Oral History Interview with Thomas J. (Tom) Johnson

This is a 193-page PDF document using the Adobe Acrobat Reader plug-in. You may click on section names below to view individual parts. Use the Adobe tool bar (inside the OTAN frame) to navigate through the document and or to print a document.

To save this PDF document to your hard drive, go to the File menu, choose "Save As," and enter a suitable name, including the ".pdf" extension. (For example, if the PDF file is called "History," then you will need to save it as "History.pdf").

OTAN activities are funded by contract #2000 of the Federal P.L. 105-220, Section 223, from the Adult Education Office, California Department of Education. However, the content does not necessarily reflect the position of that department or of the U.S. Department of Education.

California Department of Education
Adult Education Oral History Project

Oral History Interview

with

THOMAS J. (TOM) JOHNSON

Consultant to the California (State) Department of Education

Hacienda La Puente Unified School District
(formerly La Puente Union High School District)
Adult Education Principal, Director, Senior Director
Assistant Superintendent, Adult and Alternative Education
1956-1993

Instructor in Adult and Career Education,
California State University, Los Angeles, 1970-75
and
University of California, Santa Barbara, 1973-74

February 23, February 24, & March 17, 1993

La Puente, California

By Linda L. West

TABLE OF CONTENTS

RESTRICTIONS ON THIS INTERVIEW

None.

LITERARY RIGHTS AND QUOTATIONS

It is recommended that this oral history be cited as follows:

Thomas J. (Tom) Johnson, Oral History Interview, Conducted 1993 by Linda L. West in La Puente, California, for the California Adult Education Oral History Project.

PREFACE

Adult education in California has a proud history of helping its citizens to meet the challenges of life in a huge, complex, multicultural state. Through the years, California adult educators have provided leadership to the nation in the development of innovative instructional practices and creative educational solutions.

The California Adult Education Oral History Project began in 1992 as a companion to a print history of adult education commissioned by the California Department of Education. As the century draws to a close, the growth and energy of California adult education in the sixties, the institutionalization of competency based education in response to the influx of refugees and immigrants in the seventies and eighties, and the innovative uses of technology of the nineties will be recorded.

The oral history project started with a small group leaders whose careers began in the 1950's and 1960's and who witnessed and influenced important events in the development of the nation's largest adult education program.

Significant assistance to the new project was provided by the staffs of both the California State Archives and the Oral History Program, History Department, California State University, Fullerton. This project could not have begun without the vision of Raymond G. Eberhard, Administrator, Adult Education Unit, California Department of Education, and the support of Lynda T. Smith, Consultant, Adult Education Unit.

Linda L. West
June 1, 1993

INTERVIEW HISTORY

Interviewer

Linda L. West

Interview Time and Place

Three interviews were conducted in La Puente California, on February 23, February 24, and March 17, 1993.

Editing

The interviewee reviewed and edited the transcript with the assistance of Lynda Appleton. When the tape was inaudible or when necessary for clarification, some information was added and is indicated by brackets [ ]. Four short sections of sensitive personal remarks were deleted from the original tape and the transcript, with the concurrence of the interviewee. These sections are indicated on the transcript by the phrase, "personal remarks deleted."

Tapes

The original cassette tapes were transferred to reel to reel format at California State University, Fullerton and deposited with the California State Archives.

CALIFORNIA ADULT EDUCATION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEWEE: THOMAS J. JOHNSON

INTERVIEWER: Linda L. West

[Session 1, February 23, 1993]

[Begin Tape 1, Side A]

WEST: This is Linda West interviewing Tom Johnson in La Puente, California, on February 23, 1993. I'm interviewing Tom to record his recollections of significant events and trends in California adult education during his career.

Tom, you moved to California from Nebraska in 1954, and almost immediately became principal of what was then La Puente Valley Adult School. Well, what was California adult ed like then, nearly forty years ago?

JOHNSON: I came here in September of '54 to get out of school administration. I had been the youngest superintendent of schools in the state of Nebraska for the prior two years, and decided that there had to be better arrangements than Nebraska, which had no income tax, no sales tax, no schools, and damn few roads. The county where I was superintendent had two towns, two town schools and fifty-seven school districts. The state of

Nebraska had more school board members than they had teachers because they had all these little country schools with three board members and one teacher. So it was really primitive days. The school [Pilger Public Schools, Pilger, Nebraska] where I worked, I dropped normal training for junior and senior girls mostly and put in homemaking, because at that point you could take double block, two periods a day your junior and senior year and teach country school K-8 after you graduated from high school, or you could go to one summer school after you graduated from high school and teach country school that fall. My cousin had been superintendent of the same school district and they had taken a large room on the ground floor and made it into a house and lived in the school. My brother and sister worked at the school before it burned down and they built the new one, so I'm trying to set the background. It probably hasn't a damned thing to do with adult education in California.

There were fifty-seven school districts, they were mandated by the State of Nebraska to have an annual study on redistricting, they called it consolidation, to eliminate all these small

districts in the German-speaking part of Nebraska. Of course, I had lived in Europe and served in the army in Europe. My grandfather had homesteaded land there, so I'm the new kid on the block, and they coaxed me to come and speak in favor of this. In fact, my master's thesis was on school district consolidation. I didn't have any choice. I went to the University of Colorado. The advisor in the School of Administration said, "You're from Nebraska. There's only one topic you're going to do. With all these crazy little school districts, you're going to talk about it." So the county superintendent had me speak on this subject at the annual required meeting, and I got up and talked about how it was safer for kids to ride buses than it was to walk a mile to school and all that sort of thing. This man who was older than I was stood up and he said, "Tommy Johnson,"--speaking broken English--"your grandfather gave us the land for the school," that's true, "and your aunts taught in it," and that's true. . . . But my aunts, you have to understand, I'm the grandson of this old man who had children, and I've got a brother twelve years younger than me. These aunts, if they were alive, would be 120 years old or so.

Anyhow, "They taught in it, and they're better schoolteachers than you'll ever be, and you leave our school alone." They closed the entire thing and joined with the neighboring school in the neighboring town.

Anyway, all that aside, I came out here. I had been superintendent for two years in the village where I was born, and I came out here to get out of school administration because I'd had so many problems. And halfway through the first year, the superintendent called me in and he said, "I've hired a substitute, and," he said, "we have this big community event and it's all screwed up. It's called Operation Cooperation." Glen Wilson just went into his second year as superintendent for the district. He hired me in September of '54. And he said, "We've got this big community event in the spring of the year called 'Operation Cooperation' of the town and high school. It's a big clean-up thing." The kids went out on a clean-up campaign and so forth. And there was a community member who was an old circus-type and he had been running it and he got mad and decided he wouldn't do it, and Glen said, "The old man quit and he tells us we can't do it. And," he said,

"I've hired a substitute for you," and then he talked on about what this Operation Cooperation was. He said, "Would you like to do that?" Well, I played the tape back to where he said, "I've hired a substitute for you," so I said I'd be glad to.

After that, he called me in and he said, "I've come back from a meeting at Mount SAC [Mount San Antonio College]." Newly organized, Mount SAC had just been created, basically by the Pomona School District. The Pomona School district had been toying around with the idea of having grades 13 and 14 be in community college, which was a relatively common pattern for larger school districts. They would be K-8 and K-14 districts. The Pomona districts had been playing around with the idea and they decided to start Mount SAC, and they did, and they elected a president and all this. They called a meeting of the ten or eleven superintendents for districts in their area and they said, "We want to be a college," quote, unquote. "We want to be a college. We want to be the first two years of the college system. Therefore, we don't want to get involved in adult education," meaning non-credit classes, meaning

almost totally unrestricted as to what one could do in adult education.

In 1954, both K-12 districts and K-14 districts offered adult education, and we had two levels of financial support: the attendance of adults, persons twenty-one years of age and older, and minors, and minors included people under twenty-one and people who attended ten or more periods of no less than sixty minutes a week. We got so we called it the 600-minute, but that became a "minor as defined." You could be eighty years old, but if you attended 600 minutes a week, you became a minor as defined. The minor a.d.a. was reported in a K-12 annual period, and you counted in all the formulas for state support.

California and New York were the only significant adult education programs in the nation, and the reason there were significant programs is because both in California and New York public school adult education received state money, and local tax money to a lesser degree, as a consequence of attendance of adults. That's still largely true in the nation. If you go to places like Arizona and such, the only adult education they have outside of the community

college programs, which are essentially college programs, are post-secondary. All they have is the adult ed, and in many cases Arizona, last time I consulted for them, that's all they have. The GED and high school completion and literacy and ESL [English as a Second Language] funded by the Adult Basic Education Act, which has gone through a zillion titles . . .

[Interruption]

I was talking about the fact that school districts, K-12 districts, really had the option if they were large enough to be in K-14 districts, and there's a whole lot of really important decisions for elements that create structure that occurred because of the changes that happened there.

The 1950s were explosive days in southern California, most of California. The veterans were coming home, the factories were starting up, cars were available for sale. There was a shortage of all kinds of consumer goods, and everything cranked and hummed and buzzed. And in this valley they took bulldozers. . . . They take two bulldozers, tie a long chain between them, and they were going to pull out two rows of orange

trees at a time. You tear out the trees to build tracts for bedrooms for people moving to California, because they saw the Rose Parade and sunshine and they were sitting in the snow in Minnesota, and the people who were out here in the service came back, so California was exploding. Our teachers' salaries were better. Standing on the front steps of the [La] Puente High School gym, a kid yells out, "Arkie, if you see Okie, tell him to tell Tex I've got a job for him in La Puente." [Chuckling] And almost like the great migration from Europe to the midlands of this nation that happened at the turn of the century, folks came to southern California and the economy buzzed.

But because some of the companies were a little bit sophisticated [asking for better educated employees], there was a big demand for adult education. So, when Mount SAC started and said they didn't want to get involved in what they perceived to be night high school, we began to offer some classes, then classes really exploded. Prior to that, you know, prior to World War II, Covina High School District, which this was part of originally until about 1914 or 1915, Covina had

an adult education program; El Monte High School District had an adult education program; Whittier High School District had an adult education program; and Pomona had an adult education program, and those were big older districts, and as I say, Pomona really gave birth to Mount SAC.

But the thing that happened almost simultaneously, Mount SAC was just about one step ahead of the van [forefront] of the current trend. A lady named Donohoe--I don't know her first name--was a member of the California legislature, created the Donohoe Act, which split the community colleges off from K-12 districts, and it required that all property in California would lie within a community college district, gave them a separate tax base and separate funding. The push behind that act was the fact that this blowing-up population was creating a demand for colleges and they were building state college campuses and state university campuses as fast as they could. It looked as if they were going to have to have one on every street corner. So the whole push behind the creation of the community college, besides just the national trend of community colleges, was for it to be the first two years of

the college system and take the pressure off the college system, and that of course accounts for the thinking of the people at Mount SAC that's been good for almost twenty years.

Nowadays, you know, they just within the last two or three years really have said, "We are serving all comers we can." You know, in those days we didn't use the term "community college." They were junior colleges and colleges that transfer. In the most recent review of an issue of *California Community College*, they still hold that as their number one mission. And it's really very shortsighted, because if you analyze what happens to their enrollments, their transfer program, up until the last couple of years when universities have been turning people away again, has been a very small part of their program, 5 percent or so. And the community colleges have done best out of their two-year programs in technical fields like airplane mechanics and nursing and those things.

Anyhow, the thing was that the act required the community colleges to be broken loose from [K-12]. But there was, like so many things, a phase-in period. So, for awhile in a number of the

larger ones that in fact had [included] grades 13 and 14. . . . [One] has now become Citrus Community College--I don't know what that district was--located in the Azusa School District. But the Citrus Community College District, Long Beach, Los Angeles, San Francisco, San Bernardino, Pasadena, a number of others, the board would sit--the same school board--would sit once as a K-12 board or a high school board and then adjourn that meeting and have a new meeting and be the community college board. Of course, over a period of time, we divided up the property and campuses and they elected new boards as they became, in fact, independent agencies. Of course, the same act created the Chancellor's Office for the Community Colleges.

WEST: But that was 1960, I think.

JOHNSON: Well, I don't know all the effective dates, but a number of interesting things fell out of this. In talking to the people who were in school at that time. . . . Well, I have contended, and made public speeches on this subject, one of the things that districts that operate 9-12 should do, and it is in part a solution to some of the financial problems of the 9-12 districts, if they could

break the social perception that you graduated from high school in the twelfth grade and 9-12 is a high school experience, if they could in fact make it popular for youngsters to spend five years in a four-year high school education, or spend five years in high school before taking a diploma, as has become extremely common among our four-year colleges and universities, that it has become the exception and not the rule [that] a person makes a baccalaureate degree in four years. They more typically take five and six years. It is perfectly legal under existing California school finance to keep kids in high school five or six or seven years. Naturally, it's legal for adults going to high school. Many uninformed people say, and probably there's some just common sense behind it, that you don't keep people in high school after they graduate--technically, legally, split hairs. If you go to the *School Attendance Accounting Manual*, you will find a footnote where the attorney general was asked, oh, like in 1920 to 1925 if in fact a high school graduate could return to high school for apportionment, the answer was, "Yeah, but. . . ." And the "yeah" is, yes, a high school graduate may return to high

school as long as they don't take post-high school classes. In other words, you couldn't start offering college-level work--remember this is a 1928 or 1925 opinion--at the high school and then have your high school students continue on beyond high school. But if they came back and took Algebra I and U.S. Government, or whatever, the high school-level courses, yes, they could enroll and be counted for apportionment, graduate or not. That is still the law of the land. If you understand the status of an attorney general's opinion, as opposed to some other things, all you really have to do to change that is to ask for a new attorney general's opinion and you might get a different opinion. But that is the current law, that anybody can go to high school, college degree or not.

So back to what I was saying about these community colleges, or grades 13 and 14 attached to school districts, many of the people that went through that experience, that level that I have talked to later, many of whom are now professional educators, they speak of that as being a very smooth transition. Many times the college classes on the same campus or in another portion of some

campus, that it had a steadying effect on the younger students and that in many ways it was very, very desirable, they thought, as opposed to the sharp cleavage at the end of twelfth grade and then you go on and apply for college. My wife was a flower child, so her impression of community college is high school with an ashtray. Her social group wasn't interested.

But anyhow, there was a big investigation of adult education in the early fifties, and Stan Sworder was the state administrator at that time, and Stan kind of. . . . Well, the state conferences were held in Bakersfield, and the association was known as the California Association of Adult Education Administrators [CAAEA], and it included all the community college folks, which are now in the [California] Community College Continuing Education Association, and have completely divorced themselves from us, except for perhaps their participation in NAPSAE [National Association Public School Adult Education]. They met at the Bakersfield Inn, and the Bakersfield Inn is to be remembered because whatever highway went right through the middle of Bakersfield--Highway 101 maybe--had a bridge across it and it

was between the two halves of the Bakersfield Inn. Every year they had the conference up there, and the sub-units which went on to the state association, which were not clearly recognized, but there was some kind of snottiness about the territories in those days.

Tri-County Adult Education started with Covina and went out to San Bernardino, and Los Angeles, Riverside, and San Bernardino Counties. People who had money wanted to join and they were told no, they couldn't join. The people from Whittier wanted to join and they told them no, they couldn't join, this was Tri-Counties. But since Covina was in and I started the program, they said, well, La Puente could go in because we were parallel with Covina and had once been part of the Covina district.

It was really an interesting group of people. It met in a cafeteria called Crystal Cafeteria on Holt Avenue in Pomona, which is an old converted Victorian house, and the Crystal Cafeteria just closed in the last year. A really tall man from Ontario, I remember he bumped his head on the mantle of the fireplace. But that association continued up until the time ACSA [Association of

California School Administrators] was formed, at which point the California Association of Adult Education Administrators still existed, even though the community college types had left us. But when the California Teachers' Association became extremely militant and decided they didn't want administrators belonging--you could belong but you couldn't vote. . . . If you wanted to buy their insurance and their hosiery or whatever, you could still belong, but they threw us out in terms of any input into the organization. They felt that it was dominated by managers and they became, as I said, militant and they started talking about collective bargaining and they wanted to get rid of the administrators.

So we formed ACSA as the super organization of all the [administrative groups]. All the administrative--not all--most of the administrative associations coalesced into what we call a super organization in order to have a political base, and that became the Association of California School Administrators. Our first executive director was a guy named Bill Cunningham, who was a superintendent. The first executive director, [he was] the superintendent in

one of the beach towns, like Manhattan Beach or Newport Beach, somewhere down there--an extremely handsome man, very capable, six-two, good speaking manner, just a super guy. Bill served in that capacity for a lot of years and eventually became the first governor's advisor on education [for George Deukmejian]. Each governor since then. . . . He moved to Sacramento. He worked there till he retired in ill health. He has a daughter who is still a superintendent of schools somewhere around Morro Bay, somewhere up in there. Anyhow, Bill is now replaced [as the governor's advisor] by a Maureen [DiMarco, Secretary of Child Development and Education]. He was the first executive of ACSA.

The only holdout that I can remember from the formation of ACSA, was the California School Business Officials, CASBO. They never really joined. The California Association of Adult Education Administrators joined and we had the largest treasury of any merging organization, the elementary organization, the secondary organization, people, personnel, superintendents, and so on. I personally wrote a check for $10,000 from our treasury to the ACSA treasury and the

treasurer, which I was, the state treasurer of each of the merging organizations got together and set up the first budget and dues structure and such for our new association. And I've been bitterly disappointed that they made the change. We said that the dues should be one-half of 1 percent of your prior year's salary, and since we pegged it, and we thought that was brilliant--we pegged it at a percentage of a salary, there should not be a need for dues increases because we got more association [dues as salaries went up].

In the initial days of ACSA, ACSA was very aggressive, in terms of publications and seminars and workshops and conferences. They had a conference chairman and they had some bright editors and writers on the staff in Burlingame, and they bought the building and they were entrepreneurial and I was very proud to be a part of that. After Bill left, and under other managers, they got to be much more self-serving in terms of the state staff on the payroll. They dropped most of the moneymaking activities, and as a consequence, they came back and asked for more dues. So the dues are currently three-quarters of 1 percent. And in spite of the fact that I

suggested ACSA membership and we made up a charter--there's probably one around here. One of the big deals was if you joined by a certain date you'd get a charter membership, they did them up in gold bond, framed membership certificate as an ACSA member. I've been a continuous member of ACSA since the day [it began]. I was ready to bail out. The problem was that I carried some insurance. A man my age with diabetes, you don't drop insurance policies, so I consider my ACSA dues as part of my current insurance dues, insurance cost. I'm also a Phi Delta Kappa and I have a number of interesting things in that regard, and that's a whole other story.

So, anyhow, going back to this business of breaking off the districts. We had two things going for us, you see. We had the minor as defined, which became part of the K-12 count, and growth in K-12 has always been a win-win and decline has usually been a lose-lose. You have fewer students, you get less money per student. You get more students, you get more students times more money per student. Those are generalizations, but they tend to be true. Like most generalizations, there are exceptions. We

could give you lecture by the hour in terms of what happens in financially growing and declining districts and the various things we have. We've had safety nets under declining districts. You get last year or this year, whatever is greater, and some of those kinds of things. But the two programs went two different ways.

My personal experience, Glen [Wilson] then called me in and said, "my colleagues don't want to do this, would you like to do this?" I went over and talked to the principal of the Covina Adult School and he told me about it, and I came back and said yes, I do, and started planning it. So I still had a home in Colorado near Boulder. I went down to Boulder and I enrolled in the adult education classes, the university was called Boulder.

At the University of Colorado at Boulder, Colorado residents are in the minority. It's a beautiful, beautiful campus and the summer school operates with guest lecturers from all over the country because it is as attractive to college professors as it is to students--a beautiful place. So one of the things about it, although it's not a big name college and as an

undergraduate school it's considered a party school, we really got some tremendous educators who came there for summer program. I did my master's there in summer. So I went back there and I enrolled in adult education classes. And the fellow who was running the class, I was talking to him about what I was doing, starting this adult school and so forth, and he said nicely, "I've seen California adult schools. They are nothing but night high schools." That still rings in my head.

