KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH PETER EDWARD (ED) BOSTICK

CONDUCTED BY THOMAS A. SCOTT AND DEDE YOW

EDITED BY JAN HEIDRICH-RICE AND THOMAS A. SCOTT

INDEXED BY THOMAS A. SCOTT

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Location: CIE/CETL House at Kennesaw State University

TS: Ed, let's just start for the record with where you were born and when you were born and a little bit about your educational background.

EB: I was born in 1939, so that makes me 66 as we speak. I was born in Chattanooga, and shortly after I was born my mother, father, and I moved to Nashville, Tennessee. My father was a Remington Rand salesman—office equipment. My folks bought a small farm outside of Nashville. On the day that my sister was born in 1944, my father died.

TS: The day.

EB: The very day. So my sister never knew her father, and I vaguely remember him.

TS: What was your father's name?

EB: Same as mine, Peter Edward.

TS: So you're a junior.

EB: I'm a third.

TS: A third?

EB: Yes.

TS: What about your sister; what's her name?

EB: Margaret Kate. Kay. She lives in McLean, Virginia. She's married to a foreign service officer, retired.

TS: What's her last name?

EB: Allan. Kay Allan. So we moved to Birmingham with my mother's three unmarried sisters and mother. I grew up in a home of six women and me, which I tell people is a big influence in my life because I was constantly striving for male images to emulate: father figures. I grew up as a Catholic, going to Catholic school. So, for example, the priests were always very strong influences on me. I was always looking for "Father Somebody." And coaches—I had a high school football coach who was probably one of the strongest influences on me.

TS: One of the things we're really interested in is mentors. What was your mother's name, by the way?

EB: My mother's name was Lillian, maiden name Gribbon.

TS: What was the name of the coach?

EB: Tom Banks. Maybe we'll get to him later.

TS: He wasn't a priest?

EB: No. I attended Catholic parochial elementary school and high school, and then I went to the University of Alabama in 1957. I majored in biology and minored in geology. I graduated in '61, and I had a couple of mentors along that line, too. Then I went to graduate school at the University of North Carolina in '61. I got my master's and Ph.D. there and finished in '66.

TS: You didn't waste any time, did you?

EB: No, I was fast going through graduate school. Unlike people in history, who sometimes . . .

TS: A lot like me!

EB: No. In a lot of other fields, English and history particularly, people tend to take a job after their master's degree. I was always told that that was a big mistake, in science anyway. I don't know why the difference. But a lot [of folks] take a job after their master's degree and support themselves while they're working on their Ph.D., and sometimes it takes years.

TS: That's what I did.

EB: I just crashed through!

TS: You wanted to go back to Tom Banks and some of those mentors and what kind of influences they had on you?

EB: Well, I have to preface this by saying that this man was a brute.

TS: Your football coach?

EB: Yes, a terribly cruel man. But women don't seem to understand the relationships that boys have with their coaches. Even though it's a brutal one—[Paul] Bear Bryant [famous University of Alabama football coach] is a good example of this—in retrospect, it always turns out to be a loving one. So for years until his

death a few years ago, my high school friends and I have honored this man with various kinds of picnics and roasts and banquets and ceremonies and plaques and things like that. My wife always says, "Why are we doing this? He was such a brute." But the lesson he taught me was one of, "Stick to it; never give up." That lesson has always served me well. I had no business going out for football. I was a skinny weakling. As I said to one of our audiences: The only reason I did it was the hope that I would get into a game, intercept a pass, and go tripping down the sidelines for a touchdown in order that a certain cheerleader would fall in love with me and we'd live happily ever after. The daydreams when I was a boy.

TS: And that never happened?

EB: Of course not. I warmed the bench most of the time.

DY: What was it in him that really inspired you?

EB: Well, for example, the first encounter I had with him was in gym class, PE class, as a freshman before I ever went on for sports. He purchased a rope, a big thick rope that was attached to the ceiling of the gym, which was about twenty feet high. To pass PE you had to be able to climb the rope and touch the rafter. You would make an "A" if you could do it without using your feet and legs—if you could just go up with your upper body—and most of us couldn't do that.

DY: That's the Marines, isn't it? [laughter]

EB: But I remember I got to the top of the rope by shinnying up with my feet. He was down there with his clipboard, and I touched the thing. So I made my "C" or whatever it was that was minimum. But then I realized that I didn't have the strength to come back down. I yelled to him, "Mr. Banks, I can't come back down." He said, "Well, just let go."

TS: Twenty feet?

DY: Did you have any mats under you?

EB: No.

TS: So what did you do?

EB: I found the strength to come down. Another time, while we were exercising on the practice field, I fell and cut my hand open on a sharp rock; it was a bad cut. I came running up to him on the sidelines and showed it to him, expecting some kind of first aid, and he spit tobacco juice on it. "Get back to practice." So it was that kind of relationship, which most people would call brutal, and would be fired for this kind of activity. But this guy made a big impression on most of us, and we look back on him with a fond remembrance.

TS: It was kind of a survival mentality.

EB: Yes, it's a bonding.

TS: But it builds character in the sense that you found that you could do more than you thought you could otherwise.

EB: Exactly right. That persistence pays off in things like college and graduate school and in life in general.

DY: But I thought this was interesting, Ed: You said that he was brutal but loving, so there must have been another side there?

EB: I'm not sure he was loving; we loved him in retrospect. I hated him at the time. But it's also like some professors I had. I sometimes tell my students this: In olden days, we weren't able to evaluate professors; that wasn't done. I raised this issue when we started doing faculty evaluations. There was an English composition professor I had who would make us write something everyday, so we hated him for that. We had to write everyday. And then number two, he would bring our papers to class the next day and openly criticize us by name. He would read our poem that we had written or our little composition, and he would cut it to pieces savagely. I saw people weeping—leaving the class in tears. If I had been asked to evaluate the man at the time, I would have just—

TS: Zapped him.

EB: Zapped him. But now, almost fifty years later, I think back about Dr. Mason with a lot of respect and fondness because he taught me never to turn anything in unless it was the best thing I could do. For fear he'd use the stick instead of the carrot. I think I've always responded best to the stick, as Mr. Banks and Dr. Mason show.

TS: I've wanted to do that on occasion but never, I guess, had the courage to do it.

EB: We don't do it.

TS: It's dangerous to do that nowadays!

EB: It would be a form of harassment these days, I'm afraid.

TS: Yes.

EB: We'd be singling somebody out.

TS: But sometimes you can get so frustrated when you know a student can do better. It seems like they don't even care, and you'd just love to rip them apart.

EB: Well, I had a student a good number of years ago who was obviously not paying attention in class. I had just covered some material in ecology, and he asked a question that had just been covered. Everybody in class turned and stared at him, and I looked at him and then just walked to the board and banged my head on it. Apparently, he went off and complained to the chair of my department, and it was mentioned in my annual review that I shouldn't do this. He left school, poor child; he transferred to Georgia State. He came back about a year later because he didn't like it at Georgia State. He wanted to come back to Kennesaw, and when he interviewed with the chair, he said he wanted Dr. Bostick as his advisor. A little degradation helps every now and then.

TS: Right.

EB: He was embarrassed.

TS: Even though he deserved to be embarrassed. Are there any mentors that steered you toward biology? How did you get interested in biology?

EB: I don't know what got me to biology. As a matter of fact, midway through undergraduate studies, since I'm good in languages, I almost transferred to what we called "area studies" in those days. I had three years of Russian. I might have had a career with the State Department—James Bond or something like that. It's like running down the sidelines hoping the girl would fall in love with you; I thought I'd be a diplomat or something. But when I went to college, I knew I wanted to major in biology. I wasn't clear as to what I wanted to do. I think I had some kind of vision of research on cancer or something like that. I think the thing that really set me on the academic track is that I had a mentor at the University of Alabama, a botanist named Gibbes Patton. He was an alumnus of the University of North Carolina's Department of Botany. I took several courses with him. I liked him, and he liked me. One day in the spring of my junior year, he came up to me with a brochure from the National Science Foundation for an undergraduate research program at the University of North Carolina. He said, "Here, I think you should apply to this." I did. I was accepted and went off to Chapel Hill, North Carolina, for the summer and spent my time as a research assistant for the man who eventually became my doctoral degree advisor. That summer was probably the most important summer of my life, I think. It showed me behind the scenes what research was like and what academics do. I never knew that in college. You didn't know your professors at a big university in those days; they were gods that walked into the room. You knew nothing about their personal lives, if they were married or had children or what they liked or disliked. They just came in and did their thing. There really wasn't much undergraduate research in those days, so this was kind of a novel program. But I saw what they did, and I said, "That's

what I want to do. I want to go to graduate school." So I finished my senior year at Alabama and applied back to Chapel Hill.

TS: This is the summer of '63.

EB: The summer of '60. I finished and graduated in '61, then came to Chapel Hill for graduate school. That summer I met probably the two professors at Chapel Hill that most influenced me. One was a man named [C.] Ritchie Bell who was a cellular botanist, someone who works with chromosomes and such. The other was a man named Al [Albert E.] Radford, who eventually became my master's advisor. Bell was my Ph.D. advisor. I worked with them a lot that summer, particularly Ritchie Bell. I was his assistant. At the time those two were working on the great reference work called the *Flora of the Carolinas* in an attempt to identify and write a manual of all the plants of North and South Carolina. So I got involved in that that summer. I did a lot of fieldwork with those guys, so I got to know them well.

