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Fairbrook, Paul Oral History Interview

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Paul Fairbrook

Director of Food Services, 1965-1966; Director of Housing and Food Services, 1966-1975; Director of Auxiliary Services, 1975-1985

By Francis Michael Sharp

June 22, 2011

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Edited by Susan Fairbrook and Michael Sharp.

Subjects: Improvement of University dining services; managing University departments during the turbulent decades in the 1960s and 1970s; staging all-campus international dinners; public relations on a university campus; improving town-gown relations between UOP and the Stockton community; self-operation versus contractor operation of a college or university dining service.
SHARP: My name is Francis Michael Sharp, and I'll be the interviewer today. The interviewee’s name is Paul Fairbrook. And today’s date is June 22, 2011. The interview is being conducted on the first floor of the library, right across from Knoles lawn. Okay, so I think we can get started. Paul, let’s talk a little bit about your arrival at the university first. What years did you serve the University and what were your official titles?

FAIRBROOK: I came on August 1, 1965. I was hired as Director of University Food service. I was subsequently promoted, but for one year I worked as director of food services.

SHARP: What were the circumstances that brought you to the University of the Pacific?

FAIRBROOK: Well I had my own consulting practice in food services management in Chicago. Plus I had four children and was doing a lot of traveling. I was a consultant to Expo 67, which was the Canadian World’s Fair and at the time I was also doing a cross country lecture for the Canadian Restaurant Association. I traveled across the country from Saskatoon all the way to Moncton, New Brunswick. At ten o’clock at night, while I was sitting on a table, my legs dangling down, talking to about 20 somewhat disinterested restauranteurs, I got a call from John Higgins, who identified himself as the Director of Personnel at the University of the Pacific, asking if I would be interested in a job as Director of Food Service. I had never heard of the University of the Pacific, but I would have taken a job as a dogcatcher at that time, because I was so tired of traveling. Apparently, I had answered a blind ad a year earlier to an unnamed college in California and had forgotten about
it. But they had saved my application and that’s why I got the call.

SHARP: An interesting start! What were your first impressions, maybe just some first thoughts that you had of Stockton and the University when you arrived?

FAIRBROOK: Well, to be quite honest with you, my wife Margret and I were excited about going back to a college campus. I had been director of food services at Northern Illinois University earlier, and I had been Dean of the Culinary Institute of America. So being on a college campus was pretty exciting for me. I didn’t look around to see what Stockton was like, so I really didn’t have any impressions of Stockton at the time. Of course the campus then and now is such a beautiful campus that it didn’t fail to make an impression on both of us.

SHARP: Was there somebody at Pacific who was especially helpful in your initial orientation?

FAIRBROOK: Absolutely. Lloyd Stuckey, at the time, was the Comptroller and he is the one who flew to Chicago to interview me. And he was very helpful. In fact, I asked him to rent a house for me and he did. So when I came, my rented house was ready for occupancy. And with four children and a dog, my wife and I were very happy to have that arranged for us. So he was very helpful especially at the beginning.

SHARP: Next, let’s talk a little bit about your programs here. Could you give us some idea about the innovative programs that you helped develop at Pacific.

FAIRBROOK: Well, I had a series of challenges that I had to face when I first came. My predecessor was a Mrs. Hennessey and apparently she had not been on a college campus before and was rather strict in a way that did not help her image. For instance, I’m told that when the people in the serving line started talking to the students she would say: ”You’re supposed to serve food, not talk to them.” Now, I don’t know if that is true, but I realized that I had a lot of fence mending to do. I had a series
of objectives that I had to meet. One of them was to improve the quality of the food and the service. The other was to connect with the students. Then I had to impress the Administration that I really knew what I was doing. And, of course, I had to become friends with the faculty, and with the university staff. I also had to create a realistic budget and meet my financial obligations. Those were my immediate objectives. The way I tried to solve them when I first came, was to improve the quality of the food and that took some doing. I've always had a motto that I liked to follow which is: "Nothing Counts But Quality!" Nothing counts but quality really means that no matter what your problems are—whether they are budgetary problems or personnel problems, or anything else, quality is what you have to remember. And I always follow the philosophy that I wanted to give students what I personally would have wanted myself. I put myself, not just the students, in the position of the client, and in that capacity I felt that if I'm going to serve food it had to be as good and as hot and as appetizing as I would get at home. Now that is a little difficult to do when you’re feeding thousands of students, but it is not impossible. You have to be somewhat fanatical about it. I really felt that one of the immediate things I had to do was to serve hot food hot and cold food cold! I did that by putting overhead lamps over the food, by putting half covers over the serving pans so they wouldn’t get cold. I made sure that the food didn’t sit in the steam tables too long. I made sure on the salad bars that the plates would be chilled; not many food service managers at the time were doing that, but I felt if you’re going to serve a salad that’s cold, you might as well put it on a cold plate. So I had a little freezer in front of the salad bar. Serving hot food really hot became almost an obsession with me. I’ve since written several articles about the misuse of steam tables by so many of my colleagues. They would put food in the steam table and expect the steam table either to heat it or to keep it hot and that is not the purpose of a steam table. Fortunately, today, we don’t use steam tables so much anymore because now food is prepared for the students and other customers in front of their eyes. But, at the time, steam tables were what everyone used, and I wanted to be sure that it was merely a container that kept the food warm for just a few minutes
while the students were going by. One of the specific menu items that would bother me was scrambled eggs. When I saw a big pan of scrambled eggs get dry, I would go and throw the whole pan out—in front of the students, in front of the managers, and in front of the servers. Because unless those scrambled eggs have a little bit of a glistening sheen, the dish is no longer, in my judgment, edible. I had a worker named Abigail, who was unable to follow my instructions and prepare just a few scrambled eggs, instead of a whole pan of 35. After throwing a few of those pans away, I said: “Abigail, you go ahead and do the lunch. I’ll get somebody to do the eggs.” I got a student from Africa, a woman named Kim Lund, and I said to her: “Kim, here is what you do: when you see the whites of the students’ eyes as they enter the dining room, that is when you put the scrambled eggs on the griddle.” After that, I had no more problems with scrambled eggs. There were other things that I had to solve; a young lady came to me once and said: “I’m gaining so much weight because there is always this gravy on top of the cutlets.” And I said: “Why don’t you ask for a cutlet without gravy?” She said: “Well, I’m really a little embarrassed to do that.” Then I realized that I had to take some immediate action, so on my menu for the day, I inserted an item called “Plain Item.” Then the cooks knew that I wanted a pan of cutlets without gravy, so she wouldn’t have to ask for it—she could just point to it and indicate that is what she wanted. That was very well received, especially by the women students. This was something I hadn’t been aware of until she told me. Another thing I had to do was make to sure that the servers were really friendly to the students. Now, I believe in hiring many student workers, and it’s very easy to get students to smile, in fact, sometimes they talked too much on the serving line. But with full-time employees, it’s sometimes more difficult. I had a woman once who was a Hungarian refugee, and her life had been so hard that she always stood grim-faced in front of the line and really turned the students off. I finally had to move her to another position because she could not be one of my servers since she was unable to smile. I used to tell my workers: “You are never fully dressed unless you wear a smile.” That sort of helped. One of the things that I did earlier was to establish salad bars.
Now, they weren’t my invention, but I certainly made much of the idea to have a salad bar where the students could come and get all kinds of nice, fresh, cold ingredients. That was an idea that really made us very popular. I always made sure there was some fruit salad there, and I never served only canned fruit salad. I mixed the canned fruit salad with some fresh fruits so it wasn’t too much of one or the other. Then I had to establish some very strict standards with regard to purchasing. I found out once that this meat company, even though I had specified “U.S. Choice” grade meat, had given us meat that we found out was of lower quality. When I found out that this was intentional I eliminated that company from all future purchasing, a measure which cost them thousands of dollars, but I had to make sure that the quality was there. In fact, when I went to our bake shop (I always had a wonderful bake shop, and we had terrific bakers), I saw that they were using a lot of canned fruit for pie fillings. When you make a beautiful pie, you don’t want to put canned fruit in it. And I took all the cans of canned fruit and gave them away or threw them away. Then I told my employees: “From now on we use only frozen fruit if we’re going to make pies. If you go to that much trouble, you might as well make a decent pie.” So those are some of the things that I did immediately in order to make a difference in terms of quality.