The other thing is he arranged for us to go down to Denver to the Emily Griffith Opportunity School, what an old school, country, it goes back . . . almost as old as the California adult education started in San Francisco, and it was an elementary teacher named Emily Griffith who thought that adults needed to be educated as well. The Denver City Schools built a campus for her in downtown Denver, a couple of blocks away from the mint, and they just had an adult school, and it was incredible. They had a cobbler shop and all sorts of things. We went down as a college class and toured this--and again, it would have been in the mid-fifties--and it was just run as part of

the. . . . And their only requirement to attend there was that you could not have moved to Denver just to go to school there. I don't know how you could prove that, you know. Basically, any resident of Denver, anybody with a Denver address, could go to school at the Emily Griffith Opportunity School. And the school is still there, still functioning, and it's still a great school. There is a tragedy involved with Emily Griffith. When she got to be a mature woman and that school had been operating for a number of years, was shot and killed on the front steps of the school one night.

Anyhow, that had a lot to do with my thinking, and somewhere along with a couple of adult education classes I took, there was a requirement to write a paper on the ideal adult school. I found it ten years or so in my trash, and it reads remarkably like the La Puente Valley Vocational Center. They planned on having a campus here for those things. I don't know that he got into some of the things that developed like open entry, open exit, some of the things that we have really pioneered here and have really changed adult education and education. The independent

study--we called it contract instruction when we started Valley High School.

WEST: Did the school start with the vocational, or did you start . . .

JOHNSON: No.

WEST: Okay, how did you start?

JOHNSON: It was a night high school.

WEST: A night high school?

JOHNSON: But you could offer almost anything. I started to say there had been a big reform movement, a big public criticism of adult education, and the critics were saying [things] in the legislature and [in] the public press. The title that they really liked to make fun of [was] "Walking the Doggie Back Home," dog obedience training. Barbershop quartets, team basketball, anything that anybody decided was basically a group activity, they would whip up a name and run it through the adult school and collect apportionment money for it. They were doing night high school work, and the basic teaching force was high school teachers from the day, working at the high school campus at night, and the classes were typically 7:00 to 10:00. I remember saying to this one woman who was taking typing. She left and went to

a private typing school. "How are you going to pay for it?" She said, "Mr. Johnson, I go two nights a week for three hours. If I go five or six hours a day, five days a week, and I build up my typing speed, I can go to work. I'll never do it two nights a week or one night a week." I suppose she was right, you know, but . . .

[End Tape 1, Side A]

[Begin Tape 1, Side B]

JOHNSON: . . . kids either in high school or just out of high school and trying to finish. While the community college average age of attendees has increased over the years, the average age of adult education students has decreased.

The criticism I was saying in the fifties was some of these course titles, and so the state was very, very critical of our course titles and there had to be course title approval. It's like French. Whether the students learned to pronounce it correctly, [they] didn't care what you taught, as long as you had a title that was respectable and looked academic. And that was the big push, but there was absolutely no limit on what you could do and you could just enroll as many as you wanted to. I paid the teachers $4 an hour and I

a private typing school. "How are you going to pay for it?" She said, "Mr. Johnson, I go two nights a week for three hours. If I go five or six hours a day, five days a week, and I build up my typing speed, I can go to work. I'll never do it two nights a week or one night a week." I suppose she was right, you know, but . . .

[End Tape 1, Side A]

[Begin Tape 1, Side B]

JOHNSON: . . . kids either in high school or just out of high school and trying to finish. While the community college average age of attendees has increased over the years, the average age of adult education students has decreased.

The criticism I was saying in the fifties was some of these course titles, and so the state was very, very critical of our course titles and there had to be course title approval. It's like French. Whether the students learned to pronounce it correctly, [they] didn't care what you taught, as long as you had a title that was respectable and looked academic. And that was the big push, but there was absolutely no limit on what you could do and you could just enroll as many as you wanted to. I paid the teachers $4 an hour and I

paid myself $5 an hour, and we opened up school two nights a week in '55 when I started the adult school, and my wife came down and volunteered her time to run the office. There were three classes when I took over: oil painting, parent ed, and first aid. Parent ed was at that time a program of long standing in California adult education.

WEST: Yes, from the twenties.

JOHNSON: Dr. Milton Babitz wrote his dissertation on the subject of parent education, and among other things he discussed in his dissertation--and I didn't read it but he told me--was that the more education a person had, the easier it is to get them enrolled in school, and vice versa. The majority of parents, mothers coming back to take parent education, had a much higher level of education than the typical member of the community in which the classes were held. They weren't afraid of it, you know. They seemed comfortable and they came back and did it.

Milt Babitz was the person who was the brains behind the superintendent I just mentioned, the black guy, Wilson Riles. He and Wilson worked together in comp ed. And it was he who encouraged Wilson to run for state superintendent, and

immediately Wilson got elected. He appointed Milton his deputy. Milton had been the number two person. . . . He had been a consultant in adult education before that, had worked under Stan Sworder, a very, very bright man. One of the things that really changed--I think handicapped--Wilson Riles's tenure as state superintendent was the fact that Milt died of a heart attack about six months after Riles was elected, because together, you know, Wilson had the charisma and Babitz had the brains.

WEST: While you're talking about people in the department at that time, tell me a little bit about Stan Sworder. And do you remember George Mann? He went out in '57.

JOHNSON: Of course. I went to his retirement dinner. I changed my title because of. . . . George Mann?

WEST: Yes.

JOHNSON: No, E. Manfred Evans. George Mann I had met.

WEST: E. Manfred Evans was at the department during World War II and then went back to L.A., and George Mann had been there a long time. He retired in '57 and Stan Sworder [replaced him].

JOHNSON: Yes, I've met him. He didn't make much of an impression on me. But Evans made an impression on me.

WEST: Well, tell me about him.

JOHNSON: Well, the association had broken this business of going to Bakersfield all the time. They went to Stockton once or twice and then they started on kind of a circuit of conferences. We had a conference in San Francisco probably . . . late fifties, maybe '60. Anyhow, this little bitty Irishman sat across the dinner table from me at the banquet, and we had the banquet. It was in the Marine Memorial Club.

The Marine Memorial Club is an old hotel that was purchased by the Marine Corps PX kind of thing. They had this student body fund and they had a whole bunch of money in World War II and they had bought this old hotel at Fifth and Sutter in San Francisco and restored it. And anybody who had been in any of the American services, or any of our allies during World War II, could buy a membership for $20 a year. And when rooms were $50 a night in San Francisco. . . . If you were a member, you could get a room at the Memorial Club for $13--not a bad deal. Jean Estes introduced me

to the place--in terms of the club. I didn't join in the fifties. Anyhow, the dining/ballroom at the Marine Memorial Club is about half the size of my office here.

So we had the state banquet in this room, and this little Irishman sat across the table from me and I was just telling him all about the wonderful things I was doing in Puente. He just listened and he just asked questions and he was just as charming as he could be and he shared his insights with me. Later, I said, "That's really a nice guy. Who is he?" "Well, E. Manfred Evans."

WEST: [Chuckling] Mr. Adult Ed in L.A. County, right, at that time?

JOHNSON: Well, Mr. Adult Ed in California, or Mr. Adult Ed in the nation, if you will. But Manfred, like most great men, didn't have to tell you how great he was. He didn't have to have his PR group, didn't have to have a retinue of people. You see so many people today. . . . Over the years, you know, you get a little bit of importance and everyplace they appear they have their support group. But he was genuinely interested and he wasn't shining me on. You know, he wasn't just petting the kid, he was genuinely interested in

what I was doing. He knew what he was doing, he didn't have to tell me what he was doing, and I was really impressed by the fact that he was interested in me and my program.

Anyhow, when he retired, they had a retirement party for him at one of the old hotels downtown, probably the Biltmore, and I went down to this big ballroom. They had Evans and all the big shots up here, and then they had the tables here for people titled director and back here for the people title principal, and back here were all these unwashed people. [Chuckling] And I came back and changed my title to director. [Laughter] The next time I've got to go to one of these damn things, I'm going to sit up front. Okay? [Laughter] So that's how my title changed from principal to director. If you look back in the archives long enough to see where I did that, you'll probably know what year Manfred retired. But that was quite a. . . .

You know, I've always been fascinated by the operation of L.A. Unified and I've always had cordial relationships with people in the management of the adult system, vocational system. [Personal remarks deleted]

WEST: Do you want to change topics, talk about voc ed and starting voc ed?

JOHNSON: Oh, sure. I don't know, it's the standard stuff. It's probably in every textbook today.

WEST: The sixties, what happened . . .

JOHNSON: Well, no, you've got to talk about land grants and land grant colleges.

WEST: Okay, I don't have that. Tell me about it.

JOHNSON: Well, you go back to the admission of the states into the union, and places like Nebraska and others that came in around the time of the Civil War. When a state became a state, every sixteenth section of land was reserved to the state for purposes of running public schools. Many of the states sold off that land and started ag colleges. They were called land grant colleges. The University of Nebraska, an ag college, is a land grant college. Nebraska sold off practically all the land that they were given in the land grant when they were admitted as a state, and this land was reserved for public education, except western sand hill land. When I was a kid in high school, you could buy western sand hill land for 50 cents an acre. It's a range shadow desert. The Rocky Mountains take all the moisture out and then in

eastern Colorado and western Nebraska you get desert area and sand hills in Nebraska. Well, the only reason was because nobody was interested in buying it. I suppose from time to time they may have rented some of it as pasture land. They struck oil after World War II. So, when I was a superintendent in Nebraska in 1950, the State Department of Education sent us all out a little tube of crude oil from the state wells that belonged to the department of education, because it was on state land.

So the ag colleges played a major role in vocational education. They had county agricultural agents in all those rural counties, paid for by similar monies, but the big thrust for vocational education came in World War I as they were trying to convert from horse to mechanical, to the internal combustion engines and steam. So there were several acts, Smith-Hughes being the most famous. There were a couple of others, the names of which I've forgotten, but the Smith-Hughes Act basically provided federal assistance and teacher qualifications, and they taught things like working on tractors and agriculture and those things, and homemaking was funded under the same

stuff. So during my lifetime, from the time I was a kid in high school until I moved to California in the fifties, vocational education was largely double-period shop classes and maybe the vocational educators were Smith-Hughes trained in the state colleges and they had this double-period ag class kind of an orientation.

There was another thing that happened immediately after World War I. Most cities in the United States designated one high school as a voc tech high school. Initially, they had some success because the country was very low tech and was becoming higher tech and there was a big demand for people with technical training, but they were killed by the academics. This same phenomenon that when I started the vocational center in '64 and started taking high school kids is that the high school staff whose orientation is college, and if you give them a question about the world of work and what you have to do to be this, that, or the other, they could tell you what you have to do to be a teacher or maybe a doctor or a lawyer, but they haven't the faintest idea whether the blood technicians that work at City of Hope have got bachelor's or A.A.'s or whatever, you

know? They're really illiterate in terms of career education. But they are capable of sending minorities and less academically talented students to vocational training. And they dumped on those high schools which started off with high hope till they made them into what we used to call "gooney bins," when you set up a study hall for kids that got kicked out of classes. Then they hired slave masters with whips to operate gooney bins. Fifth and sixth period was. . . . But they killed vocational education by using it as a dumping ground.

So, when in the fifties and sixties you talked about starting some kind of a new vocational high school, they said, "Oh, shoot, we did that. Vocational high schools aren't worth a damn." They didn't go back and look to see whether the fault was with the vocational high schools or whether the fault was with the gatekeepers. And the fault was with the gatekeepers. That's why in the seventies I was excited about career education. We had a secretary of education who felt that . . . made big speeches about every kid should graduate from high school with a saleable skill, whether you

were college bound or not, and that was a great movement. But when they pulled the federal money out of it, it just dropped dead.

Well, the other idea of career ed--I don't know how much you know about career ed. The career ed idea was to go back to that. Instead of Dick and Jane and Fluff and Fuzz and Spot, that the content material when not otherwise dictated, remedial and that stuff should really revolve around the world of work, just like when they started out in public education. In the first place, it was supposed to be religious, and the hornbooks and those things were on religion. The concept of career education was that the content of your English lessons and your history lessons, some of that should be about the world of work and the history of the world of work, and they made great fun of. . . . In the Dick and Spot era we talked about traditional roles, fireman, policeman, airplane pilot, but we really didn't talk about 99 percent of what people do to earn a living. They talked a lot about the fact that children today have very little idea of what their parents do to earn a living in a technically educated society. They know dad works for Aerojet

and he goes away in the morning and he comes back at night, but whether he works on telescopes or bombs, they don't have the faintest idea. [Chuckling]

WEST: Are we calling it voc tech today?

JOHNSON: Well, no, the career ed idea was to begin with kindergarten. Besides taking the kids to the dairy, you took them to places like grocery stores, you took them to places that employ large numbers of people, and you essentially started preaching to the little guys when they started school that most humans work at productive things and that there is respect for work and that you need to. . . .

I was absolutely horrified. We had a district director of voc ed. . . . I got the original VEA money in the district as a grant application, and then the assistant superintendent, who thought he was very clever, hired this guy and took over the VEA money and hired a fellow named Roy Apple from Monterey Park. I took Roy Apple down into the garment district. A friend of mine was moving a couple thousand suits around in his warehouse and Roy was absolutely fascinated. You know, he followed me

around the wholesale areas of Los Angeles, and I'm saying, "You know, I'm an old tired English teacher. This guy is supposed to be the voc-ie." He came out of vocational photography. He knew less about the world of work. . . . You know, one of the major problems is that principals, superintendents, teachers know virtually nothing about the world of work, and so they go from school to school, to college, the college classroom to teacher, teacher to counselor, counselor to principal or whatever, frequently without ever working a forty-hour week for anything.

WEST: So you had a different concept when you found your teachers for Valley Vocational Center?

JOHNSON: Of course. Of course. Adult ed credential. Five years in the trade and you can get a temporary credential and start teaching. If you've got any college, that counts for years. If you have two years of college, three years of work, you can teach it.

WEST: Talk to me about those first few teachers and how you found them. Who was the first teacher? Was it Smitty [Harold Smith]?

JOHNSON: No, he was the third welding teacher. The upholstery teacher was a guy who upholstered my sofa and had worked with the Department of Rehab[ilitation]. And he had a rehab referral in his shop learning to be an upholsterer. You can't buy it from an employee, so I hired him to teach upholstery and he sold his shop to an upholstery supply house and then I bought the stuff back from them. Then he set up an upholstery shop. His name was Ben Luna and he was a super guy. He was an obese Mexican, grew up in East L.A. He and I were very close. But he was an upholsterer. He wrote a textbook and it was published in English and Spanish, and I have an autographed copy around here somewhere, one of the very, very few books on upholstery, and he wrote it and illustrated it and sold it, actually.

The welding teacher. . . . Well, the first upholstery teacher, I fired him. The first welding teacher was a drunk. [Chuckling] I followed him around and I finally said, "You know, the truth, I think you're an alcoholic and I think you're drinking on the job, and if you want to leave now it's okay. If I have to entrap you and I'm forced to do all that, I'm going to be very

nasty when I dismiss you." And he said, "Well, I'm not a drunk, I'm not a drunk." But in about three weeks he kind of graciously disappeared. He was also working for Tri-Community part-time and he was a part-time welder.

Ben Murphy was the first body shop teacher. His father had a body shop in Covina and I knew his father. That was Zoe's first husband, Zoe Farris's first husband.

The first auto teacher I got from West Valley Occupational Center, but I don't remember the original name of it. It's across the street from Pierce College. That's Jay Ray, and he was working for them. He wasn't working full-time when he came to work for me. He was running a teaching gas and oil station for Mobil Oil across the street from the Winnetka Occupational Center, and so he was working part-time for them and then a full-time auto shop teacher. He used to commute from Woodland Hills out here daily. That's another story.

There was a Hughes Junior High School on Winnetka Avenue, across the street from Pierce College, clear over on the west side of the L.A. district, the northwest corner, on the road to

Simi Valley. Back in the fall of '64, I had just gotten the vocational center started, and we got a call that somebody had arranged for sixty Japanese educators who were doing tours, and wherever their tour was supposed to go something happened. They called the district and said, "Can you accommodate sixty Japanese educators on a tour of your district?" We agreed to do it and they sent buses down. I called up probably Bill Johnston and I said, "Bill, I want to borrow something." He said, "What do you want?" I said, "I want George." George Kawamura was the high school principal in L.A. and eventually went to the central office. His kid worked for us in the PIL Lab for awhile, I guess. He now works for the U.S. Office of Education stationed in Hawaii. George spoke Japanese.

[Personal remarks deleted]

Another thing, Bob Troutman, who was the first county adult education coordinator, to my knowledge, and he's the one who started the Los Angeles County Association of Adult Education Administrators, which has now become part of a chapter of ACSA, was beach master for Omaha Beach.

[Personal remarks deleted]

He was a very sweet and bright man. He was an adult education administrator in the San Bernardino area [Personal remarks deleted] and then was hired by L.A. County, and he held the job for years until Sig[fried] Ringwald. Why did I get onto that? Who knows?

WEST: We were talking about the Valley Vocational Center starting up and the first people there.

JOHNSON: Well, you have to understand, when the Valley Vocational Center started, the Vocational Education Act [VEA] of 1963 as amended in 1964, the money was available strictly by application. You sent in a project idea and you got money if it worked. So I sent in the application, wrote it myself and sent it in. I was really proud of it and it read so well--and there are still a number of copies around here somewhere--that we went ahead and leased the building and started on Proctor, where Mike's [Michael Wada] office is, and went ahead and started the program, July 1, 1964. We have to be the first program in California operational under VEA, because we just started July 1, 1964. We didn't know anything about--me or anybody else--know anything about

federal applications and such. It just sounded right and it was a good idea, so we started.

Well, we didn't get funding. A couple months later we got the letter that said we wouldn't get funding. Our assemblyman at that time was a former radio and TV repairman named Phil Soto. And Phil's office was right next door to my office, down across the street from the Star Theater. And the only contract I ever put in, I went in and said to Phil, "You know, those bastards up there in voc ed didn't fund me!" A guy named Wes [Wesley P.] Smith, who was the head of voc ed in California, an old Smith-Hughes guy, (inaudible) Smith-Hughes money for years, taking the applications for this stuff, and I just said, "They didn't fund me. What am I going to do?" The program started. And finally I got a call from Wes Smith and he said, "Get that damned assemblyman out of my office. You're funded! You're funded!" [Laughter]

The funding we asked for was something ridiculous, like $17,000 or $40,000 or something. So we rented the building where Mike Wada's office is, and that was the only building on that side of the street. A machine shop had been in there and

gone bankrupt. And I hired Roy Bailey and Pete Bulza and we had academics up front and Ted Zimmerman was the vice principal. And a lot of our doing vocational stuff was Ted. Ted was very heavily oriented in terms of vocational stuff. Ted and I had offices up in front. In the back room, in the same back room, we had welding, upholstery, data processing, PBX receptionist.

WEST: [Chuckling] It must have been a little noisy.

JOHNSON: My secretary kept fainting and that's when we finally hired Shirley Buchanan. The secretary before that was Roberta O'Neil. She worked for Rowland for awhile before she retired, and her husband was in our warehouse. They lived just across the street from Puente High School.

