28:16
Perrault: It's off the coast of—it's off the coast in federal areas where the fishermen go out to fish for cod and other resources, [...] disintegrating from impacts, as well. So there's this pressure. Overcatch by fishermen, there's all kind of things [that] were happening to the fishing grounds.
- 02-01:28:39
Eardley-Pryor: And that's the Georges Bank?
- 02-01:28:41
Perrault: The Georges Bank, yeah. That's the area.
- 02-01:28:42
Eardley-Pryor: And where are we talking? Off the coast of—?
- 02-01:28:45
Perrault: Off the coast of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Hampshire.
- 02-01:28:52
Eardley-Pryor: Oh, right up—so it's—that's a pretty huge area.
- 02-01:28:54
Perrault: Yeah, right. Oh yeah. It's a big area.
- 02-01:28:59
Eardley-Pryor: So Georges Bank becomes the area where oil drilling is being considered, because this is, again, the seventies. The oil crisis has happened.
- 02-01:29:06
Perrault: Right. And you worried about if you put an industry to extract oil drilling, then you have all the support industries that have to come, and they impact the coast. Along with the idea of ports that you have to have, ships that could collide, the impacts you could have from the oil leaking, et cetera, et cetera. Just so many possible problems.
- 02-01:29:31
Eardley-Pryor: So these are the multiplier effects you're talking about?

02-01:29:33

Perrault: Yeah.

02-01:29:34

Eardley-Pryor: So NEPA [National Environmental Policy Act] was passed in 1969, and so environmental impact statements become—

02-01:29:39

Perrault: Right. And so we had to read—you had to learn how to read them, you had to look for the holes in them. You had to find what questions should you ask? What's missing? So we became very good at reading impact statements.

02-01:29:53

Eardley-Pryor: When you say *we*? I'm trying to get a sense of the mechanics.

02-01:29:57

Perrault: Well, all of the activists that we had in our coalition knew that we had to testify—and I have my testimony that I presented on these impact statements, because there'd be hearings.

02-01:30:08

Eardley-Pryor: And you made mention of having meetings at your home? Was that a common thing? Were there meetings in the chapter office?

02-01:30:14

Perrault: It depended. Sometimes I'd—I wouldn't have them all the time in my home. We'd have them in the chapter office, or someone in the other members of the coalition would offer a place to have a meeting, too. But sometimes I just did it because I was close by, and it was just nice to have a little social aspect to things and not just a straight meeting.

02-01:30:34

Eardley-Pryor: Yeah. And kind of an "each one, teach one"—everyone brings their ideas, what you've read, and you share it together.

02-01:30:37

Perrault: Yeah.

02-01:30:39

Eardley-Pryor: That's great. Another issue: we mentioned the oil crisis as kind of a context and backdrop for this issue of oil drilling on Georges Bank that gets you so deeply involved in a number of different ways that you then also bring to California later. But another issue that happens in the seventies—I'm just reflecting on memories. You're so politically active in '74. The Watergate crisis—is this echoing in some of the work that you're doing, in some ways?

02-01:31:07

Perrault: No, I don't remember specifically. I do remember—let's see, it was '70 when the Club started doing endorsements of candidates, and we got very political, involvement in political activities. In the seventies—wasn't it the seventies?

- 02-01:31:20
Eardley-Pryor: I think SCOPE [Sierra Club Committee on Political Education] began in '76, at least.
- 02-01:31:21
Perrault: So I think in the seventies, right. So I was—but at that point I was—when I began in '70—I was doing endorsements very early on as [Sierra Club] president [in the '80s]. I don't think they sent anybody else around for big programs where you had to go out and endorse candidates.
- 02-01:31:41
Eardley-Pryor: At least in the early seventies, that wasn't happening.
- 02-01:31:44
Perrault: But they would send the president, so I was—but I wasn't president until—
- 02-01:31:47
Eardley-Pryor: Eighty. [Note: Perrault was President of the Sierra Club from 1984-1986, and 1993-1994.]
- 02-01:31:47
Perrault: Eighty—
- 02-01:31:50
Eardley-Pryor: You were on the [Sierra Club] Board [of Directors] in '80 to '83/'84. Then [your] first presidency [from 1984-1986].
- 02-01:31:54
Perrault: Yeah, yeah, so—
- 02-01:31:54
Eardley-Pryor: Well, [I'm] just trying to get contextual memories, and if Watergate's not a big one—
- 02-01:31:59
Perrault: No.
- 02-01:31:59
Eardley-Pryor: You were living in Boston during the 1976 US Bicentennial. Was there some sort of great celebration, especially around the harbor—issues you were working on?
- 02-01:32:06
Perrault: Oh, well there were the big ships, you know, the large masts and stuff.
- 02-01:32:11
Eardley-Pryor: Was there any relation to your coastal work or any of that kind of stuff?
- 02-01:32:14
Perrault: No, no I don't—

02-01:32:16

Eardley-Pryor: Okay. Just a general question.

02-01:32:18

Perrault: Because you're a historian.

02-01:32:19

Eardley-Pryor: Yeah, yeah! I want to know what the contexts are, right?

02-01:32:22

Perrault: Yeah, yeah.

02-01:32:22

Eardley-Pryor: Well, you also made mention of the League of Women Voters doing different training workshops. The sludge training, the water management training—

02-01:32:31

Perrault: Right. Well, and then the big ones when I was hired by the League, I was paid—

02-01:32:36

Eardley-Pryor: Oh, I didn't know that.

02-01:32:38

Perrault: I was hired because they knew me and my work as a volunteer. That was the community college program, eleven community colleges, in which I was the director of all the workshops that we did in conjunction with each community college. And so we would have a humanist from each college on a planning committee. Each of the community colleges' areas would have a planning group, which would decide what should the focus be for having people talk about land use and growth-management issues? Because it was a big deal in Massachusetts during that time period, of how will Massachusetts grow? How will it save its ag. lands? Where will it have intense development? How will it relate housing to land? So we did workshops that varied at each community college—one would be on maybe transportation, the Orange Line in the Boston area. Another one would be on the shorefront in Cape Cod. Another one was on agricultural concerns. Every community college picked its theme, and then I traveled around to each one. We had a working committee for each community college. Those, in turn, picked out the resource leaders and people who could be on lead groups in discussion, and who would be the major speaker. We had representatives from the state office of planning in Massachusetts, on each of those. But you can imagine, here I am, I'm still pretty young, and I'm running a program with—

02-01:34:00

Eardley-Pryor: With a daughter, too!

02-01:34:00

Perrault: With—yeah, right—and I broke my neck during the process, which—I had a big halo on my head. And that's when I traveled around for the last three of

them, I remember, in cabs that only fit—only certain cab companies fit me in there. And I was on a train once going to one of the community colleges, and it's rocking like this, and my halo's going—and my husband is like—[utters a high-pitched sound of alarm]. Because I had to wear it for three months, screwed in my head. It was screwed in with posts. And there was a bed in my house that I could never lie down in—I lay on posts, because this was the halo, and it was down to the waist. And you just took a bath by q-tipping through the fuzzy construction. Because I had broken the second vertebra which is—fractured it—which controls all your nervous system. And luckily, I didn't have a major problem.

02-01:34:50

Eardley-Pryor: How did you break your neck?

02-01:34:51

Perrault:

On black ice. On black ice, and I swirled around four times on the highway going to a meeting. I saw a gasoline truck and said, "If he doesn't hit me, the guy behind him is going to hit me." And sure enough, that was a paramedic that hit me. So they take me to a hospital right near where the accident happened. I was kneeling in the snow. I said, "Get me to a hospital. Get me an ambulance." So they got me an ambulance, get me to the hospital, and the lady says, "All right, stand up for the x-ray." I said, "I don't think you should stand me up," because I'd heard this cracking going on in my head when this happened. She said, "*Get up*." So I get up, and she says, "Oh, put that lady down, get her down." I said, "Get me out of this hospital!" So they got me out and sent me to Mass[achusetts] General. There was a guy who had been a roofer—he also had fallen because he'd gone on the roof, and it was black ice and he fell off. He was waiting to be x-rayed, too. So that was a big ordeal, because my daughter, at that point, was only about two years. And so I'm in this halo.

But I finished the program. And it was a wonderful experience because it put me into a position where I had to do a lot of management, which—I needed a little help. And one of the people who helped me was Barbara Fegan, who was the president of the League of Women Voters, who ended up being a member of the Citizens Advisory [Committee] on coastal zone management under [President Jimmy] Carter that I was part of. [laughing] So we all got to serve with each other in these various capacities. There was overlap of expertise. She was very helpful in helping me move through the project development.

But I hit so many issues with land use, growth, and development, that it was a big learning thing in itself, because every workshop I was at, I heard all the dialogue and I helped to form what would the questions be. So I became very big on land *use*, which cuts across so many issues.

02-01:36:59

Eardley-Pryor: So just being the director of this state land-use project—

02-01:37:00

Perrault: This project, right.

02-01:37:01

Eardley-Pryor: —and getting this massive grant—

02-01:37:02

Perrault: Right. And then, of course, it was also tied in with the humanities, and the whole issue of values and how people think about private ownership of land or who owns the land. Who should own the land? How do you make decisions about—would we have to have business interests match environmental concerns? And how do you plan for growth?

So it was quite a—and that, in turn, of course got me more into an understanding of all of the issues related down the road to that big word *sustainability*, which became *Our Common Future* [The Brundtland Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development] through Gro Harlem Brundtland, in Sweden. When the UN was doing its work in growth, I was already immersed in some of those very kinds of things that they talked about in that program.

02-01:37:54

Eardley-Pryor: And that grant for this land-use project that you've continued to use and has inspired you in different ways was from a foundation that included humanities work? That's why the humanists were a part of it?

02-01:38:04

Perrault: It was the foundation—[the Massachusetts Foundation for] Humanities and Public Policy.

02-01:38:12

Eardley-Pryor: Let's take a break here, and we'll revisit some of the work in Massachusetts and move us on.

02-01:38:17

Perrault: Yeah, let me—[interruption in recording]

02-01:38:20

Eardley-Pryor: Okay. So we were just making mention of your diverse symposiums that you ran as the director of this state land-use project in the mid-seventies—or late seventies—in Massachusetts. I was really struck by the way that it was organized, that each place got to choose their own topic, each community college, of the eleven [where] you had these symposiums.

02-01:38:40

Perrault: That's right. Right. And so there was a working group that we met with of elected officials and citizens, and then they would say what was the thing, of land-use interest, that they wanted to focus on.

02-01:38:53

Eardley-Pryor: When you brought these ideas to the community colleges and said, "Hey, we'd love to do a symposium," where do things go from there? Did you say, "I'm coming on behalf of the League of Women Voters?" How did this work?

02-01:39:03

Perrault: Right. And we were doing it in conjunction with the community colleges, so they would set up the rooms. They even had to deal with janitorial services. And one of the things in the review was they spent—one person spent about thirty hours trying to get support for the conference from the janitorial services. There were just complaints like that. But the whole idea was just to increase a larger public's understanding of the broad aspects of land use. And each one could hold about two hundred people. But then they would get press coverage, and there would be discussions that would be related to the rest of the community in other ways, for the people that didn't attend.

It was to increase the dialogue that needed to happen, so that people could say, "Well, this is what growth is about. This is where the impacts can be. This is where we need to do something in a different way. This is how we want our community to grow." So the people had to be from the community, to talk about these matters, so that they, in the end, had a better understanding and knowledge, and they could make decisions at the community level.

02-01:40:11

Eardley-Pryor: And I'm thinking also in 1972, *The Limits to Growth* report comes out from scientists at MIT. So this is very much talking about a global-scale issue of growth and limits.

02-01:40:21

Perrault: That's right, yeah.

02-01:40:24

Eardley-Pryor: And issues of land use were really such a topical, new idea—thinking how broad these things do penetrate on a social-political-environmental-economic way. There's a need for this. On this issue of limits in growth, was limits something that was in the dialogue in some of these symposiums? Concerns about overgrowth or overshoot?

02-01:40:47

Perrault: I don't recall all of the details, because I was more at the operational level—make sure that everybody got what they needed in terms of space and food, and make sure that everything would run, and the sound systems, all that sort of thing. So it was only in later, looking at some of the dialogue that occurred at each of them—but I just, I can't recall. It's too far back. But I don't recall there was a lot on carrying capacity or limits to growth. Carrying capacity is, of course, is another issue that had to be thought about.

Eventually, when we started to do programs when I was in California and ran the Bay Area—co-directed the Bay Area Alliance [for] Sustainable

Development, we had many, many meetings and sessions and made reports. People were concerned, particularly in the Club too, that the issue of carrying capacity needed to be considered. What were the limits to the environment's ability to sustain certain kinds of decisions about growth choices? Yeah, so I think there was a lot of a learning curve that went on during that time period you mention, and later much more intense.

02-01:42:01

Eardley-Pryor: Yeah, carrying capacity as a topic around limits—and coming out of the Bay Area. And so of course I think about the Ehrlich's writing *The Population Bomb*, and population being an issue on carrying capacity. Was population a topic of concern in the seventies during these discussions in Massachusetts?

02-01:42:16

Perrault: Well, not in the—as I recall, not in the Massachusetts workshops. I don't think they felt the impacts like you would feel them, let's say, in the Bay Area today, where people can't get housing and they're growing out into some of the pristine agricultural lands, and you want to protect them. But they did have concerns in Massachusetts about their ag. lands and preserving them so that the state could be economically sound in terms of whether it's good productive land. So that was a focus. But specifically in some of the conferences, not all of them.

02-01:42:51

Eardley-Pryor: Yeah, so feeding the population, but not as much concern broadly about the population growth. Something else that came up through, I think, League of Women Voters work—you made mention of "A Future of Urban America and Guidelines for Growth?"

02-01:43:04

Perrault: That was just another conference we ran. Conferences, of course, are necessary because that's where people want to learn more. If they have an interest, that's where they go. Of course a lot of people don't have an interest, and you have to find a way to entice them to come to something exciting. So that was just an example—somebody has to run those things, and somebody has to care that the issue is important, and then someone has to get the funding for it. And it's just an ongoing process, ongoing need.

02-01:43:35

Eardley-Pryor: And you find yourself in the position of running a lot of these things?

02-01:43:37

Perrault: Right.

02-01:43:39

Eardley-Pryor: I just wanted to step back and to talk a little—one more thing about the state land-use project and these symposia. The fact that it was this Massachusetts Foundation for Humanities and Public Policy, you said, and it included

humanists in there. But there was a challenge around that. Can you talk a little bit more about why—what was the challenge with the humanists?

02-01:44:02

Perrault: Well, the humanists were community college educators.

02-01:44:06

Eardley-Pryor: Professors, yeah.

02-01:44:07

Perrault: And so they had a specialty. So let's say they had a specialty in social studies. They are teaching a social studies curriculum and certain kinds of books, and they aren't necessarily relating that to everyday choices people make in their lives. And so it seemed, in some of these cases—and certainly in the review that we did of these workshops, that the humanists weren't quite sure how to bring up some of these matters, because it isn't something they did in their social studies teaching. Or it could have been a history teacher, you know? It's not something they were aware of as an issue.

I think it's like—they were like other citizens. They don't necessarily think in those terms unless somebody brings them up as a problem, or they have to look at something happening very close in their neighborhood and they go, "I don't want it there. Not in my back yard." So I think the humanists were just like the average citizen who didn't really know enough about it.

But as educators, they weren't incorporating it into their activities. They weren't bringing the reality of today's decision making that has to occur in their classes. It wasn't in their books, so to speak, because their books didn't know what was happening in these communities. And they weren't making the transition of—"Here's the book. It talks about something that happened in the past in social studies, and look what's happening today over here." There wasn't enough of *that*.

02-01:45:34

Eardley-Pryor: There wasn't any application.

02-01:45:36

Perrault: Right. What was not happening was the kind of the things that I *did* make happen when I took the teachers to workshops to study—like Lake Tahoe. And we interviewed people, the real people that were making the choices about which wetlands will be protected, where will the housing go, how will we take care of the effluents that are going to come out of a particular project—all those kinds of questions. Those are more exciting too, to people, because it's real life. The others just—it's sort of book stuff on other experiences. That when they—their community might become an experience in somebody's social studies book. But the academics weren't engrossed in the world of the everyday stuff that was happening to people.

02-01:46:18

Eardley-Pryor: Yeah, they didn't know how to apply their understanding.

02-01:46:19

Perrault: Yeah.

02-01:46:21

Eardley-Pryor: Because in my mind, I think one of the challenges in today's environmental activism [is] these issues have become, as we've discussed, so professionalized. You need to be an expert in law, [or] you need to be an expert in this area of ecology to make a contribution to the discussion. And I think, often, humanists are left out. And what I think is lost in that process is the very thing that I think you were trying to do by bringing them in, in Massachusetts, was to talk about value and meaning.

The humanities is so much about meaning-making and trying to understand meaning, whereas a quantitative understanding of something from an ecological science—and looking at the tables, and what were the impacts on this species—is different from saying, "Well, that might be the impact, but what does that *mean* to my life?" And the meaning part, I can see a humanist adding something to. But if they don't—if they're not applying their trade, I can see how it just becomes an empty space for them.

02-01:47:19

Perrault: I think some of that is similar to—a lot of the environmental stuff for a long time didn't look at that long-term health impact. And then gradually people began to understand it wasn't short term, but there were these long-term impacts that could happen. But it was a long term of educating to begin to understand when—and when you needed epidemiology as a study to bring in, to analyze stuff. You couldn't just say, "Well, it's going to cause a problem." You kind of had to show, and you had to know, what was the science that would show that this had a long-term effect? So all of these disciplines come about through education—and trial and error in many cases, where suddenly people are getting sick. "Oh, we should have known."

02-01:48:06

Eardley-Pryor: Yeah, everyone, all disciplines, needed to have a more environmental education. That was part of what the seventies really opened people's eyes to.

02-01:48:13

Perrault: Right.

02-01:48:17

Eardley-Pryor: You made mention a couple times of this work with President Carter on some sort of citizen advisory committee. Can you talk about what that was?

02-01:48:25

Perrault: Well, it was—presidents have the option to set up advisory committees and then have a process to put people on of differing views, as well as different levels, whether it's senior citizens or young people—sort of a mix. And so

President Carter, through his National [Oceanic] and Atmospheric Administration, NOAA, said, "Well, it would be helpful to have a citizen advisory to help us implement the Coastal Zone Management Program." And because I had done work in that very area, I was recommended to be on that along with Barbara Fagen from Cape Cod, from the League of Women Voters. She was also on it. And Shirley Taylor from the Sierra Club's coastal zone program. So we all served on that.

02-01:49:23

Eardley-Pryor: What was it like? What was asked of you?

02-01:49:26

Perrault: My recollection is we had to be aware of what was going on in the different states, the coastal states. Where were they in the process? What were some examples of things they were facing? Who had their act in place? How were they talking about the various matters that relate to the use of the coast? And so my recollection is—that was a way back—was that we were homeless researchers trying to get at what was taking place.

So I contributed, of course, how was it happening in Massachusetts? And we shared that with the others so that they could have an understanding. And then that, in turn, was shared through various papers and dialogue. And so we would go to meetings in Washington, DC, and we would all talk about what would we look at next, how could we then get back to NOAA about what was the status of what was happening in the states.

02-01:50:27

Eardley-Pryor: And so each state or region had a different expert that would come in? Like let's say maybe there'd be somebody from Alabama or Louisiana [who] would say, "I'm familiar with *these* coastal issues."

02-01:50:34

Perrault: Well, we had to also go out and find out more ourselves. We didn't have to have somebody from Alabama come, we would just—what is Alabama doing? Just sort of knowing, and then sharing that. But frankly, I just can't remember all the meetings that we went to.

The thing about a lot of meetings, and the thing that I remember about myself in meetings, is that I always asked good questions. [laughing] You had to be creative. And a lot of people weren't necessarily creative to think up the good questions that needed to be answered in order to have a better program. So that was kind of a contribution you made, depending on what the topic was.

02-01:51:16

Eardley-Pryor: Yeah. And asking good questions is also about being continually curious, always learning.

02-01:51:20

Perrault: Right, right. And not everybody was that way.

02-01:51:24

Eardley-Pryor: And there's an element of bravery, I think, in asking questions, too. There's a vulnerability there in saying, "I don't know the answer to this, and I'm okay with letting other people know, and I will learn from that process."

02-01:51:35

Perrault: Right, yeah. Or asking questions that gets the experts focused. Not that I needed to necessarily have an answer from them about a specific thing, it was how to get them to come to some realization about where they should go next.

02-01:51:53

Eardley-Pryor: Yeah, to get down to the point.

02-01:51:54

Perrault: How to push the people in charge of different programs to move to the next step.

02-01:52:01

Eardley-Pryor: That's a good—that's the New Yorker in you coming forward. [Perrault laughs] "Let's get down to it!" [making tapping sounds] I like it. So this brings us, timewise, into some of the activities up through the late seventies. And so around 1978, this is around the time you decide—?

02-01:52:19

Perrault: Right, because they—I say goodbye to Boston Harbor advisory. My friend Nancy Anderson continues to run her programs, which I come back to and serve on panels for her—or give her people. Like David Sive spoke in one of them I remember. Bill Futrell spoke in one of her conferences. So it's always finding the experts to help her run these conferences that were very special for New England. They were quite a force. She was an amazing person.

02-01:52:48

Eardley-Pryor: Well, this transition of saying goodbye to these people and then moving to California—talk a little bit about what that transition was like. That's a big decision. That's a big move. You were so active in the East, and then to—

02-01:53:00

Perrault: Right, well, I became, very quickly, very active in my [Sierra Club] chapter, the Bay Chapter, because the oil drilling issue was a big one starting up. So I just moved from one to the next and said, "Look, you need a coalition. Let's get one formed." And there were some key people that were also interested in the whole idea. And one of my famous people I didn't have you talk to is Richard Charter. Richard Charter is like Mr. Offshore Oil Drilling of the West Coast. And he's still very active in following everything that's happening as Trump tries to reopen, President Trump and his administration, try to open up these areas that we thought were saved. You're never saved; you have to have a whole cadre of new people to come help you fight the battles. But Richard Charter's still in there. He's a gem. And so I became very friendly with him and with many other people in a coalition that we created. They thought it was a great idea to have a coalition. And of course lucky for us, it was an easy

thing to do in California, because we had the Barbara Boxers of the world. We had Governor Brown. We had good people. And we had Gary Patton. And we had [Leon] Panetta, who eventually went on to higher things. He was a big one, too, in terms of caring for the coast, Leon Panetta.

02-01:54:18

Eardley-Pryor: Was working with you on offshore oil issues?

02-01:54:20

Perrault: Yeah, oh yeah. And Barbara Boxer, she was a gem. In fact, eventually I became the head for a foundation that she helped set up called the American Ocean Foundation—for Barbara Boxer. So I headed that one up for a while.

02-01:54:36

Eardley-Pryor: When was this?

02-01:54:39

Perrault: [laughing] Somewhere in the—

02-01:54:41

Eardley-Pryor: In the ensuing forty years from then.

02-01:54:41

Perrault: Eighties or nineties, yeah. I have a file on it. I'll talk about it the next time. I wasn't ready for [discussing that] today. But yeah, I administered that. She asked me if I would chair it. So I did that for a little bit. And I just remember her, you know, standing on the table and speaking up for the coast. She was terrific.

02-01:55:02

Eardley-Pryor: Before we dive too deeply into the coastal work, because that is—it's a beautiful transition—I am interested just a little bit in the mechanics and the personal aspects of moving from East Coast to West Coast. What was that decision-making process like? And [how] was the getting there? And where were you going to land in California? Where were you living? Those kind of things.

02-01:55:22

Perrault: Well, I just remember Phillip and I just got a place. He had had bad knee surgery, so we went to some little place near a Safeway and rented it. And then eventually—

02-01:55:33

Eardley-Pryor: In Lafayette here, in California?

02-01:55:34

Perrault: No, in Walnut Creek. And then—we weren't there—oh, and then we went to August Frugé's house, where we also lived for a bit.

02-01:55:42

Eardley-Pryor: And who is that?

02-01:55:44

Perrault: August Frugé was the founder of—was the head of the Berkeley publications, UC Press [University of California Press], and he was a cousin of Phil. And so we stayed in his house for a while until eventually we moved into a home in Lafayette. So for living, as long as we had a place to go, we just—he proceeded doing his law practice, and I went right in immersed in environmental stuff.

02-01:56:13

Eardley-Pryor: Phillip, I remember had other sons from previous marriages. Were they also living with you guys then?

02-01:56:20

Perrault: No. No, no.

02-01:56:23

Eardley-Pryor: And Gabrielle and Gary were still back east?

02-01:56:25

Perrault: Part of the time. Gabrielle came on all of the holidays with me, and then the next year all the time with me. She went back and forth.

02-01:56:33

Eardley-Pryor: How did you do emotionally with that transition?

02-01:56:35

Perrault: That was tough. That was tough, and it was tough for her. But I wrote to her every day and talked on the phone. She was in a private school, and she was in good care. But it was tough.

02-01:56:52

Eardley-Pryor: When you come out to California, as you say, you dive right in. But you were also working in Phil's legal office at the same time?

02-01:57:00

Perrault: Yeah, that came a little bit later. I was a paralegal in his law office, which was working on asbestos cases.

02-01:57:07

Eardley-Pryor: I'm wondering what that experience was like?

02-01:57:10

Perrault: Well, I just had to read medical records of people who had had exposure to asbestos. It was a part-time job.

02-01:57:14

Eardley-Pryor: Can you talk a little bit about Phil's—

02-01:57:17

Perrault: Speak about what?

02-01:57:18
Eardley-Pryor: Phil's practice. What that was like, and what kind of cases was it focused on?

02-01:57:23
Perrault: Well, that [asbestos cases], mainly, that was the thing. But he had some extra things he'd do pro bono, and they were more fun. [laughing]

02-01:57:28
Eardley-Pryor: Like what?

02-01:57:29
Perrault: Like defending somebody who was accused of burning down some forest land for marijuana growing. And then we had to go visit this person in this place you couldn't talk about or talk about this person. But it was just going out in the environment and seeing something a little different. He also had some wonderful cases that dealt with Newport Beach and saving some open space there, and so we would go down and meet with the people. That was more related to our conservation work. So that was kind of fun.

02-01:58:04
Eardley-Pryor: Was that work that you guys did together—part of this pro bono work—through the Club? Was that kind of an early Legal Defense [Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, now Earthjustice] work?

02-01:58:10
Perrault: No. The pro bono work he did through the Club. I wasn't necessarily a paralegal at that time. Yeah, because he did a few things for them, as well.

02-01:58:20
Eardley-Pryor: Well, then let's do talk about this transition to moving here. Suddenly you're in California—the beautiful light, the coast, the landscape is just so different. And you dive right into your conservation work with the coastal—

02-01:58:32
Perrault: Well, the League—I joined the League locally, and so was involved in some of their projects around land use. And then I also joined the [Sierra Club Bay Area] chapter, the local chapter, and got mostly involved through the offshore oil, representing them on that. But also, they sent me as a liaison on the biotechnology committee for the Association of Bay Area Governments. Then there were a number of other kinds of advisory things on environmental ed. that I got involved in because people knew that I was in that field. So a lot of things happened rather quickly. And then people would be asking me to do certain things, and I would go into the next project. There was a lot of stuff going on, which we'll talk about when—[laughing]

02-01:59:15
Eardley-Pryor: It sounds like a lot of stuff.

02-01:59:16
Perrault: Yeah, I was going to do that on the next [oral history interview] session.

02-01:59:18

Eardley-Pryor: Yeah. Well, are there other things you can think about in terms of what was happening in this late-seventies period? You move to California in '78, and '79 you're still doing other work that's also at a regional—?

02-01:59:29

Perrault: Yeah, well because then, of course, I also got—when I got back, and when I got into California, I was also appointed to the Environmental Education Advisory [Council], so I started going to national meetings. That was a three-year appointment [by President George H.W. Bush]. And then, soon after that, while not [Sierra Club] president but vice president. No, by vice president—

02-01:59:54

Eardley-Pryor: While serving on the [Sierra Club] Board of Directors?

02-01:59:55

Perrault: I served on President Clinton's Council on Sustainable Development.

02-01:59:58

Eardley-Pryor: After '92?

02-01:59:58

Perrault: I was appointed to that for six years, because it was three-year terms. And then [with] three-year terms, if you were still in your position with your title, you got to keep it. So that was six years of that. And those were very influential, because when President Clinton's Council on Sustainable Development was over, it bothered me that—well, what would happen? What do you do—you go to all these meetings for six years, what change occurs? What do you make happen?

And I recognized that one of the important things that we talked about in the President's Council was that regional planning was so critical. And for the Bay Area, of the nine counties, they really needed a lot of regional planning, around land-use matters in particular. And so I co-founded, with my partner who was from Pacific Gas and Electric, Dick [Richard A.] Clarke, we formed a coalition called the Bay Area Alliance [for] Sustainable Development.

02-02:00:54

Eardley-Pryor: And this is in the early nineties you're talking about?

02-02:00:56

Perrault: Yeah, and so that was a ten-year project. And he eventually passed away, but there were some other key people that were involved in that process, including Carl Anthony, who was a person of color, very much involved with the Ford Foundation eventually, a terrific guy on equity issues, and he's still very active in that field. Another was Sunne [Wright] McPeak, who was a politician in the county, and she was very strong. And then there was the Bay Area Association of Governments and the Bay Area Council, which were—it was a council of businesspeople. And of course, I was always open to the businesspeople, particularly since I also knew—from the League of Women

Voters discussions, when we had the workshops—that the businesspeople were not in large attendance, and people wanted *them*, because they are part of the community. They're a very big part.

02-02:01:45

Eardley-Pryor: Absolutely.

02-02:01:46

Perrault: So that was our Bay Area Alliance. And of course, we had no staff for a while, and we kind of—five of us—kind of ran the thing. But talk about solutions! One of the simple things that hadn't happened was the five regional agencies that run the Bay Area had never met together. So we did dinners to get them together to talk! And we ran many, many symposia that invited people from all over the Bay Area, and they were well attended. And we would do them in—sometimes in the Pacific Gas and Electric's conference room. We'd run them all over the place. So that went on for a good number of years.

When we closed it down, I then was appointed to the Greenbelt Alliance board, which does a lot of the same things. They're particularly interested in saving agricultural lands and open space by doing close-to-transit-station development, finding housing close to—and worrying about housing, that all of that is very important if you're going to plan for better land use within the region. And so my experience from the land use and the League in Massachusetts impacted how I was involved in these things with the Bay Area Alliance [for] Sustainable Development, and which in turn was impacted from my possession, which—I still, I'm on the board, of Greenbelt Alliance in the Bay Area.

02-02:03:11

Eardley-Pryor: These coalitions that you're putting together in the Bay Area reminds me of echoes of the coalition you worked on with the Georges Bank area, building those coalitions.

02-02:03:20

Perrault: Right. It's always been coalitions, right.

02-02:03:22

Eardley-Pryor: One other thing to talk about that I think is interesting is, at the time that you move out to follow your heart to be with Phil in California, your mom is also meeting somebody new. You've made mention—

02-02:03:32

Perrault: [laughing] Oh, yes.

02-02:03:33

Eardley-Pryor: Can you talk a little bit about that experience?

02-02:03:36

Perrault:

Well, she lost my [father], her husband, when she was forty-five, and luckily met a man about four or five years later in a Democratic Party meeting, because she was, had gotten—she was always involved in her town. And so they lived together for many, many, many, many years. And then finally he said, "I think we'd better get married, so I can put you on my health plan." [laughing] Which he did. And he was Burt Tinker, her husband. [He] worked for NOAA, National [Oceanic] and Atmospheric Administration, working on blue crabs in Chesapeake Bay and doing research in Gloucester, Massachusetts, where he was working. And so my mother became conservation commissioner in the town. She didn't think she'd—"Well, how can I do that? I haven't been to college, how am I going to—?" "Mom, you're smart. You know you can do it." So she did it for almost ten years—even more, yeah.

02-02:04:34

Eardley-Pryor:

I love that. So she got involved in conservation work, as well—through you and through Burt?

02-02:04:39

Perrault:

Right, right. And I kind of helped push her, yeah.

02-02:04:41

Eardley-Pryor:

I think it's just great. I love the idea that you both are finding this next stage in your life, and following your hearts to go do something, and it also catapults you into further work in your communities.

02-02:04:50

Perrault:

Right.

02-02:04:51

Eardley-Pryor:

That's a great story. Well, I think we've covered a lot of ground. [Are] there other things you want to talk about in the seventies before our next session, when we can talk about your work on the [Sierra Club] Board of Directors and moving into—?

02-02:05:00

Perrault:

Yeah, yeah, right. No, I think we kind of covered what I remember of what was happening. And I—of course I have, just for your information, all the New England Environmental Network stuff. I think—did I talk enough about the training? That they train citizens, so we could take courses in environmental law?

02-02:05:19

Eardley-Pryor:

You know, there is one—

02-02:05:20

Perrault:

That was the—the citizenship center at Tufts opened it up for environmentalists to apply to have these free classes. And they gave us a choice of classes dealing with valuing, with legal issues in the environment, a

whole number of things we could take courses in for a whole year. And so that was like a wonderful situation, because I was getting more training and more information, and that, of course, was recommended by Nancy Anderson. She said, "You've got to go apply for this." I thought, actually, at one point thought it was such a great program for training that I wrote up a model training program that the Club should apply [for] a grant, so that they could follow something similar. But it never did come to fruition, and I don't know where that grant went. But I have the written grant proposal to help the Sierra Club do what I was getting trained for in Tufts.

02-02:06:24

Eardley-Pryor: And the Tufts—you chose what—of those topics you chose legal? Is that correct?

02-02:06:28

Perrault: Legal was one of them, yeah. And valuing was another one. That was the one with Sheldon Krinsky, who in 1993 welcomed me back for a celebration of people who'd been through the program. Oh, and I was looking in my notes, and he said at the time, "Could you get me the background stuff from '75 when you entered this course?" [laughing] And I can't recall—I'll have to ask him if he's still teaching at Tufts—did I ever send it to him? I can't recall that I sent it to him, but he didn't have copies of how the program started, which was very strange.

02-02:07:03

Eardley-Pryor: There was one other training you made mention of with the League of Women Voters beginning in the time in the seventies, that it might—?

02-02:07:09

Perrault: The solid waste one, where they—?

02-02:07:10

Eardley-Pryor: No, it wasn't—maybe it wasn't League of Women Voters, but it was on lobbying. That's a whole other skill set.

02-02:07:17

Perrault: Well, I'd taken a variety of programs on how to lobby, and I think I did one in Massachusetts. I know I did one in California where they trained us. And I did one—the Sierra Club ran one in Washington, DC that I attended once, where they brought in people that taught us how to lobby.

02-02:07:35

Eardley-Pryor: I think that's the one that happened in the seventies, so you must have come down from Massachusetts.

02-02:07:37

Perrault: Yeah, yeah, because out of that, I think, is this wonderful picture I have with myself and Dianne Feinstein.

- 02-02:07:43
Eardley-Pryor: Is that where you first met?
- 02-02:07:45
Perrault: Who?
- 02-02:07:45
Eardley-Pryor: You and DiFei. And you hadn't—
- 02-02:07:47
Perrault: I hadn't had personal contact with her like I did with Barbara Boxer.
- 02-02:07:51
Eardley-Pryor: Oh, I see.
- 02-02:07:51
Perrault: And Nancy Pelosi. But I went—I had to visit her [Feinstein's] office, and so I have this beautiful picture of me with Dianne.
- 02-02:07:59
Eardley-Pryor: What do you remember from that lobbying training? Because it becomes such an important part of your role, particularly as president of the Sierra Club.
- 02-02:08:05
Perrault: Right, right.
- 02-02:08:06
Eardley-Pryor: Lobbying becomes a big part of your job.
- 02-02:08:08
Perrault: Oh yeah! I mean you learn how to go in and talk to a public official and tell him your concerns and feel comfortable to knock on their door.
- 02-02:08:17
Eardley-Pryor: What does that entail, then?
- 02-02:08:18
Perrault: Hmm?
- 02-02:08:18
Eardley-Pryor: Tell me more about what that entails.
- 02-02:08:21
Perrault: Well, the Club of course sets it up and says, "We have our people coming for this training. Will you visit with them?" And so you knock on the door. They know you're coming, and they're just people. You're talking to them about your concerns, and they're there to listen. They're not going to say, "I only want to hear from a citizen in my community that might vote for me, not—." So I never felt intimidated in any way, and I was always very open to and eager to meet and talk with any elected official. So maybe that helped, or maybe I would have done it anyway. [laughing]

02-02:08:58

Eardley-Pryor: Part of that bravery.

02-02:08:58

Perrault: But I think it's something exciting when you do it in Washington, and you see all—how everybody has their little office, and you can—you should feel that this is a place they're expecting you to come and see them. So yeah, it's good experience for anybody to have. And we did the same thing at the state lobby workshops—getting to know your capital and knowing who's in charge and how does it work, and what do they cover, and how do you find out what they cover, and how do you keep abreast of it? Yeah, very important. So I was always very supportive of [Sierra Club's] state lobby office for California, for example, and how to raise money for them and how to—personally wanted to give, because you have to learn to give!

02-02:09:47

Eardley-Pryor: Funding is something we haven't really talked about for your time in the seventies in Massachusetts. Was fundraising a part of something you did then?

02-02:09:55

Perrault: No. I didn't do much. I did when I came to California. When I became president [of the Sierra Club], I went to the fundraising school and took lessons. I took a course—

02-02:10:03

Eardley-Pryor: What [is] the fundraising school?

02-02:10:04

Perrault: There's a school called the Fundraising School. And I went and took courses about how to approach fundraising, just like I took a course in computer literacy. Same thing, because computers were kind of new at the time, and we hadn't used them that much in the Club.

02-02:10:19

Eardley-Pryor: Yeah, constant learning.

02-02:10:20

Perrault: Yeah, yeah.

02-02:10:21

Eardley-Pryor: Always new things.

02-02:10:21

Perrault: Yeah, the fundraising—I have a certificate from the Fundraising School. [laughing]

02-02:10:25

Eardley-Pryor: Well, is there anything else you want to cover in the seventies before we move into the eighties and talk about your role on the [Sierra Club] Board [of Directors]?

02-02:10:31

Perrault: No, no.

02-02:10:32

Eardley-Pryor: All right. Okay. Well, thank you, so much!

Interview 3: December 7, 2018

03-00:00:00

Eardley-Pryor: All right! Today is December 7, 2018. We're in the home of Michele Perrault. We are here for our third interview session oral history for the Sierra Club Oral History Project. Michele, it's great to see you again.

03-00:00:12

Perrault: Nice to see you, Roger.

03-00:00:13

Eardley-Pryor: Last time we spoke together, [at] the point in your personal narrative, you had recently moved to California. You had done a significant amount of work on the East Coast, especially on offshore oil issues, and you immediately get involved in the Bay Chapter of San Francisco [in] the Sierra Club. Can you tell me a little bit about the work that you did with that?

03-00:00:31

Perrault: Well, the major work that I did was on offshore oil, because at the time I got into California, they were beginning to face what I had faced in New England with the oil drilling there. So they were fighting oil drilling in California in the northern part of it, and so I immediately joined the local chapter and got permission to speak on their behalf for oil drilling, and got them to take positions against the drilling, and formed a coalition with a number of other key groups that were concerned as well.

03-00:01:05

Eardley-Pryor: You were involved in forming that coalition?

03-00:01:06

Perrault: Because I had formed the one in the East Coast. I said, "You need one in the West Coast." And so I became the chair of the West Coast coalition right away, and I was able to explain to them some of the things that we had done in the East Coast with our coalition, and how we had gotten all the various people together. So there were a number of very strong, good people concerned about oil drilling, and they became friends of mine and we worked together. And Richard Charter is still doing that same work. Richard lives up in the Sonoma area, and he's just a wonderful guy. And so with his help, we formed the coalition. Warner Chabot was another good one, who's doing some work still, on environmental issues, in the Bay Area now. And these were just great people, and I was able to get to know more and more of them. I would call the meetings, set up the agenda. We would then be able to pull in some of the important people that were in power within California, like Jerry Brown and Barbara Boxer, Dianne Feinstein—all people that—we were able to pull them in.

03-00:02:10

Eardley-Pryor: That's pretty high in the power structure. [laughing]

03-00:02:11

Perrault:

Right. And eventually, in my work with Barbara Boxer, I was able to run a foundation she had helped set up, for oil drilling, and that was the American Ocean Foundation. And so I was the leader of that years later because of the work I had done for offshore oil in general. And we were still fighting many lease sales and trying to protect the future of the coast, particularly because we had such an investment in tourism, and the people in the tourism industry were very interested in being part of the coalition. There were fishermen— [William F.] "Zeke" Grader was the head of the [Pacific Coast Federation of] Fishermen's Association[s], and he was a terrific guy too, so he brought all his people in.

So there really were very few people [in favor of] offshore drilling, other than oil companies who had their own interests. But because of those coalition meetings and the unity, we were able to speak to the national, federal offshore oil people, who wanted to see a promotion of oil drilling, and express our views and have the politicians behind us. We were just very lucky to have the likes of a Barbara Boxer or a Jerry Brown, who also cared about the matter.

03-00:03:23

Eardley-Pryor:

Talk to me about how you formed this coalition, even the process of that. How did you get in touch with Mr. Charter? How did you get in touch with, you mentioned—?

03-00:03:30

Perrault:

You know, it's hard to recall exactly what was involved, other than when I met some people concerned about the matter, because they were already living in California. And I had found out, probably in some way, that they had concerns. Once I said we need to form a coalition, then it all kind of fell in place, and we were able to bring in people.

I was able to use the printing at headquarters—at the Sierra Club—and do notices. They were all handwritten at first. [laughing] And I still have them all, of course, from my files—of the handwritten agendas and how we pulled people together. And then we had to think about fundraising—and there were many, many environmental organizations within the Bay Area, and so they all became part of the issue. Natural Resources Defense Council—Sarah Chasis from the [NRDC] headquarters in DC was another big player. We were able to just find these people through their organizations, and they just joined in.

03-00:04:28

Eardley-Pryor:

Well, I recall you also did work on a Citizens Advisory board under President Carter.

03-00:04:34

Perrault:

Right, and that was based—

03-00:04:34

Eardley-Pryor:

Was that also on ocean issues?

03-00:04:37

Perrault: That was based on my work and recommendations from people in the East Coast. So that it came under the National [Oceanic] and Atmospheric Administration, NOAA. I was on the advisory as a citizen, a member.

03-00:04:52

Eardley-Pryor: Were you able to leverage any of the connections on that national board for the coalition-forming in California?

03-00:04:56

Perrault: Yes. Another key player—and I forget the timing on all this—but Michael Fischer, who became one of our [Sierra Club] executive directors during my presidency, was heading the [California] Coastal Commission. And the Coastal Commission was very important, as well, because it tied into trying to protect the coast—particularly from any offshore oil industry that might go offshore. They [the oil industry] would want onshore facilities, and they [the Coastal Commission] would be involved in some of that. So the Coastal Commission was another area, and Michael Fischer was a key person at the time that he headed that.

03-00:05:27

Eardley-Pryor: That's a huge story. Yeah, because the Coastal Commission, I think, was voted in '72. It became law in '74 or '76.

03-00:05:33

Perrault: Yeah, and I wasn't, of course, in California at that time.

03-00:05:36

Eardley-Pryor: So by '79—

03-00:05:37

Perrault: But we had the Coastal Zone [Management] Program in Massachusetts. All the states that were coastal were trying to form their own kind of commissions, but California's was very good and very aggressive—California being a leader in so many of these issues, including protection of the coast.

03-00:05:52

Eardley-Pryor: I love that you came to California, but brought your Massachusetts/East Coast experience, and that's what informed the work here.

03-00:05:58

Perrault: That's right, yeah.

03-00:06:00

Eardley-Pryor: So was that the first time you had interactions with Michael Fischer—through his work on the Coastal Commission and your coalition building?

03-00:06:05

Perrault: Yes—well, no. No, because he [laughing]—my recollection, he met his wife, she was on the NOAA in DC working.

- 03-00:06:15
Eardley-Pryor: With you in the Carter advisory? [President Carter's Coastal Zone Management citizen advisory committee.]
- 03-00:06:16
Perrault: Yeah, when I was there on the advisory. And I'm not sure of the timing of when they got together and married. But I knew his wife as well, Jane [Pughe Rogers], through the CZM under Carter, and then Michael. So then she joined Michael in California.
- 03-00:06:34
Eardley-Pryor: This sounds like it was almost personal connections that helped with the coalition building, too?
- 03-00:06:38
Perrault: Yes, yes.
- 03-00:06:40
Eardley-Pryor: Tell me a little bit more about how you build a coalition. Are you just getting names and calling people out of the blue and saying, "Hello, my name's Michele. I'm calling on behalf of the Sierra Club." How did it work?
- 03-00:06:51
Perrault: That's how I seem to do all the coalitions that I've created in the past. I've created a number of others after that—and the one, of course, in Massachusetts, that did the same thing. Oh, just find out who are the leaders, who is responsible, who are the potential lawyers, who do you need to win the battle? How do you reach out, who has got the capabilities to do some of the press outreach? Who can be good speakers? What needs to be done? When are the times to testify? Who wants to testify? It just—it's a whole lot of things. And of course being very much aware of the condition of the coast itself—where would it be impacted, where would they want to go for the leasing? Knowing the history of how far out does the state have ownership; how far out does the federal government have ownership—and just having all your facts in one place.
- And so there were times when the oil company that wanted, for example, to say that we would be harming employment, and being able to have the facts on that. They were trying to bring in minorities as well, and say we were affecting the minorities by not allowing jobs to pursue under the offshore drilling. And you know, it was the same story we heard in New England. So kind of knowing what the opposition would say.
- 03-00:08:10
Eardley-Pryor: How did you counter that opposition in either circumstance? Was it different?
- 03-00:08:13
Perrault: Well, through comments to the press, printed material. But I don't remember very much of it printed. There were rallies that were called for, and I didn't have to organize the rally; somebody else organized it. There were big—I

know that Rachel [Binah], who's—I forget her last name—she was one of the tourism people up in Mendocino, and she helped run events as well. So there were a lot of people. It was a really big concern for Californians, in Northern California. They just didn't want to see this happen, and so they came out of the woodwork, and they all contributed in various ways.

03-00:08:58

Eardley-Pryor: What are some of your memories of these rallies? Where were they staged? What kinds of things happened?

03-00:09:02

Perrault: Well, there was music for them. There were different ones—I have brochures that show when the rallies occurred, but I don't remember offhand which ones when. But my major job was making sure that there were constant meetings held to coordinate all these kinds of events. That was the major contribution that I had, as well as staying on top of the issues to know what do you fill the agenda with. So being aware of what events were occurring, who do we talk to.

There was also some key state legislators, like the one who ended up working under Clinton—[Leon Panetta]. He was a big person who Clinton hired for a number of positions—it just escapes my mind right now who he was, but he was wonderful—and there were many other people like that. There was Farr [Samuel S. Farr], another politician. And so we became interested in making sure they stayed in their roles as politicians, so sometimes I probably ended up speaking on their behalf. Also, finding politicians that might be in more local activities that cared, and they were coastal towns, and so we would find ways to involve them. But it was looking constantly for the opportunity which could be either a press opportunity, or it could be just building up support.

