Oral History Interview of
Peder Christiansen

Interviewed by: David Marshall
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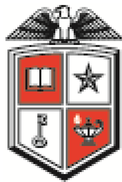

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Transcript Overview:

This interview features Dr. Peder Christiansen of the Department of Classical and Modern Languages at Texas Tech. Dr. Christiansen talks about developing an interest in Classics, teaching, attending graduate school, and eventually coming to Texas Tech. Dr. Christiansen also discusses his work with the Honors Program.

Length of Interview: 01:57:23

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David Marshall (DM):
The date is August 17, 2016. This is David Marshall interviewing Pete Christiansen at the Southwest Collection, Texas Tech, Lubbock, Texas. And let's begin with your full name and date and place of birth, if that's okay.

Peder Christiansen (PC):
My birth name is Peder George Christiansen. Born in Springfield Illinois on July 21, 1934.

DM:
Okay. Apparently, your family moved to the Milwaukee area somewhere along the way. Is this—do you remember that?

PC:
Yes. My dad worked for Allis-Chalmers in West Allis, Wisconsin, suburb of Milwaukee, and in about 1930, he was sent down to Springfield to the Allis-Chalmers plant there, to introduce social security practices to that Allis-Chalmers plant. And there he met my mother because she was working there, and they got married in 1932, and I was born in '34. And not long after that, we moved back to the Milwaukee area, to the Allis-Chalmers plant.

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DM:
Okay, so you don't remember Springfield as a childhood place.

PC:
Only because of visits.

DM:
Yes. Okay—family, her family.

PC:
My grandparents and other relatives down there.

DM:
Okay, what were their names, by the way—your parents.

PC:
Well, my dad was born Peder Jorgen Christiansen. He had his middle name legally changed to George and his brothers called him Yank. And my mother's name is Thelma Florence Smith.

DM:
Well, your father's name, at least, is very Scandinavian it sounds like.

PC:
Well, his parents migrated here.

DM:
Is that right? They were first generation.

PC:
Yes, and he had a sister who was born over in Norway.

DM:
Oh, how interesting. Have you gone back to visit with distant relatives—

PC:
I have not.

DM:
—or anything?

PC:
I am not that great a traveler.

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DM:
Oh, okay. Well, let's talk about you growing up in the Milwaukee area. You lived in a suburb. Is that correct?

PC:
Yeah, it's called West Allis, and it was a working class community. A lot of the people worked at Allis-Chalmers, at one time, had about 19,000 employees.

DM:
Well, there has to be a connection between the name of the suburb and Allis-Chalmers, then. Is it, Allis is A-l-l-i-s—?

PC:
I think the subdivision was called Allis, and that—on the west side of Allis they call it West Allis, and that's why it was Allis-Chalmers. You got that right.

DM:
Okay, the company was named after the community, not the other way around.

PC:
Exactly.

DM:
Okay, how interesting. I wondered if there was a person named Allis who was from there and started all of this and both names came directly from that individual. But anyway, there's a link.

PC:
That's what I think, yes.

DM:
Well, what do you remember about your early childhood? Can you think of influences that would make you what you later became? What interest in—classical history, ancient history—as a school child, or any family interests in that area?

PC:
Well, the most important thing is that it was a working class community, so there was a great variety of people. We went to public schools, and most people were working people. The interest in reading and education came from the home. Both my parents were great readers, and they read different kinds of things. And I remember, spring of 1940 as France is collapsing, Winston Churchill had been named Prime Minister, and my mother was going through magazines trying to find a picture of the new Prime Minister, and I triumphantly pointed to a picture of Chamberlain. And she said, "No, that's the old one. We want the new one." But I remember that as, I guess, something formative.

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DM:
Yes. Yes, they had you in the books then. You were looking. What about in ancient history? Was there anything from those early days—a book that you picked out—any specific that you can point to to say, Hey this might have been a start?

PC:
Well, my dad had a great library. We had all of Mark Twain, Charles Dickins, The Harvard Classics—which were really, really important to me—and detective stories, I was interested in all of those things right from the start. And I remember when I was in grade school—like in the sixth grade and the war was still going on—we'd read the *Yankee Flier with R.A.F.*, you know. Children's stories like that. But then, after that, I started reading westerns. My dad had all of Zane Gray. And then I started getting into mysteries, when I could go to the adult library.

DM:
Did you ever play with the idea of becoming a cowboy?

PC:
Oh, as a kid I remember a picture of me wearing a cowboy outfit. Another thing I remember is World War II in the backyard. We'd dig a foxhole.

DM:
Right, right. You know, when I came along—I was born in '59—but we were still playing World War II.

PC:
Oh really?

DM:
The Vietnam war was going on, but we were playing World War II. It was an enduring influence. I asked about the cowboy thing because I have a good friend—he died maybe five years ago—but he was from Wisconsin. He was born there in the thirties, and he decided that—there was some influence there that made him want to become a cowboy, and that's how he spent his life career.

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PC:
Oh my.

DM:
He'd travel all over the Western U.S. cowboying, I mean, really roughing it, so it's an interesting influence to come out of Wisconsin, I thought.

PC:
Well, there's another thing that—for some reason I pretty sickly as a child, and I remember—maybe second grade, third grade, or fourth grade—missing the last month or so of school, being at home. And this probably had a lot to do with my reading. That was my main activity.

DM:
Right, right. Do you remember any—you mentioned some series of books. Where there any other series? I think in that time period there were books like the Landmark series and, you know, children's books in series that were related to history or the sciences. Do you remember any of those?

PC:
Well, I'm glad you mentioned series. There was a guy named Altsheler who wrote a lot of children's books about American history. A kid would be at a battle in the Civil War or out West

when we went to war with the Mormons and just all kinds of things like that. So that certainly fanned my interest in history.

DM:
Okay. What's the spelling on that—Altsheler.

PC:
Something like A-l-t-s-h-e-l-l-e-r **[Altsheler]**.

DM:
Okay.

PC:
That's just a guess.

DM:
Right, right. We can find it from there, probably.

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PC:
I haven't touched one since about 1945, or no, '47, let's say. I still remember those.

DM:
What about in school? Do you have any particular memories of certain teachers or subjects that you gravitated toward?

PC:
Well I remember in the sixth grade we had a really good teacher who was interested in developing children, I think, and I remember having a debate about the fall of Rome. Was it good or bad that Rome fell? And I took the position it was a good thing because it brought out all these fresh people and restarted things.

DM:
So there you are.

PC:
Her name was Jeannie McMahon. I remember that. And she really encouraged me to read. I had really terrible practices through all my whole school system, I would do the work as quickly as possible and then read. And most teachers would let me read.

DM:
Well, that's not a bad practice, it doesn't sound like to me. That sounds like a good practice. (laughs)

PC:
Well, I liked it.

DM:
I'm glad that they were willing to let you learn in your own way in that regard. But here you are debating the fall of the Roman Empire as a child. Sounds like a budding ancient historian to me.

PC:
I guess so.

DM:
What grade are we talking about?

PC:
Sixth grade.

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DM:
Sixth grade, yeah. I don't know if it's still the case, but I think that's about the time that in the public schools, you started delving in to world history—fifth and sixth grade it seems like. Is that—

PC:
We did in that class, anyway.

DM:
Is that the case there? Okay. What else was going on in this area? Did you have other influences in your life—politically, in a religious sense, or other things that might have affected you from then on?

PC:
Well, funny you should mention religion. My dad is Norwegian-American Lutheran. My mother was Christian—which is a Campbellite but not like Church of Christ. It was much more open to other branches. And when they got married, she went to her church and he went to his, and then, when we moved up to Milwaukee, that continued until we moved out to West Allis. And then a neighbor suggested that we go to this Presbyterian church that was nearby, so from then on we were in a church that neither one of them grew up in. And it was a very small church, and again,

working class. I remember the young people—growing up in that church with. Friendships were formed there and we shared religious perspectives.

DM:
Do you pretty well hold to those still, or are you Presbyterian, or do you have any particular—?

PC:
Well, there's another story there. But what I remember about growing up in a church is the golden rule, I mean. That's simple enough. It shows you how to behave.

DM:
And universal.

PC:
Definitely universal. But since we were in a Presbyterian church, my parents informed me that I was going to college, which I had not known, and they also told me I was going to go to college associated with the Presbyterian church which is only twelve miles west of West Allis.

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DM:
That's Carroll College.

PC:
You got it.

DM:
Okay, tell me about that.

PC:
Well, about the religious thing—I thought the Presbyterians in Waukesha, Wisconsin, were kind of snooty. And my junior year, I started living on campus, and I had a roommate who invited me to join him at a Methodist youth group. So I went to that, and I felt very much at home because everybody was accepted.

DM:
Okay, right, right.

PC:
And in my senior year, a girl from upper Michigan showed up in the group. And she belonged to a sorority, and she had to ask somebody to a party, and she asked me. And that's the last person I ever dated.