Dave Taxis was the [assistant to] L.A. County Consultant for Voc Ed [Lee Ralston], and he had several people working with him. We'd been open about eighteen months and he was teaching a college class in vocational education and he brought a group out to visit. He looked me in the eye and he said, "You know, I'm glad somebody's finally tried this." He said, "It won't work." He said, "These suggestions about special vocational schools have been around forever." And

he said, "The vocational schools in this country have been a big disaster, and the place for a vocational education is at the high school." Of course, I got even with him. [Chuckling]

Another thing he said, "I don't really understand how you do this open-entry, open-exit. I'd never heard the phrase open-entry, open-exit." What we were doing is the teacher. . . . We'd hire teachers and we'd start with a group of students and we'd have the students come in and we'd talk to the teachers. To have a job all year long, we'd have to find some way to take in new students. You know, eventually the colleges said that was open-entry, open-exit. We were just trying to solve. . . . You know, we literally sat down and said, "What's the problem? Transportation. What's the problem? Child care. What's the problem? Schedules." And we literally built the vocational center concept in the early days, of whatever your problem is, we'll find some way to solve it. If you live in this valley and say you can't go to school, you're a damn liar. Because you can go day or night, you can start anytime, you can stop anytime, you can attend on odd-numbered Wednesdays, whatever it is, you know.

And we did, we put in. . . . When Mary Kernodle started our first Programmed Lab, at one point I was ready to install glass, as they do in places where they do observation schools, because of these constant people traipsing through there. How in the hell can you do a study lab? How in the hell can you do a programmed laboratory, individualized instruction? I couldn't understand it. Mary and I belonged to the. . . . They had a special task force in L.A. headed by a gal named. . . . She just died recently, lung cancer, a heavy smoker, Elsie Withy. Elsie Withy headed up the Los Angeles Adult School Task Force for Individualized Instruction. And that's a whole other story.

Cambria Adult School is a whole other story. Cambria Adult School cut a deal with the United States Immigration Service back in World War I time or so. The Immigration Service sent out notices to all new immigrants, and they sent notices to everybody who was going to go into L.A. They told them, "You go to Cambria." Then Cambria Adult School was torn down and it became E. Manfred Evans School, named for him. It is the

largest adult school campus in the state, 4,000 or 5,000 students come to this single campus.

Cambria had a basement and they guarded it like a vault. They had lesson plans and work sheets for ESL and they had pigeon holes, walls covered with pigeon holes, and they'd hire teachers during the summer to develop instructional materials for ESL. I tried everything under the sun, including hiring some of their teachers, to try to get access to that material, and they protected it like Fort Knox. In those days, concepts were like. . . . What do you hire for an ESL teacher? Is it important if the teacher speaks another language, and how much should they teach and what languages and all that? We tried to do seat-of-the-pants kinds of things. I can remember adult school principals in L.A. saying they hated hiring young, attractive women to teach ESL because the Latinos got so infatuated with them and it became such a problem. And I finally cut my own criteria, you know. Besides enthusiasm for the job, if I could find someone who had acquired another language as an adult, as I did, I felt that that process helped them understand the process of somebody else acquiring

a language. You know, that seems like the Model T, Model A Ford today when we have colleges preparing people and we have materials and all that. But you have to remember that the first concrete adult education act and we got money for teaching literacy and ESL, and that the first. . . .

[End Tape 1, Side B]

[Begin Tape 2, Side A]

. . . came to me on the first adult basic ed application and wanted to know what we'd been doing. And I had invited. . . . A lady came to me and wanted a place for a Laubach Literacy class to meet, and I said, "I'm sorry, I can't do that. If I loan you a classroom to teach literacy for Laubach Literacy group,"--she came up from Pomona and they had a number of people coming from here over there--"I've got to go through a district use permit and charge you rent and all this other stuff. I'll tell you what I'll do. . . ." She was a retired teacher. I said, "We'll offer literacy. I'll hire you, you can teach it. The only thing you can't do is use the religious part of Laubach. And I'll put you on the payroll and I can buy supplies for you and give you the room and

all that stuff." And she said, "No, I don't want to be paid. I'm a volunteer." I said, "So endorse your check back to Laubach, and you don't pay income tax if you donate it." And she did. She taught literacy for six or seven years, she and her sister, at Puente High School. Those were our first literacy classes.

Well, so the money came out for Adult Basic Education. So Ed Goldsmith came out to meet me one night when we were at the Valley Vocational Center on Proctor and he followed me around this afternoon and evening. I said, "Ed. . . ." It was a matching deal. You know, you do so much in basic education and essentially the state grant of federal money would match it, and I was doing $3,700 worth, paying this teacher (inaudible). I said, "I need $3,700," and my first Adult Basic Education grant was $3,700, and I remember getting down on my hands and knees and begging him for it.

WEST: Well, that's interesting.

JOHNSON: That had to be in the sixties sometime.

WEST: You have a note, "Cosmetology 1966." What does that mean?

JOHNSON: Well, it simply meant that we got started. . . . Ernie [Schnuelle] was a high school vice principal

at La Puente High School. ROPs were forming, just starting, and VEA money was rolling around and cosmetology was a popular subject. And two things that Ernie and I pulled off that year: one, there was no pregnant minor school-age parent program, and vocational choices for girls were virtually nonexistent; and I had the building built for cosmetology.

The guy who owned the building where court schools are owned that land and he built two buildings. He built the building in front as a temporary housing for Valley High School, and he built the building in back for cosmetology, built it in the summertime. In the middle of the summer there was a plumbers' strike. He and I and a couple of his friends put the plumbing in that building at night with blankets hung over the windows so the plumbers wouldn't see us working. So I've got a vested interest in it. [Laughter] You know, all the sinks across the back wall.

WEST: Oh, you put those in? [Chuckling]

JOHNSON: The plumbers walked off with it half-done. Anyhow, that was that year. And if you go over there, you'll find a letter from the State Board of Cosmetology. And it's interesting, they'll

give you no help till you. . . . You finish the facility according to the guidelines they mail out. Then they come out and inspect it and tell you you pass or you don't. So I have a little letter of inspection and passing. But it was a major step. And it has served thousands of women. Cosmetology has a value that I don't accept in many vocational classes, but the. . . .

You know, one of the things that people who experiment around and do exploratory stuff in various occupations, it makes you an informed consumer. If you take an upholstery class, you will never see a piece of upholstered furniture the same way again. You will know instantly what quality and what craft is. And the one thing, every woman, if she's lucky, has hair, and most of them have children, and you become a much more informed consumer if you go through the basics and the basic hygiene. And there's another benefit, particularly in the days that we started cosmetology, the *cholo* girls wore an awful lot of crap on their face, almost black lipstick and pancake--it looked like shit. Well, you know, it would make a hooker look like a saint. But the cosmetology teacher could look at a kid and say,

"Get that crap off your face." If one of the high school teachers at Puente High School said that, we'd have had a discrimination suit. You know, it really has some value, that while they're pretty hard to measure, I think they're a very real value to people. Both of Ruth Warren's daughters took cosmetology for a time, and I don't think either one of them ever thought it was time wasted, you know.

But that's the early days. You know, we started the vocational center in '64. We started cosmetology in '66. There's an ugly story to that, too--well, several stories. When I knew I wanted to do it, I called on a kid that I had taught at Puente High School. Wally was a graduate of Puente High School when I taught there, and he became involved in dog shows. So ten years after he graduates, I'm looking for a cosmetology teacher and I ran into Wally at a dog show. I said, "Wally, I'm going to start this school of cosmetology. Do you want to work for me or know anybody?" He said, "Well, gee, you know, I had this great teacher when I went to cosmetology school named Ted Dragoo." Ted was running two or three schools for Marinello College

of Beauty, which is a chain, and so Ted came in part-time and we started some pre-cosmetology stuff. When I wanted to go full-time, Ted wasn't willing to do it, and I hired a guy named Scalo, Giovanno Scalo, who had a beauty shop up on Hacienda [Boulevard] next to the Sunset Room, and he had been talking about starting a beauty school. So I hired him. The man was a thief and we eventually fired him, went through court hearings and all sorts of ugly things to get rid of him. Eventually, several years later, Ted came back to me and he went to Marinello and he said he'd bought a piece of land up north and he had a week's vacation coming and so he wanted to take a week vacation, a week of unpaid time, and go see his land up in northern California. They said, "No, you can't do that." So he told them to shove it. And Ted said, "I don't have a job." I said, "Well, Ted, you got here at the right time. I need somebody to run cosmetology."

So the story of the teachers is [that] most of the teachers came right out of the trades and had no idea they were going to teach at all. There were two kids who went to Puente High School named Conatser, and I taught one of them and

Zimmerman coached the other, and their dad is this big, six-foot-four kind of a geek from Oklahoma. What's the big town in Oklahoma? Little Rock, Arkansas.

WEST: He's from Arkansas?

JOHNSON: Yes, Little Rock. And he had an appliance repair shop and he came in one night in '65 or so, and he wanted to learn how to weld aluminum. Because one of the common problems is the aluminum freezer top of the refrigerator, women would be defrosting it and they'd stick an icepick through the aluminum jacket of the freezer. And there's no way to fix it; you've got to be able to weld aluminum. So he came in to take a welding class. I said, "You know, we have a lot of people who come in here and ask about appliance repair." And so he was going to teach one night a week appliance repair. Seventy people showed up. [Laughter] So, you know, Merle retired at seventy-two or seventy-three.

WEST: Right, I remember him well. [Chuckling]

JOHNSON: The one son became a multi-millionaire by owning an airport and the other son was a narc and wound up retiring and leaving the area so he wouldn't get killed. I've got to go.

WEST: Okay.

[Session 2, February 24, 1993]

[Continue Tape 2, Side A]

WEST: This is February 24, and I'm continuing the interview with Tom Johnson.

JOHNSON: We talked about our first involvement in Adult Basic Education, as we got a matching amount for the fact that we had let a Laubach Literacy lady come onto campus and use a classroom, and we paid her even though she was a volunteer, and she in fact endorsed her checks back to the Laubach Society. The only restriction we placed on her was that she couldn't use a lot of the religious sorts of things that were in their materials. Ed Goldsmith was the state consultant who authorized that first grant and Roy Steeves became the first state director of that program. Parenthetically, I found out yesterday that Roy's wife has just died. He's no longer with that part of the State Department; he's been transferred elsewhere.

Exciting things happened. The first thing, I don't know if it was in yesterday's notes or not,

but in 1963 the feds passed the Vocational Education Act, which is now the Carl Perkins Act. It was passed as the Vocational Education Act of 1963, as amended in 1964. The district applied, and we were so certain that it was a great idea for the adult school to create a daytime occupational center. We rented buildings in July 1, '64, rented the buildings and started a program and then we were funded later. That was a significant change. Most of the growth in the adult school, which was about a little less than ten years old at that time, came from that change.

One of the things that happened, and that first grant was like $37,000, no big deal, but it did get us started. Shortly after that, the Manpower Development Training Act [MDTA] came in. And the Manpower Development Training Act was direct grants from the federal government without going through state government.

Basically, local employment offices, California EDD [Employment Development Department], but representing California Department of Labor, met in conjunctions with schools and we did needs surveys. I was really incredibly unimpressed when EDD officers, heads of

EDD offices, spent the major time of the first meeting deciding who was going to keep the notes and keep the minutes, because they were so busy, none of them could have a secretary keep minutes. I finally resolved it by just saying, "We'll keep the minutes." But it was that bureaucratic. Up until that time, if I wanted to deal with Employment or Welfare or those agencies, we did it by mail. You know, since that day, it has become the place where I and now I and other staff know the managers of all those agencies by first name and have dealt with them over the years, and I think that's one of the major changes, is the agencies have learned to work together. There was a lot of conflict and problems, as far as the number of high schools in the district to try to keep marching to the same drum. They have a tendency to stray away, but nonetheless, there is a much higher level of interagency cooperation, and GAIN and WIN and JTPA and CETA have all brought that into being, the Department of Rehab and others.

So MDTA was a simple process. You met, determined there was a need and determined there were people to be trained, estimated the cost of

training, turned in proposals to the fed, and you got the money. And you opened class, and if the class failed, people got jobs or people didn't get jobs, you bought the equipment, you had the class, and you'd done your work and you got paid. Wonderful simplicity.

One of the first of those we did was welding. We bought welding equipment, the welding stations that are on Proctor today, with that money. When the funding for the program ran out, we got a letter from the state or federal agency, "We're going to come out and pick up your equipment." And I said, "Over my dead body." I said, "I'll lie in the door and call the press." Then I got a letter saying, "That's okay, keep it. Just maintain the inventory." All that stuff has long since turned to junk and been replaced.

But MDTA was followed by CETA, Comprehensive Employment Training Act, and you'll have to look up the dates. But CETA was a new plan and it involved money flowing through the state to the training agencies, and it fostered the idea of performance contracts. That is, you trained them and got them placed and they stayed placed, and that determined your payment, not your plan and

your budget. And we've had an ongoing battle among the training agencies from that day on. They still want to look at our budgets and our costs, and the answer is, "If you're paying us for performance, you're paying us so much a placement, you really don't have any business looking at our books. If we deliver what we say we're going to deliver and we can make a profit or loss, it certainly is not your business. But they still insist on tracking money and accountability, blah, blah, blah. It's an ongoing hassle. I still feel if we get paid $5,000 a placement, and the placement has. . . . We say, you know, he has had training for a minimum of so many hours, and he's placed for a minimum of so many days at a certain minimum wage, that's all they are entitled to know.

That wasn't bad. And the state involvement was not onerous, but in the brave new world of JTPA, which is the son of CETA, there was great and noble oratory about partnerships, partnerships with business, and the creation of PICS, Private Industry Council, which had to be heavily majority representation in the private sector. That has placed unnecessary constraints and redundancies

and problems on vocational training that could be removed by a single act of legislation. The problem is this: They have said that so much population can constitute a. . . . [service delivery area], it creates a PIC, and you have to have basically so much population, so many job opportunities and [other] criteria based on size. The county and city entities within that get flooded and are involved in creating the PIC, which is the Private Industry Council, which in fact contracts with service providers to provide this service. And each level of government wants a piece of the action. And I'm not just talking about decision making, but they want some of the money. And in California, and particularly southern California, it has become very problematical because we have the entities themselves, such as L.A. County PIC, and then we have a consortium of cities which can be PICs. Long Beach is a PIC and Pasadena is a PIC and so forth. They're large enough entities--I'm not getting the word right that describes that entity that creates a PIC. But then we have subordinate groups which may or may not have enough population to qualify on their own, and the East San Gabriel

Valley is one of those. We have enough population and basis to qualify on our own, but originally we chose to become part of the entity funded by the county. And then the county has dirtied on us, and from time to time we have talked about becoming our own. . . . These sub-entities are called prime agents and there are a number of prime agents within L.A. County. Some prime agents want freedom and some prime agents want to continue to get their money through the county. But the first and foremost argument is that the county rips off some money, that if the money came directly to us from the state, that we would get a larger percentage of the money. And the county says, "Yeah, and that takes away their administrative costs. Let them run their operation." That was the argument.

Going back to MDTA, the money is granted directly from the federal government to the Valley Vocational Center as a training agency and we train students. If in fact they had just changed to performance based and said, "You don't get the money unless you place twenty workers," there would have been an awful lot of folks, bureaucrat-type thinkers, out of work. Because the prime

agent has monitors who come out and check, and the county PIC has monitors who come out and check, and then we wind up getting funded by three different PICs. We're funded by the county for youth. In some cases, we can be funded by the county superintendent, directly by the county PIC. In other cases we are funded directly by Los Angeles City PIC for programs in our jails or within L.A. city. . . . Well, not necessarily in L.A., within the confines, but certain L.A. city populations. We are funded in some cases by set asides at the state level that the state can manage, and it does what it was intended to do. Politically it was intended to share the wealth with political entities and to keep their devotion to an administration. Reagan's, I think.

In fact, it was really interesting when Reagan--I believe it was--announced how much more effective JTPA was than CETA before anybody had been processed. [Chuckling] And the reason they could do that with absolute confidence is they cooked the way the score is kept. So, if you approximated previous years of performance, you would do much better on their scorekeeping. The same way they cleaned up the water in Hacienda

Heights. Do you remember? The water standards said our water wasn't safe to drink and we put bottled water in all the schools. And then, since we couldn't clean up the water, we changed the standards. [Laughter] The same process.

And it's important to detail those processes because people get caught up in the rhetoric and they believe a lot of this nonsense. But in actual fact, the people that write that stuff are just as cynical as I am. If they're the least bit knowledgeable, they know we are going to get the support of cities for our Federal Jobs Act because we're going to get the city's money. And we'll do it with the city's money by creating CETA, which means they get a piece of the action, a piece of the decision making, and they get to pick the service providers, and they can even get political clout if not kickbacks from the service providers.

We are looking at. . . . We are at the threshold of a new Roosevelt era. If you listen to our President, he talks about government as the employer of last resort, as opposed to welfare. I support that. You know, after spending approximately thirty years of my lifetime dealing with the training and placement of adults, I have

to agree with the basic premises of WPA [Works Progress Administration], PWA [Public Works Administration], NYC, Neighborhood Youth Corps, CETA Youth, JTPA Youth, all of which have to do with employing a negative criteria: This person doesn't really deserve a job. But employment has more to do with breaking the cycle of poverty, the things that Lyndon [Johnson] had in mind when he created the War on Poverty and all the other stuff. In fact, just paid them to work, and that's a form of . . . what do they call it? Workfare? Generically?

WEST: Workfare? Yes.

JOHNSON: Yes, and that's what WIN is nationwide, it's called Workfare.

WEST: From your perspective, a lot of what I've been reading, they're saying that the sixties with the federal initiatives, with the ABE Act, with the Vocational Act, made quite a difference in the direction of adult education in California, from the forum kind of thing and [moved it toward] . . .

JOHNSON: Oh, yes, crumbs from the . . .

WEST: [Serving the] disadvantaged, beyond just the ESL population.

JOHNSON: The premise is that the government dangles bait money out there, the funded programs frequently spending more money on the program than what the subsidy is, but it is very definitely a means by which government--in any case, the federal government--can get local entities to give the same priorities in order to capture the money. Case in point: By a series of accidents, including the upholstery shop that we bought out along with the teacher to start the upholstery program had a rehab referral man, and I didn't think it was legal for us to take rehab money to train . . . you know, government money to train people. And we researched that, in fact found out we could, and found out we could in such depth that Valley Vocational changed the structure of the Department of Rehabilitation in the state of California. At one point we had 1,700 active rehabilitation referrals at Valley Vocational Center. And I'm not talking about workshop, I'm talking about. . . . people that were Department of Rehab clients and were sent here for training and retraining.

The practice of the Department of Rehabilitation prior to that time had been to send

all these people to private schools, locksmithing schools, welding schools and whatever, cosmetology schools. When I worked out the first arrangements, because the guy that was the rehab trainee at the upholstery shop looked like Sammy Davis and he was blind in one eye and wore a patch, and we used to call him Sammy Davis behind his back. Anyhow, the Department of Rehab had all of their regional managers come down here and we had a two-day workshop in the back room. The lecture room of the cosmetology school. And I lectured them for two days on the basic fundamental school plan for both the community colleges and the adult school. I said, "You go home and go to your local adult school and tell them. . . ." This was prior to being a capping system in terms of the enrollment. You know, the average in the state of California is, if you enroll a student, 525 hours of attendance equals one year of a.d.a., and add so much money in, you divide the money by the 525 and it comes out to $2.67 an hour. And the local adult director can increase their revenue by that amount of money. And if the Department of Rehab only pays the student's registration fees and books and

materials, the Department of Rehab, instead of paying $3,000 to have a person trained in welding, you give him the money for supplies and welding leathers and those things, and in essence have them get the actual training itself for nothing. The advantage to the school district is you increase your number of units of a.d.a. and on and on and on, you know. Two solid days of lecture.

And as a consequence. . . . Well, it was funny. The West Valley Occupational Center on Winnetka, I contacted the principal and said, "You're on the other side of the world. Will you please look at what we're doing. I do not want to be the rehab center of the world. We do not want to have the majority of our students be rehab students. In fact, it's much better for the students if you get a mixture of people with different types of problems. And L.A. City did in fact get involved.

