

Interview with Clark Kerr

Interviewer: Germaine La Berge

Transcriber: Mim Eisenberg/WordCraft; April 1999

[Interview 1; January 22, 1999]

[Begin Tape 1, Side A]

La Berge: Why don't we start with when you first met David Gardner, your first recollections.

Kerr: I met him when he was a graduate student here at Berkeley. I wouldn't know when because he was in the Center for the Study of Higher Education [sic; Center for Studies in Higher Education] under T. R. McConnell. There were a number of graduate students around. I went over and met most of them. He was one of them, so I saw him first of all in a student context. He was then doing his book on the oath controversy, which became his Ph.D. thesis and an excellent book it is.

Then I next came in connection with him--he began doing some work with the California Alumni Association. In those days, the president of the university, beginning with Robert Gordon Sproul, went around the state on an annual tour, meeting with alumni groups, meeting with Rotary clubs, meeting with the boards of editors of leading papers, like the *Sacramento Bee*. David organized those on behalf of the Alumni Association, and he went with me on some of those tours, so I got to know him in that connection.

Then subsequently, I knew of his work, although I wasn't directly involved with it, in Santa Barbara. Then, when he became vice president of the university in charge of external--I don't know what it was called--university extension. It had a broader title than that. I did see something to that. And then, as his career moved on, why, he would often consult me on--he had lots of job offers. He was a bright, energetic, very competent young person, and he had various job offers coming his way, and he'd ask me--usually he'd just call me up, and we'd have long phone conversations--was this a good move, or wasn't it.

Mostly, I thought he was better off what he was doing now than moving around too much. I didn't think he--several times, why, I would tell him I thought he needed to

stay for a while, whatever the job was [that] he had at the time, and not look like he was hopping from one job to another and couldn't be counted on in the long run.

And then, of course, he became president of the university--

La Berge: Right. Now, did you have any part in that selection? Do people call you to be on those committees, or just ask your advice?

Kerr: No, not in connection with--I know the recent ones here at Berkeley, why, I have been consulted with the faculty committees--for example, Chancellor Berdahl. And I was consulted by the board, asking me to meet with their selection committee, both the Peltason and the [Richard] Atkinson appointments. But I don't remember--I was then traveling around the country when David came in a lot. I don't remember having been consulted, either by a faculty committee or by the Board of Regents, in his appointment.

La Berge: Do you remember what your reaction was when he was appointed?

Kerr: I thought it was excellent. I thought it was very good. I had a very high regard for David. I had seen something of him at the university of Utah. He had me give the commencement speech there one year when he was president of that university, and you could see the high regard with which he was held by the Utah community. So I thought he was an excellent appointment for the university. And he turned out to be one of the most important presidents in university history.

He came along when there were two big issues that had to be confronted. One was this decline in university support under [Governor] Ronald Reagan and [Governor] Jerry Brown. As I point out in that foreword that I wrote to his oral history, "The support for the university had gone down by 32 percent" --which is just an enormous amount--"had gone down 32 percent at a time the cost of living was rising," so that the real reduction--when you put together the cost of inflation and the reduction in money, it was more than 32 percent. He came at a time when that had to be reversed or we were really on our way, way downhill.

In one year he succeeded, against the advice of a lot more cautious people, in making up for the 32 percent reduction.

La Berge: How do you think he did that?

Kerr: It was easy to see that that's what the university needed. Now the question is why would a new president, in his first year out, decide to overcome a 32 percent deficit that had been accumulated? Suppose he failed? [It would have been] an enormous black mark on his record to have tried it and failed. You'd say, "He was stupid for trying, [for having] initiated this process to begin with."

He had to succeed, and he did succeed. As I say, I wasn't involved at that time, but David prepares for things very, very carefully. I'm sure he prepared his case with enormous care. Also, he's a very persuasive person. So the combination of careful preparation and being persuasive, and having a governor who first of all had some surpluses to work with because the so-called recessions or depressions of the 1970s were by that time over with, and he also had a favorable inclination toward education. The combination of having a better economic situation and a governor who was basically friendly toward education and David's own talents--he made up in one year the deficits that accumulated over sixteen prior years.

