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Redig, Dale F. Oral History Interview

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FACULTY EMERITI INTERVIEWS
UNIVERSITY OF THE PACIFIC ARCHIVES



Dale F. Redig (1969-1978)
Dean of Dental School
Regent (1986-1987)

April 5, 2017

By Doris Meyer

Transcription by Mia Watts, University of the Pacific,
Department of Special Collections, Library

Subjects: Professional History; Transition from 2-handed to 4-handed dentistry; Curriculum changes from four to three years; Role as University Regent; Association with Saudi Arabia Dental School; Years as Executive Director, California Dental Association.

UOP ARCHIVES FACULTY EMERITI INTERVIEWS

Meyer: Good morning both to you Dale and to you Diane. I am Doris Meyer and I have this wonderful opportunity to interview Dale Redig and his wife Diane is also sitting with us. The date today is the 5th of April.

Dale: Yes, that right.

Meyer: We're sitting in a cottage that Diane and Dale live in which they live now in Stockton, CA and it's a beautiful day. Dale has agreed to answer some questions to contribute to our oral history project at the University. Good morning to both of you.

Diane: Good morning.

Dale: Good morning.

Meyer: What is unique about our visit is that our oral history project has about 65 online interviews but there's not a single one that talks about the Dental school.

Dale: Mhm.

Meyer: And that's why it's so important that we get some, at least some idea started to contribute to this collection. So, thank you very much. Everyone always wonders how you, or each interviewee, gets to the university, or in this case, the dental school.

Dale: Mhm.

Meyer: And so, how did it happen that you decided to come out here and be dean of the dental school in San Francisco? Is there a contact person there? How did that happen?

Diane: Dale had a pediatric dentistry at the University of Iowa.

Meyer: Right.

Diane: And he felt ready to take on a deanship and was interviewed two places in particular and visited both and decided to come to the University of the Pacific School of Dentistry in San Francisco.

Meyer: Do you remember who did that interview when you came out? Was it a panel of people or was it the president?

Diane: President Robert Burns...

Dale: Yes.

Meyer: Oh.

Dale: Bob Burns was the foremost...

Meyer: Yes.

Dale: ...by far in the whole business.

Meyer: He was so creative and so innovative.

Dale: He was.

Meyer: And so, you had been at the University of Iowa where you graduated but you were also a professor there for several years...

Dale: Yes.

Meyer:...before you decided to come out here.

Dale: That's right, yes.

Meyer: Were you Dean also there or just a professor in Iowa?

Dale: Head of the department of pediatric dentistry.

Meyer: Head of the department of pediatric dentistry.

Dale: Right. I was not Dean of the dental school there.

Meyer: Okay. Right. And so, did you and family and everybody all come out just at once?

Dale: Yes.

Meyer: []?

Diane: No.

Meyer: Why not?

Diane: Because we had 3 children who were very involved in swimming...

Dale: Oh yeah.

Diane:...and our son went for six weeks to a boys' camp in Minnesota that summer and Catherine was taking a course and Ann went through that swimming season, and in November was announced as the outstanding AAU swimmer in the state of Iowa in all age groups.

Dale was in private practice from 1955, after he graduated, in Des Moines and he went back on a federal grant to get a masters in dentistry in 1961 at Iowa. Then in his second year of studying for the master's, it was 60 hours, we went to Baghdad, and he was on a Fulbright scholarship and established pediatric dental department in their dental school. They did not have one at the University of Baghdad.

Dale: Well there wasn't any pediatric dentistry program in any school outside of the United States at that time.

Meyer: I bet.

Diane: So then he came back to Iowa after the school year. We came back, we went as a family and the head of pediatric dentistry died 2 days before or after we got back.

Dale: Yeah.

Diane: And Dale became acting head even though he hadn't finished his masters. His master's was finished in 1965.

Meyer: Wow.

Dale: Mhm.

Meyer: Gee. So then when you came out here, we're talking about the years from '69 to '78.

Dale: Yes.

Meyer: Is that about it?

Dale: That's right.

Meyer: When you arrived in San Francisco, at that time was the school located on Webster...

Dale: Mhm.

Meyer:...and Sacramento. Right up there at the top of the hill.