I started to tell you about George Kawamura and West Valley Occupational Center on Winnetka. I never finished that, I don't think.

WEST: No, you didn't.

JOHNSON: I told you there was a junior high school called Hughes Junior High. They had blacktopped an

entire site, like fifteen or twenty acres, and they had portable buildings on this property and L.A. Unified was getting ready to sell or dispose of the property and change it. George Kawamura came out because we had those sixty visiting Japanese educators and George talked to them. But meanwhile, while George and I were waiting for them, he followed me around Valley Vocational Center and I'm telling him all the things that we think we're doing at Valley Vocational Center and how we're going to serve high school kids and dropout kids and adults and all this big wonderful planning that went into the Valley Vocational Center. George went back and talked to whoever was running adult education--probably it was Bill Johnston, I'm not sure--but they liked the idea so much that they convinced the L.A. Unified Board to give them Smith Junior High School. And the adult division took it over and created a vocational center there and they hired Cal [Calvin] Dellafield. Cal became the executive officer of the National Vocational Education Association based on his history for the great concept he pioneered for vocational education at Hughes Junior High School [personal remark omitted] and

eventually came back and took over. . . . became a head of the adult education division of San Francisco Community College.

Because there's another story about San Francisco Community College. He took over the adult schools in San Francisco when the split was made. There's a big story about that. Anyhow, he got that job and failed at it and left education. But he also had a big house in the hills of Woodland Hills that slid off the hill. But there were some personally unpleasant things for me.

Anyhow, at one point we were really pursuing the business of having the school board build a plant for us and were ready to take the school board around the country to look at anything that was outstanding. I called Cal, the executive director of the American Vocational Association, and he called me back several days later and said, "Tom, there's no place on the East Coast or the Midwest that approaches what's being done in California in terms of adult vocational centers."

Let's go back and talk. . . . It's a different subject, but related and it isn't. This goes back to the Donohoe Act and the breaking away of the community colleges and the fact that a K-14

district like Long Beach would sit twice, once as a K-12 board and once as a community college board--they called themselves JCs in those days. I was in San Diego on an accreditation team, chaired by Bob Troutman, and the accreditation team of the adult school--it was University Adult School in San Diego--went to the district office, as usual, and met with district administration about the accreditation. We were told, "We are taking adult education from under K-12,"--because it started at K-14--"and we're going to transfer all our reports this year to the community college, through the community college records, to the state."

WEST: That must have been about 1970.

JOHNSON: Or '65, '66. Anyhow, we calculated the value of that attendance for K-12 adult education and we valued it as attendance for community college, and there's a million dollars more state income from reporting it through the community college system at no change in cost. So we just transferred the cost and the income over to the community college, and San Diego picks up a million dollars additional income at no expenditure. We just moved the paperwork. Well, this created such a

shock. Again, in the late sixties a million dollars was a lot more money than it is today. So the legislature, I'm sure at the request of the State Department of Ed, ran through a quick bill declaring a moratorium . . .

[End Tape 2, Side A]

[Begin Tape 2, Side B]

JOHNSON: After the accreditation of University Adult School in San Diego, when the decision was made by the boards, the same board managing both systems moved the adult education attendance claim from the K-12 district, the community college district picked up a million dollars. The principal of that school was a fellow named Ralph Grove, and the district director was a fellow named Kent Imel, and Jud Bradshaw and several other people were along as part of the school district on that accreditation. As I say, at that point they had been employed by the K-12 setup, or the K-14 setup, and were suddenly told, "You are now community college folks." The moratorium ran for a couple of years.

The other large system in California that was really concerned about this was San Francisco, again a K-14 system that had, I believe, seven adult high schools scattered throughout the city.

And they were beginning, as we were here, to grow and do some vocational things and do well. San Francisco called Sacramento and assured members of the legislature and members of the Department of Education, even though the moratorium was going to run out, that nothing was going to happen, don't worry about it. They held a board meeting at one o'clock in the morning on the day after the moratorium ran out, transferred the program and picked up over $2 million that year. Six or seven years later when there was a crisis in school finance, San Francisco nearly went bankrupt in K-12. And the reason they went bankrupt, or were very borderline bankruptcy compared to other districts, is they had given away their birthright. They had transferred the adult program.

Remember that there were two types of attendance: minors, minors as defined, and adults. Minors and minors as defined drove the formula that established the revenue limit to determine the amount of money per a.d.a. for the entire K-12 system. The numbers of adult minors were included in that formula. And because they had lost them and they went to the community

college, the community college had lots of nice income and the school district was virtually bankrupt.

That same year, a guy named [Frank] Maddox was our assistant superintendent of business and he called me one night at nine o'clock at night and said, "Tom, blah, blah, blah, and do the minors count in the apportionment formula?" I said yes. He said, "You just solved our budget crunch." Because he had them.

Well, the first year we ran the program, the first couple of years, I had like 10 a.d.a. in that category. I said, "I don't think it's really important enough to figure it out and report it." Then I figured out the difference it made--you know, in today's numbers it would be the difference between $2,000 and $3,000--and so then I aggressively went after it and I was even. . . . We didn't have large programs, so for science and math I was sending students to Tri-Community Adult School; but the rules said if they were enrolled for ten or more hours, no less than sixty minutes, they counted. So if I referred people up to Tri-Community, I counted their hours up there and their hours down here, until we had a meeting with

the auditor. The auditor explained to me, since there was no way they could audit their attendance in the neighboring adult school, there was no way, even though they were going a total of ten hours a week, I could only. . . . Anyhow, I've always been aggressive, I guess.

One of the other things that's gone around since time began is: What about the consequences of the pre-schoolers attendance in the parent ed classes? And there's always been someone trying to figure a way to take attendance on the children. That's kind of gone away because a lot of that's done now in conjunction with Head Start and other kinds of programs like that. We do a parent ed component for the parents and the kids are subsidized by other means, but it's an interesting thing. Every bright young administrator would suddenly say, "Why can't I take attendance on these babies?"

But then the state association split off. The K-12 adulters became a committee within ACSA and we turned our state treasury over, and the community colleges formed their own association and went their own way. And there have been considerable quarrels ever since. There have been

all sorts of historic suggestions. Historic suggestions run like this: Let's create adult education districts and take adult education away from the K-12 and community colleges and set up a separate series of adult education entities within the state funded by the state. The same similar proposal has been made for vocational education a number of times in California and has actually happened in some other states. For instance, Colorado took it's early VEA money and put it all into creating state operated vocational centers scattered throughout the state, taking kids from the high schools and the various public schools in the state. You know, in retrospect, we've never needed an additional layer of government.

WEST: Delineation of function.

JOHNSON: I wrote that.

WEST: In the seventies, all the time, and in the eighties again, the Behr Commission?

JOHNSON: Yes, well, I didn't write that, but I was chief testimony on it.

WEST: Tell me a little bit about that.

JOHNSON: Well, the whole delineation of function was, you know, what could the community colleges do? The community colleges did much the same classes and

got higher apportionment for it and they competed with us for students in things like ESL and basic education and high school completion. And the attempted delineation of function was just to do that: What should the adult schools operated by K-12 and what should those colleges do in communities where the school district--particularly in rural areas the school districts didn't want to get involved in it, you know--what kind of agreements did they make with the community college? And it took several years to get it through the legislature, with a lot of acrimony, and K-12 said, "We can do it cheaper and more effectively."

The most impressive thing that came out of that was a research study that Bob [Robert] Rupert used to quote. It was a study done on adults and where they preferred to be educated, regardless of the content. A similar study was done regarding child care, because I used to be a child care provider privately, and the answer hits close to home: The closer to my residence, the more desirable it is to me. Think about it for a minute. You've got child care. If your employer offers child care and you wanted to be sick or

call in sick or play a game, you've got to take your kid down and leave him at the child care or arrange for child care for that day, as opposed to a provider near your home, you know? The same way with schools, travel and parking and all those things. That's one of the reasons why. . . . Quite honestly, that's the historical reason why adult education at K-12 has survived many of the financial crises and the attacks by community colleges and others, is because we have a decided advantage of having school district facilities in proximity to people's residences.

Let's take a little detour here from the subject of that and go to a cyclical thing that's observable and I have never seen commented on and never seen written on, in terms of behaviors of high schools, junior high schools, and adult schools, and colleges. Whenever there is a surplus of students, as right now when colleges are turning away entries, freshman and sophomore entries to four-year colleges, because their budgets have been cut and they don't want people and they're pushing them to the junior colleges. In those times, every layer of school attempts to do what they did in the days before these cycles

became more pronounced is they tended to take the level above them. Community colleges want to act like four-year colleges, high schools want to act like community colleges and adult schools, it works all the way down to junior high.

But before all the changes started to occur, high school teachers were people who couldn't teach college, and that if you were once a high school teacher you play hell. That's still true. Become a high school teacher and you pay hell getting a college job. An elementary teacher is very hard to transfer into teaching high school, even in the same district. Even though you go out and get advanced degrees and other things, you're typecast forever. It's easier to work your way down, for a high school teacher to become an elementary teacher, a college teacher to become a high school teacher. If you work your way up that ladder and you're advising your kids, you know, if you're thinking about teaching, if you ever think about teaching college, then stay the hell away from K-12. The same thing is true at community colleges and universities. You're better off to start as some baby teacher at a university, or as a community college teacher.

But that thing, if there is a shortage of students, instead of pushing them down, they suck them up. The universities start competing with the community colleges, the community colleges start enticing high school kids, the high schools start planning programs for bright junior high school kids. Now, quite honestly I recognize the cycle because of running adult education. In times of low employment we have high enrollment, always out of sync with the demand. And in times of high employment when we place ourselves out of business, teachers literally lose their students to jobs, guess where we go to fill up our holes? We woo the high school kids. We run programs out at the campus and so forth. It's a cycle that's very easily observed and very easily documented and really not. . . . Nobody pays any attention to it; it just kind of occurs like the tide.

WEST: Do you want to talk a little bit about adult ed finance? You mentioned it briefly.

JOHNSON: Well, what happened was. . . . I told you about this minors as defined. The next major change in school finance in California occurred when Xavier Del Buono became the . . . well, eventually became the assistant superintendent for adult education.

WEST: Yes, in the mid-seventies, about '74 or. . . ?

JOHNSON: Long about. He met with selected adult education managers of larger systems and asked them, "What do you need?" Xavier, in his experience with the State Department of Education--for that matter, his experience growing up, because his father was politically active in California government. . . . His father actually trained Cesar Chavez. Xavier met with this group, met with us in a hotel. It was called the International Hotel. It's been sold and changed its name now. It's just at the entrance at the airport. And he said, "What do you folks need?" And I said, and Ted Zimmerman was with me, I said, "You know, there's this ten or more thing." And so we explained about ten or more periods of no less than sixty minutes. I made a mistake in a way by doing this. I'll come back to why. Because it's just part of the reform legislation that was just passed. I said, "You know, every adult school I know of any consequence has high school kids enrolled. And it says in the accounting manual you can only take one day of attendance in a day from a high school kid. But, you know, it really seems to me that one of the things we need to do as society gets more complex

and more difficult, it's harder to be a kid and rougher if you don't finish high school, et cetera, et cetera, how about we take a look at the minors and minors as defined? Because," I said, "what really happens is adult schools either don't claim them at all or they claim them illegally. But there are greater numbers of those than there are adults who are going ten hours a week basically to finish high school diplomas." Remind me to talk about high school graduation requirements for adult ed. Anyhow, "What about we come up with something else?" And so we sat around this table on a bright sunny day and eventually we said, well, "Those kids are concurrently enrolled." Out of that room on that day came the concept of adults and concurrently enrolled high school students. Our conclusion was that concurrently enrolled high school students were more numerous and more needy of our attention than adults who went ten or more hours per week, which did receive a high school income, as opposed to the adult ed income which was lesser. Well, that was great, and to a degree there was growth from that. We served concurrent kids and there was more money than 600-minute students, but it

didn't really take off and replace a lot of high school programs. For a number of years it just kind of sat there, and it was a nice little extra kicker in terms of the income because it was a higher income.

But a number of other things happened: Prop. 13. We had a cap on adult a.d.a. And at the same time we had a cap on adult a.d.a., we had a poor economy and we had more. . . . Because the cycle falls that when the economy is down, enrollment goes up, we had more and more demands on adult education. Adult a.d.a. was capped, but guess what? Concurrent wasn't capped. Oh! Well, let's run the first period ESL class at El Monte high school, have the adult school pay the teacher, report the kids, then they go on to school. We cause concurrence there. You know, a high school kid in a high school program can only get one unit of a.d.a., but if he went on to the adult school, he could earn it by the hour, and, you know, in adult ed you can get five days in a day if a kid goes to school. A day is three hours, you go fifteen hours a day, you can claim all fifteen hours. So this became very attractive. When, in fact, El Monte did that, I was really offended. I

said, "We never created concurrence to run third period algebra at the high school. We created it in order to serve kids at risk and to give the adult school extra money to counsel and to buy their books, which adults did and other kinds of things, and for extra . . . actually extra staff to handle them, because high school kids require a little more supervision than adults do, et cetera, et cetera. And that's really what was in our mind when we did it. It was to assist those high school kids to come to us and make up their graduation requirements and do those things. Prop. 13 comes along and limits what we can do and limits what day schools could do, puts a cap on total adult a.d.a. So the school districts started doing things which created more concurrent enrollment. And as each year went by and more districts did it and they got further from the original concept, that's what created a cap on concurrent and that's really what created what was a very big driver behind the need to reform in the current form of legislation that we just passed, in terms of those three bills. And again to structuring concurrent, and how you can do it and with whom you can do it and to what extent you can

do it, as opposed to. . . . Well, it was becoming obvious that what we were doing was using some concurrent a.d.a. to make up for the loss of income because of the economy and the reluctance of the legislature to fund us. As California slipped from one of the top seven or eight states and put pupil expenditure down to fourteenth, thirteenth or fourteenth in the fifty states, obviously school districts became scrutinized--the rules and regulations for attendance and how to generate money--more closely than they ever had before.

And frankly, this district delayed for a long time our involvement. Part of that was just stubbornness on my part. Our teachers' union in essence said, "You can't put adult education teachers on our campuses doing the same work high school teachers are doing without paying the same salary." I said, "That's outrageous." But eventually Barry Altshule came to me and Barry said, "Tom, look at this." And we ran the numbers. And even though we paid what works out to like $60 or $70 an hour for a senior teacher under contract for instruction, if you took thirty students at $4 and change an hour--and actually I

think it's up to $5 and change an hour on concurrent attendance--so you make $200 an hour. So you pay the teacher $100. So what? You make $100 profit and the school district is able to offer not to lay off teachers and to be able to offer things kids couldn't otherwise get.

Sometimes the things we offered were not the things they couldn't otherwise get, but something else was offered down the line because we underwrote the English teacher or the history teacher or whatever. In fact, we started out underwriting vocational teachers. The attendance wasn't as good, and currently in the last couple years we've been underwriting larger classes with more attendance. It just made sense. We underwrite an English teacher, we know they're going to have thirty-five students, as opposed to a shop teacher that has fifteen students. Now, if the high school wants to turn around and spend their staffing money on a shop teacher for fifteen students, that's fine, because they don't have to pay an English teacher with the thirty-five students that the adult school picks up. So that's the thing we've been doing.

And in all honesty, again as an active agent at the behest of the Department of Education, we got involved, I got personally involved and involved Mike Wada, in the drafting and reaching consensus on the [1992 adult ed] reform bill[s]. And the reform bills are going to cost this district some millions of dollars a year. We were at like 2,700 units of concurrent. The reform bill says that we shall have no more than 10 percent of the 9-12 a.d.a. as concurrent enrollment. That puts our cap at 660, which looks like we lose 2,200 to 2,300 units of concurrent. At roughly $3,000 a unit, that's big money even spread over a three-year period.

WEST: Quite an impact.

JOHNSON: Yes, and Rosemead was at a higher percentage than we were, and some smaller districts around the state were not at the highest percentage of concurrent in the state. By any matter, and even at 2,700, because of our size we're one of the larger ones, but percentage-wise the little districts in Central California, half of their high school a.d.a. was being reported as concurrent.

I think it was one of the high schools in Azusa that got this wonderful idea and they simply reported all their fifth and sixth period classes, not counting the four basic periods, and tried to report all their fifth and sixth period classes as concurrent. The state and their own auditor told them, "No, you really can't do that." And the auditor's exception with us, a lot of it had to do with course titles.

The real issue is that we are really supporting the high schools with our money. You know, we're a K-adult district and our high schools have suffered--all of our schools have suffered--from a lack of money, and all our public enterprises, I guess, waste some money. I'm very upset about that, but I told Dr. [James E.] Johnson three years ago--three or four years ago. . . . I said, "Jim, I am frightened and concerned. I personally, and the adult division, am what stands between this district and bankruptcy. And whenever I replace a high school teacher, you allow the high school principal to go out and hire a teacher with that money instead of saving money and doing something else." And I said, "You know, I cannot guarantee. . . . I

can't even tell you it's likely that the adult division can continue to do this, and I find it very, very worrisome to me personally."

Well, there was another reform thing that went in when Prop. 13 came through. Jean Estes and I were drunk. At three o'clock in the morning he raises up in his bed. . . . We were up there lobbying, trying to keep adult education and survive this mess, and he said, "What we need to do is take adult education money out of the regular K-12 mix and create a separate fund, Fund B of the state school fund, and the money generated by adult education should be expended by adult education." At least part of the books, school district books, there are lots of rules and regulations, if you'll notice in the reform act, about what the district can and cannot charge against the adult education fund and what are legitimate indirect costs, et cetera. El Monte High School District had to turn back to their adult division several millions of dollars, which is how they paid for the business center that they have over there. In fact, when my wife was employed by the El Monte High District, the district accounting office simply took 18 percent

of all income to the adult school as a district cost.

WEST: Wow! [Chuckling]

JOHNSON: Well, some auditor somewhere said, "I think you need to pay that money back. I don't think the district really is entitled to that money." In addition, you have to remember they had been offering first period ESL for years. They also were told they had 600 illegal expulsions in one year. If the district didn't want to serve the kid, they would release them to parents' custody, or some such phrase as that, which meant, "Go away and don't come back." Six hundred illegal expulsions.

So, you see, I am very, very high on the reform acts. They really make sense. Six hundred concurrent a.d.a., six hundred sixty that we're entitled to year after next, is about what we've always done. This system has always had about 1,000 high school kids enrolled in the adult division, but they typically take one or two nights a week of a class or a lab to finish up or catch up or take a class they can't get at the high school or repeat one--they've failed it or whatever--get it out of the way so they can take

band next year or whatever. In fact, there was a survey made when Bob Shilling was still in the district, so that's quite a while back. When they surveyed these graduating seniors, something like 40 percent of them had adult education credit on their transcript, 15 percent of them had ROP credit on their transcript, which says that those two systems are doing [a lot to support] K-12.

I don't know if this really belongs in your physical document or not, but perhaps some reference to Ray Eberhard's taking over the operation after Don McCune and Claude Hansen disappeared. Ray, when he first took over, he'd been there about a month. . . . Because I had known him since he was a counselor in Simi Valley and I knew him. . . . One of Ray and Xavier's major contributions was the S.B. 65 legislation, which is not adult ed, it's dropout [high-risk youth]. But Ray met me at the airport, we went out to his house and we talked nonstop for seven or eight hours, and he took me back to the airport and I went home. One on one. And I reviewed with him all of these things we've talked about, adult education districts.

Another one I didn't tell you about, which if it had been in the Donohoe Act it would be very different and it would have been easily achieved, and probably could be easily achieved today, and that is if you were to do as they do in unification, you guarantee that all employees with tenure, three years employment, you know, in the new . . . create a district.

[Interruption]

[The problem] is that people simply fear for their jobs.

