

KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH LEEANN B. LANDS

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Interview with LeeAnn B. Lands
Conducted by Thomas A. Scott and Kathleen Harper
Edited, and indexed by Thomas A. Scott
Thursday, 17 April 2014
Location: KSU Archives, Kennesaw State University

TS: LeeAnn Lands received the KSU Foundation Distinguished Service Award in 2011. She received a KSU Foundation Prize for her first book, *The Culture of Property*, in 2010. That year she also received the Betty L. Siegel Faculty Member of the Year Award from the KSU Alumni Association. In 2006 she received a Georgia Board of Regents Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Award for her Summer Hill Project.

LeeAnn, why don't you start by talking about your background? I know that your first degree was in Material Science and Engineering (Metallurgy) from the University of Florida in 1991. You were obviously pretty good at math and mechanical stuff to get through the bachelor's program, so why don't you talk about why you started in engineering?

LL: Okay. From very early on, I thought a lot about what I was going to do with my life, and I'm sure I worried my dad a lot. I went from wanting to be a horse trainer to this that and the other thing, so around . . .

TS: You would have been a good horse trainer!

LL: In tenth grade I decided that I wanted to be an engineer. Part of that was inspired, not by the fact that my dad was in the steel industry, but I had been given this book by my grandmother, the kind of book you might give a young teenage girl like an adolescent or a pre-adolescent. It was Miss America's guide to life. It was a huge book. Now I don't remember the title. I tried to find this book since then. I can't find it. But remember the period. It would have been late 1970s or early 1980s at the time I would have been reading this book.

TS: So you're like eleven years old or something.

LL: Yes, some period like that. My mom even thought it was too adult for me to be reading, so she didn't even give it to me for a couple of years.

TS: Oh, Miss America . . . ?

LL: Yes, but it was that period when women's rights is taking place, and women are moving into offices, and all these things. So the last chapters of this Miss America book were women talking about their careers. This one was a mechanical engineer, and she was talking about building buildings and structures

- and all this, and I decided that's what I wanted to be. From then on, I wanted to be an engineer. I graduated high school in 1985, and at that point aerospace industry was big . . .
- TS: Sure, and you were in Florida, I guess.
- LL: Yes, we watched the shuttles and did all of this stuff, so I was going to be an aerospace engineer, working on materials like ceramics. I went off to Florida, and you didn't apply straight to whichever engineering major you wanted. You had to apply by the time you hit eighty hours, something like that. At that time, I couldn't get into aerospace. My GPA wasn't high enough to get in.
- TS: That's hard to believe.
- LL: I enjoyed school a lot. The University of Florida hit the party school rankings in that time, and I was personally part of achieving the number one ranking. I could get into materials engineering. It still, I felt, fit what I wanted to do. But once I got into materials, metallurgy was really what attracted me—and the science of metallurgy. So I went that route. I graduated in 1991, which means I was six years in a five-year program, again attributable to my party lifestyle. I think of myself as having a double major in engineering and partying.
- TS: That's kind of the stereotype of the traditional student going off to a residential college.
- LL: Exactly. I got into Georgia Tech too. If I had gone to Tech, which didn't have the national rankings at the time, it would be interesting to see if I would still be in engineering. I'm sure I would have been a better student because it's a totally different atmosphere at Georgia Tech, but at the same time it's a hard school.
- TS: Harder than Florida?
- LL: Yes. Even then they were rising in rankings.
- TS: Were there a lot of women students in the engineering program?
- LL: No, not at Florida. Georgia Tech has a very high percentage of women compared to other engineering schools.
- TS: And very high means what, 25 percent?
- LL: Tops, it would max at 25. It was probably closer to 17 or 18 percent.
- TS: That's about where Southern Poly is. They're somewhere around 20 percent.
- LL: Florida's percentage of women was really low. It was very unusual to . . .

TS: I did a tour of Southern Polytechnic [State University] the other day, and just walking around campus it was kind of startling just seeing all males it seemed like.

LL: Yes. To some degree that's an attractive option.

TS: Okay, in your partying days.

LL: Yes. I had a Calculus 3 class. Classes were bigger at Florida than they are here at Kennesaw, and the Calc 3 class had probably thirty-five or forty students, so fairly large, and I was the only woman in the class. That was startling. Usually, there were at least three or four. I think we had maybe seven women in Materials Engineering.

TS: But not in an advanced Calculus class?

LL: That one just happened to draw no women.

TS: Did you have strong aptitudes in math, I guess?

LL: I developed strong, yes. I'm very much the work hard and your test scores will go up.

TS: You weren't part of the stereotype that women weren't supposed to be good at math then.

LL: Well, I wasn't that great in high school, but once I got out and got into college I became good.

TS: You were determined.

LL: Yes. I took more math than necessary in order to excel, and it worked. When I took my GREs [Graduate Record Examinations] my scores were extremely high.

TS: I'm thinking back about over fifty years now, but I took my second calculus class, and I made an A in it, and I understood nothing, so I said, this is it for math for me.

LL: Yes, you can't give up.

TS: Yes, that's true. You've got to keep plugging away. All right, so you get a degree, and did you go out and actually work in engineering jobs for a while?

LL: I didn't have a job coming out. I took a few months. I was also getting married right out of college, and that meant that I was relocating to south Florida. So I

was sort of spatially challenged in my job market. I had interviewed with U.S. Steel. Probably, if nothing else had interfered, I would have gone to work for them. Instead I was getting married, so I was delayed a few months in getting a job. Then I went to work for American Welding Society, which is an organization that does voluntary consensus standards. Buildings and everything else have codes to work to, and often some of those codes are voluntary consensus codes. I was just a staff engineer. I think my title was staff metallurgist, but there were about five of us that worked with engineers from companies across the U.S. and Japan to pull together these codes.

TS: Voluntary consensus means that the companies volunteered to meet a certain standard?

LL: Yes, that is exactly right.

TS: And you're checking to make sure that they did?

LL: No. The engineers got those standards created and disseminated, so my job was to manage a bunch of engineers from different companies, so they might be sent from Kobe Steel or U.S. Steel or whoever to get together to decide what the standards would be. I would help the committee chair move that work forward. It was getting a lot of people to work across their interests and collaborate toward getting this work done.

TS: Why the switch to history?

LL: At some point very early on in my work, I became, I'm not sure what the right word is, but dissatisfied. You go through life and spend time in college, and all you think about is what you're going to do, and somehow it should be this fabulous, awesome thing that you've finally sweated it out and achieved. I ended up being quite disappointed with the product, you know, sitting in the office, doing fairly rote things. It wasn't that I was bored. I just thought there would be something more interesting out there. I started going to school at night at Florida Atlantic University. I initially was taking Mark [H.] Rose's History of Technology class. I decided this was interesting, and it might be something to do. What I did was, I was commuting from Palm Beach County to Miami, which is a sixty-mile, one-way commute.

TS: To school?

