

Patricia Berkowitz Oral History

San Francisco Conservatory of Music Library & Archives

San Francisco Conservatory of Music Library & Archives
50 Oak Street
San Francisco, CA 94102

Interview conducted July 23 and 30, 2015
Tessa Updike, Interviewer

San Francisco Conservatory of Music Library & Archives Oral History Project

The Conservatory's Oral History Project has the goal of seeking out and collecting memories of historical significance to the Conservatory through recorded interviews with members of the Conservatory's community, which will then be preserved, transcribed, and made available to the public.

Among the narrators will be former administrators, faculty members, trustees, alumni, and family of former Conservatory luminaries. Through this diverse group, we will explore the growth and expansion of the Conservatory, including its departments, organization, finances and curriculum. We will capture personal memories before they are lost, fill in gaps in our understanding of the Conservatory's history, and will uncover how the Conservatory helped to shape San Francisco's musical culture through the past century.

Patricia Berkowitz Interview

This interview was conducted in two sessions at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music on Thursday, July 23 and 30, 2015 by Tessa Updike.

Tessa Updike

Tessa Updike is the archivist for the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. Tessa holds a B.A. in visual arts and has her Masters in Library and Information Science with a concentration in Archives Management from Simmons College in Boston. Previously she has worked for the Harvard University Botany Libraries and Archives and the Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley.

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July 23, 2015

UPDIKE This is Tessa Updike, and I'm in the Conservatory's archives with Pat Berkowitz. It's July 23, 2015 and we're doing an interview for the Conservatory's Oral History Project. So Pat, thank you so much for doing this for us. I think we'll start at the beginning – if you can tell us about your early years – where and when you were born, and where you grew up.

BERKOWITZ I was born in 1940 in San Francisco, just a few blocks from the Conservatory when it was on Sacramento Street. My family was extremely musical. I was the oldest child, and my parents were very anxious for me to get started with piano lessons. So I started taking [lessons] from Nettimae Clement, who was a sister-in-law of Ada Clement when I was about four years old – before I could even read. She came to my house, but I do remember being at the Conservatory also. I took piano lessons from that time until I graduated from high school, whether I practiced or not. My parents didn't practice with me, and I think I probably didn't practice as much as I should have. But I enjoyed the piano, and I actually earned my first money accompanying a ballet class when I was in high school. Then a friend of mine taught ballet in high school and I accompanied her. This was at Burke's School which at that time went from K-12. I started there in the 7th grade, and that's where I first heard of Didi Boring, because she went to the same school – she was a few years ahead of me.

I took [lessons] from several different teachers. Nettimae Clement – not too long. Then I took [lessons] from some other people, and ended up with a woman who had been born in Germany; she was very serious. I probably was not serious enough for her. Then when I went to Stanford, I decided I would take a few lessons, and I took [them] from the head of the music department there. To my great surprise, he asked me what I wanted to study. I had been used to my teachers telling me what to study, so I told him I wanted to study Scarlatti – I was interested in his sonatas. My teacher said, "They were written for the harpsichord – I do not teach the harpsichord – we're not going to play them." That's all I can remember about the lessons I took at Stanford. I got married in 1960, and from that day until about 2010, I never touched a piano.

UPDIKE Could you tell us a little bit about your grandparents and your parents?

BERKOWITZ Three of my grandparents were born in San Francisco. They were all very interested in music; my parents too. My mother's only brother studied with Albert Elkus, and almost became a professional pianist. But then he decided to go to engineering school, and became a chemical engineer. When I was a very little girl, my parents invited the cantor of our congregation (his name was Reuben Rinder, he is still very much remembered in the community

– it was said he had discovered Isaac Stern and Yehudi Menuhin) they invited him over to our house and he tested me to see if I was musical, and said I was. They were thrilled about that.

My parents always had a full subscription to the San Francisco Symphony. Once in a while when they couldn't go, I went.

UPDIKE Do you have any memories of the house on Sacramento Street when you went to take classes with Nettimae Clement there?

BERKOWITZ Nettimae taught me at my house, but I took classes there sometime later, when I was in grammar school. I remember going to classes and singing, and the only memory that I really have is that the children of the opera director Kurt Herbert Adler were also there in the class. That's all I can remember except just visual things. Actually, I was not aware of the fact that the Conservatory was an accredited school until I came to work for it. I thought it was just a music school – I didn't realize it was a college.