[Interruption]

WEST: Talking about Ray and what you had told him.

JOHNSON: Well, I talked to him about these things. If when they had created the community colleges, if the state had said the community colleges will do adult education, and those people that are employed in K-12 systems doing adult education in those K-12 systems, you know, the a.d.a. will all be paid through the community college, there would not be any more K-12 adult education. Would that be advantageous? Well, you wouldn't hear things like delineation of function. You wouldn't have things like community colleges testifying, "Well, I don't know about this reform education. It

means that they'd be paying more per a.d.a. than we're being paid at the state level for our non. . . . than we're being paid for our non-credit classes," a lot of issues would go away. Would it have been good or not? I don't know. But I went over it with Ray, all those discussions, and at the end of the day we concluded. . . . You know, the two of us were together and I was so convinced I kept repeating it, that the future of K-12 adult education is with K-12 period, and that because the level of concurrent wasn't then what it is now, but it was post Prop. 13 and it was [what was] happening. But I said, "What we really need to do is find ways to integrate our services with the K-12 mission. Adult education in the K-12 has historically in recent years attracted a population . . . students have become younger and younger, while the student population of the community colleges has become older and older. And for a number of reasons, that's the way the world is going, and we really as leaders should try to press for continuing that instead of trying to fight for some kind of status like the colleges or separate status like the voc-ies are trying to

do. The line of least political resistance and the ultimate better service to clientele at a level because. . . . In spite of the fact that a lot of community colleges have made themselves more attractive, the local school districts are a lot better able to attract and serve a lot of people, and do it sometimes cheaper than the colleges. That's really kind of a specious argument. Public systems spend what they get; private individuals spend what they can get and borrow. [Chuckling] As does the federal government. But he agreed with me, I agreed with him, and as I say, six or seven years down the road when there's a whole lot of pressure on us and insistence on corrective legislation for concurrent and caps on concurrent and caps on ROP. . . . Well, basically the state ran out of money and is trying to plug every hole when any kind of a public entity could get money.

WEST: And legislators like Senator [Gary] Hart taking an interest.

JOHNSON: Well, the Department of Finance more so than Hart, because a lot of this stuff was fed by Hart. In fact, on our audits, the Department of Finance is the one that's most aggressive in terms of leaning

on the Department [of Education], saying you really need to get this district and a couple of others. The world is political. I laughed at Don Roth because Don came to work here and he said, "I really like working for public schools because I'll get out of the political arena of private business." [Chuckling] He came back a while later when he became director and apologized to me for his lack of perception.

Anyhow, that brings us really up to the reform legislation, which I'm sure you know a great deal about. You talk about the reform legislation, the person who did a great deal, who got very little recognition in the process because that's his nature, is Michael Twombly.

WEST: Yes, I know Michael.

JOHNSON: And Michael, that's partly his management style. There are other lobbyists who will take a lot of credit for it and make a lot of noise, and associations that take a lot of credit and make a lot of noise, but if you really want to get down to who the prime movers were . . .

[End Tape 2, Side B]

[Begin Tape 3, Side A]

JOHNSON: The real credit for the reform legislation goes to the districts and the individual managers of those districts that were performing at above the ten percent level of concurrent enrollment. Because we consciously made decisions that were in the best interests of the public school adult education population of California, and we made concessions to get what should be a long-term fix, you know, until the kinds of things that happened, and happened before that, destroyed it, which history does that. But for the foreseeable future, the package we have is the best we can get. Hopefully, an increase in the economy would somehow remove the cap, and that may happen.

One of the things that happened was that in that reform of the early fifties, in addition to talking about dog grooming and "Fun with Frosting" and "Walking the Doggie Back Home," and silly course titles, trying to limit course titles, the other thing they tried to limit was hours, and they said nobody, it's still in the Education Code, nobody could be credited with more than fifteen hours of adult attendance in any one week. But you could not. . . .

WEST: No reason?

JOHNSON: Well, it's in the code. But what we did is each year when we got a chance we'd write exceptions in the code and we excepted high school diploma completion, elementary, ESL, vocational. . . . What it gets down to today in our authorized course of studies, there is no program that comes under the fifteen-hour exemption. Each time this district has changed auditors, the auditors come in and say, "What are you doing about the fifteen-hour limit?" And I say, "If you can show me any program we offer which does not fall within the exclusions of the fifteen-hour limit, then I'll keep track of the fifteen-hour limit. Until then, we do not have any reason to track it." Okay?

So it's possible that the same way may work with cap. You know, if times get better we may say, "Well, the cap applies to adult education, with the exception of ESL, you know." The cap applies to adult education with the exception of high school completion, et cetera, et cetera, until we work our way back up to. . . . You know, we may lift the cap by waiving each of the authorized areas one at a time. You know, I'm trying to predict, but that's more probable the direction than just saying, "Gee, we've got money

enough, because. . . ." Well, we never say we have money enough. Right?

WEST: Right.

JOHNSON: So that's kind of the history of funding, that and the parallel federal funds, and you can research those [and find out what you need to know].

WEST: I have several other topics here.

JOHNSON: Well, I've got about ten or fifteen minutes before I've got to go bail out my daughter, so talk fast.

WEST: Okay. Do you think you can talk about apprenticeship programs and say what you want to say about that in that amount of time?

JOHNSON: Sure I can. I became aware of apprenticeship programs, I knew they existed. In fact, we didn't have any apprenticeship programs for a long time, but I had a friend who was a high school graduate in La Puente whose name was Raul Cervantes, who became a leader of the bricklayers' apprentices. Well, it really started with a guy named Leo Garcia. I knew Leo. Leo was hired by the Mexican-American Opportunities Foundation, and his role in the Mexican-American Opportunities Foundation, which operated out of East L.A. and was formed by the guy who is our [U.S.] senator right now for this area, Esteban Torres. He was

one of the founders of the Mexican-American Opportunities Foundation, which was just that, you know, to help Mexican-Americans find better opportunities. And Leo was familiar with organized labor and he had a program within the Mexican-American Opportunities Foundation to explain to kids in East L.A. what they had to do to get into a union and get a union job, particularly in the construction trades. And they not only told the kids what you had to do and explained to them, told them when and how to apply, they also did remedial math and things that would help them get through that.

I met Leo, actually, with Oscar Gallegos in a Los Angeles-operated skill center, which was funded out of MDTA money. Oscar Gallegos ran it and has since retired. Oscar, a character. Anyhow, Oscar is an historical figure in adult vocational education in California and in the Los Angeles Unified School District. His last position I know of was the principal of the East L.A. Occupational Center, right by General Hospital downtown. I'm sure he'll speak kindly of me if you can find him.

Anyhow, Leo left his employment with the Mexican-American Opportunities Foundation and was employed by the Division of Apprenticeship Standards, which is a group and a state commission operated by. . . . Now there's an appointee, who currently is a guy named Gail Jesswein, who used to be the apprenticeship coordinator for the electricians in L.A. City. In his position as a consultant for the Division of Apprenticeship Standards, he met with all the local JACs, Joint Apprenticeship Councils.

A Joint Apprenticeship Council is an entity created for the provision of training for apprentices. A Joint Apprenticeship Council consists of equal members representing employers and an equal number of members representing the union. And the two of them together, typically two of them together, will hire a Joint Apprenticeship Council coordinator. And the Joint Apprenticeship Council does a number of things. They try to promote to get employers to join and to be part of the program and be union employers. They lean on employers to have an apprentice not just continue to do menial tasks but do tasks of increasing responsibility, so that they in fact

are working towards being journey people. They keep track of the hours the apprentice works, and so many hours and then you're promoted to another level. They also get involved with disciplining an apprentice. An apprentice shows up on the job unfit to work, they report it to the Apprenticeship Council and to the coordinator, and he calls the kid in, in front of the JAC, and the JAC sits down, "Now, son, what did you do? You screwed up. You know, you didn't come to work, didn't sign in, you've been smoking pot," whatever, and they discipline them. And they promote them. And they hold annual graduations.

The first time I met Ted Kimbrough, he was a counselor for. . . . He was a counselor in the L.A. Unified Adult School and he was sent out to meet with the JAC, and the JAC had asked me to meet with them about the possibility of transferring to Hacienda-La Puente, and Ted and I were there. That's the first time I met Ted. Ted is now superintendent of schools in Chicago.

So the original law that existed when I took this job thirty-eight years ago, or thirty-seven years ago, said that you could report the attendance of apprentices. . . . If you got a

signed agreement with the JAC, you could report the attendance of apprentices as adult education. And if that wasn't enough money to run that program, that school district could level a permissive tax to make up the difference. The same thing was true in the area of child care and children's centers. If the school district felt you wanted a children's center and had a lot of children of local parents, you could levy a tax against your property in the school district and you could do it. Well, Prop. 13 wiped that all out.

But Tom Johnson wiped out the apprenticeship tax long before that. Because what was happening, some school districts, forever to be deemed nameless, were operated by L.A. Unified School District, and the L.A. Community College District, were doing apprenticeship programs, reporting them to the state, and so the apprentices came in on Wednesday night for what's called "related and some supplemental instruction." That's what the role of the school district is, related and supplemental instruction, learning how to read blueprints, learning how to do the other things that you don't learn how to do out on the job

necessarily. I've forgotten what the dollars are, but the timing was you've got fifteen students that come in on Wednesday night for three hours. The three hours generated enough money. . . . Well, it generated enough money to pay the teacher. What they were doing is they were reporting Monday and Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, if the guy was working on the job. They pulled the apprenticeship records and they showed those as attendance and they reported three hours for each of those days as work experience, so the guy went to class three hours a day, one night a week. Now, why they didn't double up on Wednesday, but they were reporting fifteen hours a week for a working apprentice. One apprentice for his fifteen hours a week was enough to pay his teacher. The other fourteen were pure profit. They were not telling the apprenticeship councils. The apprenticeship councils, "This is great, we've got this relationship with you. We will pay your teacher and we'll buy you some supplies," and they were pocketing money by the bushel.

So Leo became coordinator, working out of the San Diego office. I said, "Leo, this is so much bullshit. Districts are really ripping off the

state and ripping off the apprenticeship programming." Jerry Asher, who had been a teacher in this district and was a teacher at Rio Hondo, became the assistant to Joe Montoya when Joe was in the assembly. And I had known Jerry because he and I had fought over my firing, like disciplining union teachers being involved in such things, so I knew Joe and I know Jerry.

So I talked to Joe and Jerry about it and Joe said, "Why don't you guys go in the back room and write a bill that will fix this, this rip-off." And we were sitting in the back room and we were writing this bill, and Joe walked through and I'm trying to explain to him about school financing. This was at a point which was established . . . twenty years old or so. So I explained to him that based on the difference in wealth of the district that if there were three K-12 districts in a row and every one of them had a different revenue limit. And you'd have three community colleges in a row, and every one of them would have a different revenue limit, every three adult schools, and community colleges, and ROPs. I said, "Really, the smart Joint Apprenticeship Councils would go shopping." Because the

authorization in the Ed Code is any school district--actually, any local education agency.

The two largest, three largest apprenticeship programs in California are in this order: Hacienda-La Puente, L.A. Unified, and L.A. County ROP. Anyhow, Joe said, "You know. . . ." Joe is smart, smart. But he looked down and he said, "You know, that's too complex for me." And he said, "Make it all the same dollars, no matter where they go." So we wrote the bill at $2.49 an hour, except now it's something like $5.05 or $4.05. Sharon can tell you the exact rate. But he said, "Make it all the same amount of money, no matter with what local education agency they have a cooperative program."

The thing is that in order for the money to go to the JAC, it has to go through a local education agency. Sometimes the union folks get real smart and say, "Why can't this money just come directly to JAC from the state and not screw around with the school district?" The reason it does is quite simply over a period of time that we're not here to rip you off, we're not here to do anything, we're here to see justice. Whatever money comes from the state, we take 10 percent and

give you the rest of it. Then you're to operate apprenticeship programs with it, not to run the union or those things, but to deliver apprenticeship training. Any apprenticeship training program of any value cannot operate on the state support, even at $4 a student hour. All of the union, all of the apprenticeship programs, the quality ones, and particularly those with a lot of technical stuff involved--anything from glazing to refrigeration and electrical and those things--they have an apprenticeship training fund which is based on cents per hour of journey people, sometimes apprentices as well, and sometimes matching contributions, 8 cents an employee hour and 8 cents from the employer per hour for the apprenticeship fund. That is still the major source of apprenticeship training fund, but the Montoya money, as it has come to be called, has been a great supplement and it helped apprenticeship programs get started.

Unfortunately, in this district there was a tremendous boo-boo in this office and the district business office, that when a cap was imposed the district continued to report all the hours and pay all the hours until we paid out in excess of $4

million more than we received from the state. That has produced something of a crisis, to say the least. And we're still dealing with it. In fact, at the last regular board meeting for the contract, with the largest of the apprenticeship programs to create a system of setting aside the debt so we could go on, and we'll continue to pay them some money as we get it in and we'll work off the debt some way. But because we put a freeze on it over a year ago, and they've had zip, zero, zilch--even the ones we owed money to--and was caught up in the fact that Mr. [John] Kramar [Assistant Superintendent, Business] basically was. . . .

Mr. Kramar's department was the source of the problem--not that the adult school wasn't part of it--but the major source of the problem. We didn't write the checks, they did. And he was the acting superintendent at the time we discovered the problem. He wasn't anxious to take it to the board. It took him a year from the time we discovered it to get to the board. Jim came back in thirty days or whatever, complicated things. I explained it to him, he was really distressed, he left. Then we had Kramar again, and it took me

sixty days to explain it to Jessie [Kobayashi, Interim Superintendent]. The day she finally understood it, she put her head on her desk and just sat there for ten minutes. (whispering) "You mean we gave away $4 million?" "Yeah." "And we only had to cut $2 million out of the budget and we gave away $4 million?" "Yeah." "Can we get it back?" "Not likely. At least not this year." Anyhow, that's the apprenticeship program.

There is change coming, we've had a lot of stuff about their movement, and the original law said that if they moved from community college . . . The program is run through the Superintendent of Public Instruction, which would be ROPs and adult schools, the money would follow. And the community colleges have played with that legislation. A lot of people have played with that legislation. The actual fact is that community colleges don't have a cap and adult schools do. And one of the really weird things is that the cap that does exist exists by district and not by trade. So we've got the plasterers, the plasterers did 20,000 hours. We're the ones that have determined that of the money we get from

the state, the plasterers are 20,000 and a certain percentage of all the a.d.a. we reported or a percentage of what we get paid for, and therefore we get this much money. There is a current move for the cap to apply trade by trade, actually union jurisdiction by union jurisdiction, and not the school district. Because right now half of their programs could leave and we still have more a.d.a. to report than the state is going to pay us for. It is very much a screwed-up mess. If you want more details on that, you need to see Lynda [Appleton]. It's really kind of a Hacienda-La Puente only problem.

WEST: This concludes the second interview with Tom Johnson on February 24, 1993. This interview was done as a part of the California Adult Education Oral History Project.

[Session 3, March 17, 1993]

[Continue Tape 3, Side A]

WEST: This is Linda West interviewing Tom Johnson. This is the third interview, continuing on March 17, 1993.

JOHNSON: We'll start with the Vocational Education Act [VEA] of 1963, as amended in 1964. The State of California had submitted a plan, and the first allocation of monies went for the '64-65 school year in California. Federal money and the War on Poverty and those things were so new that the school district, the old high school district, had very low experience in making applications. So Ted Zimmerman, who was the assistant principal, who had really had great hopes for vocational things, and I discouraged him because of capital outlay and space requirements since the program was largely at night and in high schools . . . . Ted and I got excited about making an application for Vocational Education Act monies, which is now in recent years named Carl Perkins for a member of

the congress. We wrote the application to be effective July 1, 1964, and we were so proud of it--we mailed it in to Sacramento--that we convinced Superintendent Glen Wilson and the school board to lease the building which is now the welding building. Then we went ahead and started the program and did not get funded. We discovered in October or so that we weren't funded. Phil Soto was the assemblyman from this area, and Phil Soto talked to Wesley [P.] Smith, Wes Smith, who was the State Director of Voc Ed. We finally got a phone call from Smith that said, "Get him out of my office, you're funded," and so we were funded.

We had already started Valley Vocational Center in that one building, and we had welding and PBX and data processing and upholstery, all in the same building--if you can believe the fire hazard. For the first six weeks, we thought we'd made a terrible disaster, and after the first six weeks, we had so many students we didn't know what to do. The original plan again was to take nonconforming high school kids . . . . And we had many, many nonconforming high school kids who literally were down here at five o'clock in the

morning sitting on the curb because they had no place else to go and we had to run them away at night when we locked up. We had body and fender here, too--I mean, I assume we had it, we had it out back--so the total thing operated in one building. And none of the buildings that are there now were there. We had a mud puddle in the back, we put in gravel and parked on it--the City of Industry didn't know. By mid-year, we had such heavy demand for students that we rented the building on this side of the street, the court school building, and had the building that is now the JTPA, placement and the cosmetology buildings built for the district.

But it was project application in those days, so a few programs were funded by project application. There wasn't much money, but again there was no limit on adult ed, so whatever we had for students and hopefully generate enough money to run the classes, we could go whatever the demand was.

Gradually, each time the federal congress reenacted the Vocational Education Act of 1963, as amended--and if you look in the books there's amendments in 64 and 68--they changed the

patterns. One of the things that they did is they started assigning priorities. Well, interestingly enough, the open entry/open exit evolved very quickly. You know, we didn't set out to do open entry/open exit by any great scheme. We simply had classes and rented buildings and teachers, and as students were to drop, the teachers would say, "I'll accept new students," and students would come in and you would enroll the students. So, again, gradually over a period of several years, we got around to understanding that what we were doing was open entry/open exit, but started out just at first trying to make it so teachers could accommodate incoming students. Once we discovered what we were doing, then we really gave it some spin in terms of designing things in a fashion that would do that.

But the VEA funding . . . Well, one of the things we did with open entry/open exit became so attractive--again, we were smothered with students--and what we found was that the students with whom we were not successful with open entry/open exit, the students who couldn't handle individualized progress at your own speed and couldn't work with the teachers when the

teachers--knowingly they would acknowledge it--were handicapped. And we were getting them in such numbers that we really didn't know what to do, and a group of managers and I set out to discover what was appropriate vocational education for handicapped. It sounded like to us a very profound question, and we were not familiar with the literature.

You know, we had visited the California Youth Authority, Youth Training School, YTS, in the Ontario area, Chino, when we first started vocational classes. Because, really, daytime vocational schools, other than private ones, the only one that was really operational in the area were some in the state prisons. So we looked at a lot of those as we created ours. We have always had in our minds the whole alternative ed serving the nonconforming kids along with adults. So the result of the investigation was simplistic. The most effective form of training of most handicapped is done in a sheltered workshop, and there are technical differences between a sheltered workshop, activity centers, et cetera, et cetera, defined primarily in federal law in the Department of Labor, and to a lesser extent under

California law, but in a structured work for pay under the federal regulations that allow you to pay less than minimum wage, and all the various combinations of assembly line in house and outside work in crews and enclaves, with partnering, with sending a non-handicapped person as a coach for the handicapped person and have him stay with him however long is necessary for a person to be able to function on the job.

We began very early on to bring in translators for the deaf. Tremendous stuff. No longer true, but in those days the deaf, many, many deaf were shut up at home. Today there's kind of a bounty on them in terms of school districts, but we found many people and we began to bring in translators for the deaf.

Again, we were inundated at one point, and I think I have this in earlier notes, we had 1,700 active Department of Rehabilitation referrals, and it changed the whole structure of the State Department of Rehabilitation. Because before that they dealt exclusively with private vocational schools that were not public ed programs. Now they contract with ROPs and adult schools.

