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Saroyan, Ralph Oral History Interview

Doris Meyer

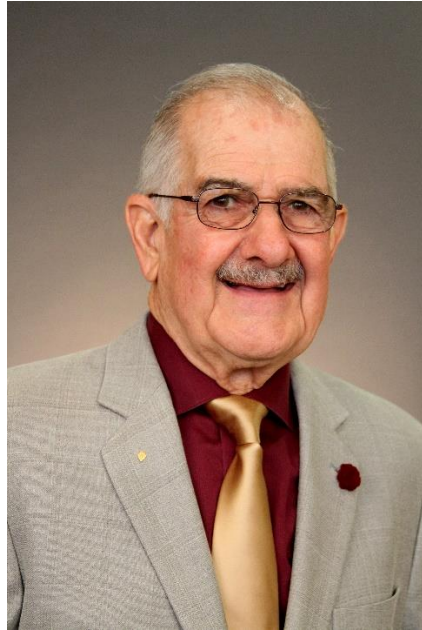
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FACULTY EMERITI INTERVIEWS
UNIVERSITY OF THE PACIFIC ARCHIVES



Ralph Saroyan (1970-2002)
Professor of Pharmacy
Director of Pharmacy Student Guidance
Assistant to the Dean and Director of Pre-Health Programs

April 29, 2021

By Doris Meyer

Transcription by Don Romero, University of the Pacific,
Department of Special Collections, Library

Subjects: Role of Director Student Affairs Pharmacy; development of Pharmacy Experiential Learning and Accelerated Pharmacy Programs; relationship with University Student Life cross campus colleagues; value of various pharmacy fraternities, professional organizations; and job market and trends in profession.

Ralph Saroyan Interview

MEYER: Good morning, Ralph.

SAROYAN: Good morning, Doris.

MEYER: Ralph, you and I have known each other for a long time. Where are we talking today? Tell me where you're sitting and I'll tell you where I'm sitting. And what the date is.

SAROYAN: Today is April 29, 2021. I'm at my home in Stockton, California. Close to the main campus of the University of the Pacific. I can see the lights of the Pacific baseball field from my house when they're playing at night. I've lived at this address since 1973 when I first purchased the house.

MEYER: Thank you, Ralph. I'm Doris Meyer and I'm in my apartment in Stockton, California. As I said before Ralph, and I have known each other for a long time. Tell me about how you first came to the university, in fact your whole history here is a bit different than many of the folks we have interviewed.

SAROYAN: I was raised in Sanger California. My parents choose to raise in the Methodist Church. I graduated from Sanger High School in 1959 and during my youth, the Methodist Church was closely affiliated with the University of the Pacific. It wasn't uncommon on special holidays that the Church would have a reception after church service, so we could meet students from Sanger who were attending UOP. And so, I started my career at UOP as a student, as an 18-year-old. Elliot Taylor recruited me out of Sanger High School. I decided to follow my brother and attend pharmacy school. I arrived on campus in the fall of 1959 as a student, a freshman. I remember how intimidating my first registration was, how intimidating orientation was. Yet, it was a small campus, so you know it wasn't as intimidating as some of the big universities. And I went through a program that was called the Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy. It was a zero-5 program where you did all five years as a pharmacy student. We started out in pharmacy school taking the undergraduate type courses and then eventually moving into the professional classes. I took my first PE class, tennis from Doris Meyer, my interviewer, and that's when we first met. It was spring term 60 according to my transcript.

Fast forward I graduated in 1964 with a Bachelor of Science degree in pharmacy. I practiced in the Central Valley, Tulare for two years, in Fresno for four years. In the July of 1970, I got a call at my work at Stillman Drug in Fresno from Dean Rowland. He told me they were starting a new accelerated three-year program in the pharmacy department and this was going to be the first accelerated program in the nation. They had just occupied the new Pharmacy building in Fall 1969 north of the Calaveras River and President Burns insisted that this building, which is the most expensive development project in the university's history, not be a 9 month use facility, insisted that they figure out a way to use it either year-round or day and night. At the time McGeorge School of Law had a day and night program, so Burns thought why we don't try that approach. Dean Rowland said that wouldn't work, it would require twice the number of faculty. Instead, Dean Rowland came up of the accelerated three-year program, the first in the nation. That was 51 years ago. Now many schools are adopting that model but we're the veterans in that. And he offered me two positions, he said I want you to come set up our first Pharmacy student affairs office. He says secondly, since we're taking away the summer, where our