I joined the staff because I had a very good friend named Susan Gould who was a graduate of the Stanford Business School. She took that degree when she was in her 30s, and her first job after Stanford Business School was to become Director of Administration and Development at the Conservatory. She was having trouble with her business office, and at that time I was raising my family and trying to take some business classes at night – I took accounting classes. She asked me to stop taking accounting classes and come work for her. At that point – I had taken some part-time jobs too – I decided to quit my part-time jobs and go to school full-time to get an accounting degree. I wasn't sure I wanted to work for the Conservatory, so she brought Paul Resnick to talk to me. He said, "If you want to know how business works, this is a perfect job – you'll learn more here than you'll learn in school." So he persuaded me, and that was in February of 1978. I said, "Alright, I'll try – I'll take over the business office." I started full-time, and it quickly became apparent to me that I just couldn't be a good parent and run a household working full-time, so I worked 4/5 time for about a year and a half. Then, when Sue Gould left to go into private business, I took over as Director of Administration and Development, and I had to go full-time then. That was in 1980.

UPDIKE When you first joined the Conservatory, what was your impression of the school – the building and the atmosphere?

BERKOWITZ It was very informal, mostly. I thought the inside of the building was really unsightly – there were boxes all up and down the hall where people would put paper to be recycled. That was way before the days of recycling – before that became serious. I just couldn't stand all that garbage all over the place. I said, "You've got to put it away somewhere!" The business office was open from 9am to 5pm every workday, and every other office closed for

lunch. I couldn't understand why the business office couldn't close for lunch, too. So I decided we'd close for lunch, and Joan Gallegos got on the warpath, as she did many times about many things, and she raised a ruckus about it – but we still got our lunchtime. So I prevailed in that dispute. But people went in and out of offices – there was no real formality at all at the Conservatory, people stopped in the halls to talk – students, faculty and staff. It was a very comfortable place to work.

UPDIKE How many staff members were working in the business office at that time?

BERKOWITZ Well, I think there were four, including myself. One was only part-time – he was a payroll clerk by the name of John McCarthy. [He later became director of the Preparatory Department and is a very talented teacher.] The payroll was actually very laborious to prepare because every teacher's hours were counted [except for a few fulltime collegiate teachers] – they were never paid on a salary; they were paid by the number of hours they took every two weeks. We submitted that information to the Bank of America that did our payroll checks. I can remember calling the Bank of America once because there was some question, and they said, "We do not take incoming calls." That was how difficult it was to get some things done. But we didn't have any computers in those days, we used to post to ledgers in the old-fashioned way. We had a big old safe, and there was a ledger for every year. It was about four inches thick, and we posted in ink to that – it sounds like the dark ages! But we got our books to balance, and we passed the audit every year, so we did a good job. At that time also I had a big problem with the filing system in the business office. I never could find anything – everything was filed under "S" for "San Francisco Conservatory of Music"! So we redid the filing system.

UPDIKE What were some of your main responsibilities as director?

BERKOWITZ As business office manager? Well, I was responsible for the payroll, and making sure that all of our books were in order. We worked very hard during registration periods, because at that time no one pre-registered, and no one paid with credit cards. So we ended up with lots of cash, which we had to take down to the bank. We made a bank deposit every single day, but during registration I think we went more often, because we had a lot of cash. We had a safe that was always locked, so we could keep money in the office. I was responsible mainly for the business, for the audits, for collecting student loans, making sure that all the teachers were turning in their lesson tallies. The payroll had to come out on time, that was really imperative.

UPDIKE What were some of the big financial challenges that the Conservatory had when you started?

BERKOWITZ It seems that the challenges have always been the same. Especially then, some of the facilities were very old – we were out of space even though they had built Hellman Hall and some classrooms about ten years before that. There was a very small endowment, and it was important to have an endowment because we were overly dependent upon contributions and tuition, even then. I don't think there have been that many changes in the challenges because of the way a conservatory works, which is that there's an emphasis on one-on-one instruction, and we have very large faculty costs. Although getting into the Conservatory wasn't nearly as competitive then as it is now. We still had to give scholarships, because it seemed like the poorer the students were, the greater their talent was. So we gave a lot of scholarships – and also scholarships to Prep students.

UPDIKE What were some of the fundraising schemes that you had over the years?