DM:
Oh, okay. So you married her?

PC:
Yes, we did.

DM:
Okay, this is Carol? Is that her name?

PC:
Yes. Carol Jean Jose , J-o-s-e.

DM:
Oh, really? J-o-s-e.

PC:
It's English.

DM:
Oh, really?

PC:
From Cornwall.

DM:
I have never come across that.

PC:
Well everybody called her José.

DM:
I'm sure. (laughs) Huh, okay. All right, so this was—you met her in your senior year.

PC:
Yes.

DM:
Okay.

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PC:
First two years I lived at home and commuted, so I didn't really have much of a social life then. But I had a four-year scholarship. I earned—

DM:
To Carroll College—

PC:
Yeah. And I earned money in the summer, so I took care of my own education. And I still stayed home the first two years, but the last two years, my mother decided I would live on campus. That was a much better experience.

DM:
And so tell me about Carroll College as far as influences. Any permanent influences on you at that point? Any faculty that you recall?

PC:
Oh, yes. I would say there are a lot of influences there. Freshman year we had a year of basically European history, that was required, which was really, really great. Oh, and that really was what I was interested in, and it started in the Middle Ages and went up to modern times. I need to mention ninth grade. First two years of junior high we were working class—junior high school where the teachers told us we were dumb. And I didn't do particularly well there. I tended to believe that. And I remember in the ninth grade, those of us in the Nathan Hale area were moved there a year early, so I was in a four year high school which had a different type of faculty. And I remember, in the ninth grade, reading the play *Julius Caesar,* and I really enjoyed it, it was really great. And I remember, the teacher, preparing us for a test, kept asking us various questions, and we would answer as a group. And then she asked, "Who was the soothsayer that told Caesar that it was the ides of March?" And I said, "Artemidorus," or something like that, and nobody else said anything. And she looked at me like, he's not stupid. And I think that's the first time I remember thinking, I'm not stupid. I mean, *that* teacher with that response.

DM:
You know, a moment like that could make all the difference it seems like.

PC:
Well, it really was important.

DM:
And this brings up an interesting subject here. You grew up in a working class community, so expectations were low for you guys? Like, Oh yeah you're going to work at Allis-Chalmers, or

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you're going to—whatever. Did you feel any desire to head on in to higher education at this point, or when did that come in to mind.

PC:
Okay, let me go back to junior high again. Since we were moving over to West—to Nathan Hale High School we had two choices, everything else was preordained. We could take practical math or algebra, we could take woodshop or Latin, and with my attitude, I chose practical math and woodshop. Well, my mother had Latin and Physics in high school. And she was really upset over that, and she went to see the principal. And he allowed me to change from practical math to algebra, but not to Latin. That was going to be beyond me.

DM:
Huh, wow.

PC:
And I mean—I really thought the teachers made all the difference in the world where at Nathan Hale, I think they encourage us to learn. I want to mention a teacher in an English class—she was trying to raise our performances, to get us interested in more things. And she talked to us about what you call great literature. And she says, "Try it. It's good stuff. *Crime and Punishment* is just about an axe murderer." And, well, that got me, so I immediately went out and read *Crime and Punishment*, and that was really the beginning of my interest in what's called good literature. I mean, we had the Harvard Classics at home, and I read, I guess, just about all of that. But works like novels, I had never—poetry, I really had never touched. And she really restarted—or started up a broader interest. And when I got to college, in my sophomore year, we had to take a year literature course: American or English or World. And I think, because I had broader interests, I chose the world, and wonderful teacher there, I thought the best teacher I had in my college experience, just opened up so much. Read novels by Turgenev and Tolstoy and a lot of classical literature. It just broadened perspectives.

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DM:
I can relate to that. I had the same experience in world lit in college. It was just—it was a very formative time.

PC:
Who was the teacher?

DM:
It was—this was down at Hardin-Simmons.

PC:
Oh it was at Hardin-Simmons—okay.

DM:
It was Lawrence Clayton. You might have heard his name—

PC:
No, I don't know the name. But, okay, you know exactly what I'm talking about.

DM:
It's the same kind of thing. And it wasn't the area I went into specifically, but it's all related, you know? World history, world literature, and for you, linguistics, classical languages. It's interesting. But I noticed that your studies were—they looked like they were as much history as classical languages.

PC:
Yeah, I got to tell a couple things here.

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DM:
Sure.

PC:
I talked about how I had a low level of confidence, and as I went on I start—achieving success, I got more and more arrogant. And I remember this teacher, that got me interested in literature, gave me an A in the fall semester. And I had a good friend in class and we used to clown around a lot. We were just terrible. And I just didn't perform as well, and then I got a B in the spring semester, and she wrote on the report card, "You know what's the matter? Your attitude has changed." And the same thing happened to me in college. While a youth in a Presbyterian church, there was a summer camp, and I'd gone to one of those and ran into a really colorful character from another suburb of Milwaukee. And I liked him a lot, and I liked that summer camp. And then my junior year, he happened to transfer from a school in Milwaukee to Carroll College. Well, we just fed upon each other. We were taking this education course, and there was this teacher who was kind of weak in mathematics and sometimes make statements that were imprecise, and we'd laugh at him. And we'd do silly things like come to class late and say, "You started class already?" And he took—he bore it very, very patiently, and then we had a—the class was in counseling, and he saved up all the hard questions for an oral final. And I got a D on the final. And I learned my lesson at that point about authority.

DM:
Oh, interesting.

PC:
Well, I've got to mention my Latin teacher. Same person for eight semesters of Latin.

DM:
Is that right?

PC:
Well, the only one who taught Latin there. But I wanted to teach history—I wanted history. I loved history.

DM:
World or American? Where were you going—

PC:
Especially world. Not so much American. But I realized that if I wanted to teach history, I needed to have some other field so I could get a job. So I had two years of Latin in high school. I automatically went into second year Latin in college, so that satisfied the language requirement. But I kept of taking Latin, so I'd have a teaching field in Latin which was a really smart move because that's what got me the jobs.

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DM;
Yeah. Well, let me ask you. When you were in public schools and you took history courses—I mean, probably beginning in late elementary—was it almost always American history, American history, repeat of American history.

PC:
Oh, I remember I was able to choose world history as a sophomore in high school—

DM:
Were you? Right.

PC:
I liked that very much.

DM:
And you mentioned some world history, in what, sixth grade, I think.

PC:
Yes.

DM:
But was it not—was it spotty? Was there a lot more American history than—

PC:
Oh, it was one of your world history—the only history required was one year of American history. I memorized a lot of things, and I had a good friend in high school who had encouraged me to try things that I would never try. So he said there's this test in American history, and we could go downtown to Marquette—I think it was called a college then—and take this test and just see how we do. And I was one of the five people in the Milwaukee area that placed. Well, yeah, there were more than that from the state of Wisconsin. So I went on and took the national test, and I placed in that too. So I think because of that and because of my standing in graduation is why I got the four-year scholarship at Carroll. But, I mean, here are people who are pushing me to do things I wouldn't have done, and then I have a really bad attitude from time to time.

DM:
Now, what about your parents? Your dad worked for Allis-Chalmers. When you started thinking about or talking about—someone started talking about college somewhere along the way—or was that just assumed? Was it assumed by them that you would go to college?

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PC:
They assumed.

DM:
They assumed? Okay.

PC:
I had no idea. And it was going to be the Presbyterian college because that was related to our church.

DM:
So by the time you left high school, you knew—

PC:
Yeah.

DM:
—that this is what was going to happen.

PC:
And what I remember, going from high school to college, was this is going to be great. Instead of just telling us things, we were going to learn things. Because I remember the woman who taught all the math after geometry. I would ask, "How do we derive this formula that we're using." She said, "Never mind. Just use it." And I really resented that, and I looked forward to college because I thought it was going to be different—which it was.

DM:
What about—here you took a lot of Latin in high school and then in college, any Greek at that point?

PC:
No. I had no idea.

DM:
Was there even a Greek course—at Carroll?

PC:
No. No, that was unheard of. I mean, we were so lucky we had four years of mathematics. I remember the math teacher telling us over at Cudahy High School they don't have these courses.

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DM:
As you were graduating from Carroll—and that was in—

PC:
Fifty-six.

DM:
Fifty-six. Did you have more history then? Well, you had a lot of Latin, but were you—

PC:
I took all the history I could.

DM:
Were you gearing toward a—you said that it was helpful for you to have these Latin courses later, but were you gearing at this point toward a career as a history teacher or as a Latin teacher or what were you—?

PC:
Well, I knew I had to be a teacher, and I knew I'd be teaching Latin or I wouldn't have a job. But I really wanted the history. And I remember when I graduated from Carroll there were three things on my mind. One was going to Wisconsin and getting a master's degree in modern Russian history. And the second thing was fulfilling my military obligation as soon as I could, so it'd be over with, and then marrying Carol as soon as she graduated which was going to be three years later.