LL: No, from home to work, every day, sixty miles, so 120 back and forth. What I decided to do, since I was already becoming disenchanted, was to quit my job and go to work as a low level administrator in Bill Glenn's [William E. Glenn Jr.'s] HDTV—High Definition Television—lab [Imaging Technology Center] at Florida Atlantic University. He is one of the nation's greats in HDTV, and this

- was a lab in their engineering school that had DARPA [Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency] grants and some other grants.
- TS: Engineering school at Florida Atlantic?
- LL: Yes. I worked there and went to school there at night.
- TS: I didn't realize they had an engineering school.
- LL: Yes, yes. [The College of Engineering and Computer Science] opened in [1965], but in the 1990s it grew really fast. They were able to get a lot of grants, and they attracted Bill Glenn [in 1989] and supported his lab. I went to work for them, and by the time I finished my degree—I finished in two and a half years going at night—and by the time I finished my degree [in 1995], I decided I would apply to PhD schools just like anyone else would, and we'd see what happened. I applied to the usual suspects in southern history.
- TS: A master's is as far as you could go at Florida Atlantic?
- LL: Yes. By that time I was already interested in urban history because Ray [Raymond A.] Mohl was there and Mark Rose was there. I got into Georgia Tech and was offered money at Georgia Tech, and Loyola [University] Chicago—I was offered a package there. Ultimately, I decided I wanted to study with Ron [Ronald H.] Baylor at Georgia Tech. The PhD at Tech was in History of Technology. The PhD has changed names [to History and Sociology of Technology and Science] to reflect its interdisciplinarity. So I also have a field in history of technology, though I don't teach or research in that area.
- TS: That was a natural for you from engineering to history of technology to Georgia Tech.
- LL: Right. So in 1995 I headed off to Georgia Tech.
- TS: That's where you spent the next six years, I guess.
- LL: Yes, I had to study for four qualifying fields, so I basically redid course work, not fully redoing my master's course work, but I just went ahead and did that, and then City Planning. Then it took me three years to do my dissertation. They funded me the whole six years, so I was able to continue my student life much longer (laughter).
- TS: What did you do your dissertation on?
- LL: I did my dissertation on housing segregation in early twentieth-century Atlanta, which is the basis . . .

- TS: The forerunner to your book [*The Culture of Property: Race, Class, and Housing Landscapes in Atlanta, 1880-1950* (Athens, University of Georgia Press, 2009)].
- LL: Yes. After I finished my dissertation and graduated and came to work here at Kennesaw, I ended up gutting the dissertation, so I think I threw out three chapters from the dissertation. They were poorly written, and I don't think they were the story I wanted to tell, so I redid those three chapters and then added an additional chapter. At the time the book went out to reviewers, it came back with a request for an additional chapter as well as changes to the other parts. My dissertation was unusual in the Georgia Tech program in that it was on an Urban Studies topic. Most of the graduates are straight History of Technology or History of Science or Sociology of Technology or Sociology of Science.
- TS: But you had the City Planning minor field?
- LL: Yes, they let me do that as a minor field instead of Sociology.
- TS: Also, it's kind of an extension, I guess, of Ron Bayor's book [*Race and the Shaping of Twentieth-Century Atlanta*], which, I think, came out for the Olympics in 1996 and was really about institutional racism in Atlanta.
- LL: Yes, and that's exactly why I went to study with him. I knew he was finishing that work. When I joined Georgia Tech, my idea originally was to do class segregation, but Ron really encouraged the racial framework, and so I switched to that and let that be the guiding lens.
- TS: But class is still a big part of it, isn't it?
- LL: Yes, you can see the class elements in *Culture of Property*.
- TS: You finished up in 2001, and Kennesaw just happened to have an opening at that time [to head the Public History Program].
- LL: Luckily enough.
- TS: Maybe I should ask next what attracted you to Kennesaw other than a job, but why did you want to come? I'm sure you had other offers; why did you want to come to Kennesaw?
- LL: I had one other offer. It wasn't like there was a crowd trying to hire the recently minted PhD. I had taught here as an adjunct in not the immediately preceding year, but maybe 1998-99. I'm not sure, but the year ends up on some of my documents here.
- TS: I think I remember that.

LL: I just taught the survey U.S., whatever, U.S. since 1890. I was terrible. I read my lectures. It was awful, and I got terrible reviews.

TS: Well, you have to start somewhere.

LL: Yes, you do. I remember that now when I look at other faculty.

TS: I remember J.B. Tate at one time saying that we should have returned our paychecks for the first year or two.

LL: Indeed, that's a good idea! That being said, I still know some students from back when I was an adjunct, so you still make relationships somehow. But I went back to Tech to finish my degree.

TS: You had obviously done a good enough job as an adjunct that we wanted you.

LL: You must not have read the teaching evaluation. I was hoping they would shred it.

TS: I think they were pretty good as I remember.

LL: Well, the students are very polite, as you know.

TS: Okay, go ahead, you go back and finish up . . .

LL: Yes, I finished up. The back story is that while I was at Tech, during the summers I would work for the National Park Services' Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record. There aren't a lot of historians of technology in the U.S., so luckily I always got hired in the summers.

TS: Especially those that have a bachelor's degree in engineering.

LL: Yes, yes, and that are female too because the Park Service does look at diversity issues. So every summer I would go off to some obscure place to document a historic engineering structure where you were documenting the structure but also the engineering process that took place within there. So I had preservation documentation experience. This job at Kennesaw opened up to coordinate the Public History program, and so I applied. I thought it was a long shot, that surely there would be other people on the job market who had solid academic experience in Public History. Then I furiously studied as if I were studying for a qualifying exam, guessing what your committee would ask. You were on the committee, right? David [B.] Parker chaired it.

TS: I think so. I'm pretty sure I was on the committee.

LL: Yes, so luckily enough I was hired. I worked the next four and a half or five years coordinating the program and taught the basic courses.

TS: But you also did some fabulous projects with students and got an award from the Board of Regents for one of them.

LL: Yes. I think that story, which I'll tell, illustrates what people can do at Kennesaw that makes us different from a lot of other institutions. When I came in, I had graduated from an R-I institution, a research-intensive institution, and very much was out of the mold of publish, publish, publish. Ron was that way. Doug Flamming was that way.

TS: They were "publish or perish" type people?

LL: Yes, yes, and encouraged me to think about that. Now, I think part of that is simply to keep the blinders on the students, so they don't get distracted to do other things.

TS: Are they discouraging you from coming to Kennesaw?

LL: No, not at all. They were encouraging, no matter what, but you're definitely shaped in the mold of you need to publish. Comments about people were always around publications, so, you know, if we were admiring a professor, it was like, "Oh, Tom has published this," or "Randy [Patton] published that."

TS: So even after you came to Kennesaw, they were still pushing you to publish?

LL: And that's how I entered Kennesaw for the first three years. I was going to coordinate this program, and then in my other time I need to be pushing publications out the door. But at that time is also when Joe Frank Harris Jr. [the son of the former governor of Georgia] up in Bartow County approached Kennesaw. I think he faxed [E.] Howard Shealy, the chair [of the Department of History & Philosophy] at the time, some information about the Summer Hill project. They were planning to renovate or rehabilitate the historically black school in Cartersville, which was no longer there, but they had built a replacement school.

TS: Right, but there was a community.