That was an enormous contribution because, as I point out in my foreword, if we hit the early 1990s with 32 percent still to make up, and then falling behind another 14 percent, the university would have been really ruined, so that it was absolutely crucial to have a president with the courage and the ability--the courage to present a program and then the ability to carry it forward that overcame the deficits of sixteen years.

The second issue which was important in history was the state of the presidency itself. The university had, up through Robert Gordon Sproul, had been run really as a one-man administration. Sproul had a staff of a thousand people working on the paperwork of the university and making decisions that he would then review and sign. Hardly anything could happen without going through Sproul's mechanism.

For example, when I was head of the Institute of Industrial Relations, I needed a file

cabinet for this new institute, so I had to apply to Robert Gordon Sproul, president of the university, to get this file cabinet. [Laughter.] Every six weeks--which was the normal length of time before he got around to anything, because he was so busy--I had a phone call from him. He said, "Where are you going to put your file cabinet in your office?" As a matter of fact, I didn't know. I wanted to get it and then see where it fit. I said, "I don't really know, but I'll find a place. I want to see where it fits the best, and I let you know where I put it if I get it." He finally approved it. But he got that far into detail.

As I tell in the memoirs that I'm writing, on another case--I had to go down to Los Angeles on some university business and somehow got delayed and got to the Oakland airport after all public transportation had stopped, and I had to get home. I had a class at eight o'clock the next morning. So I took a taxi for six dollars to my home. I applied to the president's office to see if I could get my six dollars back. Six weeks later, I get a note from him, saying that he thinks it's a reasonable request and he's approving it. But that's how much detail the president got into.

La Berge: And you changed all that.

Kerr: I changed that, yes. In the course of it, I dropped my staff from the thousand people he had had to two hundred fifty, which I might say is an enormous thing to do. I turned them over to the campuses. They didn't lose their jobs, but they were turned over to the campuses. A lot of them were unhappy because they had been in the state-wide administration and were making decisions on behalf of the president. Now they were sent down to the provinces, you know. It was a disturbing time, but I did decentralize the university just enormously.

During the time that I was president--I had taken the place of--from being administered by one man, this whole big university--which, of course, was growing in size very much at that time, more than doubling--and I had decentralized it into a federation of campuses, where we had a lot of shared governance, lots of decisions made by the campus level--some having to be reviewed at the statewide level and by the regents but essentially turned it over to the campuses to run on a daily basis.

Then, in Los Angeles, our chancellor down there, who had come from a system in Kansas--there was no president of the Kansas system. There were six institutions: university of Kansas, Kansas State, some city college, and I guess a community college or two--all reported--and it was a pretty small system; none of them were big institutions--all reported directly to the Board of Regents. He was accustomed, as head of the university of Kansas, to going directly to the board and not through a president.

La Berge: Who was this?

Kerr: Franklin Murphy. He lobbied with what was then called the Forbes Committee, set up by the regents, that was looking at the organization of the university. He lobbied through what he called a confederation system, under which each campus would set up separate governance. You had to take a constitutional amendment to do this. But instead of having one united university that would be at that point nine campuses, each established as a separate entity.

The difference between a federation and a confederation is that in a confederation, the central body does only those things which are delegated by the individual parts of it. I opposed this. The Board of Regents agreed with me unanimously on it. There are a lot of reasons for my opposition. One was if nine campuses went separately to the legislature, they'd be fighting each other instead of going with a unified budget, and there would be a tendency for them to make their alliances. Davis might tie up with UCLA and fight Berkeley, and it would break down into factional fighting.

Also, if we were a confederation rather than a single institution, we would be facing the CSU, the California State Universities, which were organized together and probably would stay organized, and they, after all, had twenty-two campuses scattered around the state, which means a lot of political support, and we were then going to be a divided group.

Likewise, we did some things in common--like, I had set up a library system with these buses going back and forth to the central libraries, and everybody having a unified catalog of what the university had in the total system. The Study Abroad programs were set up together. Look what happened to those programs. Anyway,

there was this idea of a confederation that got defeated.

