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Professor Jerry Gaff Oral History Transcript

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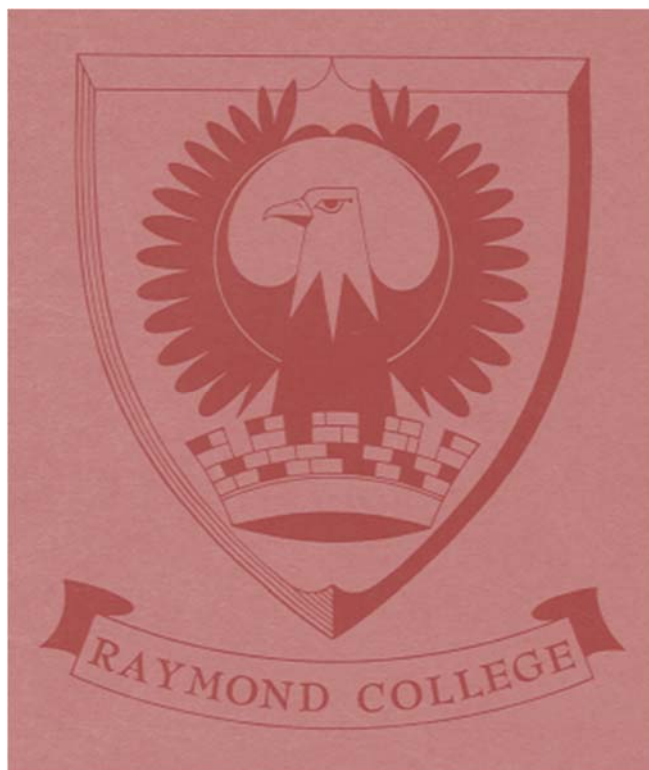
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RAYMOND COLLEGE PROJECT ORAL HISTORIES
UNIVERSITY OF THE PACIFIC ARCHIVES



Jerry Gaff (1964-1967)
Raymond College Professor

September 2021

By Tom Preece, Raymond Alumnus
Edited by Jerry Gaff

University of the Pacific,
Department of Special Collections, Library

PREECE: Well, let's see, it's a Sunday in September, 2021 and I'm sitting in Sacramento, California. We have Dr. Jerry Gaff. I should say that we were encouraged not to use the honorific Dr. at Raymond College, so Jerry is in Lusby, Maryland. And I think we're going to start. Tell us please, a little bit about your background and who you were before Raymond college came beckoning. However it did.

GAFF: Okay. Okay, well you feel free to direct and cut me off if need be. I grew up in Fort Wayne, Indiana. I was the first in my family to go to college. Needless to say, I didn't know very much about what it was because for me college was listening to the Notre Dame football games in the fall and the Indiana University basketball games in winter. In the eighth grade I had to decide what track I was going to choose for high school. It had three tracks: the academic track for students going to college, a business track, and a general track for the weaker students. The counselor asked "Well, what do you want to do?" And I said, I don't know. She followed with "Has anybody in your family gone to college?" After my negative reply, she said, "Well, maybe we'll put you in the business track," because my grades were too good to go into the general. And so I started high school for the first year in business. I soon discovered all my friends had gone to the academic track, and I didn't see them in my classes. So for my sophomore year I transferred into the academic track for the rest of high school.

When I was a college senior, I still didn't know what to do after graduation. One day in trigonometry class a small group of guys who had been together for several previous classes were acting up. The teacher, Marie Miller, said, "All right, take out your pencil and paper and we'll have a pop quiz on your homework." I always did my homework, but I didn't do it then. And just then, there was an announcement that came over the loudspeakers in every room from the principal's office. It said, "There is a representative from DePauw University, who would like to speak with any senior who was interested in attending DePauw. I had never heard of DePauw University before, but suddenly I was intensely interested. I went to the room and heard about DePauw University, not DePaul in Chicago, but the liberal arts college, about an hour west of Indianapolis. There I found out about the college and also a scholarship program. I went home, I shared this information with Mom and Dad.

Dad said, "People don't give people like us money like that. But, if that's what you want to do we'll support you." Now make a long story short, I got not only an acceptance, but a full tuition scholarship for four years which at that time was 500 bucks a year, \$2,000 for the four years.