At one point, the Department of Rehabilitation brought their regional managers and executives down here and we met in the back of the cosmetology building in a lecture room for two days, and I talked nonstop on how school finance is put together and what the Department of Rehab manager could say to a local school, "If I generate so many bodies for you, this is what happens for you and this is what happens for me." And I think I told you a little bit about that.

WEST: Right, I think you mentioned that.

JOHNSON: But one of the real kudos, I think, belongs to the organization [Valley Vocational Center]. When the feds decided that they were going to give the handicapped priority to the Vocational Education Act monies, they sent a team to Hacienda-La Puente and they spent a week in Valley Vocational Center, three people, and the original guidelines for what was handicapped and what were qualifying service for handicapped were modeled exactly on what we were doing here on Proctor. It was shortly after that that we received an award from the U.S. Office of Education. They had three different categories of manpower, and one is on my office wall or in my conference room. I think that when

[Robert] Benbow was bragging a couple years ago, a year ago, about his national award [U.S. Secretary's Award for Outstanding Adult Education Program, 1990], I sent him a photocopy of it. They actually sent a team out from D.C. to present it to us then. But again, things were less sophisticated and we made less noise. And, you know, the U.S. office was less of an entity, and the California Department of Education had less of a commitment to adult ed. All those things have grown.

Anyhow, the priorities in vocational education have continued, and the interesting thing is that in the current year of funding under the Vocational Education Act, there is a separate amount of funding for 9-12 and a separate amount of money for adult, and the adult can be accessed by either adult schools or by . . .

There's also that split between community college adult schools and ROPs. ROPs are considered a single entity because they are funded through State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Once the money is split between the chancellor's office and state superintendent, then there is an amount of money for kids in high

school and an amount of money for adults, and that amount of money is not humongous. It's on the order of $7 million.

WEST: Seven million or seventy?

JOHNSON: Seven million. This district gets $2.2 million of it, L.A. Unified ROP and Adult School together get probably $4 million, and the rest of it is divided through the rest of the state. But as you can see, about $6 million is going to us. Only L.A. Unified gets more money than we do. And again, their program is forty times larger than ours, not twice as large.

Currently this is driven by the count, just head count of financially disadvantaged students enrolled in adult ed--not completed, not hours of attendance, just enrolled. And there have been some big battles over . . . Some people say, "Well, all my ESL students are pre-vocational and they should count." Well, there are some political battles about this, would take hours to explain. Currently the U.S. Office of Education is very unhappy with California, and specifically California managers, over how the money has been divided between community colleges, between the

chancellor's office and state superintendent's office . . .

[End Tape 3, Side A]

[Begin Tape 3, Side B]

JOHNSON: Anyway, I was trying to remember at some point on the tape who the Los Angeles County consultant, the County Superintendent of Schools consultant for adult education, for vocational education was, and that was a fellow named Lee Ralston, and he was national head of the Association of Vocational Educators. He came out with a college class he was teaching and said this idea has been around for years, about starting these kinds of school district vocational centers. And they're disasters, and I'm glad that instead of talking somebody is trying it so we can really observe the failure of this organization and put that to rest. Lee hired my former assistant at the vocational center, a fellow named Manuel Jiminez who created a number of political problems when Lee finally retired.

I talked to you earlier about night high school. In fact, one of the professors at the University of Colorado said California adult education was just night high school. In the last

six months, when I went out to speak to staff about problems, particularly publicity about the audits, I set appointments for day and evening, late afternoon at each campus, and evening on each campus. Today, Hacienda-La Puente, probably on the order of 5 percent, 7 percent, of the student attendance teacher hours assigned are evening hours.

WEST: Mostly day students?

JOHNSON: It's practically all day. We over-generate 10 percent of a.d.a. in terms of our cap. I believe we can abolish night programs entirely and still attain our cap. The question that I can't answer, because much of the history of the organization has been battling staff to keep them from operating the program at their convenience rather than the students' convenience, their desire to screen students, their desire to do a lot of things are basically, you know, staff desires for their own comfort and not . . . And I'm wondering if that has crept in or if in fact public interest really is . . . You know, among the subjects we offer, is the interest and availability really [in the] day [program]?

WEST: But maybe part of it is our people that are on the programs, like JTPA and GAIN and . . .

JOHNSON: All of that's a part of it, but those are still not huge numbers. Even though half of my money is soft money, the numbers of rehab students, GAIN students, WIN students, even the total are a small portion of the program. So it's just an interesting phenomenon that I think needs to be watched and scrutinized. Jail program. Did I do a history of jail programs?

WEST: We have not talked about it yet.

JOHNSON: Okay, in the . . . God, you'll have to go back and look up dates, but when my office was on Proctor on this side of the street, a man named Nielson--I don't know his first name--was a civilian employee of the county sheriff, concerned about inmate welfare, came to me. He came to me because they knew of some inmates who had been released from county probation and they had done extremely well in the open entry and in the environment of the vocational center, which was atypical from schools.

[Interruption]

WEST: So Nielson knew of at least one success story, so he came to me and wanted to know--he's Danish by

birth, incidentally--wanted to know what we could do about providing training for inmates at Sybil Brand Institute. I said, "You know, that's out of my district, and I really don't see any way we can be involved." But he was insistent and persistent, and finally I said okay.

So I dug out the Ed Codes and I started researching the Ed Codes and I found several things in there. One is that there was separate money, different from adult education a.d.a., available for the education of inmates. Virtually no school district or county superintendent was accessing that money. The possibility sat in the Ed Code. And then it said the sheriff can contract with any school district, essentially a local education . . . school district or county superintendent for instruction for inmates. The reason that Mr. Nielson was so persistent was that the county sheriff was faced with some class action suits over their failure to provide instruction as is provided for again in the California Penal Code, so they were motivated to find some way to have education and I was motivated to try to help him. And after I researched the code, I wrote a contract between

the school district and the sheriff to do education at Sybil Brand. Okay, that was the mechanical, the funding side of it, okay?

The implementation of it was very different. The phrase I have used, you may not want to use it in print but it really describes the process . . . . Nielson got me to say we could do it and I said we could do it, and then we met with the sheriff's personnel manager at Sybil Brand, and deputies and the captain in charge and all that, and yes, yes, yes, they wanted to do it. "Okay, we'll start now." "No, we can't do it right now." I call it the reluctant virgin behavior: "I want to, I want to." "We're going to do it." "No, we can't do it now." [chuckling]

So this went on for some period of time, and reaching the end of the school year. You know, again, I'm sure you'll find records of when it was, but I made the sheriff's personnel, the woman in charge at Sybil Brand two proposals: come in the summer and write a pilot program, no commitment to anybody, just experiment, and we're not going to spend any money. I'm sure I can find teacher volunteers and we'll try something, okay? All you've got to do is let them in and have

access to the inmates. I went out and pointed my finger at four or five professional staff members, and, in fact, I said, "I'll pay your salary, but they don't need to know that, you're a volunteer," and I appointed Barbara Zunich and Laurel Adler and Nancy Donahue, and probably a couple other people whose names escape me at the moment. They went to Sybil Brand and they taught basic education to selected inmates for comparable to a district summer school length of time, number of hours. And I told the management of the prison when we went in, I said, "We're going to give a pre-test and a post-test." And I said, "I want you to know"--I don't know, it was six weeks or whatever the length of time was--"that the rules for giving the test"--probably CAT . . . .

WEST: Probably what?

JOHNSON: California Achievement Test [CAT]. Because we're looking at elementary grade levels. I said the closeness in time in which we give the test really invalidates the scores, and one would expect an increase in scores just from having taken the test. Being familiar with it and the types of questions, even though you use a different form. If you give the students this test one week and

give them the same test the next week with no instruction, you'll get an increase in scores. In order for the scores to be valid and reliable, there needs to be a period of time expired and is greater than the length of time in summer school. "But," I said, "we will get an increase in grade level achievement, and," I said, "you can tell anybody you want to." In spite of the lecture, you know, of telling him it was phony, we went ahead and performed the activity. And guess what? There was remarkable improvement.

WEST: Everybody went up. [Chuckling]

JOHNSON: Well, not only did we get the halo effect of repeating the test, but we actually taught to the test. And with absolutely a straight face for years and years and years, and including when they contacted the power in the sheriff's department to start the program, they talked about this wonderful data. [Laughter] You know, if you just put it in print, it becomes very important. So, anyhow, that was what really caused us to do it.

So we went ahead and scheduled the classes, and I had teachers to teach them, and went on our merry way. I also discovered a number of things about what had happened in the past with classes

that the sheriff had tried. And typically they'd get some spirited volunteer that would come in. Someone in the sheriff's department would contact somebody in the L.A. School District or the community college district to come in and do classes, and the classes would fail in some period of time, depending on how effective the teacher was or how much the institutional . . . how great the institutional obstacles were. And the classes would die and that was the end of that and they drifted on.

The term I used . . . . Well, when we took over management of the classes whenever a class failed, we'd do an autopsy. Well, one of the ways you rate hospitals is by the percentage of autopsies performed, because, you know, good practicing medical practitioners have got to confirm their diagnosis.

WEST: That's right.

JOHNSON: So it muddled on for a period of time. Mrs. [Ernestine, "Ernie"] Schneulle was placed under incredible political pressure over some early emerging issues about Latinos in school, et cetera, and it was at the point of unification--this would have been about '71--I said to Dr.

Wilson, who was the superintendent at that point . . . . I needed somebody to go down to Sybil Brand and take over that organized instruction, because we had enough classes. I needed somebody to do the autopsies and somebody to manage the teachers and have the ongoing relationship with sheriff personnel. And he allowed me to do that and Ernie has fulfilled that position ever since. She began to offer some classes at some of the other jails, and I'm really kind of fuzzy which ones, and I'm sure you'll interview her as to what other sites.

But interestingly enough, the program that existed when I started this operation in the fifties, the county sheriff had instruction, regular instruction, had one site and one site only, and that's Pitchess Honor Rancho, which was started in '39 or so. It was a national model of honor ranches, a low security facility for county jail inmates where they did productive work. They raised animals and raised vegetables, those kinds of things. Kind of the county poor farm idea, except that it was done with inmates.

They had a training program through the William S. Hart High School District, and some

strange things happened. The contract was that the sheriff paid William S. Hart the cost of the program plus an administrative fee. You have to remember that in the thirties and the forties, outside the war years, there was a surplus of teachers. There were all kinds of regulations in those days that married women couldn't work. You know, single women could work, married women couldn't. If you hired as a teacher in Omaha, Nebraska, you could only be a teacher in a district if you subbed for the district for three years and that sort of thing.

William S. Hart had a lot of oil wells and very few children, and thus was a very high wealth district by the measure of wealth. The wealth of a school district is the assessed value of a school district divided by the pupils to be served. That's back when local taxes in the school district drove the [funding formula]. And, you know, local school boards assessed a levy against the property of the district and that was your funding source. And that's the way it still is in many states. In California the state portion of that has continually grown.

Anyhow, William S. Hart had a contract. They provided instruction for the inmates at Wayside Honor Rancho. A lot of that instruction was arts and crafts and kind of junky stuff. Almost every prison makes little lamps made to look like wagons that went across the country, you see them all over.

WEST: Covered wagons? Conestoga wagons?

JOHNSON: Yes, that type of wagon made into a lamp is very common. You see them all over. Most of those that you see are made in prisons. So they had hobby shop and I think they had some furniture repair and probably some ESL and some high school completion, GED for sure. It was called Golden Oaks Adult School, and that was larger than the William S. Hart regular adult ed program. But William S. Hart had this interesting thing that if you were hired in the district as a high school teacher, you first had to work in the contract classes in the jails. Needless to say, it was a great screening device. They didn't get a lot of disciplinary weaklings coming through the system and then going to teach in the high schools. But it also built a very strong proprietary interest

on the part of William S. Hart in the jail instruction.

But remember what I said earlier about the separate pool of money that had never been accessed? The sheriff was just coughing up out of county general funds sufficient money to pay the cost of that program. So the sheriff's personnel--inmate welfare personnel are the ones who deal with us--put together a proposal and they called together the school people in Antelope Valley, because Antelope Valley had another GED program in a small jail out there at Mira Loma, and the personnel from William S. Hart, and of course us from Hacienda-La Puente, and there may have been some others, but those were the three players that actually had a program they were operating for the county. And what they said was, "We want to have a single provider of educational services in the county. We want somebody in the jail that can, you know, get college classes or, you know, they can broker those things through. We want educational experts to manage the educational programs and we want your districts to submit proposals of on what basis you will provide education for the jails of Los Angeles County.

The only proposal they received was the one authored by Mrs. Schneulle. Neither of the other two even submitted a proposal; they didn't have the support or the interest or whatever.

There were several people who lost their jobs or jobs were displaced. In the main, we tried to hire folks that had been working for those two districts to work for us, but there were a couple of district people that were doing things part-time, like administering GED tests, and they had a little private, part-time deal going that they controlled completely about when they worked and how they worked and what the rules were for working, who hung around for a number of years disgruntled. Of course, that's all again ancient history. But from that point on, you know, we've had a sole proprietorship.

A funny story. A lady walks in one day. She says, "I have a federal grant to do education [in L.A. County jails] in Los Angeles." "That's interesting." She says, "Well, you know, I filled out this federal grant application, and since there is no instruction in the county jails in Los Angeles, and Dr. Stephanie Grant from the U.S. Office of Education will begin a program for

education of county jail inmates." "That's nice." "So you're really not interested?" "What do you mean we're not interested? We have a full-blown program, large staff, and we're doing all this stuff." What had happened is she had talked to some captain out in some outlying sheriff's station, and based on premises that he gave her and numbers he gave her, she submitted an application and the fed funded it. You know, it tells you something about the process of some of these applications and proposals. I don't know what she ever did with the grant or how it was ever done. You know, the shock to her and us was so great that we never stopped to negotiate anything out in order to let her use her grant money. So what we have now is an ongoing contract, and each year we do a revised work plan which becomes the new plan, and we have the district fiddle with the funding of the program from the state and with the rules and regulations by which it's done. Mrs. Schneulle in the program has taken a leadership role, in terms of creating statewide organizations and joining national organizations. See, by it's very nature, inmate education is the most isolating kind of work that

educators do, and so she has worked to excess in the business of building networks and relationships among educators of inmates nationwide. That program currently is facing major problems in terms of plant closures.

One of the other characteristics the district did early on when we started hiring staff, we developed a little disclaimer that anybody who is hired directly into corrections and has not worked in a district, not acquired tenure job rights for the district, have tenure and seniority and job rights only within the terms of employment under that contract. The fear of the district would be that at some point the sheriff would politically find it advantageous to go with some other organization. That's their privilege, they can do that any time they want to, and it would be a major disaster and embarrassment to suddenly discover that we have 100 or 110 certificated, tenured employees whose credentials don't very well match what we're doing in other areas, and all kinds of problems, and just the issue of . . . . So we tried to maintain there's no bumping and there's no involvement. The legal

basis for that is not super solid, but from just a common sense standpoint, it's almost absolute.

A couple other characteristics of that program. One is that the jailer always wants potatoes peeled and the walls painted and the sheets washed and the work of the grounds kept, the work of the prison done, and they love to have it done, quote, under education, unquote, because it costs them less money. Educators per se want to try to do something to increase the knowledge or skills of the student, and those are kind of diametrically opposed goals and need to be negotiated out.

In the situation where we are, we call it third-party educators, inmates are one party and the jailers are the other party and the educators are the third party. The third party, while we might appear to be powerless under the contract, we're really more powerful than when you only have two parties, the jailers and the inmates. In the state prison system, the teachers are civil servants and report to the warden of the prison. And if there is an emergency, they are on the line along with the uniformed personnel maintaining order, doing whatever has to be done to do

business with the prison. With a third party, our teachers go home, stay outside, provide services or whatever if there's a problem in the jails. We get annual lessons on hostage . . . . But you understand the difference in dynamics?

WEST: Yes.

JOHNSON: The inmates know, just like you can tell boys from girls, they know instantly if the educators are third-party educators or if they're prison employees. Then you get the business of bringing in people who have not been indoctrinated into the jailers' protocol and all these things about not bringing things in to prisoners, not carrying messages, not talking about your personal problems, affairs, not revealing your home address, and never giving anybody the key. And that will over a period of time produce some problems in terms of that dynamic. The other is really that the managers have to be very, very skillful in terms of the interest of the inmate as opposed to the interest of the jailer. And the lowliest of the low, a new sworn-in deputy can bring the whole system to a screeching halt for two or three teachers if they simply decide to exercise their authority. There has been a

gradual increase in the respect of educators by the jail staff and by actual planning and new facilities for classrooms and such.

One of the funniest stories is the captain of Wayside was a very senior captain in the sheriff's department. He had been placed at Wayside because he had become less than effective as a street cop or at managing . . . . So they placed him up there, and he had converted his private offices. It looked like the entrance to a high-priced bordello and he very much had life his own way. And the first time Ernie showed up, he wasn't going to let her on the premises. He didn't want that damn woman there, period. [Laughter] But like many other things, he's history. So those are the topics I know we left out.

WEST: Independent study.

JOHNSON: Independent study, big issue. Part of that is blowing my own horn, I guess, but an independent study law was passed for school districts and it was passed for K-12. There was a caveat in there that said that it was available only to schools that fell under attendance category something and something and that attendance categories had to do with high schools, K-12. I wrote a five-page

analysis and sent it to Xavier Del Buono and suggested that in fact we could, by following this logical train, that we could offer independent study for adults. We would have to report it as high school and high school a.d.a. In several other things I've sent to the State Department in suggestions and heard nothing back, later I discover they're handing them out as guidelines for other people to ask the same questions. And that was really true years ago on driver education and training for adults. You know, I tried to find a handbook, couldn't find it, so I wrote it up and said this is what I want to do, and never heard back and just went ahead and did it, and later found, you know, one of the principals showed me a copy of my letter. The state was mailing it out as the guideline for how to do that. And essentially that's what happened.

About four years later or five years later, school districts began to educate adults under independent study by enrolling them as high school students. There's an obscure passage in the state school attendance accounting manual that there is an attorney general's ruling of 1928, and it said, "May a high school graduate return to high school

for apportionment?" And the state attorney general said, "Yes, as long as they continue to take high school level classes, but they cannot take post-high school," which was a term in those days for college level course. That still stands. Now, you understand it doesn't take a great deal to change an attorney general's opinion, particularly one that old, but it's never been changed. It's still in the book. So any non-high school graduate can without a challenge return to high school as long as the high school is willing to accept them. And under that term, any adult can return to any high school, as long as you're willing to take high school courses.

So, with that background, school districts began to offer independent study for adults. So you had to go through the motions of making it fall within the regulations for K-12. One of the major constraints would be that to graduate as an independent study student from a high school, you have to meet the high school graduation requirements, and there are certain things . . . . There are differences between adult school graduation requirements and high school, the largest of which is being that adult schools don't

offer or require P.E. So you get around that by enrolling in high school during the period of time they take the classes, then they transfer to the adult school and graduate with an adult school diploma. So as that became a common practice, and as time became tougher and tougher, eventually the state stepped in and Hart--what's his name--Gary, he authored legislation to reform this because no one was concerned that adult schools were doing a good job and being able to offer increased services by this. And in fact, you know, I used to tell people, I'd say, when we were first starting learning laboratories, which is a whole other story, we'd say, "Well, we're not a correspondence school. You can't take the work home." What we really were saying is, "We collect apportionment based on the contact of your derriere to a seat. We're doing seat time attendance and we're not authorized to do anything else." So magic is magic, you know. Year after year, with the Hart reform and all that, adult schools may now instruct adults under the adult education, the adult high school, and take apportionment for it and do it by independent study.