03-00:10:35

Eardley-Pryor: I'm thinking about pre-Internet—where are you getting this research information? Where are you pulling these sources? Because here's something that I—when talking with Mike McCloskey, talking with Rebecca Falkenberry, talking with Anne [H.] Ehrlich, they *all* celebrate the depth of your knowledge—not just the immense breadth, but the depth as well. So where are you pulling all this information?

03-00:10:57

Perrault: Well, a lot of it was probably from newsletters that I got on the lists of. Yeah, the computer stuff was still rather new at that time.

03-00:11:13

Eardley-Pryor: This is the late seventies, early eighties.

03-00:11:12

Perrault: In fact, I had to take courses in computer literacy when I became [Sierra Club] president [in 1984], so it's an interesting question. I haven't quite thought about where did I get it all *from*. Yeah.

03-00:11:25

Eardley-Pryor: The Club also maintains a pretty dense library [the William E. Colby Memorial Library]. I wonder if maybe you were using the Club's library?

03-00:11:31

Perrault: Not for the California stuff. Maybe some information from Sierra Club California, which was an entity I associated with as well? [laughing] But I just really can't remember where it all came from. Certainly, there were [environmental] impact statements prepared, so when you wanted to testify, you knew what the content was, and what the issues were going to be that were raised. And having done environmental impact statement reading for the New England one, I knew what was coming up. So I was probably also able to—there were things like drilling muds you had to worry about in New England. So I knew drilling muds was going to be a problem. But how I did my research on drilling muds? I can't recall. And I think a lot of—we got help from scientists too, that were concerned about the impacts, the potential impacts. So—it's interesting. I'm not sure that when I go back in my binders I can figure out where I got all my information from.

03-00:12:36

Eardley-Pryor: My memory of pre-Internet learning was so much person-based. I would call the person who knew, and they would point me to say, "Here's the thing I have in my files. You should read *this*." So maybe part of it is—

03-00:12:46

Perrault: Yeah, that may have been a lot of that. I just had so much people interaction, and we had so many meetings where we all shared information.

03-00:12:55

Eardley-Pryor: And your role was to orchestrate that, coordinate this coalition?

03-00:12:57

Perrault: To get the people together, right. And to expand the knowledge. And of course, there were other people who contributed. Natural Resources Defense Council had their own ways of doing their exploration and understanding of issues, so they would bring it to the table. So each of the groups had their own [information], and they would bring *that* to the meetings. We do have the minutes on all the agendas.

03-00:13:19

Eardley-Pryor: At the same time, when you moved to California, you were working as a legal aide in Berry & Berry Law Firm in Oakland?

03-00:13:26

Perrault: Right—part-time, because when my daughter was on a—one year her father had her, and I got all the holidays; another year she was with me the whole time, and he had the holidays. So my job, since my husband [Phillip Berry] owned the law firm, I could adjust my schedule accordingly when my daughter was here.

- 03-00:13:45
Eardley-Pryor: That's nice to have that flexibility.
- 03-00:13:46
Perrault: So that was nice, right.
- 03-00:13:48
Eardley-Pryor: I'm thinking Phil [Berry] had a pretty strong role within the Sierra Club Legal Defense Club.
- 03-00:13:53
Perrault: Well, and he was also on the [Sierra Club] Board [of Directors] many times while I was on the Board, and so we worked hand in hand in understanding each other's time needs and supporting each other. [laughing] And of course, in his law firm, he did some pro bono work, which he allowed me to do more of, because there was more environmental pro bono, and not the asbestos-related litigation—although I was supposed to read all the medical workup for the asbestos cases, which got me into health issues, too.
- 03-00:14:21
Eardley-Pryor: Well, I'm just thinking with Phil's connections, he might also have been a resource for pulling in legal advice for your coalition formation?
- 03-00:14:29
Perrault: Right—well, we did have to tap the Legal Defense Fund, which at the time was still attached to the Sierra Club, the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund which then branched off to become a different private—its own firm.
- 03-00:14:41
Eardley-Pryor: It eventually became Earthjustice.
- 03-00:14:42
Perrault: Right, you're right. Earthjustice. So we had that help as well, which you needed, because you're going to have to challenge a lot of the impact statements.
- 03-00:14:51
Eardley-Pryor: When you were targeting—you're creating this coalition, and here's our goal—what was the goal you had in mind? What was the thing that that coalition was working toward?
- 03-00:14:58
Perrault: Oh, to not have any offshore drilling in Northern California—*ever*. [laughing]
- 03-00:15:06
Eardley-Pryor: That's a big goal. So when you're—
- 03-00:15:07
Perrault: And eventually, moratoriums were established, and that's what Trump wants to undo, any moratoriums. He wants to see drilling all over the place in the nation. And we had had some protection which allowed us to have a

moratorium in place, finally. So we didn't have to worry about lease sales. And now, of course, we have to worry whether they're going to come back again.

03-00:15:26

Eardley-Pryor: When did the moratorium—so this coalition was very successful. You said you got major political actors involved, from the governor, a few of the senators, US senators, all the way down through the California legislature to local board members.

03-00:15:37

Perrault: Right.

03-00:15:39

Eardley-Pryor: That's a huge arm, political arm, that you got to work in favor of your goals.

03-00:15:43

Perrault: Right, yeah.

03-00:15:46

Eardley-Pryor: When did the laws start to change? When did the moratorium start moving through?

03-00:15:49

Perrault: I'm trying to think when the moratorium came into place. Again, that's—those details of timing I can't remember.

03-00:15:55

Eardley-Pryor: This is forty, almost forty years ago. [laughter]

03-00:15:58

Perrault: I know! Right. Well, we still had the moratorium in place when Trump came in. And so just when that occurred, and the details of when? Again, that's my problem, when things aren't asked of me early enough in my time, when it's closer to the events that took place.

03-00:16:16

Eardley-Pryor: Yeah, yeah—well, that's also why you do such great recordkeeping, that you can always just get back and look at those—that's what the archives are for. One of the things that came out of the oil-drilling coalition-formation that you did was some sort of connection with Robert Redford. What is that story?

03-00:16:30

Perrault: Right. Well, he was concerned about—he had an organization that wanted to bring people together to solve problems. And so he thought, "Well, it would be good if you get the environmentalists and the oil-company people together in one room, and maybe you could find some unity of focus." And so the idea was well, can the environmentalists say which—this particularly related to the Bering Sea in Alaska. He wanted people to meet with the oil companies, of which about five oil companies agreed to meet with the environmentalists. A

lot of them didn't, and we didn't have any representation from the state of Alaska.

But we did have environmentalists and oil-company people, and he said, "Well, can you all agree there are some areas you want totally off from any environmental hazards, so you don't want any oil drilling there? And then there are some places you can say to the oil companies, 'Okay, maybe you could go here?'" So that was the gist of these meetings that we had with Robert Redford in attendance down in Morro Bay in California. And I believe it was probably in the early eighties. Yeah, I have a record of that. I have the whole thing, with pictures of Robert Redford, and their messages inviting us to participate, and who was attending, and all of that. But in the end, the material of our meetings was to go to Secretary [Donald P.] Hodel.

03-00:17:54

Eardley-Pryor: The [US] Secretary of the Interior?

03-00:17:55

Perrault: Of the interior.

03-00:17:57

Eardley-Pryor: For what?

03-00:17:58

Perrault: To say here's where—we actually had an agreement about areas that we wanted saved. And the oil companies—the five of them said, "Oh, oh, okay." And then we said, "And here's where you might drill." So Hodel received it and said, "Oh, that's wonderful you did all that." But in the end, because there hadn't been all the other oil companies involved, they protested, and the state of Alaska protested. And so, in the end, Hodel gave in and the agreements never went to any final form. But it was a very interesting activity to sit down with oil-company people and talk and say, "Well, maybe there can be some agreement here, and maybe not there."

03-00:18:41

Eardley-Pryor: Was that the first time in your environmental work that you had sat down with, let's say, what might be framed as the *opposition*, and try to work on negotiation of agreements?

03-00:18:51

Perrault: Yeah, I believe so. Certainly, businesspeople had been interested—fishing industry, and from tourism in the Georges Bank fight in the East Coast. But those were not people in opposition. So yeah, that's, I think, my first recollection of sitting down with people in opposition. Yeah.

03-00:19:10

Eardley-Pryor: Because that's something that does come up again in your activist career, in sitting with people that are maybe serving on the board of Enron, and trying to

figure out how sustainable development works, and then moving that process to the Bay Area.

03-00:19:20

Perrault:

Right, right. I always believed that collaborative work was one way to go forward. Conflict resolution was a big issue that people were writing about, and I still, to this day, think that maybe the world would be a better place if we had more conflict-resolution activity going on.

So that helped lead me into other concerns. I would say that my work in the League of Women Voters in the East Coast—when we had run these community workshops, and we realized we hadn't brought in the businesspeople enough—was another signal that you really can't do things in isolation of these other interests. So I had that knowledge back then. Even though we had some businesspeople, but not a lot in those workshops that I did for land-use planning

03-00:20:06

Eardley-Pryor:

When the oil companies were giving pushback to your California work, and maybe even some of the work with regard to Robert Redford with Alaska and the Bering Sea, what were their tactics? What were their methods that you remember having to [face]?

03-00:20:21

Perrault:

Well, one of them I mentioned, just previously, was to bring in people like the minority community and say, "Oh, we need jobs. What are you fighting offshore drilling for?" That would be one of their tactics. And, in fact, we had a paper—I believe it was from [the oil trade group]—outlining their concerns and their tactics, which we were able to expose because we had a copy of it.

03-00:20:44

Eardley-Pryor:

How did you get a copy?

03-00:20:45

Perrault:

Oh, I don't recall. But we knew what they were up to. They would try to just get other kinds of people that would—and I don't remember them being very successful.

03-00:21:00

Eardley-Pryor:

Yeah, how would you counter some of these tactics then?

03-00:21:03

Perrault:

Well, you would talk about, when they would talk—like, let's say, for example, they'd say, "Well, you're going to hurt employment." And we'd say, "Look who you really bring in. You don't bring in the local people. You bring people from *outside* in, so you're not really benefiting the local people with all the jobs they think you're going to give them."

That would be one example. Another would be when they would say, "Well, there are no real impacts from the onshore development." And then we'd point out, "Well, these are the support features that you will *need* to maintain the drilling off the coast."

Or they would say, "Oh, it's not going to hurt the wildlife." And then you'd point out, "But here's what can happen if you have a spill." And then of course we could point to the spill that had happened in California, with oil drilling down in Santa Barbara. And of course that was a really big issue that rallied—easily rallied the state of California against drilling. So we kind of had that as help. [laughing]

03-00:22:02

Eardley-Pryor: Did you pull in the south [of California]? When I'm hearing you talk about the coalition, it was northern based.

03-00:22:06

Perrault: Yes, well, we could because [for] Northern California, we start at Santa Barbara and go north, yeah, yeah.

03-00:22:13

Eardley-Pryor: That's great. Just being starstruck with Robert Redford, can you talk a little bit about what that work was like in Morro Bay? What was his role; what was your role?

03-00:22:26

Perrault: Well, he kind of sat back, but he attended. He watched the dialog. He wanted to see how the process was working. I remember—I have nice pictures of us going out on a boat with him in Morro Bay and having a party. I have pictures of him sitting around the table with us. So he was interested in the process. It wasn't like he was contributing details or looking at aspects of which part of the Bering Sea.

03-00:22:53

Eardley-Pryor: Were there other times that movie stars or celebrities played a role in activism? Was that a strategy that you thought was effective, or not?

03-00:23:02

Perrault: Oh, well, whenever they would speak up, the press would cover things. So it was always great if you could get a star. I just don't recall us particularly getting any stars other than the Barbara Boxers, and those were pretty—

03-00:23:15

Eardley-Pryor: That's a pretty big star.

03-00:23:17

Perrault: And Sam Farr, I think that was another one—key people like that. Those were the stars.

03-00:23:25

Eardley-Pryor: One of the things I saw on your list of many awards was, in 1982, there is a conservation award from the Sierra Club Bay Chapter. Was this in regard to the offshore work?

03-00:23:35

Perrault: Mainly that, yeah, because that was my contribution to the Bay [Chapter]. I did other things, but I don't remember the timing. I did other work in conservation in my own [Contra Costa] county, and I did it under the name of the Club, and I did work in my own city [Lafayette, California]. But whether the award was mainly—I'd have to look at the date of that as to when I got involved in the other things at a local level. But I think they knew I was very busy fighting stuff locally as well.

03-00:24:03

Eardley-Pryor: It sounds like you were extremely [busy] because I have a note that you did a land-use survey for the Diablo Valley League of Women Voters.

03-00:24:08

Perrault: League of Women Voters, because I joined that when I got here. And again, I met many new people, so I immediately began to flow into the environmental movement in California, without any trouble, between the League of Women Voters and the Sierra Club.

03-00:24:20

Eardley-Pryor: Just building your networks even further.

03-00:24:21

Perrault: Right, yeah.

03-00:24:23

Eardley-Pryor: And at the same time you're also still involved in the Sierra Club at the national level?

03-00:24:28

Perrault: Yeah.

03-00:24:28

Eardley-Pryor: And you'd been attending [Sierra Club] board meetings since '74.

03-00:24:30

Perrault: Right, and I was, of course, chair of the Education Committee. And since I'd had the workshops for teachers in the East, then I set up right away the workshops for teachers nationally, because we had a lodge called Clair Tappaan Lodge. And by having teaching workshops there, it was also a way of bringing attention to the importance of the lodge, which some people wanted to say—"Well, why do we want to keep this lodge? We could sell it and make more money." And I said, "Well, I'm going to run teachers' workshops there," which I did for thirteen years, based on the model—

03-00:25:05

Eardley-Pryor: At the Watson Ecology Workshops.

03-00:25:06

Perrault: With my friends, and the same staff, as from the East.

03-00:25:08

Eardley-Pryor: That's great.

03-00:25:08

Perrault: So then we were able to—I was able to get it in *Sierra* magazine, and I didn't have to pay to have the ad in there. I had to fight lots of bureaucratic Club stuff, like trying to get my workshop announced in the magazine, because, you know, we didn't have any funds. I didn't pay my staff. They wanted me to pay to have an ad in *Sierra* magazine. And I said, "Look, this is going to serve your lodge, and I can bring teachers from around the country."

03-00:25:35

Eardley-Pryor: Why was Clair Tappaan Lodge such an important thing for you? Why did that place stand out?

03-00:25:39

Perrault: Well, it was built by volunteers. It was inexpensive. It was in a beautiful place. And I'm trying to think—my first impressions of it. I guess I went there a couple of times, but I loved the camaraderie of it, everybody helped serve the dinners, wash the dishes. They had events in the family room with the fireplace. You know, it was just—it was part of the Club's *history*. And I knew some of the people probably, as well, that had helped create it.

Because when I first came to California, Phillip, my husband at the time, everybody knew him, and he knew all these people. And so they became, immediately, friends of mine. I felt like I had married the history of the Club, in a way, since he had started when he was sixteen or younger into the Club. So I began to meet many, many people quickly through *him*.

03-00:26:42

Eardley-Pryor: Was that an incentive for you to become more and more involved as well? Meeting all these people that are part of this world and then—?

03-00:26:48

Perrault: No, I didn't really need an incentive to get involved. [laughing] No, it just—that was my purpose in life. The two major things was protecting as much of the beauty of nature that was in jeopardy, the coast being one of them; and the other was the environmental education aspect, which then later grew into a broader concern about teaching for sustainable development as well. So I expanded the environmental ed. to be broader, and working with national organizations, like the National Association of Environmental Educators [NAAEE] I was able to make presentations to them, to speak not just as environmental educators but broader. [I] also worked with a group that was doing global education, and bringing the larger global concerns to

environmental education, which was really more parochial. For just your local area—you know, recycle, have clean water where you live locally, clean air, and all that.

But a broader connection, I thought, should be made in looking at environmental education in collaboration with global educators, and with this whole issue of equity around sustainable development and the importance of economics *and* environment, to not just isolate environmental ed. to be only that. So that grew over time by keeping my focus both in the conservation side of issues and their relationship to other areas like equity and economics, but always having a strong environmental base.

Because there was a struggle by the environmental educators to even be able to penetrate the schools and assure that there would *be* such programs within the schools, because they had so much else they had to cover. And so you couldn't really have a separate environmental ed. class. You had to be able to integrate it with all the other kinds of classes you had. But teachers didn't really know how to do that, so they needed teacher training. So you had to speak up for more teacher training, which was the kind of thing we spoke about when I was on the Environmental Education Advisory under George Bush.

03-00:29:00

Eardley-Pryor: George H.W. Bush.

03-00:29:01

Perrault: Yes, George H.W. Bush. It was to broaden and argue for more interests by the states in having environmental ed. be in the curriculum of the schools in some form.

03-00:29:17

Eardley-Pryor: Wrapped into the curriculum in whatever way they felt would fit?

03-00:29:20

Perrault: Right, yeah.

03-00:29:21

Eardley-Pryor: The process of your environmental work, and your own education, seems to start from a very local—that here in my backyard I'm growing a garden as a child, and trying to save a piece of land as a part of the school that you were working at—to expanding to eventually become more regional when you moved to Boston. I'm thinking about the coastal work that you did, coming to California, doing more coastal work, even expanding up to Alaska. And you just spoke now about this global focus. When did the global issues come onto your radar as, "Here's where we need to move as the next stage?"

03-00:30:01

Perrault: I think—well, I'd have to look at the timing of when, as president [of the Sierra Club], I helped to move the international program from New York to

Washington, DC, because it was a need the Club had. It wasn't being successful enough on environmental matters unless it could have its staffpeople in DC, where the action was and the power centers were, to make a difference. And so there was some point there that I—because I had to become involved in it, I was learning more about international—but then there was also, when the Brundtland Commission Report on *Our Common Future* came out, the timing of that also had created an interest in me as well.

03-00:30:46

Eardley-Pryor: Yeah, I think I can totally—

03-00:30:46

Perrault: So I'd have to look—

03-00:30:47

Eardley-Pryor: I think I can help with the dates on that, because this actually—that's a great segue to get into your work on the [Sierra Club] Board of Directors. You joined the Sierra Club Board of Directors in 1981. You served as vice president from '82 to '84.

03-00:31:01

Perrault: For conservation.

03-00:31:03

Eardley-Pryor: And '84 to '86 is when you were president of the Club.

03-00:31:05

Perrault: President, right, right.

03-00:31:06

Eardley-Pryor: So it was '84 to '86 when this international shift from New York to DC happened?

03-00:31:11

Perrault: Right, right.

03-00:31:12

Eardley-Pryor: And I know that the Brundtland Report was released in 1987.

03-00:31:15

Perrault: Oh.

03-00:31:16

Eardley-Pryor: So it was probably sometime between '84 and '87 that this sort of global focus came more on your radar in some ways.

03-00:31:21

Perrault: Right. Now, the focus in terms of global for educators, I'd have to look back on the dates on that. Because I had met with some important people that were studying and worrying about global education, including David [C.] Korten,

When Corporations Rule the World. He was a very good—we corresponded a lot about issues, and he was very—

03-00:31:45

Eardley-Pryor: How did you and David cross paths?

03-00:31:46

Perrault: Because of meeting some of the global educators, which I met through the National Association of Environmental Educators. I think that's how it all happened. But I have a lot of correspondence between David and myself, because I loved his writing and what he was focusing on, and he was very good friends with the global educators people.

03-00:32:06

Eardley-Pryor: Where was David then going in all this? What was his interest and what kind of things did he say?

03-00:32:11

Perrault: Well, he was concerned about the power of corporations internationally, and trying to form change and having people be aware and be educated to know what was going on. And that was really—he was one of the earlier writers on some of the concerns about the power of corporations in general.

03-00:32:30

Eardley-Pryor: I'm thinking about how that plays out for how education works in an environmental frame.

03-00:32:33

Perrault: Right, yeah, yeah. His books are right [there]. A couple of his books are on my bookshelf. [laughing] And I have letters of correspondence from David Korten for the archives.

03-00:32:42

Eardley-Pryor: Well, let's get into—because the international work does play a major role in both your presidency, but especially your later work within the Club. Let's talk about your rise into the Board [of Directors].

03-00:32:52

Perrault: Right. I loved being Vice President for Conservation. I just loved it, because I had to know all these issues, and many of them I had already become familiar with from my work in the East Coast with the League of Women Voters. And I had gone down to Washington, DC to be trained on solid waste matters. I had been concerned about sludge in the East Coast. There were just a whole number of land-use matters that were very broad, so I had a big background on these issues, and I was able to flow into many other issues that the Club was facing. And they intrigued me, because I was always intrigued about learning more about the various matters, whether it dealt with clean air or clean water. And of course I had, as a teacher in the Atlantic Chapter, had gone to hearings and tried to get teachers to hearings on clean air. So there was a whole broad area that I was familiar with, and I just became more

enriched with more materials, many of it supplied by the Club, because the Club staff were fighting some of these concerns. And I would have to sign letters—I didn't have to write them all, but I had to know what I was signing, and I had to be involved in many, many issues. It's all part of the binders of my work, and the kind of matters that the Club covered at that time.

There was another issue that when I was in the East Coast, working on environmental education, I became aware of agencies, and how you couldn't always trust the kind of material that they were printing up. And some of it had to do with nuclear waste issues. I remember that and being intrigued about the fact that the issue was complex. But if you started wading through it, you could find out where the agencies were either off base, or they were pushing a preference for some industry that wanted to move on a matter. And I remember being very intrigued by how complex things like that could be sorted out. And so—

03-00:34:53

Eardley-Pryor: And this happened on the East Coast, that realization of nuclear issues?

03-00:34:55

Perrault: Yeah. I just have that recollection of realizing, on that particular matter for some reason—it might have to do with hearings, but in material I came across. So then when I was Vice President for Conservation, it was like, "Oh, here's more issues, and they all interrelate in many ways," and I was fascinated by how some of these had an interrelationship.

But I was also aware of laws, that there were some federal laws, there were some state, there were some local, and knowing more about them—and where you could position yourself as a citizen once you were aware of what they were, and what your role could be as a citizen, in making comment.

And of course my work on testifying on Georges Bank, in the East Coast, gave me a lot of confidence too, that there was a role for the citizen to make a statement. And in that case, combined with the lawyers' help, we won the battle and stopped the drilling. [laughing] So each time you won, you got more power, and you just felt you could beat a lot of these other things that were happening, a lot of other concerns.

03-00:36:01

Eardley-Pryor: So you're taking more and more on, as—the more success you had.

03-00:36:02

Perrault: Right. And of course when I came to the Club, there were some people that specialized in some of these issues, and so I would learn more from them as well. There were people that—their major concern was on—either nuclear matters, or on air, or on water. I knew who they were, and so I learned from them as well, and—

03-00:36:22

Eardley-Pryor: Do you remember some of their—does anything come to mind about specific examples?

03-00:36:30

Perrault: Well, biotechnology might be one example. When I came into the Bay Area—because I had been [Sierra Club] president, and then the [Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG)] was forming a group to figure out, how should the Bay Area think about biotechnology?

03-00:36:48

Eardley-Pryor: So this is after your presidency, in the mid-eighties, late eighties?

03-00:36:50

Perrault: Just after I left the presidency.

03-00:36:51

Eardley-Pryor: Okay.

03-00:36:52

Perrault: So they knew I was—they put one environmentalist on this task force for biotechnology. And that was it!

03-00:36:58

Eardley-Pryor: Who was *they* again? Who's forming this task force?

03-00:36:59

Perrault: The [Association of Bay Area Governments]. And so I was asked to serve on it. I didn't know a lot about biotechnology at that point, but I learned a lot! And my job, of course, was to raise questions about, what should cities worry about if they were going to have a facility? What would they have to know about animal research? What would they have to know about ethics? There were a whole lot of questions that had to be considered, and what laws were in place for citing any of these facilities. Of course, the [Association of Bay Area Governments] were interested in increasing the economic development within its one-hundred-plus cities.

So I learned a lot by sitting on that, and eventually I used that knowledge to help the Club force a biotechnology task force. [laughing] And by that point, I had known who some of the key people were that could advise the Club, because I had been reading so much about biotechnology in general that I became pretty much aware of it all. And I remember having [much] correspondence with important people like [Margaret] Mellon. She was working with, I think it was—either the Environmental Defense Fund or Natural Resources Defense Council. And when I had questions about biotechnology, I would correspond with her, because she was one of the key environmental people, nationally, following that issue.

03-00:38:35

Eardley-Pryor: What were some of your hopes or concerns around biotech that came up through your work on the [ABAG] task force and then creating this [Sierra Club] task force on biotechnology?

03-00:38:42

Perrault: Well, when I look at the task force notes and what we accomplished, my contribution would have been how will the cities assure that they're not going to have concerns about air pollution from facilities? What are the questions they have to ask in an ethical sense? What kind of work is going to be done in biotechnology that might have an effect on the environment in general? Those kinds of things. But it was an interesting case where I got put on because of my being an environmentalist—"Who are we going to put on this thing?"—and then gradually becoming very much involved in the issue itself. And it remained with me for many, many years throughout my Club work, because there were questions—

03-00:39:31

Eardley-Pryor: Doing this biotech work?

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Perrault: —about bioengineered trees down the road.

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Eardley-Pryor: What's that?

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Perrault: One of my senior fellows, [Jim Diamond, in Sierra Club's International Conservation Fellow Program] was interested in that issue. And of course the forming of the task force itself and being an advisor on it. Then issues came up about genetic bioengineering. And so one of the staffpeople who left the Club actually asked me to help him when he started working more on bioengineering, genetic engineering, would I help advise him? So you know, it was just constantly, as in my whole life, meeting these people who then get involved in these things.

And the most recent thing that just happened to me; I was reading the paper the other day, the *Wall Street Journal*. Here we are now—and there was a discussion about the demilitarized zone, the DMZ [in Korea]. And I saw that one of the people raising the question is from Korea, Nial Moores, and he was a guy I worked with on flyways, and concerns about the flyways with Japan and Korea. And so now I'm saying that I have to write to Nial and congratulate him that he's speaking up on the DMZ, which had been a concern of mine down the road, when we talk about [my] international involvements. But it's that connection of people—and then keeping up the relationships.

03-00:40:54

Eardley-Pryor: That's important. Building these relationships, getting onto the [Sierra Club] Board of Directors, is a big deal. And then it helps open more doors and more

networking, more possibilities and more task forces that you can create and serve on.

What was the decision like [when] you joined the Board of Directors? You were elected to it in May 1981. With this early work, what was your decision-making process to go onto the Board? Were you asked? Did you say, "This is a goal, that I want to be a part of the top players here?" What were you thinking?

03-00:41:27
Perrault:

Well, that's where the power was in the organization. [laughing] And I had been a member of other parts of the national organization. And to move your agenda forward, like for environmental ed.—that was not a big agenda item for most of the board, and even to this day. It was not big, except that they did form a Sierra Student Coalition down the road, but that was not quite what I was talking about when I was working with environmental educators. I wanted to see the Club pay more attention to what was happening in classrooms and what was happening with young people, and how do you encourage more of these kinds of activities at the local level, through the Sierra Club? So I probably figured, in one sense, it was power. Another—I wasn't married to Phillip, but I had fallen in love with him already, and he was on the board. [laughing] I don't know whether that had a driving thing, but I think it was mainly because you could really get things done more. That's where you had to be, yeah. And we had the headquarters, and so, yeah.

03-00:42:22
Eardley-Pryor:

The headquarters? What do you mean?

03-00:42:23
Perrault:

The headquarters of the Club was where I was living, you know, in California. I don't know if I would have run to be on the board right away from the East Coast. But I saw it all in action because I had come as a delegate from the East Coast, and I saw it all in operation. And then, of course, once I became president, then I had many other issues that I also had to get myself up on. I was not as big on financial matters, you know, because I hadn't run an organization that had to deal too much with financial aspects.

03-00:42:56
Eardley-Pryor:

How did you learn? How did you get yourself up on the topic?

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Perrault:

Well, I read all the material that came out. I listened to what the Finance Committee people were talking about. You know, you had to either believe what they said was a certain way or not. And you gradually—you worked out on budgets and you began to learn so you could ask the right questions. And so you learned all the terminology in terms of the finances.

And then there were many other things. We were trying to move the headquarters so that we wouldn't have to pay rent. We would maybe buy a building. That was another big part.

03-00:43:27

Eardley-Pryor: That's a great story. So tell me what—this was the Space Patrol Committee? [laughter]

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Perrault: Space Patrol. Yeah.

03-00:43:33

Eardley-Pryor: Tell me about Space Patrol.

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Perrault: Well, we had to find a building we could afford. We had to find donors, including—my husband and I were big donors—to buy the building. And we had to have a reason why it made sense to buy one. We had to find one that was earthquake protected, or we had to find one that could be made earthquake resistant, which in the end is what we did. And so we ended up finally with one of the key board members, Phil Hocker, who was an architect. He was the chair of this committee that helped us interview various firms and find us locations and stuff. So we had to go visit them all. It was a very busy time, a big move, to have to do something like that. And there were other issues. I had to learn how to use the computers correctly, and I took a computer literacy course.

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Eardley-Pryor: Where did you do that?

03-00:44:22

Perrault: There was a program run for computer literacy for women, so I took a course on that. And then there was another one—the Fund Raising School. I took a course from them, so that I would be much more up on the terminology in the fundraising world, and how your whole board needed to be donors. That was ideal. Just all the kinds of things that people who are fundraisers have as law: how do you approach new donors? How do you [build a fundraising pyramid]? You get many donors at a low level, at a certain rate, then you get your big ones up at the top of the pyramid—and just all the things that people who are professional fundraisers do.

03-00:44:59

Eardley-Pryor: That's a lot of education.

03-00:45:01

Perrault: Right. So I briefed myself up on issues that I was not as familiar with, and that helped me through my career in the Club. Because I was often on fundraising committees in the California Sierra Club level, and various fundraising matters in issues we were fighting to protect at local levels, you know—

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Eardley-Pryor: Can you remember some examples of fundraising?

03-00:45:21

Perrault: Oh, auctions, for example. Fighting at a local [level] to protect land that's just down the street from me, we formed a group to fight a project called Palos Colorados. And in that, again, I had to form a coalition where we had meetings regularly, called the meetings, tried to find out what the power structures were, what other information we needed to know—things like construction grading issues. But we always had artists who sold their paintings, and we raised money that way. And so we would have fests of art shows every year. And they still continue to do some of that under the leadership of a young woman, who after my work of over ten years on that battle, she picked it up—thank goodness! And she was wonderful and still is doing that. So now I kind of support when I can, if I can get to a meeting or if I can get the money—

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Eardley-Pryor: Who is that person that took the mantle that you passed on?

03-00:46:14

Perrault: Suzanne Jones.

03-00:46:16

Eardley-Pryor: And that's the Palos Colorado[s] work?

03-00:46:17

Perrault: Right, right. And they're now building on that land, but at a much reduced level. We were able to get rid of the golf course they were going to have there. We were able to cut down on the grading that occurred and the number of houses, and they're still having their problems we warned them about on some of the flooding that would take place, and they've had a big mess and problems with it even to this day. But we prevented a road that would have come down right to the end of my road where I live, [it] would have come off this big project down into the town of Lafayette.

Which, as an aside, because I did all that work for the Palos Colorados project, which was in the town of Moraga, next door to Lafayette, Lafayette staff were interested in helping me. Because we had comments about visual effects that would affect Lafayette, even from its BART station looking at this project, if it had houses on top of this knoll that was pristine, you could see from the BART station. And so I ended up working, very closely, with the planning people in Lafayette. And eventually, they then put me on an environmental task force where we worked on sustainability for Lafayette. So that was down the road.

03-00:47:30

Eardley-Pryor: Your work snowballs in these wonderful ways.

- 03-00:47:31
Perrault: But that was a big thing. And I guess I served on that about five or six years, where we talked about all the kinds of things to make Lafayette more sustainable.
- 03-00:47:40
Eardley-Pryor: Well, take me back to this fundraising coursework. Where were you taking courses and learning all this?
- 03-00:47:46
Perrault: It was in San Francisco, the Fund Raising School, yeah. I have a certificate from it in my files. [laughing]
- 03-00:47:53
Eardley-Pryor: It sounds like it really served you well!
- 03-00:47:56
Perrault: Yeah, right. And the computer literacy was at a time when I had never really done much on a computer, so I really needed help. And I got support, of course, from staff, as president, to type all my letters and stuff—because I wasn't very good at doing any of that. I'm trying to think if there were any other courses I took. There was lobby training for the state of California.
- 03-00:48:20
Eardley-Pryor: But you had done lobby training out in the East Coast.
- 03-00:48:21
Perrault: I did a lobby work[shop]—one in the East Coast as well.
- 03-00:48:24
Eardley-Pryor: What was the California work, lobby training? How was it different?
- 03-00:48:27
Perrault: It was sort of the same, getting to know how the legislature worked in California and visiting people. So I took one for the Massachusetts program, then I also took one through the Club for how you deal with Washington. I went to a lobby training workshop in Washington, DC, where we learned to knock on doors and talk to the officials.
- 03-00:48:49
Eardley-Pryor: So from the state level to the national level, knowing how to move those organs of power?
- 03-00:48:53
Perrault: Yeah. How do you go and lobby, right. [laughing]
- 03-00:48:57
Eardley-Pryor: That's great work. When you joined the board in 1981, this is right around the time of the Reagan revolution. So Ronald Reagan sweeps into office—

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Perrault: And we get [James G.] Watt, right? Yes, right. [laughing]

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Eardley-Pryor: That's right. James Watt becomes US Secretary of the Interior under Reagan. And Watt served from 1981 to 1983, right at the beginning of your time on the Board of Directors. What do you remember from that time with regard to this new hostile role from the federal government on environmental issues?

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Perrault: Well, I didn't have to worry about the day-to-day stuff on it. I just had to sign letters with my title. I had to be able to speak on behalf of the Club when they needed a person to come, and sometimes I would go as the volunteer speaker on a matter. But—

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Eardley-Pryor: Give me an example of that. What do you mean: *you would be called to speak?*

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Perrault: Oh, well, you know, sometimes if the staff couldn't go and participate in a talk to somebody, they would say, "Can you go do it?" And then I—but again, I'd have to look at all my talks and my speeches, which ones did I go on. But I would be involved in knowing about the issues of concern under Reagan. For example, one of the speeches I gave was in Indiana, and that's when the press showed Watt saying I was to the left of Gloria Steinem.

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Eardley-Pryor: *You* were to the left?

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Perrault: Yeah, he called me to the left of Gloria Steinem. I think in part he was concerned about my work I'd done in offshore oil drilling. But I remember being in [South Bend,] Indiana—I think that's where the talk was, but I was invited. In many cases, I was invited by chapters. Usually the Club president was invited to go and give talks. The chapter would say, "Could you come to our event?" So the majority of the talks were to specific chapters. But when you talk to them, you talk to them about the issues that the Club was facing against Reagan, and what was happening under his administration. So I had to be briefed and be knowledgeable on all those matters.

03-00:51:00

Eardley-Pryor: And how did that process work? Were there staff members who would come and say, "Here are the issues." Would you—

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Perrault: I would sometimes ask for help, but they weren't really there to give too much help to volunteers. You could ask for *some* help, you know, or clarification. But there were many national materials that I could read. There were things

called the *National Report*. The Club had its own literature, and all I had to do was pull from that to write a speech. They didn't write speeches for you, no.

03-00:51:24

Eardley-Pryor: You were doing all that work.

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Perrault: They might do letters for you sometimes, to sign. But speeches—no, you did your own.

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Eardley-Pryor: And from your files, you gave a *ton* of speeches.

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Perrault: Yeah.

03-00:51:32

Eardley-Pryor: You were all over the country!

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Perrault: Right, right.

03-00:51:33

Eardley-Pryor: Being invited to a number of these things.

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Perrault: Right, yeah, I remember one particular one I was in Georgia, [at] the Georgia Chapter, and there was a young man, Bill Mankin. And he said, "Well, can we take a rowboat out in the water?" [laughing] You know, it was like after the talk or something. And so we're out there, and he's looking up at the sky, and he says, "You know what really concerns me? I'm worried about all the space debris." [laughing] And he was really an engaging kind of guy. And so I said, "You know, you might be interested in our International Committee." And in the end, he became involved, and he became quite an expert on forestry matters, where three environmental organizations, including the Club, helped pay him to do some forestry work. And it was just a wonderful. I loved the fact that I had met him in this rowboat, he's looking up in space and worried about the debris, and I pull him in, and he becomes a leader. There were many things like that. I would look for people when I gave my talks in chapters and see, who could I pull in?

There were some issues of concern in California about a place called Bolsa Chica. It was a place that the people in California, Southern California, were trying to save. And I was able to help them by connections of people I met in Washington, DC, who could maybe have something to do with helping on this wetlands protection.

So it was always connecting people on concerns they had when I'd visit. You know, what could I do to follow up and help their issue get some mileage? And I liked doing that. I liked the fact that I could contribute from my

knowledge of other people something that would enhance their work, and it was just very rewarding to do that.

03-00:53:23

Eardley-Pryor: On the topic of enhancement, the Club membership itself exponentially grew. It just grew leaps and bounds in this time period that you joined the national leadership on the Board.

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Perrault: Right, yeah.

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Eardley-Pryor: I have a note here that [in] 1980, membership was only 100,000. And by 1984, it was 350,000 members!

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Perrault: Yeah, because we had an enemy. [laughing] And when you have an enemy, you were able to [recruit.] It was from how many we had against [James] Watt.

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Eardley-Pryor: People wanted to join to fight against Watt?

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Perrault: Yeah, yeah, right.

03-00:53:50

Eardley-Pryor: How did that change the Club—or did it, all that growth? Or your experience of it, at least.

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Perrault: Well, I don't remember facing numbers. I just remember that we had many, many more activists and people. But I don't remember it as being something that I'm facing all of a sudden. The Club had to face it in terms of the financial matters. How would we increase and pay for outreach to all the people? How do we even go even higher in numbers—because we got a real taste for numbers. So we had a lot of membership surveys and meetings and discussion about how do you do outreach to get more members? And Denny Shaffer was a big promoter on a lot of the membership things.

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Eardley-Pryor: Yeah, it seems like direct mail was a pretty powerful tool at that time.

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Perrault: Direct mail was, right, at the time, right. So yeah, I guess in that respect we were—the financial matters became larger. Like how are we going to increase training for all the chapters? A big concern of mine was that the chapter [chairs] were really our managers, and we didn't do enough training of chapter chairs. And so at that time—that's when Sue Merrow was president—and I remember we did a joint letter together to try to encourage a gathering of

chapter chairs for the first time, where we focused more on them than we had been doing, because I—

03-00:55:19

Eardley-Pryor: That hadn't been done before?

03-00:55:21

Perrault: Not—we had a council where delegates would come. But not the chairs; they didn't come, the council delegate came. And in my opinion, it was the chairs that really should come. And you know, I have in my files so many [letters] thanking me so much for thinking of doing a session for chapter chairs, because they really needed help to run their chapters, and the council delegate wasn't really the one who was going to go back and say, "Well, this is what you should do for financial management." They needed to be trained in financial management and other affairs within the Club. So I thought that was a really big thing.

And I felt the same way about groups under chapters, because all the chapters had these local groups under them—many of them had a few. And they were sort of a weak link, in a way, because the chapters didn't necessarily have the capacity, unless they had staff—and they didn't all have staff. How were they going to manage the various groups under them?

03-00:56:14

Eardley-Pryor: Tell me about the structure—explain what you mean by chapters and groups.

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Perrault: Well, for example in the Bay Chapter, the Bay Chapter covers a number of cities—and counties. So in my county of Contra Costa County, we have our own local group, but we don't have a lot of people, a lot of members in it. The members are mostly at the larger chapter-level who don't necessarily know the details of what's at the county level. And so there was a need—if you're going to be really a strong organization, don't just be strong in your chapter. How about your outreach fingers to these local communities where the battles are very local? Because—

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Eardley-Pryor: And it gets more and more localized the more and more membership grows, as well?

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Perrault: Right, right. And I don't think that enough was ever done, even to this date, because I know we have a struggling—to this day we have a struggling local group near where I am. I don't attend it. I don't try to make it stronger, because I can't stand doing too much bureaucracy and meetings and things. I want to just get approval. Let me go do my thing and not have to wade it through too many people.

03-00:57:20

Eardley-Pryor: Do you think there was a dilution that happened with the effectiveness of the Club by growing so much? Did it become spread too thin on too many different issues?

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Perrault: No. I mean, my sense was we stayed strong at the national level, which then allowed many people to carry the name of the Club in the work that they did. We were very strong, we had many layers of organization. And we had what we called *issues committees* that did a lot of the work on those things throughout the Club. And they, in turn, networked with people in the chapters. For example, if there was a wetland concern, the wetland local people could talk to the issue committee at the larger level and get some help. We don't have those anymore, but you know—

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Eardley-Pryor: There are no more issue committees?

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Perrault: No. Not unless they're online. For example, there was a coastal committee where people actually met. I was actually an advisor to that at the Club nationally. And one of my dear mentors, Shirley Taylor, was chair of that. When they got rid of issues committees being able to meet, they put them all online. And so then they just talked to each other online, but they didn't necessarily meet face to face—and that came under the reorganization of the Club under Project ACT and Project Renewal.

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Eardley-Pryor: Oh, this is in the 2000s.

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Perrault: So, it happened to the international committee, too. We used to have meetings all the time, where we saw each other face to face and we could talk in great detail. But then we became just an online meeting, and it didn't work to the same degree.

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Eardley-Pryor: How do you think that impacted the Club itself?

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Perrault: Well, we're—now we're getting into a whole discussion of Project ACT and [Project] Renewal. That's really another session.

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Eardley-Pryor: Oh. Well, we'll table that.

03-00:59:06

Perrault: Yes.

03-00:59:06

Eardley-Pryor: One of the things when [I spoke] with Larry Downing—when you introduced me to him to speak in anticipation of our discussion, your and my discussion—Larry described you as coming out of the issues area of the Club.

03-00:59:20

Perrault: Right, as opposed to the outings area.

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Eardley-Pryor: Oh, okay.

03-00:59:25

Perrault: Yeah, because there were people that joined the Club either to be in outings and take trips, or they joined for the conservation side. So I came in on the conservation side. Gradually, of course, in my work I became very interested in what the outings people were doing, too, and so I was most interested in helping them do further work. Whether it was on trips they took internationally, would they please talk about some of the issues that we knew in the international committee when they went on their outing? In the local outings, I wanted to see them enrich—because I was doing outings myself. [laughing]

03-01:00:02

Eardley-Pryor: Well, let's talk about that. Because you started—in a previous discussion you talked about camping in college a little bit and later becoming very active in outings. But it was when moving to California [that] you and Phil would do an annual trip, is that right?

03-01:00:17

Perrault: Trips, right, because he had grown up through Ansel Adams trips when hundreds would go—like a hundred people would go, and they would have burros, and he would be a cook on the camp trip. So he had this history of the Sierra, and he knew the Sierra and loved it. And so I started going with him right away into these Sierra trips.

03-01:00:38

Eardley-Pryor: Were they these huge trips then?

03-01:00:38

Perrault: And every year we went on a Sierra trip, whether it was on mules, with my son on my chest, or it was—we went from the day he was born. I went since I came to the [California] Club. So I think there was over thirty or more years of the Sierra every summer. And that would be our life, where we would go to the Sierra, and then mostly with mules taking our stuff and then dropping us off, and then we'd walk home after being out about seven or eight days. So we always went to a different place in the Sierra, always. I don't think I ever repeated a trip in the Sierra in thirty years. It was always a different place.

And then gradually, I ended up going with Vicky Hoover, who was leading trips nationally, and then she stopped doing that. She just had friends, and I was one of her friends, luckily. It was wonderful.

03-01:01:28

Eardley-Pryor: You and Vicky did these trips in the 2000s.

03-01:01:30

Perrault: Yeah, yeah.

03-01:01:32

Eardley-Pryor: So in the early—

03-01:01:33

Perrault: I only went on her trips after the divorce from Phillip. Otherwise it was just family that went on these trips.

03-01:01:39

Eardley-Pryor: Tell me about some of these trips. What were the experiences—you said you went out with burros and then—?

03-01:01:43

Perrault: Well, then we would just camp, and then do day trips from the campsite. As the kids got older, then we would travel and have many different places that we would camp. And Phil, of course, was a fisherman. So most of the time we were going to be by a lake. But we would go cross-country; we wouldn't go on the regular trails. You would just go off where nobody was. You seldom saw anybody else in many of the lakes you went to. So he was able to fish everything he wanted.

03-01:02:13

Eardley-Pryor: Off trail?

03-01:02:13

Perrault: Yeah. Off trail, oh yeah, yeah. It was just—usually off trail.

03-01:02:18

Eardley-Pryor: What was that like, doing some of that? Had you done that kind of mountain backpacking for days at a time before?

03-01:02:23

Perrault: No, but I thrived on it, because I'd been a Girl Scout, and I loved camping. It was just—it was just something that was—just enriched my life tremendously. It was wonderful. And of course, it's spectacular! I could never have imagined that there was so much space and so much beauty. And then of course it was all tied into the Sierra Club and the understanding of John Muir—because I got to be much more into John Muir and the founder when I came to California, because it's much more knowledgeable to people when they're in California, because that's where he did most of his work. And also, I got to know him more because I was teaching teachers in Clair Tappaan Lodge, and

I used to bring the person—there were a couple of people that impersonated John Muir. I always had them there for my teachers. They would come.

03-01:03:07

Eardley-Pryor: Like Lee Stetson, and those kind of guys?

03-01:03:09

Perrault: Lee Stetson, yeah, he would come, and Frank Helling was the other one. And then I got to use the boyhood [book], [*The Story of My Boyhood and Youth*] that John Muir wrote. I would introduce the teachers' workshop with readings from that. And so I just became more entrenched in the John Muir aspect of things, to the point that there were various little segments where I spoke up, like for the John Muir painting that used to be in my office. Carl Pope didn't want it, and so I claimed it for my office when I was doing the international work. Then there was the Dunbar home of John Muir, where Phillip and I had gone to visit.

03-01:03:54

Eardley-Pryor: In Scotland?

03-01:03:55

Perrault: In Scotland, yes. And we met a wonderful environmental educator there, Graham White, and he took us to the John Muir house. And then a few years later, the John Muir house, they wanted to change it. Graham had a fit and he wanted some support, "Don't ruin, don't change the John Muir house," which, in the end, they did. They modernized part of it, and it isn't like when I went in it and saw it the way it was.

On the mantelpiece was a congratulations to the John Muir house from my county [Contra Costa], because we have a John Muir museum here [John Muir National Historic Site]. So there I'm walking in to Scotland, in Dunbar, and there's this congratulations from my county leader to the house, the old house—that was the old house. So then Graham White became a constant person that I knew through many, many years of activity. He ended up being a spectacular advocate for protecting bees.

03-01:04:48

Eardley-Pryor: In Scotland?

03-01:04:48

Perrault: And he actually came—bees worldwide, Graham, Graham.

03-01:04:52

Eardley-Pryor: But he's based in Scotland?

03-01:04:54

Perrault: He's based in Scotland, right. And he actually came to the Club a few years ago with Bruce Hamilton, our conservation director, in a meeting, where he shared his interest in the bees, and what more could we do to help in that matter. So Graham maintained this correspondence. But John Muir—so then

the John Muir museum [in my county] wanted to do a new focus on John Muir, so they asked me to be on an advisory for them. And so it's spattered throughout, this interest in Muir and this connection and this feeling.