BERKOWITZ Well, that gets more into the time when I became Director of Administration, so let me talk a little bit about that. I was interviewed for that job by Milton [Salkind] and June Kingsley. I felt that I was qualified for the job, but my qualifications were more for what I had done at the Conservatory previously, than any on paper. As I think Paul Resnick told you, Milton liked to take a chance on people, and he took a chance on me. He and I had always got along very well – right from the very beginning. He felt very comfortable with me, and I think that's why I got the job. I was hired to be both the administrative director and the development director. That meant that everyone in the Conservatory except the faculty, who reported to the dean, reported to me. That went from people who managed the physical plant to the secretary of the Prep department, and the telephone operator ... I had so many direct reports that it was ridiculous. And there was no development or PR department. So I hired the first development director, because I said, "If you really need to raise money, you can't do it on a part-time basis." In addition to that, I staffed all of the board committees – which meant that I not only had to get them organized, but I had to take all the minutes. So I was constantly doing a huge amount of work to keep up with the trustees as well as the other staff members. I remember reading that when you had a job, you always should go in in the morning with a list of what you wanted to accomplish that day. That was just not possible for me. We had an open-door policy, so anybody who wanted to could walk in and ask me a question or talk to me. I was mostly putting out fires all the time; it was hard for me to be able to get all the work done that I needed to do.

UPDIKE Who was the first director of development who you hired? Do you remember?

BERKOWITZ I remember his first name, which was Edwin. But I can't remember his last name. He used to work with a hat on because he was afraid the florescent

lights would give him cancer. Milton didn't like him. Milton didn't like most of the development and public relations people we had working for us. I think maybe it was because he was the development director, and he was the PR director ... but there were certain things that had to be done that he didn't have time to do.

UPDIKE

Could you talk a little bit about Milton Salkind?

BERKOWITZ

Milton was the kind of a man that – as I said, if he liked you, you could do no wrong. And if he didn't like you, you could do nothing right. We hired people who then in the end he turned out not to like, and I had to fire them. But we did manage to get some very good people to work for us. My office was next-door to his, so he would always come in and talk to me. I could more or less tell what he was up to. He taught quite a few students at that time – some Prep students and some collegiate students, and I loved listening to that. Also, he and Peggy would practice when it came time for Chamber Music West. They no longer really performed anywhere except at the Conservatory, at Chamber Music West. That was great for me to listen to. He understood that what the Conservatory needed was to have an endowment, because if it didn't have enough endowment, it wouldn't be able to weather any financial difficulties. And so he was always trying to raise money for the endowment, as well as the annual fund and other initiatives. He was less interested in the academic part of the school than in the outreach part of the school.

He did things that maybe wouldn't have been such a good idea in subsequent years. Like when the Ralph Lauren Polo store opened, he sent our entire orchestra down there to play for the opening. That meant that the orchestra couldn't rehearse at the school. All of our equipment – our chairs and music stands – had to get down there, we had to bus the students down there – it was extremely disruptive and the faculty weren't very happy about it. But he thought it was important for getting us out there into the community, because people really just didn't know the Conservatory, and they didn't know what we did or where we were. Only those people that drove up and down 19th Avenue had a vague idea of what we did. As he said, it was the biggest secret in town. He had other schemes like that, that were maybe frowned upon by the faculty but were really important to get the right people in here.

He was also very interested in how our publications looked. He loved to have colorful publications. I don't know if you've seen the Chamber Music West programs, but I thought they were quite gorgeous. Every year we would change the color scheme, and he'd go out into the hall and nab the first person who came along and say, "Do you like this color?" We called this process the "color committee" because he was always out there trying to get it just perfect. He also was a stickler for no spelling or grammatical mistakes in publications, and he really taught me how important that was, and it really was important that all our publications be first class,

and all the letters that went out. And that was in the days before computers, so it wasn't so easy to retype a letter.

UPDIKE Looking at a lot of the publications that the Conservatory produced from the '70s through I think the late '90s, it looks like there were a lot of changes in design over the years, and changes in logos. I always wondered if it was different people in the PR department coming in and changing that, or somebody higher up.

BERKOWITZ I'm not sure. There were different people in the PR department who changed it, and if Milton didn't like it he would just say, "OK, we need a new logo." I don't know how professional all of them were. One of the early ones looked like branches of a tree, and I think it was a drawing of a Ruth Asawa sculpture.

UPDIKE It was.

BERKOWITZ And Milton used to have, suspended over his desk, something that looked like that but was actually a tumbleweed. It came from the desert somewhere. I always thought there was a similarity in looks between some of Ruth Asawa's work and this tumbleweed.

UPDIKE That's interesting. What were some of the other fundraising ideas from the '70s? I know there was the Sing-It-Yourself Messiah, and the Bay Bridge Run.