Dale: Absolutely. That red brick building on the corner. It was beige except for a low brick wall.

Meyer: I remember that. I remember because there are several medical buildings...

Dale: Yes.

Meyer: ...up there. In fact, when I read some of your background, there was a library...

Dale: Yes. Catty-corner from the dental school.

Meyer: Yes. And were you able to get that library and move it over or was that—how was that library tied in with the dental school? It was or it was not?

Diane: Stanford. It was a Stanford library. I believe that Stanford had been approached by University of the Pacific about the dental school.

Dale: Mhm.

Meyer: Yes.

Diane: And it didn't work out.

Meyer: Right. So when you came out, was that Webster building in an old fashioned sort of structure and when you thought that it was necessary to change the way teaching should be done...

Dale: Right. Well, dentistry used to be a stand up operation for the dentist and it was difficult to operate from the left side standing up and moving around...

Meyer: Right.

Dale:...and it actually started—I started this in Iowa, but sitting down is the appropriate way to deliver dental care. You can imagine that. And I, it sounds bad I guess, but I was really the leader of doing that in the United States. And a few of the dental schools did it as well, but they did it after Iowa, we did it first. We did it first in pediatric dentistry and Iowa. At that time was the old dental school building the pediatric department was one floor above, it took about 15 feet, 20 feet from the wall to the edge of the

pediatric thing, and it actually hung over the main clinic floor while the rest of it was below and that was standard dentistry at that point.

Meyer: Yes.

Dale: And I had gotten the grant for doing the 4 handed dentistry with sit down from the federal government and I used to stand there while I was supervising students thinking “those poor guys below standing up going through all this crazy stuff.” And I said it makes some sense to apply for a federal grant and I believe Iowa was the first school to get it.

Meyer: Right.

Dale: And it sounds bad, but it was my idea to submit the grant and it was approved. It is now, nobody thinks about standing in dentistry anymore. But it is true that I pretty much did set that standard that and I, well all other dental schools when you stop to think of it.

Meyer: The other thing that comes through very clearly was your role in the curriculum change from the 4 year program to the 3 year program at UOP.

Dale: That’s right.

Meyer: Explain that a little bit.

Dale: Well, it had been apparent to me for a long time to operate a dental school on a 9 month basis when the expenses related to the dental school happened over 12 months.

Meyer: Sure. Was that curriculum change, did you have to ask the president of the university?

Dale: Oh yes.

Meyer: What was your role in relation to him in those kinds of things?

Dale: Well he was a friend, actually, not really a personal friend but he knew who I was, obviously. And he was a very nice man and he certainly looked at positive things related to the university and always while the dental school was certainly not the most important school in the university but it was an important one. And he was a very optimistic forward looking guy and he thought it was a perfectly good idea to operate on a 12 month because dentistry does. We were one of the first schools to do it.

Meyer: And so he accepted that right away huh?

Dale: He did. He did, yeah.

Meyer: So that sort of brings up your relationship: here’s the university and here are the various schools.

Dale: Right.

Meyer: So as a dean, did you feel like you had to answer to the president for many things or did you feel that you were quite autonomous and you could run the program?

Dale: I wasn’t autonomous but I kept the president’s office aware of everything we ever did. And he was supportive of everything I ever did. So we had a very good relationship. I didn’t touch base with him

every day, I didn't have to because once he realized I was doing the right kind of thing, operating on 12 month versus 9 month, everything moved forward.

Meyer: So many of the ideas from the Iowa program you were able to transfer to the San Francisco...

Dale: The entire inspiration.

Meyer: Right. So tell me about the Dean's role with the departments. Were there chairpersons of the various departments?

Dale: Yes.

Meyer: But that, to you, you seemed like, in my reading, that it was—you wanted to be more cohesive...

Dale: Absolutely.

Meyer: ...not silo's.

Dale: Not silos If it makes sense for pediatric dentistry to using sit down and 4 handed dentistry, it certainly must make sense for the whole thing because they do more complicated procedures than pedo does. And because they do crown and bridge and all the specialties in dentistry and it is at least as important for them as it is for pedo. It is very important for pedo because you really can't deal with children without having assistants, you just can't. That's true though of all the other disciplines as well, and it's standard now in schools for 4 handed dentistry.