College opened my mind and introduced me to new literature that I never knew existed before. I had some very good teachers that drew me out and encouraged me to formulate my own ideas. It also introduced me to a much larger variety of good students from all across the country. I began to search for meaning in earnest studying psychology, social science, and particularly existential philosophy. That was very big, at the time, and enhanced my search for meaning, for values, for who I am, for who I could be, and for who I wanted to be. And although my tuition was taken care of, I had to work my way through college to pay for my room and

board, for books, and for extras. I waited tables at the fraternity house where I had joined. Then I transferred into waiting tables at a sorority house, which was essentially the same work but a much more pleasant environment for a young man.

I enjoyed my college, and I certainly learned a great deal. But I still didn't know very much about what I wanted to do so for my life's work. When I was a senior, I read a lot of interesting graduate catalogs, and I chose Syracuse for graduate school, because it had a special program, Doctor of Social Science (DSS for short), designed to prepare college teachers. You know the old saying, if you don't know what you're going to do you can always teach. So that's what was my kind of default mechanism. I had never taught before, but I was accepted into the DSS program and for the first year given a position as resident advisor in one of the men's freshmen dormitories. I learned that few college professors had received no preparation for teaching the diverse students in their classrooms, the history of the academic profession, or the various missions and cultures of different types of colleges. This program seemed so sensible and so reasonable that I could never understand why it was not commonplace for all college professors. It required a course in the history of social science, a course on college teaching, and a supervised teaching experience as a graduate teaching assistant. And so all of those things I found very fascinating. And shift gears just a bit to personal life. I got married in 1959, a year after graduating from DePauw. And, and we lived in married student housing, which was leftover World War II barracks that the University acquired after the war.

PREECE: Typical for the time.

GAFF: The apartments were cheaply constructed of about quarter inch plywood. They were tiny, nobody had any privacy. And my wife of course didn't like that very much. But that was what we had, and it's what we could afford. It turns out that Gene Wise was my best friend. He was also in the DSS program, and he and Margaret lived very close to us in married student housing. In fact, they were the first persons I told about the birth of my son and my daughter. Gene was recruited by Raymond in the second year of its existence. The way that happened was, Mike Wagner, had a former student who he kept in touch with who was also at Syracuse. I think his name was Jim Blackwell and he told Mike about the DSS program. Mike asked him whether he had anyone to recommend in history or American Studies. So they recruited Gene, Gene kept in touch with me, and when Raymond implemented the social science sequence in its third year, Gene recommended me to teach psychology. So, but I had some preparation for teaching, I had taught under some supervision, and I knew a little bit about what I was getting into. But when I left Syracuse February 10, of 1964, it was in the middle of a raging snowstorm I was already predisposed to the special teaching environment of Raymond and the climate of California. Do you still live in California, Tom?

PREECE: Oh, I never left.

GAFF: Okay. Well, you've heard of snow. So at any rate, when I got to San Francisco and saw Union Square with its green grass and flowers growing and looking beautiful, and I thought, boy, this is

a different world. California looks pretty good to me. And so, you know, then I was, was hired. And we, fortunately we had Gene and Margaret as friends, sort of intermediaries to introduce us to Raymond and people and so on. So it was with that background that, you know, we actually got there and I was attracted to this innovative college. It was a time of social criticism, social reform, critique of racial issues, you know the women's movement was just getting started. And shortly thereafter the war in Vietnam was going full steam ahead. And so there were a lot of, there was a lot of dissent a lot of, you know, protests among students and faculty at colleges and universities around the country with a lot of ideas being tossed about, about how we can improve the quality of education, make it more relevant, make it more personal, make it more meaningful and here was a school that was doing exactly that and creating a sense of community. I had come out of this graduate school, where people care mostly about research, and they would do their teaching that was not where their heart was. I had done enough teaching in graduate school to know that I really wanted to teach at a college which had a community of scholars, where close personal relationships with students was the norm, and faculty collaborated and supported one another. When the job was offered to me, I jumped at the opportunity.

PREECE: Mike recruited Gene. You say Gene recruited you, but how engaged were the upper reaches of faculty, administration, etc? How much contact did you have with Martin when you were coming?

GAFF: Oh, I did know about Martin, but I didn't know much.

PREECE: What was your engagement with him? If there was some, perhaps there wasn't...