BERKOWITZ I guess the Bay Bridge Run was the first stab at a community kind of fundraiser. It was in the days when new runs were popping up all over, and it was very popular. We got them to close the Bay Bridge for the first time ever in history. A friend of Susan Gould's and mine came in to run this event. We thought it was very successful, it raised \$2500. I guess it was a good first try, but then when we thought about it, it didn't really say anything about who we were as a conservatory.

Someone got the idea of doing a Sing-Along-Messiah, and it was such a perfect thing for us because it was something about who we were – bringing music to everybody in the community. It got us to showcase our orchestra and some of our singers, and it got us to Civic Center, so it was a perfect fundraiser. I don't know how it all came together so well, but there was a well-known choral conductor named Louis Magor, who conducted the first few runs of Sing-It-Yourself Messiah, and he was very charismatic, people just loved him. He was very good on the stage, too. But we had no idea if we were going to sell tickets, or if there was going to be anybody in the audience who could sing, so we made a great effort to get established choruses there. I don't remember if we gave them free tickets or not, but I think we did. It was touch and go, we just didn't have any idea if it was going to work out. But it actually worked out well. I'm

not sure whether the first performance was televised on KQED, but I think it was. We got the Emporium – a local department store – to underwrite it. So we made I think \$10,000 on the first one. And that one was in the Opera House because Davies Hall had not been finished yet.

So the first Sing-It-Yourself Messiah was really a triumph, and the second time we did it I think we sold out. Louis Magor did it again and KQED not only broadcast it live, but it was picked up by 32 stations all over the country. It really put us on the map. As the years went by, we made ever more and more money on it. We increased it to two nights; we gave priority ticketing to members of the Friends of the Conservatory, which was a big encouragement to join the Friends. People created their own little choruses and came in with their friends. In the end – the last one I think we made \$87,000 – or at least the highest we ever went was 87. Like all things, the Sing-It-Yourself Messiah was copied all over in the community, and it got very expensive because we had to cater to KQED's wishes, and some of them were not to our benefit. Eventually KQED no longer televised it, so that went away. But we were still able to do a couple of nights of Messiah for ten or twelve years. We added a dinner to the festivities, which honored somebody for their work at the Conservatory – it was called the Halo Dinner (halo as in an angel). We honored several of our trustees and other people close to the Conservatory. And we made some money on the dinner as well, that way. So it was with great sadness that eventually the Sing-It-Yourself Messiah was terminated. But it was a huge amount of work for the staff, and it got to a point where it gradually made less and less money. But it was one of the best things we ever did.

The first fundraising event I went to, before the Sing-It-Yourself Messiah was thought of, was an idea that John Anderson had. It was called Ribs and Ragtime. We imported barbeque ribs from Kansas City and we had Jeff Kahane and Robin Sutherland play ragtime. It was held at a restaurant on Gold Street, downtown. It was fun ... I have no idea how much money we made, but we had all kinds of fundraisers. Another one was called Mao to Mozart, and that was the year before we had our Chinese students at the Conservatory. There was a film made of Isaac Stern's trip to China, working with Chinese musicians, and I don't think it had been released yet in San Francisco. So Milton got on his phone and got the Chinese Consulate here to let us have a showing of the film in the consulate. And then he called one of his special "angel friends" who was not on the board, but who was very generous, to underwrite the whole thing. We had a Mao to Mozart benefit for the Chinese scholarships, and that was a wonderful movie, and lots of fun.

Talking about the Chinese students – I think that idea was hatched with Agnes Albert and one of our trustees also, named Charles Russell, who never attended a meeting and didn't live in San Francisco – but he was quite wealthy and a very good friend of Milton's. I think the two of them went with Milton to pick out the students the year before they came. Somehow my job widened to include being the students' sort of housemother. I didn't go to the house but we got somebody to live in the house with them. I felt that it wasn't really my job to take care of those students, even though I wanted them to succeed and I wanted them to have a good experience. I think they

did succeed, and they did have a good experience, but there were things that we couldn't prevent from happening to people who had never had any freedom before, and all of a sudden were turned loose in this big free-wheeling city. But I think that was a successful venture, and I guess they stayed at the Conservatory for fifteen months, and some of them never went back to China.

UPDIKE Do you remember was year that was?

BERKOWITZ The Chinese students came in the '80s. I think it was '81, '82.

UPDIKE Do you know if they were from Shanghai?