Meyer: I don't think I realized how important pediatric dentistry was to the whole...

Dale: It was.

Meyer:...larger picture.

Dale: That's where it started.

Meyer: Is that right?

Dale: That's right. You can understand that, I think, because it is very important to have an assistant with you with children because from one thing, if they're afraid, that's not the right word, if they're nervous but you know as a child is. And if a child is sitting in the chair and you're doing the operating and the child raises his hands and grabs your hands, you can hurt him a lot. I never operated without a dental assistant, I just never did. And it sounds bad, I guess, but I was a major leader in getting the 4 handed dentistry concept in place.

Meyer: Oh, that's very interesting.

Dale: It's standard—I don't think anybody thinks of dentistry being 2 handed anymore these days.

Meyer: Let's see. Let's move on here a little bit. One of the questions asks about people that made your transition to deanship an easy one or a difficult one. Were there particular people at the dental school at that time who helped you move forward or was it a difficult transition for you?

Dale: Dean Galagan was...

Meyer: What's the name?

Dale: Donald Galagan. G-A-L-A-G-A-N.

Meyer: What was his role at that time?

Dale: He was the dean, but he was in federal government before he was appointed. Yeah. As dean for the University of Iowa. We lived pretty close together just a few blocks away.

Dale: And we became good friends and Diane and his wife were good friends as well. And the four of us did lots of things together.

Meyer: But he wasn't out here?

Dale: That was all Iowa.

Meyer: And he was dean in Iowa.

Dale: Yes he was the dean.

Meyer: What about the people when you came out here? Who was it that was helpful then or was it a difficult move without much help?

Dale: Well it was pure luck.

Meyer: Dugoni was after you but, let's see, the deans before you were John Tocchini.

Dale: Mhm. T-O-C-C-H-I-N-I. Tocchini.

Meyer: Was he then still active when you came in and replaced him or succeeded him. There was a Cagnone in between; an interim person for a short period of time.

Dale: Yes he was. Leroy Cagnone.

Meyer: Those—go ahead, Diane.

Diane: Okay. There were some alumnus who in the old school mission district held it together. They were very, very supportive. Dr. West, for one.

Meyer: The alums made that transition rather...

Diane: A core of alums that made it, they were very supportive.

Meyer: That's right. It's seems when you think about the dental school and it was originally the college of Physicians and Surgeons that the loyalty of the alums and the loyalty to the school made that school what it is today.

Dale: Absolutely.

Meyer: And all of you as deans and administrators helped. But the family feeling of that place has been remarkable, I think.

Dale: And that's still true.

Meyer: Is that true?

Dale: Absolutely. Absolutely.

Meyer: I've noticed when I've looked at graphs of donor contributions that when you look at the San Francisco contributions and the Sacramento ones and the Stockton ones that the donors and the alums from the San Francisco school are heads and shoulders above in contributions, loyalty, and all of that.

Dale: That's true.

Meyer: Somebody did something right. What do you think it was?

Dale: I just, I won't stand for second hand delivery and it only makes basic common sense that it's important for pedo it is at least as much for general dentistry because they do many more comprehensive procedures than pediatric. Pediatric dentistry is basically prophylaxis. Treating children, explaining everything before you do anything with the child is imperative with them. And by establishing that between the treating dentist and the child, they ask questions about everything and one should never start an operation with a child unless they do describe it fully. Because if you describe it fully to them, that releases a lot of fear in the very beginning, and a 4-handed operation rather than 2-handed, it's much, much better yet because well, virtually every instance the dental assistance is a woman. Not always but 99% of the time it is true and children, I think, just naturally relate to the female for describing everything they've been handled by females for most of their life about everything and it was the natural thing. If it works for pediatric dentistry, it certainly is going to work for general dentistry.

Meyer: I think you identified that role that the assistant gives, the staff person gives, all of you are a team. There is no second class citizen...

Dale: There is not. That's right.

Meyer:...in the whole concept.

Dale: That's right.

Meyer: And so by having the collaborative team feeling, it helps the patient, it gives prestige to the whole team.

Dale: it does. The dental assistant is at least as important as the dentist. It's true.