David Saxon, when he became president, came from UCLA, and UCLA had had this big battle against--but you're quite familiar with it over all the years--hating Berkeley and hated Berkeley's dominance. He came in unpersuaded that there should be a single university of California. When David talked with me when he first came in about breaking up the university, he abandoned this idea, but he did initially favor the confederation idea.

When he was leaving office, the day before he left, he called me down to university Hall and said he'd like to talk with me, and so I went down. He had a little story to tell me about how he had changed his opinion about the university, that he had come in thinking the university should be split into component parts, and he wanted to say that he had abandoned that idea, and he thought it would lead to just endless controversy among the different segments, and battles, and would be very destructive.

Second, he said he had come in with what was a standard UCLA point of view that the statewide administration was incompetent and that he shouldn't, didn't trust anybody in the statewide administration. As he got to know the staff, he had come to the conclusion that they were a lot of devoted and competent people there.

Third, he said that he had come to realize that when he first entered office that this was the university of the people of California and that he should have done more in going out to the people and talking with them about the university. That would be like these presidential tours that Sproul took and I took and which he had abandoned.

And then fourth, he said that he wished he had spent more time talking with some of the old hands, like Harry Wellman and me about what the university was about when he first came in.

Anyway, it was sort of, almost a confessional to a father confessor about how he viewed this period. But anyway, he had abandoned this idea, the Murphy idea of a confederation. However, he still had this attitude that the campuses could do more than they had done, that the presidency was sort of a suspect position.

La Berge: We're still talking about David Saxon?

Kerr: Yes, David Saxon. David had done various things which reduced the power of the president. For example, there had been an All-university Faculty Conference that Sproul had started and I continued, which I had found very helpful. He discontinued that. These presidential conferences were very important, to get the representatives of the total faculty to talk about where the university should go. He discontinued the Cal Club, which was an organization that taught student leaders of the several campuses, in which we talked about student concerns and what should be done. Both of those had been unifying forces that Sproul had started.

Also, I had set up a Council of Chancellors, which I consulted on major things going before the board. But that Council of Chancellors began treating itself as though it was not an advisory group to the president but as though it were a constitutional agency, like the Board of Regents--could make decisions. It began meeting without the president in attendance, taking action on its own.

While the presidency was continued under David Saxon--and he decided that the university should continue as a single unity--he still, however, did reduce the influence of the presidency quite considerably.

And so when David Gardner came in, he decided, I think very importantly, to restore the position of the president to what it had been, not under Sproul but what it had been under me when I decentralized it. So he made--aside from keeping things running--he made two historic contributions. One was to work out a viable support program from the State of California. The second was to get some unity back to the university and some greater influence on the part of the president. That's how I saw his presidency, confronting those two grave problems--and very successfully.

La Berge: Would he have noticed this from afar, at the university of Utah--known that the presidency had lost some of its effectiveness? Or did he talk to you--I know that he had these lunches that he talked about with you and Harry Wellman and Elmo Morgan.

Kerr: Yes, he talked with me some. But he knew the Sproul presidency, too. I think he must have felt that you couldn't go back to the Sproul presidency, everything done by one man. But he did want the university to be held together. I think it was just sort of the logic of the situation. You had to have a strong president to hold the nine campuses together, keep them from fighting each other, and to go to Sacramento with enough power to get the budgets you wanted. Anyway, as far as I know—quite on his own--I don't know of any regental pressure on it--decided to restore the power and influence of the president and the Board of Regents.

Then you're probably going to ask about his leaving the presidency.

La Berge: I will, but before that--because I know we won't forget that--how do you think he interacted with the Board of Regents?

Kerr: I think he did extremely well with the Board of Regents. I've got to qualify that a little bit, something I didn't see at the time but became conscious of later. As I said before, he was a very careful planner, and so anything he went to the board with, he got all his information in line and was very confident in his judgments, so he prepared excellent agendas.