03-01:05:27

Eardley-Pryor: [laughing] Muir-ology.

03-01:05:29

Perrault: And just this year, I took my ten-year-old to the John Muir house.

03-01:05:35

Eardley-Pryor: Your ten-year-old granddaughter?

03-01:05:36

Perrault: Granddaughter—my son Matthew's daughter. She had not been to the John Muir house [John Muir National Historic Site] and didn't know enough about him. So we had a quiet time there when she was able to get her ranger badge. I have a picture of her standing next to the statue of John Muir, and she's in a ranger hat. It's a darling picture. So we went through the Muir house, and I have a picture of her in front of the house for her, because I figured here she has two grandparents that were on the Board of Directors of the Sierra Club. She sure well should know John Muir! [laughing]

03-01:06:10

Eardley-Pryor: Absolutely! That's great. So the backpacking trips, too—you mentioned taking Matthew. Matthew was born in 1982?

03-01:06:20

Perrault: Yeah.

03-01:06:20

Eardley-Pryor: And you still went on a trip that year?

03-01:06:22

Perrault: Oh yeah, yeah. He was in a little thing, on my chest. And then when he was two—

03-01:06:28

Eardley-Pryor: Hiking with him, or on a burro—on a donkey?

03-01:06:30

Perrault: On the burro, yeah. Oh yeah, I carried him wearing that. And then I remember when he was two—two or three—he was on the pommel, and it kept hurting him, because he's sitting with me and he's bumping on the pommel. I had to put some diapers in front of the pommel, so he didn't get hurt while he's sitting there and we're on the burro.

03-01:06:48

Eardley-Pryor: You used diapers as the padding on the pommel? [laughter]

- 03-01:06:51
Perrault: Yeah, right.
- 03-01:06:52
Eardley-Pryor: That's beautiful.
- 03-01:06:53
Perrault: And then I also remember my daughter on one of the trips. It was raining a lot and we're in the tent with Matthew, and I'm helping her get one of the Girl Scout badges, by reaching outside the tent to find things that the badge required her to get. [laughter]
- 03-01:07:10
Eardley-Pryor: In the rain, just kind of sticking a hand out?
- 03-01:07:13
Perrault: Right, but we were doing some things—you know how these badges are. "Find three" of something—or whatever the badge was at that point. It was related to natural history issues. [laughing]
- 03-01:07:23
Eardley-Pryor: Great. I have a now one-year-old daughter, and I am anxious about—I am excited to get her out into hiking and camping, but also thinking gosh, that's a real challenge! What was it like, having babies and these young kids out in the wilderness for a week at a time?
- 03-01:07:39
Perrault: Well, it just limits how much hiking you'll do. But it's just like being out in a yard, right? As long as they're not sick. What could be more exciting to them? Climbing on rocks—I have just lovely pictures of my son just being a tiny little thing and enjoying the rocks and the dirt and climbing on things. And nothing to it! [laughing]
- 03-01:08:04
Eardley-Pryor: Speaking of Matthew being born in '82—a lot of people's first memories of you, at the national level, is coming into these Board meetings either visibly very pregnant or with Matthew in your arms.
- 03-01:08:19
Perrault: [laughing] Yeah.
- 03-01:08:21
Eardley-Pryor: So that was something that came up again and again. And I wonder if you realize what an inspiration you were to so many people—doing this amazing work that you're doing, while also taking on these roles as a mother and a partner. Yeah. Was that, was that—?
- 03-01:08:38
Perrault: Well, I kind of felt, probably—I don't remember being a model to anybody. I always felt that the Sierra Club people were all kind of alike, and that they probably did stuff like that, too. You know, that they were no different. We

were kind of—that was what was special about the Club in many, many ways—that you were a family. And everybody, that's what they liked to do. So it seemed kind of a natural thing.

03-01:09:06

Eardley-Pryor: It felt natural to bring family to be in that?

03-01:09:08

Perrault: Yeah, yeah. Or, it wasn't like I was doing something different than they would do. I think that's why I didn't think of myself in terms of a role model in any way like that.

03-01:09:20

Eardley-Pryor: Yeah, but you certainly—from the people I've spoken with—you were a role model. You did serve as a model for them. "Look at this person who's doing all of this work *and* also doing the work of a mother." That was really inspiring to a lot of people I spoke with.

03-01:09:35

Perrault: Yeah. I did have some help, too. I had a wonderful person, a young woman named Diane, who came and helped me at the house so that I didn't have to bring Matthew every time. It wasn't like he went to *everything*. And you certainly couldn't bring him into meetings of agency people. It wasn't going to be the same thing as the Club, you know. I had to have some coverage.

03-01:09:58

Eardley-Pryor: Let's take a little bit of a break here, and just give us a—

03-01:10:00

Perrault: Are you warm enough, by the way?

03-01:10:01

Eardley-Pryor: I feel great. This is—let's just take a little break here.

03-01:10:04

Perrault: Because I usually don't turn heat on at all. [interruption in recording]

03-01:10:09

Eardley-Pryor: All right, let's continue. Something that happened right around the time that Matthew was born is also that Gabrielle [your daughter] moved to live with you permanently. What was that like?

03-01:10:22

Perrault: Well, she was eleven years difference than my son, and it was wonderful to have her full-time. She had been on an alternate-year arrangement with her dad back east, and so we had alternated years. And she decided she just wanted to stay out here. So it was kind of nice for her. She had a little brother. But she also had her own life. She was doing different things than he was, and one of them was she was riding horses. We owned two horses, which—actually owned one horse. It was a quarter horse. And I had to take her to

riding lessons. So, of course, I had to hold Matthew in these cold barns a lot of times, I remember that. But she had her own life, and she went into shows, and she jumped horses. And then gradually she needed a different horse. But we were stuck with the other horse, so I had to learn to ride that horse—so we had two.

03-01:11:14

Eardley-Pryor: So you did this together with her?

03-01:11:16

Perrault: Yes. And—well, I didn't—I'd have to have help. When I had to ride the horse, then I had to have help with Matthew for his care. But I had to take care of her life as well, because that was what was important to her. And also, since Phillip owned a ranch, we had this great idea that we were going to take the horses down on the ranch, which we never ended up doing. [laughing] She mainly just worked in arenas, and various people she had in charge of the horses. But it was her special thing.

03-01:11:49

Eardley-Pryor: Was that a big shift for you, and Phillip as well, to now have a newborn and an eleven-year-old daughter in the house?

03-01:11:57

Perrault: Well, she was the same age as one of Phillip's sons, too.

03-01:11:59

Eardley-Pryor: Who was also living with you?

03-01:12:01

Perrault: Well, he came to be part of the time with us as well. And it certainly—when we went on vacation, times we went down to the ranch, he would go as well. But he [Phillip] had other sons, too. He had a family—he had four sons. And so we had a complicated existence. So I can't say that I felt anything change, we just kind of just got a little bit bigger interactions. But he was always busy with the Club, I was always busy with the Club; and busy at his office, and I was at his office, and it was kind of—it just all flowed together. [laughing]

03-01:12:35

Eardley-Pryor: Were you tasked with doing more of the care work with the others? Was your role also more of the care work with [your children as well as Phillip's children?]

03-01:12:51

Perrault: No, I didn't have to do too much caring, because he had wives, former wives, that took care of the caring for the most part.

03-01:12:59

Eardley-Pryor: But your job was—?

03-01:13:00

Perrault: But my job was to feed [laughing]—do all the food. And often many of them were visiting, so it was feeding them as well. But I liked cooking and doing all that kind of stuff. So I just fit it in when I wasn't at the Club and I was home with Matthew. But then my daughter had Girl Scouts, and Matthew had Cub Scouts, and so I was a scout leader, and I did things for the scouting organization as well, as one of my other chores.

03-01:13:30

Eardley-Pryor: What were some of those things? What do you mean?

03-01:13:33

Perrault: Well, I served on advisories for Conservation Day, for the Boy Scout headquarters in my county. And then, of course, I had to create programs along with my co-leader. So we had things for the boys they'd have to do, and so we'd take them to landfill sites. [laughing] Or other things related to environmental kinds of things. And there was careers day for conservation. We helped with that. So there were—not a big role that took me too far away from my Club work. But I did have to do other duties as a scout leader.

03-01:14:15

Eardley-Pryor: I don't know when you slept!

03-01:14:16

Perrault: [laughing] Well, when I look back on it all, I don't know how it fit in. I don't think I'd have the energy for it now, looking at it. But I must have had a lot of energy—that's all I can say.

03-01:14:25

Eardley-Pryor: Yes! Doing not only all this work, but then also doing all the reading and getting to become more expert on all this diversity of issues.

03-01:14:33

Perrault: Right, right. And then of course, having been a teacher, I was very much caring that the children had good support as they were growing. So I didn't want to neglect their upbringing either.

03-01:14:43

Eardley-Pryor: What do you mean?

03-01:14:45

Perrault: Well, many times they had to come with me to meetings, which they grew to hate. "Oh, not another meeting. I don't want to go to another meeting." But I always tried to make sure that there was something that was good for them, or something afterwards that would happen to—

03-01:14:58

Eardley-Pryor: What do you—give me an example.

03-01:14:59

Perrault: Well, you know, "If you come to this meeting, we can go to a movie on a different day," or whatever it was. You know, just something that would make them feel, "Oh, okay another meeting. All right, Mom." [laughing] Probably over-meeting them probably was not so great. But they turned out okay. [laughing]

03-01:15:18

Eardley-Pryor: Good kids. Do they also have an appreciation for nature? Do they enjoy hiking and the outdoors?

03-01:15:24

Perrault: Oh, Matthew always loved hiking. From the day he was born, I swear he was the greatest little hiker. My daughter did not like it. To this day, she doesn't like it. In fact, we always joke about how she was so upset one time, she just threw a backpack down the mountain. She was so upset, she just wanted to go home.

03-01:15:42

Eardley-Pryor: On a backpacking trip?

03-01:15:42

Perrault: Yeah. So we got it. But no, she—when she married, even her husband didn't want [to camp.] They wanted to have a shower, a regular shower anytime they wanted. They weren't big into camping. But Matthew always kept the love of camping.

03-01:15:56

Eardley-Pryor: That's neat. Kids are their own people, aren't they? When you were on the [Sierra Club] Board, you very quickly moved into the Executive Committee, becoming Vice President, as you mentioned '82 to '84. And that was while Denny Shaffer was president.

03-01:16:11

Perrault: Right.

03-01:16:13

Eardley-Pryor: Other people that were there—Sanford Tepfer was the secretary, Peg Tileston—

03-01:16:20

Perrault: Peg Tileston, right.

03-01:16:21

Eardley-Pryor: Tileston, and then [Marlene] "Marty" Fluharty was also on this executive committee with you.

03-01:16:25

Perrault: Yes.

03-01:16:26

Eardley-Pryor: Tell me a little bit about some of the personalities of the Board. Who were the people that stood out for you?

03-01:16:30

Perrault:

Well, everybody had their own specialties that they liked. Denny was very big on membership drive. He was also wonderful for the finance issues. He understood them. He was a businessperson himself. Marty Fluharty was always doing outreach on management and organizational issues. She cared a lot about the Club, a very warm person. And Peg Tileston, she was from Alaska—I think she was—Alaska, right. So she cared about those issues.

But I never did too many things with any of the Directors, because they were from different states, so we would see each other at meetings. You know, they were all from all over the place. And so you would become close maybe with some of the California ones, for example, who I would see more regularly, like at Sierra Club California meetings, which were always held a couple of times a year.

But I always admired Denny Shaffer's ability to move things and to raise questions and to not be worried if he upset staff. [laughing] In fact, he married a staff person as well, and so did Larry Downing. They married friends that were staffers. I always liked the people that were on the Club board. We may not see each other a lot, but there was a camaraderie. There was a nice feeling. And I think when I was President of the Board, I tried to keep people together. And for a lot of—even when we had hard times we had to go through, we were very unified, even though we were of different sorts, in many ways.

03-01:18:09

Eardley-Pryor: Well, let's talk about some of those topics. Also, on the topic of people, David Brower makes a grand return to the Board of Directors in 1983.

03-01:18:18

Perrault:

Right. And I served on a few advisories with David.

03-01:18:22

Eardley-Pryor: What was that like?

03-01:18:22

Perrault:

David and Phil [Berry] had a long relationship, because he was a mentor to Phil when Phil was sixteen, and he went on the trips with Ansel Adams, as well. So he was kind of somebody that—where Phil used to go to David's home, and he knew David's wife. So he was kind of somebody that I was very familiar with because Phil had been familiar with him. But David was always his own person, you know. David was a showman, and he had his problems. And the Club has—the history, I think of where he'd been released because of the financial issues on the [exhibit] format books and the stuff that he had promoted at the time. But he was a person who you rallied to some of his interests because he was always there for the Club. He always cared—not the

Club, I meant the *movement*. He was a person of the movement. But he didn't do the same kind of local little things. He wanted to do the big stuff. So that was a difference in the way we operated, in terms of our work.

03-01:19:35

Eardley-Pryor: Was there any outstanding animosity with his return to leadership sessions?

03-01:19:38

Perrault: Well, he didn't attend a lot of them. Yeah, when he returned, he didn't attend a lot of the meetings. In fact, there was a discussion about asking him to resign because he really didn't come to a lot of the meetings. And he could be divisive. He would join activists on the outside who were trying to change the Club. He would support [slate politics]. And it irritated Board members because he wasn't thinking of the whole organization in the same way the rest of them were. He was sometimes thinking of himself and his issues he wanted to promote. And if it got in the way—[if] bureaucracy got in the way, as he would call it, probably—then he would be upset and not show up.

And then, he also took a strong relationship to one of our young presidents, Adam Werbach. And that was a very divisive kind of election as to who should be President of the Club, when that election was held. So David stood up for Adam Werbach. That was somebody he was promoting.

03-01:20:44

Eardley-Pryor: In the nineties, whenever Adam was president, the youngest person—?

03-01:20:46

Perrault: Right, well—yeah. And that was a Board election where it was going to be myself, or Adam possibly, to become president. And Adam became president.

03-01:21:00

Eardley-Pryor: Oh!

03-01:21:01

Perrault: Yeah.

03-01:21:01

Eardley-Pryor: Did that create tension between you and David Brower?

03-01:21:04

Perrault: No, no. I never let that get in the way. I could have predicted the problems.

03-01:21:09

Eardley-Pryor: Tell me a little bit about the mechanics of how Board—once you're on the directorate, how does one decide to join or make an offer to join the Executive Committee?

03-01:21:20

Perrault: Oh, the Board just decides who they think is the best to be, they—

- 03-01:21:25
Eardley-Pryor: Do you nominate yourself?
- 03-01:21:25
Perrault: No, no. They—well, you say you're interested, or they say, "We want you to be."
- 03-01:21:29
Eardley-Pryor: In a particular position? "I am interested in being secretary." "I am interested in being president." Is that how it works?
- 03-01:21:33
Perrault: Right, or you encourage people to do the positions, yeah.
- 03-01:21:36
Eardley-Pryor: I see.
- 03-01:21:38
Perrault: But usually the Board looks and sees who has the time, who's strong. It's a combination. And other people say, "Well, I'm ready to run." And somebody says, "Well, I want to run against you." And then the Board has to decide and vote when there's a problem like that.
- 03-01:21:53
Eardley-Pryor: Is it an open vote? Or closed ballot?
- 03-01:21:54
Perrault: No, it's closed. Yeah, it's closed on the Board. But it gets out—sometimes it gets out. I think that vote got out, about the Adam [Werbach] presidency vote.
- 03-01:22:06
Eardley-Pryor: Did that change your and Adam's relationship in any way?
- 03-01:22:09
Perrault: No, no. He became president. That's the way it was, and he did his thing.
- 03-01:22:18
Eardley-Pryor: Some of the other issues that come up timewise to think about while you were VP of Conservation, on the Board in '83—acid rain becomes more and more of an issue. Was that an issue that was on your radar, or on the Sierra Club's radar?
- 03-01:22:30
Perrault: Not any more than any other issue, yeah. All the environmental issues—like I didn't have a hierarchy of interests, except for the ones I was more familiar with, like offshore drilling was always a big one, to this day. I mean, I went and testified on the East Coast last year when Trump wanted to remove the moratoriums. I testified at—it was kind of a—it wasn't exactly a hearing. They had these booths with the agencies, and you went around booth to booth. And I gave them the big spiel, which they typed in, my comments. But it wasn't an open-enough hearing, because that's the way the Trump

people were required to do it. But I still have maintained my interest in that issue, to this day, and I will always have that. And if they dare try to come into California—in that case it was the Georges Bank they were going after again—I will speak up.

But acid rain? I'm not the same way about acid rain. It's just—if there's something that has to be done about it at the time I was President, then we took the immediate steps that were required, based on whether it was a regulation meeting or it was something in danger. But there were some issues I loved more than others. [laughing]

03-01:23:38

Eardley-Pryor: What were some of those issues—you've mentioned oil, what else?

03-01:23:39

Perrault: Well, land use overall became a big one, because of my work in the League of Women Voters and the land-use programs that I ran. And so I took that same issue into California. And eventually I was placed on the General Plan Congress for [Contra Costa] county, and that was on overall land-use matters. And my present position for many years now, on the Greenbelt Alliance board, is about land use, but also concerned about how do you find housing for people at the same time you're looking for preserving land? And there's a competition for both. So, land use overall. And then of course the broader concern about sustainability. That came later, after my work on President Clinton's Council [on Sustainable Development].

03-01:24:26

Eardley-Pryor: In the early 1980s, what was your decision to become president about? When you decided, "I'm ready for this, I'm going to run for president," where were you at then?

03-01:24:39

Perrault: Well, I can't remember exactly, other than I knew I would be good at it. [laughing] And enough people encouraged me to run, and they hadn't had a woman for a *long* time.

03-01:24:53

Eardley-Pryor: Certainly not in the modern era. You were the first modern [woman] leader of the Sierra Club.

03-01:24:56

Perrault: The second—yeah, I was the second woman president at all. Yeah, and then after that, many women became president.

03-01:25:02

Eardley-Pryor: And women had served on the Board as well. You mentioned the other Executive Committee members when Denny Shaffer was president were women as well.

03-01:25:10

Perrault: Oh yeah, right.

03-01:25:11

Eardley-Pryor: So the Club had a number of women in leadership roles.

03-01:25:13

Perrault: Right.

03-01:25:15

Eardley-Pryor: But not in *the* leadership role.

03-01:25:17

Perrault: Right. I think part of it had to do with my experience in so many areas, that I just had command of a lot of issues. I also—I don't know, they probably didn't know this when I became President, but I was always known to run a good meeting. [laughing] And I had experience doing that in the League [of Women Voters] and other places.

03-01:25:38

Eardley-Pryor: And that's important.

03-01:25:38

Perrault: Yeah.

03-01:25:40

Eardley-Pryor: Very important for the Board. When you ran for President, you mentioned just now, some of the things you continue to care about—offshore oil drilling, education you had mentioned earlier, land use. What were your priorities as President of the Club? Where did you want to move the Club during your leadership term?

03-01:26:00

Perrault: Well, keep it financially sound was always a big one, you know. Increasing membership was always a priority. Being able to plan ahead, so you could know what you would consider. We had these processes called priority processes, in which you had to run it through the membership, you know, “What should the priorities of the Club be?” So that I had known from my work as Conservation vice president. So there was a lot of that. And the fact that you needed to be able to plan ahead. So we had planning committees formed. The building we mentioned before, was a big one.

03-01:26:41

Eardley-Pryor: Space Patrol.

03-01:26:42

Perrault: It was also tied into financial. Enhancing the strength of volunteers, training. Because I did not see—and there was not, at the time I came onto the Board, enough training like I had seen with the League of Women Voters, for what they did for their people in the East Coast when I was there. And I thought

there should be an enhancement of organizational effectiveness training for people.

03-01:27:09

Eardley-Pryor: So you brought that experience in the League of Women Voters into your leadership role in the Club?

03-01:27:13

Perrault: Right, because I always felt the League had trained me better than the Club that I was part of in the East Coast, and then coming to the West. And they became quite good at doing training programs for people.

03-01:27:28

Eardley-Pryor: So how did you—?

03-01:27:28

Perrault: But it was not—at that time, it was not.

03-01:27:31

Eardley-Pryor: How was that training enacted within the Club?

03-01:27:35

Perrault: Probably through the Council, yeah. I know there was—

03-01:27:38

Eardley-Pryor: What's the Council?

03-01:27:39

Perrault: The Council is when each chapter could send a delegate to the major national meetings. They still can do that.

03-01:27:45

Eardley-Pryor: And so training would happen during those Council meetings?

03-01:27:47

Perrault: Right.

03-01:27:50

Eardley-Pryor: When you think back about your time as president—and this is a huge organization. It's a \$20 million annual budget. There's, at this point, almost 350,000 people that are members, and growing. What were some of the challenges that you remember experiencing—maybe that were different from your time as Vice President of Conservation to becoming President? Was there a difference?

03-01:28:14

Perrault: It's hard to sort it out, because we did have a lot of issues that were rising in the membership. So one of them was the population. The people in the—population activists, some of them wanted us to take a stand on immigration. So that was a very controversial matter.

03-01:28:33

Eardley-Pryor: It was starting to bubble up.

03-01:28:34

Perrault: It was, that was bubbling up. We [also] had the concern about the people that were worried about nuclear proliferation. They wanted to use a million dollars of our budget—they wanted to make it the big priority, *the* major priority—and of course, that's not the way the Club worked. You didn't just do it by petition. And we didn't. That wasn't the Club's *biggest* priority. We had many other things that were part of our background, like concern for forests and concern for clean water and air. So we weren't going to take—or, at least, a lot of us didn't feel we were going to take that amount of money and put it onto the nuclear matter. So that became a petition process from some of the members. They wanted to change the way the Board did its priorities, and make nuclear a much bigger one and spend more money on it than we did on other issues.

03-01:29:23

Eardley-Pryor: Well, let's pause on that, because I'm interested and also not quite clear on how that worked. You talked about the priorities being formed kind of from the grass-roots up.

03-01:29:32

Perrault: Right, right.

03-01:29:32

Eardley-Pryor: There was this process of—?

03-01:29:33

Perrault: They wanted to do it by petition, because we didn't make their priority the top and put all the money to it.

03-01:29:42

Eardley-Pryor: So the membership, when they were saying, "Here are our priorities," this small group said, "Nuclear is not one of them, and it needs to be?"

03-01:29:48

Perrault: Yeah.

03-01:29:48

Eardley-Pryor: So what does *petition* mean?

03-01:29:50

Perrault: Oh, they petition to have it as a vote of the membership. They wanted it on the ballot. And that's the same—the immigration people wanted the Club to make immigration part of its population work and spend more money on it. So they had to go the ballot route because the Club wasn't listening to them to do it the way they wanted it.

And the same for the forestry matter. When the forest people wanted no commercial logging on public lands, they weren't getting the way that they wanted because the Board would say, "Well, listen, we're not—it's okay in some areas that have already been forested. We have to do some maintenance and some logging there." And there were other concerns that if you put a "No Commercial Logging on Public Lands," it may affect what happens in other countries, when people go and try to rape those other countries outside of the US. That was one of the arguments that some of the members of the Board were saying, "You're going to put the pressure there." And other people felt you might also put the pressure on pristine areas outside of the federal forest lands within the United States, by arguing for no commercial logging on the federal lands. And so when activists weren't happy about the way the Board wasn't addressing their issues, then they went the petition route to get signatures to put it on the ballot of the Club.

03-01:31:13

Eardley-Pryor: And the ballot is what got sent out to the members and saying—?

03-01:31:16

Perrault: Right, and then the Board—

03-01:31:16

Eardley-Pryor: Here are the ten things that could be priorities in the unit—?

03-01:31:21

Perrault: No, that didn't—no. It would be when there would be a national election, there would be an item on there called a resolution: "Do you like this position, or the one that the Board has suggested instead?" And that's how it got on the ballot during an election time period. When you were voting for Directors, you were also voting for these resolutions. Should it be this way, or this way? Because the priority—other priority process was never on the ballot. Those priorities were just done in meetings, and contributions sent in by Chapters and other activists, as to what might be the major focus. And in the end the Board decided from all the listening to everything, "Here's what the priorities will be."

03-01:32:04

Eardley-Pryor: I see.

03-01:32:04

Perrault: And then if anybody was unhappy, and they didn't get their priority heard, then they'd go, "Okay, we're going to go on the ballot."

03-01:32:09

Eardley-Pryor: The petition route.

03-01:32:10

Perrault: Right.

03-01:32:11

Eardley-Pryor: And this nuclear proliferation issue in the early eighties, when there's a re-inflamed Cold War that gets close to being more and more hot under Reagan—there's the Star Wars military funding.

03-01:32:25

Perrault: Right, right.

03-01:32:26

Eardley-Pryor: There's all these new nuclear weapons that are being proposed. What do you remember—what were the issues that you were concerned about with that?

03-01:32:33

Perrault: It had to do with how much the Club was going to allocate its resources in its work *towards* those issues. It was not that the issue itself was the problem. It was that somebody would say, "Well, we want it all—so much of it to go." And a lot of it was very strident, and sometimes there was slate politics around those issues.

03-01:32:57

Eardley-Pryor: What do you mean by that—slate politics?

03-01:32:59

Perrault: Well, for example, in the case of the logging, commercial logging, they also wanted to say, "Well, we'll get the Board to do what we want by running a slate of people on petition." Because if you didn't get nominated by the nominating committee, then you could get certain signatures—you had to get a certain number of them and run. It's the same—one time I had to run a petition because I wasn't nominated by the nominating committee, so I went on petition. But you had to have all these signatures. So they could do the same thing. They could get themselves on the Board. They wanted to take *over* the Board.

03-01:33:34

Eardley-Pryor: And that was the slate.

03-01:33:34

Perrault: So during [my] presidency, I remember just a lot of time taken up with having to cajole or to clarify. Then you had to have lawyers, because people were misusing the Club name on many of these issues. So—it was also the one for forming gay and lesbian groups within the Club. That was another—

03-01:33:52

Eardley-Pryor: Oh. Well, that's another topic.

03-01:33:53

Perrault: I'm just saying—yeah.

03-01:33:54

Eardley-Pryor: Let's talk about that.

03-01:33:54

Perrault: Okay.

03-01:33:55

Eardley-Pryor: So that was during your presidency. What was the issue with gay and lesbian Sierrans?

03-01:34:00

Perrault: They wanted to have groups within the—

03-01:34:04

Eardley-Pryor: Who is *they*?

03-01:34:05

Perrault: Well, promoters of—gay and lesbian members wanted to be able to have a hiking—they wanted to have a group for outings that would be called a gay and lesbian group. And so they started in the Bay Chapter, and that became a controversial issue within the Club, including my concerns as well about why would they want to isolate themselves and have something based on sexual preference as a hiking thing? And so it was at a time when society was not as open as it is now, you know. I'm sure I'd have a different viewpoint now than I did then. [laughing]

But I remember being disturbed as an activist, like, "Well, why aren't they hiking with *us*? Aren't we all kind of the same? Are we going to have a hiking group for the Catholics? Are we going to have it based on religion? Are we going to—where does this end?" They had a point to be made, because there was a Solo Sierrans, where people who weren't married could hike together. [laughing] Single Sierrans—something like that. So they had some justification for it, but it just became kind of an issue. That never went to the ballot. That was not one of those items.

03-01:35:24

Eardley-Pryor: How did it get resolved?

03-01:35:28

Perrault: Well, the [Bay] Chapter itself refused to allow it. There was a tied vote there for a while. And then I guess how it got resolved—gradually, I guess people realized, "Well, they had a right. You couldn't really deny them." And it started in the Bay Chapter. And it turned out to be, literally, just hiking. Although there had been some comments by people in the gay community—"We want to join our cause with yours." And that I found disturbing, because I—

03-01:36:03

Eardley-Pryor: Why?

03-01:36:04

Perrault: Because we had our cause, which was environmental protection, and we were an environmental organization. We weren't one on human rights, to go that

route. I didn't want to join our cause with your cause—and yet the people that were trying to organize the hiking group were not necessarily saying that. And in the end, that's really all they wanted to do, was hike together. And I think it's proven to be that's where it is. Some of the other people that were in the gay community, who wanted to get strength from our strength, that never occurred. They didn't use the Club that way. But there had been some effort to suggest that maybe people should join the Club so that they could get this result of concern about gay and lesbian [issues].

But the Club did—there was a time when the Colorado—there was a Colorado boycott about gay and lesbian activities, and the Club was very strong in speaking up about we didn't think that that was the right thing to do against gays and lesbians in Colorado. I recall we spoke up on it. And I felt strongly too, that to speak up—that the Club didn't want to do things in Colorado if they're going to act like that. The state of Colorado was doing things anti-gay, and we did, I think, take a position as a Club. But again, it's fuzzy what the details were on that.

03-01:37:28

Eardley-Pryor: That's interesting, because in thinking about—in Colorado Springs, the Focus on the Family organization, the pretty evangelical, sort of right-wing, family evangelical work is based there in Colorado.

03-01:37:42

Perrault: Yeah, I think we were concerned about Colorado because we had Club members that lived there and worked there. We had staff that worked there, and it was—

03-01:37:52

Eardley-Pryor: Yeah, Bruce Hamilton's from Colorado, isn't he?

03-01:37:53

Perrault: Who?

03-01:37:54

Eardley-Pryor: Bruce Hamilton. Isn't he a Coloradan?

03-01:37:56

Perrault: I can't remember where he's from.

03-01:37:59

Eardley-Pryor: Another major issue that came up during your pres[idency]—

03-01:38:02

Perrault: Oh, and by the way, just on the nuclear thing. In the end, I remember meeting with some of the activists and saying, "Let's find a way we can move your concern about this issue in such a way." And that's when I asked Anne Ehrlich to chair the Military Impacts on the Environment [Committee], which she agreed to do. And we brought in some of the so-called "dissidents" at the time on the issue, to work with her. And they thanked me for doing that, because I

didn't want to see the hostilities continue. And she [Anne] was able to have meetings where they could then make comment as a committee on some of the things that were happening in the US on those matters.

03-01:38:47

Eardley-Pryor: On nuclear issues?

03-01:38:48

Perrault: Yeah, right.

03-01:38:48

Eardley-Pryor: Now, was that the same—the nuclear proliferation concern is the Military Impacts [on the Environment Committee]?

03-01:38:54

Perrault: Yeah.

03-01:38:54

Eardley-Pryor: Yeah, those were—

03-01:38:55

Perrault: Yeah, it was all—it was the whole gamut of the military getting involved in uranium depletion—whatever it was, all kinds of things like that. She had a very broad agenda that they ended up working on. And it considered some of the people that had been in opposition to the Board over the whole matter.

03-01:39:12

Eardley-Pryor: How was Anne Ehrlich on your radar? How did you think to tap her to chair this?

03-01:39:15

Perrault: Because she had been—was she a Board member at that point? I knew her through population work, too, and she had spoken up about some concerns—I forget quite how I figured she was the best person. She was a great person, anyway, on lots of things. I don't know whether she was already with me serving on the Board or not, because she wouldn't have headed a committee if she was a Board member. So I think that came afterwards.

03-01:39:44

Eardley-Pryor: I think that's right.

03-01:39:45

Perrault: Yeah, yeah, so I just knew of her through work on other stuff.

03-01:39:49

Eardley-Pryor: Can we talk a little bit about population and what your views were? Where did you come out on this issue?

03-01:39:54

Perrault: Oh, I was very strong on the population. We had a Population Committee, and very strong on the work we were doing in family planning. Particularly

internationally, as well, trying to assure that if you took care of people's needs and helped them—and had family planning support—they wouldn't necessarily have more kids. And so you could cut down the population on the larger arena that way.

03-01:40:15

Eardley-Pryor: Why do you think that was an important issue? Why was population important?

03-01:40:19

Perrault: Well, it was always a Club concern. We had a Population Committee for years that did work on pushing for—just have one kid, if you can. You know, try to eliminate what you—don't have more. We had—they were working on an international program. They were funded separately, by donors who cared about the issue. Alan Weeden was one of the donors at the time. So it was always a Club issue, separately funded. It wasn't out of the regular Club budget for the most part.

But when people wanted to tie and put immigration limits coming into the country, it became more of a divisive issue. And that's when the Board said, "Wait a minute. We're going to be neutral on immigration." And you can imagine, knowing today's situations on immigration, how that could have gotten out of hand. And there was no reason. There were population-stabilization groups, there were all kinds of other groups that wanted the Club to take on immigration as one of its concerns, and we said no. So then they wanted to do a petition to force the Club to do that.

03-01:41:35

Eardley-Pryor: Tell me a little more about your background for population. Why do you think limiting population was important?

03-01:41:39

Perrault: Well, because you could see the statistics constantly raised by Paul Ehrlich, as an example. That there was such a carrying capacity that the world had, that if you kept increasing the numbers, it would just drain further. And we were always told, you know, that this incremental number will get bigger and bigger and bigger, in the whole world. In addition to which, the more people you had, the more impact it was going to put on scarce resources to support them all. And so it was just common knowledge that if you were an environmentalist, you were aware that population was one of those issues.

03-01:42:18

Eardley-Pryor: Was that controversial?

03-01:42:19

Perrault: Zero—remember zero, it was population—

03-01:42:21

Eardley-Pryor: ZPG [Zero Population Growth]?

03-01:42:22

Perrault: ZPG was a big promoter of the whole concern. And so it was just something you learned and you took as a given.

03-01:42:32

Eardley-Pryor: Within the Club?

03-01:42:34

Perrault: Well, in society. I didn't just feel that way because I was a Club member. I felt that way as an individual growing up in the world that we just learned through ZPG and others that promoted that matter, that it was a concern. "Don't have so many kids yourself."

03-01:42:50

Eardley-Pryor: Why do you think it was so controversial then?

03-01:42:53

Perrault: Oh, it was the immigration part of it that was controversial. Because if you started to bring that in, that had a background like, "Who are these people? Who's coming in? How many should come in? Where might they come from?" The whole thing where you see the racism stuff, aspects of it. It was just a minefield we didn't need to get into. And still, we could still have a very good population program. Which, you know, we still have to this day.

03-01:43:18

Eardley-Pryor: And just not have immigration be connected to it?

03-01:43:19

Perrault: Right. That was the controversial part of it.

03-01:43:24

Eardley-Pryor: When you became President, the shift from Vice President to President, was there a shift in how you pictured your role in the Club?

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Perrault: I don't remember that. All I remember is that suddenly I was put in a position where I had to be more aware of the myriad of concerns from the management of the organization.

03-01:43:45

Eardley-Pryor: Not just topics, but actually running the show.

03-01:43:48

Perrault: Oh yeah, yeah—really. Running, right, making sure it moved smoothly, that it was a well-oiled machine and that everything worked. So it became much more managerial kind of things, like the fundraising, and like the office and where are we going to move it to, and membership issues. You know, they were not conservation in the same respect.

03-01:44:09

Eardley-Pryor: You had worked on the Space Patrol [and] found that new building at Polk Street [in the Tenderloin neighborhood]. What was the transition like into the new building?

03-01:44:20

Perrault: It wasn't so different than where we were before. It's just that we knew that we didn't have to pay rent, and that it would be better in the long term. But it was not the greatest neighborhood. And in the end, when bodies appeared in the dumpster outside the building—

03-01:44:39

Eardley-Pryor: What's the story there!?

03-01:44:41

Perrault: Well, no, it's that the [Tenderloin] neighborhood kind of went down a little bit from when we had bought the building. And so we realized we had to sell the building, because we're getting more into a—I don't know if it was drug infested, but it was just not safe. And the staff were upset that they had to come into a neighborhood where they couldn't stay too late at night. It just didn't work.

03-01:45:03

Eardley-Pryor: Oh.

03-01:45:04

Perrault: But there *was* a body in the dumpster one time. I just remember that because [the building] had one place for a few cars, and you would drive past the dumpster and go down into this driveway. Because when I was President, I was in the new building, and it was hard for me to get back home. So they let me have a space so I could drive my car into the driveway, into the garage—because that's the only way I could get back home in time for Matthew and the babysitter. [laughing]

03-01:45:29

Eardley-Pryor: So when you drove past, into this [parking] space there was a dumpster there?

03-01:45:31

Perrault: I didn't see the body, I just know—well, the dumpsters, that's where the garbage was picked up, was outside the garage.

03-01:45:37

Eardley-Pryor: And there's a dead body there?

03-01:45:39

Perrault: There was, yeah. I was told there was a dead body in the dumpster one morning, but I didn't see it. But I just knew that was part and parcel of the angst of the staff. The staff said, "Get us out of here."

03-01:45:51

Eardley-Pryor: Did you feel threatened in that area, coming in and out of this place?

03-01:45:53

Perrault: No, because I was driving my car there. [laughter]

03-01:45:55

Eardley-Pryor: Because you could park right next to it. That's a good way to do it. Well, another thing that happened that maybe we can talk about is—and we've hinted at this—this transition of the international program staff from New York City to Washington, DC, which happened during your presidency.

03-01:46:12

Perrault: Right, right.

03-01:46:13

Eardley-Pryor: Tell me why did this happen? Why did this happen? Why do you think this needed to happen, and what went into it?

03-01:46:17

Perrault: Well, as I said before—the power for change, for regulations, and you have to get the government—if you're going to have the kind of things like logging sustainably, what comes in [and] what goes out, imports and exports, and all that kind of stuff, and labeling of woods and where they come from—those are the positions that have to be made by the government. And so if you're in Washington, you can influence by lobbying. You couldn't lobby in New York. There was not government in New York except the UN. And the international program was very UN-involved and based. It was not lobbying on critical legislation that you needed for doing international work. And doing international work in terms of the Club's role in agencies, like the Agency for International Development or UNDP [United Nations Development Programme]—there were various agencies that dealt with international work—and the State Department. So you needed people who could lobby and be there, and it wasn't happening in New York.

03-01:47:24

Eardley-Pryor: Well, but the UN was in New York, so—

03-01:47:26

Perrault: The UN was in New York, but the UN is not the major—the Club didn't do that much UN work, except through those staffpeople who loved the UN, and they loved all the UN conferences and all that stuff. But they weren't doing anything to make change in federal law, and that—we needed lobbyists. So then we ended up with Washington staffpeople who did international work, bankrolling disasters, wrote a book—Larry Williams was one of our staffpeople who did a lot of work on the kind of decisions that the federal government would make that had an impact on the environment worldwide.

03-01:48:04

Eardley-Pryor: So the shift became—help me understand. The shift became, instead of trying to have the Sierra Club lobby the United Nations for international issues, the shift was, "Let's bring them to DC so that we can have the Sierra Club not be—"

- 03-01:48:18
Perrault: Do things on multinational bank issues, on all the kinds of things that were happening in DC that influence the US—
- 03-01:48:25
Eardley-Pryor: International.
- 03-01:48:26
Perrault: And its effect internationally.
- 03-01:48:27
Eardley-Pryor: So it was to focus the US role on the international—
- 03-01:48:30
Perrault: Area, right.
- 03-01:48:31
Eardley-Pryor: Rather than look at the UN, focus the US's international impact.
- 03-01:48:34
Perrault: Yeah, right. But there was always this tension when we finally went to Washington, as to how much did the Club care about some of the UN work, which was very important stuff, too, that was going on. So the committee kind of did more of the UN concerns than the staff. The staff were working on other matters that dealt with lobbying directly in Washington.
- 03-01:49:01
Eardley-Pryor: You said the staff that was in New York loved the UN. What was their reaction to saying we need to move to DC?
- 03-01:49:07
Perrault: They didn't go. [laughing] They left the program, yeah.
- 03-01:49:12
Eardley-Pryor: So you hired new people in DC?
- 03-01:49:14
Perrault: Right, yeah.
- 03-01:49:16
Eardley-Pryor: Do you think that was still the right call?
- 03-01:49:16
Perrault: Yeah. Those were good people that were doing New York stuff, but it was—well, I didn't know all of the work they were doing. But they were pretty focused and they didn't branch out enough to the broader Club.
- 03-01:49:45
Eardley-Pryor: Yeah. And they could have more impact in DC, so that was the time to move it?

03-01:49:48

Perrault: The Club had more impact.

03-01:49:51

Eardley-Pryor: I think this is a good place to stop, because the next topics we'll get into—with Doug Wheeler's taking over in the wake of Mike McCloskey stepping down—these are big issues. And I think we need to have a little more time to flesh them out.

03-01:50:03

Perrault: Oh, okay.

03-01:50:04

Eardley-Pryor: So we'll pick that stuff up the next time we talk.

03-01:50:06

Perrault: Okay!

03-01:50:06

Eardley-Pryor: Thanks, Michele.

Interview 4: December 12, 2018

04-00:00:00

Eardley-Pryor: All right! Today is December 12, [2018]. We are continuing with our oral history interview with Michele Perrault as part of the Sierra Club Oral History Project for The Bancroft Library. Good to see you again, Michele.

04-00:00:10

Perrault: Hello.

04-00:00:11

Eardley-Pryor: The last time the we spoke, we were talking a lot about your role on the [Sierra Club] Board of Directors, your twenty-some years that you served on there, and particularly around the time of your first term as president. A major event that happened while you were president was Mike McCloskey deciding to step down from his long-time position, from 1969 to 1985, as the Executive Director of the Club.

04-00:00:35

Perrault: Right.

04-00:00:35

Eardley-Pryor: What then followed?

04-00:00:36

Perrault: Well, first we had to find a new role for Mike, because he wasn't leaving the Club. So he became a Chairman. And then we had to [determine] what will the chairman do?

04-00:00:46

Eardley-Pryor: Yeah, what does—what would the chairman do?

04-00:00:47

Perrault: [laughing] Well, there was a whole list of things. And of course, what we wanted was his sage advice. Mike was just—an amazing memory of all kinds of issues and background. And he had been serving the Club for so long, we didn't want to lose him. So there was a whole procedure about getting approval and titles, and what was comfortable for him, and how would he work with the next Executive Director. And Mike was always terrific in international issues, as well. He is just so broad. One of the best people I ever worked with in the Club.

04-00:01:21

Eardley-Pryor: When Mike decided to step down from Executive Director, the new position that he took, that you created for him was—?

04-00:01:25

Perrault: Chairman.

04-00:01:26

Eardley-Pryor: And what *did* that entail?

04-00:01:28

Perrault:

Well, it literally gave him a title to be able to speak out on behalf of the Club, whether he was speaking out in speeches anywhere, or he was giving advice to the rest of the Club in any role. And he could sit at the Board meetings and speak up on behalf of the kinds of issues we were addressing. So there was a whole list of things, because you can imagine—and a person coming in as an Executive Director would want to have a clear idea of what is this former Executive Director going to be doing?

04-00:02:00

Eardley-Pryor:

Yeah. So once you and the other Board members, and Mike himself, had established what a Chairman of the Club would do—?

04-00:02:07

Perrault:

Then we did a search committee. So I've done a number of search committees for various Executive Directors in the Club. And we had to get a search firm and, you know, go through all the procedures, which is very intensive. Because you have to do interviews, you have to give the staff a role in having some decisions about people that they will be working under, and so we did that search.

And the first time we found a Republican, Doug Wheeler. And he had a huge background, a wonderful background, working with the farmland issues—[American] Farmland Trust, I believe it was. He came to us quite well recommended from many, many people, and it seemed a natural. But there were problems in terms of working with a club that had its own culture, that had a different way of doing things. And in the end, there were some problems that related to interactions with the staff and different viewpoints and things.

04-00:03:08

Eardley-Pryor:

Maybe take me back to the process of choosing. Was Doug the only person that you had, that the Board had their eyes on to take the Executive Directorship?

04-00:03:17

Perrault:

Well, no. Searches are private affairs. We don't say who we did not choose. So you end up with two to three people, and then you decide—you interview them in detail. The search firm gives you those [two to three] people after they've done a wide request for people. At this point, I don't even remember who the others were. All I know is that he rose to the top in terms of the choices we were provided.

04-00:03:39

Eardley-Pryor:

In 1985, I'm thinking the Club has expanded drastically in [those] years in reaction to Watt and the Reagan Revolution. And the choice to select—to consciously bring in a Republican to lead the Sierra Club—what was that choice about?

04-00:03:55

Perrault:

You know, I don't recall looking at the fact that he was a Republican as being a problem. You know, there are good Republicans. There are good Club people that are Republicans, so it wasn't like we were against Republicans, as such. We looked for the person that had a good record. And he had a good record of protecting the environment and caring about issues, and was well recommended by other people. We didn't find anything bad in his background. So—you're asking me about something that goes like way back a lot of years, over thirty years, and I can't remember exactly the details. And a lot of the discussions about searches are private, within the organization.

04-00:04:35

Eardley-Pryor:

A big thing that the SCCOPE [Sierra Club Committee on Political Education] Committee had been active on since the mid-seventies was making selections on behalf of the Club, giving endorsements.

04-00:04:46

Perrault:

The Sierra Club political endorsement issues, right.

04-00:04:46

Eardley-Pryor:

That's right. And for the first time ever, the Club endorsed, in 1984, [Walter] Mondale and [Geraldine] Ferraro.

04-00:04:53

Perrault:

Under my presidency, right.

04-00:04:53

Eardley-Pryor:

Under your presidency. Can you talk a little bit about that decision and what the consequences of that were?

04-00:04:59

Perrault:

From my memory, it was just we realized that we could not make a difference unless we got into the political arena. And so we were opening the Club to be able to do endorsements, not just for the President of the United States, but allowing local people to do endorsements, even for an environmental education—well, an education secretary at a state level, which we did once in California, asking questions about their viewpoints on environmental education. But at every level—and that meant at the county levels, at the city levels. It just opened us to be a much more aggressive political organization.

04-00:05:34

Eardley-Pryor:

Was there, I remember—?

04-00:05:35

Perrault:

And I just remember being asked to go out and do endorsements, and remember them being quite receptive and smooth when I stood up for Mondale or I stood up for Geraldine Ferraro—and it was a pleasure to do those kinds of things. But I don't—it might have been controversial in the press or just some members of the Club. Because we wouldn't necessarily pick somebody of the persuasion they were interested in, whether they were a

Democrat or a Republican. We were looking for the best candidate for environmental concerns.

04-00:06:08

Eardley-Pryor: And that was certainly not going to be Reagan and Bush.

04-00:06:09

Perrault: Right.

04-00:06:12

Eardley-Pryor: So that endorsement happened in '84. From looking through some of the papers you shared with me, I remember seeing letters of people saying, "I'm disappointed in the Sierra Club's political engagement, especially their endorsement of a president, and I'd like to resign from the Club."

04-00:06:28

Perrault: Right, right. We would get letters on many issues, which if they didn't like what the Club was doing—we kept records of them, so it wasn't so drastic when we would say we have to reevaluate what we've done. I don't remember what the number was, but we certainly were probably with more letters of overwhelming confidence by suddenly stepping up and doing something in that arena.

04-00:06:49

Eardley-Pryor: There is a broad membership in the Club, especially as it grew during that time. I ask those questions as context to selecting Wheeler, for perhaps trying to make inroads with Republicans? As opposed to being identified—having the Club be identified in the mid-eighties—

04-00:07:06

Perrault: Yeah, I don't recall a decision ever being made that that was the reason we would have picked him.

04-00:07:14

Eardley-Pryor: Once Doug Wheeler did take the helm as Executive Director in 1985, what were the next events that transpired?