Meyer: Oh gee.

Dale: We're mechanics. A dentist is a mechanic, you know, in a way. We tend to be perfectionists, we need to be and we're very good at that and it is absolutely true that we could not be as good at doing it alone as we can with 4-hands because the dental assistant is absolutely critical. I don't think there is a dental center that's 2-handed. They all have dental assistants nowadays. It didn't use to be that way.

Meyer: There was somewhere I read where it talks about master's and serfs, meaning the teacher and the student. And I could tell by what you've just said and by my reading that that was no longer your idea. That the student and the faculty person become colleagues.

Dale: That's right, exactly.

Meyer: And the staff are part of the whole team.

Dale: Team. It is a team.

Meyer: And so therefore, this feeling of loyalty and everything that we're talking about is a result of that relationship of each, to each other and respect.

Dale: Absolutely.

Meyer: You've done a wonderful job of clarifying that thing because that's so, that's the way I feel about it.

Dale: It is very, very important.

Meyer: Say that again?

Dale: It is very, very important.

Meyer: Yes. Oh boy. This has been great. Let's move on. Shall we move on?

Dale: Sure.

Meyer: Okay. Now, lets see. I had no idea that you were a regent at one time.

Dale: Mhm.

Meyer: Can we talk a little bit about that?

Dale: Sure, sure.

Meyer: You were a regent from what years to what years, I have that written down somewhere. But it was after you left the deanship. Is that right...

Dale: Yes.

Meyer:...or were you a regent while you were still a dean?

Dale: I don't think so.

Diane: I gave you the years.

Meyer: Yes. Let's see

Dale: 1986-1995

Meyer: Oh yes. Now this was in relation to a Webster, the Webster thing.

Dale: Yes. That's right.

Meyer: But when you became a regent, how did that work? How did—who asked you, which president, and how did they feel—what was the connection all about? How did that come about? Was that an interest of yours or somebody must've thought you would be a contributor in some way shape or form.

Dale: Yes.

Diane: []. Maybe it was connected with having someone from the dental school and I'm wondering if McGeorge as well. I don't know.

Meyer: Let's see. Let's take time to check those dates of the, it was—From 1986 to 1997, so you left the deanship in '78.

Dale: '78, that's right.

Meyer: You became, let's see. Well, tell me about your time as regent. Was that—I know there were some problems during that but not necessarily all of the time. Did you feel that the role of a regent was an interesting or important one or what?

Dale: Oh I did because the dental school had not been represented before. I was the first one.

Meyer: That is so important.

Dale: To me, yes. To everyone.

Meyer: Yes.

Dale: Everyone in dentistry for sure. Because dentistry was never really involved, you know, it was separate in San Francisco and the university in Stockton. The dental school was just sort of hanging there and we didn't have any inputs, really. We were very, very important to the university because we contributed a great deal of money to the university, and they knew it too. I took advantage of that, of course, why not? And it was profitable for them and it was profitable for us.

Meyer: I can see that. That is exactly, it would be isolated over there and would have, just like you say, would not have the influence and so by being a regent, you knew what was going on, you could let them know what's going on over there.

Dale: I had very good people in the dental school who could do things for me. They knew exactly what I wanted, and believe me, they did. I trusted them to implement those things by the standards I had set up; that sounds bad, maybe, but it's true.

Meyer: No, that's right.

Dale: It worked. It was then and I think it still is one of the best—better dental schools in the country.

Meyer: So after you had been on the board of regents for a while, I think it was Ted Vaughn who called for your role as a chairperson of the board of regents and Jim McCargo(sp?) as the vice chair person.

Dale: Jim and I were very good friends. He was a great guy.

Diane: We went to his service.

Dale: He really, really was.

Meyer: So at that time Atchley was President of the university.

Dale: Yeah.

Meyer: What was your relationship to him? Was he...?

Dale: He liked me and I liked him.

Meyer: Yes I remember him very well.

Dale: Very nice man.

Meyer: Yes. But he didn't get along with the faculty very well. But he got along with the regents, did it seem like?

Dale: I don't recall him not getting along with faculty.

Meyer: Yeah there was some, there was been always a lot of scuttle about that. There was a problem with the WASC accreditation.