He also, on controversial matters, spent a lot of time talking with regents in advance so he knew what problems there were going to be and how he might answer them, et cetera. So it was careful preparation and then very careful consultation put together. But he got along very well with the board. Now, the board, however--once he was no longer president--began complaining that they had turned into a rubber stamp and all they were doing was giving their approval to what the president proposed, which was correct, and not having enough influence on their own.

I had no sense of that at the time he was president, but I knew that that came up afterward. I know it was an issue when I was asked to advise on his replacement, that they talked with me about. The board wanted to be sure that they could have something to do, really to do. Whether there was any of that while he was president, I don't know, but I never heard of anything about it until afterward.



- La Berge: Were you in the practice or are you ever--to go to regents' meetings?
- Kerr: No. I've never been to a regents' meeting since the day I was fired. [Laughter.]
- La Berge: You probably never want to set foot there.
- Kerr: I never wanted to go there. But I did go to these committee meetings when they were selecting both Peltason and Atkinson.
- La Berge: In a general way, what kinds of qualities were the board and you, then, too, looking for in a president? And does it depend on the situation?
- Kerr: Well, it depends on the situation, but you don't know what the situation is going to be.
- La Berge: That's true.
- Kerr: I mean, after all, when I was selected as president, nobody knew that Reagan was going to become governor and would I get along well with Governor Reagan.
- La Berge: Even you pointing that out, it's very important, isn't it, who the governor is and how that relationship works.
- Kerr: I got along very well with [Earl] Warren, although I was chancellor only briefly while he was governor. And Goodie Knight, who followed him, and very well with Pat Brown. I didn't get along--he didn't get along with me--a better way of putting it--when it came to Ronald Reagan.

As I saw the situation when I was made president, the regents wanted at that particular moment in time somebody who was forward-looking because they were facing the tidal wave of students. We were facing building three new campuses. We were facing the need for getting the Master Plan. And I had shown that I was forward-looking as the chancellor of Berkeley because I developed a very well-regarded academic plan, well regarded by the regents, and a very well-regarded physical development plan here. They wanted somebody who was oriented toward the future,

which I was. They had seen me.

They also wanted somebody that would tell them what he really thought. I had gone through--Ray Allen, the chancellor at UCLA, was the man who was slated to be the next president when the chancellorships were established. He and I took different approaches. From what the regents told me and what I saw, he had a tendency to guess what the regents really wanted and then give them that. They had seen me stand up to them and argue for positions that they didn't like, but do so politely and reasonably.

La Berge: Is this the loyalty oath mainly?

Kerr: It happened during the loyalty oath, but I wasn't chancellor then. I was a faculty member. But there were other issues that came along likewise. I guess--well, some of them were always worried that I was too liberal for them. Regents Pauley and Canaday, who were the two remaining members from the oath controversy, were the two people who led to my dismissal on behalf of Ronald Reagan. So there must have been something left over of this concern that I was too liberal. But I did face them on a number of things.

There was a period when the federal government said that nobody could take ROTC, which was really a federal program, if it belonged to any organization of what was then called the attorney general's list, which was a very long list of suspicious organizations, most of them not Communist. Since all male students who were citizens had to take compulsory ROTC, this meant if they couldn't take compulsory ROTC, they couldn't be students. That was a really hot issue in those days. It was still the [Senator Joseph] McCarthy period. I took the position before the Board of Regents that we would not enforce this, that the federal government could not control our admissions and retentions policy, that this was autonomy of the Board of Regents.

It was a very nasty--Sproul never took a position on it. He said it was an issue for the chancellors. When a meeting came up on the issue, which was held in Santa Barbara, before the issue came up, Ray Allen disappeared. He just went back to Los Angeles. Sproul decided it was not a presidential issue--although it was, obviously. He said it was a chancellors' issue. I was left there, without the president supporting

me, with Allen having disappeared. Allen, I might say, on that day lost his presidency of the university, that he wouldn't stand up and take a position, and I would.

When I got through, the regents complimented me on my presentation, my willingness to tell them what I thought was best for the university. Allen, while trying to cater to them, lost their respect. Anyway, that was one illustration. I think they felt that I would tell them what I thought was good for the university and not what I thought was catering to their--that they were getting an honest opinion. I think that was the general view.

