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## Brown, DeMarcus Oral History Interview

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FACULTY EMERITI INTERVIEWS  
UNIVERSITY OF THE PACIFIC ARCHIVES



**DeMarcus Brown**  
**Pacific Theater/Drama Dept., 1926-70**

By Jerry Briscoe  
November 18, 1994

Additions and Corrections Added February 19, 1996

**UOP ARCHIVES FACULTY EMERITI INTERVIEWS  
BROWN (DEMARCUS), 1926-1970  
NOVEMBER 18, 1994  
[TAPE 1, Side A]  
[Begin Tape.]**

BRISCOE: This is an interview with Professor De Marcus Brown, who is probably the father of little theater in the city of Stockton and probably the father of the Fallon House and the Drama Department of the University of the Pacific.

BROWN: That's correct, the whole regime started with Tully Knoles. I am flattered to look back on it that he hired me when I graduated from college and said, "When we move to the new campus over in the valley (some far away place) I want you to head the theater there." As I look back on it, it was amazing. Because I was pretty green and full of punch that young guys are and I had a remarkable background for it, because I was able to study with the founder of the whole little theater movement in America, Morris Brown, and his marvelous actress wife Ellen Van Volkenberg.

I went to theater school with some great names in the American theater, and I was green and wide-eyed and gulped in that in a big way. I had the background of the little theater training to propel me into the little theater movement as it was called at that time. It has gone through a number of phases, and it is now called regional theater, and the whole picture has changed. It is enormous compared to the beginning which was quite simple. So, Tully said I could do anything I wanted with theater. He was a Puritan (Personally he could tell some dirty stories) about speech and language and so forth. He said, "You can do anything you want, as long as it doesn't cost anything," so I was given form the very beginning, something which I was cursed with later and blamed for many years later. One of those Methodist surveys came around and said it was too commercial.

BRISCOE: So you had to make with the theater.

BROWN: And I think it was the best thing that could happen. You couldn't fool around with obscene, fancy things. You had to give people what they wanted to see, and we started that basis of a "clean" program of theater, contemporary and classic, and Stockton had for my 44 years a big dose of it.

BRISCOE: Well, good. Was there prudishness in Stockton any different form Sacramento or San Jose?

BROWN: No, I don't think so. The whole attitude has changed. Foul language has become an everyday occurrence and nobody notices. Incredible things are said in movies now, which the public would have had fits over. It's true anywhere.

BRISCOE: You met Knoles when the college was still in San Jose?

BROWN: Yes, I was a student and he was the President.

BRISCOE: I see.

BROWN: The campus was a small, provincial (unclear). Nobody should turn their nose up at being provincial. It can be very warm and pleasant and human. I had to figure out that the "Old Pacific" was a human place. The new Pacific is plastic.

BRISCOE: (Laughs) That's good to hear.

BROWN: So are most institutions.

BRISCOE: Let me get back to how it was, because, when you said it was small and human. You were an undergraduate student in San Jose, and then you went off to the theater school for graduate work.

BROWN: I went to New York and the American Academy, and to San Francisco, to the theater school there. There were marvelous people. The faculty were an extraordinary group. I was elected to represent the students of the group with the faculty, so I got to have dinner with them at Papa Coppolis' on Kearney Street. We had regular meetings. I was able to know them then, and the nice thing about it was Papa Coppolis was a friend of the arts, and I could go and have dinner with them and have spaghetti for 35 cents!

BRISCOE: (Laughs)

BROWN: Which was all I could afford. I lived on a hundred dollars a month, which my aunt gave me each month. She sent me a check for \$100.00, and I paid for my apartment and all my expenses with that \$100.00.

BRISCOE: Really unusual. You're lucky. Probably you knew they were going to move over here in 1924, and you made contact after the graduate schools that you were on the faculty. What did the faculty think of Stockton when you first came over?