TS: Was North Carolina divided into a botany department and a zoology department?

EB: Yes. That is a division that was not only at Chapel Hill but also at most other institutions; it does not exist any more. Budget considerations, beginning, I think, in the '70s, began to make it more efficient to merge the two. When that happens, as it happened at Chapel Hill, botany always loses out because of the demand for zoology courses, mainly to support the pre-med program. The emphasis these days is still molecular biology, and so my kind of botany—the field, the plant, the identification—that sort of thing is kind of "passé."

TS: But ecology was just kind of coming in, wasn't it?

EB: Ecology is a unifying science. Even though I took courses and taught a course called Plant Ecology, it's really an artificial division; it really should be unified. So there's a lot of sense in merging the two departments. Philosophically, you probably should, but it always works out that the botanists lose out. The hires go to the zoologists. At Chapel Hill, for example, that happened years ago, and the botany department is a shadow of what it used to be. When I was there it was probably No. 3 in the nation. Berkeley was probably No. 1, and Michigan State was No 2.

TS: Did you get to do some of the research for the *Flora of the Carolinas*?

EB: Actually, since I was working with Ritchie Bell as a chromosome guy, I mainly spent my hours in his lab on top of a microscope looking at plant chromosomes, counting them and such. The thing that I think also was kind of a grabber for me that summer is that he allowed me to write a little publication. So the first thing I ever published was a list of certain plant chromosome numbers, a trivial matter,

but it was a big deal for an undergraduate. He didn't insist that his name go on it either. That wasn't done much in those days, so it was all mine.

TS: Wow.

EB: The usual thing, I think, these days is for your major professor to put his name on it somewhere.

TS: There's been a bit of that in our science program at Kennesaw with Dan [Daniel J.] Williams and Patti [Patricia H.] Reggio and others doing faculty-student research together.

EB: Yes. That hardly existed when I was in college. The undergraduates just didn't do that; it wasn't available to them. It probably was, but you probably really needed to have an inside track or develop some kind of personal relationship that most of us were too shy to develop. I mean, you just didn't do that.

TS: I had no conception that anything like that went on when I was an undergraduate.

EB: I didn't know what professors did.

TS: Right.

EB: But somewhere in Chapel Hill they showed me what they did besides coming to the classroom and talking for an hour.

TS: Right.

EB: It looked like fun to me!

TS: Yes. What did you do your master's thesis on?

EB: Well, since I grew up in Alabama, and I was always interested in geology, too—in fact, I minored in geology all the way through undergraduate and graduate school, and I currently teach geology—I chose a small mountain near Gadsden, Alabama, that was well mapped geologically, and I wrote a thesis that had to do with the correlation of the plant life with the underlying rock structures—sort of geo-botanical correlations. There is a very strong correlation. You can predict what kind of plants are going to be growing if you know the geology. And vice versa, if you know the kind of plants, you can predict that there's limestone or sandstone. That [study] was under the direction of Al Radford.

TS: It kind of makes sense doesn't it that . . . ?

EB: Yes, as we sometimes say about ecology, it is the painful elaboration of the obvious. [laughter]

TS: I was just thinking about the limestone valley that comes down through Georgia on the Alabama border.

EB: Exactly.

TS: And up near where you live on the Etowah River and the Etowah Indian Mounds, you kind of have that transition. The plant life and the animal life are different west than east.

EB: Well, most people have spotted that cedars like to grow on limestone. If you see cedars it usually means you are in a limestone [area]. That's what got me interested.

TS: Right. So that's what you were documenting in Alabama?

EB: Right.

DY: What are some other markers of limestone? I'm curious. What are you going to see in limestone?

EB: In that part of the world the black locust tree—which is a thorny thing in the bean family—is a marker. There's an oak called the Muhlenberg Oak that's a marker—an indicator, as we call it. So it was fun. I got to travel back home and stay with my family while I drove fifty miles up the road for awhile [to do research].

TS: So they were still in Birmingham?

EB: Yes. They never quite understood botany as a choice of profession. I think they would have rather seen me go into something more tangible. Like most of us in academics, our parents don't understand why we don't choose to go into marketing or business or engineering or pre-med—something like that.

TS: Yes, I bet with your scientific bent they were wondering why you didn't go to medical school.

EB: I think there was a time when I thought about that, but it just didn't attract me—too much chemistry—that was it—too much math, and I've never been good at math. The only college course I ever flunked was college algebra.

TS: Is that right? Well, you know, in the old days it used to be the students could have taken biology or chemistry or physics at Kennesaw. They all took biology because of the math.

EB: Right, with the perception that biology was easier because of the math. At other schools it's geology that they take—"Rocks for Jocks." That's the reason that we never had geology at Kennesaw. Dr. [Horace W.] Sturgis had come from Georgia Tech, and at Georgia Tech geology was a course for jocks. It had a bad reputation, so he swore he would never sign off on a geology course. We tried. He said, "I'll veto that if you ever propose it." We sneaked one in behind him though and called it something else. We called it Physical Ecology and labeled it as a biology course. We taught it for years and years.

TS: You got your master's in '64, and then just two years later you got your doctorate. So did you continue on the same topic for your dissertation?

EB: No, I did something that I just realized a few years ago was very strange. Even though I had seen people in action, I never knew anything about the politics of the department, that there were such things as rivalries and animosities and even hard feelings in some cases. The two men that I mentioned, Radford and Bell, apparently were like this.

TS: They didn't like each other

EB: Not much. Even though they were hard-, close-working colleagues, they had different points of view about the science and different ways of operating and competing for students. That happens in some of the big institutions where you're judged by the quality of the students and sometimes the number of students that you are supervising. I went to Chapel Hill as a research assistant for Ritchie Bell, but I immediately chose to work for his rival with my master's thesis, so that created some resentment. And then I switched back to Bell for my Ph.D., and I'm sure that created resentment, but I never heard a word about it.

TS: So you were probably naive about this.

EB: I was naïve about it, and I didn't realize that I had done an inappropriate thing until years later.

TS: Right.

DY: It sounds like they were professional enough not to . . .

EB: They were professional enough that they never said a word to me, and it never influenced my progress in any way.

DY: That's wonderful.

EB: It was wonderful. So I was totally unaware of wandering through this wilderness.

TS: They were probably aware that you were unaware.

EB: I suppose.

DY: It sounds like a class act to me, doesn't it? Doesn't it to you?

TS: Sure.

EB: They really didn't care for each other very much, and to this day even though they're both getting fairly—what's the word?

TS: Up in age?

EB: They're up in age and they're also losing a lot of their wit, but they still don't like each other very much!

DY: Oh, that's so sad!

EB: I went with Bell, and I did a study on a group of plants called the Meadow Beauties. It was a different kind of plant botany. Instead of lists of plants, this was an intensive study of the chromosomes and the chemistry and anatomy of Meadow Beauties, which are Southeastern United States Coastal Plain species; it was an attempt to reclassify the group.

DY: Where did you go to study them?

EB: I was still at North Carolina.

DY: Of course, you were studying there.

EB: But it involved a lot of field trips all over the Southeast.

TS: A lot of time to the coast, I guess.

EB: Yes. It was kind of nice. In the beginning part of it, I was just recently married, so it was like a constant honeymoon trip on these field trips. It was very nice.

TS: So you finished up in '66. Did you go straight to Emory from there?

EB: Yes, and that's an interesting story, too. Chapel Hill had just hired a young man as an assistant professor of ecology who was a Ph.D. graduate from Emory. He came in and immediately became very popular with graduate students. A lot of them abandoned Radford and Bell for Frank McCormick because he brought a fresh, new experimental ecology in. Emory at the time needed someone to teach a new way for non-science majors to take their required science courses. They were interdisciplinary. One was a course that was a combination of physics and

chemistry, team-taught by a physics person and a chemist. The other was a biology-geology combination.

TS: Right down your alley.

EB: So Frank McCormick got to Chapel Hill and saw that I had this combination, so he recommended me for a position at Emory. I came down, interviewed, and got it. That was the course that I team-taught for five years with Willard Grant, who was an older man and a mentor to me in developing that course.

DY: Which one [of the disciplines] was he?

EB: He was geology, and I was biology. Emory had a biology department.

TS: But he was a senior faculty member at Emory, correct?

EB: Yes. He was professor, and I was twenty-six years old when I went there. I turned twenty-seven in November.

DY: This was 1966?

EB: '66.

DY: So when you graduated, you just came right on into a job.

EB: Right.

TS: So you were at Emory for five years in a Research I institution. It must have been a huge decision to go from a Research I institution to a five-year-old junior college in '71. What caused you to come to Kennesaw?