La Berge: So when they were looking for a replacement for David Gardner, they weren't necessarily looking for the same kind of person?

Kerr: No. Well, they didn't consult me on David Gardner. They consulted me on Peltason and Atkinson. And then--

[End Tape 1, Side A. Begin Tape 1, Side B.]

Kerr: Both times I was taking the position you needed a strong president to govern this huge enterprise, and both times they would jump me and say, "We don't want too strong a president." This was in reference to David Gardner. There were also issues--Chuck Young, who was a possibility on both occasions, had had disagreements with his wife, which are well known and troublesome to some people. And Dick Atkinson had this famous case of having promised to help some lady acquaintance have a baby. The regents were taking both things quite seriously.

I said in both cases I didn't think that would impair their conduct as president. It might be distasteful for other reasons, but would not impair their conduct as president. At both times, I gave them names of people outside the university to look at, as well as just internal people. I thought they should make a nationwide search.

So what do regents look for? They aren't looking so much at what problems the president might confront, because they don't know, but they're looking at the problems which they've had most recently. When somebody gets to buy a house [and] they didn't

have any closets in their old house, that's the first thing they look at: are there sufficient closets? [Laughter.]

I guess when you look for a second wife, which I never have, you want to know whether the lady is a good dish washer if the prior was not. At any rate, they're more concerned with [what] the recent problems have been than about the future.

I might say that Charlie Hitch followed me and then Saxon. Charlie--I'm sure they were looking at somebody that they thought could get along with Governor Reagan. Charlie had come out of the defense department, had been comptroller general at the defense department when I brought him to the university. He had been able to get along with all those generals, and I'm sure they had some thought well, if he got along with all those generals fighting each other, fighting the Secretary of Defense, that he ought to get along with Ronald Reagan.

Charlie was a much more cautious person than I had been and I would have been and was needed at that time. He was also extremely competent. He could handle budgets very well. So I don't now. When you say, "What do the regents think?" there were twenty-four of them. What are there? Twenty-six now?

La Berge: Yes.

Kerr: And you have twenty-six different answers, depending on which regent you're looking at. It's hard to say what do the regents think.

La Berge: Would you like to comment on David Gardner's resignation and retirement?

Kerr: David was, of course, in Asia at the time--I think specifically Hong Kong. The day he came back from Hong Kong, he asked me if I'd go down to see him, which I did. The president's office was then in Oakland. What I said was a general proposition, that I thought the president's salary should be based on academic grounds, in relationship to faculty salaries. See, the people who had recommended the salary were looking at comparable jobs in business and things of that sort. They had a survey made. That was a very difficult and very complex job. In fact, I think there are very few jobs in

business which are anywhere near as complex as being the head of a big university, and having to deal with medical schools and rebellious students and prima donna faculty members, with all the knowledge known to mankind, and so forth. It's just fantastically complicated.

I could see why they would want to look at what was paid for big jobs in industry, but I thought it was more important for the president to be looked upon as a member of the academic profession and not be too far out of line with what faculty members got. In fact, when I was president, the regents had several times wanted to raise my salary, and I said I didn't want it. I had in mind two things. One, I didn't think it was wise for the president to receive more than the governor of the state. I just thought that it might cause some trouble with the governor or the people in Sacramento.

Now, let me say they also said if I was going to keep myself below the governor, then I ought to get the retirement plan the governor had, and I said no, I wanted to get the retirement plan the faculty members had. So the highest salary I received for being head of this university was \$45,000. The governor then, I guess, got something like \$47,000. And I kept to the faculty--I mean, I'm saying this as a matter of principle and also the action which I followed, that it was better to think of it as an academic position rather than as a business position.

I thought David ought to thank the regents for their consideration but that he ought to say he'd rather be at a somewhat lower level. Now, let me say, he got advice from the chancellors, all of whom knew if the president's salary went up, their salaries would go up. He also got advice from the other vice presidents. They knew the same thing, including Ron Brady. You know, Ron Brady did very well out of this transaction. The whole new policy did very well by him. I don't think I said so, but I certainly thought that he was getting prejudiced advice from people who would personally benefit from the advice that they were giving.