BROWN: Interesting thing. This area around here called Pacific Manor, was purchased by a group of faculty and subdivided. There was a time when practically all the people living in Pacific Manor were faculty. Now there are only two or three. They've all moved to far away places. They have modern transportation.

BRISCOE: That's true. This is a nice neighborhood.

BROWN: And I lived here where my wife could look out the kitchen window and see me when I came off the steps of the Conservatory Building for lunch.

Briscoe: So you were rehearsing in the Conservatory?

Brown: It was a joint venture. I look back on it with amazement. I'm a tough old bird now, but in those days – I can't believe the arrogance that I had and maintained and succeeded. We lived in very uncomfortable circumstances, because the space everybody wanted in all the time, and, I won the battle. The Conservatory had it until four in the afternoon. At four o'clock, the theater took over. We had until eleven at night.

BRISCOE: Until 11! In addition to teaching classes during the day?

BROWN: Oh, yes, and running the art department, because I was the Chairman of the Art Department, because along the way, Tully asked me if I would take over because Miss Booth, who was very elderly and a little confused by the whole thing and a bit of a problem, and I had the ghastly job of being the liaison between the administration and Miss Booth and getting the department going. That was the lesson in diplomacy, I can tell you!

BRISCOE: Well, maybe you can tell me some more about your neighbors here. We're on Knoles now.

BROWN: Knoles Way, named for Tully. And I remember Professor Webster, who built the house next door before my house was built. He was the head of psychology. Dr. Gustav Werner had a house across the street. The fourth generation of little Werners are living there now. His great great grandchildren are there. So the old names of the principal characters. The faculty that came over had a devotion to Pacific which was unique, when you think about it. All these people sold their houses in San Jose, and came over to rough circumstances of new adventure and built houses and picked their life over here.

BRISCOE: That's interesting to me, because you dealt with the community in the theater, and there must have been some theater people here that were very happy that you did come.

BROWN: Oh, yes, and you see, I look back on it, took it for granted at the time, you know, you're so busy with the job, you don't look out to see what you're really doing sometimes. And so I was given this challenge by Tully, to develop a community connection. He was very interested in that and the whole - - I look back on the years – Pacific was a foreign object in the area. The town was pretty tightly divided. There was a very strong (times have changed greatly) Catholic attitude and Methodist college was the opposite of that, and so there were those two factions plus some incredibly corrupt City Council kind of arrangement. It's no different now. I think it is. It used to be much worse. And so we had the job of introducing to this community Ibsen, the Greek Euripedes, Shakespeare, contemporary plays, all that and we drew an audience.

BRISCOE: You were the little theater of Stockton. There was no competing little theater?

BROWN: No, no competing. Stockton high school did the School Play, and I got some people from the school plays out to Pacific, and we developed a kind of a nucleus. There were no majors. Majors were a thing of the future.

BRISCOE: Well, I understand there are no majors in theater at Yale or Harvard. They do it all on their own...

BROWN: That's true. When I get irritated with the fact that theater has taken such a downward turn at Pacific, then all I have to do is look around. It's true everywhere. Northwestern was the dominant persona. The Yale theater was it, and all those have gone down. UCLA is the only one I know that is really strong..

BRISCOE: That's amazing

BROWN: Seattle is no longer. It had a time of many theaters in Washington. That's lost too. It's part of the turn of... We saw the rise of the radio and the decline of attendance. People stayed home to hear Amos and Andy or something or other and didn't go to the theater, and the cry arose of "The death of the theater"... You know it is called "the Magnificent Invalid": It's always dying but it never dies. And then, the revival, then came television and you had to compete, and then, I think, the turn – it's beginning to swing.

BRISCOE: So real live theater - -

BROWN: There's a lot of live theater everywhere now. Community theater and I'm positive that it'll come up in another form, and another way, because it is not going to stop. And so some of those plays we did were kind of a dose to this semi-rural community.

BRISCOE: So the Ibsen or some of the others were pretty strong material?