BERKOWITZ They were from Shanghai. They were auditioned at the Shanghai Conservatory.

UPDIKE Is there anything you'd like to say about the Music Marathons?

BERKOWITZ Oh, they were fun. You know, this was another way that Milton thought we could get out into the community. And the great thing about them was we had a lot of Conservatory faculty and students playing – but they did have to audition. Milton was very, very critical musically. He did not want anyone whom he couldn't endorse playing there. It was first broadcast live on KALW, which was one of three classical music stations. KQED had also broadcast classical music part of the time – it didn't go to an all-talk format until sometime in the '80s. So KALW broadcast the marathons I think a couple of years, and then after that KQED did it. Here is another thing that just took so much work from so many people. There was criticism because it deflected us from some of the things that maybe we should have been doing otherwise, but I think the reason was a valid one – we just had to get out there, be heard.

UPDIKE Would you like to comment on the roles of public relations and development when you started working with them, and how they might have changed over the years?

BERKOWITZ Well, I think that both public relations and development became more professional as the years went by. We had an awful lot of people in those positions, and some were better than others. Development expanded to include the Friends of the Conservatory, which eventually became something like "The Conservatory Society" which was developed during Ann Otter's chairmanship. But the demands on the fundraising department were quite extensive. You had to not only write grants, but you had to go out into the community and talk to people and solicit contributions from foundations which needed a lot of research. Milton was out there always knocking on doors, but his reach wasn't always as great as it should be in terms of small people – small donations who might someday become big donations. There were times

when he ended up making a few enemies – I don't know why. There was one woman whom he just couldn't stand because she was so boring. She used to come and bring him cookies. But she gave some money to the endowment, and he had to eat those cookies, and he had to put up with her. Everybody did what they could to get people interested in the Conservatory.

There was always a question as to whether public relations should report to development or be its own department, and public relations included in that time all publications – including the academic catalog and everything to do with student recruitment. Milton felt that public relations should be its own department and not report to development. That was in the days before development was called “advancement”. Advancement really encapsulates what both of those did.

UPDIKE Is there anything that you could comment on about the academic environment over the years?

BERKOWITZ I didn't get too much involved in academic things. In fact there were many part-time faculty members that I really didn't know at all. The ones that I knew were people who wanted advances on their paychecks, and people who had some specific problems. But I did of course know the full-time faculty pretty well. It was a small place, and everybody would congregate in the room where the copy machines and the coffee machines were. I of course was responsible for the financial parts of the self-study and accreditation, and to that extent I got involved in it. I do remember once the scholarship committee was missing a member, and I was asked to sit on that committee for one day. It really opened my eyes, because I had never really imagined what was done in the scholarship committee. I was certainly not qualified to vote on who should get a scholarship and how much they should get. It was serious business, and a very important thing that a Conservatory did every spring.

I was always aware that the Conservatory prided itself as being as little competitive as possible. Milton said that he was on a committee that went to accredit Juilliard once, and some students came and told him that they felt the atmosphere at Juilliard was far too competitive, and uncomfortably so. And so Milton really was interested in keeping an intimacy and informality at the Conservatory. His door was always open, the dean's door was always open, my door was always open. Faculty got together, talked with students whom they didn't even teach, and the layout of the Conservatory made that very possible because it was small and there were only two floors. People hung out together and I think when Colin took over as president he cared a lot that that same feeling be maintained, but he was interested in organizing the academic parts of the Conservatory in a more conventional way, so that it would work better and there would be faculty governance, which was lacking during Milton's tenure. But I think Colin also realized that the atmosphere at the Conservatory was something that made it very special, and he was

interested in including that. That's why in the new building, it was a conscious decision to let the music from the practice rooms bleed out into the halls.

UPDIKE Would you like to share any memories of the Preparatory department in its early years when you were there?

BERKOWITZ Well, the Prep was ... Milton was very interested in the Prep, and in fact May Kurka was a protégé of his. He got her to come and run the Prep. May was a very fine teacher, I understand. She really cared about her students, and Prep got very fine students. She had kind of a tragic life. She was Japanese, and was interned during the Second World War, when the Japanese Americans were interned in camps in Nevada and other places. After the war she married Robert Kurka, who was a composer, and he died extremely young, leaving her to raise her child. She worked terribly hard at the Conservatory, I think she taught as well as administered the Prep – but she was really a musician, and was more interested in teaching and the quality of teaching, and hiring good teachers than she was in an actual administration.