students would get their internship hours, we needed to add an experiential learning program to the curriculum formally run by a School of Pharmacy. This too was the first in the nation. I had a B.S. degree in Pharmacy and wasn't trained in student affairs, nor in experiential learning, but I was young and stupid maybe and I said YES. I knew I enjoyed working with students, because I had been working with the Phi Delta Chi Pharmacy Fraternity as an alumnus and I knew that if I wanted to influence change in the profession, it would be easier to do with young aspiring pharmacy students than older "set in their way" pharmacists. So, I accepted the position, I initially told the Dean no, because my brother and I were looking to buy our own pharmacy but after I consulted with my brother Stanley; he told me, "Ralph, that job was made for you, you shouldn't turn it down because of our partnership". Unfortunately, he never ended up owning a pharmacy. That was the beginning of 32 wonderful years at Pacific. That's how I see it...

MEYER: Can I stop you for a minute Ralph. I wanted to have you review the two job parts of the new job. One was the experiential learning phase. The first one you mentioned, say that again and clarify that one.

SAROYAN: The first thing I did was set up the Pharmacy Student Affairs. My official title was Director of Pharmacy Student Guidance. At the time and because of the size of Pacific, Student Life was housed on the main campus. The individual colleges didn't have student life officers. Because the School of Pharmacy was expanding its enrollment from 75 students to 160 students Dean Rowland felt he needed someone designated to be a student affairs officer. So, prior to that time, the student issues were handled in the Dean's offices, and Dean Rowland handled them. But he felt it was more important to establish a separate student affairs office, so UOP Pharmacy School was one of the first schools on campus to have a student affairs officer.

In January 1960, President Burns passed away. When President McCaffrey arrived on campus, he immediately established four task forces; one on financial affairs, one on academic affairs, one was on student life, and I believe the fourth was on alumni. I was appointed since I was the only person with the "student guidance" in my title outside the University's Dean of Students.

Dean Edward Betts was the Chair of the President's Task Force for Student Life. During the first meeting of our committee, consisting of alumni, students, administrators, and faculty, we were asked to introduce ourselves, give our background and state what one recommendation we should make to the President. And I was very new and not used to academia or administrative behavior and I introduced myself as a pharmacist and I was the first Director of Student Guidance at the School of Pharmacy and I said, if this President thinks enough of student life to make it one of his four task forces, then if we recommend nothing else, we need to at least recommend that student life have a vice presidential level administrator. That was the first recommendation to come out of our committee; to elevate the student life division to a vice presidential cabinet level, and Judy Chambers was appointed the first Vice President of Student Life by President McCaffrey. And the reason I bring this up is because Judy did one other thing. She wanted to expand the student life division to include the individual schools. So, within the first year of her Vice Presidency, she added the Associate Dean of COP, me for pharmacy, someone from engineering, someone from Conservatory, so each school or college on the Stockton Campus had a representative on her student life staff. We didn't report to Judy, we reported to our respective Deans, but that was a nuance that never happened before. She

wanted to bring all the schools' student life people together. Many of the schools didn't yet have student position, so it was usually an Associate Dean. I served on the Student Life senior staff, throughout Judy's Vice Presidency. Unfortunately, the next Student Life Vice President didn't continue that good arrangement. So that was the first half of my job.

MEYER: That clarifies a question that I was going to ask about who you answered to. So, Dean Rowland was in theory your boss and Judy was in relation to? You spoke to her about things to clarify just a little bit.

SAROYAN: When she set up this arrangement, she had started out monthly meetings and then they became weekly meetings of the senior staff. And so, once a week I sat down with the Student Life Division, people within her purview, and the Associate Dean's from the different schools. We met regularly, and this was helpful because, you might recall, the School of Pharmacy was on a different calendar. So, I'd be at a meeting where the health Center would say we're going to be closing for Spring Break and I'd raise my hand and say, wait a minute, pharmacy students are still in classes in Spring Break. So, I was able to maintain the continuity of the pharmacy support from the Division of Student Life because I was the reminder of where our schedules were different. This problem still exists since pharmacy is still on the tri-semester calendar.

MEYER: Wow, well I think that clarifies, I've wondered about that all these years. I do know, well in my mind I was always thinking well, you're kind of like the Dean of Students at the Pharmacy School.