DM:
Yeah. All of this happened pretty quickly, it looks like, from the dates I have here.

PC:
It did.

DM:
I mean I have—well, and when you say Wisconsin you're talking about the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

PC:
Yes.

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DM:
So yeah, '56 to '57, MA, is when you worked on your MA? In History, I have—I don't have anything about Latin here.

PC:
Well, I wanted it to be Modern Russian History, but the great man who taught that was over in Moscow at that time. So there was a German professor who took all of the refugees under his wing, and he was a great man. His name was Easum, and he taught me a lot about how to behave. I remember looking at some case where the motivation—some actor and some event—and saying what does it hurt to give them the benefit of the doubt, where some people are always critical. He wrote a book called *A Half Century of Conflict* which covers from 1900 to 1950 or so, which I still think is a really great book.

DM:
Give me a spelling on his name.

PC:
E-a-s-u-m.

DM:
Okay.

PC:
That book is in the Tech library. He had been the cultural attaché to the Bonn government after World War II. And he was very much a Russian, and he looked at things as Van Ranke **[Leopold Van Ranke]** did, look at the event as it happened in particular instead of just looking at a broad statement, oh it's like this. He was a really big influence on me.

DM:
How come you didn't become a Russian historian?

PC:
Well, there was actually a class in Russian history because we had a guy from California who came to teach the spring semester, and that was it. So I really went in to German more than Russian, but it happened that for my master's thesis I wrote on the Russo-German relations from 1939 to 1941. And looking at all those documents—that was a great preparation for looking at thing as they happened from the particular evidence. And when I was a senior at Carroll, some of us were planning to go on to college, and the Dean of Men in his political science class said, "Don't worry about the draft. I'll take care of notifying your draft board that you're going on to college." Well, he didn't. So in January I got a draft notice.

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DM:
Oh golly.

PC;
And I went to see the draft board and told them I was in school, and they said, "Okay. We'll let you finish the spring semester, and then you'll be drafted."

DM:
So this was in '57 when this happened.

PC:
Yeah. So Professor Easum said, "We'll make sure that you finish up." And we did. I remember the final oral examination is the most nervous I ever was in my life, but he got me through it. And so afterwards, I looked into the alternatives. My cousin—two of my cousins went in for two years, and that satisfied their military obligation. But at this time, you could go in for two years and have two years reserve duty, or you could go in for six months and have five and a half years reserve.

DM:
Is that what you did?

PC:
And my wife chose that I go for six months. She was not going to have me gone for two years. So I went to Fort Leonard Wood for six months and came back and spent five and a half years at Wisconsin National Guard.

DM:
Interesting thing is—I mean, that was kind of an interesting time to be in the National Guard because we're talking about Bay of Pigs and Cuban Missile Crisis—

PC:
And we didn't know any of that stuff.

DM:
And there were some ugly things that happened in that time period.

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PC:
Yeah, I mean the first four years were just fine, but then in 1960—

DM:
One and two.

PC:
Yeah, 1961, things start happening.

DM:
Were you nervous about that?

PC:
I don't remember even—well I remember worrying about nuclear warfare, but that didn't happen. And after that, I didn't worry about it.

DM:
I know it was a big deal in Texas—

PC:
—because the 47th Armored—

DM:
—and in the Gulf States. Well, yes that, and also just proximity.

PC:
Well there's a funny thing about that. I was in a 32nd infantry division in Milwaukee, and that was the other unit called off. But I had moved from Wisconsin to Madison to go to graduate school, and I joined a unit that turned out to be a MASH outfit, which is not part of the 32nd, so we didn't go.

DM:
Wow. What were your responsibilities with the MASH outfit?

PC:
Well, my specialty in the Army had been clerk typist school. I was a clerk in a common engineer outfit. So when I came back to 32nd, I was a clerk in the quartermaster corp.

DM:
All right.

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PC:
And then in the MASH outfit, what we did was put up tents and run errands for the officers.

DM:
By the way, your wife got a degree. Elementary ed? Is that correct?

PC:
Right. She went into elementary education.

DM:
Was this Carroll or was this at—

PC:
Yeah, at Carroll College. Yeah, we had four years there. Part of the time I was gone for the last three, but we did. Well, there's another funny story there. I got a job in Ripon, Wisconsin, teaching History and Latin, and made a lot of mistakes because I didn't understand students. And they'd tell you in education classes, "You just smile and everything will be okay." Well, there's a reality there, and eventually I learned. and I was fine teaching Ripon, I was planning to stay there, and Carol applied. Well, they wouldn't hire her because two family members in the same school system—too much power in that small rural community. So they turned down her application. So then I looked elsewhere and Racine, Wisconsin, had an opening for a Latin

teacher. So I went there and she had no problem getting a job at all. They needed elementary school teachers.

DM:
But it was because of the rural setting, then, of the small school.

PC:
The mindset.

DM:
Wow. That's interesting. Well, you were there in that position for a while as I recall, a few years?

PC:
Okay, two years. There's a law in Wisconsin that if you are a teacher, you need to take graduate work once every five years. Okay, so in my first year in Racine, turned out there was going to be a workshop for Latin teachers sponsored by the federal government, because, like all other languages, Latin was a vital language for our defense. And I got into that workshop, and I went up there. And I had had one teacher for eight semesters of Latin, and up here, here are all these wonderful people with ideas I'd never heard of. And there was a woman who taught at St. Montclair Teacher's College who taught us about reading Latin in the Latin word order as the Romans did. And that was one of the ideas that has been influential for me ever since. So at this workshop, it was for six weeks. And I really loved every minute of it, but if you stayed for two more weeks and continued taking Latin courses, you would have credit for a summer of Latin. So I stayed because I liked it so much, and there was this Latin teacher named McKendrick who was just so challenging. I really, really liked it. So at the end of that summer I went to see McKendrick, and I said, "Would there be any possibility I could get a fellowship to come and study for a PhD." Because after that summer there was nothing more in my life I wanted than getting a PhD and doing research.

DM:
You were hooked.

PC:
I was hooked. So, first reaction was, "Well I understand you're a good high school teacher. We need good high school teachers." But they said, "Okay, if you do two years of Greek by correspondence next year, you can have a fellowship beginning the following year." So I took first year Greek by correspondence, and went through it as fast as I could, and went through the second year—which no one had ever finished before—and I went as far as the professor was willing to go. So I got credit for two years of Greek.

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DM:
How was that compared to your Latin studies? I assume your Latin studies helped that.

PC:
Oh, yes, an awful lot, especially the book by two guys named Crosby and Schaeffer. They arranged it for people who already knew Latin, so it fit in very, very well. So I had a teaching assistantship for the fall semester, and I had what was called the Adams Fellowship in Greek, which was $500, but that was a lot of money at that time. I mean, tuition was about $100 a semester, even in graduate school. So, that was really great.

DM:
How could you turn that down?

PC:
Well, okay—

DM:
But you didn't have any opposition to teaching public schools. It wasn't that. It was just, Hey I love this. I'm going to go this—

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PC:
Oh, by that time I felt good about teaching, and I—my second year at Racine, I had a class in Virgil with a lot of really, really good students, and it was a very, very successful class. And I just loved it. We had been—Carol and I had been saving our money. We were living off my income and saving hers, so we could buy a house someday, and she could quit teaching and we would raise a child. So we had thousands of dollars saved, and we had plans. And she was already pregnant at that time, but she said, "Go ahead and do it."

DM:
Well that was definitely a life changer.

PC:
Yes it was. And I remember, over spring break we went up to Upper Michigan where her parents lived, and I was thinking, Do I really want this? I really love this high school teaching. I'm going to give that up. I finally—and I asked the principal, I'd already turned in my resignation, "Can I cancel that?" And he said, "Yes you can. We'll keep you on if you change your mind." So we went up on our spring break, we were going to thin it over. So I finally decided that if I didn't try it, I would never know. I had to try it, and I had to hope that I would enjoy the teaching experience in college, too. But I really wanted that PhD.

DM:
How did the teaching assistantship compare to that high school experience of teaching?

PC:
Well, it was kind of similar. It was a wonderful place. I mentioned Easum—what a great man I thought he was—I had one advantage as a teaching assistant. I was older—more mature—than all the other graduate students, and I had three years teaching experience. So they had a program called integrated liberal studies where students would go through the ancient world with all that Greek literature, and have lectures by great people, and in the spring they would do the medieval period. So I had that teaching assistant for the fall semester and the Adams fellowship, and we lived off what we were paid and kept Carol's money. In the integrated program, we'd have the lecture one day, and there'd be two days of discussion that I would meet with about twenty students. And these were *really* good students.

DM:
That sounds like a good experience right there. So did it not—so you didn't miss your high school teaching experience after that?

PC:
It was different. And I really liked it. And the people—you know, 1961, '63, these are the people that become the hippies. And I remember a student names Nancy Kurshan. She was a girlfriend of one of the guys in the Chicago Seven.