But the Prep always had wonderful students. I remember Milton had a student named Teknalbder Winesberry, and he told me that Teknalbder was going to be a student that either made it all the way to the top spectacularly, or he was going to fizzle out. And Teknalbder's first name was "Red Blanket" spelled backwards. Imagine parents who inflict that name on their child. He went to Oberlin, and his family – they were very conservative, religious people – they took him to Oberlin after he was admitted, and they saw some rather racy announcements on a bulletin board and so they brought him home again without enrolling. So I don't know what happened to him after that, but I think his career fizzled, unfortunately – he was very talented. So he was one student in the Prep that I remember quite vividly, because he had such an unusual story.

UPDIKE Do you have any memories to share about the Extension program – the Adult Extension program?

BERKOWITZ I guess when I became Director of Administration, there were very few Extension classes, and I always thought that that would be a good outreach program too, because there were people who had discretionary income that they could spend on music classes, and they would get to take lessons from people who were very fine musicians. Not only private lessons, but classes. And so at one point we tried to expand the class offerings, and we did a lot of work on that. We did have quite a wide variety of offerings, but it was never really given the administrative attention that it deserved, and I don't think May Kurka was terribly interested in it, and I couldn't do too much about it. I think now there are hardly any Extension classes at all, and the Conservatory can only do a few things well and that's one of the things that they couldn't do well. They had a teacher named Robert Greenberg who was a very big draw. He taught music history – all different aspects. He was a big draw, and his classes always filled. There were also

classes preparing for the Sing-It-Yourself Messiah that were popular. And there was class piano and we had people from the Opera teaching classes about opera. There's something in San Francisco called the Fromm Institute, which has now kind of taken over a lot of what the adult extension tried to do, and it's during the day, which is better for retired people. Business men and women found it difficult to go out to 19th Avenue to take classes at night.

UPDIKE What can you tell us about the beginnings of the chamber music center?

BERKOWITZ Well, from where I sat, Bonnie Hampton and Milton got in a room and invented it. And they came out of the room, and they said, "We're going to have a chamber music center, and we're going to have a chamber music major, and it's going to be the first in the country and it's going to be something that we're going to be famous for." And they made it happen. That's how it happened. I think they got some very talented students at the very beginning – Seth Knopp and Violaine Melançon – they got married and were very good and very telegenic, and very good spokespeople for the program. It was a very good program, and we had a lot of teachers here who were very fine chamber music artists who could tutor them. Right from the very beginning the Juilliard String Quartet came, and several other very famous people, some of whom had participated in Chamber Music West. Maybe it kind of grew out of Chamber Music West.

UPDIKE Could you talk a little bit about Chamber Music West?

BERKOWITZ Chamber Music West started before I became involved with the Conservatory. I think Milton started it. Milton had a lot of friends in the music community all over the country, and he invited them to come and play with our students. When it first started – actually the whole time – we got housing for these people. We didn't put them up in hotels, we got trustees and other friends of Milton's to give them housing. We entertained them, and it was a wonderful atmosphere where they interacted with everyone in the Conservatory. It was a good use of our facilities in the summer, besides. I think it was quite successful. I think Gordon Getty underwrote it from the very beginning. Milton always said that the reason there was so much Dvořák played – Gordon Getty liked Dvořák.

I used to go ... I went to practically every performance, and it gave me a special love for chamber music. The Tokyo String Quartet came, and my husband and I got to get Sadao Harada, who was the cellist, to stay with us twice. We became very good friends of his – he was quite an extraordinary man, who later went on to become a cello professor at the Conservatory under Colin's regime for one year. It didn't work out, but he was a very fine cellist. I don't know what's happened to him, I think he lives in Germany. Peter Oundjian was the first violinist. Peter Oundjian was a very good friend of both Milton's and Ava Jean's [Brumbaum]. He stayed with

Ava Jean every time he came. I think that Peter had to give up his post as being violinist because of physical problems. He became a conductor, and he's a very well-known conductor now.

UPDIKE Is there anything else that you'd like to share about chamber music at the Conservatory over the years?

BERKOWITZ I loved to go to the master classes that were given in connection with that program, even after Chamber Music West was discontinued we had chamber music residencies regularly throughout the academic year. Those are wonderful concerts, my favorites.

UPDIKE Is there anything that you'd like to say about the Conservatory's Community Service Program?