Dale: Yes, that's right.

Meyer: They put the university on a temporary sanction.

Dale: They did.

Meyer: And they said that their concerns were that there wasn't forward looking planning, problems with finance, and governance. There was a lot of conflict at that time.

Dale: Yes there was, that's right.

Meyer: So when you—the students stuck up for you. The faculty stuck up for you.

Dale: They did.

Meyer: They said that you and Jim walked around the university and were actually concerned about students.

Dale: Yep, that's true. We made history with that, really.

Diane: I think that...

Meyer: Go ahead, Diane.

Diane: The person that the faculty would have called...

Meyer: Academic Council.

Diane: Academic Council gave a speech at graduation and in favor of Dale and Jim

Meyer: I remember reading about that. As I say, I retired a little bit before that time, but it reminds me of walking around the campus and being part of the student picture, that's exactly the kind of dean that you were in San Francisco.

Dale: That's true.

Meyer: That you were interested in the students and that they were the important persons in the whole picture.

Dale: Yeah absolutely, because without them, where would we be?

Meyer: We wouldn't be.

Dale: That's right. Exactly.

Meyer: And that's what a university is all about and that's what a...

Dale: I never forget that.

Meyer: So but you stayed on when they brought in Monaghan and Don Smith, you stayed on as part of the board of regents.

Dale: Mhm, I did.

Meyer: Was that an awkward role? Did you still feel important or?

Dale: Did I still feel important? Yes I did, and that sounds bad maybe but I was important because those things, sounds bad, I guess, but those things really wouldn't have happened without my doing what I did.

Meyer: And your role of being a representative from the Dental School was still as important.

Dale: Absolutely. We had never had a voice in the operations of the university except in Sacramento and San Francisco and with my coming in, I made myself known very quickly and everybody who knows me knows that's true. They liked me. I came in—my ideas were not personal, they were professional and they related to the operation in San Francisco which absolutely needed to be heard. We contributed a great deal, still do. It's just accepted now and people must say "of course" but it didn't use to be "of course."

Diane: The university was taking money from the Dental School [] to the dental school and there was a confrontation with Stan McCaffrey over this, but the Dental School won.

Dale: You bet we won.

Diane: Anyway, they remained friends until Stan died.

Meyer: That's right. Stan McCaffrey was president before Atchley.

Dale: Yes. That's right.

Meyer: Let's go on ahead a little bit or back. Tell me again a little bit about your role with the development of the school in Saudi Arabia. How did that all come about?

Dale: By chance, actually.

Meyer: By chance?

Dale: Really because the fellow had been chosen for it. He had applied for it, I didn't know anything about it at the time. Something with his family, was family oriented anyway, prevented him from accepting the Fulbright. I'll never forget it. He was standing here and I was standing right behind him and he turned to me and he said, "Would you be interested?" Honestly that's what happened. And I said "Yes I would!" He said okay and then I threw a [] in there that saying that I would be interested but I wouldn't be interested if I had to go by myself. I wasn't going to leave my family, for my sake and their sake. I was [] awhile while I spent a year in Baghdad, it wouldn't have worked for me, it just wouldn't have. And at that time, spouses and families were not part of the Fulbright. And it now is standard,

nobody now can even conceive it being otherwise, but I was the one that broke that and it was the best thing that ever happened to the Fulbright program.

Meyer: So how did you and the family—how long did you live over in Saudi Arabia?

Diane: I did not go to Saudi Arabia.

Meyer: You didn't?

Diane: I would've had to stay holed up in the Hyatt because I would've have to had a driver all the time.

Meyer: Because you were a woman?

Diane: Yes because I was a woman. But I was also teaching in Los Angeles for part of that time.

Dale: But you were in Baghdad with me too, Diane, come on.

Diane: Well I thought you were talking about Saudi Arabia. You were.

Meyer: Well yes, yeah.

Diane: Yes. We were as a family in Baghdad where I taught in the American school.

Dale: Yes. She did.

Meyer: Yeah. So how long were you in Saudi Arabia again?

Diane: Whatever year—

Meyer: I, yeah. Was it like several years? Just one year about?