EB: Well, to be perfectly frank about it I didn't get tenured. The reason I didn't get tenure is because I wasn't producing the research. I found it hard to develop a research program there because—and I'm not trying to excuse this—but they had hired me for a specific job, to teach this course. It took a lot of my time to develop that, and basically my research experiences and interests duplicated those people who were already there. So it was hard for me to find a niche. I never developed a research program and the grants that were necessary; that didn't happen. But I also found that what I did best was teaching; my evaluations were very high. Herb [Herbert L.] Davis was a colleague at Emory; he had gotten his Ph.D. there a few years earlier. He was a young assistant professor, and he got the job as head of the Division of Science and Mathematics at Kennesaw Junior College.

TS: He came from being an assistant professor to being a division chair.

EB: Division chair at Kennesaw Junior College. He brought with him that year a recent Emory graduate named Bowman [O.] Davis, [Jr.]. So they were here in 1970, and when I started looking for a job, Herb called me and said, "We have a position." So I came out, and here I am.

DY: Was Herb a Ph.D. student there?

EB: Herb finished his Ph.D. [at Emory in 1965]. He was already a Ph.D. when I came to Emory. He was an assistant professor at Emory. I was hired in as an assistant professor, but he was there [already] after having finished his Ph.D.; they just hired him right on.

DY: Oh, they hired their own?

EB: That happens sometimes. Some institutions have a policy against it, but . . .

DY: Yes, the inbreeding.

EB: But we had a couple of those at Chapel Hill.

DY: Oh, I know some of the big, better schools do it. So why does Herb want to come here, because he wanted to be . . . ?

EB: He wanted to be an administrator. And I made a good move financially, because at the time Emory's salary was just awful. Only in years later did they get a lot of Woodruff money, and their salaries started going up. I still have some close friends there, and their salaries are just fine now.

TS: Your salary went up coming to Kennesaw?

EB: Oh, my goodness, yes.

TS: How about that?

EB: It went up by $5,000.

TS: Good night! Salaries were pretty low back then, so $5,000 was a huge amount!

EB: Yes, so it was not a bad move.

DY: So we got you and Bowman, and Herb was running the show, and who else was in the division? Who interviewed you when you came?

EB: Herb and the dean and the president interviewed me. We didn't have faculty search committees then. Tom and I were talking before this interview started that when he was hired and I was hired, we didn't meet other faculty members. I

don't think I met anybody. I'm sure I was introduced and shook hands, "Glad to meet you," that kind of thing, but certainly no sit-down.

TS: But you were telling me about a presentation that you had to do in the seminar room in the library. Was that after you had been hired?

EB: No, it was on the day of my interview, which was apparently pretty odd, because in those days you were just interviewed by the chair, the dean and the president, and it was a "go" or a "no go." But Herb and Cullene Morgan [later Cullene Harper, the Director of Community Services] were in on the summit, because apparently it was put out that the seminar was presented under her aegis.

TS: She was in charge of public relations for the campus.

EB: So at the time I was doing a routine, a dog-and-pony show on homeowners' ecology. It was tips on how homeowners as consumers could conserve energy and avoid water pollution—what kind of detergents to use, put a brick in the toilet, that kind of thing. Apparently, Cullene opened it up to the public, so there was a large attendance.

DY: Oh, how nice.

EB: A lot of women were there. I think there were some garden clubs in attendance. But there were some faculty members, so at least I made a presentation. I had the usual interview with Dean Robert [H.] Akerman and then with Dr. Sturgis. I was hired on within a few days, I guess. I don't remember exactly whether an offer was made that day or later.

TS: That little seminar room held about forty or fifty people, I guess. It was right off of where the desk for the library used to be and back where I guess our Special Events folks are now.

EB: That room used to contain the entire faculty of Kennesaw Junior College because we were required to have monthly faculty meetings. They were supposedly "required attendance monthly," whether there was any business to do or not. But in those days the faculty voted on every curriculum issue. Every course that was proposed, the entire faculty heard about it and voted on it. I can remember debating the merits of a certain video game that was in the Student Center that involved running over pedestrians. It was a game where you drove your car, and every time a pedestrian was hit, a cross appeared as a symbol of death. I won't name the faculty member that objected to this on the basis of misuse of a Christian symbol, but I got up and ranted about the fact that here we are the intelligentsia of the community, and we're debating a video game! I urged everybody to abstain from any vote that came up on the topic. I don't remember what the decision was. I think Roger [E.] Hopkins said he would take care of the situation. It never came to a vote.

DY: I wonder what Roger did. Would he have smashed it with a baseball bat? No, he wouldn't waste anything.

EB: I think they took the game out or something like that. But I thought it was inappropriate for academics to be debating the merits of a video game. We had more high-falutin' things to be doing.

TS: Right. Did you look around anywhere else besides Kennesaw?

EB: I really didn't. I sent out some credentials to other institutions but nothing serious. I take that back; I had another interview and another offer at the same time, as a matter of fact, from the University of South Florida in Tampa.

TS: That's a big place now. They've got 40,000 students.

EB: Right. I went down there and had to make a presentation, as a matter of fact. I think I chose Kennesaw because it wouldn't involve a big move. The salary was better than the University of South Florida. The South Florida thing was peculiar because I was being hired—this sounds strange coming from me—to teach the freshman course only. They had two departments of biology. They had an undergraduate non-majors teaching department and a teaching/research majors department, and I still wanted the combination. I didn't want to do just the teaching even though I knew very well at the time that was my strongest point. So I turned them down.

TS: You didn't want to be labeled that way.

EB: Right. I didn't see that they would be advancing, and I think that was probably true in those days. Those people were condemned to second-rate citizenship.

TS: So you saw more of a future at Kennesaw.

EB: Yes, although I didn't see what it was to become.

TS: Who could have back then?

EB: We all saw four-year status, I think, somewhere down the road; we all had that in mind. I think that was on the mind of everybody from Day One.

TS: Did they say that when you did your job interview?

EB: Yes.

TS: They were really hiring a four-year college faculty by that time.

EB: I suspect.

TS: By ‘71. Or at least trying to.

EB: We all wanted to do that. After a few years of teaching nothing but freshman courses, you want to do more. There’s something inside of you that wants to come out.

TS: What did you think of the intellectual life of Kennesaw in those junior college days when you got here?

EB: I was going to be teaching nursing microbiology, which was a course I’d never taught before. And I had a colleague at Emory say that you wouldn’t even be able to teach them how to streak a bacterium across a plate.

TS: Because they’re too dumb to know? Is that what he meant?

EB: Either because they were female or because they were just in junior college; I’m not sure what his implications were. Then I came out and discovered they were the equal of anything I had had at Emory. You know, the average Emory student is probably better academically than the average Kennesaw Junior College student, but I had people at Kennesaw that were quite as gifted as anybody I had at Emory.

TS: Well, Charlotte [S.] Sachs was kind of like your football coach over in Alabama, wasn’t she, in running the nursing program then?

EB: I wouldn’t be surprised.

TS: I mean, she demanded high standards from the students. That’s my impression. You were closer to it than I was.

EB: Charlotte Sachs, yes, she was a strong administrator. The nursing program has always been superior, even back in junior college days. It was probably our top program on campus in terms of academic achievement.

TS: So you’ve got this stereotypical view of looking at things from the Emory vantage.

EB: Elitist.

TS: That junior colleges are the pits, and it wasn’t so.

EB: No, it wasn’t. It was just as exciting as Emory to teach. The students were just as stimulating.

TS: Did you find that in the non-nursing courses, too?

EB: Yes. The main reason for hiring me was to fill that niche for that nursing microbiology, but I also taught the introductory biology courses and botany. At the time, we had a botany course, which I loved.

TS: So even in the junior college days, we had a botany course.

EB: We had a botany course, which doesn't exist any more. It fell by the wayside about the time we became a four-year college. The chair of biology at the time decided that that material could be covered in advanced courses.

DY: Who were your colleagues at that point? We didn't have departments obviously.

EB: No, we didn't have departments. We had divisions. It was the Division of Natural Sciences and Mathematics and Nursing.

TS: And the biologists would be you and Bowman.

EB: And Mary [L.] Lance. Herb Davis.

TS: Was Pam [Pamela J. Rhyne] here?

EB: Pam wasn't here when I came. I don't think there were any other biologists. I'm trying to think of the people that had offices nearby, but that was about it.

TS: We had a few chemists.

EB: We had Frank [W.] Walker. I can't remember anybody else.

TS: Charley [G.] Dobson, [Jr.] was doing physics.

EB: Charley Dobson was the one-man physics department. And then Math was Ira [B.] Guy and Morgan [L.] Stapleton and Don [Donald J.] Sparks.

TS: How would you describe your division as a whole in those years in terms of intellectual climate? Was it a stimulating environment? After University of North Carolina and Emory, was it disappointing? Or is it somewhere in between? How would you describe it?

EB: It was not an adversarial thing. Everybody became fast friends. At Emory we were too much in competition with each other, so it was hard to make a friendship with a colleague. I had some friends, but that was always looming in the background. I was a graduate student at Chapel Hill, so that experience is irrelevant. But at Kennesaw, since there were no promotions at the time—there were no promotions; it was impossible to be promoted—you weren't really

competing with people very much. So it was possible to establish good friendly, collegial relationships. It was always easy, and always I give Herb Davis a lot of credit for basically leaving us alone. He did not control us very much. He gave us free rein with a lot of things so we were able to develop things and do things that were sometimes not permitted in other areas. We were a kind of wild and crazy bunch, as a matter of fact. We had a reputation for that. It was possible to make fast, firm friendships, and that's one reason I liked Kennesaw.