LL: Yes, the historically black community is still in that surrounding area, and much of the public housing is there. They wanted someone to document the community and develop a museum and an archives and things like that. Howard approached me about it and said that, "You are welcome to do this; you don't have to do it; but yes it does matter. Don't feel pressured; don't worry about who Joe Frank Harris Jr. is related to." I'm not from Georgia. I knew who Joe Frank Harris was, but I didn't feel any pressure, but it sort of stuck there in the back of my head, and

I just kept thinking, “Well, this could be a real interesting project if they let me do what I want to do.” So Randy [Randall L.] Patton agreed to go out to a meeting with me—he offered—he said, “I’ll go with you to the meeting.” Howard went with me to the meeting. I put together a proposal where I could work with the students to document the community, photographically—basically the way that the Historic American Engineering Record works. We would document every piece of property, we would gather oral histories, we would photograph, we’d do field notes like an anthropologist does, and then we’d use the students to develop the interpretive materials. The challenge of doing this is that it takes a lot longer. You’ve got to build this stuff into classes, and you’ve got to make sure the stuff is quality work, etc.

TS: And lots of work for you before the students get involved.

LL: Oh, yes. Then I wanted to study the outcomes, so I wanted to do a pretest and a posttest to see what the students would learn and gain out of this because that’s where I thought there were gaps in the public history field. I went and proposed this, and they accepted. They thought that was great, “Come on down.” We needed some money. They had some money to help cover costs, and so that’s what we did. When I tell this story of the project to people in other academic communities, they can’t believe it because I went to Howard and said, “I think I want to hold a class in the public housing community center. We’re going to all go up there, however far north.” And Howard is like, “Have a good time! Let me know if you need anything! Good luck! See you!”

TS: People elsewhere are surprised that we did this?

LL: Yes, yes, that I had the latitude to do that sort of thing.

TS: What are you, thirty something and an assistant professor?

LL: Yes. Howard felt sure that I would have no issue with tenure. Along the way I’m still working on those articles that came out.

TS: We can talk about that issue later on about how you measure public history for promotion and tenure decision, but right now Howard is saying, at that stage in Kennesaw’s history, no big deal.

LL: Yes. And it wasn’t. I got support the whole way. I got resources whenever I asked for them. It’s been that way since then. I have somehow enjoyed a very privileged existence. But part of it is built on the Summer Hill project. That was a multi-year project where the students benefited significantly; the community benefited significantly. The museum is still there; the people still use it; Bartow History Center still does stuff there.

TS: It was great for our students. I know Melissa Massey gets her name on some publications.

LL: Yes, and she co-curated the exhibit with me, and then we won the Regents prize for programs. It wasn't the teaching award; it was the . . .

TS: Scholarship of Teaching and Learning.

LL: Yes.

TS: That wasn't for an individual. It was for a program.

LL: It was for a program right.

TS: But you won it, basically.

LL: Yes, so the Summer Hill project was the program somehow.

TS: And that was 2006 that you won the award?

LL: Yes. So I went into the tenure decision with that award and other publications and that project [tenured and promoted to Associate Professor of History in 2006].

TS: That should have been enough, and it was.

LL: It was enough, luckily.

TS: You did the Public History program until [2006], and then you became Associate Coordinator of the American Studies Program. Why did you give up the public history program at that time?

LL: Catherine [M. Lewis] had joined us, and we asked Catherine to take it over. She had more obvious Public History background and a range of experience, and I had coordinated it five years. So I felt it was a good time to step away from it and do other things, and Catherine was willing to take it on.

TS: So you had done all that you wanted to do?

LL: Catherine has strengths that I don't have, and she was able to build out the program in different ways, so I wouldn't . . .

TS: But you immediately started getting involved with American Studies, didn't you?

LL: Correct. Yes, in the coordinating of Public History, you're having to delivery fairly traditional Public History classes, and what American Studies gave me was

some latitude to continue to do public scholarship, but not in ways that necessarily were traditional preservation or traditional curating.

TS: You were tired of teaching historic preservation and all that.

LL: Yes.

TS: Or museum studies or whatever.

LL: Right. But I liked doing the career development with the students when we did the internships and did resume development and things like that. I really enjoyed that sort of work.

TS: Where did the project come in where you were taking the students up to Rome and to Holly Springs and south Cobb County?

LL: That's the Taking Place project, and I wrote that grant I think on a whim.

TS: Was that under American Studies or Public History or both?

LL: I didn't put it under any program. It was me, so wherever I am it is. A lot of these ideas I come up with and I started fleshing them out on paper, and then I send them off the next day to whomever. We proposed that as a grant to the Georgia Humanities Council, again using students to document the stories of place and sort of how people narrate and understand place. It was based a lot on interviews and interpretative projects, and that was around 2007. Then I was going to be co-creating alongside the students, so it was a collaborative project. I was over it and directing it, but I was also building alongside them.

TS: Sure.

LL: About that time is when the South Rome Redevelopment Corporation had approached me about doing some work there. My part of the project was on doing a radio documentary series about South Rome, which is another historically black area, at least part of it is. Each of us, the students and I, all had kind of an organization or place that we were working on. We all developed very different projects. I think they were all radio documentaries. Right before that I had gone to Duke University's [program] that is colloquially known as "radio camp," but it's out of their Documentary Studies Department. I had gone to one of their workshops on radio documentaries. Then I taught the students how to do radio documentaries and created some really interesting stuff.

TS: I just remember that you could go online and click on the interviews or blurbs from the interviews.

LL: Yes, and the whole South Rome series is available online, so you can hear the whole thing. Part of the reason I wanted to experiment with that, and I'm talking just about the South Rome piece, my piece, is that I wanted to pull things together that were in people's own voices where I wasn't entering it as a traditional historian narrator; I wasn't telling the story. Of course, I'm interpreting it because I'm pulling the pieces together, but it allows a different kind of mix than a traditional piece of historical scholarship does. It made me think and do things in new ways, and it created new challenges, and that's why I end up doing a lot of these different projects is it makes me think in different ways and about people's experiences, how to represent them fairly, appropriately, in ways that move and engage other people. South Rome was one of my favorite projects. I thought the final set of pieces really captured the conflict in the area, both people's conflicting feelings about it—from the outside people think South Rome is a depressed area; you go inside the area, and you hear these glorious stories of community and commitment. Juxtaposing those two things was very interesting.

TS: They both can be true can't they?

LL: Absolutely, right. I think that people found it interesting—if they were outsiders, they found it interesting to hear the stories of community that they hadn't heard before, and if they were insiders, they could hear this very raw viewpoint of what people thought when they go over the bridge—that it's a scary area and to be feared.

TS: Okay, so they're surprised that people are saying those things or they knew them already?

LL: No, they get to hear it.

TS: They already knew it though?

LL: They knew it, yes.

TS: Wow, okay.

LL: But it challenged that narrative by putting the narratives of community out there, and having it played on the local radio station more than one time is constantly reminding people that these places aren't the images that circulate sometimes, and they're not.

TS: And so I think all along you're doing scholarship to meet all the standards that academics want, but you've also had a public desire to change things maybe as well.

LL: Right.