Well, David said that the regents had voted this. They had this survey made, and they had voted this, that it would be a slap in the face to say he wouldn't accept their decision. He wasn't prepared to take that action. He also argued to me, which was absolutely true, that the job of the president was at least comparable to that of people in

big industries. In fact, I think at that time the university of California had more employees than any single corporation in the state, including PG&E and so forth, except for the State of California, which is the biggest single employer.

So anyway, I thought he ought to thank the regents and regret that he felt it was not wise to get that far out of line with faculty salaries.

La Berge: Right now we're just talking about the salary, not about the benefits package.

Kerr: Well, I was talking really about the salary. I don't know much about the benefit part. I knew about the salary policy. Faculty salaries were being held level at that point. And tuition was going up. I thought it would cause bad relations--as it did--with students and with faculty members, to have the president going up so much when they were being held stable or their tuitions were going in a negative direction for the students.

Anyway, David thanked me for my advice and decided to go along with what the regents had done. I personally--rightly or wrongly--and I say rightly or wrongly because I don't know about the situation to really come to a clear decision--that Ron Brady, who was the one who had made the proposal to the board and who had himself benefitted very much--he was as clear or clearer a beneficiary than David Gardner was--had persuaded David to stay with the settlement, which he, Ron Brady, had recommended to the board, which benefitted him so much. I held Ron Brady more responsible than I did David Gardner, and I still do. I say rightly or wrongly because I don't know enough about the inner workings to reach a clear decision or competent decision about that.

But I do think that David would have been better off within the university if he had followed the academic policy rather than the business policy. Now, I know I proposed that the new library be named after David. I was the one who made that proposal, went to the chancellor, and saw the thing through to a successful conclusion. But by this time, it was, I guess, eight years--seven or eight years after he had left. There was still resentment within the faculty that David would accept a salary increase of that magnitude while their salaries were being held even, as the cost of living was rising.

So it was really deeply felt within the faculty. Now, that problem was solved by the Chancellor [Chang-Lin] Tien making the decision to go ahead with--although there was some hesitancy on the faculty side. Now, I argued that first of all they shouldn't hold David responsible for what had happened; it was more Ron Brady and the regents who were responsible. But also you had to look at a person's total record. You couldn't look at just one thing that you didn't like. I thought that David's record in totality was a superb one, that he did great service to the university, which was important in the short run and also in the long run, and that he deserved to be honored with the biggest building we'd had for many years and the most important one on campus, the addition to it. Anyway, it went through. But I just say this to indicate what damage was done in faculty opinion.

Then I've been among others who have tried to persuade David to come back to the university, and that is in the process of happening. And said to him, "Welcome home." I put it--the "welcome home" thing, which he has reminded me of recently in a telephone conversation--that he felt for a while that he wasn't welcome in his old home, and so I put it "welcome home"--and he *will* be welcomed home when he comes back.

La Berge: Now, I may have missed something, but I didn't realize he was coming back.

Kerr: No, that will be announced soon.

La Berge: Okay, all right. So this is a little preview.

Kerr: He's coming back to the university on kind of a leave of absence from the Hewlett Foundation, to accept initially a--Hewlett is going to be paying him a year's kind of sabbatical. He will be associated with the School of Public Policy and the Center for the Study of Higher Education, and then later take on responsibility for the Center for Higher Education, for which he is the best qualified man in the United States to do that. So that's about what I know about David Gardner.

La Berge: Any of these other issues--

Kerr: I glanced down your list.

La Berge: How about the move to Oakland? Did you have any comments?

Kerr: Yes, I had a problem with that. Not the move to Oakland, but the move to the Kaiser Center. These are two separate things. When I was president, I was very conscious of this resentment of UCLA. They blamed everything on Berkeley. It wasn't Berkeley. "Berkeley" was their phrase for the statewide administration.

La Berge: Yes.