SHARP: Sounds good, Paul.

FAIRBROOK: Now, in terms of connecting with the students, it was very important that somehow they saw me as someone who cared for them, and the only way I knew how to do that was to try to get to know their names, try to be with them, try to talk to them. Most of my managers were young dietitians just graduating from dietary school. They didn’t know much about managing college food service, but they were just the right age--just a couple of years older than the students--and they were just wonderful in relating to them. I would say to them: “If you see a student sitting by himself or herself, just go and talk to them. Don’t just let them sit there; there’s something wrong if they’re all alone. And don’t ask them: “How’s the food?” I used to do that, but that was never a good question. Why would a student tell me that it is good. That’s not
normal. I would say: “How are things going? What courses are you taking?” and so forth. I would do that, and I would try to get their names, and obviously, if I didn’t remember them all the time, I would say: “What was your name again?” Towards the end of the year, I would get to know a lot of the students by name, and once you get to know a student by name, and after you talk to them once or twice, you develop a relationship that can’t be bought. It’s the kind where they begin to think that this fellow is really interested in me. A student came to me once with a long beard—he was obviously a hippie—and he said: “Can I stock my own yogurt in the kitchen. I want to stock my own yogurt. Can I do that? Will you help me?” I said: “Sure, that’s not a problem” and so he started making his own yogurt for himself and for some of his friends, and he thought that was great. But then when he came to me and said: “Can I sun-bake the muffins on the roof?” I shook my head and said: “No you can’t.” In terms of the Elbert Covell students especially, they all came from Latin America and didn’t have much money. Almost every one of them worked for me in food service and getting a job right away was really very important to them. And even today, 50 years later, they would come in at reunion time, and tell me: “Hey Paul, I used to work for you.” And so that always makes me feel very good.

SHARP: That would be a great feeling!

FAIRBROOK: Obviously, I also had to impress the Administration.

SHARP: Sure.

FAIRBROOK: And I knew that having been at the Culinary Institute of America, that there were certain things you had to do to make certain banquets special. I got about six or seven young men together and made them the “Elite Waiter Corps.” I bought them tuxedo jackets, gave them white gloves, even a few training sessions on how to carry a napkin over their wrist, and taught them how to give real fancy service. Shortly after I arrived, there was a Regents’ Banquet and I got my chef to make a beautiful ice carving, and here were my elite waiters, a beautiful buffet, and a ham with the seal of the university emblazoned on it. I have to tell
you, that first banquet really impressed the Regents! Thus I made sure, especially at banquets, that we developed a level of service that hitherto had not been known, to the best of my knowledge, on this campus. So once you have a few of these banquets, after you've dealt with them and got a lot of compliments, you begin to see that maybe you’ve made a point. Then, of course, I also had to become friends with the faculty. Since I have a masters degree in Business Administration, I felt that I was their professional equal. Therefore I wanted to be one of them. That was very easy at the time, because the University was a much more intimate place than it is now, although our current President Pam Eibeck is trying to recreate that in several ways-- especially by being available to anyone who wants to talk to her. At the time we used to have a faculty picnic at Oak Park once a year in September. Almost all of the faculty went with their families, and I brought my family and it was so intimate that you really got to know each other. It was important to me that I got close to them and I had different ways of doing it. I'll give you an example: The History Department invited an author called Stringfellow Barr. He had written a book called *Strictly Academic*, and I decided to read this book before he came. In his book he describes a poor faculty member being feted by a member of a foundation and he invites this faculty member to breakfast in a fancy hotel. The author describes how for breakfast they brought in, platters of scrambled eggs and bacon, pitchers of orange juice and hot steamy coffee--this whole thing had made a big impression on the faculty guest. When we had our luncheon for the author and about 12 others in the Regents’ Dining Room, there was a menu on everybody’s plate, and it was the page from the book; I underlined what I just described, and in came the platters of scrambled eggs and the bacon and the pitchers of orange juice etc... Well, the History Department was really very impressed with that. First of all, they were surprised to have a food service director who actually read books, and second of all, to serve a menu described in the book was a big compliment to Mr. Barr, since I obviously had read his work. That was the menu for the day, and I hadn’t asked the History Department but just decided that was the right thing. So with things like that, I feel that I got pretty close to the faculty.
Another thing that I felt was very important and made me a lot of friends was my policy that the child of any faculty member, on the day of his or her 16th birthday, would be guaranteed a part-time job in food service. That made a real difference to many faculty members. Most of their children had never worked before. Nobody had given them a job, and I didn’t treat them any differently than any other student worker, so they learned a lot. You know, at 16 they don’t know much about working for somebody else. Many faculty members told me later on: ”Paul, you taught my son/daughter a lot when he/she was working for you” and even today I meet some of the people who worked for me when they were 16. Kathy, a daughter of an engineering professor, Bob Hamernik, came to me when she was a young girl. She is now a teacher at Stockton Unified, and she still remembers having started to work for me. That was one way in which we tried to cement our friendships with the faculty. Another example is how I dealt with a group called “the Faculty Dames.” They were faculty wives and women faculty members. They had an annual luncheon and they didn’t have much money in their treasury. I would go out of my way to maybe throw in the punch or cookies or something like that at least they wouldn’t have to pay for that. It was a small gesture, something I was able to do as a food service director of a private college. If I had worked for a state college, I couldn’t have done that, but at a private college I felt that this would contribute to the general atmosphere of the University. I felt that part of my job was to do that. The chair of that group for many years was Jean Whiteker, the wife of the Dean of the College, and we got along famously.

SHARP: Well can I ask a question at this point? Why couldn’t you have done it at a state university, would the expense have been too much?

FAIRBROOK: At a state university you don’t have a right to give things away that are state property, and the cookies and the punch were state property. You can’t just give them away. But I felt that as long as I was contributing to the overall success of the University, I was able to do these things. I enjoyed doing it, and it made a difference, I think. One other example of cementing my friendship with the faculty was when we
celebrated Albert Einstein’s 100th anniversary in 1979. The faculty came to me and asked if I would help them with that and I agreed, of course. First of all, I scheduled an all-campus Einstein dinner. Since Einstein had held three citizenships—German, Swiss, and American—I decided it would be a Swiss dinner. Thus we had a very big Swiss dinner for all the students and faculty. In addition I was asked to speak at the symposium in the Raymond Great Hall. Someone had heard that at the age of ten I had actually met Einstein personally.

SHARP: I had never heard that.

FAIRBROOK: Yes, my father had sent me to a boys’ camp since I had misbehaved a little and he wanted me out of the way for a few weeks. I was sent to this boys’ camp near Berlin, and Einstein had his summer cottage next to the camp. One day he came to the fence, and all of us ten-year-old boys went up and talked to him. So the faculty asked if I would talk about my meeting with Einstein. So here was this symposium in the Raymond Great Hall, and everybody was there expecting some very learned speech. I decided that I really didn’t have much to say except that I met him as a ten-year-old boy. So, I read a poem instead that I had written about Einstein. It was humorous and a little risqué, and I read it to the entire group, just to loosen up the atmosphere a little bit. They laughed— they knew that I had a sense of humor, and that was that. I still have that poem and will attach it as an appendix to this oral history.

SHARP: You’ll have to show that to me.