BROWN: Sure, pretty strong stuff. And through the years I provided the City of Stockton (the community in the college moved along) but the people who stayed here have seen an enormous sweep of classic and pretty good theater and some pretty terrible things.

BRISCOE: The light ones that draw the big crowds are just what they are supposed to be: fun.

BROWN: I learned my lesson though. I learned that trivial little things some of the things that I thought to be crowd pleasers didn't draw very well.

BRISCOE: Oh? I thought the reverse, but it's not true.

BROWN: They saw that they were thin and trivial, and no matter how hard you tried to do them they weren't any good. You know we have a list of plays we did through the years. (Shows list)

BRISCOE: "The Doll's House"

BROWN: The Torval in “The Doll’s House” became a star at the Metropolitan Opera. So you see even then I was sending people on their way to careers. (see below)

BRISCOE: How neat! And the attitude people took. I thought that the people in Stockton would be more interested in vaudeville than in heavy theater, but that isn’t true. They came out.

BROWN: Yes, they came and they sat in those hard seats in those years. I never did have the luxury of having a decent seat.

BRISCOE: I’m thinking of the little theater on Pacific Avenue that you had for a while.

BROWN: The Playbox. Now that, to me, of all my many productions, that was the most pleasant experience. I was happier and enjoyed myself more my last years at the Playbox than I did anywhere else because it was so pleasant and intimate. We didn’t have to work so hard to be heard and understood.

BRISCOE: That’s right, no mikes. It was theater in the round.

BROWN: No mikes. Oh Lord! I’m one of those old fashioned guys that doesn’t want a mike. My former students have come back, some of them up into their eighties, believe it or not. They all talk about diction and how I made them to be understood. Because the acoustics over here in the auditorium weren’t that good. It was way too big.

BRISCOE: So for which years you were in the auditorium (Now Faye Spanos Hall) which seated hundreds of people - -

BROWN: Twelve hundred, roughly.

BRISCOE: Did you fill that?

BROWN: We have been known to. We have been able to sell it out, and we used to play double weekends. An appalling thought. For “Arsenic and Old Lace” We’d sell it out for four nights! That’s five thousand people.

BRISCOE: That’s a lot.

BROWN: That is a lot. It was a wonderful production. We had wonderful people. One of the reasons for that is that we had such a variety of people that worked in the theater who were not theater majors. Carlos Wood in the early days was an engineering student who went to Cal Tech. He skipped his graduation at Cal Tech to come up and light a show for me.

BRISCOE: How nice.

BROWN: He came back. He was able to work with the feeble lighting equipment that we had, but he was never a theater major. He was an engineering major.

BRISCOE: So did you have to buy your equipment from the take of the theater? You didn't have very much in the way of annual budget for equipment.

BROWN: Oh, no. We bought everything and we contributed to the auditorium. I paid for the carpet in the aisles. We put drapes in the windows and we paid that bill. We had to pay for everything. So my wife used to say that we spent part of the time straightening nails so we could use them over a second time. We were so tight for funds. It was a good thing in many ways that we were. One of the things that was a contributing force was that I had a double major in college... I was an art major and a theater major. I had a background in design and I covered up our weaknesses and bad performances with good-looking sets.

BRISCOE: That's very good. You designed your own.

BROWN: I did a program for half century club a year or so ago, reminiscing about and showing on slides all the plays for the first ten or fifteen years, and they made a video and put it together and I did the narration. When I saw the continuity of the pictures, I said I had a style. I didn't know I had style. Something I repeated and it worked very well.

BRISCOE: Someone could do a thesis on that, having all those slides from those years.

BROWN: There are a few holes: Some sticky fingers got some pictures along the way. But there's a terrific file stuck away over in the archives of photographs of every show from number one on.

BRISCOE: It's a good thing that they kept that. I'm glad that you did keep those pictures.