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DM:
Oh really?

PC:
Jerry Rubin. I mean, those were the kind of people I was teaching in the classes. They had ideals.

DM:
Yeah, yeah. That would be a colorful bunch, wouldn't it? Very interesting.

PC:
Well, then another thing happened. There were just five of us because there was something called a three university program where you spent one year at Wisconsin and another year at Iowa and another year at Minnesota. Well, it's wasn't Wisconsin's turn that year, so those of us who came to Wisconsin were just a small group of five. And one of the guys was a fellow from England who had a scholarship—a fellowship at Wisconsin because they wanted to attract English students. And he, again, pushed me—he pushed me to—my first idea was I'll get my French out of the way, right away. I had worked on that. I got my German out of the way in the

first semester, and then George pushed me to take the prelims in the summer which I had not planned to do. We had thirteen hours of prelims, and I failed twenty minutes of Latin composition. So if it hadn't been for George, I wouldn't have done all of that. Then I studied Latin composition while riding the bus, and retook that in November and passed that. So then I was ready to start writing my thesis.

DM:
These things clicked very quickly, I notice, because even though you taught school—high school—three years, right?

PC:
Yes.

DM:
It looks like you finished your PhD at age twenty-eight or twenty-nine—somewhere in there. Is that correct?

PC:
Yeah, let's see. I got it in '61, so I was twenty-seven.

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DM:
Twenty-seven. That's an early PhD—and especially since you were working full time for part of that period.

PC:
Well, at Wisconsin, they didn't realize I did it in two years. There was a three year residency and I had a year's residency for history, and I also had that summer of '61, and then I had credit for various things—well, like my thesis in '63, and I—

DM:
But someone could have made the case that, Hey, you didn't fulfill your residency here, if they had wanted to?

PC:
Well they couldn't have because I satisfied it because I had the year in History. So I—

DM:
So it wasn't consecutive years that you had to have. It could be—

PC:
I think so.

DM:
Oh was it? Okay.

PC:
Yeah. I believe that that's correct. And one of the reasons I was able to do it is that the man in charge was so disorganized. I mean, he was a brilliant person but he—(laughter) he didn't learn till sometime later.

DM:
It was too late then. But '63 is when you got your PhD. Is that correct?

PC:
Yes.

DM:
Well, can you tell me about your dissertation?

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PC:
Okay, I didn't want to do something other people had been doing. I wanted to find a brand new area. And as a freshman in college, we had a book which was on Virgil, but then in the back of the back of the book, they had selections of various poets. And there was a poem written by a Late Latin poet named Claudian comparing a general of about 400 to Scipio Africanus, the winner of the Punic War number two. And I always remembered that, and I said, Okay, I want to try something different. And I looked at Claudian, and in the twentieth century, basically, almost nothing had been done on him. So I wanted to pick a topic that was original. And then in our graduate housing, across the hall there was an English fellow who was in the English department and I asked, "What kind of approaches to literature are going on now?" And he told me about image studies. And there are almost unknown in the field of Classics at that time. There had been an important one in Greek, really nothing in Latin. So I looked at the scholarship on Claudian, and he wrote a lot of poetry and people—and used a lot of imagery, so that was going to fit just fine. So the conventional wisdom on him is that he used a lot of images just to dress things up, but they really don't fit the topic. They're just extra.

DM:
Now, he wrote different things. He wrote about Honorius. He wrote about—was it Stilicho? Is that it?

PC:
Stilicho's the name of that general.

DM:
Stilicho? But he wrote mythology as well? Were you leaning more towards what he wrote about these political figures or about his mythological—?

PC:
Well, at the time, I didn't care. I just wanted to look at the question. Is it true that images are just window dressing or are they functional? And so my thesis was "The Use of Images by Claudius Claudianus." And I went through every single metaphor and simile, and I showed that they were definitely functional.

DM:
Uh-huh. Can you give an example? Just one primary example of that?

PC:
Well, he wrote an epithalamium on the marriage of the daughter of Stilicho and Serena. And in this—in the course of the image there was a lot of imagery of Venus and the mermaids playing around. And I said, Okay this is not window dressing. This is all designed to provoke arousal. It's perfectly appropriate.

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DM:
Right, yeah, yeah.

PC:
In order to do this, I picked an elderly gentleman named John Paul Hieronymus who was really great in his knowledge of Latin grammar and Greek grammar. And he was an elderly person who was still an associate professor that all the other professors revered. But people didn't go to him for doctoral dissertation. So I went to see him about the topic because I'd had courses from him, and he valued my work. And I was sure I could do what I wanted with him. And so I was able to do this unusual topic which I wouldn't have been able to do with some other people. I remember the chair of the department telling me one day before my final oral exam that he thought I should start over on a new topic. But I just blew—brushed it off like I did everything else. So Hieronymus chose the committee very carefully. There was himself, the director, and then there were two people that were going to vote against it, probably, because they were very traditional.

DM:
Because of the topic.

PC:
I mean—

DM:
Traditional at this time would have meant first century Rome—

PC:
First century Rome.

DM:
First century Rome, yeah.

PC:
I'm fourth century Rome. Okay, so the other two members of the committee were the ancient historian, who was fascinated by what I was doing, and the wife of a fellow who was a philologist who was in comparative literature, who was fascinated by what I was doing. And we get to the oral exam where—on my master's exam, I had been really, really nervous, and this one I was really, really angry. And I responded to everything they said. And they'd say, "Well Claudian did this." "This is not good Latin." And I said, "Well, Virgil does this very, very same thing." And I showed how over and over again, Claudian was doing things that are traditional. And I remember Walter Agard, the mythology guy, who believed in Greek and didn't care at all for what I was doing. And I came to one case and I said, "This is exactly what Horace did." And he said, "I don't care for Horace." But, you know, there it goes. Anyway, I passed.

DM:
You know what's funny, it sounds lie maybe they were poking at Claudian rather than at—what does it matter about Claudian as long as your research is sound, you know? They didn't like the topic.

PC:
They were first century Rome, fifth century Athens. That was it. But I got a great education there.

DM:
Well you published this dissertation, didn't you?

PC:
Yeah. Mouton over in the Netherlands noticed the topic—and it was unusual—and they asked me to send over the dissertation. And they were interested in doing it, and I said, "Okay, but I want to make some revisions." And I wasn't satisfied with what I'd done on imagery outside of

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the Classics, so I did quite a bit of revising on it. And then there was a considerable subvention, and said, "Okay, let's do it." And that was the smartest thing I ever did because that dissertation is still a standard work on Claudian today.

DM:
Have you continued your work that area?

PC:
Oh, yes, an awful lot. That's been my area of research, and I got two articles out before I came up for full professor which was three years after I got here. I got an article accepted for publication, and that was an unusual thing at that time. I mean, people were here to teach. And I—no, no, I'm sorry. Before I became full professor, I had three articles published and the monograph. The funny part was that after three years I got promoted to associate professor, and at that time—

DM:
You got tenure at this point?

PC:
Yeah.

DM:
Associate and tenure at the same time.

PC:
Yeah, I had only one publication, but—

DM:
But like you say, it was more of a teaching emphasis.

PC:
Yes, it was.

DM:
Well here you are—I mean you get your PhD in '63. You get it early—age wise. And then there's a position opening at a university. It might not have been the part of the country you were looking at. I'm not sure. How did this all come about?

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DM:
Okay, excellent question. So in sixty—fall of '60—the December of '62 I go off to a national convention, and I have interviews with several different colleges. And I apply in several different places.

DM:
What were some of these, by the way? Do you remember?

PC:
The place I was most interested in was University of New York at Buffalo. That would look—like a school where I could do research, and it was close to home. I had an on campus visit at Grinnell which was a really fine, fine arts school. Also, Florida State was interested in me. So I'm looking at these places, and then, lo and behold, somebody at Wisconsin said, "Well, here's an advertisement from Texas Technological College."

DM:
Had you ever heard of it?

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PC:
No. And I—we had—in our graduate student housing, there were two people who had graduated from Texas Tech, and they were good friends of ours.

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DM:
Really?

PC:
We told them about it—I was just laughing about it—and they said, "Oh no. This is a good liberal arts school. You ought to look into it." So I looked into it. And other places—there was a Converse College, a girl's school in South Carolina, that was really interested in me. And McKendrick came to me and said the University of Loyola Chicago was interested in me, and I said no, I wouldn't want to go to a church school. So it came down to Texas Tech, which made an offer, and I'd had the visit at Grinnell. And I called there, but the Grinnell position was a second position and they didn't have enough enrollment for the fall so they didn't open up the second position. And if they had have offered me the job, I would have taken it, because after what Carroll had done for me, I would have to. I wanted to go to Texas Tech because I was horrified at the library at Grinnell.

DM:
Oh really?

PC:
Oh, it was so bad.

DM:
Really? I'm surprised.