04-00:07:24

Perrault: I just think there were some concerns that he wasn't necessarily the right fit. And it may have been on his part as well, that feeling—as well as some of the [Club] members. But he was a very warm man. I remember him very fondly—a good sense of humor, very decent person. But people who come into those positions, they have a strong role to play both in Washington DC and the rest of the country, as well as managing staff. And so in some sense, there were probably some conflicts there, and it was just a wise decision on his part that it wasn't probably the right fit, and he resigned.

04-00:08:04

Eardley-Pryor: The decision to resign, from my understanding, also involves staffmembers. In the wake of your presidency, after you had cycled off your term as

president, and Larry Downing became president, [I understand] that several senior staffmembers demanded that Wheeler resign. Do you remember that coming up in the Board discussions?

04-00:08:24

Perrault: Well, I don't know how much of that was public, so again, being one who's concerned about the Club, I don't like to disclose stuff that might have been off the record. But there was certainly some unrest amongst staff.

04-00:08:38

Eardley-Pryor: And the decision to accept Wheeler's resignation, from my understanding, also came down to a very close Board vote?

04-00:08:45

Perrault: Right, it was a—yeah, and again, that vote, whether that's something that's public record—I guess you may have heard of it somehow. [laughing] I don't know that the press ever knew what that vote was. It was close.

04-00:09:00

Eardley-Pryor: It was a close vote.

04-00:09:01

Perrault: And not wanting to accept it, and giving him a further chance to continue working for us.

04-00:09:05

Eardley-Pryor: Yeah, he'd only been there for a year or two at the most.

04-00:09:07

Perrault: Right, and searches are very expensive, and it takes a lot—drains a lot of time from the efforts of the organization.

04-00:09:15

Eardley-Pryor: Your vote during that process, whichever side you were on, would you change your vote now?

04-00:09:24

Perrault: Probably so. I wasn't as aware of some of the unrest in the staff. So I probably, had I known more about that at the time, I might have—but I just happened to like him very much as a person, so it was a tough—it was a tough decision.

04-00:09:41

Eardley-Pryor: Something you've mentioned in our previous discussions [is] the increasing role that [Sierra Club] staff plays with regard to the decreasing role that volunteers in leadership have.

04-00:09:50

Perrault: That's much later in our history.

04-00:09:52

Eardley-Pryor: Is this part of that process though? Where staff is coming forward and saying we need this to happen?

04-00:09:56

Perrault: No, I never connected those. I think the dramatic changes that came later, with Project Renewal and Project ACT, were of a different nature, and that was something that our two Executive Directors later were more involved in.

04-00:10:10

Eardley-Pryor: Yeah. We'll talk about that later, too. So in 1987, there's another search that happens. Can you tell me a little bit about that process?

04-00:10:17

Perrault: Well, again, we were looking for the best person, and the search firm—it was a different search firm at that point—came up with a choice for us, which was Michael Fischer.

04-00:10:29

Eardley-Pryor: Michael Fischer.

04-00:10:29

Perrault: Someone whom I'd personally known through coastal zone management work, because he had been head of the coastal zone program in California [California Coastal Commission]. Again, a very fine person, did a lot of good things, and I guess ran into some of the buzz-saws that Doug had in terms of some of the interactions with staff, and his own ability to be aggressive in the direction that both staff and volunteer leaders wanted in the organization. So I guess, again, he chose to leave the organization.

04-00:11:03

Eardley-Pryor: As a leader during his tenure—where he served as Executive Director from 1987 to 1992—as a leader on the Board of Directors and a long-time leader within the Club, how would you characterize Michael Fischer's relationship with the Board and with the volunteers, and his leadership of the Club?

04-00:11:21

Perrault: Well, you know—yeah, no I thought—very fine, cared about the movement. There was no doubt about that. A very solid caring about it. But there were some little things that happened. I personally bumped into some problems that he had regarding a staffperson, where he was supporting the staffperson over me, over an issue dealing with—and this was very public in terms of the Club's position—on whether or not to take money from McDonald's Corporation. Because they [McDonald's Corporation] wanted to do something related to a program for young people and associate our [Sierra Club] name with it. And I was able, through my work on the [Sierra Club's] Corporate Relations Committee, to do some background checks on the Styrofoam clamshells that they wanted for serving the food in.

- 04-00:12:04
Eardley-Pryor: The boxes that the old burgers used to come in?
- 04-00:12:05
Perrault: Yeah, right, and there were a lot of controversies over that. And one of the staff—his staff, Michael's staffpeople in our communications, his communications department—went ahead and had done some agreements that had not been widely shared enough with the Board. And he was, of course, defending the staff. So there was a little problem as far as I was concerned over that kind of activity. But trying to think back on whether that would have been strong enough for me to say, "Well, it doesn't work with Michael Fischer at the helm," I don't think that in itself would have been. But it was a problem, and others may have felt it in other areas as well.
- 04-00:12:43
Eardley-Pryor: Why do you think he left so quickly, with regard to [David] Brower being in office for so long [and] Michael McCloskey being Executive Director so long?
- 04-00:12:49
Perrault: Brower? Oh, you mean Brower way, way back originally?
- 04-00:12:52
Eardley-Pryor: Yeah, I'm just thinking of the long-term leadership of [Sierra Club] Executive Directors.
- 04-00:12:55
Perrault: Again, you know, it's cloudy in my mind. It was a long time ago.
- 04-00:13:00
Eardley-Pryor: The last Executive Director that I think you and I can talk about during your time on the Board would be when Michael Fischer does step down in '92.
- 04-00:13:06
Perrault: Right.
- 04-00:13:07
Eardley-Pryor: And then the decision to rise—instead of going outside the Club, to select someone *inside* the Club.
- 04-00:13:14
Perrault: Right, and that was a pretty easy choice.
- 04-00:13:15
Eardley-Pryor: For Carl Pope.
- 04-00:13:16
Perrault: For some of us, yeah. Carl—brilliant and very much a fit for the organization, and an activist himself, superb with the press, good sense of humor, very well connected. It was a pleasure to work with him. There were problems down the road, at times, but I always respected his intellect and his aggressive activism.

I wish he were around more often in terms of what he was able to do with the press. He was just terrific as a spokesman for the movement. And I would wonder, would we see much more of the Sierra Club under the Trump reign if he had been around? That's not to say that Michael Brune, our Executive Director now, doesn't do a good job. But we're just not getting in the airwaves like Carl used to get us in. And Carl ran into his own problems with his Board after I was gone.

04-00:14:18

Eardley-Pryor: Do you have any sense, as a volunteer, as a still-active member but not quite serving on the Board, what that did in terms of membership, in terms of the feeling among members?

04-00:14:28

Perrault: Which thing?

04-00:14:31

Eardley-Pryor: Carl's challenges that he ran into later with funding?

04-00:14:34

Perrault: Oh, well I don't think—unless people read the press, I don't think that a lot of people were aware of what was happening when Carl got involved with a company dealing with gas. And it was—

04-00:14:46

Eardley-Pryor: Chesapeake Gas. [Chesapeake Energy]

04-00:14:47

Perrault: Chesapeake. [Carl] was very much interested in taking money and didn't clear it adequately with his Board. And later on—and I have it in the record—people began asking me some questions, because Carl referred to the fact that, "Well, Michele was head of [the Sierra Club's] Corporate Relations [Committee]. Didn't she take money from one garbage company when they were fighting another garbage company over a landfill in her county?"

And I looked back to find all kinds of information about that. It was such a small amount, and I couldn't even remember the details of it. But I thought it was kind of odd that he was saying, "Well, *Perrault* did it." And people were asking—[J. Robert] "Robbie" Cox was the [Sierra Club] President at the time, and is asking me, "Michele, do you remember back then, when those two garbage companies you were fighting then?" That wouldn't be justification for Carl to be taking money from this gas company. It didn't make any sense to me. But the requests they made to me are part of the record. [laughing]

04-00:15:43

Eardley-Pryor: Well, you had mentioned your time on the Corporate Relations Committee, and I'd love to hear more stories about some of what that work meant. But were there other committees that you served on that we haven't talked about?

04-00:15:54

Perrault:

Well, not that we need to go into great detail. I was on the Advancement Committee, which was to raise funds. I always loved and would have welcomed much more interaction with donors, because I really wanted to raise money for the Club. But the staff did a lot of that raising of money, and it was very hard to be able to go out and even raise it from corporations that we had approved. I remember having a long fight trying to get to go to one computer company, because some staff wanted to go to it, and they'd go, "Well, you could go to it later, but let us look at it first." And a few years would go by. It was very frustrating.

But being chair of the Corporate Relations Committee, which—I succeeded Doris Cellarius, and I believe also part of that time Ruth Caplan—who was very active in our Corporate Accountabilities Committee, a wonderful person from Washington, DC, and she actually served on the committee under Doris and myself. When I became head of that, it was an opportunity for me to clear good companies so that the Club could make more money. It was another way of raising money. I didn't personally get to go to most of the companies. They hired a staff who would do a lot of that outreach. But we were able to make decisions about—answer questions about companies that came to us, either from the chapters or from the national. "Are these good companies? Is there something we should be worried about for the Club's image? Is there something that these companies do, or their subsidiaries might be doing, that would be damaging to us if it got out into the open with the public?" And so I did that for over ten years or so. I probably have twenty binders of just approval requests and dialog that went on over various companies.

And there was a point when the Club had a big summit, [for] which they wanted to get approvals for twenty, thirty of these, and my committee had to constantly be researching. Luckily for the Corporate Relations Committee, I had a wonderful guy named John [Shelton] Lawrence, who—he actually was a man who wrote things, and he got some award for doing a thing on heroes, myths and heroes, like Superman—that kind of book [*The American Monomyth* (1977), and *The Myth of the American Superhero* (2002), both co-written with Robert Jewett]. But he came into my retiree program, where I had this program for people who had wanted to work in the Club [International Conservation Fellow Program]. They were retirees and they want to do something, and I would create jobs for them. So John Lawrence ended up being the main researcher for us for Corporate Relations, which was a *big* job. He eventually then later got a position on the Club's Investment Committee, where they were looking at a mutual fund, and so John was one of those success stories for the senior fellows program that I created, among many other good people too. But when I go—

04-00:18:44

Eardley-Pryor:

Take me back to the timeframe here, so I'm trying to—you became the head after Dolores Cellarius left the position?

04-00:18:49

Perrault: Right, I think it was in, probably, 1997, '98—sometime in that time period.

04-00:18:55

Eardley-Pryor: So you maintained your chairmanship—

04-00:18:56

Perrault: And I maintained the chairmanship—

04-00:18:56

Eardley-Pryor: —even after cycling off the Board?

04-00:18:58

Perrault: That's right, yeah. And then I—in my records, which I have in archives for the Club, are over twenty volumes of approvals and things, and the dialog that went on to question what was approvable. Now, the approvable list, we never circulated that to the public either. It was sort of internal. But there were chapters—the Inner City Outings Program was trying to raise a lot of money. If it was over a thousand dollars, they would come to us and say, "Is this okay?"

For example, let's say a garbage company would come and want to give money to the Club and associate their name with the Club—were they allowed to do that? What would be the effect? Do we have problems at the national level for those particular companies that they're requesting?

04-00:19:42

Eardley-Pryor: So a thousand dollars was the limit where a chapter then had to turn to the national Board—[or] to the [Corporate Relations] Committee?

04-00:19:46

Perrault: Right, they always had to tell us what they finally were going to do when they did their own research. But even they had trouble doing research. If they stayed local, like in a local ice cream parlor or—but when it got more complicated, or to a car company—somebody wants to give us a Prius to use around and use their name—what do you do? Then you come to national for some questions about, "Is that going to be okay?"

04-00:20:08

Eardley-Pryor: What was the process like for making some of these decisions? What were those discussions like?

04-00:20:10

Perrault: Well, I had a committee of anywhere from three to five people, but they included, sometimes—Anne Ehrlich was a member, our former Board member. [H. Anthony] "Tony" Ruckel, former Club President was a member at times. Doris Cellarius, who was—had to eventually leave because she became head of our environmental quality team. And we had Stuart Auchincloss, who was from New York. And he actually became a Club representative on CERES [Coalition for Environmentally Responsible

Economies], which is a group that deals with sustainable companies, and he wanted to always do something. Mike McCloskey used to be on CERES, and then Stuart replaced him. So I probably am leaving out some names of people. Dick Fiddler used to be on our Board, he was a member of the [Corporate Relations] committee for a while. Just very top quality people who cared about the Club enough to watch it while we still tried to get funding.

04-00:21:07

Eardley-Pryor: Help me to understand the process of determining whether funding would be acceptable.

04-00:21:13

Perrault: Well, we had many forms of approved policy on companies you couldn't take from. You didn't want to take from major polluters. We didn't take from tobacco. We didn't take, usually, from any polluting industries—oil and gas, that kind of thing. So what were the kind of companies we could take from? They had to be more related to environmental matters. But then, gradually, we had some changes of the policies, which added in some concerns about social issues. Are we going to take from a company that has a bad reputation for using children in their factories? They make clothing—where do they make them, how do they make them. Is it a polluting industry?—and so forth. So there was a whole list of guidelines we had to follow.

And so they had a major—beginning issues dealt with environmental, but then Mike McCloskey helped us develop a policy, as Chairman, on social issues to look at. And so eventually the Club passed those. And then there were various levels. There was licensing, one where you would associate the name of the Club with a product. In other words, just getting the actual money—one of the companies, Lucas Films, for example, had a whole series of companies—like a puzzle company, and a bunch of other companies, where they would service us by finding these companies for us and kind of being an intermediary. And then later on there was some effort to, as I recall, use the Lucas Ewoks symbols. And I remember that Director Phillip Berry was very upset that they weren't real animals. We're not going to do that. And that was part and parcel of one of the things that got us, eventually, out of a very lucrative arrangement with LucasArts.

We had other arrangements. One that I liked the most was where a Japanese company, Takara, made sake, but they made it in Berkeley, and they needed to have the clear water. So they were willing to help us get clear water, which we cared about for the salmon. So there was a Salmon Forever program, and they gave us over \$500,000, which was a big amount of money—bigger than some of the other kinds of things we did when we did greeting cards, or Sierra socks, or clothing like sweaters. One time we had sweaters that were supposed to show the Antarctic and the Arctic, and when we went to look at the sweaters, they had the wrong animal for the Arctic. It didn't exist—it existed

in the Antarctic, so we had to correct the company. [laughing] But, you know—

04-00:24:02

Eardley-Pryor: What, they had like polar bears in the south, down in the south [Antarctic] or something?

04-00:24:05

Perrault: Yeah, they had them in the south, and they're really from the north. You know, just little funny things that you catch, so that the Club wouldn't get any trouble.

04-00:24:14

Eardley-Pryor: Help me understand the internal dynamics of the Club and the complexities of the member-driven committee making decisions about how the Club could accept funding, versus the role that staff or staff directors played.

04-00:24:32

Perrault: Well, the staff directors—actually, one of the key staff directors I worked with was Johanna O'Kelley, and she was just wonderful! Well, she would bring us ideas, and then we would say yes or no about them.

04-00:24:47

Eardley-Pryor: So the governance decisions were—

04-00:24:48

Perrault: Mainly the staff was initiating the initial outreach, and then we would say yes or no to the staff on some of those. And then they would—

04-00:24:55

Eardley-Pryor: So volunteer members got to choose whether the money was accepted or not?

04-00:24:58

Perrault: Well, the Corporate Relations Committee made some decisions. For example, let's use the Clorox example, for Green Works—

04-00:25:06

Eardley-Pryor: What is the context for Clorox?

04-00:25:06

Perrault: —where the Corporate [Relations] Committee did not want to get into that. We thought it was a little complicated, and it wasn't good on public views to see a company like Clorox, which made other products, being in association with the Club. But we were overridden by the staff and Carl Pope on that one, and it was a very lucrative arrangement. And so, in that case, we did not rule. So the staff always was able to have—with the Board as well, it wasn't like Carl or Johanna would just say, "Okay, well we disagree with you, Corporate Relations." They would take it to the Board.

04-00:25:41

Eardley-Pryor: So even that Clorox decision was a Board-approved decision?

04-00:25:43

Perrault: Yeah! Yeah, because—yeah, it had to be. The staff couldn't just make those decisions on their own. And so it was lucrative for the Club, and then there was a point where they cut that relationship. And I forget what the details were on their cutting it, but my Committee was not involved in that at the time.

04-00:26:06

Eardley-Pryor: The committee work, with the Corporate Relations Committee, does that continue today?

04-00:26:11

Perrault: Oh—so, then—then there was a new group that formed under—I guess it was more recent in the Club history. They had corporate partnerships, and when Michael Brune came in as Executive Director [in 2010], I think that began to move into a larger arena.

04-00:26:30

Eardley-Pryor: What does that mean?

04-00:26:31

Perrault: Where they were going to find ways in which they could do work—like say with the solar industry on roofs and stuff, and they would play a larger part in working with them. And I never followed the business partnerships to that degree. That was a little bit when I was sort of pulling back [from Sierra Club involvement]. But eventually, Johanna O'Kelley left the Club, and I was able to rescue her for Green Seal, which was a board I had sat on, which Mike McCloskey used to be on and asked me to go in his place.

04-00:27:08

Eardley-Pryor: Tell me about—what is Green Seal?

04-00:27:08

Perrault: So Green Seal puts their names on products, or they put their name, in recent years, on specific hotels, giving them the credentials to say this is an approved, a Green Seal-approved hotel for its sustainability practices. They had a board that had members from the business community end—I was representing the Club. And then when they needed somebody, Johanna went in, and she's on there now. And I left after—I was the longest person on that board, probably ten or twenty years! [laughing] I forget—it was very extensive. And now she's there, and she's been there a couple of years now.

04-00:27:50

Eardley-Pryor: When you served on Green Seal—you said Mike McCloskey served on it and then you came in?

04-00:27:55

Perrault: Right, and—

- 04-00:27:56
Eardley-Pryor: Around when? I'm wondering, is there overlap between your Corporate Relations Committee leadership?
- 04-00:28:00
Perrault: Yeah, I was doing both at the same time.
- 04-00:28:03
Eardley-Pryor: What was the relationship of thinking about these different opportunities?
- 04-00:28:05
Perrault: Oh, well—one dealt with more international labeling. There was a whole thing that happened internationally about labels, worldwide, because many labeling entities began to form internationally as well. Green Seal mostly dealt with the United States, but there was EPA, the Environmental Protection Agency, was also getting into labeling of refrigerators, you know.
- 04-00:28:36
Eardley-Pryor: Yeah, the ENERGY STAR recognition.
- 04-00:28:36
Perrault: ENERGY STAR, yeah, right. So that there was a whole world of these labels, and how would the public really know which ones were good? Because there were also some out there that were whitewashing—brainwashing? Whitewashing—
- 04-00:28:50
Eardley-Pryor: Greenwashing.
- 04-00:28:51
Perrault: Yeah, *Greenwashing!* Greenwashing efforts. So you had to know which were good and which were not. So that was just a whole other arena. But they didn't cross over in terms of what the Club was doing on corporate relations. It was just a different process.
- 04-00:29:02
Eardley-Pryor: There wasn't a chance to say, "Here's what Green Seal [says]. There are some opportunities. Maybe we could have the Sierra Club partner with them?"
- 04-00:29:06
Perrault: I don't recall that, no. They were doing different kinds of companies.
- 04-00:29:09
Eardley-Pryor: Separate worlds. Are there any other memories you have about the Corporate Relations Committee?
- 04-00:29:14
Perrault: Oh, by the way, on the Green Seal—that was Denis [A.] Hayes, who had been in charge of it, their Executive Director, for a long time before he went onto the Bullitt Foundation.

04-00:29:26

Eardley-Pryor: Oh, Denis Hayes, who helped run [and] start Earth Day?

04-00:29:29

Perrault: Was with Green Seal.

04-00:29:30

Eardley-Pryor: He was the head of Green Seal? I didn't realize that. He was the chairman.

04-00:29:32

Perrault: Right. In fact, while I was still on the Green Seal board, a few years ago they had a celebration of twenty-five years of Green Seal, and he attended. And it was great to see him, because the first time I saw Denis Hayes was—oh, way—many years back when I was in Massachusetts, and he came into the Sierra Club office in Boston. He was doing his work on energy at that time. And so it's one of these things where you, in the movement, you see people you meet in your twenties, and they're still very active, doing things, and you're kind of like a family around the world with all these people that you know are still doing things. It's wonderful.

04-00:30:10

Eardley-Pryor: That is really neat. This is sort of an off-topic point, but Denis Hayes in the seventies, in the late seventies, around '78, got really involved in something called Sun Day. Do you have any memories of Sun Day?

04-00:30:22

Perrault: Right, that was related to one of the books I think he was doing—yeah, right.

04-00:30:25

Eardley-Pryor: It was a kind of a push—kind of trying to make [another] Earth Day movement happen, but around solar technologies.

04-00:30:29

Perrault: Right, exactly. Yes.

04-00:30:31

Eardley-Pryor: Was that perhaps why he came to the office?

04-00:30:32

Perrault: That was. I recall, that that was one of the things that he was doing when he came to that Boston office. [laughing]

04-00:30:38

Eardley-Pryor: Yeah. It's almost a hidden—it's a hidden story [Sun Day].

04-00:30:40

Perrault: Again, another gem in the movement, you know, who's stuck with it for all his career.

04-00:30:46

Eardley-Pryor: I want to come back to a question about the Corporate Relations Committee, because I think it gets to this issue of how the Club has changed over time, especially over the past twenty-five years, twenty years or so, in the Club's cultivation and acceptance from major donors—looking towards *individuals* to fund major initiatives within the Club. And I think you had mentioned Carl Pope's relationship with Chesapeake Gas, that kind of being hidden. We've talked—we've referenced David Gelbaum and his funding relationships with the Club. And I'm wondering, how did the Corporate Relations Committee—what was its role with regard to fundraising in this other tack? Are there different strategies that are happening here? Did those strategies change over time within the Club, to move away from corporate-relations funding and towards this sort of individual-donors funding?

04-00:31:40

Perrault: Well, see—I'm not aware that it moved away from it. I don't know what the present situation is in terms of the outreach for corporate money. And donors were always of interest to the Club. There was always the idea that you had a certain pyramid, and you went for some big donors and—when you ended up having—Carl was pretty good at raising money.

04-00:32:03

Eardley-Pryor: Very good.

04-00:32:03

Perrault: Money—when he got it from Bloom—?

04-00:32:05

Eardley-Pryor: Oh, Bloomberg. Michael Bloomberg.

04-00:32:06

Perrault: Bloomberg. In New York—that was really quite a coup! And you know, he just had that ability to talk to people at that level and be very persuasive. But I don't—I'm not aware of the thrust now.

04-00:32:25

Eardley-Pryor: But, so there wasn't any kind of—or *was* there any kind of relationship with Corporate Relations?

04-00:32:27

Perrault: No, our job in Corporate Relations simply was to make sure that the Club brought in more money, had licenses that were more regular. And it really boosted up the budget tremendously, even if it was like \$30,000 for a four-year time period for a note-card company, or something like that. It made a big difference in the budget. We just didn't want the Club to be embarrassed in any way, [we had to] make sure it was the right kind of money to receive. And somebody had to sit around and do that, not just at the national level, but also for the chapters—they had to have guidance, too.

Often there would be controversies if a club [chapter] wanted to take—like in California there was a chapter that wanted to take from an energy company, and there were other people fighting that energy company. And we had to say, "Well, we don't think this is a good time for you to take from that company. They shouldn't get the use of the Club name next to theirs while other people in the Club are fighting that same company." And there were many examples of that kind of thing.

04-00:33:25

Eardley-Pryor:

This makes me also think about communication networks. To have those kind of dialogs—of knowing what the Club is doing, knowing what different chapters are doing. How are those communications done?

04-00:33:35

Perrault:

Well, there were paper forms that they had to file. And so they would come in with a request from, let's say the Inner City Outings Program. And we had research. There were *many* vehicles of research entities around the US that were looking at corporate companies and saying, "Well, here's the ten top, major polluters."

Complications would arise—for example, with banks. Can we take from this particular bank? The Club had a Bank of America card in an affinity program, in which they made a lot of money on—the fact that we had an MBNA agreement. But then another entity might come in and say, "Well, we'd like to take from Morgan Stanley," or companies like that. And then we would have to do the research and say, "Well, listen, we see that they're a problem in such and such a part of the world." Or, "We see an entity fighting a certain computer company on water issues, and that company wants to put their name on one of our productions"—to highlight Ansel Adams or to highlight John Muir. And then the Corporate [Relations] Committee would look at it and say, "Well, we don't think that's a good idea to have them give us the money, because there are these entities all over that are fighting that same company." The Corporate Relations staff wouldn't know that, but we would research it. And particularly when you could Google it, years later, it became even easier to be able to find those problems.

04-00:35:16

Eardley-Pryor:

Those are important records. I hope that you're able to put those in the [Bancroft] Library.

04-00:35:22

Perrault:

Well, I archived them. Right, yeah, and they're very interesting. But again, whether the Club would want to see those archived for public consumption, I don't know. But it gives a good history on the kind of work that had to be done, and the effort. It was rather intensive, because it was ongoing—every day. You never knew if you were going to get a request.

04-00:35:44

Eardley-Pryor: What? The requests, would they come in from particular projects? Like the film team might come and say, "Here, we have this issue?"

04-00:35:50

Perrault: That's right.

04-00:35:51

Eardley-Pryor: Okay.

04-00:35:51

Perrault: And there was one point where our Executive Director didn't agree with our decision, and I ended up taking it to the full Board. This was after I'd been off the Board, [but] I was head of the Corporate Relations [Committee]. And I spoke [on] why we didn't think it was a good idea to attach that particular company to one of the productions. And the Board agreed. And so that was—it was worth my effort. [laughing]

04-00:36:22

Eardley-Pryor: Another topic for us to talk about is, before you chaired the Corporate Relations Committee, [there] was another term as [Sierra Club] President. So in 1993, in May of '93, while you were already serving the year before on the Executive Committee, you became President again on the next Executive Committee from '93 to '94.

I just think the context of all that is really neat. The leadership that you were a part of there, during your presidency, was all women—all the Executive Committee was women. [Perrault laughs] So, yourself; Joni Bosh, Vice President; Secretary, Kathy Fletcher; Treasurer, Ann Pogue; and then the Fifth Officer was Rebecca Falkenberry.

04-00:37:03

Perrault: [laughing] I had forgotten that!

04-00:37:05

Eardley-Pryor: I'm wondering—this happens just a year after the US Congress has what it considered its first Year of the Woman. So a number of women were elected, a record number of women elected in the House of Representatives.

04-00:37:16

Perrault: Yeah. I don't remember the association with that. [laughing] The thing about the Club, at the top leadership there were a lot of men, but throughout the Club there were many, many women. And so I never thought about it in those terms, of the women versus the men. Although I do remember there was one director from the Bay Chapter that was able to set up some committee about women—I can't remember her name.

04-00:37:51

Eardley-Pryor: Do you remember the interest of the committee?

04-00:37:51

Perrault: Helen Burke—[Her name was] Helen Burke. And I guess because some people were looking at this role of women in the Club. But personally, I just never thought there was such a conflict between the men and the women in the organization. [laughing] It seemed pretty—more balanced to me, if you looked at the chapters and the representation.

04-00:38:15

Eardley-Pryor: And throughout your time on the Board, the representation of women certainly became even more and more so.

04-00:38:19

Perrault: And certainly for the presidency of the Club, we ended up with more women presidents. I was the second woman president.

04-00:38:26

Eardley-Pryor: You helped blaze a trail in the modern era, when the Club became national in scope. During your [second] time as President [1993-94], one of the major issues that comes up is around forestry. And there seemed to be some efforts by a group that called themselves the John Muir Sierrans. Can you tell me a little bit about what that was, and what their concerns were?

04-00:38:44

Perrault: Well, it was a group of members that wanted to have no logging on public lands *at all*.

04-00:38:50

Eardley-Pryor: Zero logging?

04-00:38:50

Perrault: Yeah, right.

04-00:38:51

Eardley-Pryor: What was the take from the Board on that?

04-00:38:54

Perrault: The Board—well, not only did they [the John Muir Sierrans] want that, but they also wanted to be able to have the funding to be able to carry out those campaigns. And the Board had its process for how it decided what would be the major campaigns. And there were also concerns raised about if you had no logging on public lands, what would it do to impact the concerns for forests in other countries, where there might be a rush on their lands? And what would it mean for private lands? I think we talked about this briefly in one of the other discussions.

And so, in addition, the group that called themselves John Muir Sierrans, there was a question about the use of the name of the Club with *Sierrans*. And so we had many, many things with our lawyers about the use of the name, and how do we preserve the Sierra Club's name? And then they went to slate politics, where they wanted to run and take over the Board. And how do you

deal with that, because they would go on petition to run in elections. It was very time consuming, and it was difficult. They had a cause. They were concerned, because they said, "Well, this is what Muir might want, to not have the logging," and there were problems about logging. There was overlogging, as there had been in Muir's time.

The question was just—a number of questions. What do you do with lands that have already been logged, and the Forest Service was taking out—logging for that purpose? So there's many, many issues around the whole thing, a lot of controversy.

04-00:40:31

Eardley-Pryor: What did you think about them? Where did you come out on some of these issues?

04-00:40:33

Perrault: Oh, well, I came out more with [what] we would call the mainstream Sierra Club concerns—that we didn't want to see the hand forced by the Club in how it would pick its priorities. And we had these other concerns that I just mentioned—about some of the issues if you had no logging at all on public lands. What would it mean for the surrounding lands, and private lands, as well?

04-00:40:54

Eardley-Pryor: A theme that is coming up—even just today in your work with the Corporate Relations Committee [and] other issues we've talked about in the past—is protecting the name of the Club. And you also spoke about your self-education and also just deep love of John Muir, and his history, and the role that he played in forming the Club in general.

04-00:41:12

Perrault: Right.

04-00:41:14

Eardley-Pryor: Where did you come out in terms of them trying to use the name John Muir Sierrans?

04-00:41:19

Perrault: It wasn't because they were relating to Muir, it was because of the use of the Club's name. Because you have it trademarked. And in fact, the same thing about the trademark issue was raised when people wanted to use names like "Sierra Cubs" when you're teaching kids in their chapter. Do they have the right to just adopt that as a name, or do they have to go through requests for use of the name?

04-00:41:49

Eardley-Pryor: And why is it important to go through the requests?

04-00:41:53

Perrault:

Well, you lose—anybody can just attach the name Sierra to any—Sierra Club or sierra, people are allowed to—sierra itself is *mountain*, sierra. But Sierra Club, or any association with people as Club members, wanting to use the name when people would think, "Well, that's what the Club approved." And so it would mix up the public if you didn't use the name correctly. And we spent a lot on lawyers to get the name trademarked properly, and to say to other people, "Well, you can't use it in a way that it looks like the Club is supporting this particular issue when it's not."

04-00:42:35

Eardley-Pryor:

The forestry issue in the John Muir Sierrans, is that what helped inspire the actual trademarking?

04-00:42:41

Perrault:

No—well, it firmed up our trademarking, yeah. I mean—I don't remember—did we have any trademarking at all before that?

04-00:42:54

Eardley-Pryor:

Yeah, it seems. I remember hearing Carl Pope talk about, in his oral history interview, how the John Muir Sierrans had a *big* wilderness idea, that massive swathes of wilderness need to be protected—versus the incrementalist idea, [to] go as you can, and win [small] victories as you can.

04-00:43:10

Perrault:

Right, and that was always a thing that divided some Club members. Do you do it incrementally, or do you get it all at once? And if you try to get it all at once, you have to have a lot of money put behind it. So then what do you do with the other issues as well?

04-00:43:25

Eardley-Pryor:

The other priorities.

04-00:43:26

Perrault:

And that—there were times, for example, in the issue where people wanted to protect on the nuclear—concerns about a nuclear buildup, and they wanted to make the major Club effort on that. So they wanted to dictate the budget by running a petition to get the changes they wanted. And so there was that problem. That made the Club then say, "All right, we'd better put it on the ballot and say how do we want to run the Club? Do we want to run it by people just saying, 'Well, make this the thing, and we've got all the votes for it, and that's what's going to happen?'" That's not the process we'd use.

04-00:44:00

Eardley-Pryor:

Did the process change in the wake of both the nuclear issue in the eighties, in your first presidency, or in this John Muir Sierrans forestry issue in your second presidency?

04-00:44:08

Perrault:

You mean the priority process?

04-00:44:10

Eardley-Pryor: Yeah.

04-00:44:11

Perrault: That had many changes over time, you know. Sometimes it was a broader request for input. Other times, as they changed through Project ACT and Project Renewal, there were other processes. And so I don't know, at this point, how they pick their priorities—whether it's just done by the Board, or it's still done with the chapters being asked their opinion. I haven't followed that.

04-00:44:40

Eardley-Pryor: The other issue—we did speak about this too, and we mentioned in the last interview—was the role that immigration and population played. That seemed to be another hot-button issue.

04-00:44:47

Perrault: That was another one of those things that was very time consuming and expensive for the Club, in trying to protect it and make sure that we didn't make any mistakes that would cause anybody to sue us for doing the wrong processes and not allowing people to speak out.

04-00:45:01

Eardley-Pryor: And that involved lawyers to help mitigate those challenges?

04-00:45:06

Perrault: Right, right. Well, you had to make sure that everybody could be heard, that if you had a ballot, that they had the right to look at their position. It was just many, many complications like that—very time consuming. Not the greatest fun of my life in my Sierra Club work. The greatest fun really has been on saving places and making changes that make things better down the road.

04-00:45:32

Eardley-Pryor: Yeah, well—these were some of the challenges that came up during your second term as president. What memories do you have, during that time, of issues that you were really excited to work on?

04-00:45:42

Perrault: Well, since the staff did a lot of the work, and I had—I ran the Board meetings and organized those things. It still left a lot of free time. So my free time was used on local issues, county issues, statewide issues, and national issues. And so I was involved in President Clinton's Council on Sustainable Development for six years, with my title of Vice President for International, whereas other people who were on his Council sometimes only lasted three years because they lost their title. I didn't lose my title, so I stayed on for six years. But that whole effort then, when I took it to form the Bay Area Alliance [for] Sustainable Development [later BAASC, Bay Area Alliance for Sustainable Communities] with a coworker on President Clinton's council, [Richard A.] "Dick" Clarke—I think we have mentioned some of this.

04-00:46:32

Eardley-Pryor: We haven't gone into much detail, but maybe this is a great time to do that.

04-00:46:33

Perrault:

So [in March 1997] we formed, along with equity representation and business representation, the Bay Area Alliance [for] Sustainable Development, which then ran for ten years. We were able to get grants—sometimes \$50,000 from a foundation. Here and there we got extra grants we then allocated out to the various entities. The Club, for example, got \$7,000 of that \$50,000 in that particular case, so that they could help run the environmental caucus of the Bay Area Alliance [for] Sustainable Development. There was a business caucus, an equity caucus, an environmental caucus, and we all met in our caucuses. And then we would meet together in large meetings of legislators, representatives from the cities, representatives from the housing industry—all kinds—transportation, government [agencies]. All kinds of people we'd run sessions for over that ten-year time period.

And in fact, we were assessed by a woman named Judith Innes from Berkeley, who did a review of the Bay Area Alliance at the time. The one thing that she didn't, in our opinion, get right—and I think she later admitted—that she didn't see the follow through later, that what difference had we really made overall. But she did a big paper on the organization, the Bay Area Alliance [for] Sustainable Development. [Judith E. Innes, "Taking the Three 'E's Seriously: The Bay Area Alliance for Sustainable Communities," *UC Berkeley Institute of Urban and Regional Development* (2004), <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7zm0f4xj>]

04-00:47:59

Eardley-Pryor: Well, on some of these issues [like] the longer-term impact, what were some of the things that you saw [as] the impact of the Bay Area Alliance?

04-00:48:07

Perrault:

Well, the Alliance itself brought together the five key regional agencies that had never met together. We actually had them for dinner a couple of times so they could be together. And the ultimate now, over time, is that the agencies are working much closer together. We were able to bring many people who had not been together, over transportation and housing and environmental matters, to address the concerns we had about a growing Bay Area, with a growing need for housing and trying to protect the pristine areas we had, and the agricultural viability of our lands that we had in the Bay region. And that was a focus on regionalism, which was something that President Clinton's Council on Sustainable Development had said was an important thing to happen across the country. Focus, not just on entities within single counties, but everybody in regions, kind of thinking about how to be a better region, which is why we formed that Council to begin with.

04-00:49:05

Eardley-Pryor: So the impetus to form the Bay Area Alliance, that came out of your time on the Clinton sustainability committee?

04-00:49:11

Perrault: Out of the time on President Clinton's Council, right.

04-00:49:13

Eardley-Pryor: Were other efforts around the country done similarly? Did New York or did Atlanta or Chicago create some sort of similar kind of regional effort?

04-00:49:22

Perrault: Not coming out of President Clinton's Council. There were probably regional concerns among other cities. I know, for example, one of our [Sierra Club] Directors who was in the Chattanooga area and Atlanta area—they were looking at concerns about their regions, too. But I don't know of a similar process like we did. Certainly, we're the only one that came out of President Clinton's Council on that.

04-00:49:47

Eardley-Pryor: And thinking about the people that you co-founded this group with, the Bay Area Alliance with—Dick Clarke, the former CEO of PG&E—where did your connection with Dick Clarke begin?

04-00:49:59

Perrault: On President Clinton's Council. He was a representative there for business.

04-00:50:04

Eardley-Pryor: And another person you pulled in was Carl [C.] Anthony.

04-00:50:05

Perrault: Carl Anthony. He had been with a group in the Bay Area called Urban Habitat, where he was concerned about equity issues. He later went on to work for [the] Ford [Foundation]. He's now working in his own organization on equity matters [Breakthrough Communities]. But we made a film about the incorporation of equity in the environment—and economy is what the business part was.

04-00:50:23

Eardley-Pryor: The three 'E's.

04-00:50:24

Perrault: The three 'E's, right. And that whole idea of sustainability was a big issue that came out of the Brundtland Commission Report. [*Our Common Future*, (The Brundtland Report) by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), chaired by Gro Harlem Brundtland, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).]

04-00:50:32

Eardley-Pryor: Take me back to that, because that seems like a powerful moment. In 1987, the Brundtland Commission comes out with its *Our Common Future* report,

[which] defines sustainable development—the popularized notion of sustainable development. Gro Harlem Brundtland, who chaired that committee, the World Commission on Environment and Development—this is a pretty major moment, in an international sense, of the role of sustainable development.

04-00:50:55

Perrault:

Right. And I kind of treated that whole—it was a UN-commissioned document—and I kind of treated it like a Bible. Because when I read it, I saw what I had seen when I was at the League of Women Voters in the East Coast.

04-00:51:05

Eardley-Pryor:

What do you mean?

04-00:51:07

Perrault:

Well, the League of Women Voters was not just an environmental group. The League of Women Voters cared about the integration of equity in environmental issues. They didn't state [it] in those terms, but I learned that you had to incorporate those concerns together. And so when I came to the Sierra Club, they didn't do as much of that integration. Until I saw more of it happening, when J. William "Bill" Futrell was President [of the Sierra Club from 1977-1978] he said, "We have to focus more on cities. We can't just focus on wilderness areas. We have to focus on where people live." And so I was able to be a delegate from the Club to a meeting in Detroit on Cities Care ["City Care: A Conference on the Urban Environment," co-sponsored by Sierra Club, Urban League, and the Urban Environment Conference, 1978].

04-00:51:46

Eardley-Pryor:

Oh, this was in the late [nineteen] seventies, right? The Detroit conference?

04-00:51:49

Perrault:

Right, which fit into my understanding of what was necessary in the movement, that you couldn't just be an environmentalist. You really had to—and the Club eventually began to realize, too—that you had to think about labor. And so when it went into its positions on the free trade agreements and NAFTA, we did it in conjunction with concerns about labor organizations. Carl Pope was very big on bringing in the labor interests, as well, and I valued his input that way. So *sustainability* was a big word, and people were going to misuse it as well.

It was a word that we used a lot in another organization in California that, again, was active and called the California Environmental Dialogue, which was a group of legislators from the state and the cities, and business community, and environmental representatives, to try to find common interests for the protection of California as a viable entity. And so we had agreements that we came to, along with the state officials, which we hoped they would then bring back in their activities at the legislative level, on movement of goods in the country, you know, between the shipping and the

trucking. Issues on climate, concerns about visioning the future of California, and how would it take of its land-use matters. And there were a whole number of those kinds of agreements, and we met regularly. And one of the members of it was the Wine Institute, that actually produced a document on how the wine industry could be more sustainable—sustainability in the wine industry. So it was a word that was used many times.

I actually brought the same use of the term *sustainability* into a major conference of educators for the National Association for Environmental Education [NAEE] to try to say, "Well, let's not just be environmental education, but let's bring in the relationship to the broader sustainability field," and I gave a talk on that.

04-00:54:03

Eardley-Pryor: Now, was this part of your service under George H.W. Bush?

04-00:54:05

Perrault: No, that was actually separate from my work on the senior Bush's environmental education advisory [the National Environmental Education Advisory Council]. It was just another thing. I was trying to contribute, even there, some concerns of interest on sustainability matters.

04-00:54:22

Eardley-Pryor: The role that *Our Common Future* played for you seemed to be a real lightning rod in broadening, or maybe helping define, work that you had already been doing for quite some time.

04-00:54:33

Perrault: And we actually had a Sierra Club document produced, out of one of the members of our International Committee, called, "Our Common Future Action Plan [Sierra Club International Committee]." Yeah, and that was Bill Mankin—that was that young man that I met in Georgia one time, when we were out on a lake looking up at the space objects floating in the sky, who became one of our forestry experts. [laughing] He wrote a document, "Our Common Future Action Plan [Sierra Club International Committee]."

04-00:55:02

Eardley-Pryor: And did you see that the Club responded in the way you wanted it to?

04-00:55:07

Perrault: I'd have to go back over that document. There was not really that connection to the Club—it was the international program's idea that—I actually have the document. It's really a Club document. It probably disappeared but I have a copy. I'm sure Bill Mankin has one, too.

04-00:55:22

Eardley-Pryor: How did *Our Common Future* come into your world? Do you remember when you first saw it, or heard about it, or read it?

04-00:55:31

Perrault:

I lose track of where I find these things. I did have a personal interest in the United Nations as a kid. I remember my parents had some magazines at home that gave me a sense of the UN as an institution. And one time, when I was a child, I submitted a—you had to dress up a doll to give to UNICEF, and I made mine a wood nymph. I remember she had green leggings with netting. So I was very aware at the time that I did this doll—I was probably ten or eleven—that there was an organization that cared about children, and it was related to the UN. So I was always interested in that kind of activity and eventually helped the Club be involved with the United Nations Association, the UNA. That I learned more about through some work—maybe with the League of Woman Voters? I'm not sure just where the connection was. But the Club did some documents with the UNA, and I remember running a program where there were about twenty chapters who participated in a joint program with the United Nations Association. So it's hard to say. I've always had this focus on UN issues, but where I came across the document *Our Common Future*, I can't recall exactly.

04-00:56:54

Eardley-Pryor:

Well, you showed me a copy—you have a couple copies of the book—and one is leafed through very heavily.

04-00:56:59

Perrault:

[laughing] Underlined, yeah.

04-00:57:01

Eardley-Pryor:

And flags all across it.

04-00:57:02

Perrault:

Right. It was a brilliant. It was a brilliant piece, and it was a very big mover in the world to bring attention—I suppose, and I sense, there's been a slippage on that kind of interest worldwide, particularly with the lack of leadership from the United States. That was really so important to be able to continue some of the work on these agencies and its contribution.

04-00:57:28

Eardley-Pryor:

Another, outside the Club, but leadership position that you took with an environmental organization—in the late 1980s you were involved in something called the California Environmental Network. What was that?

04-00:57:41

Perrault:

Right. That was a follow-up from my work with Nancy Anderson, at Tufts, with the New England Environmental Network, in which she ran programs yearly. And so she said, "Michele, you have to have one out in California, now that you live there." So she encouraged me to form California Environmental Network.

04-00:58:02

Eardley-Pryor:

What was it?

04-00:58:02

Perrault:

And I did that with a man named Bill Noble. We just didn't have enough steam to carry it out for more than a couple of years. [laughing] We didn't have the backing like Nancy had, connected with Tufts. But we worked with World College West. We did two major conferences: one dealing with trying to increase communication skills for environmental leaders around the state of California; and then we did another conference down in Southern California on clean-air issues, because they were affecting poor communities in parts of Los Angeles. And so we worked with some leaders down in Southern California to run a major conference down there at the time. So we fulfilled some of Nancy Anderson's request to, "Please try to set up a network in California," but it was very time consuming. But we had two good conferences and brought in a lot of people.

04-00:58:50

Eardley-Pryor:

And the partner, the academic partner, was the World College West, you mentioned?

04-00:58:54

Perrault:

Right. We worked in conjunction with them.

04-00:58:56

Eardley-Pryor:

Yeah, you mentioned work with the California Environmental Dialogue. I'm wondering what the relationship between the California Environmental Dialogue, the CED, was with the Bay Area Alliance? They sound like they were doing similar things, but maybe at different scales?

04-00:59:12

Perrault:

Different scales. The Bay Area Alliance was for the 101 cities in the Bay Area. The California Dialogue dealt with the whole state of California and its major issues—and it was a different organization that pulled it together. It was a business organization that felt that environmentalists and businesspeople and state leaders need to talk together.

And so that's when I was doing a program for the Chinese visitors I had, that had come for a month. They wanted to learn with me about how we do our work as a Club.

04-00:59:50

Eardley-Pryor:

Tell me how or why are Chinese visitors coming?

04-00:59:51

Perrault:

One was an important activist from China [named Wu Dengming.]

04-00:59:59

Eardley-Pryor:

They came to stay with you for a month?

04-01:00:01

Perrault:

They came to stay at the Club. We found a place where they could have lodging. It was paid for. The other one was a public official from Wuhan in

China. And through various networking I had learned of their interest to come and be with me, because I had been doing all kinds of international visitors for years with the International Visitors Center in San Francisco. And so they came, and I took them to various agencies, showed them how our Association of Bay Area Governments worked, how our water boards worked, our transportation issues.

And then I told them that I was with this group, California Environmental Dialogue. And I asked that group, could I bring them with me to the retreat up in Lake Tahoe, and they said sure. And [the Chinese visitors] were so amazed that environmentalists would sit down with the business community members and the state officials and try to have dialog together. They said, "We want one of those California Environmental Dialogues in China."

So eventually, I went back to visit them, because it was a law group that had heard about some of the work that I was doing, and I was invited to go to China. And I met, the older man who had been famous in the environmental movement that I had been hosting here. I met him and he took me to his home, and we made—

04-01:01:26

Eardley-Pryor: Dumplings?

04-01:01:26

Perrault: Dumplings together, yes. And we rolled them in his home, and that was really quite neat.

04-01:01:31

Eardley-Pryor: When did you get a chance to travel to China?

04-01:01:35

Perrault: Well, my first trip to China was when I said to my son [Matthew Berry], following parting with my ex [Phillip Berry], "Where would you like to go in the world?" And he says, "China." I said "Okay." So when I told John Holtzclaw, who had been to China—he's our transportation guru in the Club, a volunteer, still very active. When I was going, he said, "Oh, I'll go with you!" Thank goodness he went with us, because he helped us figure out what trains to take. And we went down the Yangtze before they flooded—

04-01:02:08

Eardley-Pryor: Oh, for the Three Gorges Dam?