FAIRBROOK: But that was one way in which to create a feeling of intimacy with the faculty. Now, when it comes to UOP staff, that was also important to me because a food service director depends on the staff, i.e. the carpenters, the plumbers, electricians and the gardeners to be successful. For instance, if I had an all-campus barbecue, I had to have those big 50-gallon oil barrels cut in half, have legs welded onto them so I could put coal into them to broil the steaks. In those days, there weren’t these beautiful expensive big barbecue carts with that use propane gas. In those days you used charcoal and I needed about 10 or 12 of those, so
I depended on the staff. My immediate subordinates were Stan Green and Albert Warren. Stan was Director of Housing and he was wonderful all the time that we worked together, which was some 20 years. He and I made a point to really get to know the people in the Maintenance Shop where they were working. We would go over there and if they had a tragedy, let’s say a funeral, I would provide some food for them with compliments of the University. Even at a wedding sometimes I would give them food or drinks at a lesser cost, or sometimes, if necessary, for free. Again, here is an example of something I could do in a private school that I could not have done anywhere else. It created a sense of friendship and appreciation and understanding for food service—which is what I wanted.

Later, when I became Director of Auxiliary Services and was given responsibility for the bookstore, the Bookstore Manager was Albert Warren and he was equally sensitive and capable and excellent in public relations. All of us in food service, housing and the bookstore became good friends with all the others who worked for the University.

SHARP: It sort of underlined the family feeling that...

FAIRBROOK: Exactly. For instance, while I didn’t give food away for workmen who came to work in my kitchens, they were always allowed to have a cup of coffee. There was never any doubt. “If you want a cup of coffee, help yourself,” and after a banquet, I let my banquet waiters and waitresses have a meal. After that, if there were a couple of janitors cleaning up, they also shared in the meal. So you create a kind of a family atmosphere, and I think that is very important. The last challenge that I had when I arrived, was to create a budget that was realistic and I must admit, that at the beginning, I was a big failure at this. In fact, six months after I came, I was called into the office by Bob Winterberg, the Financial Vice President and Lloyd Stuckey, my boss. Lloyd said: “Paul, you’re not meeting your budget” and I asked: “What budget?” They said: “We have a budget” and I replied: “Well, you haven’t shown it to me!” I didn’t know exactly what I was supposed to do. But I came home that evening and said to my wife: “Oops, I hope I don’t get fired for not meeting a budget that I didn’t know existed.” After that, I always created my own budget,
and I don’t believe in zero-sum budgeting. I think that you have to look at the current year’s figures and look at what you did right and wrong, and see what your costs are going to be next year. You have to decide what changes you have to make in terms of personnel, food and other costs. Then you create a budget and give it to your boss, and then you have to meet that budget. And I have to admit, after that first scary meeting that I just described, except for one year in the early ‘70s when the student count dropped precipitously and our food prices went way up because of the shortage of gasoline and sugar. Except for that one year I met my budget every year. Part of that I credit to my subsequent boss, because Bob McMaster became Comptroller after Lloyd Stuckey left to become Vice President of Finance at the University of Puget Sound. Bob McMaster was a wonderful boss. He was always open to me, and whenever I gave him my budget, and I said that I did not want to increase food prices, he said: “Yes, but you’re going to because we will need to do that.” I have to tell you that Bob McMaster saved me many times by insisting that I raise the food rates a little bit. He was a terrific boss—he was always available to me, the door was always open. There were two people that I will always think of fondly. One of them is Bob McMaster, and the other is Larry Brehm. Larry Brehm was the Assistant Comptroller and he was always willing to help me—those are two friendships that have lasted until today.

SHARP: Very interesting, Paul. Are you ready to move on?

FARIBROOK: Yes, I am.

SHARP: Okay. Just let me know if this is a little bit repetitive. But anyway, do you have anything else to say about your perceived obligations to enhance the educational, academic, and student life programs?

FAIRBROOK: Well, I do... I do in the sense that a year after I became food service director, I was appointed director of housing as well. Then my responsibility was just not for food service but for housing as well. There I had some real challenges because none of our residence halls were air conditioned, and to live in them in the summer wasn’t very pleasant, and
the rooms were not particularly exciting. West and South Hall at least had a sink in each room, which turned out to be a very popular residence hall. It was funky but popular. The new ones in the Quad were a special challenge. During the first years I had to deal with the students of Raymond College and later Callison, and they were a pretty wild bunch at the time; this was in the late 60’s and the early 70’s, and my job was simply to create housing that was better. We tried all kinds of things, we even tried to create a “Room of the Future.” We broke through two walls in Grace Covell, created a bedroom and a living room and we furnished this sample room with beautiful overstuffed furniture, and we invited the students to come and look at this beautiful new room. It turned out to be a project that was not successful. Everybody enjoyed looking at it, but we never did anything with it afterwards, and it was kind of a waste of time, but we did that just to try to see what we could do to improve campus life. But, of course, we had some real challenges at the time. I mean, this was the time when the students started to use co-educational bathrooms. I couldn’t imagine for the life of me, as a 50-year old man, why a woman student and a male student would want to use the same bathroom. I always had my own private bathroom at home, and it’s bad enough to use the bathroom with others of your same gender, but to mix them made no sense at all. President McCaffrey had gotten a very angry letter from a parent demanding that it cease immediately. And President McCaffrey ordered me to stop it at once. So I went straight to the print shop and made some signs saying “Men” and “Women.” Then I went up and had a meeting with the Raymond students in their residence hall and I said: “Listen, I have to put this up. The President told me so. Now will you please be good enough--I don’t care what else you do--but don’t take these signs down. I want to be able to tell the President that I took care of it. Now go along with me for six weeks, and afterwards I don’t care what you do with the signs.” They were pretty good about it. They laughed, and I laughed, and we put those silly signs up, and I don’t know what happened, but at least I was able to tell President McCaffrey that I had solved the problem. Those are some of the things that I had to do. Would you repeat that last question for me? I want to be sure I answered
SHARP: What was your perception of your task in enhancing the educational, academic, and student life programs, as well as the mission of the University and your primary challenges. You’ve given us quite a bit, but...

FAIRBROOK: Well, I... first of all. When it comes to Student Life,. I had been trained by a woman named Ruth Haddock when I was Director of Auxiliary Services at Northern Illinois University. She had come from the University of Syracuse, where she had really been taught how to run a student life program. I was a young inexperienced graduate student from Michigan State, and I didn’t know any of those things. She was the Dean of Women and taught me things that I remember to this day. I’ve even shared them with our present Vice President of Student Life, Elizabeth Griego whom I really admire. This taught me how to be sensitive to the problem of integrating a student into a university life. They come, they’re homesick, they’re scared, they’re young, they’re not very sophisticated, and we’re expected to turn them into people who are ready to face the world four years later. This takes an awful lot of work. It doesn't happen by itself. You have to be creative and you have to let them participate by creating committees. We had a food committee in which they could express their frustrations. We had questionnaires that they had a chance to fill out. Some of them became student managers, both in food service and in the residence hall as Resident Assistants. All that requires really a rather sophisticated approach to changing the life of a student from a scared, inexperienced young person to a well-rounded human being. I saw my job as trying to assist; in this case it was Dean Betz, who was the Dean of Students and Catherine Davis, who was the Dean of Women. They were wonderful people who understood this subject thoroughly, and since I had learned it as well, we really never had any serious problems. We always understood each other and worked toward the same goal.

SHARP: Great--I think you’ve also covered the next question. But did you have anything else to say about your administrative position. Where in
the administration did you fit in? To whom did you report, and who reported to you?

FAIRBROOK: Well, as I said, I reported to Lloyd Stuckey. After a year and a half or so, I reported to Bob McMaster and I have mentioned what a great boss he was, and he’s still a very close friend of mine. We still meet every month, Bob Winterberg, Bob McMaster, Al Warren, Stan Green I and several others. We meet every month for breakfast, and we have a very friendly relationship. As I said earlier my immediate subordinates were Stan Green as Director of Housing and Albert Warren, as the Bookstore Manager. In addition I was working with an Assistant Director of Food Services, Mary Heacock, and several unit managers and dieticians.