GAFF: Oh, well, Gene had told me that he was the intellectual leader of the college. Of course he interviewed me and hired me. I was delighted that the faculty offices had been located in student dorms and classes were held in the student lounges, which you know signified that close relationship and sense of community. I was across the hall from Gene Rice in sociology, and there was not a lot of individual, you know, connection with, with Dick Martin, Warren Brian, we all called him Dick. But he was very supportive and he was, you know, encouraging and so on and his wife Elizabeth too.

PREECE: One of my impressions from the time Jerry, that I certainly don't forget, amongst the students Martin was perceived as almost evangelical in his, his pursuit of...

GAFF: Oh my god, yes.

PREECE: And I'm, I'm kind of wondering if, in some sense, it was almost cult-like. It amazes me when I listened to, to sit to some of the now older men like myself who still feel the, the, the loyalty to that. Did you get caught up in it?

GAFF: No, you know Dick Martin had taught at Pasadena College which was a strong evangelical school, and Gene Rice had been a student of his there. Then Martin became campus minister at Cornell College that was also a church-related college. But Dick actually lost faith in the church. And he found his faith in colleges, and in education. And I thought, well, that's a good trade off. I, I had my own, you know, struggles within the church. When I was a kid, I was asked to join a church league basketball. So I thought what, Indiana basketball, hey, of course. And after about a month the minister came to me and said well you know, part of the deal is that you're a member of the church. I said, oh, that was not part of the deal I signed on to. But anyway, I went to church primarily because it was the way I got to play basketball with the guys. But, but, no, I never got caught up in the cult, but I did respect Dick Martin. I respected for what he did conceptually, to have the inner woven pieces of innovation of the Raymond program, the required core curriculum. The sense of community, the way the things that he did to bring students and faculty together, you know, outside of class, the high table, the free meal for faculty at lunch, which made it necessary for them to have good lunches for everybody, which was a real thing. Martin told us, a college, like an army, travels on its stomach. So, I had my free lunches, as much as I could there. And, and there were a lot of, you know, just gatherings where we talked about issues, students and faculty, but also faculty had a meeting every week, every week, we talked a lot about students and about how to engage them better, etc so I was learning the whole time. I learned from Dick, I learned from senior faculty who were, Mike Wagner and Sy Kahn. And, and even from us younger guys, but it was a wonderful heady experience to feel that I was part of creating a new college that would finally do education, better than traditional ways. And I thought we had proven the value of it, particularly after I was able to get a small grant from the Department of Education to study students at Raymond and a comparable group over at the College of the Pacific. The data showed that Raymond students were more intellectually oriented, they were more engaged in their studies, they talked more about serious intellectual topics, and they were less involved in playing games, socializing, or doing all the frivolous things that goes on in college.

PREECE: How did we, as students match up to your expectations or disappointment?

GAFF: I don't think there were any disappointments. I was deeply engaged in my teaching and participating in the community. The faculty did discuss students who had special problems, always with the goal of determining what we could do to help them succeed. I was just a few years older than the students, and that gave me a rapport that allowed them to approach me with some of their issues. I would say that students struggled with more or less the right things. You know, my subject matter, psychology, and my wanting to connect the abstract ideas and theories with the students' lives also helped them to feel free to share with me. Students were generally quite impressive.

And let me tell you one anecdote when I went back to the Pacific to receive the honorary doctorate. I saw a few familiar faces, most of them faculty. There was one former student, Gene Bigler, who ran across the campus where I was being drawn driven to a luncheon to meet me.