04-01:02:10

Perrault: Yeah, before the Three Gorges. And of course, the whole Three Gorges became a big environmental issue that the Club got involved with, and we made comment on. John wanted to go down on the Chinese boat. I wanted to go down on the boat where I could understand what was going on as we went. So we separated at that point and met in Wuhan again afterwards. But it was quite an experience.

04-01:02:32

Eardley-Pryor: What was your memory of going down the river?

04-01:02:35

Perrault: Well, they had all the measurements about what would be flooded, and we actually went into towns that would disappear under water. It was a very incredible time period.

04-01:02:48

Eardley-Pryor: And this is early 2000s when you made this trip?

04-01:02:51

Perrault: Whenever that came—a year before they actually opened it up, the floodgates, and everything got flooded. But it was just incredible to see these measurements on the sides of a mountain. You could see what was going to disappear. And it was very beautiful looking at things. We went into some of the inlets that were crystal—aquamarine color—and kids were picking up pebbles from the clean streams. And you knew they would disappear—those streams would disappear and their communities would be flooded. It was very difficult to deal with it. But I went to China many times after that, for various things. But I'll talk about that when I talk more of the international stuff.

04-01:03:32

Eardley-Pryor: Tell me a little bit more about the California Environmental Dialogue. It sounds to me like there was a policy effort. There was an effort to try to shape public policy by having legislators involved?

04-01:03:44

Perrault: That's right, so that there weren't people just fighting each other all the time. Members of it were Disney—as I said, I've mentioned the Wine Institute already, oil companies, gas companies—Pacific Gas & Electric. And it allowed you to be able to talk to them later on if some issue arose within the Club where you had, you know, kind of contact—corporate relations. Should we take money from Disney? Well, let's talk to Manny, who was their representative. It just broadened the relationships of people that I worked with throughout the state.

04-01:04:26

Eardley-Pryor: It sounds like there was a lot of opportunity to move things forward because of that. I'm wondering, too, were there challenges it involved, especially starting with Clinton's Sustainability Council and having people like Dow Chemical's CEO be the head, and the World Resource[s] Institute person be the co-chairs? That seems like people might be at odds in trying to come together.

04-01:04:48

Perrault: Well, they were clearly at odds. You know, you could only go so far. From my position, I would love to see many more things to have happened there, but you were limited because the constituency was so diverse. But at one

point, I remember saying to the Council, "Well, maybe some things should grow and some things should not."

04-01:05:13

Eardley-Pryor: What do you mean by that?

04-01:05:13

Perrault: Well, bad things should not continue to grow, you know. And maybe there are some good things that we should try to encourage to grow together. I remember the oil guy saying, "Yeah, I could go with that one. That sounds okay to me." [laughing] But it was a way of approaching finding some joint interests.

Certainly, the big focus of the Council had been on increasing sustainable communities around the nation, and one of our big meetings had to do with that. And when you try to say, "Well, what did President Clinton's [Sustainability] Council *do?*", it's hard to measure it. If you go look now, there are communities throughout the United States—I have one in my own town of Lafayette: Sustainable Lafayette. There are many sustainable cities and towns around that were follow-through from that effort.

So to say, "Well, what was its success?" The success was the multiplier effect of people who got involved in that program. And like the people in my town, they continue to try to find the best way that the town can be as constructive and sustainable as possible. And I think those are alive still, around the nation.

04-01:06:27

Eardley-Pryor: What do you think the interest in business is, in joining these kind of sustainability councils?

04-01:06:32

Perrault: Well, they get credit for—like the Chamber of Commerce has contributed to fund awards that can be given to people that will have an environmentally sustainable home or decision to build. We give out these awards in Sustainable Lafayette, and the business community joins in. They want to highlight what's successful, and so they get good vibes from that as well. They don't want to be at odds, fighting people.

04-01:07:01

Eardley-Pryor: Yeah, I guess that question was coming out of my wondering what the environmental movement's role should be in shaping the way capitalism works—or challenging the way capitalism works.

04-01:07:16

Perrault: Well, you have to do both. You really—it depends. You can shape it by saying "Well, here's a dairy farm that's doing the right thing. Let's encourage you to buy from *them*." Or, "Here's a company who wants to put our name on it, but they are encouraging us to eat more meat. Aren't we going to eat lower

on the food chain? So is that a good idea, to have that symbol?" You guide it that way.

But on the other hand, you have terrible entities out there that—in the mining industry, for example, where they just want to rape the land. And you have to fight them, and you have to do everything you can to, for example, in some cases, say to a bank—to investment groups, "Don't fund those people." And then encourage banks that want to do things, like they get environmental people in their department.

For example, the Bank of America here had a wonderful environmental person who worked with us in our Bay Area Alliance. He eventually came and helped the Sierra Club's Investment Committee, because I suggested him to be a member of that. So there are people doing good things, and you want to encourage—the more people doing good things the better. And that's sort of the way you have to look at it—that's the optimistic way. Can you increase those numbers? And in the meantime just try to fight—fight like I did on the garbage landfill issue. There was one garbage land[fill]—

04-01:08:41

Eardley-Pryor: You've mentioned this several times. What's the story?

04-01:08:42

Perrault: There were two major garbage companies.

04-01:08:45

Eardley-Pryor: Where?

04-01:08:45

Perrault: In Contra Costa County, where I live. There was Brown[ing]-Ferris, a big one—this is all public knowledge—and Waste Management was another. But Brown[ing]-Ferris was a little bit more open to not wanting to put the landfill where there was a prospective beautiful site for a park. And it is now a park called Round Valley because we were able to get Browning-Ferris to move the site away from that area and have the landfill in another place.

In order to do that, we went around in a helicopter, all over the county, looking for a spot for a landfill. That was one of the things I remember, was my second helicopter ride. My other one had been when I was in the Gulf of Mexico on President [Carter's] Council on Coastal Zone Management, and we flew out onto an oil rig in a helicopter. But anyway, so this helicopter and the landfill—we saw this beautiful round valley. No way there's going to be a landfill site there. And so that fight, the battle to protect that park—which is now beautiful, Round Valley Park, I've walked in it—took almost ten years. It was a big battle, and I worked with a local chapter, and a wonderful guy named David Tam who was an activist in the chapter, who really knew solid waste issues so well.

In all these battles you find these specialists. You don't do it on your own, and you use their knowledge to be able to find the best strategies to win. So that I consider one of the successes—that, and the offshore oil. There's still no drilling in Georges Bank. There's still no drilling off Northern California. There's no landfill in Round Valley. You know, I like to measure some of the successes in real pieces of landscape that you've been able to save.

Otherwise, you're doing good things to try to minimize the encroachment on those lands by things like the Bay Area Alliance [for] Sustainable Development, where we're able to say, "Okay, we're going to encourage infill in cities near transit sites, infill development. That's going to take the burden off trying to build out on agricultural lands or on other more pristine places that should just be kept green forever.

04-01:11:05

Eardley-Pryor: The victory for moving the landfill and preserving this park—you mentioned Brown[ing]-Ferris was the company that you worked well with, that was more agreeable?

04-01:11:14

Perrault: Right. But that doesn't mean they were perfect in everything else they did. But you try to find—in that particular case, you had to choose which was the better option, and they were going to have the better site. [laughing]

04-01:11:27

Eardley-Pryor: Well, I'm wondering if the connections with that might lead back to Bill Clinton's Sustainability Council. William [D.] Ruckelshaus, who's the first EPA administrator, also served on the Clinton Sustainability Council, and at the time was the *head* of that waste management company [Browning-Ferris].

04-01:11:43

Perrault: [laughing] Right, but that came later from my work on the landfill—yeah.

04-01:11:48

Eardley-Pryor: Oh, okay—which came later?

04-01:11:49

Perrault: Ruckelshaus's appointment on President Clinton's Council.

04-01:11:52

Eardley-Pryor: I see. So the landfill battle was something that happened earlier. Was that in the eighties?

04-01:11:56

Perrault: That—yeah, I believe—yeah, I think it was 1997 or 1998, yeah. I have to look in my archives!

04-01:12:02

Eardley-Pryor: Yeah, of course. That's why you keep them.

04-01:12:03

Perrault: But it came early.

04-01:12:05

Eardley-Pryor: Another event that happened, that we haven't talked about, that we've kind of talked around, is after *Our Common Future* came out, after the Brundtland Commission comes and helps popularize globally this notion of sustainable development work that you had been doing locally and nationally for a long time before that, there's—with this more increased international recognition of global issues—there's another United Nations conference. A global United Nations conference in 1992—the Rio Conference, the Earth Summit [the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), also known as the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit, the Rio Summit, the Rio Conference].

04-01:12:31

Perrault: Right.

04-01:12:34

Eardley-Pryor: I'm wondering if you can talk a little bit about what the Club was up to or what your role on the Board—if there was an interest in any of this?

04-01:12:40

Perrault: Well, the Board never really got involved in international things like that. They left that to the International Committee. And of course, I chaired that for many, many years, after I left the presidency in '93. I was chairman many years for the International Committee, or a member of it. And so they worried about these conferences, and who should go, and what role should the Club play? And a lot of the role[s] I played were on citizens' groups that met within the Bay region. I was a big part of citizen entities—I forget all the names of them—in which we talked about what should happen at the Rio meeting [the Earth Summit, or the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development]. And so I participated as a member and then shared that with the international program.

04-01:13:27

Eardley-Pryor: Because it seems that, [the] Earth Summit meetings seems, to me, to help have been a trigger—the same way that the Brundtland Commission had been a trigger—for recognition of sustainable development. That Rio Earth Summit seemed to really promote this notion of sustainable development. And then it's in the wake of that that Clinton forms the Sustainable Development [Council], and all these other spinoffs that you helped lead in result of that. So I just didn't know if there were stories behind preparing for the Earth Summit, or thinking of the Earth Summit as an instigator?

04-01:13:59

Perrault: It was just so many broad issues, and being able to find funding for people to get down to it—yeah. The one big conference that I remember going to that was of that kind of nature—because it was always a matter of who's going to

pay for people to travel. That's always a big cost. You can't always do that work at those meetings. But I remember going to the Montreal Protocol meeting.

04-01:14:19

Eardley-Pryor: Oh, in 1987?

04-01:14:22

Perrault: Yeah, MOP [Meetings of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone] they called it—yeah, and representing the Club at that. It was closer, and we were trying to focus the Club's attention—one of the things that I had as a theme running through my concerns within the Club, was that the Club needed to be more aggressive on an energy policy, needed to be much more aggressive on climate-change matters.

So back in the—I guess it was in the nineties, in the early nineties, my records show me, along with other people like Anne Ehrlich and Ed Mainland, who was a senior fellow and continues to be active with California even today—we were pushing, along with other key leaders in the volunteer side, like Ned Ford in Ohio, people like that—"Let's get the Club to have a more aggressive energy policy. Let's do more with climate change matters." And of course, the Club is very much involved now, and has been on closing coal plants, but it's hard to remember that there was a time when people had to push them more.

And so I have many archival efforts of trying to push on that—even when the Club had programs like Cool Cities. It was a wonderful program in which the Club was going to focus on the towns and entities, like my town, and how could we be better in our response to climate matters? Because of course, even today we recognize a lot of cities and states are more aggressive than our own national government. So I remember pushing more on the Cool Cities program.

But the Club never, in my opinion, stayed with it long enough and gave enough assistance to the local communities. I think that, in many ways, the priority on closing the coal plants kind of took over, and then there was a whole hierarchy of individuals who the staff worked with on those climate matters, that that got kind of left. I think it should have continued to be in operation. I tried to do some work with encouraging the Club to work closely with ICLEI [the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives, now Local Governments for Sustainability, founded in 1990].

04-01:16:22

Eardley-Pryor: What's that?

04-01:16:23

Perrault: That's the—it's a climate-focused city group that actually does things worldwide, and they were based in—they had a program in the Bay Area. And

so I have many efforts that I worked on with them to try to get a closer relationship with the Club and what ICLEI was doing.

04-01:16:41

Eardley-Pryor: You were so plugged into all these networks, and all these issues that were flowing through the Club throughout your entire term.

04-01:16:47

Perrault: [laughing] That's right.

04-01:16:48

Eardley-Pryor: Do you have a memory of when the climate issue came onto your radar, when climate change became something—or global warming—became something that was more and more of a concern?

04-01:16:57

Perrault: Well, we were aware of a lot of—those of us who read knew from the scientists, like Stephen [H.] Schneider, who was a very dear friend of Anne Ehrlich—all those early scientific efforts pushing us to think about the long term. How would you translate their concerns as scientists into a program for your organization, an organization that was prioritizing wilderness protection and other things? And you had to say, "Well, look, if you don't deal with climate change, your wilderness is not going to do well." So there was that effort internally, to try to encourage the Club to spend more time and more money on those matters.

I think it just came from those of us who read. It came onto your radar right away if you were following *Science* magazine or *Scientific American*. In your reading, you know that something had to be done, and if you believed it, and it had to do it right away, then—I can't say exactly when it came on [my radar]. But there were many, many efforts which I connected with where people were thinking about those concerns.

04-01:18:04

Eardley-Pryor: Let's take a little bit of a break here.

04-01:18:04

Perrault: Oh, okay. [interruption in recording]

04-01:18:07

Eardley-Pryor: All right, Michele. I want to talk a little bit more about the role you played in the Bay Area Alliance for Sustainable Development, this organization that you began in the mid to late-nineties, maybe '96-'97, and it lasted for ten years.

04-01:18:22

Perrault: Right.

04-01:18:23

Eardley-Pryor: That you helped create in the wake of your time serving on the national sustainability committee under President Clinton [President Clinton's Council on Sustainable Development]. The focus on these regional approaches—it seems like you were able to merge some of the work you did in the name of the Club, as the Vice President of International for the Club, with this regional, local work—that wasn't quite directly Club related, but was still part of this Bay Area Alliance?

04-01:18:49

Perrault: Right. Well, there's actually—to form the Alliance, I had been on President Clinton's Council as a Sierra Club person. So when we formed the Alliance, I was still a Sierra Club person. I wasn't really representing any particular chapter, but I was coordinating efforts that spanned three chapter areas: the Redwood Chapter, the Loma Prieta Chapter, and the Bay Chapter. So in order to be able to represent them adequately, when we finally came to agreements as to a compact for the region, I had to make sure each of those chapters agreed with the content of what was in the compact.

04-01:19:24

Eardley-Pryor: Well, tell me about the compact. What kinds of things were in the compact?

04-01:19:26

Perrault: The compact was the agreement—the agreement that what cities—and we sent drafts out to cities to sign on. We ran meetings in cities for citizens to come and speak to the various issues that were raised in the compact, about how to look for better environmental protection, how to have better economic opportunities for people that weren't going to be harmful to the environment, and how to increase the areas where people were poor, and how to increase their capability for them to have better housing and better jobs where they lived. So these were—

04-01:20:07

Eardley-Pryor: And how to do all this integratively.

04-01:20:07

Perrault: So this was creatively decided through very many meetings and drafts that were put together.

04-01:20:15

Eardley-Pryor: The compact was decided?

04-01:20:15

Perrault: Yes. And so then, when the final compact was released as a result of many public hearings, in order to sign the Club's name onto the document, I had to make sure that the three chapter Executive Committees were in agreement with the wording.

04-01:20:29

Eardley-Pryor: What was the process to get those [chapter's Executive Committees] on board?

04-01:20:32

Perrault: I had to go and speak to each of the chapters. And there was some controversy because a couple of them felt that we needed to have more information [on] concerns about carrying capacity, that it wasn't mentioned enough in the document. So I was finally able to get it in the preface. [laughing] And using Carl Pope's help—because I told him this is something that we really needed to have the Club sign on to—and a staff-person that he gave me some help with, we were able to get agreement by the three chapters. But that was a big process, and it took *months* of an effort to get agreement there.

04-01:21:05

Eardley-Pryor: What do you remember about the carrying capacity? What was their concern?

04-01:21:10

Perrault: Well, I think it's a legitimate kind of concern to have the wording—but it just didn't fit into the design of where you would put it in the compact. So the creative solution was to stick it in the preface.

04-01:21:21

Eardley-Pryor: The preface, to at least make mention of it?

04-01:21:23

Perrault: That needed to be considered, yeah.

04-01:21:27

Eardley-Pryor: And that was enough to get those chapters on board?

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Perrault: Yes, right, because the rest of it was fine. I had been working with many local people in different chapters that were members, and [I] came to all the meetings, from their—because they thought it was a great effort. So they would participate. And if we do a special meeting on housing or we do a special meeting on transportation—whatever we did as a focus—they attended those meetings. And hundreds of people came to these gatherings, that didn't exist before for people to come to, whether they were just average citizens or they were leaders within their city.

04-01:21:59

Eardley-Pryor: Do you think when "sustainability" became this buzzword that came into more practice after *Our Common Future*, after the Brundtland Commission, how did the work around environmentalism [change]?—You'd always been an environmental *activist*, and "the environment" had been sort of the buzzword that brought people together for context. When "sustainability" started becoming the buzzword, how did that change the way that activism happened and the way that you brought—that people came together?

04-01:22:29

Perrault:

Well, I'm not sure that it changed. But from my point of view, a way to show how important it was for environmentalists was, you cannot save the environment if you can't take care of the people who are living in it! Their demands will get stronger for particular solutions that could impact the environment, unless you help them with their needs. So if you meet their needs for transportation—close to housing, that kind of thing—and you give them opportunities to find affordable housing, they're not going to need to go out into the hinterland and travel two hours to get to a job—things like that. So there was a relationship there that was important to understand.

04-01:23:12

Eardley-Pryor:

You mentioned too, earlier, that Mike McCloskey helped encourage the Club to take a view of "social issues."

04-01:23:20

Perrault:

He helped draft a document. Now, the Club knew—there was a time period, and I can't remember the distinction between when our social-issues paper came up and when we were criticized in the movement for not being concerned about places where people lived. For example, the Southern Poverty Law Center and groups down in the South were saying the environmentalists were not fighting for preventing toxics from hurting poor people and finding a way to clean up sites where poor people lived. And so there was criticism of the movement, including of the Club, for not taking those concerns of people's health-needs into affect. And so whether the social-issues paper came in along that time period or not, I'm not sure. But it was very clear that we needed to think more about those kinds of concerns that were being raised by environmental justice groups.

04-01:24:20

Eardley-Pryor:

Yeah, they were concerned about the environmental racism—

04-01:24:23

Perrault:

In fact, that was the title of the concerns, environmental justice issues. That began to surface up from these communities that were being impacted, so that environmentalists were not just supposed to think about wilderness areas, they were also supposed to think about things where people's lives were, and their health that would be jeopardized for generations to come.

04-01:24:43

Eardley-Pryor:

When Mike [McCloskey] put together this sort of think-piece paper, what came from that?

04-01:24:49

Perrault:

Well, that was actually a position paper that was approved by the [Sierra Club] Board.

04-01:24:53

Eardley-Pryor:

And does that—and so what's the process for—?

04-01:24:56

Perrault: Well, the position paper just gave a focus for what people should be thinking about. And as a result, the Club began to form its environmental justice entities, and people began to make relationship liaisons in their chapters with groups they didn't necessarily talk to before.

04-01:25:16

Eardley-Pryor: Okay, that's what I—what happened in the—?

04-01:25:18

Perrault: It just encouraged—it encourages that to occur, because it says, "This is okay to talk about these things, and this is really part of our concerns as a Club."

04-01:25:26

Eardley-Pryor: And those were clearly something that you were thinking about, too, with creating the Bay Area Alliance and including Carl Anthony, and what he represented, into those dialogs.

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Perrault: Right, right, right.

04-01:25:38

Eardley-Pryor: Another thing that came out of the Bay Area Alliance experience was something that you created called Faces of Sustainability?

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Perrault: Faces, right.

04-01:25:46

Eardley-Pryor: What was this?

04-01:25:47

Perrault: Well, there was a number of reasons that I thought, "Well, how does the average citizen think about sustainability? What does it look like when you see it?" And one way you can see it is to look where people are doing it. So if you have a good company that is doing good practices for the environment, highlight them and say, "Well, this is what it looks like for this company." If you have a town who has set up a gardening program for people to join, so that they can have more sustainable growing of food and stuff—highlight that. So that was something—I wanted to show what it looked like in reality. And how do you know when you're there?

At the same time, I had senior fellows [International Conservation Fellow Program], which was a program I had created with the Club's approval—the Board approving me to set up this thing, which was mainly because I was at the Club office all the time. I could bring in volunteers and have them do jobs, people who weren't necessarily experts on something, but they wanted a role to play in helping the Club. And so I advertised this program through—

04-01:26:54

Eardley-Pryor: When? This senior fellows program, when did you create this? Were you still on the Board at that point, or was this after you—?

04-01:27:00

Perrault: I can't recall when I first set it up. But it was a pretty extensive response, and people would come in. Now when they would come in to want to do something, I'd have to interview them. "Well, what skills do you have? What do you like? What do you think about in terms of the movement and what role you'd like to play?" And I would try to match their skills to their interests and our need. And sometimes I'd run out of things to give them, you know, because here I was, a volunteer myself.

So when I was working on the Bay Area Alliance, I said, "Ah! Maybe I can take some of these people to help me write up a particular county. And what are the highlights for that county of what sustainability might—what does it look like? What are people doing there, or what are the projects they have that are pretty neat that you can put the label *sustainability* on?" And so I gave them—and I had many of my volunteers, senior volunteers, working on a particular county, and doing the research and writing up the documents. And then I asked the Club to be able to put that on a computer, so that people could look it up. So they could take the written documents. And so when I was working with the Bay Area Alliance [for] Sustainable Development, and we weren't going to continue past the ten years, I wanted to be able to have Faces [of Sustainability] appear in one place, for all the effort these people had put into it.

04-01:28:24

Eardley-Pryor: So what did that mean?

04-01:28:25

Perrault: That means putting it online.

04-01:28:26

Eardley-Pryor: Oh, you put it on the Internet.

04-01:28:27

Perrault: Yeah, right.

04-01:28:28

Eardley-Pryor: So Faces of Sustainability became an online site.

04-01:28:30

Perrault: Right, right. And it was online under the Association [of] Bay Area Governments, which was one of the lead groups that was a member of the—so it was equity, environment, business, and government. So the [Association of Bay Area Governments] had a website to put that on. In the end, the [Association of Bay Area Governments] gave me all the archives. They couldn't keep them. So I'm the only one with the archives of the Bay Area Alliance [for] Sustainable Development.

04-01:29:00

Eardley-Pryor: Oh, that's great. More to the archives, and more of the reason why they're provided.

04-01:29:04

Perrault: Right, but the Senior Fellow Program was not just for that kind of an effort. Some people were interested more in international work, some were interested in energy. I remember one guy came once and he says, "Well, I don't know. I just was a hat manufacturer. What can I do?" And that was my toughest one, because there wasn't really too much I could slot him into.

But I did offer them to other staff. I had some of them do research for the outings department on some of the places where people were going on trips. And I had Gene Cohen—who was staff for the Board—he had one looking up some history. And so when they had a need, I'd say to the staff, "I have somebody who can come do some research for you." And so I had all these various jobs for people to do. And it was an extension of not only myself, but it also gave these people a role, because they were retired, and they didn't want to be retired. They were, "What else can I do? I want to do something contributive." The real skill was matchmaking them to something they would love, and for which we would have a need.

04-01:30:15

Eardley-Pryor: And you have such a skill at networking and bringing people together.

4-01:30:18

Perrault: [laughing] That was kind of fun to do. Yeah.

04-01:30:19

Eardley-Pryor: It was a good role for you to play. Something that comes up—you mentioned this—the way that you can multiply, how you make yourself a multiplier, how you make a multiplier for yourself. How do you replicate the work that you're doing?

04-01:30:33

Perrault: Right.

04-01:30:34

Eardley-Pryor: And the senior fellows, it seems like that was a way to do that.

04-01:30:36

Perrault: Yeah, and then, certainly through the international program, we had the International Newsletter, which Jim—

04-01:30:45

Eardley-Pryor: Oh, Jim Diamond!

04-01:30:45

Perrault: —Diamond. Did you ever talk to him? Yeah. Well, Jim Diamond was the editor for it. That was a job for him. And he was marvelous at it, but not a lot

of people wrote for it, so I ended up being one of the major—the major writer. But I also brought in some of the senior fellows to write for it. So for example, I had a young woman who was helping me, and she wanted to be a librarian. And I said, "Well, you know, maybe you could contribute. We need some research done on a particular issue." And then she would write an article. And then she'd get the joy of being printed.

04-01:31:18

Eardley-Pryor: The newsletter, again. It reminds me of the work that you did, the *Right Now* newsletter at the Atlantic Chapter. This International Newsletter, how was it disseminated? Who received it?

04-01:31:30

Perrault: Online. It was disseminated online, and Jim put it all together. I still, to this day, I wouldn't know how to do my own newsletter. I can write for them, but he was able to get it all blocked out. And it was a way in which I could also—every time we had international visitors, I would talk about who came and what they learned and what they told us. And I would write that up and that would go in the newsletter. Also, any interesting articles or reports that came out of the UN or any other agencies, I would highlight that report in the newsletter.

04-01:32:01

Eardley-Pryor: How were you learning about these topics you highlighted?

04-01:32:04

Perrault: Just by constant reading, finding all this information. I worked almost full-time. Every day I went into the Club office, because they gave me an office.

04-01:32:14

Eardley-Pryor: At the Club?

04-01:32:15

Perrault: Yeah. [laughing]

04-01:32:18

Eardley-Pryor: Something that comes up in the sustainability work that you've done—in reading some of the documents from the Clinton Council [on Sustainable Development], all the way down through more local focus, regional focus, and even the city area—is the importance of visioning. This role of visioning and imagining the future seems to come again. Can you talk a little bit about why that keeps coming up and what role visioning plays?

04-01:32:41

Perrault: Well, it's really another name for planning ahead. Because you have to kind of know, what are the trends that are occurring? What will impact the place that you're visioning for? You have to know statistics about changes in numbers of people. Or if you're talking about a place, changes in the need for new improvements to existing structures. It's the kind of thing that if somebody had done a better visioning process on our infrastructure, we might not have

so many bridges in disrepair—we would have fixed them at the proper time—or roadways, or that kind of thing. So, agencies do this. You have to have a sense of planning ahead. So to me, that's the way I would look at visioning.

And in conjunction with that, you have to have indicators, which was, again, a big area which we focused on in the Bay Area Alliance. What are the indicators of [the] present situation, and what do they tell us about the future upon which we can base the visioning? So there was a huge area of focus in President Clinton's Council on indicators as well. There's a whole art, a state of art, of how you're doing those measurements so that you can envision ahead.

04-01:34:02

Eardley-Pryor: What part of [those] things did you take from that sustainability council into this other work, into the work of the Club and individual [activism]?

04-01:34:08

Perrault: Well, we kind of—they had indicators. We had an indicator program. Visioning. Just—certainly the focus on the equity and the environment and economics. I think that's—

04-01:34:29

Eardley-Pryor: One thing that came up for me, too, is just—all of this work that you're doing is across so many different scales and in such breadth—is, how do you maintain your motivation? A lot of these battles are very challenging, and they're long-term battles that [have] a lot of roadblocks. How do you continue to keep your motivation?

04-01:34:49

Perrault: Well, as I've gotten—if you're asking me now at the age that I presently am, it's a little different than when I was younger and could do it all! [laughing] Because right now, I have the added thing of my grandchildren to be concerned about, and my personal travel for family and friends back and forth across the country.

04-01:35:09

Eardley-Pryor: A lot of care-taking happening.

04-01:35:11

Perrault: But so, your question was—?

04-01:35:13

Eardley-Pryor: How do you maintain your motivation for doing all of this work?

04-01:35:16

Perrault: The motivation. Well, the motivation—that comes from the early childhood interests, that you knew what you cared about, and so you just built on the caring. And the caring didn't stop, because you believe so much in the importance and values that you got from that childhood, and they haven't changed.

Every time I would go on a trip to the Sierra in the summer, I reinforce the feelings and the value. Every time I see a particular place that I hope stays that way, or I see it jeopardized—that increases the anger and the energy. You know, so you can get a lot of energy from anger at people doing the wrong thing. [laughing] And as long as one's healthy, and one has one's own personal energy, and you know what the skills are—or you know who to gather around you who has those skills—then you don't run out of energy.

Just recently I was on a conference call—we're looking for the head of an organization I'm on the board of. And I have to contribute some ideas of people I know who have enough energy that can go in that position and give those people—I'm not going to sit back and say, "Oh, I'm too tired to give those names." I have to do that! [laughing] Or things can't move along for the better. So as long as you have your personal energy, you have your beliefs that you care about things—that's what you make your life.

04-01:36:44

Eardley-Pryor:

Another senior fellow that I spoke with, who just had glowing things to say about you was Ed Mainland. And one of the things that Ed really emphasized in his wonderful time working with you, as he described it, was your indelible optimism. That you were such a ray of light, that when you came in on these—

04-01:37:04

Perrault:

Oh, that's sweet. [laughing]

04-01:37:05

Eardley-Pryor:

Even though these issues are oftentimes very challenging, and sometimes can be—people have a different response to that. It can make them more depressed or have them fall back. How do you maintain your optimism in the face of all of these continued and worsening environmental challenges?

04-01:37:20

Perrault:

[laughing] Well, I mean, we all—let's take the year that we're in, with Trump. We know how all the gains we made, and the gains the agencies have made, are being undercut. And that is extremely depressing; very, very dismal. And yet if you believe that, and you see the rise of citizen action like we did in the [2018 mid-term Congressional] election, where now we have a Democratic elected House of Representatives, then you say, "Wow, maybe it's not so far messed up by the Trump people on these agencies. Although terrible damage has been done, there's a way to maybe turn it around."

So you know that if enough people swell up, that's got to be the optimism. You could go to these protests that have been held during this Trump era, and just feel so enthused by the excitement and the people, and their signs and the crowds! And that gives you an extra boost. I mean, it's just exciting to be out in the middle of them all. So, yeah.

04-01:38:32

Eardley-Pryor: So having other people in the work with you sounds to me like a big boost for you?

04-01:38:35

Perrault: Oh, right! And seeing who are leaders, and who's up and coming. You can have confidence that there's somebody there to carry it. The thing is, it has to be in large-enough numbers. And on the other side of the thing, you could say, "Oh, it's so depressing. There are what, eighty-five thousand children that have died from starvation in Yemen? And you can't do anything about it." But if you don't do anything about anything, then it's all worse. So you try as yourself, and you try to encourage others to take their part every day in doing something that enhances the capability for things to move forward for the better. And even if it's for your own family, you know? You don't give up on them either.

04-01:39:28

Eardley-Pryor: In 1994, just after you finished the second term as [Sierra Club] President, you took on a role within the Club—you were given a designation of International Vice President. And you took over a position that initially had been held—that role had been held by Dr. Edgar Wayburn. How did you approach the international issues differently—when you're just thinking about them, not the specifics, but just broadly with regard to what Ed Wayburn had done to what *you* wanted to do?

04-01:39:59

Perrault: Oh, I never really thought about it in those terms. He was his own person. He was just something pretty special, and he had such a breadth of knowledge. It was quite incredible. I basically, in that role, made sure that we ran the meetings well, brought the issues to fore that we had to care about—which is what he did, too. We had staff to work with, international staffs, so we had to know what they were doing. What role could we play in enhancing their efforts? He didn't have as many local things that he was doing, like he was doing some big things, certainly, in the Bay Area, and was well known for protecting the Golden Gate area.

04-01:40:43

Eardley-Pryor: Yeah, around Marin.

04-01:40:45

Perrault: I was doing much more local things. But on the international arena, he didn't have some of these special projects I set up—again, using senior fellows and other people that came in to help, such as my China Working Group or the Western Ghats Working Group, or a special focus on helping NGOs [non-governmental organizations] that came in. And we were doing the international visitors program, in which I had to be up on just about every issue you can imagine they might face in their country, which already I kind of was keeping abreast of, even for my own local region. So we had—I had those extra roles.

But I think as far as managing the International Committee itself, it was a pretty standard thing. You had to call the meetings. You had to make sure the agenda covered all the various things that were of importance to the Club. And bring in new people, where you can, on matters.

04-01:41:37

Eardley-Pryor: That sounds like maybe a good point to stop, and we'll talk next time about the international work.

04-01:41:40

Perrault: Okay.

Interview 5: December 14, 2018

05-00:00:00

Eardley-Pryor: Today is December 14, [2018]. We're in the fifth and final oral history session interview with Michele Perrault, in your lovely home here in Lafayette, California. Michele, it's great to see you again. Today we wanted to cover a number of topics, especially revolving around your international work on behalf of the Club. What would you like to tell us first?

05-00:00:18

Perrault: Well, first of all, my interest in international started very early in life. And I was thinking back on how did I get this sense of something more global? And in elementary school, you have to do a diorama of a country. So I remembered doing the Belgian Congo, in which I did little huts in the diorama. And that experience, of learning about the Belgian Congo, brought me into an interest in a continent I was not familiar with—and it has lasted all my life! [laughing] I remember, I loved the diorama. I did a really great job, and I remember the little huts. So then, of course, later on, when I was doing my work—and of course, I think I've also mentioned, that my parents had some magazines that told me about the larger global concerns. But my major thrust was, of course, activism within the places that I lived.

So then when I finished my [first Sierra Club] presidency in '86, I took over the International Committee because I had been involved in helping move it to Washington, DC, and I was really very interested in a lot of the issues. In addition to which, the chapter had been approached, the Bay Chapter, had been approached by the YMCA. They were doing a program focusing on Africa as a continent. Not just its environment, but its culture, its people's lives, economy—the whole gamut of concerns about the continent and its people. And they needed somebody to do the environment, so I was appointed to do that. And what they wanted to do was have outreach to other chapters in the Club to learn about Africa. So that went on for a couple of years, and it was a focus project that they funded in terms of materials that had to be produced. They ran meetings, and I was on the agenda to talk about environmental concerns.

But that interest in Africa lasted all my life, because I began to focus on the continent and its full people. As a result of that, and other books that I then read about the continent, I'm always concerned about it. And even today, I'm concerned about what's happening as China begins to do more within that [continent], and take over some of the areas where the people need lands for food, because they want to be able to supply their [own] country, China, with the growing numbers of people there. So it remains a concern.

And I was able to finally go to Africa later on, years later, when a donor wanted Sierra Club to take a look at some of the areas they were funding, particularly in training on nongovernmental leaders in Africa. So I was invited

to go along with Steve Mills, our staffperson for international, and Bruce Hamilton, our conservation director. And we took a trip to Africa to not only visit the Zulu territories where some of the projects were being funded, and to see what their options might be for increasing tourism within the Zulu lands, but also to go to the World Wilderness Congress in [Port] Elizabeth, South Africa. So I just, you know, I remember a lot of good times we had. We had a chance to also go to the national park, the famous one in—

05-00:03:42

Eardley-Pryor: The Serengeti area?

05-00:03:43

Perrault: No, no, no, no, [Kruger National Park.] So we went there, so I was able to see some of these wonderful things I had remembered. [...] But we went, and we saw lots of—of course, animals. And having been a former leader in the zoo, the Bronx Zoo, it was really interesting to be able to see them.

05-00:04:10

Eardley-Pryor: In the wild. Well, take me—?

05-00:04:13

Perrault: But while we were there in Africa, we met, of course, lots of other nongovernmental organizations at the World Wilderness Congress. And at that time they were displaying, in the Congress itself, work that had been done by women, of their life story. They were big hangings, wall hangings. So Bruce Hamilton got one for the Club, and I bought one. They were \$300 each, and they helped pay the women. There was probably about ten or twelve of these women who did little patches, like a patchwork quilt. And I still have one of them which I have hanging in my home. And I got the Sierra Club magazine [*Sierra*] to be able to do a little bit of a feature on these women and their life stories. Each of the panels has a story that's on a separate sheet of paper about how the women felt about where they lived.

05-00:05:08

Eardley-Pryor: Do you remember some of those stories?

05-00:05:09

Perrault: No, I have them, I just haven't looked back on that. Just an interesting aspect of that trip. But as I look back, and I'm talking many years—twenty, thirty in some cases—of places I've been on behalf of the Club, it's such a massive amount that I realized I should do a special story on each of these areas that I have files on. I have all the information, the people we met, the networking we did, and the follow-through that happened over the years because of those experiences. So that talks more about the multiplier effect and what other people are doing.

And of course, also, each of these areas that I got involved in internationally relate to a lot of the people that I met in my international visitors program, in which I responded to requests from the International Visitors Center in San

Francisco, to meet with visitors that wanted to come from any country. I had people visiting, sometimes four or five visitors per week, coming into the Club over ten, maybe fifteen years. I have binders of all these visitors that came.

05-00:06:18

Eardley-Pryor: And you were the point of contact?

05-00:06:19

Perrault: And I was the contact person.

05-00:06:21

Eardley-Pryor: What's this visitors center?

05-00:06:22

Perrault: What I had to do was know about their countries in greater detail, so that I could share with them their concerns. And also, they were interested in how could they learn from the Club about the wonderful things we did, whether it was with our Inner City Outings program, our political program, our development of members, our financial ways of dealing with fundraising, our specific issues—whether it was climate change, or how would I tap them into some of our experts on wetlands, on clean air and clean water. Because I knew all these people, and who the experts were who could help them in the long term. I knew the Club structure so well that I could also tap into other experts and bring them into these meetings with the visitors. So that was kind of a pattern that I kept up for all the years until I left the Sierra Club office, which was my volunteer space after I got off the Board [of Directors].

05-00:07:18

Eardley-Pryor: That's a huge amount of involvement on the international [front].

05-00:07:20

Perrault: Right.

05-00:07:20

Eardley-Pryor: Well, take me back. There's a couple things you talked about that I'd love to revisit. First off, what's this international center?

05-00:07:27

Perrault: Oh, it was a center in San Francisco where they serviced people from around the world, and they did it in conjunction with the United States Information [Agency]—USIA, and a few other groups. And these people would come—and they didn't always want to see an environmentalist, but when they did, they came to us.

05-00:07:49

Eardley-Pryor: I see. And you were the point of contact on behalf of the Club?

05-00:07:49

Perrault:

And so I was the point person, right, and I got an award from them from over the years of doing work with them. They then changed in their own programming a few years ago, where they decided they wouldn't be able to send people around to different places. They had volunteers that helped do that, and so they cut that out. And then I didn't have people coming, which was just as well, because the Club, at that point, kind of moved the office from San Francisco to Oakland. And these people usually were coming into San Francisco, so it was easy—our office was there. And I would get sometimes anywhere from two people, one person, up to thirty at a time. And the Club had this beautiful facility, and I was able to talk to them about any issue they wanted, because I had so much background in so many areas that it just flowed out. And then they would want to know more.

And then they, in turn, would share things about their country. Well, I had files on all the countries. So someone would come in, and I would say, "Oh, yes. I know you're from Germany," or, "You're from Australia," and I would know what was going on in their country from all these readings that I had done. [laughing] And I would know ahead of time what countries they were from, and I just remember one time somebody said, "Oh, you don't have anything from East Germany." I said, "Yeah, I'm sorry, because we just don't know enough, just because of what has happened in your country—I didn't have a file for you!" [laughing] And she just felt so bad. I just remember that.

05-00:09:16

Eardley-Pryor:

So you kept these active files on what was happening in the world, just to be ready in case someone came?

05-00:09:20

Perrault:

Well, and to help my own memory about things. I would pull those out, brief myself on their countries before I met them, and so I would know. [My files] were mainly on their environmental concerns, so I would know what they were facing. And they, in turn, would add to that with material they gave me, and then I would put those in the files when they left.

I remember having, just as an aside, many—for a few years *many* visitors from Japan. Somehow, the country itself was encouraging people to go learn more about the environment, so they could be more environmentally sound in Japan. And so one time, I remember even a label company came, and they said, "Well, what can we do better, as a label company, in Japan?" And I was just, you know, I just told them to talk about sustainable materials, and know where they got them from, and that kind of thing. I just remember that label company. But there were all kinds of companies coming to visit.

05-00:10:15

Eardley-Pryor:

That's fascinating!

- 05-00:10:16
Perrault: And so my files on Japan are very extensive. [laughing]
- 05-00:10:17
Eardley-Pryor: I wonder—was this in the eighties? In the early nineties?
- 05-00:10:20
Perrault: Probably—yeah, I'd have to, again—
- 05-00:10:22
Eardley-Pryor: Yeah, look at the files.
- 05-00:10:23
Perrault: I can't keep in my mind all the years that were involved. But there was a certain point, and then the visitors dropped off.
- 05-00:10:28
Eardley-Pryor: Yeah, we'll pause here. [interruption in recording] I want to also ask about the—you mentioned this pan-Africa focus project that you began in the eighties.
- 05-00:10:38
Perrault: Oh, yeah—we can just call it the Africa Focus Project.
- 05-00:10:39
Eardley-Pryor: The Africa Focus—
- 05-00:10:39
Perrault: Right, in the YMCA.
- 05-00:10:41
Eardley-Pryor: Contextually, in the eighties, thinking about the famine that's happening in [Ethiopia] and these concerns about hunger—what were some of the issues that you remember talking about, environmentally, with your Africa folks?
- 05-00:10:54
Perrault: Well, again—that's why I think if I start to go back and look at all the agendas, look at the kinds of things we said, I could talk to it better. I need to do stories on all of these places, and I have the files to do it.
- 05-00:11:08
Eardley-Pryor: That's the next project.
- 05-00:11:09
Perrault: Right. [laughing]
- 05-00:11:09
Eardley-Pryor: That's the project.
- 05-00:11:09
Perrault: Yeah, exactly. And I'm looking forward to doing that.

05-00:11:13

Eardley-Pryor: Well, maybe you can use these oral histories as memories.

05-00:11:13

Perrault: And mapping it to the visitors, because I had visitors come from those countries after that African Focus Project. I had somebody from Uganda, they would come from the Belgian—well, the Congo. All of the countries in Africa came as visitors, and so I learned from them, and I have the background material they shared with me.

05-00:11:33

Eardley-Pryor: What was it that you were, on behalf of the Club, what were you sharing with *them*?

05-00:11:38

Perrault: I was sharing with them the things that made the Sierra Club great. They came because they knew about us. They wanted to learn what are the skills they needed? How could they advance that work? Mainly, if they were NGOs, how could they encourage their own country to respect the work of NGOs, nongovernmental organizations? And they would want to know, could they get help if they needed it while they were trying to do these things? And that's when I would try to refer them to other people, because I certainly couldn't give them help on an ongoing basis—nor could many other people. But if there were specific questions on waste management, I knew who to send them to.

05-00:12:16

Eardley-Pryor: Part of that networking.

05-00:12:17

Perrault: Right, a lot of the networking. Because with all my experience in conservation in the Club, I knew all the people who were experts. And they were not staff. I would not send them to staff, because staff had other roles they had to play. These were experts that the Club had let develop through some of the structures they had in the past, like their issues forums. And I was aware of key leaders in grazing, on wetlands—whatever the subject—biotechnology. I knew who they were, and I could just ask them to help, and they were always willing to provide some background. And so there was that further networking.

In addition, my work on the Africa Focus Project was an extension out to other chapters to help them join in. Connected, at that time period, was a relationship with the United Nations Association, the UNA, which again, was another way of keeping me interested in the larger entities that were trying to do something, like the United Nations Association. And they had a program where I did outreach to probably fifteen or twenty chapters to see if they would play a part in a program where they joined the Sierra Club—and the documents were produced in conjunction with the Sierra Club name and

United Nations Association name. And those documents are, again, something I have in the archives for the Club to look at. I saved everything like that.

And it brought me into an interest in the chapter work internationally, because chapters had a choice. If they wanted to be broader, they could go into global concerns. So for example, one chapter was interested—on their own—in the Philippines, and they produced a beautiful poster to save the Philippine eagle. And there were other opportunities where chapters, because an individual within a chapter—like in North Carolina they had a strong interest in stuff going on in Costa Rica, and so I have files on what the chapters were doing.

And we had a policy called *twinning*, which we established in the Club to tell chapters how they could work with other countries, what they could do, how could they provide some help. They could send books, for example. They could send materials. But there were certain things they couldn't do in the name of the Club. They couldn't make policy decisions or those kinds of things, but there were ways in which they could share. And so, again, those specific things that those chapters did, unless they have it in their records—I have it. And so again, that's another story to tell, is how did twinning work.

What we tried not to do every time a request came up—"Let's have a Sierra Club in Mexico," "Let's have a Sierra Club in [Burkina Faso]." They would come and ask us—Ghana, I think, did once—"Can we have a Sierra Club there?" And we'd have to say, "No, it's not our policy. We think you need to do, in your own country, the equivalent of an NGO that's your culture, your language, your interests. But we can help you talk about how to form it."

05-00:15:26

Eardley-Pryor: Talk to me about what the rationale was behind that. Why *not* have Sierra Clubs in different locations?

05-00:15:29

Perrault: Because the Club's name—we would have no control. The only country where the Sierra Club allowed the use of the name was Canada, because we had the same language, we had the close border, and so there's a Sierra Club of Canada. But if you tried to manage that in countries everywhere, can you imagine what would happen? Sierra Club of Somalia? Come on, how are you ever going to protect your Club name in other countries? Plus, their culture's different than ours; their politics are different. You can encourage them, in networking, to be sure that they know who their politicians are, what are the liabilities of their politicians? What are the things they could do in conjunction? And so we would provide things based on what worked for *us*. But they had to do the interpretation of what worked for them.

05-00:16:17

Eardley-Pryor: Wait, can you tell me about the story for Canada getting—becoming a Sierra Club?

05-00:16:23

Perrault: Oh, yeah.

05-00:16:23

Eardley-Pryor: I know you have a really close connection with Elizabeth May.

05-00:16:24

Perrault: I forget the years and everything, but I was a delegate, for example, to Sierra Club of Canada, again, and make them a part. If we had a corporate policy, what was *their* corporate policy? It should probably be similar to ours. What could we do together in our lobbying efforts on our different governments? How could we lobby together in broader entities, like the International Union for Conservation of Nature?

And so one of the key leaders, of course, that became head of the Green Party [of Canada] and a dear friend of mine, Elizabeth May. She was just great. And so she would come and ask for help sometimes on fundraising. "How could we approach donors?" There were questions about how would we help them in some of the Canadian issues that were occurring on the border. If they dealt with movement of water, or transmission lines, or whatever the kind of problem was, there was a relationship there. There was the offshore oil drilling that could impact them on their coast, because it was close to our coast. There were a lot of issues like that that came up. And again, that's another story, because there were many issues in which we supported them with our people. And that story is probably not told anywhere, [but] I could find it, in [my] archives. [laughing]

05-00:17:44

Eardley-Pryor: But there is no Sierra Club Mexico. And from what I'm hearing, the reason is because it's a different language and different culture?

05-00:17:52

Perrault: Well, and we had this policy developed by the Board of Directors, encouraged by those of us that felt strongly about this, that it was not a good idea. You start to have a Sierra Club of Mexico, then the other countries say, "Well, why can't we have a Sierra Club of Guatemala? A Sierra Club of Honduras?" You have to stop it at some point. Plus, it makes more sense to have it where you have a similar language. But we didn't want a Sierra Club of Great Britain. Even they are different; they have their own way of doing things. So I think it's been sound, and I hope that the Club continues that policy in years to come, because it would be a big headache to open it up.

05-00:18:28

Eardley-Pryor: You've mentioned that one of the visitors you had while you were hosting these visitors for many, many years was somebody from East Germany.