Stan and Albert were such capable assistants that, except for giving them some guidance, I didn’t have too much to do. Stan was a very loyal man. He had come out of the U.S. Army--I hired him right out of the military service, and he stayed long until after I retired. He was the kind of man who would get up--so different than I was!--and be there at eight o’clock sharp, and he would go home at five o’clock. I would come in at maybe 9:30 or ten a.m. and stay until eight at night, you never knew when I was working, but he was always there when he was needed. Every morning he would go to visit the Physical Plant and he would check to see if his work orders were being followed. After about ten years of doing that, maybe 15 years, he said: “Paul, do you think now that I’m walking all this much and I’m getting a older, would you mind getting me an electric cart?” And I said, “Stan, why didn’t you ask for that earlier?” Within a week I got him an electric cart, because I didn’t realize that that was something that he really deserved and needed since he was going all around the campus. I found out very quickly that the best kind of unit managers for me were young people--usually dieticians. They knew sanitation, they knew diets. They knew little about college food service, but they were young and sensitive and understanding, and they related well to the students. They were wonderful. One of them, Anne Lesovski was the wife of one of the university architects and was a fantastic manager. She was the only manager who was ever able to run the Summit--in what is now called the
McCaffrey Center—with the loss of only 17 thousand dollars that year. Usually we lost a lot more than that. It was hard to make money in that place. But she was so efficient that her year was still my banner year. I only lost $17,000!

SHARP: Interesting! Could you perhaps add a little to what you’ve already said about your administrative philosophy and style.

FAIRBROOK: I had a motto that I created at Northern Illinois University; it was this: “You Can’t Feed Kids with Excuses.” In fact, my secretary in Illinois actually crocheted a little sign with that motto on it, and I had that in my office. Sometimes it came back to bite me, because when a student came to my office and complained, he pointed at that sign and said: “Now don’t give me any excuses.” But I really believed that you have to treat your customers in the way that you wanted to be treated yourself. I said that earlier when we talked about scrambled eggs, but it really is something that you have to follow if you’re really consistent with the idea of quality and service. Then it sort of guides itself. You decide: “What is it that I would like, and what is it that I wouldn’t like and what is it that would make me especially happy?” Now as to my administrative approach—people have accused me of being too paternalistic towards my full-time staff, and that is a criticism that may be valid. I really felt, however, that these were my people, that I had to take care of them, that I had to care for them. I went to their funerals, I went to their weddings, and I treated them well. Sometimes, though, I was very strict. I remember we had a salad worker named Lucy who was basically a very fine and loyal person. I made everybody wear nametags. I wanted the students to relate to my staff in a more personal way. One day Lucy came to the Quad kitchen and she didn’t have a nametag on. She had worked in Grace Covell before that. I said: “Lucy”—this was in the middle of the meal period—I said: “Lucy, I want you to go back to Grace Covell and put your nametag on.” Now, if looks could have killed, I wouldn’t be here. She was very angry. She went and got the nametag, put it on, but she put it on in such a way that the strap of the apron she wore covered the name tag and I didn’t say anything after that.
FAIRBROOK: But the point is, it was important to me that my staff had nametags. So these were some of the things that I did in order to be a good manager. I don’t know, I’m sure that some people would have felt that I was not. In fact my daughter told me once that I was somewhat sexist, because I used to talk about “my girls.” You know, they weren’t girls, they were women. I would put my arms around them sometimes—and you’re not supposed to do that. I did all these things, and as I got older I felt I could get away with it. It probably wasn’t appropriate, but I did it anyway, and I still think that most of them did not object. However, to answer your question honestly, I’m sure I screwed up in some ways, but that’s the way I operated.

FAIRBROOK: Well, on the whole, I think my tenure was fairly successful. Towards the end when I retired in 1985 after 20 years, I think I felt, and so did the students and I think the parents as well, that our food service was very good. In fact, in 1985 we were judged to be one of the best food services in the United States. In 1985 I got the “Silver Plate Award,” a national award for being the top college food service in the country. We were pretty good but the Rathskeller caused me some special problems. I wanted to create a nice type of cozy place. I knew I couldn’t serve beer because, if I had served beer, only those that were 21 years of age could have entered the Rathskeller, and most of our students were younger. But when I planned the building, I put in a kind of a glass chiller and I put in all the equipment needed to serve beer, but instead I served root beer in frosted glasses, until such time that the law would be changed, which it never was. The Rathskeller became a real problem for a while. I wanted to create an informal atmosphere there, so I hired a student from a fraternity to be a manager. I hadn’t realized, however, that he was a very
irresponsible young man. One night when I appeared unexpectedly at 9:00 p.m. to see what was going on at the Rathskeller, he was nowhere to be found. He arrived half an hour later, soaking wet because he had been to a fraternity party, and I fired him on the spot.

SHARP: Came down pretty hard on that guy!

FAIRBROOK: Then, of course, I got all kinds of hassles from the students, arguing that I didn’t believe in student managers; I agreed that this was true, that I no longer believed in student managers unless they were supervised by a full-time person. That, naturally, didn’t make me a lot of friends among some students. There was another controversy when I didn’t want students to wear beards while they were serving food. I never liked beards, especially on a serving line, and so I was brought up in front of the Student Council and they were giving me a hard time until we resolved it by deciding that as long as they wore beard nets—nets for the beard—they could serve food. That solved my problem because none of them wanted to wear a beard net. Another time I had a problem because Thanksgiving came and I locked all the residence halls except one, because I didn’t want thieves to come and steal stuff while the students were gone. I left one hall open, however, for the students from foreign countries, and any other student who wanted to stay. Well, the Raymond students didn’t want to move out of their rooms. They felt that I should let them stay in their own rooms. I was called in front of the Student Council and I was censured—there was a big Pacifican headline: “Fairbrook Censured” I was specifically censured for having “a legalistic attitude.” Fortunately I had checked my decision with my superiors and they had all agreed that I should lock the residence halls. But these are some of the bumps along the road that I had to travel on.

SHARP: One of the things I wanted to ask about was the role your sense of humor has played over the years. You’ve mentioned several examples, but would you like to tell us about the hamburger contest?

FAIRBROOK: Oh, absolutely, absolutely. That was one of my dramatic failures, apparently. The time in the spring had come when the students
were getting a little antsy (they would always get antsy just before finals) and I wanted to break the monotony. So I came up with the idea of having a hamburger contest. I invited five fast food restaurants to participate. I told them we were going to buy 50 four-ounce hamburgers. We would pay for them and we would have a contest. So I went to A&W, McDonalds, Wendy’s, Jack in the Box and, of course, UOP. We had a big contest in the plaza of what is now called the McCaffrey Center. We had little booths set up and all the other hamburgers were picked up at exactly 12 o’clock, and ours were also cooked at that time. There were faculty and student representatives who were to judge these hamburgers. I thought this would be kind of exciting, and so I invited Doyle Minden, who was the Director of Public Relations, to come and take pictures and sort of publicize this, which—to my surprise and later on to my discomfort—he did! We had this wonderful hamburger contest and the result was that A&W with its Papa Burger took first place, Burger King second, Wendy’s third, while we were fourth. McDonalds took fifth and Jack in the Box sixth. Doyle Minden distributed this news to all the wire services and the owner of the local McDonald franchise heard about it. He was furious, because his wound up in fifth place; he is also an Alumnus, I think. He contacted President McCaffrey and withdrew his $25,000 pledge to the University. I got a call from Melinda, the Pacifican reporter, and was asked: “Paul, do you have anything to say about it? Today’s San Francisco Chronicle has a headline “University in a Pickle over a Hamburger”.

SHARP: Was this the Stockton Record?

FAIRBROOK: No, first it was the San Francisco Chronicle.

SHARP: Chronicle, okay.