Kerr: They were also saying "Berkeley did this" or "Berkeley did that" and Berkeley had nothing to do with it. I was chancellor at Berkeley, and to have people say "Berkeley did this" and "Berkeley did that"--it was the statewide administration.

Wayne Thompson was then the city manager in Oakland, a very successful one and later was manager of the Dayton-Hudson big chain out of Minneapolis--now retired in Oakland. He had some locations. I forget the name of--there was an old estate somewhere in Oakland that we looked at, a big house and a big garden around it. We would have had to have an office building somewhere, for the staff, although I cut the staff by three-quarters. But anyway, for the president's office to be there in Oakland.

I had also, I might say, raised with the regents the possibility of moving into Santa Barbara.

La Berge: Oh. This is when *you* were president.

Kerr: This is when I was president. We discussed that informally. Santa Barbara has airplane service, and it's sort of halfway between--not halfway, but partly north as well as south, so that was considered. So I was thinking of moving it out of Berkeley. The one place I thought it should never go was Sacramento because [it would be] too close for access by the State Department of Finance, et cetera. So I didn't object to Oakland.

I'm not sure--there was some talk by the regents--because they didn't see quite where to put it--of building a building somewhere near the San Francisco airport. They



thought it would be more convenient to get to San Francisco, even from L.A., than it would be to get to Santa Barbara because there are many more flights. And so there was some talk about the San Francisco airport, and then Oakland, and then also Santa Barbara.

I did doubt the wisdom of going to the Kaiser building, which is so--well--some of the people who moved there say, "We're going to the university of Chevron." You've heard that phrase.

La Berge: [Laughter.] Yes.

Kerr: The university of Chevron. The offices were pretty magnificent. It was a convenient location, of course, right near the BART system and being right on Lake Merritt and good parking facilities and so forth. But I didn't quite like the corporate atmosphere of the whole building and the fancy nature of some of the offices. So I had some resistance to the idea of the Kaiser building, but not to Oakland. I think the move away from Berkeley was a desirable one.

La Berge: Do you want to glance down the list?

Kerr: Yes, I know. [Short pause as he reads.]

Well, Affirmative Action and Admissions. That's a long, long story. I don't know anything about that in connection with David Gardner. I know the situation more recently.

Regents' Role. That's kind of a big general one. We've really talked about legislative dealings. Shall I say I think he did a good job of appointing chancellors? And got along well with them.

Divestment from South Africa. I spent some time in South Africa and appeared there in what was called the chancellor's lecture at the two big universities, Cape Town and Witwatersrand, attacking apartheid, which I saw a fair amount of. But at the same time, I didn't quite like the idea that investment policy was being determined by

political issues, which was David's--so I was unhappy with the South African situation at that time. But I was also unhappy with the general principle that you made investment decisions on political grounds. I thought investment decisions should be made where you got the maximum money. So if I had to vote on that, I don't know how I would have voted. I would have been conflicted, obviously.

Faculty Relations and Salary. Well, I've mentioned that. Salaries. Why, he restored them to parity, which was part of my first point about what he had done for the university, restoring the financial situation.

Federal Government Relations. I don't know anything about his relations with the federal government. I would just say excellent.

Same way with Legislators.

National Labs, I don't know.

Oakland Headquarters, we talked about.

Planning for New Campuses. I think David came along and thought that, looking far in advance--we needed three new ones, I think he was talking about. In 1958, when I came in, we were then looking forty years ahead. I had a forty-year plan about 1960, which--

La Berge: It's hard to believe it's--

Kerr: Actually, it said that with three new campuses we'd be able to take care of ourselves through the year 2000, which is going to be just about right, and that we need some new campuses after that. In fact, I even talked with the regents. We had so much trouble finding decent sites that size that the regents are inclined to think we might get some property now for the period after 2000--they did look at some different sites. One site that Regent Carter was particularly interested in was somewhere in the Ventura-Los Angeles county line. He thought the population was going to go that way. We never got to look at that, but we did look at some property in Marin County, and we did

look at some property in the Valley, and we did look at taking over one of the military bases in San Francisco.