- TS: Do you think anything came out of this in Rome?
- LL: Did anything “change” (laughter)?
- TS: Well, I guess if you change people’s attitudes, that’s the first step towards changing things, isn’t it?
- LL: That and the Peoplestown project [south of Turner Field and central Atlanta] both attempt to reinterpret areas, areas that have themes and meanings circulating already in the public discourse. What I’m not doing or haven’t done yet is gauge the impact of my projects. In Summer Hill I gauged that. That was part of the importance of that project is I measured its impact on the students, not necessarily on the public audiences.
- TS: Oh, on how did students change their attitudes?
- LL: Actually, I measured content knowledge, and I did measure change in attitude actually.
- TS: Okay, because that reminds me that you actually did that on one of my [Oral History] classes when we did the NAACP project in Cobb County.
- LL: Yes. And, again, I see that as a gap in the scholarship is we do these projects with these particularly well-intended meanings—I’m not sure that’s the right phrase—but we don’t actually gauge what that change is. And it doesn’t have to be substantial or world changing, but, for example, the one thing in Summer Hill, because we were constantly in public housing, and I was forcing the students to observe and look at what’s going on and all these things, not with any predetermined outcome, but their field notes indicated that, there they were, in public housing, wandering back in the courtyards and talking to people . . .
- TS: Where they’d never been before.
- LL: Right. They talked about their preconceived notions of what public housing was like and what the people were like, and it did change their attitudes toward this, and they increased their content knowledge of African American history.
- TS: I remember when I did the project with the NAACP, one of the students in there, who by anybody’s definition was a conservative student, came up to me at the end and said, “You know, my father is a member of the Klan, and my grandfather is a member of the Klan,” and I was thinking, “Boy, I bet in your family, you’re a bleeding heart liberal.” So it’s all a matter of whom you’re comparing somebody to.
- LL: Right, and those are anecdotes that we don’t end up capturing if we enter these projects with very structured approaches. We can gauge the results, and we can

- gauge it long-term too. In Summer Hill part of what I did was to bring the students back in six and twelve months later, and we sat around in focus groups, and we talked about these things again. That serves two purposes. You're gathering what stayed with the student and how it stayed with them, but it's also reinforcing those lessons again by putting people in conversation with each other to revisit these experiences.
- TS: I guess you know I've never been happy with the fact that you gave up the Public History program, but you went on to American Studies and did some great things there. Had you completed the book before you got involved with the Peoplestown project?
- LL: Yes. In fact, Peoplestown came right after I sent the manuscript off, so by the time I finished the *Culture of Property* manuscript, I knew that I probably wanted to study how people respond to inequality [*Culture of Property*] was how inequality is created across space. So then I wanted to see people's resistance to inequality, particularly in the 1960s and 1970s, when I knew people were organizing around tenant issues and welfare issues and things like that. I started doing work in that area, doing traditional manuscript research and things like that. At the time—this may be more religious info than you want to hear, but at the time I was an Episcopalian, and both my family is Episcopalian and [my husband] Ben [Hall's] family is Episcopalian.
- TS: But you're not Episcopalian any more?
- LL: I am not Episcopalian any more; we can talk about that if you want.
- TS: Okay, if you want to. At the time you were, and Father Austin M. Ford was Episcopalian.
- LL: Yes, but he's not in the picture yet. So my father-in-law, Ben's family, are like committed Episcopalians, not Christmas and Easter Episcopalians like my family is. We just go for the parties! He was a member of All Saints' Church [West Peachtree Street, Atlanta] and was a board member, I think, at Emmaus House in the Peoplestown neighborhood.
- TS: Ben was?
- LL: No, Ben's father, Richard Hall, was, I think, a board member at Emmaus House [at the corner of Hank Aaron Drive and Haygood avenues in Peoplestown], but somehow through his All Saints' membership he was [involved with] Emmaus House. So Emmaus House wanted an oral history project, and that's how he comes to ask me, "Are you interested in doing this oral history project?"
- TS: And why not?

- LL: So I already knew of Emmaus House and Father Ford's work because I'd been looking at the tenant movement and other things, so I said, "I'd love to talk to them about this." Father Ford retired about two decades ago. I went down and met with Reverend [E.] Claiborne Jones [Director/Vicar of Emmaus House]. I talked to her about it, and they had some archival materials and wanted to do an oral history project. They were thinking about doing this in a way that helps them gauge their impact on the community and their larger story.
- TS: That's their purpose of the oral history project?
- LL: Yes, they wanted to tell their story. They didn't want it as a quantitative exercise. They needed ways to tell their story and demonstrate their value.
- TS: But that's two different things, or maybe I'm confused in what you're saying. Is their goal to tell the world about what they're doing or is their goal to measure what they've done?
- LL: It's still both. It's two different things but it's both, in part because they've always been outreach-oriented. They've never really gauged their impact, so by gathering narratives they can tell that story in some way even though they don't have quantities data. They haven't been measuring educational change or anything.
- TS: Now Emmaus House is where Father Ford and others live and they're in the community, and is it kind of like a Hull House in Chicago?
- LL: Well, sort of. In 1967 the Episcopal Diocese [of Atlanta] had gone through a number of things like Lovett School not letting in Martin Luther King III. So they had some image issues to work out.
- TS: I guess so.
- LL: Yes! And we have the Summerhill riot in 1966 [in Atlanta in the community neighboring Peoplestown] and we have all sorts of other urban kind of issues going on. So the bishop of the Episcopal diocese knew that Father Austin Ford, who was over St. Bartholomew's in Buckhead at the time, was interested in civil rights issues. So they asked him if he would be interested in opening a mission of some sort in the inner city. Father Ford agreed to do that as long as he didn't have a board to deal with and to answer to. In 1967 he goes down to Peoplestown. They acquire a piece of property, which is two buildings on a corner lot. Sister Marie who is Mimi Bodell joins from a convent.
- TS: So she doesn't stay Sister Marie?
- LL: No, at some point, which is probably in the narrative [oral history with Mimi (Sister Marie) Bodell, 25 May 2011, Peoplestown Project website], she changes

- her name. She is still part of a religious order, but she does alter her name. I'm not sure I have that full story down. They open this . . .
- TS: So Catholics and Episcopalians working together. And there are some Jews in there too.
- LL: Yes. There's all sort of people, so it's not limited to a particular denomination, even though it's a mission of the Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta. It's not even a chapel yet. Their idea is to become a neighbor in the community and show hospitality. But it's not like Hull House in that they're not necessarily trying to get the neighboring community to develop educational skills just to enter a traditional middle class white existence or anything like that. They don't at that point know what kinds of programs they even want to introduce. Depending on whose narrative you listen to, it does seem like one of the over-riding philosophies is to help facilitate the realization of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. So Father Ford, then and today, contends that one of his major interests was integrating schools, and that becomes a major issue. Emmaus House literally enters the busing program, manages that.
- TS: To me, that's one of the really under told stories of the Civil Rights Movement is just exactly how did these changes get implemented on the local level.
- LL: Right, but don't tell this story before I do (laughter)!
- TS: Oh, sorry! You go ahead.
- LL: No, no, I mean like don't publish the story because that is part of my current project in telling the story of anti-poverty movements is talking about these techniques and strategies and the implementation of these things and who is involved because it's a very eclectic group of people that is involved. So Emmaus House starts as a religious project, but it's only through the demand of residents really that the chapel even opens. There was a desire for somebody to be baptized and all sorts of things, and eventually they opened the chapel.
- TS: They're not there to proselytize.
- LL: No, in fact, they were very keenly aware of not competing with the area churches. They had a different goal in mind originally. Still it's a fairly small congregation. You can go down and worship with them.
- TS: So they're trying to create the new heavens and the new earth.
- LL: Yes [laughs]. So I got involved in that.
- TS: Father Ford has died since then, hasn't he?