FAIRBROOK: So I was called by the Pacifical and I said: “No, I don’t have any comments” (somewhat unusual for me...) and shortly thereafter the Financial Vice President Bob Winterberg called me and told me that the owner of McDonalds had just withdrawn his pledge to the University. I asked him if he wanted me to call him and he said: ”No, you’ve caused
enough trouble.” I went home that day and I said to Peig: “I don’t know if I’ll get fired over $25,000 or not,” but I felt a little uncomfortable. The next day the Stockton Record’s headline read: “University not in a Pickle over a Hamburger” because the owner had changed his mind about withdrawing the pledge. I suspect that he had heard that Time Magazine was going to run that story and he may have heard from the McDonald headquarters that he better not do that, so he gave the money back. The next day I got called by Mrs. McCaffrey, saying: “Paul, you don’t have to worry, your job is safe!” A short while later I tried to make amends by writing the owner a letter saying: “You know, both of us were only peripherally involved in this thing so let’s forget about it,” and when he wrote back he had written the word “bullshit” and circled it. That was his entire answer to me. He hasn’t talked to me since. In fact, he used to donate orangeade and jackets at the football games, but he stopped doing that until I retired; as soon as I retired he restarted his donations. So that was one of my failures, but it was one of those things that I just didn’t anticipate and it didn’t go right.

SHARP: One of those times that humor helped see you through.

FAIRBROOK: But another time, and this is a story I love to tell, was when the students at Raymond College wanted to really show me up: one day, on a Sunday, they drove a motorcycle, a big Harley Davidson, into the Raymond Great Hall.

SHARP: A tricky situation!

FAIRBROOK: Fortunately, I was not on duty, but my manager J.R. Allison was. He was a 23-year old young man from New Mexico. He didn’t have much experience as a manager; he was young and new, but on this occasion he was wonderful. J.R. went out into the dining room where he saw that shiny motorcycle. He happened to be a motorcycle buff, and he asked what kind of a motorcycle it was. He then asked if he might try it out. The student, completely surprised, got off the motorcycle and J.R. Allison drove it around the Raymond Great Hall. When he drove it out of the hall, all the students cheered. The next day when I heard about it, I
gave him a big hug, and I said: “I could not have done this for the world, J.R., but you’re my man!” So that is one of those stories that I really like to tell because it’s how things can happen that are -- unusual.

SHARP: A fortunate coincidence that he happened to be a motorcycle buff.

FAIRBROOK: Well, some things turn out badly and others turn out well. Shortly after I arrived at U.O.P. the women of Grace Covell Hall (that was a women’s dorm at the time), invited my family and me to have dinner with them. I made sure that it would be a very good dinner, and the students cheered afterwards. They gave me a pair of cuff links and treated me as if I were a man from heaven. The next day the Stockton Record had a story entitled “The Day the Students Cheered.” This story was not altogether an accident, since I had invited a Record reporter, Grant Lyons to come and join us at that dinner. So he came and wrote this story up. The interesting thing is, that while they may not have cheered ever since, I kept that article, and I kept reprinting it, and reprinting it for years and giving it to the parents at Freshman Orientation. President McCaffrey used to say in introducing me: “This is Paul Fairbrook, our food service director, and the students are cheering him.” Well, they hadn’t cheered me since 1965, but for years thereafter every new parent got a reprint of the story about the students cheering me. You know, public relations is an important element in a successful career.

SHARP: That’s great public relations for sure!

FAIRBROOK: I used to talk to the parents for about an hour about the food service during which I told them that, just because they spoiled their kids until the age of 16 didn’t mean that I could do the same thing. Then I would tell them about our food service. In the process I would give them handouts about our special dinners, our nutrition education, and all those things that we did to make our students happy. Usually I was able to convince the parents that they were safe in bringing their children to us. Food was an important consideration for many mothers. They really
worried about whether their young daughter or son would really get the right things and enough to eat and so putting them at ease was very, very important.

SHARP: I can believe it. Well, those are wonderful stories, Paul, and thank you for sharing them with us. Can we talk about—and you’ve already done this in many cases—but are there any other individuals at Pacific that you’d like to remember and tell us why? You talked about Stan Green, Bob McMaster…

FAIRBROOK: Well, I have served under, or observed seven college presidents in my life and here are my impressions: Dr. Burns was absolutely terrific. He was the most wonderful man I’ve ever worked for. When my wife Margaret died in 1968, he actually invited me and my two boys—the girls were away at the time—he invited me and my boys for a weekend to his cabin at Lake Tahoe. How many university presidents would do that? He had a wonderful sense of humor. When he was sick and he was in the University Health Center, I asked him: “Do you have any bed sores from being in bed?” His nurse got very angry with me and said: “What do you mean bed sores? My patient doesn’t have bed sores” Shortly thereafter Peig and I went on our honeymoon; this was in December 1969, and after we came back from the honeymoon, the very morning we came back, I got a call at seven o’clock in the morning from Dr. Burns. I said: “Yes, Dr. Burns, what can I do for you?” He said: “Paul, have you got any bed sores, yet?” That was Dr. Burns. Another time we were invited to join the UOP football team when they played Louisiana State in Baton Rouge. That was interesting because I had Tom Stubbs in the car with me, and the policeman wouldn’t let us close to the LSU campus. Then I told him that we had Tom Stubbs, the Assistant Director of Athletics in our car and then we were given a private escort directly to the stadium. However, the night before, some of us, Dr. Burns and Gracie Burns and several others walked in Old Town in New Orleans, and the people there, the barkers, would say: “Come on in, come on in.” My new wife was 16 years younger than I and as we walked by, one of the barkers said to me: “You can bring your daughter in with you.” Dr. Burns heard
that, and the next morning he asked me: “Paul, how was it sleeping with your daughter last night?”

SHARP: Oh wow!

FAIRBROOK: That was Dr. Burns. He had a wonderful sense of humor and I really loved the man a lot. Mr. McCaffrey, who followed him, was fair to me. He was very nice when I got a grant, an Exxon grant, to write my book on college food service. He gave me three months off with pay, which was one of the conditions of the grant. He always had been very nice to me. Whether he was as good to the university as he should have been is an open question. I have a feeling he was more interested in the Rotary Club and in the Bay Area than in the University. He did a very good thing, however: he managed to convince the Stockton City Council to allow us to buy the old Delta campus, which is now our South campus. He accomplished that and I give him a lot of credit for it. His follower, Bill Atchley, was in my judgment, the worst president one can imagine. He was not only a mean person but not even a very good president. I believe that he did a lot of damage to the University. I had retired by that time, and after Atchley had turned over our campus food services to a contractor, Aramark, the Pacifican editor had come to me to my house to ask my opinion, and I gave it to him. The headline of the Pacifican the next day read: “Fairbrook Thinks Deal is Half Baked.” I had pointed out all the bad things that were going to happen and most of these did, in fact, occur. Bill Atchley called me and started to yell at me.

SHARP: One clarification please--You’re talking about, Atchley’s contracting out food service, right?

FAIRBROOK: I suspect that he had made a deal with the Aramark people when he was at Clemson University, and he was determined to throw out our excellent food service and turn it over to a private company. I believe that that was his intention. In fact he wrote a letter to the vice presidents, which said that just because he was a friend of Aramark, and because his son had a wedding given to him by Aramark on our campus, didn’t mean that he was going to prefer them over any others but a few
weeks later he turned our excellent food services over to Aramark. He called me after that newspaper article and started to yell at me and I said: “Mr. Atchley, I'm retired, I'm not working for you. I'm going to Australia next week; when I come back, if you need my help, you can call me, goodbye.” After him came Donald DeRosa, who turned out, in his ten years, to be a terrific president. He created financial stability, got to know the faculty, and I thought he was great. And now, of course, we have Pam Eibeck who is the best President that we could ever have imagined. She cares for this school and for the Stockton Community. She is the only President who has had open hours when anybody can actually come and talk to her. That has never been my experience with the seven presidents that I had known.