TS: The collegiality.

EB: Yes. Many of my friends that I have today, most of my friends, are still Kennesaw people.

TS: Yes. Would you talk a little bit about your teaching because in 1997 you won the Distinguished Teaching Award at Kennesaw? Maybe you could just talk a little bit about your style of teaching or what worked for you and so on.

EB: I get real personal in the classroom. I tell a lot of stories. It may be a bit of ego coming through, but I tell a lot of things about experiences that I've had that I think will illustrate a point. We talk about water pollution, for example, in the course I'm teaching now, which is Environmental Issues. I tell them about the time I fell into a big lake of raw sewage, and I make the point that that was permitted in those days, that raw sewage was allowed to be discharged into a big pond untreated. In some ways things are better now and some things are worse. So lately I've been bringing my age into it. "Back in the old days, things were different than they are now." I always brought a lot of humor out. I tell a lot of what I think are witty, funny stories to illustrate things, and I think students like that. I always try to make things relevant and personal. I get the feedback on the student evaluations that they like the little stories that I tell. I remember professors from my past, and the ones that I remember most fondly worked that way. It wasn't just jokes they were telling; there was always a motive. In Aesop's Fables, there was always a moral to the story. We were talking in class this morning about classification and how it's a matter of opinion from one kind of classifier to another as to whether you'll have one species or two. I told them this story about when I used to identify marijuana for the crime lab that the Georgia law used to specify one particular species. So I was approached by some lawyer trying to get me to say that it was a different species, therefore their client would be off the hook.

TS: But you didn't say it?

EB: No. Because I'm what they call a "lumper," and I just lump it all into one category. If they had searched far and wide, they probably would have found somebody who would say "yes, it's different," but that's another story.

TS: So you basically use a lecture method in the classroom?

EB: Yes. That's old-fashioned, I know, but I still think there's a lot of merit to it. It forces the student to pay attention and to listen and to try to discern what's important in a body of material. The problem for the student in a lecture is they can't distinguish sometimes between what's important and what's not important. That's hard for them. I'm not big on technology. I've always said that my idea of technology is a piece of chalk. I was badly offended when we went to white board markers. I don't like them.

TS: Right. I never remember to take the marker with me to the classroom.

EB: Although teaching at Georgia Highlands College this past semester, there's technology out there that I don't have here, and it's turned me into a PowerPoint man. We have it in the Clendenin Building, apparently, but we don't have it in the other side of the science building. There's a console and screen that I can write on and it comes up on the projection screen. It's multi-colored.

TS: Same as writing on the board then.

EB: Right. But you can actually put up a document on the overhead or off the Internet and then annotate it. So it's a wonderful thing. You can put up videos and write on them as they flow, and in multi-colors and different thicknesses of lines. For someone who was teaching geology, I was able to do layers of rocks and faults and folds and stuff in red and blue and yellow and green. So I'm working on it.

DY: Did you mentor? Did you find students that you liked to work with in the lab or that you sort of took under your wing?

EB: I probably did fewer directed studies than most people. I'm not sure why that was the case, but we had a few and some were a little strange. I had one that I always felt was a lot of fun. One thing I try to do a lot in the classroom is to try to make connections between science and other areas. I think I was interdisciplinary long before it was popular. I'm always trying to point out the similarities between ecology and economics, for example. There are a lot of theoretical stuff and terminology and so-called laws of economics that apply to ecology, and I'm always trying to tell students about this kind of stuff and make those connections. I had some students one time as a directed study work on the shopping mall diversity. The theory in biology is that as a field goes through what we call succession—starting from a field and going through pine stage and eventually ending up in a hardwood forest stage—its diversity increases: the number of different kinds of creatures increases as you go along. My theory was that this happens to shopping malls as they age. They start off with just a few kinds of shops, and as they age, competition drives out some, so that you get the specialty shops. So older malls should have a lot of different kinds of shops that don't compete strongly with each other.

TS: You lose your big anchors and have . . .

EB: Right. So for a semester, or quarter in those days, these students went to all the malls in the metro area, found out how old they were, and essentially verified that theory. They were able to look at the history of shops in these malls. So the same rules that govern plant succession govern succession in the market. So I think that's interesting, and I think it's important.

DY: I think it is too! I bet they enjoyed it. It got them outside to look at things, too.

TS: Well, sociologists really do ecology, too, I guess, and that's what they're doing here.

EB: It's human ecology. So that's always been important to me, this interdisciplinary connectedness. When I had this teaching award, we were at the time given a grant of money, and that's what I worked on was trying to develop this kind of connectedness.

TS: Did you do a lot of courses where you teamed with somebody from a different department?

EB: No. We haven't been doing that as much as we should until recently. I'm trying to think the last time I did something like that, and I guess it was at Emory with the geologist. I can't recall team-teaching. I taught an ecology course down there with a team of four or five people, but I can't remember doing that at Kennesaw. We had some of those that I know became popular in the late '70s. We had some combos of English and biology, for example. I remember Don [Donald J.] Fay was in on this.

TS: Right. And [K.] Gird Romer, [Jr.] taught a class with somebody.

EB: Physics. On the atomic . . .

TS: Right. World War II.

EB: The development of the atomic bomb program. I don't know if the enrollment was very high or not. They were so specialized that they probably didn't get a whole crowd of students. But I always tell students that they're not really getting a good education unless they can make those connections. They tend to see their courses as blocks of information that have nothing else to do with anything else that they take, and they really should see the connection between the course of music they take and the course of physics. There are certain connections.

TS: Right. As we went to four-years, what were the upper-level classes that you were teaching?

EB: Ecology. I developed a course called Earth Watch, which was an environmental issues course that was my baby; and a course in Systematics—classification. Those were my courses. Those are my specialties.

TS: As we went to four years, our faculty role expanded, as I remember it. At one time, there really wasn't much expected of us other than a lot of teaching and maybe a little bit of institutional service. Then it kind of expanded. How did it expand for you as time went on?

EB: I always kept my hand in a little research. I always had something going on, and most of the time it resulted in presentations at the Georgia Academy of Science at their spring meetings—and then with the sometimes abstract or occasionally a small publication in the Georgia Academy of Science *Bulletin*. I had a couple of publications in the regional periodical called *Castanea*, which is the journal of the Southern Appalachian Botanical Club. I always had something going on so that it kept me, not on the cutting-edge, but it kept me going in terms of something original. I always said that faculty members should always be creative, and that was the word I was using before we were using the word scholarship. So people who had been here when we made the transition and had been here in junior college days—they said, "Well, we can't do research because we're so out of it. We haven't done research since we've been teaching. To get us up to speed on the literature and the techniques that we need in science, we just can't do it in our careers." I said, "I'm not necessarily talking about research, but do something creative. Develop something new in teaching or something." And that's what we've been doing at Kennesaw. A lot of people that made that transition weren't able to get out there and get big grants and get back up to where they were when they were graduate students and that's all they did. But there's always room for something that you can do other than walking in and doing your courses. I was always big on community service. I got the [Philip] Preston Award one year for that, so I've done a lot of that, especially with gardening.

TS: But you've tied it in with your scholarship, haven't you?

EB: Yes, as much as I could. I became a Master Gardener through this program that is offered by the Extension Service—State Department. I was in the first class that went through, so I became an instructor in that and a participant. The rules were that if you got that mini degree in horticulture, you would pay back the State of Georgia with service. So I became the instructor of plants, basically—a little botany course for many years. I did lots of talks to various groups and had lots of strange experiences with garden clubs, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, third-grade classes, and things like that—and then the usual raft of college committees and things like that. I was early on in faculty evaluation where we were trying to develop instruments for student evaluation of faculty. That was a real headache.

TS: Yes, I remember some of those days. What I hear from people in science is that they didn't have support for lab space to maybe do research. Of course, you're

doing a lot of yours out in the field in ecology, but you've done all that stuff with chromosomes before. Did you have the microscopes and . . .

EB: We had microscopes to do it, although personally my idea of a good time is not to sit over a microscope all day. I'd rather be outside. I've always said I can do my research with a ball of string, just cordon off an area and count the trees and doing that kind of thing. I can teach a course in ecology with a ball of string and a few stakes, but that's certainly true for the people that are lab-oriented. We never had and we still don't have what we need to do bang-up research. Any research that we do in biology, for example, is almost always going to be done somewhere else.

TS: In collaboration with somebody else?

EB: In collaboration or just going there. Paula [C.] Jackson has gotten this huge grant from the National Science Foundation [NSF], which is an amazing accomplishment for somebody at a [non-Research I] institution like Kennesaw to get this $300,000. NSF doesn't give that kind of money to just everybody, so she's really got a feather in her cap. But she's going to do her work in Mexico. She works on rain forests and tropical water things

DY: Ed, when do you see, or where do you see the key changes as they occur? I mean, we moved into the four-year status and there are hires that come about. How did you see that change, or where do you see the key changes? Is it when we went four-year?