SAROYAN: Basically

MEYER: The role of a counselor and advisor. So did that role change, then so moving forward again. Did your title change from those early years?

SAROYAN: My role in student affairs included advising all the pre-pharmacy students and organizing the advising program for the professional students. At the same time, there was an urgency with the other half of my job, and that was to develop an experiential learning program by the following May. I started August 1, 1970, I had to establish an experiential learning program and put it into effect by May 1, 1971. At the time, all they had in the University Bulletin was a 15-unit class titled Preceptor Intern Program. This program was to occur in the third, fourth and fifth semesters of the eight-semester program (one third of the class in each group) To complicate things we had both the BS and the Pharm D programs with different curricula.

I had to write and develop the program, get it approved by the faculty, get it approved by the Board of Pharmacy and locate 55 preceptor sites throughout CA and Hawaii in less than 10 months. Being that this was the first school based experiential learning program in the nation we didn't have a lot of examples to follow. Also, since we took away our students' summer breaks where they normally worked as interns. The State of California requirement for licensure was 1900 hours; we didn't want our students graduating a year early but must work as an intern for a whole another year, to become licensed. Also, there weren't enough opportunities in Stockton for students to work part time while you're going to school. We normally went home for the summers and got our intern hours in local pharmacies. I worked closely with Dr. Max Polinsky, who was my mentor in this regard. He was critical to this effort and advised me on

how to set up a program and get it approved by the faculty. In fact, I presented our proposal to the Board of Pharmacy in front of our student body. They were meeting in Stockton, so we presented it to them. They approved it, and we were almost ready to put out our first 55 students on the first part of May in 1971.

Fast forward a couple of years, I was overwhelmed by the obligations on campus for student affairs and the obligations off campus for internship, because we had students assigned all over the state of California and Hawaii. So, I went to Dean Rowland, and I said these two positions are in conflict. One requires me to be on campus advising the pharmacy and pre-pharmacy students, and one requires me to be off campus helping the preceptors develop the program. So, he asked me, do you want an assistant, or do you want to split the positions? And I said I want both. I said I want an assistant to train and then eventually split the position. By year 3, I was full time student affairs, and I transitioned the program to another faculty member Greg Matzen (who was my first assistant in this program). They started together, but they separated, and so most, almost all my career was in student affairs, mentoring students. I mentor the pre-pharmacy students, mostly because they're the ones that need it the most. For the professional students, most of them had been in college for several years. They just need a little guidance when they got into trouble academically. My title didn't change much because I really felt anytime they change your title, they give you more unassociated work to do. I never wanted to lose the fact that I was there for the students. In 1996 is when I spun off the professional student affairs to Cathy Knapp and I focused on the pre-health programs; pre-pharmacy and the others, as the school was expanding with physical therapy and the other affiliated health science programs. My title changed from Director of Student Affairs to Assistant to the Dean and Director of Pre-Health Programs and that's it.

MEYER: Alright, let's stop for a minute. This is a good place to stop for a minute. You mentioned about Max Polinsky. One of the questions asked about other colleagues that were particularly helpful to you along the way, you mentioned about Dean Rowland, and you've mentioned about your association with Judy and in depth, are there other faculty people or other staff people that you remember that helped you in those earlier years.

SAROYAN: I would say that from day one, Max Polinsky was my mentor in the new position. Our offices were next to each other. I think they were purposely put right next to each other, and he guided me especially in developing the experiential learning programs. There were no models anywhere in the country to look at. There was some graduate work being done in experiential learning, but there were no schools in the country doing it. There were no three-year programs that required it. Max Polinsky was my most important mentor at the time. And of course, Dean Rowland was my mentor as a student and as a faculty member. Other faculty that challenged me, I would say Don Shirachi. When he came into my office I panicked, because he always asked very scientific & deliberate questions that I wasn't trained, I wasn't trained in academia, really, I wasn't trained in people skills, I just was learning it all on the job. When I arrived in Stockton, I rented an apartment and I said I'm going to rent an apartment for two to three years and see if this job is going to fit. I was young and a little nervous about whether I was going to fit into academia. There were some jealousies from some of the faculty members who still thought of

me as their student. I had a few challenges, but by the end of the second year, I was beginning to gain respect from most of the faculty. They came to me when they had questions about student or academic issues, whereas, at one point, they didn't think I was even qualified to be doing academic advising because I wasn't a full professor. They got past that with time. So that's when I bought a home, April of 1973.