SHARP: Okay, just give me a minute to look through my notes--here it is. As we all know, the 60's and early 70's were a time of national student unrest and this was a particularly interesting time for a lot of us, so can you tell us a bit about any student unrest here and how you dealt with it?

FAIRBROOK: Well, there was a real problem, especially during the grape boycott, because a lot of the Chicano students and others--students at Raymond College and Callison--who wanted me to stop serving grapes, but I had sons of Japanese grape farmers who wanted me to serve grapes and the football players, they didn't care. So here I was, faced with a dilemma: Do I serve grapes or not? I came up with the solution that I would let each dining hall make a petition if they wanted me to stop serving grapes. As I expected, at the Quad, the students didn't want me to serve grapes. At Anderson Hall, which was a dining hall at the time, where most of the football players were eating, I didn't get a petition, so I served grapes in Anderson, but I didn't serve them at the Quad or Grace Covell. This solved my problem without me getting into an awful lot of trouble. Another problem I had was when the Community Involvement Program (C.I.P.) was created at UOP. This was a program designed by Dr. Burns to minimize the protests of the students in the late 1960's. It resulted in 150 disadvantaged students from Delta College getting free scholarships. Some protesters had circled the tower once during those
difficult times, and Dr. Burns had agreed to give them scholarships. Then some of the fraternities gave these students free meals. Then I was faced with the question: “What are you going to do, Fairbrook?” I had to agree that a certain number of them would get some sort of a break on meals. That was okay, but I had to be flexible to do that. I’ll give you an example of some of the other problems we were facing in those days. On the first of May 1970, you know, when Cambodia was invaded by our American forces, there were protests all over the country. There were disturbances at almost every university, and on our campus as well. Hundreds of students, egged on by some faculty members with microphones, gathered in front of Anderson Hall. It was a hot day and Anderson Hall was a dining hall with big plate glass windows and I was worried. So I called my managers and said: “I want you to get some big containers of ice cold lemonade, and on these containers, put a big sign saying ‘Compliments of Food Service.’ Bring those out with cups and do it right away.” There were about a thousand students, angry as hell at life, at the university, and at the political situation. Suddenly food service brought them cold lemonade and no stones were thrown through the glass windows. I think the lemonade helped cool them down. It so happened that my office was right at the end of Anderson Hall, so I could see the whole thing. The only other thing I think I’d like to tell about is the Tom Jones dinner we had one night at Raymond College. Tom Jones was the name of a popular movie, and in that movie the boy and the girl are looking at each other eating turkey legs but thinking about sex. The students at Raymond wanted a Tom Jones dinner, and I sort of knew what was going to happen. I took all the portraits down hanging in the dining hall and put paper tablecloths on the table. All the students were sitting there, obviously waiting for something to happen. I had made a mistake by putting pitchers of milk on the tables with lemon meringue pie for dessert. I went out to see what was going on and they were all waiting for me. I was wearing one of these light blue polyester jackets that were in style at the time and I came out, and somebody threw a pepper at me--a little piece of green pepper--and they all just looked at me. I wanted to show what a good sport I was, but then made a strategic mistake: I threw 25
the pepper back at them, and two minutes later, I was crawling on my hands and knees. They were throwing food all over me and while I was crawling out into the kitchen they were pouring milk over each other. So I said to myself: “I’m never going to encourage that again!”

SHARP: And these were Raymond students.

FAIRBROOK: Yes, they certainly were. In fact, the Raymond students once caused me such a problem that I had to really do something about it. Some had dogs in the dining room and I couldn’t get rid of them. When I would go and ask them to take the dogs out, they laughed at me. Unfortunately Andy Key was the Assistant Provost—he was kind of a jerk and didn’t support me at all. I didn’t know what to do, I mean, these dogs were eating the leftovers off the trays on the racks, and that’s not something I could allow. Finally I went to the provost of Raymond College Berndt Kolker—he was a good friend—and said: “Berndt, if you don’t help me with this, I’m going to the San Joaquin Health Department and ask them to shut me down!” I was dead serious! The next day, the problem was solved, but it was a tough thing to do; I mean, without the help of the administrator, there was nothing I could do. But Berndt realized that I was serious and I was absolutely serious. I would not have served food in Raymond Great Hall with dogs in the dining room; you just can’t do that.

SHARP: It sounds to me like you knew the right button to push to get the...

FAIRBROOK: Well, I don’t know, this was after many frustrating days of not knowing what to do.

SHARP: Many alumni can recall some of the international dinners that you put on during your career. Could you tell us about these, and what was so special about them?

FAIRBROOK: Well, actually, if I did anything different at Pacific than most of my colleagues, it would have been in planning international dinners. Many of these contractors—like Sodexo and Aramark—would give the
students a steak dinner every Saturday, and to me that wasn’t very exciting. I had once given them a steak dinner just before Thanksgiving—filet mignon—and a student came to me and said: “When are we going to have our Thanksgiving dinner? And I said: “You had a filet mignon last night” and he said: “Is that what those chewy hamburgers were?” So I realized that I hadn’t done enough about making it exciting, and I decided that I was going to have an international dinner once each year and make it a very special occasion. I would pick a country, study that country, study their culinary habits and traditions, I would use genuine recipes. I would ask students from that country to help me and would make it a real educational experience. Very often I would ask the airlines of the country to donate 1000 blank menus and I would have our print shop print the actual menus. On the left side I would describe the country’s culinary tradition, on the right side the details of each menu item. I would also try to get some sort of entertainment. The first one I had was a Japanese dinner. At the time we had at UOP a Japanese professor named Kawarabayashi. He and I went to San Francisco and found a friend of his who closed his restaurants on Tuesdays. We then invited the owner to come and help us put on an all-campus Japanese dinner. I hired a young Japanese woman and she performed a native dance in Grace Covell Hall. We had big banners that we got from the Japan Tourist Office. But it was a good thing that the students couldn’t read it, because the banner advertised Kirin Beer! Anyway, that was the first of many. Then we had a Latin American dinner and an Italian dinner. We put on an Indian dinner, in honor of the Callison students who had come back from their semester in Bangalore. Now that was an exciting dinner in many ways. Again, we invited the man from the India House Restaurant in San Francisco to help us and we served a traditional Indian dinner. In fact, one of my dishwashers was an Indian lady and she became a cook on that day and helped us cook the Parathos (an Indian flat bread). The only problem was that our football players were furious because I didn’t have sense enough to offer hamburgers or spaghetti as an alternative. You just don’t serve spicy Indian food to 4,000 students without giving them an alternative; I hadn’t thought of it, and they were very upset with me. However, I had
many other international dinners and one of them was probably the most ambitious dinner I have ever tried. In 1972, a year which the United States Commerce Department had designated as a “Travel America Year,” we had a “Discover America” dinner. I planned it as a a progressive dinner through all the dining halls. It took students almost three hours to navigate through all four dining halls. I had a dinner at Grace Covell (with a sailboat in the middle) serving food from the Eastern shore; then I had Southern food in Anderson Hall, where we had artificial liquor poured over the fried chicken so that it would flame a little bit. Then we offered a Western dinner for which I had our Bake Shop bake bread in the afternoon so when they opened the door to Callison Dining Hall the students could smell this fantastic fresh bread. We also had a tractor and a bale of hay in the dining room. In Elbert Covell Hall I did something I couldn’t do today. I asked a beautiful young student from Hawaii, standing on top of a VW bus in a bikini, to hand out California oranges. Oranges were very popular that day. This dinner was a very big effort. I had asked all the fifty state tourist bureaus to send me promotional pamphlets and then I got the California Automobile Association to give me some of their little plastic trash bags. It took several students three days to fill these bags so that each student at Pacific who went to this dinner got a bag full of pamphlets from about 30 states advertising the products of each. Then I asked President McCaffrey to invite the Assistant Secretary of Commerce to come and talk to us about travel in America. President McCaffrey said: ”Paul, he accepted and now we have to make sure that the people come to his talk.” So I got Western Airlines to give me two free airline passes to Las Vegas as the prize for a raffle. Everybody got a raffle ticket and the tickets stated: ”You must be present to win.” The hall was full of students who were not interested in our Assistant Secretary of Commerce, but they all wanted to win those 2 airline passes to Las Vegas. That was really quite an affair. It’s not something I could do today because I actually served three dinners instead of one, but anybody who went to that dinner will never forget it. I really enjoyed doing something different. At another occasion I got involved with Bangladesh when that country won its battle for independence and we organized a “Feast day
for Bangladesh” during which we served Bangladeshi food and collected money to help in Bangladesh. For me, that was a very satisfying experience. We didn’t raise as much money as we could have. We raised only $17,000, but another friend and I got pledges for about $60,000 worth of commercial food service equipment that was sent to Bangladesh and is now installed in the Sheri Bangla hospital in Dhaka. We had many other international dinners. We had a Swiss dinner, Dutch dinner, a Yugoslavian dinner (at the time when the Olympic Games were being held in Sarajevo). We also had a Malaysian/Indonesian dinner that I would like to briefly describe. There were a number of Malaysian and Indonesian students on campus that year who kept largely to themselves. I could see them with their wives and their hair coverings, and nobody was talking to them, so I brought some of them over and suggested that in the Spring term we would have a Malaysian/Indonesian dinner, and when they went home for Christmas, they would bring us some items and costumes that would help us put on a show. They did, and we invited the consuls from Malaysia and Indonesia. One came from San Francisco, the other from Los Angeles. At the dinner we showed a brief travel film of Malaysia and Indonesia, and those great students put on a really beautiful show--a mock wedding with beautiful dresses and fancy umbrellas--it was just a wonderful experience! The following year, we had more students from Malaysia and Indonesia than ever before. This is an example of how food service can actually help the University in a much broader sense than merely feeding the students. Finally, the last international dinner during my tenure at Pacific was a Pan-Arab dinner in 1985. Since I am German Jewish and I wanted to show friendship to our Arab students, I planned an Arab dinner as a sign of friendship.