BROWN: It was almost lost. It was hidden away in the basement of the education building for heaven sakes! It should be taken care of but there is no money to file it properly.

BRISCOE: Preserving 35 millimeter slides is a difficult thing. After a few years if they were color slides...

BROWN: These were 8X10 glossies. Too late for me to identify them. I didn't want to do it. It's too much work. So, I think they will go.

BRISCOE: We could put some people to work on it. There would be some people who go back pretty far. Evelyn Start is a person who was at the University in the 1930 and I don't know many others that go that far back that are still in town, but we can find some people who knew the people on campus.

BROWN: It would be pretty hard.

BRISCOE: Let me ask some questions about the city politics of Stockton. You said that it had a reputation for corruption and it certainly did during the thirties. There was sort of an “open town” psychology downtown from what I heard. Did that bleed over on campus? The kids from the campus were sort of told not to go downtown?

BROWN: Yes, there was conflict in the early days, and I bear a scar on my lip to this day to testify it. The first year I was married we lived up on Pacific Avenue in what is now a fraternity house. Half of it was a duplex and we lived there and there was the town and gown battle. The fraternity guys on the campus side; and the town gang would be on the Pacific Avenue side and I walked across campus with a group of girls going to a sorority house. We encountered this gang I got knocked down, my mouth cut in that big brouhaha. Oh, Lord, we went to court, and I had to testify and it was part of the battle between the two groups.

BRISCOE: But that group, if they were just young thoughts, they were not representative of the Martins and the fine people of Stockton. They were just people who didn't like the idée of a college.

BROWN: They didn't like the young students, you know the different superiority of students, the arrogance of students which is always prevalent. It's part of their being. It was a precursor of gangs.

BRISCOE: I suppose you're right. Do you recall what year this fracas took place?

BROWN: Yes, about '27.

BRISCOE: So you hadn't been in town very long.

BROWN: Yes, '26 or '27

BRISCOE: But there have been fights in other communities.

BROWN: Yes, the same thing happened. It's prevalent, part of the growing pains of the community, adjusting to a very foreign attitude and perhaps to foreign individuals. The haves and have-nots kind of thing.

BRISCOE: Now, the Chamber of Commerce people of Stockton were very glad you came.

BROWN: And one of the things that I want to note. This happened through the years: A great deal of emphasis put on at the time on faculty people participating on all kinds of events. It amazes me to think back. I remember doing a series of Sunday evening church services at the First Congregational Church, not the present one but the old one. I did the one on contemporary poetry. Tully, of course, was a great speaker. And Dr. Werner, they love to have him. Luncheon clubs, however, were not my thing. Tully never forgave me

because I wouldn't join the Rotary Club. It wasn't for me. I said, I couldn't afford it. I couldn't afford the time. I could take time off from work to go to lunch every week. That was a joke.

BRISCOE: President McCaffrey had almost every administrator of rank signed up to Rotary.

BROWN: Of course, I was proven right, you can't do both jobs. You can't be – It's not possible. And that's what I said about my job I couldn't give up.

BRISCOE: You had to use every minute of every day to keep up.

BROWN: It was part of the mystique. You know my friend, Jake (Harold Jacoby), we have talked about the caliber of the faculty. We've not argued, just discussed it. I would say, you know in the old routine: "How many Ph. D's have the success with students?" Some of these people didn't have the Ph. D., but they had a darn-sight more on the ball.

BRISCOE: It's having energy.

BROWN: It's spirit. And so these people. I've admitted now, my almost 95 years. I was the fair-haired boy of Tully and of the faculty. Lucy had been a prominent student. She was named the head of the AWS students. She was a sorority president. She was the first teacher placed out of the education department on Stockton Schools. And we were part. Tully boasted of being the Pacific Family. I got to be we were two of the in-laws.

BRISCOE: Well, I noticed that when we first got here in the sixties, they were still doing a university picnic in the fall and they were introducing the new people, in a very florid way. The Department Chairs would introduce their new faculty members and I thought that was a nice institution, but they don't do it now.