He said, Dr Gaff "You changed my life." Of course, I was pleased and wanted to learn more. I didn't think that he was a great student in psychology. and he said it was in the non-Western civilization course. When first learning about the curriculum, I was pleased to see that non-western civilization was included as an antidote to the traditional focus on western civilization. But I was surprised when Dick Martin came to me one day and said, "You have taught almost all the students who need psychology. We do need to offer a course on non-western studies, and we would like for you teach it." I had never been outside the country. What could I do? After much stewing, I went into the class the first day and I told the students "I don't know anything about non-Western civilization, and I bet you don't either. We're all going to learn together." I told them what we were going to do. Each of you will pick a topic, a country, a kind of a culture, a social structure like education or health, whatever you're interested in. We're going to share our topics, and then you're going to go to the library (this was before the internet) and you're going to gather resources that would help you to understand your topic better, and bring them back to share with the class because they might be something others could use. And then you go off and write a draft and come back, we'll share those with each other and critique them as best we can. Finally, you will write a final draft and present it to the class. That's going to be how we learn about non-Western civilization. Well, Gene Bigler to go back to that time, said, You got me interested in non-Western civilization. After I graduated from Pacific, I went to graduate school and then to the Foreign Service. I was assigned. I don't remember, Peru, Equador, Chile, some country on the western side of South America. And he said, I learned a lot from my work in foreign affairs. I met my wife, we had kids and he said it wasn't all because of what I as a teacher did, but it was in large part because of what he studied in that non-Western Civ course. Here I had put all my heart and soul into my psych course. And this this course in which I knew nothing had the most impact on this student. But, of course, it made sense because that meant the responsibility for learning was on the students not just Gene but everybody else.

PREECE: It is, you may not know this, one of the things that is always remarkable to me. As you probably know, we have a good number of Raymond graduates who did go on to academics and talk about briefly here for a moment is Greg Finnegan, who has repeatedly said that in the course of his career he was always trying to recreate the Raymond seminar. I know I put you in touch with Dave Wellenbrock, I know that one of David's questions really is. How much were they teaching you how to conduct a seminar, you were one of the better ones at it and there were certainly ones who were not that good. I remember a math professor who would briefly pass through. I would much prefer Theo but I didn't get him, but he ended up fighting with the students about how his presentation in defense of his own academic freedom, which is not collaborative, which was not drawing us up at all.

GAFF: No. That's right. I remember Theo MacDonald was an anomaly. He would lecture to the few math students in his class, and we faculty would challenge him on this. But after a while, we just said, "We'll leave well enough alone."

GAFF: I know everybody loved Theo, bless his heart. Yeah. The interesting thing, first thing I had to do I went to Raymond was that I had to design a psychology course. I had never designed a course before, as I had taught other people's courses and used other people's texts that they had selected. What I really wanted to do was to have courses that didn't have textbooks, that covered a smattering of introductions to different specializations or objective examinations. I wanted a course to be much more personal and authentic than that. And I didn't want a course to be an introduction to a discipline, because most students would not take another course in that discipline for the rest of their lives. I wanted students to engage something that was from psychology that would be of use to them throughout their lives. For example, we looked at the rise of psychoanalysis by reading Freud. We followed that with the idea of human development by reading a developmental theory, such as Erik Erikson. We then examined a behaviorist critique of these perspective with B.F. Skinner. Finally we examined some social issues that could be better understood with the help of these psychological approaches. One was to understand the minds of the German people who had started World War II, and another was to get inside the minds of campus protestors against the Vietnam war and racism and for peace, equality, and love.

When I finished designing what I thought would become a good course, I walked over to the University Bookstore to order books for the students. I had never ordered books before, and the manager looked at me and refused to take my order. He apparently thought I looked too young to be a college professor, and told me I needed to bring a note from my Provost assuring him that I was indeed a professor and that he should order the books. This experience did nothing to bolster my confidence that I could actually do the job that I had taken.

PREECE: One of the mysteries for students was always the faculty process and of course, we had our own enduring views. However I really brought up Greg Finnegan's story a bit. And this is kind of a famous for those of us who were in his class, and I know you had to have been at the faculty meeting. Greg as I recall had actually flunked three courses, had received an unsatisfactory grade in three different courses at Raymond. The faculty meeting was apparently about how what measures should be taken, perhaps to purify the student or the school of this kind of failure. Greg retired as the anthropology librarian at Harvard University, that's some of the height of bricks of his career, but here was this crisis. He knew the faculty were meeting about him. We students all knew you faculty were meeting about him. Greg had failed three courses, and what ultimately resulted was an invitation that he should leave the school. Can you recall anything for us about the tenor of that decision?

PREECE: Do you remember the faculty meeting that dealt with this?

GAFF: Oh my goodness, I certainly remember Greg Finnegan but not that he failed three courses and not the faculty meeting you mentioned. But we did talk about students who were failing and about why that might be and, and, you know, collectively, you know, we did know quite a bit about them personally in their non- academic life as well as in their academic life. And what we tried

to do was to make it so that everybody could graduate who wanted to. We accommodated differences, and we helped one another as we, you know, really tried to solve these various individual student problems. Of course we had Ed Peckham as the Dean of Students who also wanted every student to succeed. My family actually lived right next to Ed and Dora Peckham, and their children babysat for our kids. Much of the time I rode to work with Ed, so that Sally could use our car.