BERKOWITZ The Community Service Program was one of Milton's ideas, he started it before I started at the Conservatory. He felt that the Conservatory needed to give back something to the community, and he wanted to make music available for people who otherwise would have no access to classical music. He also thought that it was very good for the students to learn to play in different kinds of venues, and talk to their audiences. Marcia Ehrlich, who had been a secretary for the dean and Milton and me – we felt that she was overqualified for that job and we got her to run Community Service, and Music-to-Go, which is the employment agency that the Conservatory runs to send people out on gigs. She ran those organizations very well. I think that actually before Marcia, Mack [McCray] was the first faculty member who ran the Community Service Program, and then we had an organist who was in charge, Wyatt Insko.

UPDIKE These are things that you've already talked about a little bit, but I'll just go over them briefly in case there's anything else you'd like to add. We were wondering if you had memories of master classes at the Conservatory – I know you talked about chamber music master classes, but are there any others that stand out to you over the year? Probably many.

BERKOWITZ Yo-Yo Ma, I think, and Thomas Hampson. But there were lots of them ... I was reading through some old reports, I saw that even Pavarotti gave a master class here, but I don't think I attended that. I remember when I first went into the business office and started working there, I found out what master classes were, and we had all these strange names that we would write receipts for, for people who were buying tickets ... their names were "Anner Bylsma" and things like that. That's how I got familiar with some of these famous people who gave master classes at the Conservatory, by writing receipts!

UDPIKE Is there anything you'd like to say about the Conservatory's relations with China over the years? I know you talked a little about the first students who came over, and the Shanghai program started pretty recently.

BERKOWITZ Actually, we had increasing numbers of Chinese students coming to the Conservatory, and at that time they didn't have any resources at all so they all had to have scholarships. They didn't qualify for government grants or anything, so it was very difficult. Some of our most talented students came from China and from other countries in Asia, and the faculty became very interested in going to audition students in Asia. I think the Sister Conservatories program developed from that. I can't remember when it was originated, but by the time it was signed, Colin was the president and I was at the signing of the document that made us Sister Conservatories, so that was maybe ten years ago.

UPDIKE I think it was almost exactly ten years ago. And is there anything that you'd like to say about donor groups at the Conservatory? I think the Friends of the Conservatory was founded officially in 1975, so that was a little bit before you came. But are there any other donor groups that you saw the beginnings of, and how they evolved over the years?

BERKOWITZ Well, the Friends was started by John Anderson. It was his baby, and he ran the meetings. They went on for quite a long time, and then for some reason the Friends kind of was dissolved into general fundraising. There was also a guild, and I think the guild was run by Kris Getz, if I'm not mistaken. They ran the Music Rack, which was the bookstore where they sold books and records, and there used to be used music sales. She must have told you that in her interview.

UPDIKE She talked about the beginnings of that.

BERKOWITZ My predecessor as business office manager came through the guild; I don't think she had any business experience. Sue Gould and she did not get along, and that's why I stepped in. But then there were no other groups until Ann Otter decided we should have sort of structured groups of donors named after different musical words. This happened when I was a trustee and served on the development committee. We called this whole project the Conservatory Society, and different levels got different benefits. This was all in an effort to encourage people to give more every year. We also established the Fanfare Luncheon, which was intended as a reward for members of the higher levels of the Conservatory Society. That happened maybe 15 years ago. I think that that has fallen by the wayside too – I'm not sure. I don't know how they're doing it now.

UPDIKE Is there anything that you'd like to say about the building at Ortega Street – the courtyard that Kris started, or the amount of practice rooms?

BERKOWITZ Well, the building was always a problem, both its location and its facilities. Milton liked the location, actually. He thought it was easier for students to find housing in the Sunset than it would be anyplace else. While people kept saying, "You should really move to the Civic Center," he kind of resisted it. The building was always a problem – if it wasn't one thing breaking it was another – the boiler and paint jobs. It was a real struggle to keep it looking halfway decent. We had a building and grounds committee, but it was mostly me and a trustee named David Hall who did the heavy lifting.

I had a terrible time with the building because I didn't understand how those things worked. There was a man who was the husband of one of our faculty members who used to come in and help me. He would be lurking around the Conservatory all the time, and he sort of served as my advisor with respect to the facilities – like once we got a notice from the government that we had to upgrade some of our toilets because they didn't meet the Americans with Disabilities Act, and I had no clue what that was about. That was before the age of the internet, where you could find out anything about anything. But this man drove me crazy. I could hear his booming voice down the halls, and he would come in and plant himself next to my desk, and talk to me. It took a lot of my time, so it got so that when I would hear his voice I'd pick up the receiver on my phone and pretend to be talking so he wouldn't bother me.