MEYER: Right now, what comes to mind is what your brother said about the position and that would be a natural fit for you and that sort of the same thing about people skills and so I agree that just your personality, perhaps, really fit the bill.

SAROYAN: The passion has always been there for me. Even after I retired in 2002 to take care of my mother, I continue to mentor pharmacy students. And it's something that I remain passionate about.

MEYER: Moving back, you said your position changed slightly when you moved into the other health-related areas. Physical therapy, etc. could you describe that now.

SAROYAN: Yeah, the original change went from Director of Pharmacy Student Affairs to Director of Pre-Health Programs. And most of the work was with the pre-pharmacy students. That's the point in 1996, when we decided to reinvent the undergraduate program to follow the pre-dental model of the two plus three, three plus three, and four plus three. That's when we expanded and formalized the Pre-Pharmacy Advantage Program. With significant increases in Pre-Pharmacy enrollment, we needed to add more structure to the program. Our students were overwhelming the class spaces in biology, chemistry, physics, math, and psychology. Working with the respective department chairs and specifically Paul Richmond in Biology who suggested we consider adopting the Pre-Dental model. Although we already had the Pre-Pharmacy Advantage Program, we needed to find a way to get our students into their required classes during the right semester. Following the Pre-Dental model was the answer.

I was responsible for developing the pharmacy version of the two plus three, three plus three, four plus three Pre-Pharmacy Advantage program. Prior to this major change in our program our Pre-Pharmacy students made up about 25% of each entering Pharm D Class. Today, because of these changes in the program, our Pre-Pharmacy students make up about 50% of what they now call the P1 (Pharm D) entering class each Fall. In other words, about half of our pharmacy graduates complete their undergraduate studies at Pacific which is good for them and good for the University.

People often asked me, why do UOP students stand out as leaders in their careers (13 CPhA Pharmacists of the Year), more than any other California School. My natural response is that Pacific is only school in California (presently 14 Schools of Pharmacy in CA) and one of the few schools in the nation where the pharmacy school and the undergraduate pre-pharmacy students are on the same campus and significantly connected offering professionalization of the student in their freshmen year. Granted, there's the Calaveras River in the middle, but they meet and develop relationships with people outside the sciences. Rather than going from pre-pharmacy to a big medical center where they only associate with health science people, our students

maintain their relationships with their undergraduate colleagues of other majors throughout their time at Pacific. Their soft skills aren't distracted with the "I want to be a doctor" attitude.

MEYER: Thank you, that's interesting about the 50% of our students that came through the pre-program. A question that's not on the list, but it brings to my mind. Of the other 50% that come to our pharmacy, where are they coming from, do we have a recruiting program or something of that sort?

SAROYAN: Yes, most of the transfer, we call transfer pharmacy students come from either the Cal State University or the UC system. A few come from Community Colleges. Most of the transfer students have a bachelor's degree. The average UOP Pre-pharmacy student completes three years of undergraduate studies although a few get a Pacific undergraduate degree; yet some complete their pre-pharmacy studies in two years (more the exception than the rule).

MEYER: Thank you, they have a category now in here called the people. You've talked a lot about your students. You talked about some of the faculty. How about regents, have you had any relationship to regents over the years or not.

SAROYAN: Not really, I knew Ted Bond. I knew some of them but never really had any relationships with regents, other than maybe Tony Chan. My relationship with Tony Chan was as a student. I never had a lot of direct relationships with the regents. In the area, faculty, of course. I was sort of the cross-campus type person. I spent almost half of my time on the main campus, so I had great relationships with people in chemistry, biology, lot of the COP faculty had a good relationship. Doug Smith was an example of someone I had a good relationship with, he and I started the student advising program together, he was the associate Dean at COP at the time. Originally, Ed Betts had student life was doing orientation. Doug and I went to a conference in Denver back in the late 70s. We attended to learn about setting up a student to student advising program. At the time, I believed that pharmacy's involvement was so important to the university, for the pre-pharms that we would participate fully. The student advising program started by COP and pharmacy school. But COP ran it and pharmacy participated. Eventually, engineering and all the other schools join seeing the benefit of having student advisors. Peggy Rosson was another person who worked for me in pharmacy and then later became head of the Student Advising program. It coincided with the establishment of the position of VP for Student Life with Judy Chambers being the first VP. I worked with Ed Betz, Kay Davis, Jess Mark, Bill Barr, all the people in Student Life. I was really a significant part of the Student Life division. And I took it selfishly because it benefited me to do my job better if I had relationships with all the people who serve our Pre-pharmacy, pharmacy students. So, being in student life was a labor of love, I mean it was, it really made my job as pharmacy student affairs officer easier because I had developed the relationships with the people in student life.