EB: Four-year status and the hiring of Betty [L.] Siegel were big things. We've been giving tributes to Betty for these past few months [as she approaches retirement as president]. I don't know if you've done it in your school, but in our school we had a little retrospective program. Some of us came and talked about this, and I pointed out that before Betty came, I would frequently teach a class or two, then I'd go to the Student Center at about ten o'clock for a coffee break, and then I'd go back to my office at two. We'd sit over there, huge mobs around tables, and just chew the fat from ten through lunch and on into the afternoon having a jolly good time. It was loads of fun and very stimulating, but when Betty came that disappeared. I don't remember her ever saying don't do that anymore, but she created an atmosphere . . . something happened.

TS: You didn't have time.

EB: We didn't have time. We got busier. We started doing the things that we were really supposed to be doing rather than twittering away our time with the social conversations in the Student Center, as much fun as they were and as stimulating. In many cases there was a lot of learning that went on over there and a lot of collegiality, and I'm sorry that's gone away. I just had lunch in the Student Center, and I saw no faculty members sitting around tables. Things have changed over there, too. It's gotten too noisy or whatever, too crowded.

TS: Yes. And even [the faculty dining] room upstairs is hardly ever full.

EB: So we're not as social as we used to be, but we're working harder. Some people are complaining of being overworked. I hear this all the time as a retired person coming in and waving good-bye on Wednesday afternoon and saying, "See you next week." That's the fun part about retiring, by the way, is telling your colleagues you'll see them next week on Wednesday. Tears flow from their eyes. But I hear from a lot of my colleagues that they feel that they're overworked, that they can't do the research that's now expected and keep up with their service and their teaching loads. They cannot do it.

DY: What shape or form did the kind of collegiality and intellectual discussions that went on in the student center—how did that morph when Betty came and we changed?

EB: It just went away; it just disappeared. It didn't really morph; it just stopped.

DY: So the intellectual climate then changed to what?

EB: It changed to one of more, "Let's get some business done here, folks."

DY: Was business committee business or curricular?

EB: All of the above. Again, I'm not sure how much she was in control of this or if it had to do with hires that she made—vice presidents and deans and such things as that. We went to a different system where people were starting to get promoted. It was possible to get promoted, and I'll have to pump myself on that one that I was the first full professor at Kennesaw. For one year I was the only full professor. I always felt like I should wear my academic regalia.

TS: What year was that? That was before she came wasn't it?

EB: That was before she came.

DY: So people did get promoted before she came, but there weren't guidelines.

EB: There wasn't much in the way of guidelines. My portfolio that I submitted to be promoted to full professor was a single sheet.

DY: When did you submit it?

EB: I don't remember. It was before 1980.[1]

[1][Editor's note]: Dr. Bostick is first listed as full professor in the *Kennesaw College 1978-79 Catalog*, the first after the transition to four-year status. In that catalog he is the only non-administrative faculty member at that rank.

DY: But you gave your portfolio to your division chair?

EB: To Herb Davis, the chair. That was full professor, but Herb pioneered promotions. It was his pushing Dr. Sturgis that got the first promotion at Kennesaw Junior College from the ranks of assistant professor. I remember that Mary Lance and I got promoted to associate the same year, and I think we were the first crop. I'm not sure what was happening in other divisions at the time.[2]

TS: I remember when we started, the division chairs were associate professors.

EB: Right. Your rank was based on your administrative level. When I say I was the first full professor at Kennesaw, I was the first one that . . .

TS: That wasn't an administrator. . . .

EB: That wasn't a president, dean, or division chair. It was a glory year.

TS: Right. When I came here, there were no full professors, except President Sturgis and Dr. [Derrell C.] Roberts, the academic dean. But the division chairs were associate professors. They still had a way to go on the promotion ladder too.

EB: Right. You know, it's hard for me to say what happened when Betty came. It may just be a coincidence. It may not have anything at all to do with her, but it seems to me there was a correlation between this getting our noses to the grindstone and her arrival on the campus. It happened pretty quickly after her arrival. It may be a post hoc argument here because she's not a hard-driving person as far as I'm concerned. She's never told me I need to start working harder, and I don't remember ever hearing that from an administrator. But I just felt that I needed to get moving.

TS: Yes, I guess it was more subtle than overt. But, at any rate, the intellectual climate was changing. You were doing a ton of service, and I remember you were involved with some kind of poison control or something that they called on you if somebody got poisoned with a plant.

EB: I was an unpaid consultant in the early days for two interesting groups. One was the Grady Hospital Poison Control Center, which is the one you're referring to. Then it was the GBI [Georgia Bureau of Investigation] Crime Lab, so I loved to think of myself as a forensic botanist in those days. I would get calls, especially

[2] Dr. Bostick is first listed as associate professor in the *Kennesaw Junior College 1973-74 Catalog*. At that time the only other non-administrative full-time faculty members with the rank of associate professor were Dr. Virginia C. Hinton (English), Dr. Mary L. Lance (Biology), and Dr. William P. Thompson (Business Administration). All had been listed as assistant professors in the previous catalog. Apparently, they were all promoted in 1973, while division chairs were simultaneously elevated in rank from associate to full.

about marijuana. I think I mentioned a few minutes ago about cases of marijuana identification. For some reason in the early '70s they had no one at the crime lab that could recognize marijuana. So when they made an arrest, they had to get a professional identifier. I would get these bags of suspected marijuana out here at Kennesaw Junior College, and I would make the phone call and say, "Yes, this is," [or] Case No. 50613 is not," or whatever.

DY: What did you do with it after you identified it?

EB: I sent it back. Nudge, nudge!

TS: I'm sure they counted how many ounces they sent you.

EB: They weighed it or something. I don't know. I wasn't interested. And every now and then I would get a call from Grady that they had a case of somebody that had eaten a plant and they were worried—should we pump their stomach or not? And I would say, "When in doubt, pump!" So there are some poisonous plants that I could recognize, and I would try to give them advice on that. This is unpaid; it was just sort of volunteer.

TS: When did you really get going on endangered plants? I think you've done some things on the Etowah River, haven't you, and probably a lot of other places?

EB: That was paid. That began in the 1970s.

TS: That far back?

EB: Yes, it was a series subcontracted by Cobb County to do endangered plant surveys along creeks and rivers in Cobb and eventually Fulton County because they were going to build pipelines usually.

TS: Oh, that's right. In the early '70s is when they were doing all those things around Sope Creek.

EB: At Sope Creek and Noses Creek I remember doing one. We actually contracted to do that, and then I started doing it on my own, and I had a big contract with the City of Atlanta to do what they called the Three Rivers Project. It was a similar contract down in south Atlanta to connect sewer pipelines from one watershed to another. Eventually, I got into several years of doing summer contract work with U.S. Forest Service in the national forests, mostly in north Georgia, to look for endangered species in tracts of forest that were getting ready to be auctioned off for timber cutting. They're not allowed to cut timber if there's an endangered species in the tract that's up for sale.

TS: The National Park Service owns the land but they lease the rights?

EB: No, we own the land. You own the land. [chuckle]

TS: But they lease the timber rights to companies to go in and cut the trees.

EB: Right. Which is a controversial topic. Whether or not we should allow private companies to cut national timber is a highly touchy subject these days. Sometimes my signature on a form would enable the trees to be cut, but in some cases my signature would stop the trees from being cut.

TS: So you're hired to make sure there's nothing endangered that you're going to lose if they cut the trees.

EB: Right. They're not allowed to cut if there's one there. They have to either completely abandon that particular site for cutting forever and ever, or they have to modify their boundaries.

TS: So you really had that power then; if you say "no," they don't cut.

EB: Right. But currently there's a moratorium on cutting in the forests, so I haven't had those contracts in several years. But essentially, I put my kids through college by doing this through the summer for several years.

TS: So you've been doing that for pretty close to thirty years then.

EB: Yes.

TS: And the Cobb County sewer project, that was really controversial because of the Palisades area along the Chattahoochee [Recreational Area] and then going up Sope Creek and through the Paper Mill ruins.

EB: That was a federal park, and I didn't get in on it. I was getting in on essentially just county operations along certain watersheds that were going to build sewer pipelines—Noses Creek and a couple of others. But I didn't have the contract for the Chattahoochee.

TS: That was the Ernest Barrett era, when we were building sewer lines like you wouldn't believe around Cobb County for the suburbanites.

EB: I did some of those.

TS: What did you think about the county and its interest in these environmental issues? Did we have a strong interest in preserving the environment?

EB: No. As a matter of fact, I had one person in Forest Service and one person in the county government tell me they would prefer I do the surveys in January so I wouldn't find anything.

TS: Hmm.

EB: They didn't want to find any endangered species. They wanted to build the pipelines.

TS: They were pro-development.

EB: Right. And I tell my students sometimes about this story—that in the Forest Service, that view is usually [held by] the upper management. They view the forest as a crop to be harvested.

TS: Because these are political appointees?

EB: No, they just came through a period of time when their education was timber, timber, timber. But the younger people that I worked directly with—these were usually my immediate supervisors or the actual local, usually wild life management trained [employees]—they almost got on their knees and begged me to find something so their forests wouldn't be cut. So it's an interesting schism there. You wonder if these youngsters are going to grow up to be more conservative in cutting the trees. Or is the Forest Service going to evolve into some more conservation-minded? It's not as conservation-minded as a lot of people think it is. Actually, it's a division of the Department of Agriculture, which tells you something about their viewpoint.