PREECE: What actually happened was, I thought, pretty classic for the liberal education. Greg received a letter endorsed by the faculty and signed by whoever but basically it was conclusion of the meeting, and the legend was that Mike had encouraged the text to read as it did. Greg was invited to leave and he wrote back. "Thank you for your request. I choose to remain." And we all celebrated the very Raymond logical engagement, distinguishes punishment as an invitation.

GAFF: Yeah. Yeah. It's very interesting. Yeah, it really is. I do remember a conversation that we had in the faculty meeting about a student having been apprehended by the Stockton police for having some, as I remember, marijuana. He was also said to be sharing it with other students, and the police were preparing to charge him with possession with intent to distribute. I do remember arguing vehemently that this was an adolescent indiscretion, that it should be forgivable, and that we should not make a big deal out of it. And there were others who were arguing that this jeopardized the future of the college and was harmful to UOP. I don't recall the details, but the student was not charged, the campus drug use stopped, the student graduated, and he went on to a successful career.

PREECE: Needless to say, almost every student who was there remembers that incident very well. And there's an irony that runs kind of deep in here I think. He was busted to Dr. Peckham, who we should mention is no longer with us, and was revered in his success in San Bernardino, I tracked him down, just after he died and read all the testimonials that came out of bed, but he was not so liked by the student body because he did have a tendency to render judgments abruptly. And what happened in that case you're referring to, and I'm carefully avoiding the student's names as I think you are too. Some of the conservative members, and in fact, if I remember correctly, one of them was one of the major donors to the, to the school, into this concept that they were money people together with a guy who famously drove a GTO went and asked for some I don't know if they purchased it or literally have it, got it from the student in question and then dumped it on Dr. Peckham's desk and said, what are you going to do about it. I don't know if this is true but the legend was he picked up the phone and called the cops without consulting with the community. I agree with you, he ended up in a better place because we both know he graduated and has had his own distinguished career.

GAFF: Absolutely.

PREECE: But it's, it sometimes seemed to me like Martin was the good guy and Peckham was the bad guy, and it was like two copies right, evangelist on the one hand, and the whip hand behind the other.

GAFF: Yeah. well, one of my most difficult times, was when the faculty tried to bring the faculty and the administration more closely together. That seems silly, because there were really only two administrators and a handful of faculty. We all met together, had our own roles to play, and generally got along. That is until one time a faculty member brought to the group a problem that his grade for students in his class had been changed, which was a serious threat to all faculty members. As we talked more and more, fingers pointed toward Ed Peckham. This put me in a difficult position because not only was Ed a friend, we were next door neighbors. We commuted together as he drove me to the campus most of the time so Sally would be able to use our car. That was a rough faculty meeting. It culminated with naming a small group of faculty members who were directed to meet with Ed and tell him that if he in fact had changed grades for a student, we didn't have any confidence in him. And they put me on the group precisely because I was a neighbor and a commuting partner. I had to go to that damn meeting at Ed's house next door to confront him. It turned out to be the end of Ed Peckham at Raymond. Of course, he stayed through the academic year, and then he did get a good job as the student dean at California State University at Northridge where he was very successful and highly regarded.

PREECE: Yes, I misspoke when I said San Bernadino. Yeah, he remained there for the rest of his career, which was quite....

GAFF: He did and I'm sure he was an exceptional hire and a wonderful administrator.

PREECE: So, you're portraying something else that I think, and as I think you know I researched a bunch of this stuff. I've been studying Pacific history and thinking about it. One of the things happening around this time, and I think you alluded to it earlier. Was, there was a movement, it's a movement to empower faculty across the whole spectrum of education. There had been too much done in administration. And I frankly think Robert Burns will say that someone said in the Pacific history that there was no experiment that he was not willing to try to enhance the university and he certainly tried a lot of them. But you were describing an empowered faculty, very largely empowered by the design and the aspirations of Dick Martin, in collaboration with President Burns. We mentioned earlier that you and I did not mention this, I came to the school the same year you did, although I'm sure you had some preparation going into it. I graduated high school in 1964, and became a freshman, when you were becoming a freshman professor. And one of the, one of the arcs that I discovered in the course of this I had not known was that you left the school the same time I did in 1967. Dick Martin left the year before. And I've often wondered how much that was about the sheer exhaustion of the tremendous effort of creating this enterprise, or whether or not the partnership began to sour with Burns.