MEYER: I remember Doug Smith very well because I enjoyed being part of that advising program too. I think that was one of the strong points of ours and has always been a strong part of our university. And of course, that's what today we're seeing that's what we're selling ourselves on, and that's a concern for the students. How about any other groups, alum, what your connection with alum? I want to bring up a lot about your student fraternities and things like that but hang on a minute. So how about alum, you mentioned about Mr. Chan, other alum connections.

SAROYAN: I maintain connections with many of my former students. You know, thinking I graduated high school in 1959; started UOP in Fall 1959, the first Pharmacy class graduated in 1959. So, I arrived just a few months after the first graduating class, so most of the pharmacy alumni I knew or know and have connection with. But I also had connections with COP alumni. I also developed relationship with some, non-pharmacy students who wanted mentoring. I also worked with the University Greek system, initially with current Regent Greg Boardman. I developed a lot of relationships and friendships with people that weren't necessarily pharmacy. That was part of what I liked about the division; I wasn't limited to Pharmacy students, I was more of a globalist when it came to advising and mentoring. For a short period of time, I even advised SAE fraternity when Ted Leland left UOP abruptly to take his position at Stanford; he asked me if I would advise SAE for a year, until they found an advisor. I was involved in Greek life on the main campus and, of course, with pharmacy fraternities, because it was another opportunity for leader development for our students.

MEYER: I noticed the other day in the obituary, Miss Romano passed away, what's her first name, I can't think of it.

SAROYAN: Ellen.

MEYER: Ellen. She and Ria Sutton were the two very first or close to the very first women that graduated in pharmacy is that not so.

SAROYAN: Well Ellen was in the first class, I'm pretty sure she was in either first or second class. She graduated in 59 or 60. Ria was in my class. An interesting story about Ria; we started out with three or four females in our class, Ria was one of them, and only two of the three graduated. Ria was pregnant right before the Boards, so she didn't take the boards with us, they were afraid she'd have her baby during the three exams. She was scheduled to have a baby in June of 64, when we're taking our board exam. I still stay in touch with Ria, she's up in Oregon and she's doing well.

MEYER: Of course. I hear from her time to time too. How about the ratio of women to men pharmacy students over the years?

SAROYAN: In my class 55 students of which three or four were female. I think we started out with four and then within a year, we were down to three, and then we graduated two. When I joined the faculty, the ration was in 1970 t was about 30 to 35% women. When I retired in 2002 it was about 65 % women. The overall University when I was a student had more women than men, the pharmacy school was the opposite. The current ratio is about 60 to 65% women entering pharmacy. We are also about 65% Pacific Islander today.

MEYER: Before we end today, I need to be sure I get the date of your retirement and get those dates, because they have to go on that work sheet thing. Let's take a minute just to do that. You came, or you were offered the position after you graduated.

SAROYAN: Well, my first day of employment was August 1, 1970, and my retirement, it was May 31, 2002. 32 years.

MEYER: Wow, 32 years plus being a student. I had a chance to interview Jean Matuszak. She went over a lot of the different fraternities, student organizations, professional organizations, and I know that you have done just loads of things with these groups and have been recognized by them. So, without being embarrassed by your honors. Could you tell us a little bit about these organizations?

SAROYAN: I'd be happy to, in fact, that gives me an opportunity to share. I'm often asked, when Dean Rowland came to Pacific, which student organizations were there and why did he establish Phi Delta Chi first? And the answer was, in the mid-50s, most of the major pharmacy organizations did not have student branches. American Pharmaceutical Association didn't have a student branch until the late 50s, early 60s. All the other pharmacy organizations didn't have student chapters at the time. Dean Rowland was the national President of Phi Delta Chi Fraternity. Phi Delta Chi was an all-male pharmacy fraternity at the time. Since he wanted to establish a student organization to get student involved in the school and help with open houses and projects, it was easy for him to establish Phi Delta Chi, since he was a national President, and he could make it happen without going through a lot of red tape. So that's why Phi Delta Chi was started first. Ironically, he ended up serving four terms or eight years as national president; and I'm proud to say I'm the only other national President in the history of Phi Delta Chi who served four terms. The only difference is he served exactly 8 years to the day, I served 8 years and 27 days, so I have the record. I'm the 25th Grand President, and I have the record of the longest presidency of any member of Phi Delta Chi.