- LL: No, he's still alive. He's blind now. He's slowed down a lot, but . . .
- TS: And he still lives down there?
- LL: He lives in Grant Park in a very nice house overlooking that space. I think he got an award from the city last year or maybe the year before, so he still is occasionally showing up for things. There was an Emmaus House reunion in the last year or two ago, and he went to that.
- TS: That was still at a time when blockbusting was a problem, wasn't it, in Atlanta?
- LL: Yes, and a lot of people who came to Emmaus House to work there were conscientious objectors from the Vietnam War. They were coming from all different religious backgrounds. And, in fact, if you read one of the other pieces, one of the guys is of Jewish descent and wanted time for his religious observances.
- TS: That was part of the Jewish community at one time down there?
- LL: Yes, there were strands of it.
- TS: The Jewish community down where the Atlanta Fulton County stadium would be later on?
- LL: Right, that's Summerhill, so it depends on how you define the neighborhoods so Summerhill is the area that is by Turner Field and the old Fulton County stadium, and the dividing line is around Ormond Street. Peoplestown is just south of there. I think Larry Keating [professor emeritus at Georgia Tech in City and Regional Planning], when he was doing his books on Atlanta [such as *Atlanta: Race, Class and Urban Expansion* (Temple University Press, 2001)] and running some of the numbers—he was seeing the Jewish influence more in that Summerhill area. When I looked at city directories, most of that was toward Summerhill because there was a temple down there. There were some strands in Peoplestown, but even in the early twentieth-century, a lot of Peoplestown wasn't even developed.
- TS: There was a big fire in 1917. Did it affect that area?
- LL: No, it didn't go that far south. From my understanding, that's really Old Fourth Ward, Auburn Avenue, on up.
- TS: Okay, so you start doing these interviews, and the ones I was looking at were from 2011.
- LL: Yes. I did interviews over a couple of years and went through archival materials and tried to get them sort of valuing them, saying, "This is stuff that you probably want to keep. This stuff is duplicate, and you don't necessarily need this." Then I

- tried to work out a relationship with the Auburn Avenue Research Library, which is part of the [City of] Atlanta System, for them to be archived there.
- TS: Sure, that's great.
- LL: Auburn Avenue is very interested in that. They will ultimately be the holder of the Peoplestown collection, my oral history collection. I'm not sure the diocese has agreed to deposit the papers there. It's not that they don't want the papers preserved. I think they may feel that they are better held in the diocesan archives.
- TS: The Episcopal diocesan archives?
- LL: Yes.
- TS: I didn't even know they had one; where is it?
- LL: Well, it's not a freestanding. Most dioceses and whatever the equivalent would be in the Catholic Church have an archive of some sort.
- TS: The Catholic Archdiocese of Atlanta has had an Office of Archives and Records since 1992.
- LL: Episcopal archives are usually in the area cathedral—in Atlanta's case the Cathedral of St. Philip
- TS: Do they have an archivist?
- LL: I don't think so.
- TS: Okay, so it might be better off in Auburn Avenue.
- LL: And I want them in Auburn Avenue because of community access issues.
- TS: Sure. That's a great facility down there.
- LL: It is a great facility. I really like Kerrie Cotten Williams [Archivist, Manager of Archives Division], and she has been doing great things.
- TS: Where are you going with the Peoplestown project?
- LL: It was a recovery project to some degree, so gathering the oral histories—anti-poverty movements and poor people's movements in general aren't well documented, so I wanted to gather the stories of the people from within the neighborhoods and the other activists. I also felt that Emmaus House was not unusual as a social service agency, but I do think it's unusually successful as a group of often middle class white people or elite whites who are able to sustain

anti-poverty movements over time. Almost all of them fail or they fold within a year or two. Welfare rights folds, all of these things, but Emmaus House was able to sustain a lot of movements over time and incubate a number of different movements in different ways. Father Ford is not just focused on creating direct action campaigns. He also helped birth the Georgia Poverty Rights Organization, which is a lobbying organization that provides technical assistance and other things. So they are quite clever in they're creating these different approaches to solving the same problem that can play off of each other. The lobbying organization is working with the welfare rights organization, both of which he helped birth. One is doing on the Capitol steps direct action, while the other guys are going in with their legislative proposals, which, you know, "Consider adding this to whatever." All of this is created from or facilitated by the same place.

TS: Are these white middle class folks that are doing this or are they getting people in the community to do it?

LL: It depends on which organization you're looking at. Georgia Poverty Rights Organization is primarily led by white elite and middle class people, some of whom are Episcopalian, some of whom aren't. (But there are a lot of poor people who support and work on behalf of GPRO.)

TS: Are they doing it out of religious motivation?

LL: I don't really delve into what their motivation is.

TS: Guilt stricken?

LL: Not at all, but I am concerned about their strategies and tactics. Most of them are committed rights workers. They're just doing it in different ways. Frances [F.] Pauley and Muriel [M.] Lokey and those guys are longtime activists and workers, and they're marshaling their forces at Atlanta Legal Aid [Society] and elsewhere.

TS: So they're working the system.

LL: They are working the system, but they also rely on a lot of members in the community too. Georgia Poverty Rights Organization, even though it's a lobbying organization that would go meet with legislators, they're marshaling forces at the grassroots level. Those guys too participate in the lobbying campaigns and designing them, but a lot of what sustains the movement are the white middle class people who can take time off work or are stay-at-home moms or people who volunteer for much of that. It's a different time.

TS: Or Sister Marie.

LL: Yes. All of this is contingent, which is what we study. It's a different era, and this current era wouldn't necessarily be able to sustain that work.

- TS: I thought one of the most moving things in those oral histories was Sister Marie when the kids drowned down in the Gulf Coast or somewhere, and I guess the father had already had a vision where he had seen the kids.
- LL: Yes, that's a story that has stayed with a lot of the Emmaus House people.
- TS: So you're going to get a book out of your work on anti-poverty groups eventually, do you think?
- LL: Eventually, yes. I'm about 60 percent of the way through the manuscript for the book, and it'll be on anti-poverty movements in Atlanta. It'll be another case study book.
- TS: Basically, you're arguing that they were effective?
- LL: That's not what I am arguing. Emmaus House is one part of that story. It's structured around place-space movements, like the Vine City movement where there is hyper-concentrated poverty, and people were able to organize around issues that affected that community. That's a place-space; that's how I categorize that. Then there are some movements where place mattered in that people were hyper-segregated there, but they are arguing for other issues. In East Lake, for example, in a public housing complex, it so happens, of course, that there are a lot of people on welfare there. So that facilitates the organizing of another welfare rights chapter. Emmaus House is another non-place-space. They're not just targeting Peoplestown. Emmaus House is concerned about poverty across the central city; then, of course, busing and these other issues. I look at that as a paradigm. There are some typologies within the book. Ultimately, it is looking at learning and knowledge transfer within the movements, how the movements are working with each other or not working with each other over space and time and how they network nationally as well. That's what it will be examining. I do end up assessing the movements' success or lack of success, but that's not the driving argument. I mean, we know they failed, right, but in many ways they are successful. Georgia Poverty Rights Organization, which is another group that I look at, is not place-spaced at all. It achieves a tremendous amount. It doesn't achieve everything it wants to, but you can quantify and talk about in qualitative terms what they gained, and you can talk about why they gained that when other groups didn't. There won't be an overall—this is successful this way—like the Political Science people might write or Public Policy people might write.
- TS: How much of your time do you spend on scholarship?
- LL: That's changed over time.
- TS: Talk about that then.