Certainly Kolker did very different things, than Martin did in the next developments of the school. I'm not sure that's on Burns so much as the huge cultural revolutions that you alluded to earlier that were rolling over campuses everywhere. The structured curriculum which I enjoyed, and which all the students we've alluded to here have enjoyed bit the dust within two, three years. And suddenly became a contract enterprise, which a faculty advisor would meet with the

students, they've decide what it was you wanted to study or direct it in some way. I think I know from much younger friends, it happened to ones I've been talking to most is, as much younger than me as I am of you. Even though the structure changed, the Raymond experience did not. There was a, this particular student sat in on Bob Orpinela's class, I believe Orpinela was not yet there when you left his subject was philosophy and Doug my friend sat in that class, on his student visit and said he realized that he didn't understand a word of what was going on and that probably meant he needed to learn it and he got Orpinela as an advisor. And I treasured from a conversation a bit ago was. He described to me all the self-improvement, self-learning things he did to build a career. He went out, set himself to learn accounting, and management principles, he, he built an entire network, computer network, which they didn't exist when we were at Raymond, learned how to administer that, the guy just retired from from work, this year. And I listened to his story and I said, this is a prototypical Raymond student. And what's been said over and over and over again is the reason it could change, and still keep that intensity, was the integrity of the faculty, and their commitment to the enterprise, which didn't change with the change of structure. That's more my interview than yours there, sorry. Did you see yourself, any sense of imminent change coming to the school.

GAFF: No, I did not see the change in the required curriculum coming. I was very happy at Raymond, and I could have spent the rest of my career there. But on the professional side, Berkeley was a positive attraction. And there were developments that provided me with a special opportunity. A group of Berkeley professors had received a large federal grant to create a Center for Research and Development in Higher Education. One of the first studies they did was to conduct a longitudinal study of students in a number of diverse colleges. My study of Raymond and COP students was given to Paul Heist, who was in charge of that study. He and his staff saw me as a fellow researcher in higher education. The Center was gearing up to do surveys of faculty and their impact on students, and they needed qualified staff. And so I fit right in. Dick Martin had been there for a year, and he put in a good word for me.

On the personal side, Sally, my wife, Sally had become unhappy with life in Stockton, just as she had in every other place we had lived. When I had an opportunity to go to Berkeley, she jumped all over that. She had a younger sister living in San Francisco; her husband was an attorney in one of the large law firms there; and they had two kids about the same age as our two kids. She urged me to take that job. And it was a good career move. That was a good platform from which to develop the career that I had.

But as you know, is really interesting as I was doing some, some preparation for this interview, because it's been over 55 years I think since. And that's a long time for memory to stay intact and be accurate.

I remember going to a conference on experimental colleges and discussing Raymond and other cluster colleges. Afterward, another conferee said, "Well, you're Mr. Cluster College." I thought that's a strange way to be known. And I thought I might have this image all the rest of my life,

and I hoped there would be more to it than that. But then I got interested in doing work on faculty development. While I was at Berkeley, I consulted with the American Association of University Professors which had just gotten a grant to do a Project to Improve College Teaching. They engaged me to do a study on the working conditions of faculty which recommended that institutions provide more support for the continuous development of faculty. I was then recruited by the Society for Values in Higher Education to direct a project of theirs that worked with several diverse institutions to create new faculty development programs on their campuses. That required a move to Washington, D.C. where I was housed at the Association of American Colleges, a blue ribbon organization with a mission to support liberal education for all students in all kinds of institutions.

After that project ended, I got interested in undergraduate general education that has become a national issue as a way of responding to the criticisms of students about introductory courses as being irrelevant, taught by faculty who were not interested in being there, who were not very effective in teaching, and requirements to study introductions to a range of different disciplines offered by departments are independent units, that didn't add up to a coherent curriculum. So I jumped into that fray. And I was called, not only Mr. Faculty Development but also Mr. General Education.