PC:
There was an annual biography of publications in the Classics—this is in 1962 or spring of '63—and the holdings at the Grinnell library only went back to 1950.

DM:
How did it compare to Tech, though? Did Tech have much better?

PC:
Well, I didn't know.

DM:
Anyway, that was an X on Grinnell.

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PC:
I did know that there was a foreign language department, and Texas Tech was a lot bigger. And they offered tenure.

DM:
You know, Tech was really expanding at that time. Sixties was a real period of growth.

PC:
Oh yes.

DM:
Grover Murray was president, correct, when you came?

PC:
Not when I came. It was a guy named Jones. But that's part of the story, later. So we chose Texas Tech. Remember I grew up in a working class community, and I served in the army with people who were black, and I taught in Racine which had been integrated since before the Civil War, and I—so I did not want to go to a southern school that was segregated. So I wrote to Florida State and asked whether the public schools were integrated, and I wrote to Texas Tech. And Florida State said Florida State University is integrated, but the public schools aren't, and Texas Tech said that Texas Tech is integrated and the public schools are integrated, so okay.

DM:
So there's a critical thing. But it's still a very different kind of culture, I would think, from somebody who had always lived in Wisconsin. It's certainly a different geography, a certain different climate for sure.

PC:
Well, Wisconsin—Springfield, Illinois, had had visited there as a child which I liked, spent six months in Missouri. That was okay.

DM:
You weren't west of the 98th meridian yet, though.

PC:
Well, I didn't know. It was a job.

DM:
Yeah. You bet.

PC:
I mean, if I wanted to research, I've got to go to university; I've got to go where the job is.

DM:
And you were looking for a state university, right? Not a private, religious university.

PC:
Yes. I really wanted a public university.

DM:
Now what did Carol thing about all of this?

PC:
Well, it's our adventure. Our first child was born in December of '61. And—that's what we'll try. And we were hoping that maybe we could move.

DM:
You never know, do you? You're going to come here. You're going to take a position. Who knows how long you'll stay, but here you still are.

PC:
Yep.

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DM:
What about the climate itself? I mean, when you came down here, had you ever been on to the Southern Plains before you came down to look at Texas Tech?

PC:
Not the Southern Plains. We'd gone down to Alabama when I was a junior in high school because my dad went down on business. So we had seen heat, but traveling across—from like St. Louis over to Amarillo across the dry plains—I had never seen heat like that. We—and we didn't have money. We'd stop at a restaurant and ask for a drink of water, and we're doing that every thirty miles or so. It was really, really hot. It happened that our friends from Texas—the guy grew up in Groom, if you know where that is. It's east of Amarillo about forty miles—and they arranged for us to stop there for the night. So we got there and spent the night and then came down to Lubbock the next day.

DM:
Had you already accepted the position when you first came down here?

PC:
Oh yeah.

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DM:
Oh, you accepted it without seeing Lubbock.

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PC:
Yeah. I think it was in April. In fact, I had to send a telegram accepting the position, and when I retired, the telegram was given to me, and it's now on the wall of our house.

DM:
How nice. And then, so you came down what month?

PC:
It was in August.

DM:
August. Okay. So at least no dust storms blowing at that time.

PC:
Oh, we didn't know anything about that.

DM:
Yeah. Until the next spring?

PC:
Yeah. We learned.

DM:
Well, how did you adapt?

PC:
Well, it was getting used to the teaching, and I taught three sections of beginning Latin, a junior level Latin course, and a beginning Greek class. So we had five classes at that time, each semester.

DM:
How did the students compare to University of Wisconsin?

PC:
Well, very, very badly except that I was teaching first semester Latin to people who were not language oriented. And there was an experienced faculty member named Leo Jergunsons [?] who was from Latvia, drafted in the German army in World War II. He and his wife managed to get out and come to Minnesota and eventually end up here. And he was another great man. And he called me aside and said, "You're not teaching graduate students at Wisconsin. You've got to adapt to the students." And he said that very, very early and that was really, really helpful. But the students in Greek were pretty eager to learn, and the junior level Latin students had been well prepared.

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DM:
Where were they prepared? Did you ever know?

PC:
Well, Leo Jergunsons had taught them.

DM:
Oh, he had.

PC:
And they were good. They were really, really good.

DM:
Did you have to adapt your teaching style in any way when you came to Tech?

PC:
Well, I had to learn to become reasonable.

DM:
Okay. (laughs) And you were teaching Greek as well, then. Latin and Greek.

PC:
Yeah, I brought Greek here.

DM:
Did you ever teach any history here as well, especially in those early years?

PC:
No. Everything was in the field of—

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DM:
Did classes always make in the sixties? Did you have plenty of students taking Latin and Greek?

PC:
Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. Remember that Rickover and national defense and languages and mathematics and science, so the students coming in had been well prepared.

DM:
How about those students? What were their majors? Did you have medical—pre-med students, and biology students, and others taking Latin for that purpose in those days?

PC:
We had a new, recently established Latin major, so the students I had in advanced level classes were looking at Latin teaching. Either they were majoring in Latin or they were getting a teaching field with a specialization in Latin.

DM:
I see, okay.

PC:
We had a lot of really, really good people in those day. And the people in Greek pretty much took Greek because they wanted to learn Greek. And I had learned from Wisconsin that what

you'd do in the third semester of Greek is that you use the book of Luke. So it's good classical Greek, and they're interested in the subject matter. And that worked really, really well, and then fourth semester, I'd give them Plato's *Apology*. That really worked.

DM:
Well, I'd never thought of that, but I was going to ask if there was more interesting classical Greek or Koine Greek and how you would deal with that, but Luke is a nice intermediary?

PC:
Well, it's classical Greek but it's the Koine Greek of an educated person. It's not poetry.

DM:
Right. It's a nice blend, though.

PC:
Yeah. With great subject matter. Terrific parables.

DM:
So you were off and running in the teaching field. You were able to do some research. Were you allowed time to research or did you have to dig out your own—?

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PC:
Oh, that was my problem. Nobody else cared. Now there's a funny story there about getting a promotion and tenure to a associate professor after three years. I did have an article already by that time. I really suspect that the departmental chairman did that so I would stay because once that happened I didn't find any equal position available. And then that was after three years. After three years more I got promoted to full professor.

DM:
That's it. You've got you career created why—

PC:
Yeah.

DM:
It would be hard to entice someone away it seems like, at that point.

PC:
Well, I talked to people. And I'd be asked my salary at Texas Tech. "We can't possibly match that."

DM:
Have you ever known of a faculty member who had tenure and espcially—well tenure, yeah—but full faculty status who was coaxed away to another university? Or who saw fit to leave that behind and go to another university as a non-tenured assistant—

PC:
Oh no. you're insane.

DM:
So yeah, once that's done, you're here.

PC:
And most faculties don't want to offer tenure to a person they don't even know.

DM:
How about on the personal level? Did you and Carol accept this—that this might become a permanent position for you and a permanent home? Was that a difficult decision to come to, or were you—did you adapt to the place itself?

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PC:
Well we—originally we were on Thirty-Third and Quaker which was just a place to live. And our second child came in January of '64, and it was so cold in that little house.

DM:
Even for a person from Wisconsin?

PC:
Well, little kids. You know—it was too cold. There's floor heating. You don't expect winter. So we looked for a place out on Fifty-Ninth street—Fifty-Ninth and Kenosha—and we found one. So we rented a house there. And that was in '64. In '67, good friends of ours across the street were military people. Colonel Morton was on ROTC here at Texas Tech, and he got called over to Vietnam, so they weren't able to sell their house. So they talked to Carol about buying it at a low price, and we got a house for $17,900, payment $136 a month.

DM:
What year was this?

PC:
1967.

DM:
Wow. Things really fell into place for y'all here, didn't they.

PC:
It had four bedrooms. And we chose that area because it had Haynes Elementary, Evans Junior High, and then Monterrey High School. They're all close.

DM:
You know what? That was out on the outskirts, kind of. Was that about as far south as Lubbock was pushing at that time, or was there development farther south?

PC:
It was beginning to. The departmental chairman at that time, Harley Oberhelman lived on Sixty-Second Street, and every so often I'd have to take a shovel and shovel the sand ff his driveway. So yeah, it was starting to span out. But we joined Newcomers Bridge and met people we liked there. And we liked the department. And I was well treated there, and we had a good location.

DM:
So it was fine. You adapted just fine. I ask because people have such varying stories on that. Well, let me ask you this as well as far as the climate is concerned. When the wind's blowing forty miles an hour from the north in the wintertime here, is it really any colder in Wisconsin than it is in Texas?

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PC:
Well, the last month—last January we were in Madison, the temperature never got up to zero degrees. That was cold.

DM:
Yeah, that is cold. But the wind here has to be some kind of an equalizing factor. It gets awfully cold when it cuts through you at forty miles an hour. I had a friend who was from Wisconsin, and I asked him one time how the summers were up there. And he said, "They're nice. Both days."