TS: So you think in order to get their promotions, they're going to lose their idealism? You're worried about that?

EB: Maybe.

TS: Well, didn't you do something around Emerson or the Etowah River with environmental protection? Anything on the Etowah River?

EB: No. I'm currently vice president of the Friends of the Etowah Indian Mounds, but that's the first thing that I've done with that. I've gotten more into the history since I retired.

TS: Good, that's great. So that's a state historical site at the Etowah Indian Mounds, and they've got an advisory board that you're on?

EB: The Friends. Almost every state park and state historical site has a Friends group, which is the fund-raising and developmental thing. I'm on that board, among several others. I think I've overextended myself. That one is interesting. It's probably the most interesting because we're actually in touch with the Creek Nation. We're talking to members of the government of the Creek Nation about

repatriation of human remains, and this is a real hot topic in the state. The State doesn't want to do this.

TS: Right, because these are the ancestors of the Creeks who built the Etowah Mounds.

EB: These are the Creek ancestors. They're pretty well established.

TS: Right. The Cherokees are latecomers here. So how is that going?

EB: It's at a standstill now. The local superintendent almost lost his job because he was even talking about this, and the state DNR [Department of Natural Resources]—we can't discern what their objection is. To all of us it's a win-win situation. The Creeks would be able to bring their ancestors back from the Smithsonian, and [the University of] West Georgia, and the Peabody Museum, and have a ceremony to inter them in one of the mounds and protect it with a fence. The place would become a marvelous boost for tourism, so we can't quite figure out why the state level is dragging its heels on this. They won't say, but the superintendent out there was told to back off.

TS: So you're talking about the Department of Natural Resources, the person in charge of that.

EB: Right. They don't seem to like the whole idea. But the Creeks are ready to go; they're hot for it.

TS: Wow. You would think that if the Native Americans were happy and the local park wants it . . .

EB: And the Native Americans are very hard to please, we've found out.

TS: Right. They used to have those skeletons—or at least a skeleton—on display, and I think they had to take that out.

EB: Yes. Moundville in Alabama is another one that had just acres of skeletons out, but they don't do that anymore.

TS: So the Department of Natural Resources and their commissioner is, for some reason, undecided yet. You mentioned tourism in regard to the Etowah Indian Mounds. Is there a connection between ecology and tourism, do you think?

EB: You look back at any travel magazine these days, and you'll see that once you get away from the big, luxury resorts, there's something called eco-tourism. People are taking vacations now to experience wildlife and the outdoors and to go to ecologically [friendly places]—especially the tropics. I was supposed to go to Costa Rica last May, but that trip fell through because my wife got sick. That's

the kind of thing that's going on; it's all natural history and that sort of thing. Any county or local region is well advised to do a lot of green space conservation because it's going to bring people in and also affect the well-being of the citizens. I'm on the Green Space Committee in Bartow County. We've developed a whole series of parks and trails; you can almost walk the entire county or bicycle it through parks and green space trails. So we're working on that.

DY: Good for you.

EB: And I'm president of the Pettit Environmental Preserve . . . You've heard of the Dellinger family—

DY: It's [Dellinger Park in Cartersville] a park, of course.

EB: Well, that's [named after] her ex-father-in-law. Gay had sixty-some-odd acres out in the south end of the county, and she's deeded that over. We're developing an environmental education center out there, kind of like the Chattahoochee Nature Center. I'm president of that.

DY: Ed, what presence or influence do you see this institution having since Northwest Georgia is booming and growing? I mean [what's] your perspective as a scientist and an environmentalist?

EB: Well, being retired I'm not in on all the decision-making that goes on in my own department, but I keep in touch and I've still got a lot of good friends in there. I discovered just recently that Ron [Ronald H.] Matson, our current chair—I presume this was done with a lot of collegial consultation—has decided that the direction that my biology department is headed in the near future is urban ecology.

DY: Interesting.

EB: We've always been strongest in water biology, especially with programs in Lake Allatoona, and water quality. That's been the strongest point of the biology department at Kennesaw State, mainly because of Joe [Joseph M.] Dirnberger and some others that got started on that. But Matson's vision is that we're going to be getting away from the old, wilderness, natural, unspoiled-by-the-touch-of-human-hands kind of thing. We're going to get down in the trenches and go with urban biology and urban ecology and get into things that are much more applied, which is the mission of Kennesaw State University—applied research rather than the purer form.

TS: Right.

EB: Or so I've been told. The sort of second-level of universities in the University System are encouraged to do research, but it's encouraged that it be applied

research rather than so-called pure research. As it works out, a lot of that's turning out to be what I call consulting. In other words, doing research for a contract with a company, and some of us are not good at that. That's another thing that academics are having to retrain for—going out and raising money from a corporation. I can't do that.

TS: There are some really exciting things happening in Cobb County. They're getting ready to build a trail along Noonday Creek. I think they just got a big grant of money to do that recently, and I assume that's the kind of thing [where] you really need some of this urban ecology.

EB: They're going to need somebody with some kind of skills, first of all, to look for endangered plants. They'll have to re-route the trial if there's something in the way, and they're going to be looking probably also for unusual things like extremely large champion trees or even plants that may not be on the list of things officially protected but that are unusual or of interest. Somebody with some skill about education is going to need to go through there and find places where they might want to set up an observation platform or a marker of some kind go a little education: "Here's what's going on here, folks." That kind of thing. So it's opportunities for students to do that. It's sort of an internship kind of thing.

TS: Right. Now that you're conveniently retired, I wondered if you'd talk a little bit about the Pink Lady's Slipper controversy and the environmental record of Kennesaw State.

EB: Well, I was in on the Pink Lady's Slipper thing. That happened in my final few years here at Kennesaw. For years we didn't know about the fact that there was a colony of Pink Lady's Slippers that existed on the hillside in the piney woods behind what's now the science building. That was an area that in the past had been used sort of as a lover's lane back in junior college days. It was also used at one time for a course that Toby [Eleanor T.] Hopper, a former PE instructor and dean of students, had used for a camping course. There used to be a campsite up there with lots of sort of model fire pits and log areas. It was also the place where our famous hermit of Kennesaw Junior College lived for an entire year, Mike Goldberg. But it was not that many years ago that we discovered this patch of Lady's Slippers. How I didn't see that, I don't know, but it was there. And then I was appointed chair of the department to locate a site for the new science building. I can't remember who else was on the committee. [G.] Russell Akridge of physics was on it, and we looked at several sites.

TS: Russell was the one that taught the course with Gird Romer.

EB: Right. One of the sites was the present location. It was kind of like recommending faculty members. You don't really say who your top choice is; you just give them a list.

TS: Right. These are places that would be safe to put a building.

EB: Our choice was not the current site. Our actual top choice is the location where the police department is.

TS: The temporary building.

EB: Yes, there are some temporary buildings . . .

TS: Which would be right down from the old science building, the Nursing Building now.

EB: But anyway, it got built there, which didn't bother the Lady's Slippers, but then the thing that came with the Lady's Slippers was the construction of dormitories. We were afraid we were going to lose part of the Arboretum, which is actually outside of the boundary.

TS: We might want to talk about the Arboretum later on because you were instrumental in getting that started, too, weren't you?

EB: It's dedicated to Mary Lance and me.

TS: Well, we need to give you a chance to talk about it.

EB: I love to park there because I can read my name on it! [laughter]

TS: At any rate, you were afraid you were going to lose that Arboretum, or at least part of it, to the residence halls, but the Pink Lady's Slippers were beyond there, weren't they?

EB: Well, some of them were impacted. But the thing is the Pink Lady's Slippers are not really all that rare. Had they been yellow, we would have been really screaming. The fact is that a few Lady's Slippers were destroyed by the dorms. They were the kind of the outliers of the population.

TS: But some of them are still there?

EB: Some are still there. So the population wasn't destroyed. But like all these things, you resist it as much as you can. You expect to lose some. There was quite a controversy about that for awhile—a lot of criticism of the university's clearing. One university administrator figure said that for every tree we cut down, we replaced it with a tree—which is fine, except all the trees they used were Bradford pears.

TS: Right. You cut down a big tree and replaced it with a three-inch in diameter tree or whatever, I guess.

EB: We taught a course . . . I did do team teaching; you asked that question awhile back. I did do a team-teaching course with R.C. [Robert] Paul. It was a packaged program on environmental assessment of the university. It was a special topics course, and it was basically a manual that the students would fill out and assess the university's progress in such things as waste management, natural areas, and a number of other things. Each team of students was assigned one particular thing to report. This would have been in the early 1980s or something like that. Their report was very dismal in most categories.

TS: In the early '80s?

EB: Right.

TS: And it would probably be even more dismal today, do you think? Or is that a leading question? Would you say it would be better today or worse?

EB: I think we are probably worse. One thing I've noticed is that the waste management—solid waste—paper, plastic, glass, metal—is not working.

TS: It's not?

EB: No. First of all, the users don't pay attention. But, apparently, everything gets dumped in the same bin when the custodians pick it up out of offices and such.