05-00:18:35

Perrault: [laughing] Yeah.

05-00:18:36

Eardley-Pryor: And you had also made mention that there was a trip you took to Berlin.

05-00:18:39

Perrault: Oh yeah. Early—I think it was, again, maybe in the late [nineteen] eighties. It was a World Bank meeting in Berlin. So Steve Mills was our staffperson, working on World Bank matters. And the staff—by the way, they would call on the International Committee for help and some ideas and guidance and strategy, and where we could, we would support them. We didn't get to do much lobbying for them, unless you lived in Washington, DC. But Steve Mills was one of our key staffpeople, and I remember going with him to Berlin. And there were so many protests in the street, where the police with the visors were trying to protect the stores, and the people are marching down the street. And I was terrified! [laughing] We hid in a doorway, Steve and I, as they went marching by. But I do remember that we were there—

05-00:19:28

Eardley-Pryor: This is before the [Berlin] Wall fell [in 1989]?

05-00:19:29

Perrault: Pardon?

05-00:19:30

Eardley-Pryor: Before the Wall fell?

05-00:19:31

Perrault: Oh, before the Wall fell, that's right. I remember traveling in the subway, and you go through dark stations where you couldn't—they were all blacked out and you couldn't—the train didn't stop. And you could kind of almost peer over the Wall. And I remember seeing all the designs on the Wall. And soon after I came back, the Wall fell down—that's when they took it down. But I was there when that happened, and it was my only trip to Germany.

We were there to really lobby the World Bank and to lobby the US representatives. And at that time I recall there was a nongovernmental representative from Japan, and we were trying to lobby *our* people, and they didn't have the same system for lobbying their officials. It wasn't quite, I would say, polite. Or it wasn't their cultural way of doing things, and I remember we encouraged him to make a phone call to his representative. I don't remember the outcome. That all, again, that is part of the story that's probably, in part—if I've written it down. A lot of the things that happened, in my relationships with countries, where I wrote it down was in our international newsletter. But that came a little bit later than the Berlin meeting. But all the stories of these contacts and these trips, I wrote up as stories. I was the major writer for the [Sierra Club's] International Newsletter.

05-00:20:55

Eardley-Pryor: That's the work that you and Jim Diamond did.

05-00:20:56

Perrault:

And it was a way to share, to the chapters, what was going on. Because it wasn't something that the magazine would cover. *Sierra* magazine has always been a problem for me, over the years, to get coverage of some of the issues.

05-00:21:06

Eardley-Pryor:

Why?

05-00:21:07

Perrault:

Well, they have the Club major priorities that they had to focus on, and the major priorities weren't necessarily the ones that I was working on, because I was doing it as, like an adjunct, volunteer, with outreach, using the Club's name and promoting the Club. But the Board—the *staff* had to follow through on certain priorities that they were dealt with by Board's request for those priority matters.

So I would *try*—and we had an interest in the Club, for example, "Let's talk about Antarctica." The Club had done a book on Antarctica. [...] It was wild, one of the last remaining wild places. But it wasn't a *Club* priority. It was a priority for the International Committee, but not a priority for the Club. So every time I would try to get something about it in the magazine, *Sierra* magazine—"No, you have to either find funding to allow it to be put in there, or get writers." So I gave them a couple of writers once—excellent writers that had done a lot. Jim Barnes, who became our EarthCare Award winner for his work in Antarctica—he had done a lot of writing, and another one of his staffpeople for the Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition. And they said, "Well, no, no, that's not what we mean by a writer." There was *always* a run-around.

And the interesting outcome, years and years later, is that they *did* do something on skiing in Antarctica, which they never consulted with us—those of us who had concerns about Antarctica. And I gave a huge protest about that fact, that we weren't, as environmentalists, encouraging that kind of activity—and why were they promoting it in *Sierra* magazine? So that's just an interesting thing that happened along the way there.

But getting back to Antarctica—

05-00:23:10

Eardley-Pryor:

Where did your interest for Antarctica begin?

05-00:23:12

Perrault:

On the Sierra Club International Committee, there was a woman Beth Marks—no, Beth Clark, then she became [Beth Marks Clark] because she married. She had been a scientist, studying—I think it was eyeballs of some of the animals in Antarctica, and so she was on our committee as an interested Sierra Club member. And she was our Antarctic person, and she was just wonderful, a terrific person. At one point, the Antarctic and Southern Ocean

Coalition needed a staffperson to take over. Jim Barnes had been doing the early work in that—ASOC they called it. At that time—

05-00:23:53

Eardley-Pryor: Had Jim been doing that work on behalf of the Club?

05-00:23:54

Perrault: No, he—that was a separate organization. Jim, in fact, had spent, in his lifetime, probably over thirty years before he retired. But he's back on the Antarctic and Southern [Ocean] Coalition board, which I still serve to this day. I got on that after Beth became the executive director, because they were looking for one, and I said, "Oh, I have just the person for you." And so I served on her board, and soon after that she retired to do some work in India, and Barnes came back and took over. So I was on the board, and I remain on that to this day. And people say, "Well, have you been to Antarctica?" I say, "No, but I love it. I know about it. I don't need to go down there. I feel like I've been there already, and I just have a strong interest in it."

Antarctica is not just one place; there's a whole bunch of things that relate to it. There's the onshore/on-land aspect, where countries have agreed not to do mineral mining, because there was a treaty that Jim Barnes helped to get in place, with the help of the volunteers. There's the, what we call the *offshore* part. There are meetings that are held—it's called CCAMLR [Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources], and it has to do with the ocean marine part of Antarctica, and there's a huge part of that called the Ross Sea, which we're trying—environmentalists in different groups that are members of the Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition are trying to work with the government agencies to make the Ross Sea a protected area, a marine protected area. And so many of the things that happen in Antarctica, a lot of people don't know about. I try to do my best to talk about it.

Because of my work on the Board, and my representation of the Club, I was asked [by the U.S. Department of State] to serve on five different [Antarctic] Treaty meetings. The treaty meetings are other countries involved in signing the Antarctic Treaty, and those meetings were held in conjunction with the State Department of the United States. So I was able to attend, starting—I think it's something like 2006 or 2008. The meetings were always held alphabetically, by country, so I was able to go to Uruguay, and then to Argentina, and then to Scotland, Ukraine—because that was at the end of the alphabet, that I remember—and then the US. In fact, the US meeting was held in Washington, DC when Hilary Clinton was a speaker and spoke about the importance of the protection of Antarctica.

05-00:26:31

Eardley-Pryor: What is it about Antarctica that fires your imagination?

05-00:26:35

Perrault:

The fact that not only is it a pristine place that could be harmed in terms of the life that's there, very fragile. But it's also kind of like a thermometer for the Earth, because it's where you have the changes of temperature and the flow of oceans that could affect the way in which the whole globe functions—both the Arctic and the Antarctic. Also, the Antarctic has a treaty that the Arctic does not have. The Arctic—of course, I have many files. I've been watching the Arctic out of a large concern that they are—it's not some great thing up there. They can't control the countries in the same way that there was a treaty down in Antarctica. So [Antarctica is] a model, both for what happened down there and also [the Arctic].

There are things called krill down there, and if you deplete them, it changes the whole balance of life that rely on the krill. There are species being diminished down there because we're eating, or people were trying to eat, the Patagonian toothfish—or what they call *sea bass*. And so when we did our work in the Club for Antarctica, we tried to bring it home to people. For example, in stores—ask your butcher, your fish person, market—don't buy those. Don't sell those to people. Let the public know that the Patagonian toothfish is endangered. So that was a way of bringing it home to people at the local level. And I remember doing that—and going to my own market, and knowing that they were trying to sell it, and making a comment. But I couldn't write a whole campaign around my own market, with all the things I was doing otherwise.

05-00:28:22

Eardley-Pryor:

This connection between environmental activism and using consumerism as an avenue to penetrate forward on environmental issues—when do you remember consumerism being such a major issue around environmental issues? That in order to get environmental things done, you needed to use the consumer power?

05-00:28:39

Perrault:

Well, it's a pretty broad question, because you can just look at what happened with some of the entities that began to do things about fish in general—which fish were endangered? So you had the aquarium down in California.

05-00:28:52

Eardley-Pryor:

The Monterey [Bay Aquarium].

05-00:28:53

Perrault:

Right. You had other groups putting charts out for people. There were many books that were printed about how to be more conscientious as a consumer, and each thing either—there was a movement at some point—*Shopping for a Better World*, with some of the books that came out. Certainly, my work in Green Seal was related to having a label so people would know what to buy—just a whole area. And eventually, I helped the Club form a consumption task force, so that the Club could look at its own way of dealing with things—what

was the outreach we could do to help our own members on consumption? And also, what was the Club consuming? I remember one time we were concerned about what Nestlé was doing, and I said, "Oh, well then why doesn't the Club just stop giving out free packets of Nestlé's chocolate to all the staff?" "And why don't we talk to the owner of the building that we're renting from and see if we can do anything about the light bulbs?" Trying to, every time, ask a question, when you can, about your own personal or your organization's way of consuming.

05-00:29:59

Eardley-Pryor: There's another trip that you took—you spoke about going to East Berlin, or going to Berlin before the Wall fell. And then in 1990, I have a record that you visited the Soviet Union, after the Wall fell [but] before the [Soviet] Union collapsed.

05-00:30:13

Perrault: Yeah, 1990. There had been a joint effort with a club in about the late eighties, where the All-Russian Society to Protect Nature, which was a nongovernmental group in Russia had—

05-00:30:26

Eardley-Pryor: That had to be a new thing, relatively.

05-00:30:28

Perrault: [laughing] Yeah, right—had visited the Club, and they wanted to learn more about how to organize. And they were a group that worked with Boy Scouts in Russia—they weren't a real advocacy group as such. They were introducing people to the environment of Russia.

05-00:30:45

Eardley-Pryor: More of an outings-focused group?

05-00:30:50

Perrault: Well, Boy Scouts in Russia—like a Boy Scout thing, children's programs, things like that. They came here, and I remember entertaining them in my home. And they, of course, they didn't see anything like my home in Russia. [laughing] They were very surprised about things. But during that gathering we decided—or they invited us to go to Russia.

So we had a two-week meeting in which a number of Club members—including Mike McCloskey and Phillip Berry and my son Matthew Berry—we went to Russia to meet with the All-Russian Society to Protect Nature. But we said at the time, we want to meet with the up-and-coming nongovernmental groups that are there as well, to give them a boost, and to also encourage the All-Russian Society to Protect Nature that they had to do more in activism. And of course, if you follow what's happened in Russia, Putin has put a lot of hold on a lot of the activism, and they have to be more fearful. But at the time we went, it was not as fearful a situation for them, so we were able to meet with the nongovernmental groups and have a session.

And one of our members was Nick [Nicholas A.] Robinson, from Pace University, a very important Club member internationally for many years, particularly starting in New York. And he wanted to work on a project called Beringia, which was an area that's shared by the waters of Russia and the US. And so there was a document kind of signed to try to do more in Beringia—which I realize, as I'm going through my materials, I don't know what the eventual outcome of that was. Again, it's a story of what did that trip accomplish? We were able to go to see parts of Russia, like their *zapovedniks*, which were expansive wild areas [protected nature reserves]. And I remember going into a lab and seeing an animal called the *vykhukhol* [Russian desman], which I had never heard of in my work at the zoo. My son was able to—

05-00:32:47

Eardley-Pryor: What is it?

05-00:32:49

Perrault: It's kind of like a beaver/muskrat combination, and a very rare animal. But these *zapovedniks* were huge, open wilderness areas.

05-00:33:00

Eardley-Pryor: Where in Russia? It's such a huge land mass. In the Siberian area? Are they outside Moscow?

05-00:33:03

Perrault: Again—no, no. Near—past Vladivostok.

05-00:33:10

Eardley-Pryor: Oh, so you were on the far east side of—

05-00:33:12

Perrault: Not Vladivostok, no. There's another, Vos—[Vostok]. These things were a while back. I remember funny things like, you know, sitting in a hut in one of the—like a lodge, a small lodge in one of the *zapovedniks*, and they had wild boar on the plates. And Phillip Berry loved wild boar, because he would shoot wild boar on his ranch. And I was the head of the delegation, and so I had to do all the toasts—and of course vodka, a lot of toasts with vodka. And I remember him kicking me under the table, because I just kept meeting them with each toast. [laughing]

05-00:33:58

Eardley-Pryor: More and more toasts.

05-00:33:59

Perrault: Yeah, right. But we were congratulating each other in all kinds of—you had to keep saying nice things, and they said nice things, and it went on and on. But I was pretty good—I held my vodka pretty good.

05-00:34:09

Eardley-Pryor: That's a fun story.

05-00:34:11

Perrault:

I also remember they were dismantling one of their nuclear power plants, and we were allowed to go in. And one of our members had a younger woman with him and a Geiger counter. He wanted to make sure that when we went in, there was nothing going to [make the Geiger counter] beep off. So I have a picture of my son Matthew, at the age of about eight or nine, in front of the nuclear power plant panel. And they were dismantling the core, and so we were able to look at the whole thing. And of course, that was a time when Russia was changing, and not as worried. There we were, taking a picture of their power plant.

05-00:34:50

Eardley-Pryor:

What do you remember about just cultural differences in being in a place like Russia?

05-00:34:53

Perrault:

Well, what was very sad was their—the bakery hardly had any bread or anything in it. The people were not being properly fed, and here we were being served these massive arrays of food. And so we didn't eat it all, but we made sure that the people that had serviced us got the food to take home. Another time I remember we were outdoors at a large table, and they served us some fish—I like fish, but this fish I couldn't handle. So we were feeding this fish to the dogs, [so] not to make people think that we didn't like their food! So they were very warm people. They were so eager to reach out, but they were struggling. It was very hard.

And you could still sense the control that the government was putting on visitors. We stayed in one hotel—very dreary, with a lot of attention to who went in and who went out, and this kind of sense that the people had to be very careful where they were and what they said. So I remember that. I also remember taking a train from—

05-00:36:12

Eardley-Pryor:

In [Vostok] or Moscow?

05-00:36:13

Perrault:

In Moscow. Through Russia to Sweden. That was a trip that we were taking on our own afterwards, and I remember the train going through the silent, snowy areas of Russia, the desolate areas, because people couldn't just go move anywhere they wanted to. They were really required to be in special places. You couldn't just say, "Gee, I think I'll go to this part of Russia, and they'll let me do it." You couldn't do that. And even on the train, somebody was taken off from Moldavia, a sweet couple that—they came on and took them off before we ever got to Sweden. And I remember, everything was so gray. And when we got there, the train stations had—was it Sweden? I think it was Sweden.

05-00:37:02

Eardley-Pryor:

Finland and Sweden—it depends on where your endpoint is.

05-00:37:04

Perrault:

Yeah. There were flowers at the train station. There was color. There was no color, no color in Russia. And it was kind of sad, but beautiful—the kind of stuff you remember from the Russian writers—the expanse of it. So I've always had, of course, a sense in my heart about Russia and the plight of their people.

So back on some of the things that, when I think of examples of the countries I've been in and what do we do for the people? For Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition, we helped with fundraising where we could. I remember going to a meeting with the Prince of Monaco. He was getting an award because he had helped highlight acidification in the sea. So I went with Jim Barnes down to Southern California, and we have pictures meeting with him, and he got an award—his award was seashells in an open kind of glass compartment, a container, with four sea shells in various stages of acidification. That was his award. [laughing] I always thought that was interesting.

05-00:38:22

Eardley-Pryor:

Do you remember when that was? Because ocean acidification is kind of the lesser-known twin of [atmospheric] climate change.

05-00:38:25

Perrault:

Yeah, it was—well, again, I think it was in 2002 or '03.

05-00:38:29

Eardley-Pryor:

Okay.

05-00:38:29

Perrault:

Something like that. We had gone down there to meet with a woman that wanted to help with fundraising for the larger Antarctica issue. The Club itself was not funding the work in Antarctica, except they would help contribute towards some of my travel through the international program. But I did a lot of [personal] funding of the Sierra Club's donation [to Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition (ASOC)], because the Sierra Club didn't have a budget.

05-00:38:52

Eardley-Pryor:

What do you mean by that?

05-00:38:53

Perrault:

So when we, as a member of the Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition needed to pay some dues, I would personally pay the dues, and the sometimes I'd do it through the Sierra Club Foundation. Otherwise I would just say, "Okay, I'll pay the Club's part." [laughing] And that was the way we've maintained our role in the Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition. We don't pay as large dues as some of the other groups in it, because there's no—we're supposed to pay according to the budget of your organization. [laughing] Well, there's no way the Club was going to do that, because Antarctica was not its priority. But I was able to do things to highlight Antarctica, like getting

the Club, in its awards program, to give the EarthCare Award to Jim Barnes, for his lifetime service. And that was then publicized and we were able to get news [coverage].

Also, I worked with one of the [ASOC] staff people, Tina Tin, to get our outings people to work with her for a brochure that our outings people, who led trips to Antarctica—it wasn't like the Club didn't have anything with Antarctica. They had Antarctic trips. And so I said, "Well, why don't you work with Tina? Get a brochure that you can give to people when you're on the boat so they know we do the Club work." Then I was able to argue to get a letter that I could send out to all the people who had been on Antarctic trips for the Club, to see if any of them wanted to join in on an Antarctic working group. They couldn't give me the names of the people, because that was a violation of donor privacy. So they let me write the letter, and they shipped the letter off. But it was difficult to do any follow through, and so that only brought out a few names. [laughing] But again, it was another idea of how we could expand and make use of Club entities to do more work.

And so that relationship of our outings people was kind of great, because many of them—whether they were from Antarctica or doing trips to China, would write to me and say, "I'm going there. Do you have suggestions about who we can see and what we can do?" One of the interesting outings relationships that I had, speaking of the outings program, was because I was doing a lot of work to save the Western Ghats of India, through Club activities. There was a trip leader, John O'Donnell, and he was leading a trip to the Western Ghats of India.

05-00:41:20

Eardley-Pryor: Give me some framework for the Western Ghats. What is it? Where is it?

05-00:41:25

Perrault: Well, I became aware—I must say that kind of my motto might be: *There is not an issue that I hear about that I don't want to help.* [laughing] So we were approached in about 2000 by—

05-00:41:37

Eardley-Pryor: When you say *we*, the International Committee?

05-00:41:38

Perrault: The Club, the committee—well, the Club, and then they give it to the committee. And I ended up with it because no one else was interested. And I had a wonderful volunteer support system with my international—with my senior volunteers that liked international work, like Ed Mainland and Jim Diamond. And so this young man was trying to save bats in the Western Ghats, and I thought, "Oh, where's the Western Ghats?" And I started reading up on it and found—wow, that place is very unique and very endangered. And very special—one of the hot spots in the world. So through Durgesh Kasbekar, who was the guy who came in, we opened up this whole idea of

learning more about the Western Ghats and what could we do? Because he wanted help to save the Ghats.

05-00:42:27

Eardley-Pryor: And this is kind of southwestern India? Is that—am I [right]?

05-00:42:30

Perrault: Yeah, below Goa.

05-00:42:33

Eardley-Pryor: Below the Himalayan, okay.

05-00:42:35

Perrault: No, no, wait—Goa is south.

05-00:42:36

Eardley-Pryor: Yeah.

05-00:42:37

Perrault: It's—there's the place and—it comes down the whole [western] side.

05-00:42:41

Eardley-Pryor: Okay.

05-00:42:42

Perrault: Anyway, John O'Donnell, from the Outings Department, learned about my interest in the Western Ghats, and he wanted to run a trip there, and I said, "Oh, okay. I'll go." I had to pay my own way on that. And we worked out an arrangement that when we visited the Western Ghats, we would go visit the nongovernmental groups and help give them some funds. And of course, I knew who to give the funds to, because by that time I had been doing a tremendous amount of networking with the River Center in the Western Ghats, and with Leo [F.] Saldanha, who had come to visit me in the Club, who was the Environmental Support Group—he was doing a lot of stuff. I knew all these people, either through the [International Visitors Center in San Francisco] that I had met or things I had read. When I worked in the [Bronx] Zoo, there was a man saving tigers in India, [K.] Ullas Karanth, one of the famous people. And he ended up being an EarthCare [Award] winner, of the Club—because of course I nominated him for the work he was doing with tigers.

05-00:43:42

Eardley-Pryor: What is EarthCare? You've mentioned this a couple of times.

05-00:43:44

Perrault: Well, the Club has an awards program, and the international program has a number of awards that it can nominate, and so the EarthCare is one, for somebody doing something out in the large arena. The [Raymond J.] Sherwin Award, of which I and many members are recipients, are people that are volunteers that have done a lot of work in the Club, on behalf of the Club.

And then we have another award named after—it's for people that have either lost their lives or have put their lives on the line, and it's named after an activist that just escapes me right now. I'll have to fill it in.

05-00:44:21

Eardley-Pryor: Chico Mendes maybe?

05-00:44:22

Perrault: Oh! The Mendes Award. Thank you. [laughing] The Chico Mendes Award. How can I forget that? And so we nominate each year, if we choose to, and there's an honor and awards committee that either accepts our nomination or not.

05-00:44:35

Eardley-Pryor: And I've seen also mention of a John Muir Award?

05-00:44:38

Perrault: Oh, that's the highest award. Vicky Hoover got that, and Vivian Newman got that, and Phillip Berry got it—a number of people. And then the second highest is the [William E.] Colby Award, and I got that one—and so did Doris Cellarius, my friend that worked with me in the [Bronx] Zoo. Anyway, that—

05-00:44:58

Eardley-Pryor: So the EarthCare Award was given to this person who was also working on tigers in the Ghats?

05-00:45:03

Perrault: That's right, Ullas Karanth, because I knew him from his work in the Bronx Zoo—now it's called the Wildlife Conservation Society—and he's still very active. And I noticed, as I've followed him over the years, that his daughter [Krithi Karanth] had picked it up as well, and so they sometimes do articles together. He does a lot of the research, so when we were in the Western Ghats, we also went to see tiger reserves. We only saw a footprint of a tiger—we didn't happen to see any, but we were looking for them at the time.

05-00:45:35

Eardley-Pryor: What was your experience like in India? It's such a different culture to travel to.

05-00:45:36

Perrault: Well, I'd been to India—one of the Antarctic meetings was in India, as well. But this particular trip with John O'Donnell, we were able to see all these reserves. We were able to do a lot of other kinds of things. We went by bus, and just—it was very, you know, you see the culture, the colorful culture. You get to see the wildlife and learn more about it. John was a bird enthusiast. He ran a side trip which a couple of us went on with him, afterwards, and that was to Arunachal Pradesh, because he wanted to see it as a possible trip for the future.

05-00:46:18

Eardley-Pryor: Oh, as a possible outings trip?

05-00:46:20

Perrault: Right. I don't think he ever got to do that one. I think—I don't know what the problem was. It may have been health related. But we went up to Arunachal [Pradesh], and I remember that when we landed—they were having some problems of feisty interactions with the people in the country, and so we were escorted by a police group of people to our hotels. But it was there that we then went and explored, with a guide, some of the marvelous areas up in Arunachal Pradesh. And at that time, I learned more—I'm learning about things all the time, wherever I went—about the Brahmaputra River and the importance of it to the people in India. The Brahmaputra is a lifeblood water supply, and so forth, and there were proposals for a lot of dams, including—China was interested in it. And so I began to follow that, and I started to network with the International Rivers Network. The International Rivers Network—

05-00:47:16

Eardley-Pryor: When you start doing this networking, what does that mean? How does that work, in practice?

05-00:47:18

Perrault: The network?

05-00:47:20

Eardley-Pryor: [Yes].

05-00:47:20

Perrault: Well, you connect people that you've met—like in Arunachal Pradesh, with people in other organizations who are doing similar work. There was a member who was—that we met there that was interested in snow leopards, and so I connected with the snow leopard issue, because they're kind of rare, and was able to do an article in the [Sierra Club] International Newsletter about that and about the dams. And the only way we had a vehicle to expand it internally was the international newsletter, so I did many, many stories on that and people that I met there that were doing things, and just highlighting their roles wherever we went.

05-00:47:58

Eardley-Pryor: How did you build the recipient list for this newsletter?

05-00:48:03

Perrault: Well, it—I guess it was announced on our activist system and people could sign up for it. But it also was something that gave the people in the countries that we were writing about a vehicle for them to say, "The Sierra Club has highlighted us," and they could then take that article and do what they wanted with it.

05-00:48:22

Eardley-Pryor: In their own countries.

05-00:48:25

Perrault: In their own country, so it was a way for them to reach out. There was—when I looked just at India, and my background records on it, there's over—I would say twenty-five to thirty [issues] of material that talks about all these different connections, because we met so many people to help service others that were trying to protect the Western Ghats, for example. They needed funding. I remember personally funding the River Center in India, finding out how to do that best. There were key leaders from different organizations—writers, scientists, and we would encourage them to do conferences in their own country. We would meet with them and highlight books they had done. There was a beautiful book on the Ghats done by Dr. [Kamal] Bawa, for example, and we tried to encourage his book and get coverage in the *Sierra* magazine for it.

I can't recall, or I'd have to look back to see if we actually did, but trying to use the Club vehicles in any way we could, or the examples of how we did things. I was very pleased in India that they did form a network of nongovernmental groups that began to run their own conferences. Not because we made it happen, but I stayed on their mailing list for years so I could stay aware, and I could then, in turn, write letters with the Club's name on it, whether it was going to international institutions with our name on it—anything that would help them have additional support that would say, "The Sierra Club," for example, as one of these important nongovernmental groups, "says we should do such and such."

05-00:50:07

Eardley-Pryor: And you could do that with your title as international vice president.

05-00:50:08

Perrault: That was another tool I could do with the title, and I would get it cleared through the International Committee, but they found that helpful, depending on what the need was. Or sharing with them when they were concerned about water issues or transportation issues, sharing them with some of our experts who could give them insight into how to think about something. The Club later on, through its staff, adopted a program of focus on India, because they wanted to help them shut down the coal plants, because both India and China became of interest to the staff, but their interest—

05-00:50:41

Eardley-Pryor: As a part of the Beyond Coal campaign?

05-00:50:41

Perrault: Yeah, yeah. That's—

05-00:50:42

Eardley-Pryor: It took an international frame.

05-00:50:43

Perrault: Well, there was two programs. We had a donor [Peppi Kochhar]. He was a volunteer, but [also] a donor, and he was interested in that whole program, so he and Steve Mills formed a program just to focus on that.

05-00:51:04

Eardley-Pryor: On India?

05-00:51:04

Perrault: Yeah.

05-00:51:05

Eardley-Pryor: Coal in India.

05-00:51:05

Perrault: Yeah, and they allowed—even though they were focusing on India, they allowed me to continue my work on the Western Ghats, as long as I didn't get in the way of that program. [laughing]

05-00:51:16

Eardley-Pryor: With the Western Ghats work that you were focused on—

05-00:51:18

Perrault: It was more land concerns. It wasn't just on coal.

05-00:51:21

Eardley-Pryor: And promote [issues from] the bats to the tigers. What was the means that you were trying to do? You were trying to create more national park space? Was it just more highlighting—here are issues that people can focus on?

05-00:51:32

Perrault: Well, we did a brochure for them, one of my senior fellows, Amanda Leung, she was—her background was in outreach/communications. She had done a lot of work for other groups. She was a volunteer as a senior fellow, and she did a beautiful brochure on the Western Ghats, and we were able to get great photographs and put it together, and we sent it to them. They loved having it, and it was, again, another vehicle that *they* could use. We didn't use it as much in the United States, but it was used in India. So it was trying to see what were our vehicles to help them increase their issues or attention to their issues.

05-00:52:12

Eardley-Pryor: Did Indians come to visit as well, as part of this international center?

05-00:52:16

Perrault: No, but we had other visitors from India. From time to time I would have people that were called interns that would come from a country. For example in Taiwan—that was another country that we did a lot with because they started—they asked if they could send a couple of people from one of the Taiwan environmental organizations, and so I had an intern for many years—actually two. And that, in turn, led to a relationship where they wanted me to

go and give a major talk on climate issues and meet with other nongovernmental groups.

05-00:52:48

Eardley-Pryor: In Taiwan?

05-00:52:50

Perrault:

In Taiwan, because the Taiwan environmental group said, "Oh, we know who to invite." [laughing] And so I went on a trip to Taiwan in which they, in turn—the [Society of Wilderness (SOW)]—organized a trip for my traveling friend Norman Herterich, and we went on the second-highest mountain in Taiwan. I always thought Taiwan's kind of flat, but it's full of mountains, beautiful wilderness areas. We were able to travel with them and go in their hut, where people—similar to the Sierra Club's Clair Tappaan hut, and these hikers would get up at four in the morning, while we were all lying on these kind of wooden beds with our sleeping bags, and they would cook some meal at about—early in the morning, four a.m., and they took off to see the sunrise. [laughing] Well, we didn't do that, but I remember calling my son from the second-highest mountain in Taiwan to say hi.

But in that program—and again, I have all of this information, the talk that I gave. Because I was required—in that particular case it was required, I think, [laughing] to do twenty pages of information, in which I talked about what was happening in California on climate, what was [Governor Arnold] Schwarzenegger doing? What was the whole state involved in, what was the Club doing, what are the responses? And so I have that document of my talk, and I have—it was done with the help of Jim Diamond, who was very good at putting things together for the computer for a visual presentation, which was not my forte. And so I was able to give those presentations.

And then all the NGOs that were invited were then—we took a train down the whole length of Taiwan, down to [Kaohsiung]—I forget, I'd have to look at the name of it, but where we met with all the other NGOs and had a large conference about power and building an NGO. So I learned a lot about Taiwan, and of course there were complications with how I could—I had, at one point, an interest in sharing my NGO contacts with Club staff who were going to some of the climate meetings that were being held by the UN, and I wanted our staff to meet with them. And they had reluctances, because they were concerned that they not look like they were talking to Taiwan too much while they were trying to work, maybe, with China. It became very complicated. [laughing]

05-00:55:09

Eardley-Pryor: So—the one-China policy came into play in this international work?

05-00:55:12

Perrault: Yeah, oh yes, right. But it—so then after I went on that trip in Taiwan, then they sent another group of people back to visit and spend time in the Club office learning. They wanted me to train them in—

05-00:55:23

Eardley-Pryor: Help me to understand this internship program. Who is sending Taiwanese to California?

05-00:55:29

Perrault: A nongovernmental group in Taiwan.

05-00:55:30

Eardley-Pryor: And they would live here for how long?

05-00:55:32

Perrault: A week, and I would arrange programs for them, so that they could meet many agencies, depending on their interests. I knew all the agencies because I had been working with the Bay Area Alliance [for] Sustainable Development. I knew who they all were, I knew the people—I was always able to tap them into those agencies.

05-00:55:54

Eardley-Pryor: Were these students? Were these environmental professionals?

05-00:55:57

Perrault: It depended on the country. For example, the [two] interns for China, they came for a month. And one of them was Mr. Wu [Dengming, Founder of Chonqing Green Volunteers], a very famous older man—he thinks he was maybe older than me, but we used to joke about that, because he was a long-term activist in China, well known, and he came with a public official.

05-00:56:17

Eardley-Pryor: Mr. Wu, you said?

05-00:56:18

Perrault: Yes, Wu [Dengming]. Then [Mr. Tang, from the Environment Protection Bureau] was another gentleman who came. He was a provincial leader in Wuhan, and so he came with Mr. Wu [Dengming], so that—China would usually try to send somebody, not just NGOs by themselves, and they came for a month. And they were the ones that I took to a meeting of the California Environmental Dialogue that I mentioned before. [laughing] And they were just entranced with everything that was happening. They had space in the Club office with me. We took over the Sierra Club president's office, because usually if the president isn't in town, you have the whole office. So they spent a month having that facility where they could come and do their work. And I introduced them to key leaders at the state level and city level, and even took them to a council meeting of my own town, and they could see how we interacted as activists within a local town. So it was always fun putting those together for them. And then, because of that, people from the American Bar

Association heard about my work with the people in China and the networking. They invited me to go to China.

05-00:57:36

Eardley-Pryor: The American Bar Association?

05-00:57:37

Perrault: Yes, right. Because there were some key people that knew of my work in the Bay Area with this visit and other things I was doing regarding liaisons with—because I had a China Working Group that I'd established under the International Committee. So they invited me to China, and we—

05-00:57:53

Eardley-Pryor: What was that trip?

05-00:57:56

Perrault: That was one of a couple of trips that I had been on. That particular trip, we got to make—that's when I made dumplings in the home of Mr. Wu [Dengming], but we also learned—

05-00:58:08

Eardley-Pryor: Oh, so you got to visit him in his home.

05-00:58:11

Perrault: Yes, yeah, and then we also learned about the conditions of environmental law in China, which was a growing interest. In addition to the American Bar Association asking me, I also had had as a visitor to the Club the—the head of the environmental program in China [at the time].

05-00:58:33

Eardley-Pryor: The head of the Chinese environmental program.

05-00:58:35

Perrault: Mr. [Jia] Feng, I think it was—I have volumes on all the China interaction, so if I don't remember all the names, it's because it's just a massive file.

05-00:58:44

Eardley-Pryor: These sound like huge—long-drawn out networks.

05-00:58:45

Perrault: And so he, in turn, had recommended me too, to the American Bar Association. So we were able to see how he had been able to grow an interest in China in the environmental program. So we met all kinds of people that were trying to do things that enhanced the ability to talk about health. I mean they didn't even have good law programs where you could talk about long-term effects on people's lives in China.

05-00:59:10

Eardley-Pryor: Mesothelioma and those sort of issues?

05-00:59:12

Perrault: Yeah, they didn't have experts who could do all the background work that was necessary to say that toxics were causing the problem. They just needed more [expertise], and the American Bar Association was really trying to help them with that. So—but it was a big eye-opener about China, and where was it at that point in its work. So ever since—

05-00:59:32

Eardley-Pryor: And this was in the early 2000s?

05-00:59:33

Perrault: Yeah.

05-00:59:33

Eardley-Pryor: What was Mr. Feng's interest when he came to the US? What were the things he was interested in exploring?

05-00:59:39

Perrault: Well, again—I'd have to look at my write-ups about what he said. These are extensive discussions. And, in part, he was interested in how a nongovernmental group would do its work, because they were not as developed a movement.

The same thing happened in Japan when I was working—I have massive backgrounds on interactions in Japan for a number of different trips there, because they did not have a strong environmental program. And I remember being on a committee—it was a television program in Japan when I was there, on one of the trips that I'd been invited to, in which the television program said, "Well, we in Japan know NGOs. They're barking, biting, and working." And I'm sitting at the end of the panel—oh, which ones do you think we are? And he said, "But the Sierra Club, they're a *working* NGO."

When I was asked to go on that particular trip, it was the Department of Construction that had put out the initial invitation, because they wanted to know—well, what does an NGO do? What are they like? We have them bothering us in Japan. What are they up to? And I said, "Okay, I will come as long as I can meet with the nongovernmental groups that do exist." So they set up some meetings for me, and also, I met with politicians—I remember a Ms. Domoto. She was a very progressive woman, and I found a letter in my files—again, this is why I need to tell the whole story about the Japan relationships, in which I congratulated her on being able to speak about women getting access to The Pill in Japan. And she was open about that, and I thanked her in a letter. [laughing] I wouldn't have remembered that I had said that to her, but she was a wonderful woman, and we had some dialog after that meeting.

05-01:01:27

Eardley-Pryor: When you met with these NGOs in Japan, what was it that *you* wanted to convey to them? What were the things you were trying to share?

05-01:01:33

Perrault:

Well, just to tell them how they might get stronger, to have relationships with their political leaders, to try to find camaraderie with those that agreed to their position—just using all the skills that we learned at Sierra Club, and just sharing that. That was the main thing.

05-01:01:49

Eardley-Pryor:

How to build coalitions.

05-01:01:49

Perrault:

And that was—the meeting with the NGOs, as I look back on my records, was—I was helped to have that set up by Richard [A.] Forrest, who was somebody who was working with, at that point I think the National Wildlife Federation? I'd have to double-check that. He, in turn, had met me years ago in Hawaii, when I went to a conference there to talk about global issues. And so that—those are constant connections every time I went somewhere, which I wish the staff would have done more of over time when *they* began to be sent to more of these meetings than the volunteers.

05-01:02:29

Eardley-Pryor:

What do you mean?

05-01:02:30

Perrault:

Well, there was a change in some of the structure of the Club, in which—through Project ACT and Project Renewal, that it seemed to be more attention to sending more of the staff people to some of these international arenas and funding them to go. And when I would go there would be reports on all the networking that I did at these meetings. When they went, they were probably just doing their lobbying—which was important to do, but it wasn't like they were reaching out to somebody who wasn't staff, that were nongovernmental groups, and reporting back about their connections.

05-01:03:03

Eardley-Pryor:

So the volunteer networking wasn't as published.

05-01:03:06

Perrault:

Wasn't as—

05-01:03:07

Eardley-Pryor:

It was a staff-to-staff thing that the Club was interested—at that point.

05-01:03:09

Perrault:

Well, and lobbying the officials at the meetings, which was important. But the volunteers could do that too, but there wasn't that continuing sharing and request for follow through by the NGOs as to connections that could be made for them or things that could be done for them. There was not a major report provided that—of what had happened when they were there. That's just an aside.

05-01:03:35

Eardley-Pryor: And those major reports that *you* did, in the wake of these visits, were those the things that you were publishing in the newsletter?

05-01:03:39

Perrault: In the [Sierra Club] International Newsletter—or doing follow-up in some way if somebody needed help. You know, for example, there was a group in Japan that was trying to protect bears, and they had come to visit in the Club. And so—letters would be helpful to them. They wanted to know what did we do to protect bears in the US—so that was a little more specific to just bears. But there would be other requests coming from people that knew of our relationship.

Another trip to Japan, speaking of—we're still on Japan. There were two environmental groups invited to a particular meeting that [Al] Gore was going to be at in which he was talking about climate—a German NGO and ours. And ours was invited because of me—*again*. So while I was at that particular meeting, I was able to go up to Hokkaido, where the Ainu people were, and that's where I received a gift from the Ainu of a little flute that they made, and that's where they were declared an indigenous people for the first time. But I remember being up there and meeting with one of the members of the Leopold family, who was in charge.

And then they took me on a train down to Kitakyushu, which was a town further down south. And I was interested there in being able to talk more about some of the wetlands that were of concern between Japan and Korea, because I had met, through networking, Nial Moores, who is an activist who recently appeared in the *Wall Street Journal* the other day, for being concerned about the DMZ. And I thought that was—Nial was trying to protect wetlands. And I was—with our wetlands specialist, Vivian Newman, who had cued me into Nial—doing letters on their behalf to try to raise the issue—so the importance of flyways for the world. Because these countries—

05-01:05:37

Eardley-Pryor: Where would this—?

05-01:05:37

Perrault: —with their problems, were not just problems for these countries. These were problems for the globe. So when they didn't take care of their wetlands in Japan, we had to be worried about the flyways for the birds that we all cared about as globalists. But anyway, so the—on the Vivian relationship, that was an example where she had cued me into some of these concerns.

05-01:06:06

Eardley-Pryor: And Vivian was a [Sierra Club] staff member on wetlands?

05-01:06:08

Perrault: No, just a volunteer. She was a volunteer who got the John Muir Award, who then resigned because she was so frustrated with some of the bureaucracy of

the Club and its directions under Project ACT and Project Renewal. But she's remained a dear friend. She lives in Maine. And she is a superb activist there! What we lost from her internationally, out of concerns over the way she felt she was being dealt with—she's just superb in protecting wetlands in Maine.

So in terms of countries—I'm trying to think where I want to go next with you. Oh—the DMZ. I happened to mention Nial Moores, I saw that in the paper. Well, DMZ was another issue where—the way I came on that one, because as I say, I get excited about these issues and their plight. I saw a beautiful book that had been printed on the DMZ. When I tried to find it in my home, I think I sent it—according to my archives, I think I gave it to Gary Snyder, the poet. He was most interested in DMZ, we found out, as we began to do research after I saw this book that was stunning, about the importance of that area, which has now come into discussions between North Korea and South Korea, in our time, about what are they going to do [with the DMZ]? Are they going to put roads through it? What are they going to do to that area, which has a very pristine place for wildlife? And that's what Nial Moores is now following through on. And I said to Vivian, "Oh my God! Did you see the *Wall Street Journal*? He's in it." And I want to write to Nial again and say, "My gosh! You're not just doing Korea and Japan wetlands stuff. You're now interested in protecting those animals in the DMZ."

But another person that was interested in the DMZ was Ted Turner. He had been there, I believe—I remember, I have a letter where I wrote to Ted Turner congratulating him on his interest and telling him that *we* were interested as well.

05-01:07:58

Eardley-Pryor: How did you know that Ted Turner had an interest?

05-01:08:00

Perrault: Well, just—I can't remember how all these things happened. Again, that's all what I archived, and I just glanced through that for this discussion and saw that I had sent the letter, I have the letter.

05-01:08:13

Eardley-Pryor: The book that—

05-01:08:17

Perrault: And I have clippings, you know, about what he was interested in.

05-01:08:19

Eardley-Pryor: The book that you were fascinated [with] on the DMZ, that you gave to Gary Snyder—where did this book come from? It just kind of came across your radar somehow?

05-01:08:24

Perrault: I can't remember how I got it. But it was very large, so if I had it in my collection of thousands of books here, I would *see* it.

05-01:08:31

Eardley-Pryor: So it was photographs?

05-01:08:33

Perrault: It was photographs, and it highlighted all the concerns about the DMZ, not just environmental but just broader than that. How it came to be, what was expected of it in the future. But it was so well done, that that was an example of how a book can turn somebody on. That turned me on. Many books have done that, but that was a big one. [laughing] And so we then connected with a group that was worried about the DMZ, in Washington, DC. And we sent one of our staffpersons to at least cover that meeting. And there was a lot of networking we did with people about that issue. And again, it's another story to tell, and Ed Mainland was great in trying to follow through on some of the connections that we made and the things we wrote—and Amanda Leung, my senior fellow who had done the work on the Western Ghats brochure, she did a paper, a brochure—not a brochure, but it was a flyer, on people's—help them understand the DMZ, which they in turn loved, because they could use that, and she did it with pictures and script.

05-01:09:31

Eardley-Pryor: Have you ever gotten a chance to visit South Korea before?

05-01:09:35

Perrault: Yes, I went to Korea—so Korea, again, we had all kinds of visitors coming back and forth through the International Visitors Center, so I got to meet some of the key leaders in Korea.

05-01:09:46

Eardley-Pryor: The key environmental leaders.

05-01:09:47

Perrault: Right, from the Korean—KFEM, Korea Federation for Environmental Movement—I think that's the interpretation of it. But they had known of *me*, so that when the Asian environmental ministers wanted to do a big meeting, and KFEM was in charge of helping them bring people. They brought me, so I gave a big talk, and I was paid to go to Korea. And it was before the Incheon area had been fully developed, so we got to see that area—and they were going to have a world event there, a big world event. We got to see the preparations for how they were going to build it and what they were going to do, and I got to go—

05-01:10:26

Eardley-Pryor: Was this very recently? They just had the Winter Olympics last year.

05-01:10:28

Perrault: No, this was—no, this was earlier than that.

05-01:10:31

Eardley-Pryor: The Seoul Olympics I think were in '88.

05-01:10:33

Perrault: Yeah, it was earlier than that. Then I was able to go and visit the KFEM office in Seoul, and meet with the nongovernmental groups, and had dinners with a bunch of other key leaders in South Korea. So I was able to get a sense of South Korea and all of the high-rises everybody lives in, and the compactness of it all.

05-01:10:55

Eardley-Pryor: Did you get to visit the DMZ?

05-01:10:56

Perrault: No, no, no. Seoul was as far north as I got. But their office was very close to their national park, which I didn't get to see either. But that relationship continued over time. One of the key leaders won the big award that's given out in San Francisco, the Goldman [Environmental Prize] awarded to key leaders. They give them a lot of money and they highlight them. Yul Choi, he was a key recipient of that, and he was also one that I had dialogued with back and forth for many, many years. So I had a strong relationship, and KFEM actually indicated that they had this relationship with the Club. It was on some of their literature.

05-01:11:43

Eardley-Pryor: When you cycled off of your work on the International Committee or began focusing on a different global area, what happened to those relationships, especially when you started moving away from your deep Club involvement?

05-01:11:58

Perrault: Oh—when the Club moved its office to Oakland is when I stopped doing all that work. And I, in turn, had a new life of going back and forth to the East Coast more regularly, so it became difficult to go to the Oakland office. And the Oakland office—you didn't have an office; you had to have a cubicle that you moved back and forth with a box of stuff. And so I had to leave a Club office with probably—I don't know, fifty or sixty boxes that were stored in my office—

05-01:12:26

Eardley-Pryor: Those are your archives.

05-01:12:26

Perrault: —that they had given me as a volunteer. The Club was very generous in giving me a whole office as a volunteer, for many, many years.

05-01:12:32

Eardley-Pryor: In the San Francisco headquarters?

05-01:12:33

Perrault: Right. So I tapered off, and at the same time, the International Visitors Center had tapered off sending a lot of the visitors. I don't know what happened after that. There's really no one that does that. I'm sure when people—I'm not sure, I would suspect—that when people come from other countries to see the Club

that probably Bruce Hamilton may be the one who's visiting with them. Sometimes the law program, they're coming just for legal kind of understandings, they might send a staff person down. But they don't really have—I was really a person who could give hours at a time, then the staff didn't have to do that. So I really don't know now what they do when there's a request. They could have asked me, and I'd come in, but I haven't received anything on that score. So I'm not sure how vast a program it is now.

05-01:13:24

Eardley-Pryor: I remember you talking about an organizing manual that the Club created to talk about the work that they—

05-01:13:31

Perrault: It's called [*Sierra Club*] *Grassroots Organizing* [*Training Manual*]. That was a document—oh, that I had translated into Chinese, because members of the International Committee had been invited to go to China. This was another trip I took to China along with Barry Wulff—with one of our leaders at the time. He and I gave talks to China.

My talk was to use the grassroots-organizing book and ask them what were some problems they were facing. These were workshops that were done in the Yunnan Province. What are some issues they had? They would brainstorm the issues on a paper. I said, "Well, let's pick one or two, and let's run through the process of grassroots organizing." And there was an interpreter, because they didn't all speak English. But I had the grassroots-organizing book put into Chinese.

05-01:14:23

Eardley-Pryor: So give me an example of what happens there. So they pick one of their issues?

05-01:14:26

Perrault: Well, they would pick—let's say they picked an issue, "We're having problems with waste." So the grassroots-organizing book would tell you how to approach an issue. What is the problem, who are your supporters, who are your opposition? Who do you get to know can help you? What kind of visuals can you use? All the kinds of things you use to win a battle. It was basically: "How can you win a battle? I'll tell you how. And you can follow our booklet and adapt it to your culture," which they really would have to do, because we were suggesting meeting all kinds of important people they didn't necessarily have access to in their political arena. But it was a guidebook. So we did that conference, and then a number of us took a side trip to go see the proposed area for a dam in the New River, which was in the western part of China.

05-01:15:27

Eardley-Pryor: Is this the Three Gorges that you and [your son] Matthew got to sail up?

05-01:15:29

Perrault:

No—well, this was for another dam. That was different from the Three Gorges. This was on the New River, a pristine, beautiful river that was in an area declared a World Heritage Site. There, I was able to network with a woman who was studying to do her PhD work on the mountains with the indigenous people up there. Norman Herterich and I went up to visit with her, and he did beautiful photographs of the people that she was working with.