Dean Rowland was my mentor. After we started Phi Delta Chi in May 1956, one year after they started the school (1955). Then Jean Matuszak and Cisco Kihara started Lambda Kappa Sigma, for the women students. Even though there were very few women students they started Lambda Kappa Sigma and then in I think it was 1961, Kappa Psi was started and the third pharmacy fraternity giving us one all-female fraternity, and two all-male fraternities, which balanced our ratio of students at the time. It wasn't until 1990 that we started a fourth pharmacy fraternity, Rho Pi Phi, which was the first co-ed fraternity on our campus. So up until 1990, LKS was all women, Kappa Psi was all men, and Phi Delta Chi was all men, but in 1990, we stated Rho Pi Phi as a coed organization. And then, I think LKS was trying to recruit men, and they would recruit one man here, one man there, until recently. They still have more women than men, but they are co-ed now. Phi Delta Chi went co-ed in 1997 and Kappa Psi went co-ed in 2015. In my role as student affairs officer, I worked with all the pharmacy fraternities and tried to keep them from negative influences of Greek Life.

MEYER: So, the advantage to our students of being involved in a student branch of an organization, like Phi Delta Chi, is that a networking thing, what is the advantage to them, and to us as a university?

SAROYAN: Well, there are several advantages. One is our organizations are allowed to recruit pre-pharmacy students. So rather than a pre-pharmacy student joining a social fraternity, not related to their profession, they can become involved with the pharmacy organization even in the beginning as a pre-pharmacy student, 18- to 19-year-olds. They develop relationships with other pre-pharmacy students but also professional students, which helps them grow socially and professionally within the program. When a pre-pharmacy student is struggling with organic

chemistry, they can go to a fraternity brother that's in pharmacy school that has been through organic chemistry, can help them. They get a lot of mentoring from older pharmacy students because they're allowed to join as undergraduates or pre-pharmacy students and opens a lot of relationship and network building with the alumni. For the people that joined the pharmacy fraternity, they have a family of pharmacists, both students and alumni to help mentor them and help them find their way in their career, not to mention find jobs. One of the big emphasis in the last 20 years is "leader development". You know, the job market in pharmacy has gone during my career; I've seen at least three cycles in my lifetime, where in the early 70s, when I joined the faculty, there was a critical shortage of all health professionals including pharmacists. That's why the School of Pharmacy, to get some of the health funding they applied for and received capitation grant. We increased enrollment from 75 students to 165 students entering class and we got, extra money from the federal government. Then that increase flooded the market and within 10 years we had too many pharmacists so, the job market dropped off. And so, the fraternity has given the students an opportunity to develop skills, other than just competency in pharmacy. I always tell prospective members of organizations; employers or residency directors are looking for a competent pharmacist who can lead a team. And if you are just a competent pharmacist, without leadership skills you're going to be at a disadvantage; It's value added quality if you can be a leader or lead a team. Of course, the relationships you build will help you develop your career. Student organizations are invaluable when it comes to, career development.

MEYER: Are we in the third cycle now you talked about?

SAROYAN: Yes, this is a third cycle, there was a cycle prior to this one where there was such a shortage, of pharmacists which was in the 90s, Employers were offering signing bonuses, some people are getting offered to go to work for the one of the major chains, a free lease on a BMW, What was happening, prior to the 90s, if there was a major intersection in a city, there would be one pharmacy on the whole intersection and then the big box chain stores, the Thrifty's, the Long's, the Payless, the CVS's, the Rite Aid's. Now you find a pharmacy on all four quadrants of the intersection. I Yes, In the 90s, there was a great expansion of a number of what I call outlets or units. They weren't filling that many more prescriptions, as much as they were just opening more pharmacies, and so they had to staff these pharmacies, so instead of an intersection having one pharmacy, you had four. That meant you had to have three more staffs. And so, there was a real expansion. A lot of the grocery stores started putting in pharmacies, these were called the "food drug combos".