TS: So we've got all these nice little compartmentalized bins around campus and . . .?

EB: The last time I heard it was not working very well.

TS: That's too bad. We've done so much construction around campus, and we're not through yet.

EB: The campus is being bricked over. It's pretty. It's beautiful. The campus is much more attractive now than it used to be [as far as] places to sit and study and meditate and socialize—benches and swings and shady places. It looks nice. And again, that's sort of Betty—although I can be a little critical there. I don't know if you remember this: We used to have a wildflower field out where the soccer field [currently] is. There was a time we had a director of grounds that was kind of wild and crazy. He sowed that field with wildflowers, and apparently it was too unkempt.

DY: That was that horticulturalist that we had.

EB: Yes, but he didn't last long.

DY: No, he didn't last long did he? I remember him. He was wonderful, and it was just looking beautiful.

EB: Yes. I remember leaving the campus one day, and I saw these two students out there, young women, picking armloads of those flowers. I pulled up and yelled at them, "Stop stealing the college's flowers!" They looked up at me and said, "It's okay; we're students." [laughter]

DY: What a great response! That's fabulous. I remember that wildflower area.

EB: It was too sloppy looking. It was not manicured enough.

TS: Well, I've heard rumors that universities are supposed to have an environmental literacy campaign. Have you heard anything about that, or do you know anything about that?

EB: No, I haven't heard anything about that. The person that would know about that is R. C. Paul in our department because he is much more aware of that than I am. I'm drawing a blank on that one. Environmental literacy?

TS: Yes.

EB: There was a period of time in the '80s when the regents mandated that every university and college in the university system offer a course in environmental issues. That was the impetus to develop this Earth Watch course that I taught back then, which is still being offered, sort of, as the second semester of our freshman interdisciplinary course [SCI 1102—Science, Society and the Environment II]. It's what I'm teaching right now, so there's that.

TS: That may have been it then.

EB: But not all of our students take that. I guess all non-science majors take it.

DY: Are you talking about the Science 1101 and 1102.

EB: Yes, 1102 is essentially an environmental issues course.

DY: Yes, I team-taught with Gail [B.] . . .

EB: Schiffer.

DY: Thank you! I did English 1102, and she did the Science 1102. I chose readings that were complementary environmental readings.

EB: Yes, [Rachel Carson's classic,] *Silent Spring* probably.

TS: Dede and I are doing Georgia History, Georgia Literature together; we have been for the last ten years. This last time we used *The Ecology of a Cracker Childhood* by Janisse Ray. We put a lot of environmental stuff in the class, and it went over very well, I think.

DY: Students are receptive. I mean, as you know, it goes in stages or waves or generations. This generation has somehow heard, "pave paradise and put up a parking lot" [from Joni Mitchell's song, *Big Yellow Taxi*]. It got into their heads, and they're aware that maybe that's what they're going to inherit—a parking lot.

EB: The students that I see these days are dreadfully dull—boring. They don't seem to care about much in the way of issues. Those are the ones I see. Maybe you see it differently in your areas, but I don't see people passionate about much of anything.

DY: Well, these are upper-level classes, and that might make a difference.

TS: So you're talking about Science 1102. You're saying you don't think the students are as committed now as they used to be?

EB: Right—to much of anything. I compare [them to] students that I had in the '60s. We know what it was like. It was sex, drugs, and rock-n-roll, but it was also a passion about . . .

DY: Well, exactly. These students are not out in the streets about this war [war in Iraq], for one thing.

EB: That or ecology or whatever.

DY: Right.

EB: Whatever. I don't care what it is as long as there's a "whatever" that they get passionate about. But they don't seem to be passionate about anything.

TS: What about the faculty these days? How would you describe the change of the intellectual climate, students and faculty, toward the end of your career? I forget now, was it 2002 or 2003 that you retired?

EB: I think it was 2003.

TS: So it's been about two years because you retired at the end of a fall semester, didn't you?

EB: No, I waited until June. I was going to retire at the end of the fall, but something happened. Somebody asked me to teach a special course, and so I decided to stay on for another semester.

TS: At any rate, it hasn't been long. How would you describe the intellectual climate?

EB: First of all, when I come into my department, I don't recognize most of the people. Of course, they're all new; we're growing so fast. They're hiring nine new people this year. This is biology and physics together, so half the people I don't know anymore. The people that they're hiring are much more research[-oriented]. They've got to have those credentials. They give that seminar; they've got to have a dossier that shows that they're going to be productive research-wise. That's quite different from the past. Teaching hopefully is still the strong point. They still have to make that presentation. Hopefully, they can get some nugget out of that. I'm sure they're asked a lot of questions in the interview process about teaching philosophies and such things as that, but they are much stronger research-oriented. That's what I see.

TS: I think that's what we hear [from] everywhere on campus these days.

EB: That was fairly irrelevant in junior college days and probably wasn't really encouraged. The only person that I know in junior college days that kept up a strong research program, at least in my area, was Patti [Patricia H.] Reggio. She was the master pioneer of being able to balance good teaching with a powerful research program.

TS: You have some interesting people over there like Bill [William E.] Ensign and Joe Dirnberger, [whom] you mentioned earlier.

EB: Dirnberger has got a really strong program going on lake water quality. He serves on a lot of boards and committees that watch over water quality throughout the Southeast.

TS: Ensign seems to be doing a lot of ecology, too.

EB: Yes. My nickname for him is "Fishboy." He's a fish biologist, so he's also into the same area. I'm trying to get him to come up to Bartow to look for some of our endangered species in some of our springs.

TS: You were talking about your greater emphasis on history now that you've retired. Of course, you married one of our history graduates and bought an historic house in downtown Cartersville. You might say a word or two about that. And then [you] went through a fire about a year ago.

EB: Yes. I married Connie—Connie Esposito was her name at that time—in 1986, and we lived in Woodstock for awhile. Then we bought this house in Cartersville. It's a 1905 house—it's a historic home that used to be owned by one of the two Young brothers who were early pharmacists in Cartersville. Their pharmacy still exists with the famous Coca-Cola sign—the first Coca-Cola outdoor advertising.

It's constantly being renewed up there. We had a fire two years ago when we were burned out but not burned down. The house has been rebuilt, so we're fine. We're both active in a lot of volunteer work around the community. Like I said, I've been involved in the Etowah Mounds and the Green Space and the Pettit Environmental Preserve, and I'm also on the board of directors of the Friends of the Library.

TS: Are you doing anything with the Weinman Mineral Museum?

EB: Well, we're members of that. When I teach geology or earth science, I always take students on a visit to the Weinman. The Weinman is currently expanding to three times its [original] size. We have an "unknown benefactor," which is what he likes to call himself in Cartersville. Of course, everybody knows who he is. He made a fortune in early cable television, so he's back and retired and spending lots of money on benevolent causes. So he funds the mineral museum, the [Bartow] History Center, the Booth [Western] Art Museum, the science resource center and a number of other worthy causes in Cartersville. He's unpretentious, but whenever the headlines in the local paper say, "Unknown donor tops off the Empty Stocking Fund," you know that he's been in action.

TS: Kind of the Bob Woodruff of Bartow County.

EB: But I've gotten interested in local history. We're both members of the Etowah Valley Historical Society. I have been researching and trying to get them to publish my article on lynching in Bartow County because apparently it's still a sensitive topic.

TS: How many lynchings did you find?

EB: Three.

DY: What was the date of the last one?

EB: It was 1930. It was a man who was accused of murdering the local police chief. He probably did, but it was a big manhunt. There are still people in town that I've talk to that remember going down and seeing the body as it hanged on the outskirts of town.

TS: Were these all black men that were hanged?

EB: Yes, they were all black men. [I've been] researching a case of the only white woman lynched in Georgia. It was an interesting case up in northwest Georgia that I'm still trying to get some details on.

TS: What county?

EB: Catoosa, I believe. She and her lover were hanged over near Centre, Alabama, for killing the man's wife. But not many white women were lynched, so it's a real odd case.

TS: Right. So you've certainly stayed busy.

EB: Yes. I'm trying to travel some. The other big thing in my career was teaching in the Studies Abroad Program in France in the summer of 1997. The [Georgia] University System Studies Abroad Program. Georgia Tech has a small, one-building campus and one dormitory in the town of Metz in eastern France, near Strasbourg. So a group of about eighty students from the university system went there with faculty members from Kennesaw and other institutions—Valdosta, Augusta, Dalton. I taught Environmental Issues and general biology, and Connie was able to go with me at our own cost. We had a great time over there. It's something I keep pushing on students. I tell them if they can, go to study abroad. It was an educational experience for everybody as well as an experience with coping with a foreign country and with other people, including your own student body.

DY: Did you pick up French or know French?

EB: I'm good at languages so I can pick up tourist language quick. I can make my wishes known and order meals and ask directions, but I'm not good at hearing when they talk back. I can read quickly and I can speak quickly, but I can't hear quickly because they're always too fast and idiomatic. I don't have the rhythm. But I picked up enough French to try; most of us can do that in just a few days. They'll laugh at you a lot, but it gets you along a lot better in France if you try, rather than force English on them; they don't like that. They're snooty about that.