- LL: It depends on whether you're talking about my public work as scholarship or not.
- TS: Well, of course, sometimes these are artificial boundaries, what's scholarship and what's service.
- LL: They are, yes, so the Peoplestown project, the interviews you read and the things like that, in that case I end up classifying that as service because it hasn't resulted in a final, discreet product that I've had reviewed. Summer Hill and Taking Place I had reviewed by external people.
- TS: I understand.
- LL: I was implementing a process that I was also trying to build at Kennesaw. Peoplestown I did as a service to people that I was working with. Then a tradeoff with that is I also get to integrate that into my research project, which is a fairly traditional research project. Overall, if we were to count all of that sort of work as research and creative activity, I would say that I spend 20 percent of my time, sometimes more than others. Sometimes I'll go months without being able to pick up my manuscript.
- TS: Okay. You won the Distinguished Service Award in 2011, and that was in large part for Peoplestown project, wasn't it?
- LL: Well . . .
- TS: As well as your trouble-making on campus.
- LL: It's hard to tell what was in the minds of the awards committee. I made the case based on Peoplestown -- my community-based work, not coordinating public history work -- as well as my role in creating administrative review process
- TS: Right, [your coordination of the public history program] was in the past by that time.
- LL: Yes. I used Peoplestown project as an illustration of [my community engagement work], I think. Then the other 50 percent, I was making my case on was helping to build the administrative review process we have here on campus—my role in creating what we call faculty and staff evaluation of administrators. We call it administrative review because it's the way that we get our input into their performance process, and that was a very long, drawn out, difficult process to get done. We achieved it when a lot of people thought we wouldn't achieve it.
- TS: You've been involved with AAUP [American Association of University Professors]. Are you still involved with that?

- LL: I am, and in fact administrative review came out of AAUP. My colleague Tim [Timothy K.] Hedeem and I tried to revive the chapter. I don't know when it was—a few years ago. There had been a Kennesaw chapter . . .
- TS: It's been revived a number of times.
- LL: Yes, right.
- TS: I revived it once back about 1980 or somewhere in there.
- LL: Yes, I think this time they'd even cancelled our chapter license, whatever you have that says you can officially exist. I think we had officially been made defunct. I don't even know why we started it, but we did and were able to build membership and everything. Each year we would create priorities. Some years there are more priorities than others. Sometimes we can't figure out what to do.
- TS: Usually the issues create themselves.
- LL: Right, and at this particular point in time, I think Tim was president or maybe Tom Keene was president, and we decided that administrative reviews should be a priority. There were some very vocal members that thought we should have faculty voice in administrators' reviews. Somebody volunteered to do this, and they needed help, so I said, "Oh, I'll help, whatever, I don't care." Then that person got taken away to do something else, another role on campus, and so I was left with building this process, a process that I'm committed to now because I sweated and bled a lot over it, but I didn't really care that much about it at the time, but I felt that I could get it done.
- TS: You put all those hours into it anyway?
- LL: Yes, I felt that I had the talent set to get it done, I guess—or patience.
- TS: Okay, so it got done, and then the next thing I guess is to measure to see whether it's made any difference.
- LL: Oh, yes, and I can tell you many cases where it's made a difference.
- TS: Well, good, great! On projects like Peoplestown do you have students involved with it at all?
- LL: Summer Hill and Taking Place were very much designed and built around students. Peoplestown was not. It wasn't built to involve students. It really was built in service of Peoplestown itself, but also my scholarly project. Now, that being said, I integrated students along the way, just not in the high numbers that Summer Hill had. Students were involved in some transcription projects. We test-drove a couple of interpretive projects that didn't end up panning out. Then

graduate student Wende Ballew was part of a grant proposal I did with American Studies Association that was involving delivering a summer program for middle school students. She brought the theater element to the summer program, exploring place through theatrical devices. Then we also borrowed Jennifer Dail and Linda Stewart from the English Department to do some digital narrative work and digital storytelling. Emmaus House does that summer arts program each year, but at this point we built that interdisciplinary study of place into the project. That was an adventure. I'd never taught middle school students before, and you shouldn't go in without training wheels, clearly.

TS: I think that's probably the hardest age to teach.

LL: Wow. It was a challenge. So I'm back at the university and will never teach anyone under the age of eighteen again [laughs]!

TS: I understand that.

LL: It was really challenging. You can imagine, kids don't want to be in a school-like setting in the summer, and that's what we were giving them was a school-like setting, even though they had creative outlets.

TS: They weren't excited about that.

LL: They wanted to play and do their own thing. Working on the computers was cool but . . .

TS: Well, I googled your name yesterday and "Rate My Professor" popped up.

LL: I never read that.

TS: I've never looked at it for myself, but it popped up, so I said, "Well, let me see what they're saying about LeeAnn." They were great! Basically, what they all said is "she is tough as all get out." But they liked you. Somebody said you were "the bomb," and I don't know what that means exactly, but since he rated everything very highly, I take it to be a positive!

LL: I say that in class, so I'm sure that they were reflecting my language

TS: I was surprised that you still teach a lot of survey classes, 2112 and what-have-you.

LL: Yes and I just started teaching American Studies 1102, which is a Gen Ed [General Education] class. I'll teach 2112 this summer.

TS: Obviously, at this stage of your career, you've done it because you've wanted to.