So anyway, he came along. If you're going to look forty years ahead from the time he was in, that would take you to 2030 or something like that. We're probably going to need by that time maybe three new campuses. So I think that he was quite right in starting to plan for these new campuses, at least in terms of getting land for them because land was getting more expensive and almost impossible to find.

In all of the southern California area, we only found one decent and available site, and that was Irvine. We had several alternatives for what became Santa Cruz. So I think he was quite right in planning for them. I know he was very disappointed when it looked like that wasn't going to happen because one of the big things he could have done would have been get three new campuses, particularly get land for them. And that didn't happen. I know that disappointed him quite a lot.

Regents Officers, I don't know about relationships there.

We talked about the next one, Smelser Report, which I thought was excellent. I don't know what David thought about it. I presume he favored it, too.

Relationships with the State Colleges, I don't know. I worked out the Master Plan with them. I think he probably supported the Master Plan's continuation.

La Berge: I was going to ask you, how did you think he did carry it through?

Kerr: As far as I know, he was all in favor of continuation of the Master Plan.

Senior Staff--

La Berge: Other than Ron Brady?

Kerr: I have my doubts about Ron Brady, on many grounds, including the ones I mentioned. But I have a feeling that David too much accepted the staff that he inherited, rather than

creating his own staff. I know I talked with him one time specifically about Ron Brady. I thought he ought to replace him, on other grounds than the ones we talked about now. He said, "He's the only person in the senior staff that I can rely on to get things done." Now, that's kind of a sad comment to make. I did feel that rather than accept the people he had inherited from David Saxon that he should have been more aggressive in choosing his own people. I did not think it was a strong staff, and I think he would have been better off if he had one of his own choosing.

Master Plan for Higher Education. As far as I know, he was all for it--still all for it.

Connection between the Loyalty Oath and the Free Speech Movement. Well--

La Berge: I put that down because he, in his oral history, said, "You should ask Clark Kerr that."

Kerr: I think there was a pretty close connection there. Roger Heyns once said to me when he was chancellor at Berkeley--he said, "Every time I trace back any of our current problems"--which was during the student troubles--"I end up at the oath controversy." I think that he was right about that. The oath controversy developed an antagonism between faculty and regents which had never existed before to the same extent. The regents were suspicious of the faculty; and the faculty, suspicious of the regents. I'd have to go into a lot of the history of what happened during the FSM movement to say why that was so important, including the Heyman Report in the fall of 1964--which said the students could try to disrupt a university meeting at Berkeley, could burst into Sproul Hall and drive the clerks out of the windows of the second floor and Katherine Towle out of her office and so forth--and not get a single word of reprimand from the faculty. So there was this background of regents and faculty antagonism.

And then the faculty formed this Committee of 200, which was resurrected during the FSM period, called the same thing, Faculty of 200. In both cases, there were about two hundred faculty members, and so they all got to know each other. Aside from that, the loyalty oath, first of all, politicized a lot of faculty people and radicalized them. It was a terrible controversy. And also kind of became the place to be for politically active young faculty members. They thought that's a place that's really a dynamic, interesting place. I'd like to be there. And there are some--in the memoir I'm working

on now, I quote one faculty member who said he came here specifically because of that. I'm sure there were many of them who came because it was an active place.

But then, also, it radicalized some faculty members, politicized them, and brought some new faculty, which tended to be more on the left liberal side. But aside from that, those who were on both sides of the faculty--and there were at least two sides, if not many more--got to know each other. As soon as a problem came along, they had their phone list of people they could call, and there were ready-made coalitions already in existence. So anyway, there was a connection.

La Berge: Any other comments, like an assessment of David Gardner's presidency? You've probably been saying it all along.

Kerr: I think he did two enormous things, as I said before, to advance the university of California, and he made--or he accepted one serious mistake--and that his two greatest contributions overwhelmed the one mistake. Also I'd say that people's contributions ought to be looked at in their totality, as we're facing currently in the United States, I might say. People's contributions ought to be looked at in their totality and that evaluation should not be based upon any one factor or any one development without looking at the total history.

[End of Interview]