PC:
Both days. Oh, Wisconsin—oh it's ninety degrees in Wisconsin, but its humidity is worse than a hundred degrees here.

DM:
Yeah. That's the case in east Texas, even.

PC:
Oh, Dallas is awful. Houston is awful.

DM:
Austin even.

PC:
Austin is really bad.

DM:
What about the library? You go here. You went over—this was a brand new library when you came here.

PC:
Yes. Yeah, I understand, it used to be over in the building—

DM:
Math building.

PC:
—math is in now.

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DM:
So what about the holdings? What about the classical literature?

PC:
Okay—I wanted to do research. I wanted to have a good library. So I talked to people in the library, and I finally found out that you can place orders. And I got to know the people in the library who placed orders, and I discovered that there are allotments for each department. So I ordered everything I could in Classics that I thought we needed, and then it would come to late in the year and the department was coming near it's deadline, and there was a lot of room. So they'd ask me to—

DM:
Spend the money?

PC:
Yep. And then, after that, there was a period where the library had to spend money and the library knew that I was insatiable, so I just kept ordering and kept ordering.

DM:
Are you the reason we have so many Loeb Classical Library?

PC:
I think the Loeb got put in standard order. That should be at any library. I'm the reason that we have all the Oxford Classical texts and the Teubner texts and Budé texts. And I've got to mention a faculty member who'd also had been at Wisconsin—name was John Boto [?], and he came here and he wanted to do an index of Greek verb forms. But in order to do that, he had to get texts of an awful lot of authors that weren't in the library. So he was responsible for adding some really valuable stuff to the library that I would not have thought of. I mentioned the commentary—the Greek commentaries and Aristotle—thirty volumes. That's here because of John Boto.

DM:
How did he fund that? Did he go through the libraries? Did he go through Tech? Or did he have a—?

PC:
He went to the library, and he had a contract for a book published by—which was going to be published by Georg Olms over in Germany, and so because he had that contract, he got a lot of extra consideration ordering books.

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DM:
I see, well that's great. Do you have any names of library personnel at that time who were helping you out with the acquisitions? Or helping him out?

PC:
I'm sorry, I do not. Well, oh—Dolores Maxwell. Henry Maxwell came here from Wabash College in Indiana along with Dolores. They were well-educated people, and Dolores worked in the library. The modern person in the library so helpful is Donell Callender. She has been fantastic.

DM:
Yeah. She's a good person. Did you notice whether other faculty on campus used this resource? I mean, I don't think everybody now knows about their ability to go purchase books. That they have—I don't know how it still works, if the departments are allotted the money they once were, but at that time, in the sixties, you know whether faculty members were using this or not? Whether in classical languages or in other departments, did they know to go over and say, "Hey, we need more history books," or—

PC:
Well because of my background in various areas, I knew to do things. I mean, in a quartermaster corps, you've got to have the resources, and I have enough self confidence that I'll go ask. And I was available. If they had money they needed to spend, I'm available. I never failed them.

DM:
Well your stint in the quartermaster corps might have helped Texas Tech Library, then, to get a decent holding.

PC:
That's part of it. I mean, it's true of army. You do military history, that quartermaster corps is it.

DM:
Did you see faculty that didn't use this, though? Or did you come across—

PC:
Oh my Lord. Almost no faculty will take the trouble. I mean, I wanted to get the things for here, and I wanted to get all the basic texts. I wanted to get the lexicography, I wanted to get the commentaries. I wanted to get the standard works. I remember when our third child was born; it was a long, long delay. And I took Blackwell's catalogue and I just marked—spent time marking the books that I wanted to order when things settled down.

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DM:
Well, it's really advantageous to have your name out there to them at the end of the fiscal year when they're wanting to spend money. That's great.

PC:
Yeah, it's changed. It's too bad we don't get books anymore. But, yeah, as long as we did—I mean, I had an insatiable appetite. There was a lot of money available, and nobody else was interested. I mean look at the faculty. They were here to teach. You've got to want to do research.

DM:
At least that changed. When did that start to change? Where, publish or perish basically. When did that kick in at Tech?

PC:
Once Knox Jones comes, dean of the graduate school. And he says, "If we're going to give a person tenure, I don't want to do it unless we can promote them to associate professor because I

don't want to have people here who get tenure and don't do anything." So that was a major change.

DM:
This would have been in the seventies? When did Knox Jones—mid-seventies?

PC:
I think he came in the seventies.

DM:
Okay. Now what about this Grover Murray era? You said that—when you mentioned that there was a person before Murray. It was Jones? Ian Jones or something like that?

PC:
I think it's jones. I think he was in the chemistry department.

DM:
You said—you made a comment like, "That's another story." What were you alluding to? Maybe you were going to—

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PC:
Okay. The other thing that bothered me about Texas Tech—besides a concern over possible segregation—was the fact that Texas Tech was censured by the AAUP. So I asked the—Mr. Dalling, Dr. Dalling, what about that? And he said, "Oh, they're going to get off tenure—get off censure." Okay, so I thought that was going to be okay. Well I get—and one of the faculty members at Wisconsin cautioned me against coming to Tech because it was on tenure. And I was very much alert to that, so I joined the AAUP. And we would do things like communicate with whatever the regents were called at that time. I don't remember the name. It wasn't regents then, I don't think. And that went on for a while.

DM:
You were the—you were one of the Tech AAUP representatives.

PC:
Oh, I was a member of the AAUP—

DM:
—AAUP. Did y'all get together at Tech in a group?

PC:
We would have luncheons in the faculty club from time to time.

DM:
Who are we talking about here?

PC:
Well, the great man was Henry Shine in Chemistry, and he was well respected. He could communicate with authorities, and the rest of us were on a lower level. But we would Henry compose letters. We'd spend a lot of time arguing over those. But that was a very, very important thing, and that's why I was a member of the AAUP.

DM:
Can you think of other members at that time?

PC:
Well, friends in the history department like Jack Collins. There's an interesting story there. When George Bush was running for the House of Representatives, he came here on campus and came to the faculty club. And he met with Jack Collins and myself, and I guess I was a treasurer at that time. And so we actually talked to him and got to ask him questions. And I asked him about nuclear power because—I'dbeen reading science fiction since 1950 and really believe that if you were going to have unlimited energy, it's going to be nuclear fusion—and I remember that George Bush was concerned about that. People have said to me, "Well that's because he's in the oil business." I don't know. I don't know whether he really was—

DM:
But you got to see it firsthand, that concern.

PC:
Yeah. But that was the most interesting event that I remember about the AAUP. I remember that we were quite active in pushing for a name change to Texas State University. And there were protests against Texas Tech University on campus, and I remember calling people, urging them to call any congressman they could to vote for Texas State University. I remember getting a letter from one of the regents telling me that as a faculty member, it was not my place to offer my opinion, and that's—

DM:
You got a call.

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PC:
Well, I got a letter.

DM:
Oh, a letter.

PC:
It was a letter.

DM:
It was from, what position?

PC:
One of the members of the regents.

DM:
Oh really. Golly. I hope you kept the letter.

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PC:
No, I did not. Yeah, I did for a few years, but then there's space issues, and I got rid of a lot of stuff.

DM:
But—were you involved in the tenure issue? The tenure issue on campus?

PC:
No, I was not a member of the AAUP at that time. Three children, faculty members at low salaries, and they—when the AAUP raised the dues, we dropped out. But by that time Grover Murray was here. We had a tenure policy. We brought in Bob Bass to coach basketball, and Jim Carlen to coach football, and things really, really looked great with Grover Murray. And I—and then, 1969 become head of the Honors Program, and that changed everything for me.

DM:
That's one of the main things I want to talk about here. I'm going to pause this just a second—

Pause in Recording

DM:
Okay, what can you tell me about the Honors College.

PC:
Well, in 1969 Bill Johnson, associate dean, said that Lorn Kenniver [?] looked at the honors program, and he either wanted—he wanted to either discontinue it or find someone who could work with students. And for some reason, there was a feeling that I was the kind of person who could work with students. So I was offered the chance to become the head of the Honors Program. As I said about going from high school to college, that this is going to be an opportunity to actually learn instead of just memorize—well, I looked upon this as a really great opportunity to offer special education to really good students. So my first thought is, Okay, I'll take over and see how things go. And that's as far as I went. And I visited every class taught by anybody, and my basic feeling is that, Well, this is like any ordinary class except it has a person who wants to teach good students, and it has good students. But I wanted something more than that. So—okay, I'm going to say something that—

DM:
Is it okay to be on the record?

PC:
Let's put it off the record.