But there's a whole process in there from where we first started out pretending that they were high school students going through a reform deal that Hart wrote that for a period of time if they have not been interrupted you could continue to do this, if they had been enrolled every semester and so forth, you could carry this on. And by a percentage, it declined down, and the amount of money paid, see, because you create high school students, you're getting a revenue limit of $3,000, which is virtually double the $1,500 of adult education revenue money. So, in the process of stepping it down to where you can do it, and by adding it to the district cap, we actually increased the districts a little bit, and we do now have a fully authorized independent study for adults. But there were a lot of investigations and accusations and recriminations, but it has made a major contribution because today a busy adult who is capable of doing a self-directed work can walk right through.

High school graduation. In the fifties, high school graduation was driven mostly by people who had . . . veterans who had stopped high school to join the army or had dropped out of high school

and joined the army. Now they were coming back and didn't have high school diplomas as the American economy exploded trying to meet all the unmet demand for consumer products. You know, from 1945 to 1948, most American car manufacturers built the same car because they could sell them as quickly as they could make them and they had price controls on them. The same way with refrigerators and washing machines and all these people coming home and starting new homes and new families, you know. But major corporations wanted high school diplomas. That was a way to screen people, so there was an explosion in adults wanting high school diplomas.

And one of the problems of managing a high school diploma program was adults would shop. Just as students would shop for a college or a university, they would shop for an adult school. And one of the major problems, Los Angeles Unified did several things. Los Angeles Unified said if you took [three] classes, U.S. history, two semesters, American government one semester, fifteen credits, Carnegie units. Not quite Carnegie units, but fifteen semester [periods of credits].

[End Tape 3, Side B]

[Begin Tape 4, Side A]

JOHNSON: Please understand that adult schools are managed by superintendents and administrative staff who are really K-12 people, and adult education is an afterthought or an odd beast, and so high school diplomas are very protected in that setting and have great feeling, et cetera. So people trying to work with adults trying to finish high school diplomas tend to want to be more liberal and find ways to measure knowledge and skills and not be so concerned about actual seat time and course work. And as I say, the liberal end of the spectrum was Los Angeles Unified. If you took two semesters of U.S. history and one semester of American government, passed the GED and had some work experience, you could be a high school graduate--in essence, fifteen units and a GED. And when they got around to work experience, they were getting so exotic that if a housewife were to have her physician or her rabbi or her priest or whatever fill out a letter to the school that said she was a good homemaker and a successful homemaker, that counted for work experience. I'm not trying to make a case that that's not work

experience, but it's not the kind of structured, paid experience that most organizations look at in terms of granting credit. Anyhow, first started out the superintendent didn't want to give GED credit as we set up our graduation standards in the fifties.

An experience that I had, that I heard repeated by other schools over the years for twenty-five years, a superintendent got a letter. A young, former high school student from Puente High School was in the Marines, and this student had passed the GED test. But in order to be put into this advanced training program in the Marine Corps, he had to have a high school diploma. So the Marine Corps wrote us a letter requesting that the school district, on the basis of his GED and his prior schooling with the district, to issue him a high school diploma. And the superintendent said, "We aren't going to do that. GED is not a diploma and we will not issue a diploma." California was in fact the last state in the nation for the state to issue a diploma based on GED, which we now do. In fact, everything that goes around comes around: Right now the GED people are trying to get the state from stopping

issuing a diploma. [Chuckling] And they're threatening school districts who are giving credit for it.

Anyhow, the standard of the world became GED was worth eighty credits out of one hundred sixty to graduate from high school, and then you had to have the minimum. In our district we've always had the adult take the minimum required subjects, and GED and work experience would count for up to half of the graduation from all the areas of elective credit. There have been some moves over the years to do subject level testing, challenging courses. I will take the history [test] and prove that I'm competent in history. I will prove I'm competent in English by passing an English test at the twelfth-grade level. We have done that rarely in this district; it's not widely done in public schools in California.

WEST: Next topic?

JOHNSON: Well, when we went through there I had another topic and I've lost it for a moment.

WEST: Amnesty and our response, Hacienda-La Puente's response to the amnesty crisis. That's next on the list.

JOHNSON: Well, again, my memory was that I played hero and I was right. [Chuckling] And how much of that is personality, but it's interesting that I was privileged to be among the first groups called together representing education, welfare, and health when California looked at its allotment of amnesty money and tried to decide who was entitled to what, who was going to be . . . . Who was obviously going to be providing services. We were told then there was a statutory reserve of at least 10 percent for education. The state could not give less than 10 percent for education; you'd get more if you chose to. And I counted my fingers and toes and I looked at the data that was released and I said, "We can do it on 10 percent." And everybody ignored me. And basically that's the decision that was reached, in terms of education share. And it might not have been enough had not the fed decided on the amnesty act that if a student attended forty hours of schooling in ESL, particularly if ESL had a citizenship content, that that was all that was required to complete the education segment of amnesty. But two things happened. One is that the people knew about the forty hours, and many

folks attended their forty hours, held out their hand and wanted their certificate that they had attended for forty hours. The other is that what I sensed by the seat of the pants, in terms of just how any human endeavor is limited by imponderables, immeasurables, but predictables, that that's about as many as we could serve, and that's actually what happened.

The last several years, we are still trying to spend the rest of our amnesty money, because in fact we didn't spend the whole 10 percent. But the thing that amazes me is that L.A. Unified decided this wasn't enough money. They were threatening to withhold their participation. They sent delegations back to congress to protest, and made all kinds of a fuss about, "If you really want us to do amnesty, you're just going to have to put more money in the pot." The truth is we couldn't spend what we had.

WEST: Well, we did have long waiting lists and we needed curriculum, and you put together a team . . .

JOHNSON: We never had long waiting lists because we admitted the people just as rapidly as we could, we enrolled them.

WEST: At the schools.

JOHNSON: Yes, we, the State of California. But a major point--let the history books know--early on, when I attended the meeting of other adult education managers and I learned what waiting lists were and created some waiting lists during the Cuban missile crisis, [survival classes] were common in the adult classes, or how to build a shelter in your backyard and such, that when you go to a waiting list, which you maybe get one in five, you cannot warehouse human beings. If they have a need for a program and you turn them away, the need will go away or they'll find some other more pressing need, or whatever. But waiting list is a documentation, and put this in quotes, "A waiting list is only a documentation of service denied." And I still hear it today when I sit around with baby administrators talking about their waiting lists as a proof of the popularity of their program. And I look them in the eye, and I say when I say to them, "All you're doing is saying you're not serving the people but you're counting them." And that's really true. So, when amnesty came along in this district, being so wise, we enrolled the people as rapidly as they showed that

were on the doorstep and then we peaked at something like 5,000 students.

But we hired everybody that had a credential, a block degree, that had any interest. I tried to get the superintendent to set aside the rule that said day school teachers can only work . . . full-time contract teachers in K-12 can only work in adult education seven hours a week. The superintendent wouldn't waive that, so we would hire two teachers that were friends or partners or worked at the same site, and have them split a twelve-hour assignment, six hours each, in order to get around the district regulation and the manuals.

The other thing is you mentioned that the district produced materials. When the law was passed and before the money was available, and as I was attending the meetings in Sacramento discussing the division of the money among the players statewide, it became obvious that we were going to have a wave of enrollment and we were going to need specialized, short-term, simple materials for amnesty. And Xavier Del Buono, Assistant Superintendent of the State of California, got Gabriel Cortina--both those guys

have doctorates . . . . Gabe Cortina, who was Director of Adult Vocational ROP for Los Angeles Unified, and I met and discussed the creation of material and agreed that we would do it and that the state could help fund it, and it needed to be done [and nothing happened]. So, after contacting Dr. Cortina three or four times, having appointments blown, I said the clock is going to run out, folks, and I'm not going to be able to have the material when we need it. It really cost me some friendship points with both Gabe and Xavier. I came home and they said that's typical behavior of Tom Johnson. I came home and I called Dianne and Carolyn Collins and . . .

WEST: Dianne Pun-Kay.

JOHNSON: Dianne Pun-Kay and Barry Altshule was involved, and said we need to do this. And in our original concept we really had video and computers, but we decided with our five- or six-month time line that was not realistic. You know, it takes many more hours to prepare good video for a minute or two of instruction than it does to prepare quality paper and pencil, other types of visuals.

My other contribution, besides the time was right and having the support of a district that

would let me do it, and staff that could accomplish it--and those don't exist everywhere . . . . You know, I don't know in today's climate if I would do the same thing as I did then. But in those days I simply called those folks together and said, "You are currently not teaching your classes, and this is our goal and you will produce it."

My other contribution was a cover design for some of the material, and that was we've always thought of the great melting pot and the Statue of Liberty welcoming the immigrants to the United States. And if you'll go back and look at that, you will see the Statue of Liberty superimposed by the funny-looking tower at LAX, because LAX is the primary point of entry for new Americans. And I think that's appropriate.

Some other contributions, I don't know that they were mine totally, but the idea of going to newsprint and quick and dirty, and the development of the flannel boards, which really turned out to be magnetic boards, were contributions. And you can describe the final product, I'm sure, as well as I can and how we marketed it. Every time we've entered into an enterprise like that, we've always

fallen short on the end of collecting and pricing. We've always been able to produce and sell, but our collections and marketing and those things fall short because we are basically educators.

WEST: I understand, though, from other documentation that I have seen, that it was distributed to over 200 other programs.

JOHNSON: Oh, sure. Well, you know, there's a similar story. A new subject, a new story, okay? We didn't do anything in literacy. We ran night high school programs. And in the sixties I was probably down here working on all the new vocational things and a lady came in with a request to be allowed to use a classroom for teaching literacy under the Laubach Program. She had been affiliated with the Laubach Program. We'd been sending people to her in Pomona for some time, operated by the library, we had been in cooperation with the library and the Laubach Association along with their volunteers and training their volunteers. So, after listening to her request and understanding the district mechanism by which people use space, knowing she'd have to go through a use permit request and under district guidelines pay a fee for the use of the

room, et cetera, et cetera, and she was a retired elementary teacher, I finally said to her, "I've got a better idea. You have a teaching credential. I will hire you to teach literacy. That means that I will provide you with a room and supplies, and et cetera, et cetera. The one thing you cannot do is deal with the religious content of the Laubach stuff. But other than that, you will teach literacy, you will be paid." "I don't want to be paid, I'm a volunteer." "Great, endorse your check over to the Laubach Group if you like, but you are an employee of this district." "Oh, okay." She and her retired sister taught the class for three or four or five years, and it kind of withered away and attendance was never big.

Then I get a call from a man who once rented office to the adult school when we were thrown off Puente High School campus and we rented space across the street from the Star Theater for a year or so before we started the vocational center. And the man says, "There's a crazy lady in my office and she wants to put a trailer in my parking lot," of this little shopping center up here. It's right around the corner, the Indiana

Cafe. And he said, "I told her you do that stuff," because he was involved in negotiating the first lease for the building across the street here. His name was Steve Chorak. He also bought the old teacherage [residential facility for teachers] that belonged to the high school district, tore it down and built a parking lot, just across the street from Hudson.

Steve a died a funny death. He was an immigrant from Central Europe, Hungary maybe, but he immigrated to this country through Mexico. A man not much older than I was, but he built up a real estate empire of considerable money and considerable commercial property. His one real luxury . . . . He fumed about his kids buying expensive stuff because he was conservative, he earned every penny he had. His one luxury in his life was a Lincoln Continental, and he was driving down the street in his Lincoln Continental and it just rolled over the curb and stopped. When we opened the door, Steve was dead. He owned the Star Theater, too, I think.

Anyway, Steve says to me, "There's this crazy lady who wants to put a trailer in my parking lot and teach English to non-English speakers and

teach literacy to illiterate Mexicans, and I told her you do that." And I said, "Well, let me talk to her." So I talked to her, and her named turned out to be Nancy Donahue. Nancy had been trained in the Laubach System and decided she didn't like Laubach. Laubach is based on groups and getting groups of people together as formal type classes, and Nancy started going out to people's homes and teaching women on the kitchen table and eventually got to where she had built some of those kitchen table things where she had three or four of them. Then she got a friend who was a volunteer who had three or four of them, and thus the trailer. She was looking for a place where she could meet with more than one person at a time, something central and all that. And having had this other experience, I sat and I listened to Nancy and I said, "Well, Nancy, we've got a couple of choices. One of which is I'll put you on the payroll." "Well, I want to be a volunteer. Our family is affluent and I really want to be a volunteer." I said, "Well, you can still be a volunteer, but I'll tell you what I can do . . . ." And I provided her with an office and phones and

communication and paid assistants, and that became the Vital Volunteers [Vital Volunteer English].

We published and still own the copyright to that material, and it's not currently being used, it's gathering dust. But the course contents, Barbara Zunich wrote some of that stuff, Laurel Adler wrote some of that stuff, Nancy and other volunteers wrote it, but it consists of short lessons, flies in the face with much pedagogical theory in terms of it's printed in English down one side of the page and Spanish right opposite, or one page is Spanish and one page is English. It deals with things like how to call the doctor, what do you do at a doctor's visit, how to avoid a freezer scam, which were big in those days. You know, you buy the freezer, you buy the meat, you get the freezer and what all, but it was really a take advantage of the poor folks scam. How to put in a zipper, how to read United States curtain sizes, bedding sizes, how not to get pregnant, all kinds of really super, super fundamental basic information. And we printed that stuff by the ton--and again, we were not the greatest at marketing. There was a time when probably half of the state prisons for women were using that as

instructional material. We still have the copyright and I'm sure there's still some volumes of it sitting around.

WEST: I've seen it.

JOHNSON: We turned it over to the district business office to manage the sales, and guess what? They didn't fill orders. The customers went elsewhere. Because the business office knew better. We'll print that when we get ready for it next summer, and you've got a stack of orders. So that was a whole other enterprise, but it was very similar to the amnesty, and probably provided me and the staff with a sense of what we could do when the amnesty sort of thing was coming to a head.

Going back to the amnesty, there is a happy tale. We greatly increased, of course, our enrollment and our staff during the period of the amnesty.. But as a consequence of the amnesty activity--I believe as a direct consequence of the amnesty activity, not so much individual participation--there was a general increase in the awareness of those services by at least this adult school and probably the rest of the adult education and a sense of coming out of the closet or a sense of being welcome in the class. Even if

you weren't the one that enrolled, but your sister is here now, and legally or illegally, the enrollment and attendance in ESL and basic education have never reverted to the same level they were before amnesty. There has been a residual increase. Yes, there was a drop, but never back to the same level. And if we had the money, I think it would continue to grow.

Last week I explained to the managers that we . . . . We had lost a program that was generating about 100 units of a.d.a., and when I came back from my extended leave I discovered it was proposed to put that in senior citizen and community services activity. You also just dropped three ESL classes. Yes, three full-time, St. John Vianney. Reopen them and forget the cap.

If we had to cut back this adult operation to one single activity, my recommendation would be ESL. Why? Recent research within the last eighteen months. In California society an Hispanic experiences, in the view of the researchers, no discrimination, no loss of status, no anything, if they speak fluent English. Fluency in English removes whatever discriminatory practices exist. And just as a practical

standpoint, the degree with which you speak English is the degree with which you can interface with the rest of American society. So back to the ranch. My priorities will always be with the level one ESL. One of the pathetic things about getting into literacy stuff is many times you will find in the literacy classes a very low level of classes, either the handicapped like the deaf, or a larger group are those that have gone through our entire school system and failed, that there are people who are so learning different that the typical strategies didn't reach them. I think that in recent years that group is a little smaller, but many, many times in the past, and privately, when I operated a private school, I advertised tutoring services, the people that came in of seeming normal intelligence but for one reason or another just could not read. You want to talk about difficult population. If you want to talk about why I personally got excited about the color approach to dyslexia?

WEST: Sure, let's talk about that.

JOHNSON: Let's not talk about that. That's not part of the history of adult ed.

WEST: Okay, can we go back then to a couple of the things related to vocational that we didn't cover? We didn't talk about the WIN Program.

JOHNSON: True. The WIN Program, the first acronym for the WIN Program was WHIP.

WEST: Really? [Laughter]

JOHNSON: And I've forgotten what it was all about, but it was a work incentive program maybe, so they took the work incentive and took the first two letters of incentive and called it WIN. We still have Mary Gonzalez who came to us as a client. But it was, you know, this term work fare and school fare, I guess, if you will. It was a very early War on Poverty attempt to get people off welfare by providing them with instruction. And the plan was very simple. Support came through the local employment office, EDD, and they helped us screen the students, put the students in classes, and the base plan was to bring the students up to a certain reading level and then put them in vocational classes. They couldn't go into vocational classes until they reached the reading level. I protested. I said, "This won't work. You can't do this," but I took the contract.

We had a class that met in the buildings on this side of the street, classes, and it was the first time in the management of adult education that I walked into an adult education class and witnessed what I witnessed as a high school study hall teacher: boredom so thick that the biggest noise was a fly, people with their heads down on their desk sleeping.

WEST: The problem with mandated programs.

JOHNSON: Well, you know, I told them, and staff supported me, the only way, the proper way, to do this is to put them into the vocational classes that are real and you get in and get dirty and do it and actually come home at night and say, "I did this today." Then spoon feed the academic along that relates as much as you can to what the actual activity is. Anyhow, when I walked in there for the second time and I saw adult students behaving that way, I called the EDD office on Hacienda Boulevard and I got Elsie Redline, who was the assistant manager of that office, and I said, "Elsie, we can't do it." I said, "You're going to have to make a choice. I'm either going to have to be allowed to enroll those students in concurrent vocational or we're going to drop it.

We're going to invalidate the contract and walk away from it." I got a lot of flak, but within a matter of weeks a complete turnaround on the part of EDD. They said, "That's the way it goes." Now you come in and the students are excited. They go to their vocational class and then they go to the academic class. A whole new world. Do you know we're still fighting the same damn thing on GAIN [Greater Avenues to Independence].

WEST: GAIN, yes. Get your academics fixed first and they . . .

JOHNSON: Before it ever was organized, I met with the first woman that the county welfare had given responsibility for it. I told her that story and I said, "The only way we'll agree to work with WIN students is if you will not restrict them from enrolling in vocational at the same time." I said, "You can insist on the academic that you want there, but if we do not have the freedom to go ahead and enroll them in a vocational simultaneously, we won't contract with you." Which is so stupid, but you know it's like so many things that sound good and the minute you try them out, you know . . . . Communism, for example, all the ideas sound great, but nobody has ever been

able to make it work for more than a few months. [Chuckling]

WEST: Yes. Talk a little bit more about the GAIN Program and what . . .

JOHNSON: Well, you know, GAIN Programmers work there in the simplest form of school fare. We stand at the verge of a whole new world. You know, it is my personal believe that we stand at the moment of opportunity that we stood in when Franklin Roosevelt became President. We don't have bank failures, but we certainly have the collapse of the savings and loans. We don't have the bread lines because we do have welfare, but we do have high unemployment, we do have an economy that is sick. I submit to you we have a 1993 version of 1929, 1930, 1931, 1932, 1933, and that the nation is ripe for a 1993 version of the National Recovery Act, the Works Progress Administration Act, the Public Works Administration Act, the Civilian Conservation Corps. You know, there are traces of those things yet today. Your CETA youth, when we hired them to work in school districts, the CETA when they were given jobs, people were given jobs based on negative criteria, many of them stayed in the jobs. Hiring on

negative criteria, government as the employer of resort . . . . You know, it's interesting, you read the arguments in the daily *Times*, what you're hearing is the Republicans are saying, "Well, the Bush Administration started the recovery and the recovery is coming along, and if you start doing all these stimulation things and safety net things, you're spending money you don't need to spend because trickle down is going to work and the economy is going to recover." You are talking to a child who was eight years old when it started and was probably a teenager . . . well, a teenager when we entered World War II, which was basically the end of the Depression. You know, I am at heart a New Deal Democrat, and my greatest political hero was Franklin Roosevelt. That shouldn't surprise you.