TS: You had talked at the beginning of the interview about your mentors along the way. Have you been able to play a mentor role, do you think, with younger faculty and students as the years have gone by?

EB: There were a few directed-study students that still phone me and tell me that I had a big effect on them, that they got their job because of some directed study they did. Faculty members, if I [had an impact], I don't know it. It was not a mentoring kind of relationship. There have been lots of them, I guess, that have asked me for advice—or I've given it without them asking for it—but I don't remember anything very recognizable as sort of a coach or anything like that. We tend not to do that much in our department. We don't formalize those kinds of things. I don't know how it works in other departments, but I know in some places they may even assign people to you to . . .

TS: We did that at one time, but it didn't last that long.

EB: I remember there was a time back in the days of faculty workshops, when we had little brothers and little sisters. I was Mary Bumgarner's big brother. She never asked me for any advice from the word go! It was just a sham. We're not going to talk about faculty workshops, are we?

TS: Well, I was actually thinking whether there are any stories that are fit to print of some of those faculty, off-campus gatherings that we used to have.

EB: Most of them, you're right; you don't talk about them except in private conversations. The legendary one was the first one when we went to Rock Eagle, a 4-H camp down near Madison. Don [Donald J.] Fay and I were in charge of room assignments. We were trying to mix the cabins as far as the schools. We were trying to get some from science, some from social studies, some from administration, some from humanities. It was a real mix. And then [we had to] separate the men from the women and that kind of thing. So it was a real roulette system. Most of the people were trying to avoid being housed with Dr. Sturgis because that was just something you didn't want. It was a matter of smuggling in enough beer behind his back because he didn't approve of that. The thing that most of us remember from that one is that there were hired consultants from West Georgia, two professors that were hired to come in and put us through our paces and play psychological games with encounters and ice-breaking. One of them was Newt Gingrich, who was then a professor. They put us through a day of what we thought were silly games. Our intent was to talk to Dr. Sturgis about some problems. We wanted to confront him with some issues, and that wasn't happening; we were just meeting each other and playing funny group games. So the next day when the morning session began, Newt and Darrell—I think was his name—announced that we would split into small groups and start to do some other kind of games. Charley Dobson, a physics professor at the time who was extremely reserved and shy—we sometimes called him "Mr. Peepers"—belligerently stood up and said, "No, we're not." He strode mightily forward and actually body-checked Newt Gingrich off the podium and took over the meeting. He said, "We're not going to do this any more. We're going to talk about things that we want to talk about." We proceeded to do just that. It was a landmark as far as I was concerned; it was a big shock. It was great.

DY: What were some of your concerns?

EB: I don't even remember. Dr. Sturgis tended to exercise his veto a little bit too openly, shall we say, and I gained a reputation of confrontation with him. Early on I was working on the Committee for Faculty Evaluations—student evaluations of faculty—and we had spent an entire quarter devising some sort of elaborate scheme. He heard about it and told us right off the bat that he would veto this, and we felt like we had been wasting our time. So I pranced into his office demanding an audience with him and asked him if he would prefer in the future to just write down what he wanted, and we would say, "Okay," and send it back to him. There was a long thoughtful pause before he answered, "No, that's not

really what I want to happen." But I got the impression that that might have really been what he wanted. [laughter]

TS: That he was seriously considering it.

EB: He was considering it. I gained a reputation of being a little confrontational because of that episode.

DY: Did you ever serve on Senate or do anything in that area?

EB: I was chair of the Faculty Senate for one year, not very effectively because I'm not a very good manager of people or very good at delegating authority. I think I was elected to that because I had just gotten the teaching award.

TS: There are certain punishments for winning the teaching award, and that was one of them.

EB: There was a window of about six years where winning the teaching award meant not only did you get all the glory that went with that and the $1,000 prize, but there was also a $10,000 grant administered by the Board of Regents to be used for a project.

TS: You were talking about your project earlier. That's what you got?

EB: That's why I worked on all that interdisciplinary stuff. I think some of it got into the classroom, but that dried up after a while. There were only about six years when that was available to people. I don't know what other people did with that, but it was a little bit of time release, I think, that was involved with it.

TS: That was good.

EB: I think I worked on a project that had to do with applying a measurement that we use in ecology for measuring biological diversity to measuring language diversity. I've always been interested in languages and linguistics.

TS: What did you find?

EB: That you could do that. When you calculate a language diversity index for various countries—and I did every country in the world—essentially, the more isolated and third-world the country is the higher their diversity, which is what you would expect.

DY: Well, Ed had mentioned earlier—or you did, Tom—that you wanted to talk about the Arboretum?

TS: Yes, why don't you talk about how that came about?

EB: Well, for those who don't know what an arboretum is—and most people don't—it's either a formal sort of botanical garden—the word arboretum comes from the word tree—where you collect exotic specimens of various trees and plant them as a show case; that's the expensive and difficult way. Or the other is just a natural area, and you say this is our arboretum. That's the way we did it at Kennesaw. It came about really through the idea of Mary Lance, who was a pioneer or first faculty member of Kennesaw Junior College.

TS: Charter faculty member.

EB: Charter faculty member is the word I am looking for. I was part of it, but I think Mary should get most of the credit for it. It was a bicentennial 1976 project. That particular tract of land next to the current science building was dedicated in a bicentennial ceremony. Somehow I got some credit for that although Mary deserves most of it. I think I was just sort of on a committee or something like that. That area has been set aside as a natural area for teaching and relaxation, and I don't think most people know about it. I think students are finding out more about it now that the dormitories are up that way. They use it as a pathway, which is fine with me. Hopefully they're using it as a place to meditate because there's a nice little patio in there where I got married.

TS: Oh.

EB: Connie and I were married there in 1986. The minister in charge was [the Reverend] Ledies Bargo, Martha Bargo's husband, as a matter of fact. There was a little patio in there, and we thought it would be an appropriate place.

TS: Martha [W.] Bargo was in the English faculty at that time.

EB: Right. The arboretum that I'm familiar with is the famous one at Chapel Hill. It was a famous or notorious lover's lane for many years. I've always halfway hoped that this one would become the same. It would be a nice place.

DY: It may!

TS: Who knows?

EB: Who knows? But it has potential. We use it not as much as we should in the biology department. I'm afraid if we don't use it a lot for student field trips that we might lose it with construction going the way it is. We'll fight that tooth and nail. I don't have a say in it anymore. I presume I will since my name is on it, but I'm sure that the biology department will fight that strongly if that ever comes up. I worry about that because again it's "use it or lose it."

TS: Well, we've asked a lot of people what they're proudest of in terms of accomplishments while they've been here; what about with you?

EB: Personally, I'm proudest of winning that teaching award. You may say the same thing. I don't know. You won it, too, didn't you?

TS: Yes. They weren't giving us $10,000 when I got it.

EB: No, you came earlier on and again, people who came later didn't get it either. It was about six years when that program existed.

TS: You got it in '97, and I got it in '94, so about three years apart.

EB: That's a personal thing. I guess I'm just really proud of the relationships that I had with people here, the friends that I made. That sounds kind of maudlin and sentimental.

DY: No, it doesn't. That's what lasts.

EB: Like I said, I don't make friends easily, and I don't really have many friends other than at Kennesaw. That's probably a shame; you should be more wide-ranging in your choice of friends and your social life and things like that, but it's just where my friendships were made. There's a real strong bond. Some of us who are retired maintain those friendships. I'm still very strong friends with Pam Rhyne and her husband.

TS: Where is she now?

EB: Well, among their many travels and their two homes that they own—one on Lake Hartwell, where they spend their summers, and they live in Woodstock.

TS: Do they? I haven't seen her in a long time.

EB: Gail Schiffer is in Charleston now—Garden City, a suburb of Charleston.

TS: Well, Pam must have retired before you, didn't she?

EB: She did, I think. She's never coming back. She's not interested in teaching anymore. She burned out. I still enjoy the teaching, and I'm happy not to be on the committees.

DY: I can understand that.

TS: Anything else?

DY: I don't have anything else to ask. I've enjoyed it immensely, Ed.

TS: We oftentimes ask people why they've stayed, but I think you've answered it.

DY: I think he has.

EB: I never tried to leave. I think I found my niche, and I was successful here.

DY: Indeed you were.

EB: And I don't think I would have been successful in a lot of other places because [Kennesaw] just fit me to a tee.

TS: Yes. Well, we appreciate the interview today. Anything we should add?

EB: Nothing I know of. Nothing we can talk about on tape! [laughter] There are lots of stories about those faculty retreats.

TS: We need to do some tapes, I guess, with a twenty-five year hold on them maybe. I've heard some of those stories; we'll have to write some of them down, I guess.

EB: As a matter of fact, those ended when Betty came because she saw them as a waste of time, which they probably were. Except for the socialization that went on; that was a good thing. But the sham of trying to pretend that there was some kind of an agenda . . .

TS: I must confess I did my best to avoid as many of them as I could. I went to a few, but I didn't go to that many.

EB: It was supposed to be required, Tom.

TS: Well, I know. But I got excused somehow or other.

EB: Is the tape still on?

TS: Yes, but I'm going to turn it off right now. Thanks for the interview, Ed.

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