SHARP: Fantastic--can we now talk a little bit about the issues you were involved in that stood out in your mind as important to the growth and development of Pacific? What do you think you did to help the national image of UOP through your food service activities.

FAIRBROOK: There were several ways in which my activities helped the image of UOP. The kitchen in the McCaffrey Center, which I designed, won
a national design award, and while I didn’t think it was a particularly exciting kitchen, we did get an award that made the trade magazines. In 1959 I was one of the founders of NACUFS, the National Association of College University Food Services. At that time, we had 18 members and now we have about 900 members and I’m probably the only surviving founding member still somewhat active in this field. As I said earlier, that fatal hamburger contest made the AP wires and was written up, even in the Chronicle of Higher Education. I also did some consulting for "Expo ’67," the Canadian World’s Fair in Montreal, a job I got before I came here. So while I was at UOP, I had to go back to Canada and help them. This too gave UOP some publicity. I also hosted a conference of the California School Food Services Association here in Stockton and the food service directors met at the old Holiday Inn in downtown Stockton. Then we went to Yosemite and spent the weekend there. All of that brought us national recognition. During my time at UOP I’ve also written many articles that were then published in the trade magazines. In food service, there are not too many people who like to write, but I do--perhaps because I majored in Comparative Literature in college. When I write an article about something that’s happening in my field, it will most likely be printed; it is not as difficult as an article by a French professor, for example, who has to get an article accepted by the Modern Language Association.

SHARP: That’s every literature professor’s ambition!

FAIRBROOK: So it was easy for me to write a lot of articles. Furthermore, the fact that I did something for Bangladesh gave UOP some national recognition. I did get a chance, after I retired, to lecture in Australia, Germany and in England. Even though I had retired by then, my audience knew that I had come from the University of the Pacific. I’ve written several books on college and university food service. The first one was called the College Food Service Manual written in 1979 and that got to be a popular handbook for people in my profession. I’ve written several books since then, and my last book, Catering on Campus was written in 2004, included many references to UOP and sold almost one thousand
SHARP: We’ve talked about your activities in shaping the image of UOP in the world, how about the image of UOP in the Stockton Community.

FAIRBROOK: First of all I made it a policy to buy locally. That’s not the way it has been since 1987, when our food service was turned over to management contractors. As you know, I’m a firm believer that most colleges and universities should run their own food service, (even though the number of “self-ops” are declining), but I believe in that and I believe in local purchasing. All my produce was bought locally from Segarinis. And I told them to get me the highest quality produce and I agreed for them to charge me a 15% fee for their services. However, I would have an auditor check their books to make sure that the charges were correct. I bought from Pre-peeled Products here in Stockton and I bought from Nugget, whose headquarters were here in Stockton. I just always made it a point to buy locally. I also got a chance to talk to many industry associations. I once talked to the Freestone Peach Growers Association—the freestone peach was declining in popularity, because it’s not as easy to can as cling peaches and I wrote them a poem about Freestone peaches which I shall include in my appendix. Right now, if I find a can of freestone peaches, I buy them because they’re wonderful, but they are a fruit harder and harder to find.

I also served as a port commissioner for the Port of Stockton from 1973-76 and that was only because I applied on a whim. Mr. Allister McCrone, UOP’s Academic Vice President at the time, had applied for the position. I said to myself that if he could do it, so could I, so I decided to apply. I appeared before the City Council dressed in a very conservative suit with a conservative attaché case. I had gone to the Public Library the weekend before and had studied a master’s thesis about the Port of Stockton. By the time the City Council interviewed me—on that day, at least—I knew more about the port than any of the people around me. So I was appointed Port Commissioner. I did that for three years. I’m not a very good politician and didn’t like the politics involved, so I decided that three
years was enough. But I did have that experience and that certainly helped with public relations for UOP. Finally I was very much involved in St. Mary’s Dining Room and still am. I wrote the initial grant for it, helped design the first kitchen for it, and, in fact, I designed it with very little money. I “begged, borrowed and stole” to get donations for commercial cooking equipment. In fact, it’s funny because for the first kitchen there were a couple of expensive steam kettles that we still had at UOP when we closed Anderson Hall, and I decided they were surplus. I then installed them in the kitchen of St. Mary’s Dining Room. When we had our big opening, Cliff Dochterman, the vice president, was there and I told the audience that this equipment was donated by UOP. He proudly said: “Look, the University is participating in the opening of St. Mary’s Dining Room.” All I had done was to decide that it was surplus and that I was going to give it to St. Mary’s. I knew that this was the right thing to do, and I’ve been involved in St. Mary’s Dining Room ever since. I was its president in 2001.

SHARP: Maybe one last thing I think you’d probably like to talk about: The question of self-operation versus contracting out the food service. We now have a contract with Bon Appetit. Do you see the possibility to come back to self-operation at Pacific, or is this past that time? And if you could, just say a little bit more about this dichotomy, self-operation or contract.

FAIRBROOK: Well, I’m happy to do that. I kept saying jokingly that when I die, I want on my gravestone the words “He believed in Self Op,” but frankly, in 2000 I made a prediction, which turned out to be completely wrong. My prediction was that just as Yang follows Ying, eventually the tide would turn and the people who have foolishly hired these management companies will go back to running their own. That is not the case. Many of the very large universities still run their own dining services because there’s a lot of money involved: you can hire a food service director these days at salaries between $100,000 and $125,000 a year, but a large university will spend between $200,000 and $500,000 in fees to a management company to do exactly the same thing that one capable
food service director can do. Now there are a lot of factors involved. Sometimes the salaries of the staff in the self-operation have gotten so high than they’re much higher than the prevailing area wages in town. When that happens, a university is almost forced to bring in a company that doesn’t pay these high salaries. In those cases, there’s not much choice. You also have many financial vice presidents who have come from small schools where they had management contractors. For small colleges, hiring a management company seems the right thing to do because if they lose their food service director, a small school has trouble finding the right person, whereas a management company has large groups of people who they can put in there. I have sometimes recommended contractors in my consulting jobs. As far as Pacific is concerned, I think by now, the company that is running it, Bon Appetit, is probably the best of the management companies. It’s always the food service director and not the company that makes the difference as to whether it’s a good system or not. Bon Appetit’s food service director at UOP is Sia Mohsenzadegan; he has been here four years and he’s a very good food service director, and Bon Appetit itself is a very good company. They have high standards, they hire chefs, they use sustainable food, a certain percentage of organic food and I think the quality is very good. I think students feel, not unjustly, that the prices are sometimes a little bit high, but it’s not up to me to make that kind of decision because I’m out of it now and am no longer up to date on things like that.