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DM:
Okay—

Pause in Recording

PC:
So I looked into way of putting courses together so you get a more broad picture of education than you would in a specific subject matter disciplines. And there was a book by a guy names Joe Tubman called *Experiment at Berkeley*, and he had been a dean out at University of California Berkeley. He had a two semester course for really good students. In the fall semester, they would focus upon fifth century Athens, and in the spring semester, they would focus on sixteenth century Massachusetts. And it was really unusual and I thought, Well, okay we can do a hell of a lot better than that. Now you also have to remember that this is in the sixties, and there's a lot of student interest in going non-traditional ways. So I looked at people that I observed teaching. And I called together Otto Nelson in history, Mary Brewer in English, Dale Davis in English, and John Burnett in political science, and I talked to them about constructing an eighteen hour program—six semesters of college work—that would cover the development of everything. And we constructed a program that had six hours on Greece and Rome the first semester, and then the second semester had three hours on the Middle Ages and three hours on—oh, the Orient because that had to be part of it too. I guess the Orient was first and then the Middle Ages. And then in the second year, there'd be three hours on the development of Modern

Europe and then three hours on the world as it is today. So the first six hours they got—the first semester they got six hours credit English. Second semester they got three hours credit in political science and three hours credit in American history. And then they would get—in the next year they get three hours credit on political science and three hours American History. I can't recall which way it went. But that way we used required work in English, history, and political science, and we had an eighteen hour program.

DM:
Quite a span.

PC:
Yes. And quite a violation of state law.

DM:
Oh. (laughs)

PC:
But, these people led me to their chairpersons, and the chairperson of English, the chairperson of history, and the chairperson of political science, at that time, all agreed to it, never could have happened at any other time but the 1960s. Okay, it gets worse. We had an executive committee, which I chaired, and there were four faculty members—the four I mentioned—and then the student who was president of the Honors student group, the vice president of the same group, and a freshman representative of that same group. And so it was 4-3 advantage for faculty, but everything we'd do, we'd take a vote. And I would not vote, but I would supervise discussions. And so we planned things out along the lines of Integrated Liberal Studies program of Wisconsin where we would have one lecture and two discussion sections a week, and the faculty members then would be the discussion leaders. And any faculty member in any of the three disciplines could be teaching whichever course he or she wished to teach, no matter whether it was called history, political science, or English. I mean, it was a wonderful program. It was a fantastic program, and only in the sixties was it possible. And it gradually faded away.

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DM:
How long were you—?

PC:
1969-1981.

DM:
Oh, is that right?

PC:
Twelve years.

DM:
Well, yeah, that was innovative. And what was the big difference in the Honors Program with—under you and pre-Christiansen? What was it like before? Was it just, Hey these students have a high enough GPA and we're going to put them in a—I mean how was it determined who would be in the Honors program, and what was the purpose of the Honors program?

PC:
Well, with my friends, the four, and the students, our idea was providing a good education. To be eligible, we said 1100 SAT or a B average. So we took many students who did not have that 1100 SAT average but were good students at Texas Tech. I got a letter from an Italian professor somewhere up north mentioning he got into the program because he had B average even though he didn't have an 1100 SAT, and he would not have been eligible otherwise. And he's been a very successful college professor.

DM:
It makes sense, too, because SAT is a reflection of your public school work, and there's a total difference when you step into the college environment. Some people who didn't do well in public schools just really do great in college, so I think it's a good point. But what was it like before?

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CP:
Well, let's say Otto Nelson would have a class in American History and he would have to cover the American History curriculum. And he was a great teacher, so there would be discussion.

DM:
You mentioned that you went around and you observed faculty members?

PC:
Yeah.

DM:
Did you approach people and say, "Hey, I think you would be an Honors Program faculty member."

PC:
No. By that first year, I took the people who were assigned to teach the classes and I asked whether they could visit a class. And I took whatever teachers that department gave us.

DM:
I see. Okay.

PC:
Now the people I mentioned—Mary Brewer and Dale Davis and John Burnett and Otto Nelson—all loved to go through the whole program. So they'd be in their own discipline one-third of the time. They'd be in somebody else's discipline the other two thirds.

DM:
That's interesting. So Otto Nelson, for example, he would teach—what courses would he teach in the Honors Program?

PC:
Well, he'd start out with the ancient world—

DM:
Oh, the ancient—

PC:
—and then he'd go to the Orient and the Middle Ages.

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DM:
That had to be great fun for somebody who kind of gets limited into an area of study, you know—so often at the university, but not he's got to be having as much fun as the students in this kind of program?

PC:
Well he loved it. And when I left, he became the director, and after two years he got stolen by the dean's office to become an associate dean.

DM:
That's right. That was in about '83 or so?

PC:
Yeah.

DM:
So that was your deal, then, in Honors College—'69 to '81.

PC:
Yeah.

DM:
Did you teach any courses in the Honors College?

PC:
Oh yeah. I had a one course reduction, so I'd be teaching two classes in the department, and then I was a director of the program. And another thing we did was decide—was construct a practice of developing seminars in the fine arts or science or whatever, and we—to graduate in Honors, you'd have to have thirty hours of Honors classes including two seminars. And I think those seminars were really, really great.

DM:
How were they set up? Were they like a graduate seminar or were they—

PC:
Yeah, basically.

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DM:
So you would—each person would take a particular study—a particular book for example—and you would come together and discuss each of these? I don't know. That's the way a lot of graduate seminars—

PC:
Had to write papers instead of having tests. So the integrative program, the two seminars—which I think are great preparation for graduate work—and then as part of—as one of the lectures in the Modern period, I persuaded the curriculum committee to invite Jack Williamson, a science fiction writer from New Mexico, to come and talk about science fiction. And he came and stayed in our house, and gave his lecture, and then that night we had a meeting of all people interested in science fiction. And at that meeting, which was over in what used to be the president's house—it's alum—

DM:
Alumni Center or something, or whatever it is.

PC:
Yeah, okay. There was a meeting there, and I met two chemists and an anthropologist and a person in English who were really interested, so the five of us decided that we would offer a team-taught science fiction course the next semester. And this was absolutely insane. It was not

part of our teaching load, and all five of us would go to every class and participate in discussion. And one requirement of the class is that the student would offer—write an original science fiction story.

DM:
How did that work out?

PC:
Oh. It was wonderful.

DM:
Did you have a lot of student's clambering to get in that class?

PC:
Oh, yes. And the people who chose the class knew what science fiction was, and they wanted to take it. And we did that for, I think, like nineteen semesters straight.

DM:
Really?

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PC:
Until the head of the Chemistry department told John and Art they couldn't do that anymore. They needed to focus on their research. And at that time, I thought, You know, they're right. I need to get out of that too. But in recent years, I've been offering the course on my own. As one of my two courses as chairman of the department, I would—I've only had to teach two classes a year, and that would be one. And so I'd have about fifteen people in class, and have a lot of engineers because it counted for humanities credit. It was hard for engineers to find a humanities course they liked, and they really went for that one. So I kept that up until I retired.

DM:
You were a bit innovative in the curriculum, it appears to me. Besides the standard language courses, for example, did you teach a course in reality in mythology? Tell me about that.

PC:
Okay, I invented a course in mythology which—I thought it was a viable course. It should be offered. And when I proposed this course, I went before the Arts and Sciences Curriculum Committee, and a member of my own department spoke in opposition to it because he was afraid that it would lead to a study of religion. He was a professional atheist and didn't want to see that happen. I couldn't believe a member of my own department got the course turned down. So I went to see the chair of the department and told him about it. And that second time I went, that

person wasn't speaking against it anymore. So I got that. First time I offered it, I think there were about seventy students in a class, and, well I mean, there'd never been anything like it at Texas Tech. And, again, this is the sixties. And then it got more sensible, thirty-five, maybe. And then in later years, I would limit the class size to about twenty or twenty-five, I guess.

DM:
What year did you start this?

PC:
I think it was '68. It was a great time to invent things.

DM:
Yeah. And then so how long has that continued? How long did the course continue?

PC:
Oh, it's still going.

PC:
Is it—wow.

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PC:
Then I also decided that instead of just focusing on the ancient world, I would offer comparative mythology. So we go into Near Eastern and Nordic and Indian, and those courses really went well.

DM:
What was the gist in reality in mythology? What would be some of the critical points?

PC:
That wasn't a name I used. I just called it mythology. But if you look at the gods, it's a great way of studying the family. Father, Zeus. Mother, Hera. Precocious children. Family rivalries between Poseidon and Zeus. I mean—

DM:
Are most of these mythological figures, in your opinion, based upon a real person somewhere along the way?

PC:
I think they're based on natural forces. I mean, Zeus would be like the balance, the balance of

nature; Poseidon, all the forces of the earth, which are considerable; and then Hades, death and restructuring.

DM:
So there's the reality in the mythology.

PC:
Yeah. It is real.

DM:
That's interesting. I wish I had taken that course. What about in comparative—you mentioned comparative mythology. You also taught comparative literature, didn't you?

PC:
No, I never did. It was a comparative mythology course.

DM:
Okay, I'm getting my wires crossed there. Something else that you were involved in on Tech campus was Friends of the Library. We were talking about how you helped build the holdings. Was it part of that same interest? You were building the holdings of the Texas Tech Library?