Diane: Seven years in Saudi Arabia.

Meyer: Seven?

Diane: Seven on his vacation time. He was at the California Dental Association and he used vacation time ,two weeks or more at a time—

Dale: Two or four weeks.

Diane: over a period of seven years because the dental school was in the process of being designed and then built and they needed faculty and that was part of what Dale did, to find faculty from outside Saudi Arabia.

Dale: I wouldn't allow faculty to be, I insisted that the faculty bring their families as well because it was certainly as important for them as it was for me and I think I started that business for Fulbright in the country.

Diane: That's the Fulbright in Baghdad.

Dale: I don't think anybody thinks that would be otherwise nowadays. It's just critically important.

Diane: Well I think plenty other families over a period of time were there too, you know, people who had been there over the years.

Dale: Oh sure. But I did start it.

Diane: Not all the families came for one reason or another.

Meyer: So is that dental school thriving today? Do you know anything about it? Is it moving—

Dale: It is thriving.

Meyer: It is thriving.

Dale: It is. It is a good dental school.

Diane: One of the, your students, at the University of Baghdad, went to that dental school...

Dale: Yeah she did.

Diane: ...and now is practicing in Massachusetts. They're long established in the United States.

Meyer: Right. Was the program in Saudi Arabia, did you set that up in a similar kind of model to the San Francisco program?

Dale: Absolutely. Yeah.

Meyer: Same general idea, same structure?

Dale: Same exact idea.

Meyer: The sitting down approach and all that?

Dale: 4-handed dentistry. 4-handed dentistry was unheard of in Saudi Arabia at that time.

Meyer: Is that right?

Dale: Yes it was.

Meyer: Moving on, when you left the University of the Pacific deanship then you moved into an executive role with the California—

Dale: Dental Association.

Meyer: Dental Association.

Dale: Right.

Meyer: Yes. That was in Los Angeles? Where was headquarters?

Dale: It was in Los Angeles and I knew at the time that I took the position in Los Angeles, I took it because they gave me more money and that's a good reason and it was a bigger association as well. And without telling anyone, I had in mind that we wouldn't be there long because we really belonged in Sacramento. Dentistry was then the only health profession that did not have headquarters in Sacramento, I mean, that's where it belonged. Why dentistry stayed away from, I still don't understand, but they did and the Southern California Dental Association was much bigger. Much, much bigger and a great deal more powerful in the legislature as well. If you can put yourself in my shoes, why wouldn't I take the position in Los Angeles?

Diane: Dale, look at that there were two associations. Northern and Southern until 1974.

Dale: Yeah.

Meyer: Oh they were separate for a while.

Dale: They had always been separate.

Meyer: Are they still?

Diane: No until 1974.

Meyer: Oh.

Diane: And Dale didn't go there until 1978. It was association when Dale took over as exec.

Meyer: Oh okay. Right.

Dale: We were in Los Angeles though.

Meyer: Yes.

Diane: Still.

Meyer: So the headquarters are still in Los Angeles?

Dale: No, no.

Diane: No, in 1978 it was in Los Angeles. It had been in Los Angeles and continued until September 1983.

Meyer: Right.

Meyer: Well, let's see. We've covered quite a bit, we've got a lot of. Let's see. Thinking back over your history particularly as a dean and as a executive director of the association, is there any other that comes to mind that you wish, that I had asked you? That we want to cover? Is there anything that you think that there was something that—it seems to me that the things that we've talked about that have to do with humanism and your contribution in that role and then your role as an international kind of person is really important. I feel so privileged after reading all of this and talking with you, Dale, about what you've done. Can you think of anything else that you wished you had said? Or can think of that would be important?

Diane: I have questions then. I think there are things that could be said that have not been said but it would take some going back to be actually accurate about...

Meyer: Well when we look over the interview, we can't cover everything.

Diane: No.

Meyer: So but when we look over the interview and we realize that we've had a wrong date or missed a name, we can put those in, we can edit those right on in.

Well we need to bring this to a closure and then we can talk about it. Well I think that this, we've done a great job. We've made a great contribution to the history of the university and I thank you, Dale. I thank you, Diane and we'll together look over, edit the written material, and keep it for posterity. Thank you.

END