BROWN: Tully was famous for some kind of stew. Once a year he would make this enormous amount of spicy stew. He got a lot of help on it, but he wouldn't confess that, and it was for everybody. And at Christmas time, the Christmas party for the faculty children was marvelous!

BRISCOE: That's interesting. I didn't realize there was one.

BROWN: And all the faculty kids. There were a gang of them. They all grew up together. All the faculty kids lived here.

BRISCOE: That's true. You would have gone to the same school.

BROWN: There were seventeen kids in this block. A lot of them were the faculty, or like Dr. Sutton's. Anyway being bigger isn't always being better.

BRISCOE: You were probably aware that Dr. Burns planned to open fifteen new colleges in fifteen years. The ambition was there to try to keep the smallness by having small colleges, but to try to also become financially strong. Each college had its own problems, I suppose, but experimental colleges have faded out on almost every other campus.

BROWN: It was just something that couldn't be. There is no use to bemoan change. Change is essential. Clinton says we're going to have some change, and that hasn't worked either.

BRISCOE: (laughs) He wasn't able to get much through. (Medical Plan)

BROWN: The faculty spirit was wonderfully cooperative. People don't know that came depression, I am one of those critters left that can remember, some months we didn't get any - - Two months we didn't get any salary.

BRISCOE: So they could not make their payroll.

BROWN: There was no money to make the payroll, so we didn't get any money.

BRISCOE: Well, I heard that people were so desperate for jobs that they even applied to the university saying that they would work for room and board. There were some desperate faculty all over the United States at that time.

BROWN: There was a man down on the corner at Pacific Avenue who had a grocery store, Mr. Declusin. He carried us. We couldn't pay our grocery bills, even with lettuce five cents a head.

BRISCOE: That's amazing, that he was willing to...

BROWN: We couldn't pay up our grocery bill. So all kinds of things were done on campus to make it easier for faculty.

BRISCOE: Did you have lunch with other faculty or any other such arrangements.

BROWN: No. That wasn't done.

BRISCOE: They ate at home.

BROWN: Local ones ate in the dining hall. There was just one dining hall. Students did the serving and work. And the dining hall was for everybody. The faculty would just salt and pepper in with the students and the various ones that ate there regularly.

BRISCOE: Do you recall Paul Schilpp?

BROWN: Very definitely. Very close friend of Paul's. Paul was always going, when he went back to Chicago, (Northwestern University) he was always going to get me an

honorary doctorate. That was his idea, but he never got around to it. Of course I'm grateful. I got one. Not that it means much, but I got it.

BRISCOE: I was at Northwestern when he taught there, and he was wild man. He spoke well, but for Northwestern he was both a Socialist and a pacifist in a time right after World War II.

BROWN: Neither one were popular.

BRISCOE: He stepped right up. He was very vigorous about that.

BROWN: He and Tully were great friends and adversaries and arguers many times. Yes Paul Schilpp was one of the most colorful faculty members we ever had.

BRISCOE: At the time he was here, Birdie Esser - - She was not Birdie Esser, but...

BROWN: Birdie Mitchell. She was housemother at Theta.

BRISCOE: She spoke about Paul. She knew him very well. I was interested because he had first taught here, and then eventually taught at Northwestern. I think that's where he ended his career.

BROWN: I'll go back to one thing about the community. Tully was instrumental in all of us participating. I did women's clubs, and some of them must have been dreadful. I think back on it.

BRISCOE: You always did the performance which I think they wanted. They were interested in it.