She, in turn, came to work for Pacific Environment in San Francisco. She, along with other key people in San Francisco, were the people we worked with when I suggested we have a Bay Area-China program, where we could all share—every time somebody came from China, we would all visit with them. So Wen Bo was like a key environmental activist from China, who came to meetings. We would all know, and we would tell all our organizations, and we'd get a big crowd out for him. So we would share that information with the other groups in the Bay Area that were working on China. So Pacific Environment was another—was a key one.

But back to the New River—we were able to explore and visit with people who would be impacted if that dam would be put in place, and there were proposals in China to do *many* dams. So again, that whole story of the various dams, which ones were put in place, which were not, what was the outreach—it would be similar to the kind of work that we had tried to do when we were worrying about the Three Gorges—and who could we influence there?

We met with scientists on that trip as well, to hear their viewpoints on what was going on. And then trying to highlight it, and wherever the US could bring pressure to bear on funding institutions. You see, the US has a role in terms of what it may fund through other institutions like World Bank or the IMF [International Monetary Fund] and all those others. And so you need to have pressure, and our staff used to do a lot of that work when we had a staff person doing international in DC.

Now, in DC, of course, [the Sierra Club staff] they're focusing more on international aspects of coal. But there isn't an international person like Steve Mills who was the one who made all the efforts for the Club in various ways, like meeting with Wangari Maathai, whose foundation he ended up being in charge of [Wangari Maathai Institute for Peace & Environmental Studies] when she passed away. But again, another friend that we met over the years.

05-01:18:09

Eardley-Pryor:

Oh, you got to meet her?

05-01:18:09

Perrault:

Oh yeah, oh, she was wonderful!

05-01:18:10

Eardley-Pryor:

Tell me about that experience. What was the occasion?

05-01:18:13

Perrault:

Oh! A very exciting person. She was the head of her Greenbelt group, and we were able to—the Club, through pressuring letters to the administration—it was Clinton at that point—to get letters to protect her in Nairobi, because they wanted to put her in jail for things she was doing on her protests in Nairobi. So that, again, was using the leverage of our efforts to push the United States to do the right letters to help protect her. Yeah, she was—

05-01:18:43

Eardley-Pryor:

What was the occasion of meeting her?

05-01:18:45

Perrault:

Again, you know, so many things have happened that I couldn't tell you what was the occasion, when did I first meet her—but I know Steve had a very good relationship with her. But did I meet her before Steve had that, or after? I don't remember. I probably might have met her at a women's conference, because I attended a big one in Florida that had to do with women and the environment. So you know, it's—again, there were too many of these interactions, and which one came first or not—I probably met her at a women's meeting. I'd have to look back and see that.

So the way in which issues came up to us—either they came from a person from that country that wanted us to explore or do something, or we saw there was a problem and did an outreach to them. I'm trying to think if there are other areas where—oh, the Bahamas was a very interesting example. We learned through some letter that came to the Club that there was a big project, a big development [in the Bahamas] that was proposed in an area with mangroves and a coral reef. We ended up getting the request for some help through the international program, and nobody else wanted to pick it up. So Ed Mainland and I picked it up, and we began a relationship with the people in the Bahamas.

There was a company in San Francisco that was going to be involved in the development there, so that took on an added interest because it was in my [local Sierra Club] chapter, where this company existed. And so what we did for those people was—I remember reading environmental impact statements and giving them guidance on what to put in it or what to say. I wrote to public officials down there, and I have the letters, telling them that it was incomplete, and things that had to be done. I met with a reporter from San Francisco who had done some coverage, briefly, on this organization, this company.

05-01:20:47

Eardley-Pryor:

The development company in San Francisco?

05-01:20:48

Perrault:

Yeah, in San Francisco, and I contacted her [the reporter], and we were able to get her to do another follow-through article that they could use down in the Bahamas. I remember doing a letter to the editor, which the Bahamas people

loved and got printed in the Nassau—I think it was the *Nassau Guardian*. And then I connected them to our marine people in the Club who were specialists in coral reef issues and life in the Bahama region. So they were very wonderful scientists, and they were able to help on specifics of some of the environmental impact report material.

05-01:21:30

Eardley-Pryor: What was it about the Bahamas that got you excited? That got you interested?

05-01:21:32

Perrault: Well, they needed help. And there's not a lot of good coral reef areas and mangroves surviving, and I knew that. And the fact that they'd asked for the help, and the fact that you could see the plight was intense, *and* there were relationships to things that we knew—and there was a relationship to the San Francisco company. Later on, there was even a relationship to the Disney Company. I was sitting on the California Environmental Dialogue with one of the leaders of Disney, and I found out that, in this Bahama area the Disney Company had a port for their cruise ships to come in—in this same region. [laughing] And so I was able to make a connection with those people who wanted to talk more with Disney about what they had done. Again, that's a story about all the letters and the material in between them. But my connection with Disney was from California Environmental Dialogue—in the Bahamas.

05-01:22:33

Eardley-Pryor: That's leveraging those connections, leveraging those networks.

05-01:22:35

Perrault: Right, right. So I have all the records of the testimony, the letters we wrote to the press, and how we tried to use the leverage of the Club's interest and its experts—volunteer experts—to give them resources that were helpful to them.

05-01:22:56

Eardley-Pryor: Let's take a little break here. This is great.

05-01:22:57

Perrault: Okay. [interruption in recording]

05-01:23:00

Eardley-Pryor: So what are some of the other international issues or topics that you wanted to share?

05-01:23:04

Perrault: One of the ones that came to us as a request for some help was from Argentina. There was an organization in Argentina called CEDHA [El Centro de Derechos Humanos y Ambiente], and they were fighting against a plant—a paper mill that was going to be put on the border of Uruguay and Argentina, and it would terribly impact the people's health. And this group, CEDHA, asked if there was anything that we might do to assist. It came in a letter, one of the ways in which we ended up helping people. And so I recall that we

responded with—again, support letters. We got to investigate and understand how this group CEDHA was doing so much to approach the Human Rights Commission in the UN, because one of—the wife [Romina Picolotti], who later became the environmental secretary of Argentina, the wife of Dan [Jorge Daniel] Taillant, who was the head of CEDHA, had been doing some work with human rights interests, and so they filed a petition with [the] Human Rights [Commission] about the plant.

The plant was a Finnish plant, from Finland, and at one point the king of Spain was invited to come in and help mediate the issues between Uruguay and Argentina, because Uruguay wanted it—the paper mill—for helping bring jobs to their people, and Argentina didn't want it. But in the end, even later on when Uruguay found out some of the problems—because this plant did get approval with bank funding—this was another case where we could—we provided assistance with letters to try to encourage the World Bank to not vote on the project and give it any funding. They later on were lamenting that they had been part of the project.

I realize, going through my files, that I wasn't sure what the ultimate end was on this. There were a number of things in my various work with countries, I wonder and question, "Well, where is it now?" That if I went back and did the stories, I really should tie it together and say, "Well, here's what happened." But it was another person that we gave the EarthCare Award to was this [Jorge Daniel] Taillant for his work, and CEDHA's work, in protecting the environment and all the effort they made to use the international institutions to bring attention to their concerns.

05-01:25:35

Eardley-Pryor: You said a letter is how this one got triggered. The letter would just come to the Sierra Club staff offices?

05-01:25:39

Perrault: It came to the Club. Yeah, I think because they realized we had the ability to bring pressure to some of the institutions—

05-01:25:46

Eardley-Pryor: And then that would then—

05-01:25:46

Perrault: —that would then be providing the funding.

05-01:25:47

Eardley-Pryor: And then that letter would then get cycled towards the International Committee?

05-01:25:52

Perrault: To the committee, and then I would pick it up. [laughing] The other members were more interested in other aspects of helping support the staff, or going to

meetings and talking about policy, and all that kind of stuff. But because I had so many people to help—

05-01:26:08

Eardley-Pryor: With the international program.

05-01:26:09

Perrault: —we were able to just be a regular program within the international—

05-01:26:12

Eardley-Pryor: I'm sorry, with the senior fellows [Sierra Club's International Conservation Fellow Program]?

05-01:26:13

Perrault: That's right.

05-01:26:15

Eardley-Pryor: That's how you were able to have these multiplier effects?

05-01:26:17

Perrault: Multiply my—yeah, right, because they could do a lot of the work and research that I couldn't do.

05-01:26:21

Eardley-Pryor: You've made mention of a number of names that were senior fellows that did a lot of this work with you. But how many people do you think you had?

05-01:26:28

Perrault: Probably about fifty came through the program over time, but they weren't all doing work for the international program. Sometimes I was slotting them into other work. For example, two of the people from Taiwan that came were working with the Bay Area Alliance [for] Sustainable Development, because I would get the volunteers there, and then they would work on my part of the role, in the Bay Area Alliance [for] Sustainable Development. [laughing] So it wasn't just the international program. And as I say, I often gave some of these people to the staff in the Club where they might need some research or help. So it was very broad, but I have files on what they did.

Some of them did translation. When I needed somebody to translate—we have a flyer—we had a flyer on John Muir, who was he? I had one done in Spanish; I had one done in Chinese; I had one done in Japanese. And also, Jim Diamond was very fluent in Japanese, because his wife is Japanese, so he could also follow through on many of the programs that dealt with a need for a Japanese person, or helping me the visitors in Japan. So we did many translations, and the Club was really happy to have them. They didn't have staff who could sit and do that. So I would find out what skills did a person have, and if they had the ability to have a language, then they could do the translation fine.

05-01:27:45

Eardley-Pryor: You had made mention of a conference that happened in Italy—in Assisi, I believe?

05-01:27:50

Perrault: It was the World Wildlife Fund's—WWF's twenty-fifth celebration of its existence, in which they wanted to do a focus on religions, and religion's viewpoint about the environment. And it was at a time when it was early beginning to develop that churches had a role, and religions had an interest in God's world, in the Earth.

05-01:28:14

Eardley-Pryor: When do you—decade-wise, is this—?

05-01:28:16

Perrault: Phillip Berry and I went to—

05-01:28:17

Eardley-Pryor: Eighties or nineties, 2000s?

05-01:28:19

Perrault: Yeah, I'd have to check the date. [1986] But he and I went to that, and Prince Phillip was the key person who was leading the delegates through the church. So there were ceremonies in—so for all of the religions, Catholic and Hebrew, there was Muslim, I believe. But the major religions of the world met in this—we had church services. We went down to the crypt and had a reception in the crypt of the church. And then a document was presented with an agreement called the Assisi Declaration about how the religions would try to do more for the environment. And many churches throughout the United States, and probably parts of the world, began to talk to their congregations about concerns for the environment. So it was another way of building up another interest area, of people and citizens.

05-01:29:14

Eardley-Pryor: Yeah, I mean even the most recent Pope, Francis, just had a huge writing about climate change.

05-01:29:20

Perrault: Oh, right! Oh, Pope Francis, definitely very strong on climate-change issues and concerns about people.

05-01:29:26

Eardley-Pryor: Yeah, so this is kind of a grassroots effort to help lead to—maybe perhaps encourage the top figures to make more [nuance].

05-01:29:33

Perrault: Yeah, and the only other thing that I recall on connections of Italy, there was a whole movement, a Slow Food movement. And I happened to meet some of the people involved in the Slow Food movement and connected with them and did some networking.

- 05-01:29:47
Eardley-Pryor: Internationally in Assisi?
- 05-01:29:47
Perrault: No, that was a different relationship, that I met people in the Slow Food movement from Italy that were doing work in San Francisco.
- 05-01:29:54
Eardley-Pryor: Oh!
- 05-01:29:55
Perrault: So it was another Italy connection. [laughing]
- 05-01:29:57
Eardley-Pryor: Oh, that's great, like the agriturismos that are in Italy.
- 05-01:30:00
Perrault: Right.
- 05-01:30:00
Eardley-Pryor: Maybe perhaps connecting with people like Alice Waters here [in the Bay Area].
- 05-01:30:02
Perrault: Right, exactly.
- 05-01:30:04
Eardley-Pryor: Oh, that's great. Another trip you had made mention of to me was an [official Sierra Club] outing somewhere—
- 05-01:30:09
Perrault: Oh, an outing to Bhutan was a trip I did with the Club's program, and Cheryl [Parkins], the leader of the trip to Bhutan. It was something—a place I wanted to see.
- 05-01:30:25
Eardley-Pryor: Why?
- 05-01:30:27
Perrault: Well, it was like one of these far-off magical areas, and I read the description of it in the Club's outing program. And I think—someone made some comment that maybe I was the only, or the first, Club president that had ever gone on these Club international outings. So that was, the one—I told you about the one I had done to the Ghats [in India] with John O'Donnell, so this was another one. This was the first one I did, the Bhutan one. And I remember being entranced with the magic of the place. And when Anne Ehrlich came back from Bhutan she sent me a copy of a book that became very famous. Its title is about gross national happiness, but it became well known around the world about how the Bhutanese were looking at sustainability, that it wasn't just integration of environment, development, and economics issues—and

equity—it was also being *happy*, and how could you be happy, with a balanced program?

05-01:31:36

Eardley-Pryor: The happiness that they have—instead of the GDP, it's this [GNH, gross national happiness].

05-01:31:39

Perrault: That's right. But it was a stunning outings program. The Club's outings program is very, very special. I did actually go on a third trip in the Club's outing program when they ran one to the Dolomites. I attended that one—that was my last Club outing a few years ago, and one of the co-leaders was a woman who had been on the International Committee of the Club. [laughing] I didn't realize she was going to be a co-leader, but that was exciting.

05-01:32:07

Eardley-Pryor: When you go on these outings, especially these international outings, I'm thinking of outings like your trips that you do annually to the Sierra. What's an international outing? Is it similar? Do you backpack for days on end?

05-01:32:19

Perrault: No, you are provided—for example, the one in Bhutan, we were provided with packers that carried stuff. We walked though, we hiked.

05-01:32:30

Eardley-Pryor: But this is through wilderness areas?

05-01:32:31

Perrault: Oh yeah! Oh, absolutely beautiful areas. Yeah.

05-01:32:35

Eardley-Pryor: Okay, so I was thinking—it's not just visiting towns throughout Europe or throughout Bhutan on a trip?

05-01:32:39

Perrault: No, there are some trips like that, where people are more interested in what the cities are doing and how they are. But we'd be—

05-01:32:44

Eardley-Pryor: But these are *nature* outings.

05-01:32:46

Perrault: Yeah, and we didn't even—in the one in the Dolomites we took public buses. We had a van for the one in Bhutan, because you had to get across the high mountains to see a lot of that area. And we went to markets, you know, to see how people lived. And we went to their temples, so we got a sense of the culture as well.

05-01:33:07

Eardley-Pryor: You have all this wonderful experience—not just international travel, but seeing natural places around the world. How do you think about the difference

between places like the Sierra—the High Sierra here [in California]—and the mountains that you saw in India, or the mountains that you experienced in Bhutan?

05-01:33:26

Perrault:

Well, they're just all a different feeling. The Sierra has a feeling, as John Muir said, of light, and something so special and so far away, and you're not near people. You can get off-trail and never see anybody else, and pristine lakes, and it's just the most amazing. People around the world would like to have that in their countries. Some of the places, like in the Dolomites, there are a lot of towns in parts of the Dolomites, but the mountains themselves are beautiful, and there are huts you can go visit and be more isolated. In Bhutan, we went through many, many towns. There are areas that aren't necessarily set-aside protected like the Sierra in such scope. But then once you get up into the mountains, nobody is building up there. [laughing] But I remember in the Bhutan one, where there were oxen carrying huge pieces of plywood, and there was nothing around, and these oxen—you look in the distance, and they're walking through these mountains carrying all this plywood, and you wonder what are they doing? We got to see people's homes on these trips as well.

Now, the other kinds of trips that I've taken are—even in the United States. For example, in Nevada, there was a beautiful area that I got introduced to by Phillip Berry's brother, and he asked me if I would go on this trip to the Owyhee Canyonlands that needed to be protected. And so, with my traveling companion Norman Herterich, we went to the Owyhee area. And I ended up helping them have a big meeting in the Clair Tappaan Lodge, because they were looking for a place—where could they meet? I said, "That's a great spot," so I arranged for them to meet there. I helped them with contacts with our Advancement Department on fundraising, to see if there was a way that we could bring more funds into the effort to save the canyonlands. [laughing] And so I got very much involved in that special area, providing them with skills and—

05-01:35:18

Eardley-Pryor: Who are the folks that were in Nevada?

05-01:35:19

Perrault: That was a local chapter, too, that we were working with.

05-01:35:22

Eardley-Pryor: Oh, a local Sierra [Club] chapter?

05-01:35:22

Perrault: Yeah, yeah.

05-01:35:25

Eardley-Pryor: That's great. And you've mentioned Norm a few times. The travels that you guys did through Nevada, the activism—

05-01:35:30

Perrault:

Right. I met him on one of the local Sierra Club trips [with Cal and Letty French as leaders] when we went to [Humphrey's Basin.] And so he was on that trip, and we just hit it off real well. He was twenty years my junior, but we all had the same energy, and we just—he was a photographer. He actually had studied and did his PhD in neurology, studying lobster brains. And my father had been a lobster fisherman. We had a lot of connection.

So we just hiked all over the place, where a lot of the other people weren't as willing to go as long a day. And from there, we began to see each other—it was following my break in my marriage. And so I would travel two weeks at a time with he and his mother, who would do cooking for him. And we had two—my car and his, and we'd cook on the side of our cars. And then he and I would just hike, particularly through all the Nevada areas, which again, I always thought was a flat place when I lived in the East Coast—and it was mountains and ridges, and mountains and ridges. And so for many years, we did two-week trips, just camping and hiking in the canyonlands of these various mountain ridges. It was just an exquisite time.

And I encouraged him to help take some of his photographs and send them to the [Friends of Nevada Wilderness], the organization that was saving Nevada, which later, my niece ended up on the board of that. [laughing] It's totally about relationships! She was studying in Reno, and I suggested her to go on their board, which she did for many years. She's now teaching in Davis, environmental rhetoric. So these connections again—

05-01:37:12

Eardley-Pryor:

That's really cool.

05-01:37:13

Perrault:

And she ended up in the department where the husband of my piano teacher was—in the same English Department! [laughing]

05-01:37:20

Eardley-Pryor:

It's all connected, isn't it?

05-01:37:22

Perrault:

It's always—well, people that are busy and interested in things, you somehow—and yet I'll go through a town and I'll say, "I bet I don't know a single soul in this town." And yet, I'll go to some other things and there's always the connections, you know? I'll meet somebody and—when I was down in Rio de Janeiro, I met a woman who—we were going up in the tram to the top of the Christ [the Redeemer] statue area, and we were talking, and she said she was from Nairobi. And I said, "Oh, do you know my friend Ed?" And she knew him! [laughing]

05-01:37:52

Eardley-Pryor:

It's a small world in this [environmental activism community].

05-01:37:53

Perrault:

I mean just the other day I went to the hairdresser, and the woman who was sitting before me waiting there—this is yesterday! And she said, "What do you do? Why are you having an oral history?" Because we got into this discussion, and she said, "Oh, my son-in-law was so and so." It turned out he was the mayor of Lafayette, and he was also a Club member whom I knew! [laughing] And so it's just all the time like that. And my hairdresser is going, "Oh my God! You know—."

05-01:38:20

Eardley-Pryor:

You know everybody. It's somehow connected.

05-01:38:20

Perrault:

Yeah, and she'd been helping that woman for like twenty years with her hair, and all of a sudden she and I had a connection.

05-01:38:28

Eardley-Pryor:

That's great. One of the things you've mentioned, these outings that you had gone on—in addition to outings with the Club—every year you talked about these trips that you and Phillip would take to the Sierra. In the wake of your marriage breaking up, you began doing outings with Vicky Hoover?

05-01:38:46

Perrault:

That's right, yeah.

05-01:38:48

Eardley-Pryor:

So who—?

05-01:38:49

Perrault:

Well, Vicky had a number of—first she was doing an international—her own national outings, but then decided to do them on her own. And so we worked in an office near each other in the Club [National Headquarters], because she was helping Ed Wayburn at the time, and I was always there every day and seeing her. And she said, "Why don't you come on one of the trips?"

She also did service trips [more] locally, like in Nevada, to try to do volunteer work so that you would hide illegal trails and plant bushes in the roadways—so it didn't look like it was a trail anymore, so that the off-road vehicles wouldn't go there. She was working with women in—it's a group that deals with older women: [Old Broads for Wilderness.] We drove together and went to Utah to do some work with them in the Utah Escalante area.

And then I went on many other outings trips with her along with Gene Cohen, who was a staff person who serviced the [Sierra Club] Board [of Directors]. I still am very friendly with Gene, and I was able to go and stay on his new Florida property that he's built to bring guests into. And of course, he's a world clam expert, worldwide, particularly Pacific Ocean clams, but a dear friend. So he would be on the trips with Vicky.

And I met my present partner, Jerry Bernardini on one of the Vicky trips, because he had come with two people from Rhode Island who had been on one of her national trips. [laughing]

05-01:40:29

Eardley-Pryor: So this was through Vicky's friends in Rhode Island. They invited their buddy Jerry?

05-01:40:33

Perrault: Right. But the thing—

05-01:40:34

Eardley-Pryor: And that's how you and Jerry met, is on this outing?

05-01:40:34

Perrault: But the two people in Rhode Island had been on prior trips with Vicky when she was running national outings. [laughing] So I met him on that trip.

05-01:40:42

Eardley-Pryor: More networking.

05-01:40:42

Perrault: Yeah.

05-01:40:43

Eardley-Pryor: And Jerry lives, still, in Rhode Island?

05-01:40:46

Perrault: In Rhode Island. He's been very active. He was chairman of the Appalachian Mountain Club Narragansett Chapter, and so we ended up doing a lot of trips with the Appalachian Mountain Club there with very dear friends there now, in Rhode Island, when I visit many times during the year. And we've done tremendous kayaking with them, as well as other hiking experiences and snow skiing experiences.

05-01:41:11

Eardley-Pryor: That's neat that you get to do that sort of stuff in the East Coast, when you had done so much of your outings and work on the West Coast. So now you get to have this eastern experience.

05-01:41:18

Perrault: Right. And of course with my friend Norman, we've done a lot of skiing in the West Coast, too. We had permits that allowed us to go at a cheap rate during the week, so we did a lot of that up in California, and in Canada.

05-01:41:31

Eardley-Pryor: That's great. One of the things I almost always ask now in oral histories that we do, is major moments in history that people often have a shared memory [about]. You talked about when you first learned about JFK's assassination. Another one that we often ask about is 9/11.

05-01:41:48

Perrault: Right.

05-01:41:49

Eardley-Pryor: What was going on in your life, and what do you remember about that time?

05-01:41:51

Perrault: Well, I remember that I was heading to the Sierra Club to work in the office, and I first heard about the plane that was on its way. We were all in the subway—I mean the BART line, and when we got to the station, they turned everybody away because the plane was still coming [toward the West Coast]. They didn't know what it was going to do. It was headed to San Francisco. That's the one that ended up crashing [in Pennsylvania], but it was headed to San Francisco, so we were all told to go home. So I never got up to the office, and I went back home—and I just remember it being a very lonely time, and scary. But it soon, it meant that people were afraid to go fly. There was all kinds of problems.

And so a few months later, I got the offer to go to Africa with [Bruce] Hamilton and Steve Mills. And then a few months after that I went to Bhutan, and so I was on my way to moving forward in my life. But I kept the office at the Club and went in probably—I used to go in four or five times a week, because that was the only way to get things done. And it was amazing. You'd go in, and the next thing you know somebody's calling, "Can you visit with these people that are coming up from Southern California? They're from Japan. Can you visit with them?" And so it was just constant things that kept me occupied and engaged.

05-01:43:17

Eardley-Pryor: Well, you'd mentioned—just as a point of reference for putting time stamps on things, 9/11 in 2001—you mentioned it being a lonely time. That was after the point after you and Phillip had broken up.

05-01:43:28

Perrault: Right. We were living separately then.

05-01:43:30

Eardley-Pryor: And so, what was going on as far as being a mother at that time? And where—how old is Matthew then? In high school, I would think.

05-01:43:36

Perrault: He was in high school still, and he was getting ready to go to college—and he missed deadlines for filing. He wanted to go to Santa Cruz. So I was able to get his—well, first of all, we had to get him out of the public school, because he didn't like the people. He wasn't engaged mentally, so I had to find him a school. So, with Phillip's help—mainly, I found the school for him in Berkeley. And he was able to be engaged by a history teacher there, who set him on the right track for history, because he used to love history. Because when we traveled with him when he was younger, he loved caves, he loved

swords, he loved all the stuff that he saw. We mainly did Europe. Every year after the Sierra, we'd always go somewhere in Europe. We had a lot of travel for him. So I said to him at that time, when he was—just before he went into college—I said, "Where would you like to go?" And he said, "China."

05-01:44:35

Eardley-Pryor: And that was the trip that you get to do the Three Gorges?

05-01:44:37

Perrault: And that's one of—that's, yeah. And then we went to—

05-01:44:40

Eardley-Pryor: The river.

05-01:44:41

Perrault: Then I went back twice again to China, because he was studying at Beijing Normal for a year to get more fluent. So he took that as—from Santa Cruz you were allowed to have a year away studying. So I went to visit him with Norman. And then Norman and I went north to look at the northern part of China. And then we went to another trip in the west where—that was the one, I think, following the Yunnan meeting. And we went to some of the parks in Yunnan in the north.

05-01:45:12

Eardley-Pryor: And that was while Matthew was studying there?

05-01:45:14

Perrault: Right.

05-01:45:15

Eardley-Pryor: Oh, that's great.

05-01:45:15

Perrault: Yeah.

05-01:45:16

Eardley-Pryor: And so it was a high school history teacher that helped inspire him to pursue history, which—he's now completing his PhD at Berkeley.

05-01:45:22

Perrault: That's right, yeah.

05-01:45:23

Eardley-Pryor: That's great.

05-01:45:25

Perrault: With a study in Vietnam, because of his wife's heritage, being Vietnamese. And he's studying a hero that was in Vietnam when the French occupied it [who] told them to fight the French. And this hero had done things in China as well. So Matthew's almost finished—I hope!

05-01:45:47

Eardley-Pryor: That's great. Another [thing], time-wise, that's happening, something I'd love to hear your opinions on, is around this time period, around 2000, is Project ACT and Project Renewal [in the Sierra Club]. Project ACT happened earlier in 2000. What was that, and what were the consequences of it?

05-01:46:03

Perrault: Well, that was an effort by [Sierra Club] President Robbie Cox in conjunction with Carl Pope to streamline the Club to try to direct its resources to certain priority areas. And by streamlining, it meant they were going to also cut structures that were volunteer structures, that had been in place—that in some cases were doing excellent work, and in other cases they might not have been fully using the amount of money required to take them to the meetings, because you'd have to pay for these volunteers to meet. So some would meet once a year, some would meet twice a year. The Regional Vice Presidents were one example—I was a Regional Vice President from New England.

05-01:46:48

Eardley-Pryor: Are these the Regional Conservation Committees?

05-01:46:50

Perrault: Yeah.

05-01:46:52

Eardley-Pryor: The RCCs.

05-01:46:52

Perrault: Yeah. So they eventually, through one of these projects, Project Renewal probably—I forget which is which—but they got lopped off. The issues committees got lopped off and told they should go and be online committees, that they would just meet online and do their work. And so there was a lot of protests within the Club from activists who saw this as a way of undercutting activists who had come up through the program, who knew each other, who met face to face, who were able to assess the leadership entities out of which came many, many Club presidents and other leaders within the Club. And so people saw kind of a focus going more towards a staff-driven organization.

05-01:47:38

Eardley-Pryor: These issues committees and the Regional Conservation Committees—you said they were lopped off. They just were cut?

05-01:47:44

Perrault: They were eliminated as entities. In other words, there were no longer going to be any Regional Conservation Committees. Now, if the region wanted to keep one, they would deal with it themselves. They weren't going to be funded by the Club, and there wasn't going to be an entity where all of the regions met together, where the leaders of each region met together. California had a Southern and a Northern Regional Conservation Committee, and they have maintained their so-called—they don't call it a Regional Conservation Committee. They meet together in San Luis Obispo, or other places, on a

regular basis to share—because the state, being so big, they need to share so they can direct what they're going to do at the state level, because they have staff there that they hire.

05-01:48:28

Eardley-Pryor: So that California maintained this sort of—?

05-01:48:28

Perrault: Maintained that structure, right.

05-01:48:29

Eardley-Pryor: But it's still volunteer, and it's not funded by the Club anymore? Is that what I'm hearing you say?

05-01:48:32

Perrault: No, they don't meet with other regions in the Club.

05-01:48:35

Eardley-Pryor: Oh, I see.

05-01:48:36

Perrault: And the other regions were kind of disintegrated. There's no Northeast Regional Conservation Committee anymore like the one that I used to chair. And they don't meet as an entity to talk about their problems as regions, although they were not prohibited from talking to anybody on other sides of borders of their chapters. But we basically are now a chapter, chapter, chapter entities. They don't cross the borders.

05-01:48:58

Eardley-Pryor: So there's no institutional structure for bringing people together face to face anymore?

05-01:49:02

Perrault: Right, that's right. And so it's also difficult for leaders that we used to be—we could see who the next uprising leaders might be, because we could all meet with each other. Now, they don't meet as much, and over the time when I was watching these changes, I could see more money being funded to staff for training, more money funded for them to travel. When I think of the fact that I was on President Clinton's Council [on Sustainable Development] for six years as a volunteer. Now, who goes on a lot of these bodies and takes up time and Club money would be more staff, because they're more consistently onto things or they're promoted. I'm just—

05-01:49:43

Eardley-Pryor: So am I hearing from—just trying to piece together what I'm hearing from you, is that part of what happened with Project ACT and perhaps Project Renewal, this streamlining effect pulled funding for these institutional structures that would support volunteers and directed that funding towards staff development instead?

05-01:50:01

Perrault:

Well, yes, but it isn't fair for me to just say overall that's where that money went. I mean, some of it went to training chapter volunteers or training people in some particular area of focus that was a priority of the Club. So all I can say, without a further analysis, would be that there was a change towards a more staff-driven [model], and that's the comment people that were concerned about it have made—more staff driven and staff involved. So if you looked at some of the meetings that more volunteers might have gone to in the past, they were sending more staff to them—and of course that was time consuming. If somebody was going to an international meeting, for example, and the meeting was for two weeks, you're paying staff to be there rather than volunteers who cost you nothing.

I don't know how to assess the loss of the key experts where you could say, in the Club—who do you go to, who's a volunteer, that's a specialist in grazing, or a specialist in wetlands, or a specialist—how do you know those people anymore? And when I started to—as these changes were coming about and I was watching the changes, it became difficult to sit in front of international visitors and speak with love and affection for my organization that was serving volunteers and using them so well, because things were changing too much. I began to get this feeling, "Gee, I can't be so enthusiastic about the organization." [laughing] And I guess there was a gradual falling out of my feeling, combined with the move to Oakland, which—I was no longer there a lot to watch all this stuff.

But also the sense that it was a Club that even took titles away from people that were volunteers, that were doing good things, and saying, "Well, why do you need the title when you don't—we'll get rid of it." I happened to need and use [my Sierra Club title of International Vice President] for international outreach, because the international people, particularly certain kinds of countries, value a title on somebody. You're not just a former this or you're—[laughing]. And when I told them that I would need it, they're "Oh no, we're going to take it away anyway." And there was a sense, gradually, that over time people that had been active in the organization, that had been on the Board formally, were not being used enough. They weren't being tapped for the services they had provided. There were these new—these priorities and focus, but they weren't included to the degree that they should have been for their expertise they had.

05-01:52:34

Eardley-Pryor:

Why do you think this streamlining, this move to this online-organizing model—why did that happen then?

05-01:52:41

Perrault:

Well, that was cheap, because you didn't have to pay for anybody to go to meetings anymore.

05-01:52:44

Eardley-Pryor: So it was about saving money?

05-01:52:45

Perrault: Oh yeah, and you know, there [was] a need to save money, but at the same time, if there's such a need, why was it so difficult to sometimes be involved in helping raise money for the organization?

05-01:52:56

Eardley-Pryor: What do you mean by that?

05-01:52:56

Perrault: Well, the staff would do the contacts with donors. You'd offer to do some kind of research. I was thrilled when I was on the Advancement Committee of the Club, that I was given some donors to actually approach. But we were never given enough of that to do. And so if you really are short of money, well, let's find other ways to raise it.

05-01:53:20

Eardley-Pryor: As you began to withdraw from your deep activism within the Club, you still were very active in other issues.

05-01:53:26

Perrault: Oh, I've stayed active on a number of boards! In fact, at one point I was on six boards, and I just gradually, because of my change in life and needing to be with grandchildren and do more in that direction, I cut off some of them. I have two remaining that I'm reluctant to leave. But after being on one of them for twenty years almost, I got off of that.

05-01:53:48

Eardley-Pryor: Which ones are you talking about?

05-01:53:48

Perrault: That was the Green Seal [board].

05-01:53:51

Eardley-Pryor: What are the two that you still maintain your work with?

05-01:53:53

Perrault: Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition, and the Greenbelt Alliance in the Bay Area, that's carrying forth a lot of the work that I did for the Bay Area Alliance [for] Sustainable Development.

05-01:54:02

Eardley-Pryor: You've told me before about another group that was called EarthTeam?

05-01:54:06

Perrault: EarthTeam—that was one where I was approached by a woman who had gone to high school with Phillip Berry, and she'd heard about my work, and he'd encouraged her to contact me because of my interest in environmental education, and green—

05-01:54:18

Eardley-Pryor: What is it that EarthTeam does?

05-01:54:19

Perrault: EarthTeam is an activity in the Bay Area to reach out to teens and to promote their interests, cleaning up marsh areas, doing outreach with videos, going into the high schools and having programs in their high schools for recycling. Just a whole way to bring teens into the program. And so Sheila Fish was the person, and I actually connected her with Carl Pope and said, "You know, you might want to do more with this group." Nothing much came of that, but it does—it's an interesting issue to think about in terms of the fact that the Club did some good outreach to young people when Adam Werbach was young, and sixteen, and wanted to get the Club involved. But I wonder to what degree the young people stayed with the Club, because when you look at the Club activists that are still in my age category, they're still active. How many of them will come back or stay active? Whereas we went, we never—

05-01:55:23

Eardley-Pryor: [Do you mean] how many of youth will stay active?

05-01:55:24

Perrault: The young people that started in the student coalitions, will they stay engaged in the Club? Because I'm not sure that that's happening. And I would like to see whether there'll be a continuum in the Sierra Club, so that ten/twenty years from now, they still have people as active and interested in it as I have stayed. I have never left the Club. I have not been able to trace how many of these students ended up staying with us, because they were isolated from mentors. They were isolated in the Sierra Student Coalition, which did not interact to a great degree with the other people that were older. Whereas when I was in the Club, there was not such a thing and my mentors were people older than me, throughout the Club. There's a little difference there. So I wonder about the future of the Club, and whether—will there just always constantly be an influx of young people, they do their thing, and then they disappear?

05-01:56:24

Eardley-Pryor: Because they're siloed, it sounds like.

05-01:56:25

Perrault: Yeah. But maybe they're not siloed necessarily with the staff, who love the young people and they use them for issues. But what about the broader involvement in the whole Club?

05-01:56:37

Eardley-Pryor: With the volunteer members?

05-01:56:39

Perrault: Yeah.

05-01:56:41

Eardley-Pryor: Are there other issues you think about when you think about the future of the Club? What are your hopes for—you mentioned more youth engagement. What are some of the other hopes you have for where the Club will go with its work?

05-01:56:54

Perrault: Well, it's very hard to predict if you're not engaged in it on a daily basis, which I used to see more easily. I would say my general feeling is I don't hear much about the Club when environmental matters are being talked about. I watch MSNBC all the time. I watch them with visitors that are worried about the demise of the environmental agencies. Now, I know the Club, when I see material from the Club, they're concerned too—very concerned. But I don't see a public presence to the degree—they should be fighting to be on these programs. They should be fighting to be more involved in the public's perception. The [issue, politically, of the] environment is not a very big one out there right now, and yet the damage that's being done to the agencies is horrendous. I know the Club cares about it, but if they have to rely on a few people to do that outreach, I just don't think it's happening enough.

I just hope that the Club will remain what I've always known it to be, the most progressive, wonderful institution created for people with a great model to serve for people around the world. And that, if they lose that, that will make me very sad.

05-01:58:13

Eardley-Pryor: Thinking about the future and also past together, some questions about legacy and some final reflections for you. We've mentioned your hopes for the future for the Club. What are some of your concerns future-wise for the planet itself? What are some of the issues that you're thinking about now? What are the big things that you think we need to be—?

05-01:58:35

Perrault: Well, a lot of them are worries.

05-01:58:36

Eardley-Pryor: What are those?

05-01:58:36

Perrault: Well, the worries are certainly over the impacts of climate change, which will reach a point and just snowball and snowball. I'm worried about my grandchildren, of course. I'm worried about the pressures that the rest of the world, who are not having their needs met, are going to do in terms of destroying places around the world that they need for sustenance. And it will affect—it will be a snowball effect on the planet overall. And I don't know how that can be controlled, because I'm also worried that the institutions that are supposed to be in place, particularly with guidance from the leadership of the United States, aren't necessarily there. They certainly aren't there under the Trump Administration and the agencies being destroyed, like the State

Department, who used to do much more and now doesn't even have the right people being appointed to positions. That has a multiplier effect that I hope—I hope there will be a chance to turn that around with a change in election of who's in [power in] the United States. I want to see the leader, the United States be a leader that it's not now, so that it can help these other institutions around the world and their countries have leadership, too.

05-01:59:46

Eardley-Pryor:

We spoke last time about the importance of visioning, especially around issues around sustainability. And I wonder if you wouldn't do a little bit of a mental experiment with me and imagine what you picture California, or maybe the Bay Area, California to be in—let's say 150 years? If you're going to envision what that future will be like, what do you see? What would you like to see? What do you imagine?

05-02:00:11

Perrault:

Well, I imagine it's certainly going to have an incredible growth of population. I imagine it's going to eat up more lands for housing. I see it creating the demise of agricultural lands. I see climate change having an impact—it already is on some of our industries. So I see a lot of bad things in terms of the increase.

I'm hoping that the legacy of some of the areas that have been saved, like the wonderful open space areas within the Bay Area, will not be overrun by changes to what we have protected. I'm hoping that the Sierra itself, as it tries to fight against the climate impacts on it, will stay somewhat pristine and still be available for the public to use and not be encroached upon, and it will stay the way it is now. So I hope those are in place. I hope there won't be changes.

I hope there will be better groundwater laws, because we don't really have enough in California. That will help us not deplete the groundwater supply. That people in California will end up having enough water without having to build systems that take it through pristine lands, like they're trying to do now, and ruin some particular important wetland areas.

05-02:01:39

Eardley-Pryor:

All of these years you've given in service to the Club. In these moments, a final reflection here. What are some of the things that you think you have brought to the Club? All these years of service—what is it that you are most proud of in the work that you've done?

05-02:01:55

Perrault:

I'm proud of the outreach that I've done with people in other parts of the world, who wanted to see what could they multiply themselves in their country. So it's the networking. I'm really proud of the networking. And I don't have a way to measure all of it, but I know that through the networking I did, it had an impact on other people picking up and using it in their jobs and their work to save places. So that is part of the legacy.

The other is whatever model I served in terms of activism, that others might pick up and see and want to do. Places that I saved, that I know I was involved in—like the coast of offshore New England and Northern California, where I had some direct responsibilities—that those will stay preserved and that we don't have to go back and fight them all over again thirty/forty years later—like it appears we may have to. And protecting a particular park—protecting an area near my town from having huge areas lopped off of it. And having places saved, like the Concord [Naval] Weapons Station. It's this large area, they're going to be rebuilding areas—it's going to have a regional park above it, so I feel proud that I played a role in contributing to the decision that made that happen. I played a role for ten years in my local town area on a piece of property when we've protected the visual highlights and some open space. So it's those kind of—looking at those places that were okay because I played some minor role to be—or major, in some cases. That's a legacy.

05-02:03:33

Eardley-Pryor: Yeah, the legacy. I was going to—this next question is not just what are you most proud of. What do you think the long-term legacy will be of your work?

05-02:03:43

Perrault: Well, I think I kind of said—if it stays the way I helped to make these things happen, then there's a legacy in the fact that the place is secure, or people pick up, in all of these places where we worked with them and something happens in their community and they've taken it and saved it.

05-02:04:02

Eardley-Pryor: Is there anything else you'd like to share with regard to your interests?

05-02:04:05

Perrault: Well, only that I would be most interested in contributing additional material of stories based on the incredible archives I've accumulated. Not to say that I'm a hoarder, but I did hoard a lot of the work that was done over the years. [laughing]

05-02:04:23

Eardley-Pryor: And the important—the emails especially. You printed out a number of these emails, that digitally would [otherwise] be lost, I think, to all of us.

05-02:04:28

Perrault: Yeah, and I was very lucky to have a woman [Sarah Arnold] that helped me do all the printing and filing and make this happen, that I had such a background—it wasn't that I had to do it myself. But I was very lucky to have such support from volunteers that came in and worked with me.

05-02:04:46

Eardley-Pryor: Well, we can work together to try to make it so not just your oral history will be a part of the Bancroft [Library] collection, but also your archive, and have that donated as a part of the Sierra Club record.

05-02:04:53

Perrault: Thank you.

05-02:04:54

Eardley-Pryor: Thanks, Michele.

[End of Interview]

Appendix A: Documents from Michele Perrault's Personal Archive

- Right Now! Vol. 1, No. 1, November 1969.*** 271
Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter's Conservation Education Committee newsletter, edited by Jerry Harkins, Bob Maxwell, Michele Perrault
- Right Now! Vol. 4, No. 4, January 1971.*** 275
Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter's Conservation Education Committee newsletter, edited by Michele Perrault
- Michele Perrault, speech at Tufts University, March 17, 1984.** 279
"Update on National OCS [Outer Continental Shelf]"
- Michele Perrault, keynote at symposium in Tokyo, Japan, June 1996** 284
"Sustainable Formation of Social Infrastructure toward the 21st Century in Harmony with Environment"
- Michael McCloskey email to Michele Perrault, April 29, 1999.** 288
"Subject: Re: your leaving"
- International Activist, July 2007 [published online].** 289
Newsletter of the Sierra Club International Committee (accessed January 14, 2008).

Right Now! Vol. 1, No. 1, November 1969.

Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter's Conservation Education Committee newsletter, edited by Jerry Harkins, Bob Maxwell, Michele Perrault

*Sierra Club**Atlantic Chapter***RIGHT NOW***Volume 1, Number 1**November, 1969*EDITORIAL STATEMENT

Right Now is a newsletter devoted to the dissemination of ideas that will help the classroom teacher develop an environmental ethic among urban school children. We believe that conservation pervades every area of the curriculum and should not be confined to the science program and our editorial policy will reflect that belief. We will also keep you posted on new meetings and materials and will summarize conservation news of regional interest.

Our environment is on the verge of a crisis and, unless something is done right now, we will all be the losers. *Right Now* will focus on all aspects of the crisis. We invite your help and your involvement. We hope to publish your comments, experiences, and project ideas and, in short, to make this journal your forum.

CONSERVATION BILL OF RIGHTS

Voters in New York State will have an opportunity on November 4 to add an important new provision to the State Constitution by voting Yes on Amendment No. 3. At stake is a proposed addition to the "Forever Wild" clause which would provide a constitutional mandate for a State Nature and Historical Preserve similar to the existing Forest Preserve.

The new provision would establish as basic state policy the, "...abatement of air and water pollution and of excessive and unnecessary noise,

the protection of agricultural lands, wetlands and shorelines, and the development and regulation of water resources."

Conservation organizations are hopeful that the new measure will become a model for other states to follow.

STUDENTS PROTECT MARSHLAND

For several years, the girls of The Thomas School in Rowayton, Conn. have been using a nearby tidal marsh for work in biology. Suddenly last

spring, they discovered that contractors had begun to use the marsh as a dumping ground. Having learned that marshes are among the most biologically productive parts of the earth, and that they are a rapidly diminishing resource, the students made plans for a protection campaign.

First, they organized a "Mourn-In" during which all 180 girls donned black arm bands for a silent procession to the marsh. Next, with the help of two science teachers, they formed a group called PYE (Protect Your Environment) which designed and sold bumper stickers and lapel buttons and used the proceeds to further spread the message.

In the third phase of the campaign, the girls sent handwritten letters to each of the state's 213 legislators, and invited many of them to come and speak at the school. A direct public relations campaign followed. Students buttonholed commuters and shoppers and spoke before garden clubs and PTA meetings. Finally, a bill protecting all of Connecticut's marshlands was introduced, passed, and signed into law.

This project, blending elements of science, civics, and the communication arts is a perfect illustration of modern environmental education in action.

BUSINESS AS USUAL

While the advertising of fur coats and alligator shoes continues to rise, the slaughter of animals accelerates to meet the demand. Not only are the animals often butchered ruthlessly, but, among those affected, are many species in danger of extinction. It's the same old vicious cycle, only more vicious: Rarity = Demand; Demand = Supply; Supply = Greater Rarity.

September's *Harper's Bazaar* carries ads for a mini-coat of baby Canadian Fisher, a species now exterminated throughout most of its former range, and a maxi-coat of Somali Leopard. *The New Yorker* has been running an ad for a coat of Alaskan Seal with the ironic pitch, "So much rarer than mink."

Is this slaughter necessary to keep people warm?

If you think "slaughter" is literary license, you should borrow films of the process from Association Films, 600 Madison Avenue, New York City. Free.

Right Now. Published monthly during the academic year for teachers by the Conservation Education Committee of the Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter. Editorial Staff: Jerry Harkins, Bob Maxwell, Michele Perrault.

PROJECTS

What's In a Garbage Can? New York City, like many other places, is in imminent danger of being overrun by its own garbage. We seem to live in an age of instant trash and it comes in disposable, no-return packages.

Have your students observe the situation at home for a week or so and then ask them to estimate the amount of refuse discarded daily by the average family. What kinds of things are thrown away? Could some of it be salvaged? What could we do with the rest of it (short of simply filling in more marshes or dumping it in the ocean)?

Guided Tour to Urban Pollution. How many kinds of pollution are present in your city, town, or neighborhood? What and where are they, and who are the polluters?

Classes studying local problems could be encouraged to put together a sort of field guide to pollution, describing and illustrating the sources and types and identifying, for example, "the dirtiest street in town" and "the most neglected building." Copies of the results should be sent to local officials.

Thanksgiving: 1969. Make a list of the things you are most thankful for this year. Then make a list of the things that threaten them. The

second list may give you a fair idea of the scope of the modern conservation movement, especially if you believe the old line, "The best things in life are free."

Conservation Poll. A recent survey by Dr. Gallup found that 75% of all Americans would be willing to pay more taxes for improving the environment.

Have your students conduct their own poll to find out what environmental problems people feel most strongly about and how far they're willing to go to solve them.

NEW MATERIALS

Conservation Education: A Selected Bibliography. 98 pages. The Interstate Printers and Publishers, Danville, Ill. \$2.50

Environmental Education. A new quarterly journal from Dembar Educational Research Services, Box 1605, Madison, Wisconsin 53701. \$7.50 per year.