And they had to staff these additional pharmacies which caused the need for more pharmacists. Of course, the enrollments went up again because pharmacy, everybody wanted to go into pharmacy because there was a lot of jobs or shortage of pharmacists, and they were getting a signing bonus, or sometimes even a car to go to work for them This caused a flooded of pharmacists on the market again and now we're in a trough. In the last 10 years the job market has gone upside down. Part of the reason too is when I started working for UOP, and for maybe 20 years there were about 75 pharmacy schools in the country. Today, there are over 150 Schools of Pharmacy In 1970 there were three schools in California, UCSF, USC, and UOP. We've

doubled the number of schools of pharmacy partly because a lot of these osteopathic medical schools started adding for profit pharmacy schools. and some stand-alone pharmacy schools not part of a university. There's Cal North State in Sacramento, it's just a pharmacy school with an osteopathic school. Torro University of California in Vallejo is an osteopathic school that added a pharmacy school who Kathy Knapp was their founding dean.

Many of these stand-alone schools are going to be vulnerable because enrollments are dropping now because this overabundance of pharmacists. The schools that are going to suffer are the ones that don't have a university affiliation. UOP will be sound for quite a while because we have that UOP affiliation.

MEYER: Those are private, for profit that you're talking about right now.

SAROYAN: Exactly. I failed to mention that but that's right. They're private, and for profit.

MEYER: Yes, um. So do you think that speaking about the chains, Walgreens and Rite Aid, and CVS. So has the little entrepreneurial pharmacy, is the little guy, are we not going to see those at all?

SAROYAN Yes, we saw during this 1990 expansion, a serious decline in the number of independent pharmacies. But we're also starting to see entrepreneurship coming back, but not as your traditional small corner drugstore. They're starting to come back in specialized type pharmacies. compounding pharmacies, medical center pharmacies, where there's a part of a medical group, where they offer something that's not offered in the chain stores, like compound specialized compounding or patient therapy management. Where you're paying the pharmacist for managing your therapy not just filling your prescription. There is an insurgent of people specializing again. A recent alumnus shared that he is working as a pharmacist in a medical group that specialized in pain management in Sacramento area. There are a lot of specialty areas, people are going into diabetes care, a, a very expensive disease that shortens life expectancy of its patients. Much of diabetes care is nutrition and exercise.

MEYER: Are you surprised that the direction that this is going, into these specialty areas?

SAROYAN: I'm not, a lot of schools have a faculty member that focuses on entrepreneurship, and you know we have a lot of Asian students coming into pharmacy school. That's another population I'd say 65% of our students are Asian, and they tend to come from families who are risk takers who want to own a business; they're coming from cultures that thrive to become entrepreneurs. And usually, their families put them through school and help them set up their own pharmacy. Former Regent Tony Chan is a classic example,

They seem to take better care of themselves physically and nutritionally and to me, that's an important part of pharmacy. Good pharmaceutical care is not necessarily just being a competent pharmacist and filling a prescription properly. There are times when a better solution is treating the disease rather than the symptom. A major problem with our profession is our focus on treating the symptoms rather than the underlying cause. This is exacerbated by the fact that our drug companies advertise so much to directly to the patients, that they're encouraging people to take medications whereas if we could focus on treating the disease, it might or might not require medication. Diabetes is the perfect example, as is hypercholesterolemia and high blood

pressure: you might be able to treat them without drugs. Preventive medicine where you're not intervening with medication is a good thing.

MEYER: [...] Really interesting Ralph. I agree with preventative aspects and cause holistic medicine, you know I saw bring and we're talking about mindfulness these days and we're talking about so many different things. I'm glad we brought up this issue. let's go back to the university again for a minute go back. So, you retired in 2002, you kept in touch with the university, as have I. What do you think about the direction of the university these days, the pharmacy school or university is its image it's evolution as they'd say? Comments about that?

SAROYAN: In general, I like the direction the pharmacy school is going, I feel that they're constantly keeping up with the changes in the profession, in the curriculum, and the leadership has been strong I'm optimistic about the new Dean, although she's not a pharmacist, I feel that she understands the profession, and I think she's going to bring some positive changes. I'm a little uneasy about some of the, I guess, woke positions that I see sneaking into the university. I'm a little concerned about the expansion in the Provost's office. It seems like every time there's a change in the law they hire a new provost to manage that change.

I believe that the University is one of the most diverse medium size colleges in the western US, yet they felt a need to join the band wagon and hire a DEI officer just to meet trend.

MEYER: Inclusion, yeah.