BROWN: They went out and spoke at service clubs, and Conservatory people reached out, with Charley Dennis, and later on O.H. Ritter was brought in. O.H. was a great believer in me. I had his kids in the theater. Margaret achieved considerable success as an actress and singer in New York. Lucy and Margaret have been co-hosts and friends all of these years. I was thinking about them just recently because his first wife was Lucy and they entertained us and were very gracious, and my wife, Lucy said Mrs. Ritter is one of the most beautiful hostesses I ever knew.. And later on, after she died, he married Florence Liestner (?) and then Lucy said, of all the hostesses I've ever had experience with, I've learned more from Florence Ritter than anybody. She was superb. It was true. They were wonderful at entertaining, both of them. O.H. said, "Mark, that auditorium is a front parlor.

BRISCOE: Did they hold chapel services in the auditorium.

BROWN: No, the chapel wasn't even built yet. Tully's class, "The World Today," was in the auditorium every Wednesday at 12 sharp. And Tully; would walk in, timetable in his head, on minute before twelve on the air, and hit on the dot. Go right through the

marvelous lectures on political science, etcetera, go right through, and end them, just the right time limit, automatically cut it off. Brilliant. He had some kind of inner clock, and when to stop, and he was a spellbinder.

BRISCOE: Then those classes would run up over a hundred. He was their star.

BROWN: Exactly. I did a show on KWG and it was telephoned from my office in the front of the Conservatory, and once a week, sometimes I came from teaching art, sometimes from something else, I did a half-hour show on contemporary theater. Good Lord, I don't know how I did all those things!

BRISCOE: When you're that age you can do more.

BROWN: I have so little energy now. I can't believe that I ever had that much.

**[End Tape]**

**UOP ARCHIVES FACULTY EMERITI INTERVIEWS**

**BROWN (DEMARCUS), 1926-1970**

**NOVEMBER 18, 1994**

**[TAPE 1, Side B]**

**[Begin Tape.]**

BRISCOE: Could you tell me anything about Malcolm Moule of history?

BROWN: He was very important figure. Controversial sometimes, but one of the things I admired about him was his contact with students. He felt the importance of knowing and working with his students, so he was very successful.

BRISCOE: And Professor Malcolm Eiselen also.

BROWN: Malcolm Eiselen was a remarkable guy. His wife and Lucy, my wife, were roommates in the first year in the girl's dorm. He was a great punster –outrageous puns—he dragged them in and he had a kind of dry wit and his lectures were just great. His students egged him on with his nonsense.

BRISCOE: I think he did considerable speaking up and down the valley.

BROWN: He was in great demand. He was so entertaining. I'm not so sure he was profound, but he was darned entertaining

BRISCOE: And then there were some others. Can you think of any others that haven't been mentioned up to now?

BROWN: Well one person who has been lost in the shuffle is Professor J. William Harris. I think that's really too bad because he was one of the most important members of

the early years. A learned man, eccentric in some ways, and he developed the whole department of education (as it was then called). At one time he was a one-man show. Bit by bit he built it up with his own abilities. He and Tully argued a great deal, thoroughly pleasant, but different points of view. We called him "Doc." He and his sister Anna lived together. They were my daughter's foster grandparents. He left part of his estate to the University, but he never got a name attached to anything. He owned the house down on the corner, that is now Anderson Y. A lovely house. He left that to the University but they never got a name on anything

BRISCOE: Could you recall Ed Esser? He was teaching here in education.

BROWN: A very warm, pleasant guy. Easy-going. Not very important and he didn't feel very important. A very good teacher. He married Birdie, and that was quite exciting. I'll tell you about another couple: Miss Booth and Nella Rogers. They lived together in the dorm on the old campus. Miss Booth's family came from Boston. She'd gone to Beaux-Arts, in Paris for her study in her early days I don't know how she became to be the art teacher. She was fortunate. She wouldn't get to the first base these days, but then she did very well with her art students. They were up in the top floor attic rooms on the old campus building. When they came to Stockton, thanks to her they added to South Hall a suite for Miss Rogers and Miss Booth. They bought a funny little car and Miss Rogers learned to drive it. They went about town, and had quite a social life. Miss Rogers was the voice teacher, and she was a very good teacher. Unfortunately, as she grew older they insisted on these faculty recitals, her voice was gone, the intonation was bad, and it was just not as good. They should have protected her.