Resource Materials for Social Studies Teachers: Population Control. Hugh Moore Fund, 60 East 42 Street, New York City. Free while the supply lasts.

Cleaning Our Environment: The Chemical Basis for Action. American Chemical Society, 1155 - 16 St. NW, Washington, DC 20036. \$2.75

EVENTS

Senator Ed Muskie of Maine will speak on "Environmental Issues and Problems" at the New School for Social Research, 66 West 12 Street, New York City on Wednesday, January 14, 1970 at 8:10 PM. Admission is \$3.50 and reservations should be made in advance.

The New York Botanical Garden is sponsoring a series of Wednesday evening lectures on environmental problems. The topic for Nov. 5 is Pollution and the speaker is Roy Clement of the Audubon Society. On November 12, Sheldon Pollack of the Regional Planning Association will speak on Planning Progress. The talks are held in the Museum Build-

ing and the price is \$3.50 each. For further information, contact the Garden's Education Dept. at 933 9400.

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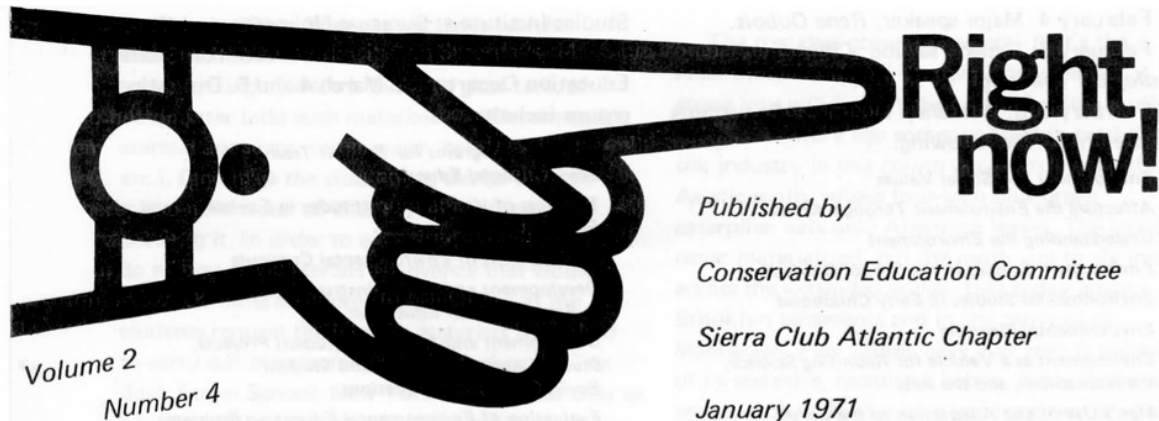


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THIRD CLASS

Right Now! Vol. 4, No. 4, January 1971.

Sierra Club Atlantic Chapter's Conservation Education Committee newsletter, edited by Michele Perrault



ENVIRONMENT AND TEACHER EDUCATION

Back in April at a meeting of student teachers involved in Earth Day planning activities, Renee Dubois, famed scientist and humanitarian, stressed the importance and need for people to take time to reevaluate what is needed for quality of life, to sift and sort alternatives perhaps not in existence now, to look in a new way at what the future could be like, and then devise plans for making it so. This, he stressed, is as important as trying to solve all the immediate problems arising in the environment. We, as teachers, need to ask new questions about our own values, about our social and economic systems and their relationship to the environment, so as to enrich the present and potential environment for children. In addition, we must reevaluate the extent to which we involve children in such areas as "environmental problems of today," keeping in mind the specific needs of children and the appropriateness of activities in relationship to these needs.

Two institutions in New York State, Bank Street College and Syracuse University (co-sponsoring with The New York Education Department) have taken a leadership role in encouraging such dialogue. Their programs are listed in part below to encourage you to attend one of the sessions or to use the ideas in starting a staff development program in your own school or institution.

Some key questions to be worked out in the first conference listed below include: Is ecological change dependent on changes in our economic and value systems? Can we distinguish between politicizing children in service of adults and helping children to develop their own capacities through involvement? What new subject matter do we, as teachers, need to know to teach about environment effectively? How educated are we in using social and political processes to effect change or help children live and plan for change? To what extent is environmental planning in tune with social and economic problems of minority groups?

Editor—Michele Perrault

Bank Street College of Education **Environment and Children Conference**, February 4-6, 1971.

February 4: Major speaker: *Rene Dubois*.

February 5: General session: *Children and Ecological Thinking*.

February 5-6: *Workshop Seminars*: Registrants choose one of the following:

Environment and Social Values

Affecting the Environment Through Action

Understanding the Environment

Environment Studies in the School Curriculum

Environmental Studies in Early Childhood

Environmental Planning

Environment as a Vehicle for Reuniting Science, the Humanities, and the Arts

Man's Use of and Adaptation to the Earth

Aesthetic Experience in the Environment

Environmental Understanding Through Literature and Language Expression

Experience in the Natural Environment for City Children

Expressing Cultural and Minority Group Perspectives of Urban Environment

Models and Games as Tools for Investigating the Environment

Urban Neighborhood Experience

Social and Cultural Approach to the Environment

To register for the above, call Tish Chamberlain at Bank Street College, 610 West 112th Street, New York City, Telephone 212-663-7200 before February 2. Indicate your choice of seminars. A more detailed program will be mailed.

TEACHER'S POINT OF VIEW

"It's the ones in the communes that are really showing people how to improve the environment, *not* the environmentalists fighting for improvement through legislative action."

An elementary school teacher
P.S. 76, Bronx, N.Y.

We welcome comments on the above, in addition to your point of view in the area of environmental understandings or specific action areas.

New York State Environmental Education Conference co-sponsored by the Environmental Studies Institute at Syracuse University and the Environmental Task Force of the New York State Education Department. March 4 and 5. Discussion groups include:

Plans and Programs for Teacher Training in Environmental Education

Teaching of Values and Attitudes in Environmental Education

Development of Environmental Curricula

Development and Use of Instructional Technology in Environmental Education

Development and Effects of Student Projects, Student Action Programs and Student Environmental Organizations

Evaluation of Environmental Education Programs

Development of Materials Centers and Information Retrieval Systems

For further materials and information, contact James Manwaring, Environmental Studies Institute, Syracuse University, 1117 East Genesee Street, Syracuse, New York, 13210.

Legislation to Watch in New Congress (have your students follow too!)

Hart-McGovern Bill—which protects citizens' right to sue for protection of a better environment.

SST—Thanks to conservation-minded legislators and citizens the SST issue will come up as a separate item from the massive transportation budget. (Continue to help defeat its funding.)

Public Works Bill—Support legislator's efforts to get Congress to vote each item individually, especially those which affect the environment.

An Environment Information Desk at the American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th Street (open on the third Wednesday of every month). The Museum plans to open the desk permanently in the near future. Free literature and information on ecology are given out at the desk. Informed volunteers may offer their services at this spot. Contact 873-1300 for more information.

PROJECT IDEAS

Cleaning Dirty Water (an activity which involves students in thinking about waste disposal and recycling of water). Set up a glass tank of dirty water (add such materials as different soils, animal droppings, twigs, sugar, baking powder, etc.). Challenge the students to devise ways of making the water so clean they might consider drinking it. In order to encourage full creativity, do not set out materials in advance that would only give hints as to processes to use. Let the students request the specific materials they need to carry out diagrammed plans. Students at The Bank Street School, New York City (8 year olds to 11 year olds) used such processes as filtration, distillation, dilution, freezing, aeration, and many others. Their greatest difficulty was in ridding their clear result of its terrible odors. One can extend such a lesson to studies of current methods of waste disposal, both solid and liquid, being used at present or being devised for future use.

LOCAL POLITICS TAKES THE LEAD

Many of us are often pessimistic, and rightly so, about the ability of national legislators to pass laws truly beneficial for the protection of the environment. However, in addition to some recent victories in national legislation, one can often feel more optimistic about the legislative process by following the surge of activity by local politics. While we were all tiring of the battle between senators and representatives in Washington over the SST, New York State Assemblyman Andrew Stein cleverly proposed that his state ban the SST from landing in New York State, therefore causing us to look in a new way at the SST question. Small municipalities across the country have been banning the sale of detergents containing phosphates or prohibiting the sale of materials in disposable bottles. Are you translating the positive approach to pollution problems as listed above, or are you still "crying doom" to students about the future of their world?

FOCUS ON THE ENVIRONMENT

The tree that grows anywhere—that's the *Ailanthus*, or Tree-of-Heaven—and wherever it grows you will find the beautiful *Cynthia* moth. About a century ago someone tried to establish a silk industry in this country by introducing this Asiatic moth, whose four-inch blue-green caterpillar eats only *Ailanthus* leaves. The industry never materialized, but the moth—up to six inches across the expanded wings—flies today among Brooklyn tenements and in the canyons of Manhattan. Few people have ever seen it because of its secretive, nocturnal habits. It has broad tan wings, each marked with a large crescent-shaped pinkish-white spot and a line of the same color, and would look like a butterfly except for its stocky, furry body and feathery antennae. The easiest way to get one is to rear it from a cocoon, which can be found any time from September to May. The 2-inch silvery-gray cocoon is attached to a branch by a long stalk of silk. This is an effective defense against birds, which cannot balance and peck at the cocoon dangling in the wind below them. *Cynthia* caterpillars usually spin high up in the tree, so reaching the cocoons can be a problem for people, too. In fact, I have been trying to think of a way to get at three of them in a tree outside my office on Staten Island, New York City, all winter . . . and they are still there.

PS: *Cynthia* cocoons hatch outdoors in June and July. If brought in in February they usually hatch in late April or May. They require no special care.

A trade magazine, *Chemical Week*, labelled an article in its January 6 issue "Moving in Fast on a Market That's up for Grabs." As its article states, the suggested banning of NTA and the bad name of phosphates has caused chemical producers to vie for the detergent business through new promotional material. It might be interesting for students to read some of the proceedings of The Soap and Detergent Association's annual meeting in New York, January 27-29, 1971.

Collection Depot for Recyclable Trash at 315 East 61st Street, New York City, on Saturdays, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Bring cans (paper removed, tops and bottoms cut off, can flattened), bottles (tops removed and added to the metal deposits), newspapers and magazines (bundled separately). There is no minimum or maximum amount needed for deposit. Have your neighbors, your school, your staff, been saving this trash? If not, start tomorrow. Organize a carpool to bring the trash to the depot. For information on collection depots in Westchester, New Jersey, or Connecticut, call The Federated Conservationists of Westchester, c/o Irene Dickinson, telephone 914-762-1362, or The Sierra Club at 212-265-2815.

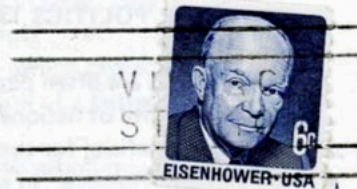
Ecosphere – A bimonthly worldwide environmental news bulletin. Obtain it from The International Ecological University, 300 Eshleman Hall, University of California, Berkeley, California, 94720. Subscription—\$4.

SIERRA CLUB, ATLANTIC CHAPTER
 250 West 57 Street
 New York New York
 10019



Teaching for Survival, Handbook for Environmental Education, by Mark Terry, Friends of the Earth/Ballantine Book, 1971.

One of the most important points in this book, and the one upon which most of it is based, is that "all education is environmental education." With this in mind, the author reminds us to beware of those that try to make environmental education a new subject or the responsibility of a special environmental educator. There is a creative interweaving of environment with various subject matter, including drama, driver education, home economics, reading, ethnic studies, and mathematics. The book stresses the importance of making the classrooms, the schools, and the school districts the places to begin improving environmental relationships. The book provides a good and easy-to-grasp background in ecological concepts and shows how these can be incorporated in activities in the classroom so students begin to see what demands their own school situation makes on the environment.



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 New York, N.Y.

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Michele Perrault, speech at Tufts University, March 17, 1984.

"Update on National OCS [Outer Continental Shelf]" (delivered just prior to becoming President of the Sierra Club)

UPDATE ON NATIONAL OCS

by
MICHELE PERRAULT

Tufts University
March 17, 1984

The Environmental Movement's efforts to protect Georges Bank have become a lot more sophisticated since raising the issue with the public more than eight years ago by displaying a large, dead fish on the Commons, seeking signers for a petition to prevent Lease Sale 42. We still have the same enthusiasm and commitment. We've broadened our knowledge base. Our message has been accepted by a broader constituency. The public knows that our fears of Outer Continental Shelf oil and gas drilling go beyond oil spills to fears of the long-term chronic discharges that have so much impact on the smaller unseen life that enters into the food chain upon which larger forms like ourselves depend. The public is more aware of the potential effects of offshore drilling and its onshore impacts. We have learned from mistakes in the North Sea. We are more aware of ways of addressing energy needs besides raping natural resources which should be protected for generations to come. We have developed more political and legal clout. Our networks are better developed regionally and nationally. We share with each other, region to region, aiding each other's case as we build the scientific, administrative and legal records. You in Massachusetts have given us in California good legal foundations and we are in the process of exploring the adoption of parts of your monitoring model in your EPA permit for our EPA region. We in California, in turn, have provided the impetus for federal legislation that has benefitted Georges Bank and set in motion mechanisms to pressure the state's rights to protect its coastline from OCS development in the pre-sale stage. Whatever your issue, our experiences in fighting OCS battles may offer strategies and tools helpful to your efforts.

I have been requested to provide background on where we are on OCS and what we can do to further Congressional action to save Georges Bank from OCS development. This is a good issue for "Year of the Oceans." OCS development is the number one threat to the coast. We are looking at a giveaway of the nation's resources. It is as bad as the Federal government's coal giveaway last year.

The Department of Interior's plan will transfer most of the nation's 1.3 trillion dollar offshore petroleum resource to private industry, which may not ensure fair market value. Some have placed losses to the Federal Treasury of over \$50 billion.

The oil companies are doing it for money--the government is not.

Under the Department of Interior's policies, a large percentage of tracts which receive bids will be evaluated after the bids are received and the remaining tracts will receive no qualitative resource evaluation.

Perrault - Tufts University Speech - 3-17-84

-2-

Why have a fire sale when there is no fire? In a fire sale the whole point is haste, which is the opposite of what is needed for planning.

The public has been frustrated with the acceleration and the size of the government's five-year program for the nation. The massive size of an average sale has gone from one million to 24 million acres. There has been an acceleration of pace from 22 million to one billion acres over five years. Half of the acreage to be offered is off the coast of Alaska: a state unable to deal with such pressure with its limited people resources, sales spread out from where the people are, acres open for the first time in areas requiring use of experimental drilling technology in severe ice weather and active seismic conditions, a truly hostile environment.

While accelerating the OCS program, the Administration has: shortened comment periods for the public, made it difficult for them to attend hearings in key local areas affected by leasing, continued to release disastrous, inadequate environmental impact statements and challenged the environmental community and states at every level of legal victory.

The government should not try to administer a fire sale that simply shouldn't occur, certainly in areas like Georges Bank and St. George Basin of the East Bering Sea in Alaska, both important commercial fishery grounds, each comprising 10-15% of the world's fishery. The same can be said for areas in Northern California: home of the California Sea Otter whose very survival may be at stake, the travel path of the California Gray Whale, location of one of the most beautiful coastlines in the world including Big Sur, the Mendocino Highlands (made famous in "The Russians Are Coming, The Russians Are Coming") and Point Reyes National Seashore.

In frontier areas around the country, Florida, Oregon, California and Massachusetts, local officials, Congressional leaders, the fishing industry, the environmental community and local coastal industries have joined to protect their precious coastal resources against impacts of the OCS. Working under the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act and the Coastal Zone Management Act, they have tried the administrative route, resorting in the end to legal challenges.

We bring from that experience the memory of the Reagan Administration's efforts to defuse opposition to its OCS program including: frustrating the public process, keeping the lid on agency comments during the NEPA process, cutting funding for CZM, dismantling vital EPA research and monitoring activities, basing decisions on inadequate scientific information provided by the oil companies, and basing decisions on lack of adequate scientific data about the affected resources. Recently, in California the Reagan Administration showed its hand again by the Secretary of Commerce's override of a California Coastal Commission decision by claiming national interest a more overriding issue than the goals of the California Coastal Act. The Administration was also instrumental in killing any hope for a Monterey Bay Sanctuary in Central California, succumbing to industry pressure.

Perrault - Tufts University Speech - 3-17-84

-3-

Given the history of the OCS program with the Reagan Administration and Secretary Watt, it is difficult to trust the Interior Department under Secretary Clark, in spite of his recent overtures to state governments regarding environmental interests to make the process more open and to take the concerns of states more seriously. Coastal states should not be lulled or relaxed into a position of complacency. It can be dangerous at this time.

Recently, Governor Sheffield of Alaska, in an unprecedented move following delicate negotiations with citizen assistance, requested delays for many Alaskan sales. Secretary Clark responded to the Governor's request for a ten-year delay in the North Aleutian Basin--the Bristol Bay Sale--by deleting large areas, yet going ahead with leasing near the Aleutian Chain, an area ranking highest in terms of marine productivity of any OCS planning area in the country. He delayed Chucki Sea two years, but opened the Beaufort Sea to drilling all year, jeopardizing critical marine mammals.

In California, we have learned of Clark's intent to issue a "call for information" that starts the process of activity to lease the northern coastline of California, which had been tied up in litigation for years in this until a recent Supreme Court decision overturned the State in a challenge brought by Secretary Watt and furthered by Secretary Clark.

We in California are now, along with Massachusetts, seeking the enactment to overturn the recent decision of the United States Supreme Court, a decision which threatens to undermine the structure of the Coastal Zone Management Act in the important protections it offers our coastal resources.

The Coastal Zone Management Act was passed in 1972, amended in 1976, and re-authorized and strengthened by Congress in 1980, in explicit recognition that the Coastal Zone contains the most ecologically valuable resources of this country and that these resources are under tremendous development pressure. A network of approved state coastal programs put in place in 28 states and territories provides the only comprehensive national program for coastal protection.

The Coastal Zone Management Act promised, in addition to funding, that federal activities would be consistent with the state's program. The Supreme Court's decision in Secretary Andrus v. California has undermined this major incentive to a comprehensive national network of state coastal programs. The Court in a 5-4 decision held the Department of Interior federal offshore leasing decisions exempt from the federal consistency requirement in the pre-lease stage, frustrating the state's ability to comprehensively plan for their coasts. The decision goes even further, arguably exempting from consistency requirement any federally-supported or -conducted activity beyond the state's territorial waters, no matter how major or significant its impacts on the State's coastal zone. This may lead to an unravelling of the entire system of coastal zone management crafted over the last ten years. Unless the decision is reversed, states will be unable to provide meaningful evaluation and response to the cumulative effects of Department of Interior lease sales on their coastal zones. They will be unable to decide, as our Coastal Commission did in California, that certain areas are unacceptable for development.

Perrault - Tufts University Speech - 3-17-84

-4-

In response to this adverse Court decision, Congressional leaders have introduced legislation in the House and Senate to amend the Coastal Act and clarify Congressional intent as to the role of the states.

Initial hearings on the House Resolution HR 4589 were held in Washington at the end of March before the Sub-committee on Oceanography of the House Merchant and Marine Fisheries Committee. The accompanying Senate Resolution S 2324 was also scheduled for hearings on March 28 before the Committee on Commerce and Transportation. Both hearing records remain open two weeks beyond the hearing dates.

Senator Kennedy has been the champion on the Senate side, along with Senator Packwood of Oregon. Senate 2324 and HR 4589 would essentially re-establish the status quo that existed prior to the Supreme Court's decision.

There is another technique to save our coastal areas which will benefit our three states--Alaska, California and Massachusetts. It is using the appropriations rider approach which we successfully used last year by prohibiting the spending of federal monies for certain areas of Georges Bank, California, Alaska, and Florida based on a technique successful for California in a prior year. We must again use this technique for FY'85 in light of the Supreme Court decision. The critical process of formulating the FY'85 Interior appropriation bill is beginning in Congress and will involve major decisions in May or June, unlike the fall last year. The key leaders are Representative Sid Yates and Senator James McClure. Deadline for comments by the public was the end of March. Congressional delegations will appear in House hearings in May.

It is critical that pressure now be exerted on the New England Congressional delegation. The appropriations process is the most important single legislative focus for local government and individuals for the next few months.

The oil industry is geared up to kill all OCS prohibitions for FY'85. Secretary Clark specifically asked Congress for a bill with no riders.

We cannot afford a "clean" FY'85 bill. New sales come up again in 1986 and we need to have a record of 1985 appropriation riders!!

Between now and the election in November we have a "political window." We must use it to our advantage to press for an administration which will be more sensitive to the needs of the people, people who value our natural resource heritage, who seek to protect it while balancing other national interests in the process including protecting the nation's investments in its renewable and non-renewable resources to assure a fair return is made to the public.

Perrault - Tufts University Speech - 3-17-84

-5-

As Mike McCloskey, Executive Director of the Sierra Club notes, "There are some issues we need to give perpetual care--this is one!"

We must explore other techniques in addition to the Congressional legislation. In the future we must seek additional protective devices besides NEPA and programs under the Coastal Zone Management Act like marine sanctuaries and estuaries. We need to better define areas off-limits to oil drilling.

I hope more of you will join us in the effort to pass federal legislation in the next few months. If we do not do this, we will have lost the best opportunity to protect our coast at this point.

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MP:ek

Michele Perrault, keynote at symposium in Tokyo, Japan, June 1996.

"Sustainable Formation of Social Infrastructure toward the 21st Century in Harmony with Environment."

■ 出演者プロフィール ■

基調講演

MICHELE A. PERRAULT ■ シエラクラブ[※] (Sierra Club) 副会長

1963年 Hunter College 卒業 (New York)。1984～1986年、1993～1994年の2回にわたりナショナルシエラクラブの会長を勤める。その間、10年にわたりシエラクラブの教師のための環境教育ワークショップを指導。また、カーター政権においては沿岸域管理諮問委員や米国内務省環境保護局の環境教育諮問委員等を歴任。現在、持続可能な開発に関する大統領諮問委員会委員。女性有権者連盟、ニューヨーク動物協会、Bank Street College 等を勤務。



※シエラクラブは、ヨセミテ国立公園設立の功労者であり、米国の自然保護運動の父と呼ばれるジョン・ミュアを初代会長とする、1892年6月に発足した環境保護団体です。シエラ・クラブはミュアを中心に活発な活動を続け、現在に至るまでアメリカの環境保護活動の一方の雄としての地位を保っている。会員数は50万人です。

パネルディスカッション

岡島 成行 (おかじま しげゆき) ■ 日本環境ジャーナリストの会会長 読売新聞社解説部次長

OKAJIMA

1944年、横浜生まれ。上智大学独文学科卒業。読売新聞社入社後、環境問題を中心に活躍。日本環境教育フォーラム常務理事。1988年、国連「グローバル500賞」受賞。
著書に「アメリカの環境保護運動」(岩波書店)「第3の資源」(共著、リサイクル文化社)「レモンジュースの雨」(共著、築地書館)など。

金田 平 (かねだ ひとし) ■ (財)日本自然保護協会理事 日本環境教育学会運営委員

KANEDA

1929年、横浜市生まれ。東京高等師範学校 理科三部・動物科卒業。47年～90年、神奈川県立高等学校教員。55年、柴田敏隆氏と「三浦半島自然保護の会」創設。90年～93年、神奈川県立自然保護センター嘱託。この間、平行して自然保護運動と自然保護教育運動に関わる。(財)日本野鳥の会、(財)日本鳥類保護連盟、全国自然保護連合などの役員を歴任。

桜井 善雄 (さくらい よしお) ■ 応用生態学研究所所長

SAKURAI

1928年、長野県小県郡生まれ。上田織維専門学校(現信州大学)蚕糸学科卒業。能楽博士。長野県公害対策審議会、県自然環境保全審議会各委員を務める。著書に「自然保護を考える」「信州の陸水」「水辺の環境学」など。

中野 良子 (なかの りょうこ) ■ 女優・WILL国際文化交流センター代表

Ms. NAKANO

1970年大映演技研究所を経て、三船プロ入り。71年NHK連続テレビ時代劇「天下御免」でデビュー。79年中国で映画「お吟さま」「君よ憤怒の河を渉れ」が上映され、人気女優に。87年以来国内、世界各地の150か所で講演活動。93年、国際文化交流センターを設立。

豊田 高司 (とよだ たかし) ■ 建設省技監

TOYODA

1936年滋賀県生まれ。62年京都大学卒業。同年建設省入省。
92年中国地方建設局長、93年河川局長を経て、95年より現職。

■ フォーラム開催にあたって ■

地球サミットの開催（92年6月）以来、わが国の環境への取組は、政府、地方公共団体、民間、個人等において、それぞれ着実な進展を見せています。

建設省においても、環境への対応は、重要課題の一つであり、平成6年1月に、建設省の環境政策の基本的な考え方を明らかにした「環境政策大綱」を策定し、建設行政において「環境を内部目的化」を図りつつ、「環境の創造と継承」、「環境の保全」及び「地球環境問題への対応」の3つの視点を基本理念とし、質の高い環境を備えた国土形成を推進しています。

ところで、住宅・社会資本整備については、戦後50年の節目を経過し、利便性、効率性だけでなく環境、福祉など多様化したニーズに対応した取組が求められています。

なかでも、リサイクルや省エネルギーなど、地球環境も視野にいれ、環境と共生したすまいづくりやまちづくりを住民及びNGOの参加も含め進めていくことが重要な課題となっています。

本フォーラムでは、環境月間を機に、ジャーナリスト、研究者、NGO等それぞれの立場から報告やディスカッションを行い、21世紀に向けた持続可能な住宅・社会資本整備のあり方について考えてみます。

■ プログラム ■

時 間	進 行 内 容
13:00	● 受付・開場 <REGISTRATION>
13:30	● オープニング <OPENING> 司会：小西雅子 MC. KONISHI
13:32	● 開催挨拶 <INTRODUCTORY SPEECH> 加藤博之（読売新聞社取締役副社長） MR. KATO (V. PR. OF YOMIURI NEWSP.) 豊田高司（建設省技監） MR. TOYODA (MIN. CONSTRUCTION)
13:45	● 基調講演 <MAIN SPEECH (OF HONOR)> ミッシェル・ペロー（シエラクラブ副会長） MICHELE PERRAULT (V.P. SIERRA CLUB)
14:15	● 休憩（ティータイムサービス） <BREAK-TeaTime>
14:30	● パネルディスカッション <PANEL DISCUSSION> ★コーディネーター / COORDINATOR ● 岡島成行（読売新聞社解説部次長） OKAJIMA (YOMIURI) ★パネリスト / PANELIST 金田 平（日本自然保護協会保護委員・理事） KANEDA (NAT. C.S. OF JPN.) 桜井善雄（応用生態学研究所所長） SAKURAI (APP. ECO. INSC.) 中野良子（WILL国際文化交流センター代表） NAKANO (ACTRESS/WILL.) 豊田高司（建設省技監） TOYODA (CONST.) ★スーパーバイザー / SUPERVISOR ミッシェル・ペロー（シエラクラブ副会長） MICHELE PERRAULT
16:15	● 終了 <FINISH!>

June 4 '96

Keynote Speaker
Ms. Michele Perrault (Sierra Club)

Coordinator
Mr. Shigeyuki Okajima (Yomiuri Press Inc.)

Panelists
Mr. Hitoshi Kaneda (Nature Conservation Society of Japan)
Mr. Yoshio Sakurai (Applied Ecology Institute)
Ms. Ryoko Nakano (Actress, Will International Cultural Exchange Center)
Mr. Takashi Toyoda (Vice-Minister of Ministry of Construction for Engineering Affairs)

The Symposium at Yurakucho Asahi Hall

12:00-13:00	Lunch meeting with all members
13:30-13:45	Greeting Speech by Mr. Hirohisa Katou (Vice President of Yomiuri) Mr. Takashi Toyoda (Vice-Minister of MOC)
13:45-14:15	Keynote Speech by Ms. Michele Perrault (30 minutes)
14:30-16:10	Panel Discussion *

Reception (Host: Mr. Shigeru Kowashi, Director-General of Economic Affairs Bureau) at The Folum Coronet Room of Hotel New Otani

18:30-20:00	Welcome Party Ministry of Construction, Environment Agency Journalists NGO Business people
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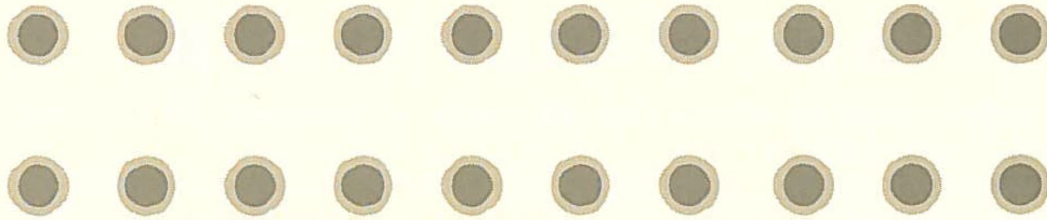
* Detail of Panel Discussion

Part I : Relationship between administration and NGO's and citizens of Tokyo.

- Presentation by each panelists (20 minutes)
- Whole discussion by panelists (20 minutes)
- Summing up by Mr. Okajima (Coordinator)
(Comments by Ms. Perrault)

Part II : Introduction of Environment Policy and Projects of MOC

- Presentation by Mr. Toyoda (5 minutes)
- Comments by each panelists (15 minutes)
- Summing up by Mr. Okajima (Coordinator)
(Comments by Ms. Perrault)

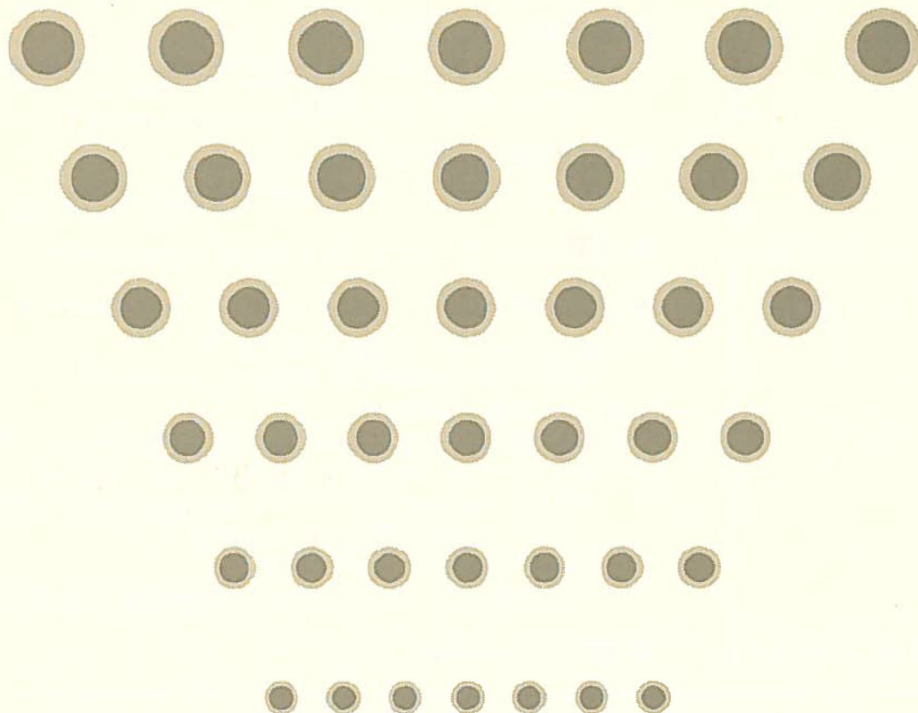


環境フォーラム

豊かな環境を未来へ

— 21世紀に向けた持続可能な住宅・社会資本整備 —

**Sustainable Formation of Social Infrastructure
toward the 21 Century in Harmony with Environment**



Michael McCloskey email to Michele Perrault, April 29, 1999.

"Subject: Re: your leaving,"

Lotus cc:Mail for Michele Perrault

Author: Mike McCloskey at Sierra-Club-DC
Date: 4/29/99 6:41 PM
Priority: Normal
TO: Michele Perrault at Sierra-Club-SF
Subject: Re: your leaving

Thanks, Michele, for expressing such fine and welcome sentiments. I too have enjoyed working with you over the years. You have been the most productive club leader I have ever worked with. I have particularly enjoyed teaming up with you now for some years in the PCSD. Thanks for stepping forward to cover the last base in Detroit. We can say our goodbyes in May and September. I am going to take a breather for a year from activism, but then I will be ready to jump in again--in some way. I really appreciate how supportive you and Phil have been as I have wound up my career. Best regards to Phil too. The two of you have really been the heart and soul of the effort to conserve the integrity of the Club. Regards, Mike McC.

International Activist, July 2007 [published online].

Newsletter of the Sierra Club International Committee (accessed January 14, 2008).

IC Activist -- July 2007

Page 1 of

INTERNATIONAL ACTIVIST

Newsletter of Sierra Club International Committee

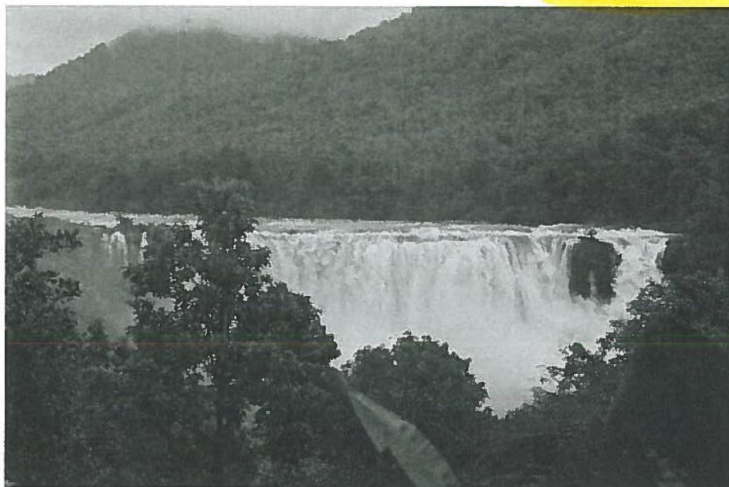
July 2007

If you'd like to submit an article for INTERNATIONAL ACTIVIST or if you have feedback, please write to Jim Diamond, Editor.

To subscribe to the e-mail version, write to Jim Diamond with the subject heading "sub International Activist".

- Hydro projects in Western Ghats
- Visitors from China - Michele Perrault and China Working Group
- Think globally, act locally
- One world
- Victories are possible
- Invitation to Brown Bag Lunch 12:00 July 24th
- Visitors from Indonesia - Michele Perrault
- LINKS

Hydro projects in Western Ghats



The Club, which has chosen Western Ghats as an important biodiversity hotspot, sent a letter to help oppose the proposed Pathrakadavu Electric Project and Athirappilly Power Projects there, urging "all legal means to prevent further degradation to this very important part

of India's natural beauty" and drawing the parallel with our efforts to protect natural beauty and habitat in the Sierras.

Visitors from China - Michele Perrault and China Working Group



The Sierra Club was a host organization for two visitors from China for four weeks this summer. It was part of an Environmental Governance Exchange Program in conjunction with the American

IC Activist -- July 2007

Page 2 of

Bar Association

which brought eight other interns to "observe how environmental governance is carried out in the US, especially the process for involving the public and other interested stakeholders in environmental protection." It is expected there will be reciprocal exchanges in 2008 to observe environmental protection in China as well as identify capacity-building needs and possible future collaborative projects.

Mr Tang from Pollution Control Division, Wuhan City Environmental Protection Bureau, and Mr Wu of (and founder of) the Chonqing Green Volunteers League along with volunteer interpreter Lu Peng, an MBA Exchange student at the Graduate School of Management, UC Davis, met with a number of leaders of environmental, business and social equity groups as well as key staff of Bay Area environmental local, state and federal agencies. In addition they met with Club staff including Steve Mills, Director of International Programs, and volunteers including many members of the Club's China Working Group.

They visited Lake Tahoe, a California Environmental Dialogue retreat, and the Club's own Clair Tappan Lodge (where they met an 80 year old member who sang a marching song with them in Chinese). They also went to community meetings, heard Ms. Perrault testify, and much more.

✓ **Think globally, act locally**



"What do we tell poor Chinese when they see rich Americans consuming far more than they? Why, they ask, should Chinese be 'sustainable' or 'environmental' when Americans aren't?"

Mr. Wu pitched this question to Ed Mainland, Senior

Conservation Fellow (formerly with the State Department, organizer of Sustainable Marin, co-chair of Sierra Club California Energy Committee). Why, Wu asked, should Chinese, avid for a bit of affluence, entranced by ads for cars, appliances, gourmet food and cool stuff, forgo all that when Americans don't?

Mainland was briefing the Chinese visitors about local efforts in the Bay Area to move toward a "sustainable" society and economy. He explained that Marin County, for example, has an "ecological footprint" many times that of China, much more than the global average, higher than most of the rest of California. "If everyone lived at the level of Marin's 'footprint'," Mainland explained, "We'd need five Earths, five planets, just to meet this level of consumption, waste and inefficiency". This can't be sustained, in America, China, or anywhere else, he opined.

To Mr. Wu's question, Mainland said Sierra Club believes China can prosper and make a totally decent life for its people while avoiding the mistakes, inefficiencies and excesses that have accompanied America's historically unparalleled affluence and economic success.

IC Activist -- July 2007

Page 3 of

People of Marin, for example, rich and poor, have now made "sustainability" the central theme of their County- Wide Plan -- tough carbon emission reduction goals, including 51 percent renewable power within five years; an aggressive green building program; innovative mass bicycling programs funded through "Safe Routes to Schools"; strict land-use policies and zero waste targets.

Sierra Club and a growing number of Americans, and hopefully Chinese, Mainland said, are aware that resources like oil, water, air and soil aren't unlimited, we're all in the same boat (or planet), so we'd best find ways, together, that mimic nature's own example of total efficiency in resources, natural capital, materials and energy, urgently, for the benefit of everyone.

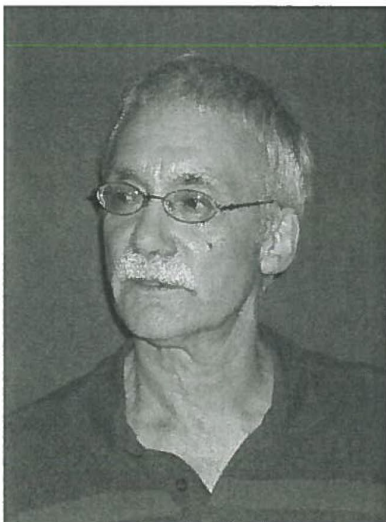
One world



Following a picnic lunch under the redwoods John Chang took the visitors through the Chabot Space and Science Center where he volunteers also joined by Sushu Pan. With the vastness of the universe and working telescopes engaged in the search for extrasolar planets as a backdrop, they had

a Chinese speaking afternoon. (I talked to their 25 year old interpreter who expressed amazement at hostess and pacesetter Perrault's energy level and snapped the photo above, hoping it said something about one world.)

Victories are possible



When I met our very engaging visitors I first described Sierra Club education and lobbying efforts to promote more efficient cities and public transit. They were interested in my participation in San Francisco Bay Area urban planning (ABAG) and pollution prevention and control (BAAQMD) committees, and how public agencies submitted their activities to public scrutiny. They really perked up, though, when I described the Club's participation in the early 1980s anti-smoking efforts! I represented the Club in a statewide coalition which wrote and qualified a couple of sequential initiatives to prohibit smoking in restaurants and many other public places. While these had modest goals, the tobacco companies funded huge campaigns and barely defeated both. Then we took these to California cities, and San Francisco passed the first, which the tobacco companies referended to the ballot. We changed tactics and made an issue of the tobacco dollars in

IC Activist -- July 2007

Page 4 of

the campaign. We won. Overwhelmingly. Similarly, we passed such measures in many other cities, most of which by this time they didn't challenge. Finally, we got a statewide no smoking measure through the legislature and signed by the governor. They referended that, and lost. The idea that we could write our own measures and get them on the ballot -- and win -- excited all three.

John Holtzclaw, a member of the China Working Group, will be leading a trip to China in November. He's active in air quality and sprawl issues and is a member of the Club's Global Warming and Energy Committee.

Invitation to Brown Bag Lunch 12:00 July 24th

It's very short notice, but you're invited. Following a request by the organizer Mr XIE Gang of the American Bar Association Partnership with the Club, NRDC, EPA USA and EPA California, the Sierra Club, we will host a 12:00 noon lunch discussion in the Yosemite Room with the nine Chinese visitors who will be coming through SF (including six that have had placement in SF) to hear their views about the environmental issues in China and responses to our questions. Mr Xie will translate. Two of the interns, Mr Bin and Mr Jun, will give specific briefings and the other visitors will be available to respond to questions. This last week is their wrap up session before flying back to China. There is another ABA exchange planned for 2008 as well.

If you're in the Bay Area this coming Tuesday, you're invited!

Visitors from Indonesia - Michele Perrault

I met with three visitors from Indonesia in late June. They came to the US under the auspices of the Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program. The participants included representatives from The Learning Circle for Women, the Samitra Abhaya Pro Democratic Women's Group, The Indonesian Women's Corps, Indonesian Moslem Student Movement, and Indonesia Legal Aid and Human Rights Association. All the women are working in very challenging conditions to uphold the human rights of underprivileged populations. There was high interest in the prior work of the Club to bring pressure on their government as well as US companies based in their country urging respect for the Indonesian environment and its people. The visitors expressed a strong desire for the Club to re-engage in networking and action with them in the future.

LINKS

John Holtzclaw points us to these links on sprawl:

www.SierraClub.org/sprawl and

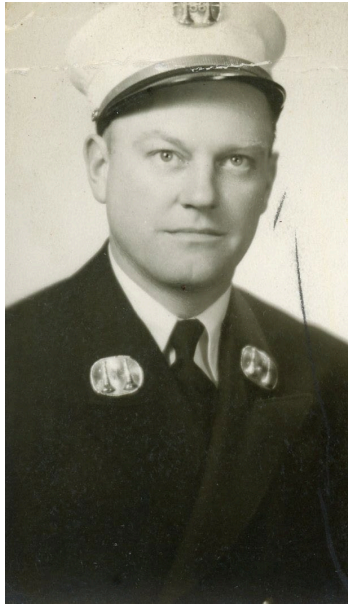
Healthy Growth Calculator -- density saves resources & reduces pollution:

www.sierraclub.org/sprawl/density/

Quick Links...

- [About the International Committee](#)
- [Beyond the Borders Campaign](#)

Appendix B: Images Courtesy of Michele Perrault and Vicky Hoover



Raymond Perrault, father of Michele Perrault, undated image.



Michele Perrault teaching through the Bronx Zoo programs, early 1960s.



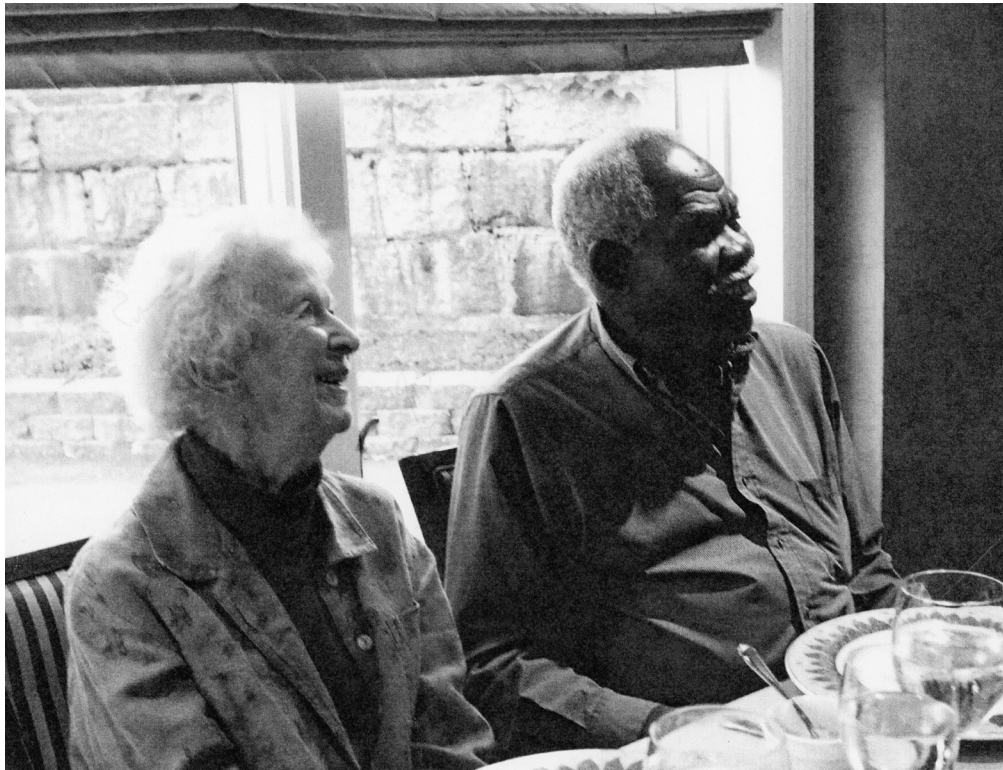
Phillip Berry and Michele Perrault, 1982. (photograph by Mush Emmons)



Michele Perrault and U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein, undated image.



Ruth Perrault with her daughter Michele Perrault at a rally, 2004.



Ruth Perrault with Burt Tinker, her husband for over 40 years, undated image.



Mr. Tang (left), Michele Perrault (center) and Mr. Wu Dengming (right), hosting Chinese visitors at Perrault's home in Lafayette, California, Summer 2007.



Michele Perrault in Sequoia National Park, August 2007.



Michele Perrault (center) with fellow delegates at 31st Arctic Treaty Consultative Meeting in Kyiv, Ukraine, June 2008.



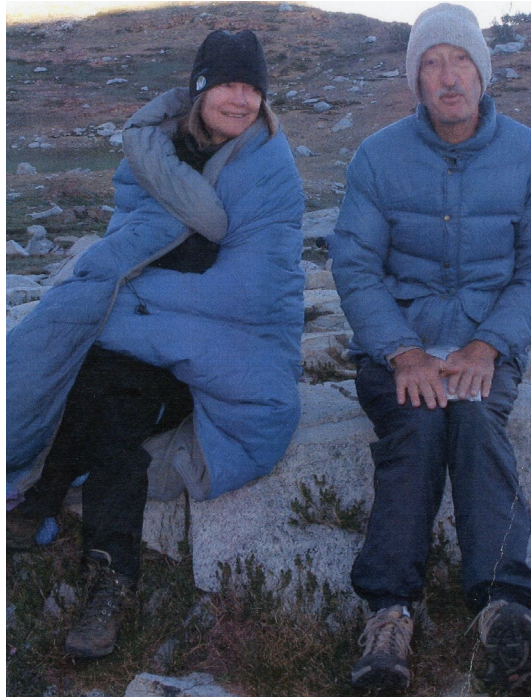
Michele Perrault at 33rd Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting in Punta del Este, Uruguay, May 2010.



Michele Perrault and Jerry Bernardini skiing at the Sierra Club's Clair Tappaan Lodge, 2011.



Michele Perrault at Buck Lake in Emigrant Wilderness, Sierra Nevada, 2008.



Michele Perrault (left) and Gene Coan on backpacking trip in the Sierra Nevada, 2000s.



Vicky Hoover (left) and Michele Perrault (right) at Rocky Basin Lakes, Sierra Nevada, 2011.