SAROYAN: I'm not convinced that a school the size of Pacific needs to invest resources to a new position just for optics. We have divisions of the university, that can focus on this issue without hiring a new provost. When I retired in 2002 there might have a couple of associate and assistant provosts, now I've lost count on the number. I think the university's getting top heavy.

MEYER: [...]

SAROYAN: So that's my only

MEYER: [...]

SAROYAN: Yeah. I think University of Pacific is going to be around for a long time because we, we have continued to have student centered culture.

Yet something I fear the most is higher education itself is going to be challenged and going forward, because of the cost. Nationwide there is runaway tuition increases and at some point, people aren't going to invest that kind of money to go to College. Every time the financial aid went up, the amount of financial aid went up accordingly. At some point we're going to have to cut out some of the luxuries without losing our character and our culture, our values. I'm optimistic because Pacific is small enough and we have strong enough individual schools. What we used to complain about as young faculty was a top-heavy administration.

MEYER: I must laugh, I have to laugh Ralph, because that's so true. There's always been that little, um, I don't know what you call it, and the issue between administrators and where the money's going. [laughs]

SAROYAN: You know, where is Gwen Browne when we need her?

MEYER: I know. You know Ralph, you must have received over the years, the alumni mentors award. Is that right? When was that? Do you remember and why? []

SAROYAN: I received it in November 2019 at the Alumni House. Someone once told me that the road to senility is paved with honors and plaques. My home office is full of plaques and honors. I also received the Pacific Alumni Medallion of Excellence in October 2002 upon my retirement. Judy Chambers received it in 2001. Nice to follow such a remarkable leader. I also received two mentor awards from the American Pharmacists Association in 1997 and again in 2014. They were the Academy of Student Pharmacists Linwood F Tice Mentor Award and Gloria Niemeyer Frankie Leadership and Mentor Awards respectively.

My reward is not the plaques, they cover a lot of wall space. My reward is all the small and meaningful relationships I gained along the way. These are what I call "lollipop moments" from a famous Ted Talk. When an alumnus comes up to me 20 or 30 years later, thanks me for something I don't remember doing and says, thank you. That's my reward. That's when you know you had an impact. The reward is really all the relationships that I've developed over the years.

MEYER: []

SAROYAN: I never thought I would be a name that people would recognize when I first started working at UOP.

MEYER: I agree with you completely when a student comes up to you, you can, I don't remember saying this or that, but they remember this or that, and then I think oh my gosh you know what else people remember, I think.

SAROYAN: No, it's amazing because you, you know you did at the time, Doris, and you're a classic example of this, you have a big heart and you you're passionate about your students, you are still passionate about them. We did what we did, to help our students, It's a labor of love.

When people ask me, "how do you handle retirement", I simply say, well, you know I worked 32 years. The first 28 years I didn't go to work, I went the fun. The last four years it was work. And that's when I realized, it was no longer as fun: I don't think I could survive this current generation of administrators where sometimes all the student needed was a hug.

MEYER: []

SAROYAN: Yeah, I was a big hugger. I mean, students would come in and they just all they needed is a hug and someone to listen.

MEYER: Oh boy, you Ralph it's so much fun to talk to you because I can identify so clearly with what you're talking about. Is there anything else that you thought you would want to be sure and say and to have this little interview to include, any other items? []

SAROYAN: There's one thing and I'm big on history and I, fortunately, I had the pleasure of working with the founding dean of our school of pharmacy Dean Ivan W Rowland. There is a little bit of history that I mentioned earlier about how we started the first experiential learning program in

the school of pharmacy because of our first [] in the accelerated program in the nation. Interestingly, while we were developing the early experience. program at UOP, UCSF in San Francisco was developing the first advanced experiential learning program at the Moffat Hospital. Currently, the experiential learning programs are called IPPEs and APPEs. IPPE is the Introductory Pharmaceutical Pharmacy Experience and the APPE is the Advanced Pharmaceutical Pharmacy Practice Experience. The initial IPPE was started at UOP in 1970, and the initial APPE was started at UCSF at San Francisco, 90 miles apart in this part of the California. Not too many people know that Pacific was a pioneer in experiential learning and a pioneer in accelerated pharmacy programs. Ironically, 50 years later, UCSF adopted the accelerated program.

MEYER: Interesting. Ralph, I didn't know how we could do this on Zoom, but you and I have done a good job. I'm just so appreciative of our friendship over all these years, even if I don't remember you as a member of my [] class.

SAROYAN: I remember you. That's my lollipop moment, I remember you.