If the University were to go back to self-operation, it would be a hard road, because you’d have to find an experienced director, and if that person turned out to be the wrong choice, you would have to hire somebody else, and in the meantime that person could have cost you $100,000 or more in bad purchasing procedures or whatever else he or she may have done wrong. To get the right food service director who is going to be with you for 20 years as I was, and who cares, that’s not such an easy job. Thus it could be that if you ever wanted to go back, it would take two or three failed attempts before you might end up with the right person, so I don’t see that in the future. I do see, however, that as
we continue with Bon Appetit, the University is in a strong position to change the contract to make it a little bit more favorable for the students. I hope that that’s what they would do, because once the company has been here several years, they don’t need quite as much profit as they do at the beginning, and it seems to me there ought to be a little give and take there.

SHARP: Very good Paul. Anything else?

FAIRBROOK: I only have one more thing to say: I think these oral histories are very good and I’m delighted to be able to share my experiences. Whether they were unique or not, at least they represent a 20-year commitment to the University, and it’s always helpful if professors or staff members like myself have a chance to share their stories, so I appreciate the opportunity, and I’m glad we had this session.

SHARP: We all appreciate your service and your thoughts today. Thank you.

FAIRBROOK: Thank you, Michael.
Appendix “A” : The Einstein Poem: “Particles or Waves- What Does it Matter?

When Einstein was a little boy  
He had a funny dream:  
He thought that it would be a joy  
To ride upon a beam.

A beam of light, so straight and swift  
That ride would never end!  
(at least not till the “Einstein Shift”  
Would make the roadway bend...)

When lightning hits points A and B  
It’s hard to be objective;  
Deciding which comes first, you see  
Depends on your perspective.

And when you heat your favorite drink  
It gains weight naturally  
And as you sip, just stop and think:  
It’s relativi—TEA!

Both energy as well as mass  
Are equal everywhere-  
And all these things have come to pass  
Cause “E is mc square”!

But there is more to Einstein’s fame  
Than mass and energy.  
Inertia is just the same  
As force of gravity.
If you are hurtling from the top
Inside an elevator...
You could, in fact, be falling UP—
(I will explain that later.)

While we experience an illusion
It all fits real nice—
In our world there’s no confusion
‘Cause “God does not play dice!”

If what I’ve said is not quite true,
Don’t let it cause a flap
In truth—to me, (and maybe you..
It’s all a bunch of ......

*Read at the Einstein Symposium at U.O.P., March 14, 1979*
All Campus Swiss Dinner - Unity of the Pacific - March 14, 1979

NOTES ABOUT SWISS FOOD:

You always eat well in Switzerland, down to the most rural of times. But there is more to Swiss meals than good food—you have the feeling of taking part in a pleasant occasion. Swiss food, like Swiss life, has been influenced by the countries around Switzerland—France, Germany, Italy and even Austria. There is no Swiss cooking as radically different from that of its neighbors as, for instance, Schwyzerörgel (Schweizer-örgel) is from Italian. Switzerland abounds in endless specialties from the various cantons, resort and even towns and villages. Many of these dishes are extremely old, and are now obsolete because they are far too substantial for modern living. Their pattern however, is still to be seen in today's Swiss eating: the stress on soups, the secondary role of meats, the simple meals consisting of home fried potatoes, a bit of cheese, and some form of fruit to taste in short, the frugality of daily Swiss living.

Switzerland's variation on a theme. They invented changes on basic dishes, such as the home fried potatoes, the cabbage and meat combinations, the things made from cheese.

Another factor which has strongly influenced Swiss eating is a food-reform movement which taught the Swiss to include, and even to start their meals with uncooked salads to prepare vegetables so as not to lose the vitamin content, to use whole wheat grains and to adopt a more modern and rational diet. The founder of the movement, Dr. Birch-Bremer of Zurich created a new national dish, the Mürizli (or porridge, a combination of uncooked oatmeal, water, condensed milk, lemon juice, grated apples and nuts) an excellent breakfast or supper no Swiss will ignore.

Even in early times the Swiss peasants relished heavily on vegetables of all kinds, especially cabbage, turnips, carrots and beets. Diced apples and pears were often used as substitutes for the more costly bread and were as much of the daily diet as fresh salads.

Potatoes, without which the modern Swiss could not exist, did not reach Switzerland until the 19th century. Bread differed greatly in the country and in the cities. Rural loaves were dark and coarse—often made from rye, barley and other grains. City bakers made white bread, called gentlemen's bread.

Meat, generally speaking consisted of pork fresh or, more usually, smoked. From early times the Swiss produced an enormous variety of sausages, head cheese, and similar pork products and to this day these are part of the nation's basic nutrition. Cheese was standard food as early as in the 13th century. The early cheeses were simple products from sour milk, such as homemade cottage cheese. The solid, lasting cheese that we know as Swiss cheese turned up in the 13th century, where they served for soldiers and travelers as one of the earlier kinds of convenience foods. When sugar became more common in the 17th and 18th century the whole Swiss nation embarked on an orgy of desserts and pastries which resulted in many decorative Swiss cakes to this day. The fame of Swiss pasty cooks has never dimmed since.

We acknowledge the kind assistance of the Swiss National Tourist Office, 250 Stockton St., San Francisco, for the posters and folders, and of Swester, 185 Post St., San Francisco, for the lovely menu covers provided for this special dinner. The help of the Swiss Consul General, the Hon. Citi Borenhusen and his staff is also gratefully acknowledged.

When God created Adam - and then Eve
He gave the sinners a benight reprieve
To keep the famous apple out of reach
He made an alternate: The Freestone Peach

Had Eve been careful in her choice of food
Our Lord would surely had a better mood.
Our lives been peaceful, our existence nice
With Freestone peaches throughout Paradise.

But Man's a sinner (as we know), alas,
This Paradise it never came to pass.
An angry God - to let us feel his sting
Gave us two peaches: Freestone, ...and the Cling.

And furthermore - to make it extra tough
He made the Freestone "diamond-in-the-rough".
Until you taste, you really cannot tell
The reasons why these peaches do excel.

It may be rough inside, and not so slick
It may not cut as easily or quick,
But when its taste is truly put to test
We all agree - the Freestone is the best.

There are some folks, whose taste buds are defective
And when it comes to peaches - not selective;
Who pick the cheapest item off the rack
Because a sense of what is good they lack.

Their reasons always have a common ring
They still hold on to Mother's Apron String
Instead of searching for the true delight
They purchase that which first comes into sight.

"There's little difference" - so they would claim
From peach to peach - regardless of the name
A rose's a rose - and freestone or a cling
They're both alike - and truly the same thing.

There're other folks, who also have a say
Who are sophisticated and gourmet
Whose tastebuds have been honed to a fine edge
And who for freestone proudly take a pledge.

They recognize a beauty by her sight
Their senses thrill with every juicy bite
They know by instinct what we find each fall
When crops are in - the Freestone beats them all.

So you can see - you've reason for elation
You represent a brand new generation
You bring us that which, often out of reach:
A yummy, juicy, scrumptious Freestone Peach.

"Delivered to the Freestone Peach Growers' Bash"
in Modesto, CA