And then the last 10 years that I was taking a paycheck I directed a project on Preparing Future Faculty (PFF). We gave grants to graduate schools to help them prepare their students for a life as a professor. They were required to assemble a small cluster of diverse institutions where they might work, teach students about teaching and learning, having them work with a mentor in one of the other types of institutions, and become a temporary member of an academic community different from their home in a research university. You will immediately recognize all the things that I had learned way back in my DSS program. There was great interest among the graduate students in learning how to teach and working with faculty members at partner institutions that, generally, were more teaching oriented than their own graduate department. During that series of projects where graduate learned not only from books about teaching but also worked closely with a caring mentor to actually teach and get feedback from an experienced teacher. Of course, I became known as Mr. PFF.

So, it's been an interesting career. And I don't think it would have happened without Raymond where I learned so much. And I don't think it would have happened if I hadn't left Raymond for Berkeley. From then on it was a matter of taking advantage of opportunities that were available nationally and drawing on my educational experiences, including those from Raymond College.

PREECE: I'm still bemused, stumbled across the document. My wife and I are downsizing pending a probable move to Washington State, and Diane dug up this document and it was in reference to our reunion at Gualala.

GAFF: You're breaking up.

PREECE: Sorry. In 2002 you wrote for the people who attended the Gualala thing. You wrote almost a thesis sentence that Raymond College, probably spoiled you for normal. I think the evidence is all in. I do have a question about that first work that you were shown is the principal author of, The Cluster College. How did it come about that when you were, most of those people were also heavy weights.

GAFF: And you're phasing out again.

PREECE: So let's go back to that. How did you become the principal author of the Cluster College.

GAFF: How did I become the author?

PREECE: The principal author, it's your name on it, says Jerry Gaff and colleagues.

GAFF: You know Berkeley was the center of educational dissent and protest during the 1960s, and I had attended a couple of conferences talking about Raymond specifically, and there seemed to be a lot of interest. I never thought about writing that book, originally, but then I learned about a new publishing company, Jossey Bass, in San Francisco. Its owner had established a relationship with a couple of faculty members at the Berkeley center, Joe Axelrod and Mervin Freeman. Joe encouraged me to think in terms of building on what I had done in studying students at Pacific and consider writing a book on experimental colleges around the country. I knew that I had limited time for this unfunded writing and lacked enough experience at other colleges to speak with confidence. I would need some help and started thinking about who could I ask to help and what could a new book add to the existing literature?

I had been in touch with hundreds of other experimental colleges public and private, large and small, stand-alone and part of another institution or system and kept a growing list of them with a key contact. I decided that most of these new schools, like Raymond, started with a utopian mission. Most were striving to implement a new vision about how their education would be better than traditional colleges and implementing a variety of innovations. While most of them had appealing rhetoric, there was precious little empirical assessment of their educational vision in practice. Could I recruit enough authors at a variety of these new schools who could provide early assessments? Could I coordinate the first empirical assessment of these new schools?

One of the first people I asked was Ted Newcomb, a well known social psychologist at the University of Michigan who had done a lot of research on the power of peer groups among adolescents. He also had been involved in planning a residential subcollege that was being implemented at his own university. I had an opportunity to meet with this great man (in my eyes) at a conference, and we discussed my preliminary ideas. He was impressed and was inclined to help this young professor. As he was leaving, he said, "Well, if you were to asked me to do something is due in two months, I'd say no. If you were to ask me to do something and it's due in one year. I'd agree." So I thought, there's a highly respected scholar whose name could

help validate my proposed book and attract other authors to this task. From there it just kind of grew like Topsy.

I also met with Allen Jossey-Bass who has just started a new publishing company in San Francisco who was eager to publish a collection of scholarly books in the field of higher education. We met in a tiny office in the financial district of San Francisco. He was a Brit who knew what books would sell and which wouldn't. It didn't take long for him to offer me a contract for the book.