BRISCOE: The conservatory rules are still in effect that some time during the year you must present a recital. I think that is good for some, but not for all.

BROWN: Some are not performers. Some are good teachers, but not very good performers. Those two were astonishing proper, Victorial ladies.

BRISCOE: Was the Conservatory small and very largely concerned with voice? I know that Pop Gordon was apparently the conductor of the band.

BROWN: He was not the first one. There was a student that directed before him and it was very wobbly and short on instruments, and the orchestra was very definitely a chamber orchestra. The emphasis in the conservatory for many years was public school music, and they were very successful. They produced a lot of very well, public school music teachers, Virginia Short, being a prize one. Over the years, Charley Dennis was the Dean and he was a public school music man, and the emphasis was there. (And he also had to do his concert.)

BRISCOE: Everybody had to do it. (laughs)

BROWN: It was well intentioned, but it was not the best in the world, believe me. And the Conservatory was a small group. I whorled in the same building, and we got along amazingly well. I don't know how it ever happened. I know I was a thorn in the side.

BRISCOE: Well, they had to share that facility because the school was so small and did not have very many auditoriums.

BROWN: In the original building there was a room behind the stage, intended to be a band room. On the door of that room was a painted sign, stating: "Director of the School of Expression." And who do you suppose that was? It was yours truly! So I was launched with a pontifical title. But that got lost in a hurry.

BRISCOE: They had speech majors or at least people who were learning to speak.

BROWN: We had the biggest number of majors in the College of the Pacific. There were more speech majors than music majors. Speech went out the window in fad. Now it's communications. In the old days Roy McCall did wonderful things holding together this three-branch speech major: We had theater, public speaking, and corrections. It was marvelous, and there were a lot of them.

BRISCOE: The corrections, then, was the father of the later Department of Communicative Disorders that the University now has.

BROWN: It was very successful, but it speech went out of fashion. But substance is still the same. In speech, maybe of the University of Iowa, was the most famous speech teacher in America. He made the speech department of Iowa a major, major department and they spread it around to everybody else, and then died a natural death.

BRISCOE: Well it has been called a different name. The teaching of public speaking and the teaching of debate.

BROWN: For many years. We had a good debate team when I was in San Jose.

BRISCOE: And that is sought after by a lot of young people who are thinking of going into law. They need that training.

BROWN: Oh, sure they do! Being a speech major was one of the chief majors at the College of the Pacific.

BRISCOE: Then you also were training people for the ministry, in a sense. There was a religion department.

BROWN: I don't know a lot about it. It wasn't very strong.

BRISCOE: But they were taking some of the undergraduate courses that you would need for seminary work later.

BROWN: Bible was a requirement or everybody! Without exception.

BRISCOE: One semester or two semesters?

BROWN: Two semesters. Old Testament and New Testament. The scandals of the term papers required for those courses, (which were kept in fraternity files and reused from one year to the next) Colliver, whom we called “the Rabbi”, was a wonderful teacher. He taught the Bible as literature. It was a great course. But he sure tred on a lot of toes, because the fundamentalists and Colliver were a little bit separated, to put it mildly. So a lot of the old gang were always protesting to Tully of the heresies that were in Colliver’s lectures.

BRISCOE: You said there was a kind of family feeling, family spirit. Another person who remembers some of this, Jane Gordon, said that the University reduced salaries down to 25% of what it had been before, but it did not fire people.

BROWN: True. It kept us all on reduced rations.

BRISCOE: Because the student body was not made up of millionaires, they had a hard time.

BROWN: They were poor. Everybody was poor.

BRISCOE: Many a school would have gone under if it hadn’t had Tully Knoles to kind of inspire people.

BROWN: Hold them together is what he really did.

BRISCOE: Do you remember anything about going together with Delta College?