- LL: History 2112 I teach only in the summers, and I teach it because it'll make. I was tired of having my classes cut for under-enrollment. But it's a joy when you don't have to teach it all the time. It's an interesting class to teach. I had gotten stuck last year or the year before [with a classroom I didn't like]. I annoy our assistant chair because I always want a particular kind of classroom and the perfect space to teach in. I had asked [David] Parker to switch me to a class with whiteboards on the side [because] I walk around and all this stuff, so he e-mails back and says, "This is the last classroom available on campus; you have to take it!" It was in the Burruss Building, for a ninety-person class and it's a 200-person tiered auditorium, but it's got the whiteboards that I want. I can set up and record the class. It's just this abysmal space; it's dark; it's not their huge auditorium; it's one of the side ones.
- TS: Oh, I know what you're talking about where it's tiered, but they've got the big tables and desks.
- LL: Right, but still you can't see the people in the back; it's really dark and crummy. So it's summer, right, who would be in a class, a U.S. history class?
- TS: How many people did you have in there?
- LL: It was enrolled at ninety. So the weather had finally gotten to be glorious. It was 80 degrees. It was lovely. I'm walking across campus, and I'm thinking, "Man, no one's going to be to class." I walk in there, and there are fifty students waiting for three hours of LeeAnn lecturing on U.S. history. I was like, "Really, you guys, don't have anything better to do on a beautiful Friday?"
- TS: They wanted to hear what you had to say.
- LL: I guess so. And I record the classes and put them up online, so they can see and hear them there. I don't know why they showed up, but they did.
- TS: I guess they want to be there.
- LL: I guess they do. Yes.
- TS: Which is a good thing.
- LL: But it makes you laugh. So they're a joy.
- TS: What's your philosophy of teaching?
- LL: You know, I have some very nice narrative written on this that I'm sure I include in every annual review and never look at it again.

- TS: Well, I was just looking at the kind of classes that you've taught, Housing and Homelessness in American Culture, American Cultural Movements . . .
- LL: Oh, yes, I can tell you, and I'm sure I included this in my tenure and promotion narrative when that kind of thing really matters, but one of the ways that I approach U.S. History and some other classes is through studying the common or average person's experience, which troubles the traditional national narrative to some degree. Part of the reason I started doing that was to try to get the students to see themselves as historical actors in some way. If you tell the story of the working class white South, which is what a lot of our student body is, and around the big events that shape their lives, you get a different history narrative than you might out of the Tindall text [George B. Tindall and David E. Shi, *A Narrative History*] or some other kind of text. That is one way that I think about material. It's not a counter-narrative, but it complicates the national and political and historical narrative. Then you can see my choice of classes to teach, the ones that I've shaped myself that it's sort of very much around issues . . .
- TS: Twentieth-Century City and so on.
- LL: Yes, issues of or about underserved communities, or at least communities whose histories are under-told.
- TS: Well, in the *Culture of Property* you've got kind of an impassioned conclusion about teaching and what we don't teach in the classroom.
- LL: Yes, and that's part of why I do what I do because engineering didn't fill that void. You should take your skill set and use it for something good, and sometimes that doesn't allow you to do what you love. I really liked work for the Historical American Engineering Record and doing preservation on engineering structures. That was an absolute blast. It was really challenging; you met a lot of interesting people everywhere; and you were still puzzling out things. But it's more important work to tell the urban story and inequality story because it could inform choices or it could encourage critical thinking among students. Part of what you're doing in the classroom is creating change agents, and it doesn't have to be around a particular political point of view, and it shouldn't be. But you have to enable students to act, and that's why in our case in the U.S. system is encouraging democratic values—little “D” democratic—and a sense of political efficacy. “Here is how all these other people made change when they didn't think they could make change.” Now let's talk about how you can make change.
- TS: So you want people to at least admit they might have a privileged existence?
- LL: Well, they need to understand how it works too, yes, to shed that privileged existence. But even for many of our students—yes, they have a privileged existence but . . .

- TS: Relatively speaking?
- LL: Yes, relatively speaking. A lot of them are active participants in civic life.
- TS: Yes, so you really want them to understand how things really work. I was just thinking with regard to your book, as far back as I can remember, people were saying, “We want to move to a certain place, so our kids will have better schools and all kinds of advantages and won’t get shot when they walk down the street.”
- LL: Right, that’s the way I lived. I moved all my life, but we always moved to the best school district. I was just a B student, and yet I’ve achieved a lot and am very successful, and part of that is by always being in this privileged space.
- TS: So people always knew that they were trying to move into the most privileged space that they could get into, but I guess Matthew D. Lassiter [*The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South* (Princeton University Press, 2007)] argues this too doesn’t he, that once they get to those privileged spaces, they somehow think they did it all by themselves.
- LL: Yes. It’s very hard to teach structural privilege.
- TS: I guess, what does he call it, naïve colored blindedness?
- LL: Yes.
- TS: That’s basically what you found too, isn’t it? Although, you’re only doing up to 1950 so I guess . . .
- LL: In that case, yes, I guess I’m talking about how those ideas circulate. Lassiter is able to get at what individuals really think in some of his work, and I’m talking about how the structural segregation is built both through the FHA, how its even circulating amongst the guys who go out in the field.
- TS: *Crabgrass Frontier* [by Kenneth T. Jackson (Oxford University Press, 1987)] has a lot about [racism and redlining in] the FHA and whatever the one before . . .
- LL: Yes, he was the real groundbreaking guy on HOLC [Home Owners’ Loan Corporation].
- TS: So you don’t have any great problem with Jackson’s or Lassiter’s interpretations?
- LL: No, not at all, I mean, *Culture of Property* builds on those interpretations. Jackson did all of the groundbreaking work on HOLC and FHA, and those of us who come after him have really just nuanced it. I used a different set of materials than he did, and part of what I do is show how it is implemented in those years amongst the industry itself.

- TS: I guess maybe a good question is how different is Atlanta from everybody else in America?
- LL: In so many ways Atlanta reflects what's going on in the rest of the world, and one of the things that Bayor brings out is that Westside, I can't remember the exact name of the organization, but how the mayor put into place this group that the white residents and black political leaders were supposed to come together to decide a rational way for whites and blacks to move into particular areas because there was clearly much less space for blacks to move into, both middle class and working class blacks. There were things like that where we were unusual in the structures that we put into place to address these things. If you read the civil rights hearings around these things, you can, I think, make two different interpretations of blacks' views on what's going on. To some degree they're buying into this, but they also are protesting along the way. I do think we're unusual in some regard, but all of the cities, the mayor and the governors are at their southern governors' meetings, talking and exchanging ideas about how to deal with the race issue. Knowledge transfer from city to city is the same, and thus in many ways we behave the same way. But we don't riot at the same level; the Summerhill riot—it doesn't compare with Newark or Detroit.
- TS: No, no. I guess the white narrative is we had fewer riots because we had progressive government in Atlanta—Ivan Allen and Herbert Jenkins and all that.
- LL: Yes, and to some degree those guys want to be progressive. It's how they do it.
- TS: But Matthew Lassiter is very eye-opening about just how little progress there was in Atlanta.
- LL: Yes, and he fleshed out the time period a lot more to see the class impact. We often think it's just white/black, but Lassiter is talking about the certain well-off whites' abilities. They can take their kids out of public schools and go to Lovett and Pace and all these places, and working class and middle class white families are left to deal with transitioning public schools
- TS: Let's get back to Kennesaw a little bit. What keeps you at Kennesaw?
- LL: I think like a lot of people for a while you think you're going to leave, right, because that's what you do. To move up you think you're going to move to another university.
- TS: Move up meaning to a research university?
- LL: Well, up, I think early on you're taught somehow or you learn that the only way you're going to go up even in salary significantly is to move or at least get other offers so that Kennesaw will match your salary. I did apply and interviewed for a

couple of jobs, but part of the reason I'm not that interested in leaving Kennesaw any more is because I've come to recognize the latitude that I have here in my project work, and I am well paid for a historian compared to our colleagues, and I also get anything I ask for. I am well-resourced, and I have the ability to make change on campus. You just have the latitude to do anything, create new programs . . .