Now about your question about what I meant when I offhandedly claimed that Raymond ruined me for life. It did in a sense because it was unconventional, it was non-traditional, it was out of the mainstream and, but after that you know what? I moved my family to Washington, D.C. where I agreed to direct a to help colleges and Universities to set up programs to help faculty members to improve their teaching. I have a very good friend, Russell Edgerton, who was the president of the American Association for Higher Education and he used to say that the mission for that organization was to play a Paul Revere role, you know, "The British are coming. The British are coming." During the 1960s and 70s the call was "the student protesters are coming, the legislators are coming, the public is coming-- if we don't do a better job of educating the youth." There was a call for ideas of how education could be made more rigorous, more personal, more relevant, more useful in solving social problems. These were all threats to established ways of the academy, such as the power of departments, the dominance of the academic major, the diminishment of general education, the prevalence of large introductory classes, poor quality of teaching, course requirements that were irrelevant to students, and the like. So my career has been spent, in one sense, tilting at windmills because the academic profession has retained its traditions in the mainstream and fought off efforts to change. The new ideas, innovations, the stability of traditions, the demise of community, and the centrality of teaching and learning have continued to be on the periphery. The innovations have continued to attack conventions like a swarm of mosquitoes. But still the pests remain outside the screen windows.

PREECE: Say, kind of, perhaps, like so many liberal arts students I regret the focus in education has taken so exclusively on STEM. I want to tell you a small anecdote as a sort of great chain of being thing that happens I have a much younger friend. How much younger will I tell you quickly was, he was three years old when I came home from Vietnam and he lived downstairs. And it's been a pleasure to watch Alex grow up. He's very much a by-his-bootstraps kind of guy, went to San Joaquin Delta College, a two-year school, studied electron microscopy and when he finished his degree at San Francisco State which was in biology. He had one student debt. He owed me \$600. I'll never forget a moment when because he had studied, purely in a science trap. He read a book that had moved to a great deal. And he called it great literature. And I have inherited all the wisdom of Sy Kahn, Cliff Hand, John Williams. And I set about a corrective course of instruction to acquaint Alex with what literature was, and I have now been in a book group with

him for some 25 years. Each one teach one is a personal ethic, even for those of us who did not have academic careers. And you were one of the models of that. And I thank you for it.

GAFF: Thank you. But I have always thought that you students were the memorable ones. Tom, you went against the grain when you joined the army and went to Vietnam. Campuses across the country were protesting the Vietnam war, being in the military was not at all popular among your peers, and that stood out in my mind. Then, you remember, we met again at a Raymond reunion, and the graduates were reporting on their lives after Raymond. You said something like, "The most important thing I did was serve as a platoon leader in the jungles of Vietnam, and I got out alive. And every member of the platoon got out alive too." That put things that the others had done into a different perspective for all of us.

PREECE There's an anecdote with that perhaps I have not told you can imagine the trepidation I had, I got myself out of Vietnam by applying to the graduate school of English at UOP. So of course I was coming back there was basically coming back to the same community. I just married by them to my first wife, Iris and we decided to go visit the campus and we're walking down. Well I think they then called it Stadium drive towards the campus, and a distance I see coming towards me along the sidewalk, Mike Wagner. And I did not know what I should expect. I do not then know about then know about Mike's role in World War Two, which I'm sure affected this. He came up with a big grin on his face, stuck his hand out, the opposite to all Vietnam veteran stories I've ever heard and said, welcome home soldier. It, it was an essential part of my truly coming home.

GAFF: That is a wonderful, wonderful story.

PREECE: You think it's time to shout for Mike? I don't know if you've talked yourself out or not but I think we've covered most of the important things. And we're, I'm proud to have been one of the launch points for your career Jerry. I think most of us who attended that time, have followed it more or less, me perhaps more than others because Jim Ratcliffe was a very good friend of mine and we still correspond. I think he actually sent me a book that he co-authored with you, which I will admit I discarded because I did not have in mind, studying myself. That was in response to some stuff I observed about civil rights and the deeds to a house I owned in Hayward which exclusively tried to exclude blacks my neighborhood because to say that last record. And my neighbor was the oldest black resident of that particular suburb and proud of it.

GAFF: Well, it was just an amazing time and it was a wonderful experience for me, which, as I say, laid the groundwork for the rest of my career. I made some wonderful friends, and we learned from one another. We continue to learn, as I mentioned when we were planning this interview. I don't develop ideas very well in thinking by myself. I develop ideas much better in interaction with somebody else. And this interview is probably the longest lecture I've ever given

PREECE: And it may be me keeping my mouth shut more than I normally do, of managing my storytelling a little bit too loudly.

GAFF: Oh, don't forget. You're going to send me a copy of your novel? Thank you.