WEST: Not at all. [Chuckling]

JOHNSON: My father's favorite funny story was about the farmer who refused to go to church. When the minister really pressed him as to why he wouldn't go to church, he said, "I just couldn't go into the Lord's house with these terrible hatred feelings that I have. It just wouldn't be appropriate." And the minister said, "What is

it?" "Well," he said, "it's this man Roosevelt." And the minister said, "Yes, but," he says, "you have to accept the fact that there's a higher power than Roosevelt." He said, "I know, and I hate her, too." [Laughter]

[End Tape 4, Side A]

[Begin Tape 4, Side B]

JOHNSON: Starting out again in the 1950s, there had been a long history of an association, and in the sixties called the California Association for Adult Education Administrators, and that association included all the practitioners of adult education K-14. Because in those days, the only community colleges that existed in California were extensions of K-12 districts, which became K-14 districts under permissive law, and so, you know, folks in K-12 districts and folks in K-14 districts practiced adult education. There's a lot to be said for that, and one could go back to it. And it may. You know, things do tend to come full circle, and it may come back yet. But the people I know that lived through that found the transition from high school to college very easy; and in fact many of them were carrying college credit and high school credit at the same time as

they reached graduation with no sweat, same campus, same administration. So there was no dichotomy, no split, no problems.

The association is very small, virtually no women administrators. I can remember the first one, whose name was Louise Heil, and she kind of back-doored in because she married Jack Heil, who was the administrator for the adult program, and then she had one on her own. And they met every year at Bakersfield. Bakersfield had a hotel/motel that had a bridge that spanned over Highway 101, and on one side were some residences and the other side were the dining rooms and the meeting rooms, part of the hotel. Every year they had their conference there and had probably a hundred and some people. Roy Simpson was state superintendent. The first year they moved from there they moved to Stockton, the big hotel down in the dock area.

Anyhow, in this area there was the Tri County Adult Education Association, and that was the eastern end of Los Angeles County and San Bernardino, Riverside County, and Corona and Riverside and some of those little districts out there, Pomona and Covina. And they invited me to

join when I started the adult program and so I became part of that group. El Monte wanted to come in and they told them, "No, no, you're too far away. You're not part of it." It became kind of a status thing. I went through the chairs of that and became president of it.

But then L.A. County, at about the same time, L.A. County hired a man named Dr. Robert Troutman. The doctorate was honorary, his secretary always insisted in calling him Mr. Troutman, and he had worked at the community college in an adult program and had some problems. So he was re-employed by L.A. County as their consultant for adult education. Bob Troutman, an interesting person. He got together those people in L.A. County exclusive of L.A. City and created the Los Angeles County Adult Education Administrators Association. Of course, Los Angeles City Schools has had an adult ed administrator association for years.

So those were the associations, and again, as I say, K-14. Then the Donohoe Act was passed, and I think I talked to you about that. San Francisco and all those broke away, so then the community colleges are now separate entities directed by

separate boards and there's really a war zone, if you will. There's competition for money and competition for students. I was young and eager and I threw myself into that argument wholeheartedly and I directed and wrote pieces of legislation, which you can look up, called the Delineation of Function Act, and I think Montoya carried that for us. And the RAVE councils. All of those were attempts . . .

From time to time, we said what we really need is just a laundry list, and this belongs to K-12 and this one belongs to community colleges, and then you can cut whatever deals you want to locally, but these are the state approved lists. We never quite got around to that, but at one point there was money for RAVE councils and pretty active and they had directors and all sorts of meaningless activity took place. The minute the money was withdrawn, then it fell apart.

There are probably only three or four places in the state where those councils exist in any kind of significant format. One of those is Cerritos, however. Cerritos College and their adult schools have always had a good working relationship. But then the colleges formed an

adult education [association], California Community College Continuing Education [Association]. And the California Association of Adult Education Administrators continued to serve those that were K-12.

Then the wonderful world of collective bargaining came to California. All the blue-collar unions as they died put on a national campaign to unionize teachers, and they were successful. And CTA [California Teachers Association], the professional organization eventually became "The Union," and we call it that today. That means that those of us managers had always been members of the teachers' association, local, regional, state and national. And I have put the arm on many a staff member to belong to the Teachers Association. The minute that the collective bargaining laws were being considered, administrators were invited to drop their membership. In fact, they allowed a limited membership. You could still get into their purchasing things like vitamins and hosiery and trips and insurance, but you couldn't be a voting member, and I have seen that for many, many years. So, as a result of being thrown out of the

teachers' groups, managers formed what we called in the formative stages a "super organization." There were associations of adult educators, guidance educators, curriculum people, secondary people, elementary people. California school business officials talked a good battle, in the final moment withdrew their support. They did not become part of it. At the time that that happened, I was state treasurer of the California Association of Adult Education Administrators, and we had the largest treasury in the state and we had $10,000. I personally wrote a check to ACSA when the adult education managers became part of ACSA. I served on the original panel that determined the dues structures and the first budget for ACSA.

And therein lies a story that really bothers me. I made a couple suggestions, and that was, one, that we do charter memberships. We opened up charter memberships, and when we made that announcement, we got lots more sign-ups than we did when we were just signing memberships. Somewhere in my trash you'll find a charter membership certificate that I designed and gave myself.

The other is that when we talked about dues, one of the awfulest things about dues is the periodic increase in dues, and everybody hates it. So why don't we do this? Why don't we do dues as a percentage of salary, because you don't know what you're going to make next year and all that. Use a percentage of the prior year's salary, prior to the year of membership, and you can do it by payroll deduction, in quotes. So we set it at one-half of one percent salary, and we said that takes care of dues forever.

Well, it did, we bought a building and we had a professional staff and we cranked out, we meaning ACSA, cranked out all sorts of great stuff, in terms of publication, guidelines for workshops and in-service training and on and on and on. We had some very good authors and editors and we had a lady named Jackie Howell who did nothing but conferences, and so she arranged conferences for us with hotels and she got good prices. We do the state overall conference and then each of us merging specialties that still have continued to have a state conference, and ACSA made money and thrived.

Bill Cunningham was our first executive director. When Bill left us and became the governor's advisor, the first governor's advisor on education, assumed that role, they chose a superintendent from the Mount Diablo area who didn't do particularly well.

He left and they brought in the current executive director, a fellow whose name is Wes Apker, who had been an employee of the Colorado school administrators' organization and had no particular status in his own right as an educator as Cunningham did, he was a superintendent. His daughter is a superintendent now. In my mind, as I saw his resume when he was hired, I saw him as a mechanic. He understood the rules, but a mechanic is not a designer, not a dreamer, not a professional, in terms of developing, whether it's an organization or whether it's a school site program. Personal bias is that he lacks those kinds of things. The moneymaking enterprises, services, a quarter of a percent increase in dues. [Chuckling] Pissed!

The only reason that I really retain my membership in ACSA after that quarter percent increase in dues is because as a diabetic I have

limited access to insurance, and I consider my ACSA dues today part of my insurance policy cost. A sad story.

There's another problem with ACSA, and that is at the state level. Your state board is elected at large, and the election of that statewide is really a farce. Having participated in several of them, there is an old boy network that gets in and they're incumbents. They develop their followers and it has nothing to do with geography. It's open season. I have felt for years that it should be restructured and that regional presidents should comprise the state board and their structures. The recent thing they did about wanting to limit . . . combine the adult ed committee with other committees I thought was horrible and would immediately result . . . . And, in fact, I have on paper a new organization which is said not to be competing but it is, with ACSA.

In my heart of hearts, if I were to continue to work, what I probably would do is to suggest that Hacienda-La Puente members buy into the little splinter group that was created a few years ago by the Simi Valley people who call themselves

the California Association of Adult Educators and Administrators. That's a problem, because that was a title we abandoned in the merger. But if ten of us were to sign up, we would have triple their membership and we could control them and start a whole new . . . reactivate the California Association of Adult Education Administrators, because our voice has become diluted in the process of being part of ACSA. And CCAE's activity is diluted by the breadth of its membership when we want to go for certain kinds of activities. That's great in terms of some dynamics, but in terms of quick action . . . .

There's a little story about the golfer who came home and his wife said, "How did it go today in golfing?" And he said, "Well, you know, my pal Joe died on the first tee, and," he said, "the rest of the day it was just shoot and drag Joe." [Chuckling] And the point of the story being that the managers who sometimes can think ahead a year or two to see some of the problems that need to be addressed and addressed quickly, by the time you bring in . . . . And you have little old ladies in tennis shoes who ran the board of CCAE, it's a good association. I'm not suggesting we abandon

it, but by its very structure it's not going to be among the swiftest of runners when you need to respond to some things. On the other hand, it's great to have that kind of representation when you've really agreed on a course of action.

WEST: With the recent adult ed legislation, with CCAE behind it, was very helpful.

JOHNSON: Yes, but you know, to tell the truth, Tom Johnson, Ray Eberhard, and two or three other people were the moving force behind all that. And the whole world can take credit, and that's wonderful, but the actual understanding and experience that put that thing together came right out of my head and his, sitting across the table just like this.

WEST: Would you like to say anything more about the other professional organizations, AVA, Phi Delta Kappa?

JOHNSON: Well, Phi Delta Kappa, the *Kappan* is the finest educational publication in the nation. I've been a member of it for years, and that's personal history.

California Vocational Association, a funny story. I was one of the founding members and then found myself frozen out the following year or two by the membership standards. I'd really rather

not comment on them. I'm really not involved with [CVA].

You know, I have been a figure in Phi Delta Kappa. We did create. . . . I and forty or fifty other people created the Mt. SAC [field] chapter. Phi Delta Kappa has campus chapters and field chapters. The Mt. SAC chapter [is a field chapter, and] the campus chapter is associated with the [Claremont] Graduate School. [A] field chapter is associated with geography and people who have been through college and are out working.

When I came here, we sponsored some people for membership in an elite society. We had to go down to SC to swear them in. Claremont had a campus chapter, but the national office back East, Indiana, couldn't understand why we would want to have a chapter ten miles from Claremont at Mt. SAC, and it took a lot of demonstrating to them that the mileage and the population . . . . Mileage wasn't important. It was the population and transportation and those things. The Mt. SAC chapter at one time was one of the larger chapters. We had hundreds of members and we still have probably hundreds of members, people who pay their dues and never go, but the actual attendance

is quite low. But a very interesting organization. It gave me a lot of thrill to be among the first to bring women in. Our sister organization, Delta Kappa Gamma, has never taken men in membership, never. I sponsored Mary Kernodle and my wife and the adult school ladies from Azusa and several other women into our local chapter. I went through the chairs and became president of it at one time.

[Tape is turned off]

WEST: This concludes the questions I have. Is there anything that you'd like to add?

JOHNSON: Yes. I'm sixty-seven, I'll be sixty-eight in July, and for a number of reasons I have worked longer than most people work. I have told myself a number of things about why I work. The simple truth is that a younger wife with young children at home is not a great motivation to retire. And I do find a lack of interest and I find that the political frustrations are greater in actual fact, and even greater in terms of personal frustration. And in many analyses, I probably have worked two or three years too long.

One of the other things that has kept me working is the absolute fascination with what's

coming next, that I see things in motion that are not two trains headed toward each other on the same railroad track. They are in fact an asterisk of railroad tracks with engines on each one of them of varying sizes all headed to a collision at a midpoint. The frustration of many professionals--long overdue--with education as it has been business as usual. The passing of the torch of leadership from one generation to the other and picking the same kind of people to replace you, that you are yourself, the business as usual, the availability of technology that absolutely will bring any part of the world into any classroom at any time, or better yet, to any student at any time irrespective of classrooms. I would remind you that you can sit in the middle of a jungle clearing with a computer and a solar unit and do anything you want to do without a flush toilet, you know?

So I see these things rushing toward gigantic changes. I see pressure of the public for vouchers, for schools of choice, I see techniques being done in alternative education that absolutely challenge the concept of the talking teacher in a classroom. I see education lagging

behind society instead of leading society, and I have engaged in political arguments about that all my life, and I feel educators properly prepared should provide leadership. Maybe we don't determine the direction, but once the direction has been determined, I think that we should let society move in that direction more expeditiously. So the opportunities have never been greater, the challenges and the negatives have never been greater. The risk in education is an increasingly high-risk venture. Now, I can say that from the standpoint of a public educator, from the standpoint of having owned and operated a private school. I think that the country is pregnant and we're going to be having labor pains very shortly. And one of the things I will regret about retirement is that I will no longer be an active participant in that fun and games. At the same time, I don't know that I'm as well-equipped. I've got the commitments and the intelligence, but I don't know that I have the stamina and the drive to continue to pound at those things. All righty? That's all you get. You make do with what you [have].

WEST: Thank you, Tom. This interview was done as a part of the California Adult Education Oral History Project.

INDEX

RESUME

Thomas J. Johnson
3366 Garden Terrace Lane
Hacienda Heights, CA 91745
(818)333-8414 (Home)
(818)968-4049 (Office)

PRESENT POSITION:

Assistant Superintendent, Adult and Alternative Education
Hacienda La Puente Unified School District

Present major responsibilities are: Chief administrator of the district adult, vocational, and alternative education programs. This includes responsibility for the education of inmates in all adult jails of Los Angeles County and several juvenile facilities. District liaison to California legislators.

PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION:

CAVA Formation Committee
ACSA Formation Committee (Assoc. of Calif. School Administrators)
ACSA Region XV President (1976-77)
ACSA Region XV Treasurer (3 years)
Phi Delta Kappa, Mt. SAC Chapter, Past President
California Assoc. of Adult Education Administrators, Past President
Los Angeles County Adult Education Administrators Assoc., Past President, Past Secretary, Past Treasurer
Tri-County Adult Education Administrators Assoc., Past President
Cal State University at Los Anteles, Asst. Professor
ABE Consultant to the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands
Consultant to President's Advisory Committee on Adult Basic Education
Consultant to Governor's Committee on Carl Perkins Act
California Council for Adult Education (CCAE)
Los Angeles National Society for Performance and Instruction
AB576 Task Force
Correctional Education Association
Regional Adult and Vocational Education Council - Chairperson
National Council for Local Administrators
American Vocational Association
California Assocation of Vocational Education
California Directors of Vocational Education
Southern California Council of Vocational Education Admin.
California Association of Work Experience Educators
California Consortium for Independent Study
Local Policy Advisory Committee to the State Job Training Coordination Council
Education Coordination Committee of the Los Angeles Business Labor Council

AWARDS AND HONORS:

George C. Mann Citation of Merit for Outstanding Service to Adult Education - California Council for Adult Education
National Assocation for the Advancement of Colored People, San Gabriel Valley Education of the Year, 1975
Employer's Merit Award, Governor's Committee for Employment of the Handicapped
Outstanding Contribution in the Field of Rehabilitation, National Rehabilitation Association
Distinguished Service to Public Education, Phi Delta Kappa, Mt. SAC Chapter
Assocation of California School Administrators Award for Exemplary Service to Education, 1980
Certificate of Merit, U.S. Dept. of Health/Education/Welfare, Office of Education, Bureau of Adult/Vocational & Technical Education
Employment for the Handicapped Citation of Meritorious Service Joint Mayor's Committee of East San Gabriel Valley
California Assoc. of Rehabilitation Facilities Award of Appreciation for Outstanding Leadership Dedicated to Assisting Disabled Persons
Los Angeles County Board of Education Award of Merit for "Pregnant Minor/Parenting" Program

POSITIONS IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION:

1949-50	Teacher, Mondamin Consolidated Schools, Mondamin, Iowa
1950-52	Principal, Decatur Public Schools, Decatur, Nebraska
1952-54	Superintendent, Pilger Public Schools, Pilger, Nebraska
1954-80	Principal/Director, La Puente Valley Adult Schools
1980-Present	Assistant Superintendent, Adult and Alternative Education, Hacienda La Puente Unified School District
1970-75	Instructor, Cal State University at Los Angeles
1973-74	Lecturer on Career Education, University of California at Santa Barbara
1976-77	Consultant to the Adult Education Field Services Section on Adult Education Title 5 Revisions
1977-78	Consultant to the State Department of Education on Vocational Education

EDUCATION:

M.A. University of Colorado, School Administration - Remedial Readers
B.A. Nebraska State College at Wayne, Education and Speech
Post Graduate Work at Cal State University at Los Angeles and the University of Colorado

PERSONAL DATA:

Birthdate:	July 9, 1925
Birthplace:	Pilger, Nebraska
Marital Status:	Married
Children:	Three
Military Service:	U.S. Army Infantry, World War II, Germany Honorable Discharge, 1946

Thomas J. Johnson, Assistant Superintendent, Adult and Alternative Education, has been the chief administrator of the Hacienda La Puente Unified School District's adult and vocational education programs since 1956, and in his present position of eminence, he has spearheaded the movements for the district's educational programs in child development/ child care; pregnant minors/parenting education; apprenticeship; independent study and alternative education; Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA); work experience; Los Angeles County Jails; and the state and federal corrections education.

Tom, as he is known by his peers, has literally changed the shape of adult and vocational education by his association with, and his membership in, various organizations dealing with the improvement of education, i.e., Assoc. of California School Administrators; National Assocation of Public Continuing Education; California Vocational Education Assocation, California Council for Adult Education; California Consortium for Independent Study; California Association of Work Experience, and Phi Delta Kappa-Mt.SAC Chapter.

He has been the recipient of the George C. Mann Citation of Merit for Outstanding Service to Adult Education-CCAE; ACSA Service Award; WASC Recognition & Appreciation for Outstanding Service on Visiting Committees; San Gabriel Valley Educator of the Year, 1985, NAACP; Outstanding Contribution in the Field of Rehabilitation, NRA; Distinguished Service to Public Education; Phi Delta Kappa-Mt.SAC Chapter; and the Los Angeles County Board of Education Award of Merit for Pregnant Minor/Parenting Programs.

Throughout his tenure in education he has served on state advisory and ad hoc committees; i.e., State Advisory Committee on Adult Education; State Advisory Board on Vocational Education; Ad Hoc Committee on Adult Basic Education; AB576 Task Force; Ad Hoc Committee on Vocational Education; a special advisory committee on adult education to the Governor; AB1898 Ad Hoc Committee; and the Local Policy Advisory Committee to the State Job Training Coordination Council.

As one of the senior administrators of education in California, he has written legislation and helped gather support from legislators for bills that affect basic education, English as a Second Language, lottery distribution, apprenticeship, vocational education, and during the 1985/86 legislative session he worked with legislators on the bill to increase Montoya apprenticeship dollars.

The programs which Tom is responsible for in the Hacienda La Puente Unified School District generated 9,500 units of ada in 1985/86, and he administers a budget in excess of 15 million dollars yearly. Over 1,000 children are served daily in the childrens centers. The adult education program is recognized as the top program in the nation.

His professional role sets examples for all members of his staff and his time allotted to this role is as much as is necessary to insure that the job is done well.

Tom has always been one of the primary movers of innovation that adds to the total realm of education in California. He has gained reputation and honor among his peers, State Department of Education staff, and state and national legislators as a force for positive change.

CALIFORNIA ADULT EDUCATION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

RELEASE FORM

For and in consideration of the participation by the *California Adult Education Oral History Project*, funded by the *California Department of Education*, in any programs involving the dissemination of tape-recorded memoirs and oral history material for publication, copyright, and other uses, I hereby release all right, title, or interest in and to all of my tape-recorded memoirs to the *California Adult Education Oral History Project* and declare that they may be used without any restriction whatsoever and may be copyrighted and distributed by the *California Department of Education*, which may also assign said copyright and publication rights to serious research scholars.

In addition to the rights and authority given to you under the preceding paragraph, I hereby authorize you to edit, publish, sell and/or license the use of my oral history memoir in any other manner which the *California Department of Education* considers to be desirable, and I waive any claim to any payments which may be received as a consequence thereof by the *Department*.

PLACE La Puente
California

DATE 2/23/93

(Interviewee)

(Interviewer)
(for California Adult Education
Oral History Project)