TS: So you don't think Kennesaw has changed that much in the time you've been here in terms of its overall philosophy or willingness to let you do what you want to do?

LL: That's a complex question. Kennesaw has changed a lot since I've been here in many ways. But I have always had support to do nontraditional work, to devote my time to teaching or devote my time to service or devote my time to research, and I've been highly resourced no matter which I decided to focus on. I joke about this with one of my colleagues that I don't know if I'm the exception or if people don't know how to work the system, but Kennesaw has always been very supportive of my work. I don't see the issues other people complain about.

TS: I think it's the latter that they don't know how to work the system.

LL: Yes, and perhaps it's a reflection of American culture: people complain [about] their place of work. So they see it as frustrating or whatever, whereas—you know, even my membership in AAUP and things suggest that I always think that things can change—the system is moveable and alterable. You just have to know how to go about it. Part of that is [establishing] relationships.

TS: Well, both President Siegel and President Papp have at least verbally been committed to community engagement. Do you not agree?

LL: I think they're committed to community engagement. I don't think the current administration necessarily understands that community engagement has taken on a particular meaning in higher education.

TS: You've been involved on our campus in all that committee work on community engagement. So why don't you talk about it?

LL: I'm trying to figure out where to start. Obviously, I work with external communities, and I think that work is important. There are a lot of people across campus who have been doing that kind of work for a long time. You've done it, I've done it, people in the arts do it, and people in the sciences do it. But what became difficult years ago was trying to meet all of the performance pressures. Scholarship expectations changed. Teaching expectations changed. So how do you sustain that kind of productive work with the external communities while these other pressures are at least in perception increasing?

I started working through Sarah [R.] Robbins' prompting with *Imagining America: Scholars and Artists in Public Life*, which is a group that is focused on arts and humanities and public scholarship. Kennesaw joined that group in 2008 back when Lynn [Lendley C.] Black was our provost. What that did for me was give me a better sense of how community engagement has taken shape nationwide in higher education. The organization also advocates for structured community engagement. It originally was a lot of R-I's [Research I universities, as formerly rated in the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education], so it was a lot of that group trying to create structures that rewarded public scholarship and facilitated public scholarship. So we joined that group, and that gave me the language and understanding to bring back to campus.

Ivan Pulinkala, who is currently chair of [the Department of] Dance, was also KSU's representative to that organization. We were co-representatives, but then Ivan stepped down because he needed to chair Dance. He kind of finished building that department and then chaired it and then later became an interim dean, so I'm the representative now. Out of that I was offered money to hold a professional development workshop on public scholarship with the idea to work with faculty to [help them] better understand how to take their community engagement work and create scholarship out of it. Now that scholarship may not necessarily be peer reviewed publications. It may be reports or it might be creative work or whatever. So I did that and worked with a number of offices on campus. I think that's 2009, and that was the Going Public Professional Development Workshop primarily sponsored by CETL but also the provost, Charlie Amlaner's office of research [Charles Amlaner Jr., Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate College], and some other places.

From that we built a core faculty who are committed to doing public scholarship and are quite knowledgeable about it. They had the language; they understood the approaches; and from there, and I won't get the time line right but it's on the website, Ivan Pulinkala approached me that he thought the window of opportunity was right to propose that Kennesaw develop a campus-wide community engagement initiative that would include us pursuing the Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement—so Carnegie who classified R-Is and R-IIs back when [those classifications] existed. Then they also have this elective community engagement classification. We pulled in Sabine [H.] Smith [professor of German] who was part of Going Public, and we approached Jorge Perez [professor of Information Systems and former faculty executive assistant to the president], and we developed this larger strategy for infusing community engagement across campus. Our plan of attack was to get seats on the strategic planning committee, somehow organize to pursue the Carnegie classification, and I may be forgetting a third element. But we just met as this small cadre of people. This stuff was going forward, but it wasn't going gangbusters or anything until the provost search fell apart and the topic of academic freedom and all these things came up. We were getting really hammered by the local community for potentially hiring a Marxist or whatever. I don't even remember what the threat was at this point.

TS: Close enough.

LL: Yes, so because we had organized already, we were prepared to jump on that bandwagon, and that's exactly what we did. So Ivan and I and perhaps Jorge again went to the president and said, "This is the kind of thing we've been talking about; we need to have better relations with the community so they understand what we do in higher education; we have relationships to build on to help ease these issues, and so on." That's at the point that we were able to persuade the president to adopt Engage KSU as it came to be known. Then we formed a leadership crew where people were supposed to commit for two years of service. I just finished my two years of service on that. Then we were able to persuade the president or whomever to hire a person to handle community engagement on campus.

TS: Which is almost brand new for us now, I guess.

LL: Yes, we are ending our first year with a director of Community Engagement and a Community Engagement office, who I believe is applying to the elective Carnegie classification for community engagement.

TS: Great. Well, you're kind of at mid-career at this stage, I guess. Let me just ask you what you're proudest of that you've done while you've been at Kennesaw so far, and then maybe what direction do you want to go in for the rest of your career or the next ten years?

LL: Yes, I'm a total planner, right? I have five-year plans!

TS: Well, what are you proudest of? Let's just make it simple.

LL: Boy, that's really hard, Tom. You know, each of the three discreet projects I've done with external community—those are rewarding in very different way. When I look back right now, those three projects and the book, *Culture of Property*—that stand out as the things—keeping in mind that the three projects also encapsulate teaching and relationships with the students. AAUP is also extremely important to me, but it's not something that I can say I'm necessarily proud of. It exists; it's there; it does what we intended it to do. But I think the three projects and the book—the three projects have had a lasting impact that I can see; the book is starting to have an impact that I see. And you know how books have impacts. I see other people using it that are informed by it; students use it in classes; and I heard about that; they tell me that. So you see some sort of value. So those four things, and I've been working here thirteen years, so it's a pretty good ratio—something to be proud of every few years.

TS: Absolutely! So your immediate goal is to get that second book out?

LL: Yes, my immediate goal is to get the second book out. Writing *Culture of Property* was the hardest thing I've ever done, but it was also extremely rewarding. So this is the same thing, and you create relationships along the way. In gathering the stories that go into it and gathering the archival materials, I've created long-lasting relationships with some of the participants in these movements and organizations, and you learn from them. Then, I think, my next project on top of that would be to somehow figure out how to tell that story back to the public. It's already had a public component in that it has created archival materials and the oral history collection. But how do I narrate that story in a broader way and what would that look like?

TS: So you want your next book to be more for the public as opposed to the scholarly community?

LL: No, it'll be a scholarly book.

TS: But you want it to be both.

LL: Yes, the book will be like *Culture of Property*. It will go to a university press, assuming it is accepted. It will have the same kind of target audience, but to take those same concepts and materials and then, whether it's through an exhibit or some other things, move it back into the public sphere. And then I have other book topics. I'll probably move into Fair Housing next.

TS: What have we not talked about that you think should be in this interview?

LL: I think you've hit on everything.

TS: Well, great. Thank you very much.

LL: Thanks for having me.

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