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DM:
Yeah, it was related to that. Ray Janeway was head of the library at the time, and he had several of us who wanted—were interested in building up the library. Art Draper in Chemistry was the one I remember. I can't remember others. Major thing we did was look at money donated to the library and decide areas where there were vacancies, so we'd order books that really should be in the library. We didn't pay any attention to department interests at all. It probably was something more general. It just ought to be there. And I was there for a while. But after '69, I mean, I was all in honors. And then there was another thing, and this has to do with youth athletics. Growing up, I played a lot of playground basketball. I really loved playground basketball. And I wanted my kids to learn to play basketball, so we had a basketball hoop put up, and I taught them to dribble with either hand and use a backboard. So—there was a boys club, and the kids would go around there and play, and they'd have teams. Well, there were four teams and one team had no coach. So I figured I was better than no coach at all, so I started coaching. So I—let's see—when David was, like, seven that would be in '68—I continued till until about 1980 coaching youth athletics, and then I got dragged in to youth baseball because David wasn't drafted for the Little League—Major League—and a guy—but I helped my coach of another son as an assistant coach. And somebody coaching in a Major League needed an assistant coach, and my name came up because somebody who had worked with kids saw that year I got brought up to the Majors and David came up to play Major League baseball. And then the Southwest Little League

decided to fire that coach. And this had to do with politics within Southwest Little League. And there was no coach, so they turned to me. And I had another son who was on the team and again, well, I could be better than no coach at all. And I discovered that I was pretty bad as a coach. But one of the kids I had on the team had a father who had played a lot of baseball, and I got him to be the assistant coach. And he knew baseball, and I knew how to teach, and then the last two years I was there we won Southwest Little League. Yeah, Bobby Welch, a plumber, number one baseball man in Lubbock. But, between youth athletics and the Honors Program, I was out of a lot of things.

DM:
Yeah, those are demands on your time, for sure.

PC:
And then our third son turned out to be an outstanding athlete, and so he played baseball for Monterrey for three years and basketball at Monterrey for three years.

DM:
Had to go to all those games, I guess.

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PC:
All over the place. With basketball we went up to Memphis one year. We went up to Indianapolis another year.

DM:
Is that right?

PC:
So up until—well, and then Brian went to Texas Tech and he played baseball for a couple of years. So it was only after that that I ended—I was out of the Honors Program in '81. When Brian was out of baseball in, I guess, about '86, then I went back to being a full-time faculty member again and getting back to my research.

DM:
Oh, okay. Are you still continuing your research?

PC:
Yes, I just had an article published a year ago over in Belgium, and I think I'm going to do one more. And it's all on Claudian. The basic deal on Claudian, was in the Middle Ages, people decided he was not really a Latin, he was a Greek who had immigrated to Rome. And the last three articles I've written has demonstrated that he was an immigrant from Egypt. He was a

Roman senator who fought against Theodosius at the battle of the Frigidus in 394. It took three articles to demonstrate it, but I think I have.

DM:
He was not from Alexandria?

PC:
Not at all. He was a Roman senator.

DM:
I wonder where that came from.

PC:
Well, it came from Greeks who moved to the west—

DM:
They claimed him.

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PC:
And they said there are Latin poets named Claudian, and this guy is really a Greek.

DM:
I see. That's interesting. You're verifying his true identity then.

PC:
Yeah, I don't believe what I'm told unless it makes sense. And I in my monograph, I stated that he was a Greek from Alexandria because that was established belief. And by the 1970s, I was beginning to think this makes no sense at all. And I wasn't—

DM:
That's an interesting life study that you've come to the point where you can make that—come to that different conclusion.

PC:
Well, it was not until 1995 that I wrote my first article entitled "Claudian: A Greek or a Latin?" And I look at the evidence offered about his Greekship, and I showed there's absolutely nothing in Claudian that requires him to be a Greek or even to know Greek.

DM:
Really? Okay, there's nothing in the language itself—in his use of Latin that would suggest a Greek origin.

PC:
Well, that's part of the problem with the other position, that as one German scholar said, "If you think that a person who is a mediocre Greek poet can move to Italy and become the greatest Latin poet since Ovid, you're crazy."

DM:
You know, it's an interesting period that he's living in and writing in as well. It's toward the end of the—it's the fall of the Roman Empire. Interesting things happening.

PC:
Yeah, actually, in 390—in 388, we've got the western empire, which was stable, and the eastern empire, which was stable. And Theodosius came west and defeated the western empire, weakening its army and appointing a child as western emperor. He dies, the west chooses another emperor, 394, Theodosius comes back, defeats that army, executes that emperor, appoints another child, and the west was never stable again.

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DM:
Right. And here's Claudian in the middle of all this.

PC:
And Claudian, who was a spokesman for the Roman senate, and actually wrote a work that attacks Theodosius, not by name, but I demonstrated that it was Theodosius he was attacking, then is asked to come up to Milan and become spokesman for the child emperor. And what he does is pick on Stilicho as a true Roman defending Rome against Barbarians because that was the truth, and it was the only thing he could find to say.

DM:
Well, it's a really intriguing topic. Did this attract—did you have some grad students come here to study Claudian, or—?

PC:
No. No, we just have a master's program. And it's a very good master's program. What we've done here at Tech under the leadership of David Larmour—who's really the head of the Classics program—we train students to get skilled in Latin and Greek, and they go do well in doctoral programs elsewhere.

DM:
All right, well I've exhausted my questions, but there may be areas that we haven't covered that you could fill in. can you think of any? In your career, we've talked about research and teaching and some of these extra activities—related activities like Honors College and AAUP, but am I—you see gaps?

PC:
No, I do not.

DM:
Okay. Anything to add?

PC:
Well, it's been great for me.

DM:
Well, maybe we'll think of—maybe I'll think of some more questions. Maybe you'll think of a few things that you would like to add to the record, and you can contact me or I'll contact you. You're local, so that makes it easy.

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PC:
Oh yes. Texas Tech has been such a place of opportunity, and I get away with so much.

DM:
So, no regrets for having come all the way down here back in 1963?

PC:
No, really good friendships. I talked about the class of five at Wisconsin in the fall of 1961. And one of the five was a guy named Ed George who got his degree after I did, went down to UT, and then escaped to here. And he came about 1971. And there's a fellow named Jim Holland who came as a visiting professor in '67. And while Leo Jergunsons went back to Minnesota to get his—finish his doctorate. And then we kept him on, and first Thursday of every month, Jim and Ed and I get together for coffee.

DM:
Isn't that outstanding?

PC:
Yeah, can you believe it? One friend that goes back to '61 and the other one to '67.

DM:
That's amazing. How nice. What about your work as a professor? You're teaching still, right?

PC:
Oh, no. No, I retired in 2012.

DM:
Oh, you're totally retired.

PC:
I was chair of Classical and Romance Languages from 1990-2012. And then they sent me over to philosophy—I'm sorry. I get the years wrong—2990-2002. Then they sent me over to philosophy to chair that department from 2002 to 2009. And then I retired part-time, and I had three more years in the language department where I'd teach comparative mythology and science fiction every spring.

DM:
Okay. And now you have a total of how many years here, did you say?

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PC:
Forty-nine.

DM:
Forty-nine years. Wow.

PC:
But I was able to do everything I wanted to do, and met a lot of good people.

DM:
No regrets?

PC:
Oh, I guess I wish I had been smarter.

DM:
In what regard?

PC:
I don't know.

DM:
Surely there was something you could have done different, huh?

PC:
Well, I mean, I was crazy to spend all that time coaching athletics.

DM:
Well—you had three boys, right?

PC:
Yeah.

DM:
You know, that's what you do.

DM:
Yes, it is. It is.

DM:
It's important aspect of your life.

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PC:
It really was. Well, I've been—okay. I really don't have regrets, but I see now that I've been really lucky. The years I was involved in youth athletics and the Honors Program, I had tenure, and there was no pressure to publish at all. Once I got out of those things, then I did get back to publishing again. And I found a way to keep up with publication because I got involved in developing concordances for late Latin authors who didn't have one. So that was filling a vital need. And I mentioned Georg Olms with the *Index of Greek Verb Forms*, well I got involved with them, and we did concordances for Claudian, a later Latin poet called Sidonius Apollinaris—both for his prose work and for his poetic work—and then for what's called the *Latin Anthology*, which deals with Latin poetry between the fall of the Roman Empire and the modern times. So the way things worked, a book counts for five years publication. And while I got involved in Honors—was getting out of Honors, I started on the first concordance, and then I kept on going with the others, and then I got back to writing articles on Claudian again.

DM:
So it worked out pretty nicely.

PC:
Had a lot of luck.

DM:
Well, things clicked timewise especially in that early career, I thought. It just—from my perspective it looks that way. Anything else to add?

PC:
No. Absolutely not.

DM:
I'm going to turn this off.

End of Recording

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