BROWN: A sort of nightmare. I got fired after the colleges went together. The President was Mineer. I tell this terrible story. My bad manners and bad behavior.

My office was often filled clear full of kids who came in after class and I went in. I shared the office with a couple of people and this secretary, so it was always jammed, and there was a great crowd of kids, for one reason or another, and I came in. The President sent memoranda by the ton. And I came in and saw the papers on my desk, and said, “Oh, my God, more manure form Mineer!” and there he was standing. I said, “Good Morning, Dr. Mineer”. We just simply didn’t agree. And I hated the classes that I got from Stockton College. They were rifferaff. They sent them over to me just to fill out their schedules. They had no talent and no interest. It was terrible to teach acting classes to those kids. I hated it.

BRISCOE: They were really not motivated and didn’t have the background.

BROWN: They didn't have proper attitudes or training. So, anyway, they were dividing things up and I took the easy way out of it and resigned from Stockton College. It must have been after WWII. A lot of people divided, and some of us felt that some of the people were opportunists. They saw bigger retirement with state school, so they used all kind of devices to stay on. The rest of us quit. Cost me money.

BRISCOE: I mentioned John Elliott at the Conservatory.

BROWN: Well, I used to say the only way you could get fired from Pacific was to rape a maiden lady in Memorial Stadium. Elliott should have been dumped years ago. There was so much that went on. He was just as lazy as could be.

BRISCOE: Could you mention some outstanding students?

BROWN: There is quite a list of those who went on. At one time there were five of my students on Broadway once.

BRISCOE: Marvelous!

BROWN: And I had student form Pacific Theatre. (We used the word "Pacific Theatre". I think they were stupid to change it to "Drama Department") But that was the academic attitude, you know. But Anyway, the Neighborhood Playhouse has been for decades the place for advanced training in theater. Stanford Meisner was the teacher there, and in some strange way, DeMarcus Brown and Stanford Meisner worked together. We always liked each other (We didn't always agree) He was a tyrant of major proportions, but for years, the first one in the late twenties just in the beginning of the Neighborhood Playhouse, (the Lewison sisters' money had been collected) Every year, from then clear through the sixties, I had somebody from Pacific at the Playhouse.

BRISCOE: It was in New York?

BROWN: Yes.

BRISCOE: And it was the place where you would get some kind of advanced training... a graduate school of theater.

BROWN: And dance. Martha Graham did the dance. Martha was top. Everybody got to know her there. Sandy Meisner was the drama coach of New York.

BRISCOE: Marvelous! And he knew you well enough that if a student was recommended by you, he could get in.

BROWN: Yes. That's true. He used to say, "What goes on at that little place out there in the west?" Couldn't figure it out. With Lois Wheeler, Jo Van Fleet, Barbara Baxley, all at the Playhouse. In the early days sometimes there were quite the number of them. Ken

Percival graduated from there. Lena Francis Darwin, Irene Meyer, I couldn't begin to list the playhouse people.

BRISCOE: Did you take any people who were citizens of Stockton to play bit parts in plays or...

BROWN: I did very little of that, and I had a high-minded, authoritarian attitude on it, that "This is a student activity. Students have paid their tuition. Students ought to be serviced. I was kind of high minded about it.

BRISCOE: That, I think is justified.

BROWN: It's justified. Once in a while on the way we had a graduate student or former student like Franklin Wilbur, who got to do a part two or three times. There were others occasionally. Very few. We used the people that were here. They weren't necessarily majors. I wasn't that stiff about it.

BRISCOE: But they did have to be students, and they had to have that age you were working with. I think that in a way gives you some ability to change. They are a little greener and they are willing to take direction.

BROWN: Yes.

BRISCOE: By the time people get to their adult years, they may have learned bad habits.

BROWN: Oh, very definitely.

BRISCOE: I want to thank you mark for this. It's just too nice of you.

**[End Tape]**

End of Interview