Finally, at one point Milton went to some party and he met the architect Michael Graves, who at that time had just completed the Portland Building. He was a very well-known architect who just died this year; he was the one who designed the famous teapot that was sold at Target that looked like a rooster. This was before he had grown so populist. He designed the Portland Building, and he designed a very beautiful library in Southern California that my husband actually went to see. Milton asked him if he would consider making some plans for an addition to the Conservatory to take up part of the parking lot and house that we owned on 20th Avenue. The atmosphere in the city was very against anybody removing housing stock – I think it still is. So this was going to be a problem for us with the city, but we went ahead and went through all the motions of what you have to do if you're going to add to the building.

We had neighborhood meetings – we had drafted an environmental impact report – we had to update our master plan, of course we started thinking about where we were going to get the money to do this. People who worked for Michael Graves took us to a winery in Napa called Clos Pegase that he had just recently designed. John Anderson said, "You are going to pay the architect the same fee no matter if he's famous or not. So why not get a famous architect and put yourself on the map?" But then I began to see reasons why we would actually be paying more if we used him, because all the hardware was specially specified, and all the way down from there

... it was going to be an issue. But we went through and had an assessment made of the existing building. We raised at least one million dollars, and we had drawings and sketches and everything.

It was during the time that we assessed our existing building that we discovered it was seismically unsound – its walls were filled with rubble and in an earthquake they would be very unstable. So we decided that we had to fix the existing building before we did anything else, and the Michael Graves plan just sort of collapsed. That was in 1987 or '88, and so in the end we closed the building for four or five months in the summer. I don't know where everybody went to – I remember my office was in one of the houses that the Conservatory owned next to its property. I think that was the summer that Colin moved in – poor Colin's office was in a bedroom in the house. At that time we also enclosed some of the attic spaces to create a larger space for the library, and we did a couple of other cosmetic things. But we didn't really make too much of a dent on our practice facilities – we did add some modular practice rooms in the basement – you could just bring the practice room in and snap it together and there it was. They were always fixing things, the facilities were never really what they should have been. Colin's dream, I think, when he became president, was to really fix that. And he did. But I will say that working with Michael Graves was quite interesting for me. He made some sketches of what our building would look like ... there were statues on the top. It looked sort of like the top of the Duomo in Milan. It was done in his characteristic yellow and white. We had one of them framed and it was on Milton's wall, I think. But when we had to disengage ourselves from Michael Graves he took away his sketches, because they would become very valuable, and they were his property. There was something else to do with facilities that you asked me, and I can't remember what it was.

UPDIKE I asked about the courtyard.

BERKOWITZ Oh, the courtyard. Kris [Getz] always loved to garden, she was always gardening. From the time I first started working at the Conservatory, she was out there gardening all the time. She helped in the Music Rack and she gardened, and she ran the second-hand music and record sales. At one point she gave some money to really do the courtyard in memory of her husband who had recently passed away. She hired a landscape architect, and it looked just beautiful, it really did. But we did not have the manpower to keep it up, and I think Kris herself couldn't keep it up. It didn't fulfill her dream as much as it should have.

UPDIKE Is there anything else you'd like to say about fundraising?

BERKOWITZ When I got to the Conservatory, they were working on a Mellon grant, and a matching grant from the NEA, the National Endowment for the Arts. They were completed in my first years as Director of Administration. We also had a yearly grant from the

National Endowment for the Arts, for which you had to apply. All the conservatories had a consortium called ACIM. I think Milton was one of the founders of ACIM, and it consisted of eight independent conservatories – Association of Independent Conservatories of Music. There was someone at the Cleveland Institute who sort of did the grunt work for it. We had meetings on the East Coast because we were the only conservatory west of the Mississippi. We had meetings in New York and Boston; I went to a few, Milton went every year. AICM prevailed upon NEA to give the conservatories \$40,000 a year for scholarships. So the first year I was Director of Administration I also had to write the grant for NEA. My predecessor said to me, “Just copy last year’s, that’s what I did.” So I copied last year’s and sent it in, and I got a call from the director saying, “You can’t just copy last year’s! And besides – it’s for this, not that!” And so that was my introduction to grant writing, but we were very lucky to get that – that was a lot of money in those days. As you know, NEA in the Republican years didn’t do very well, and we didn’t get any money from them at all after that. But we did get money from the hotel tax fund; we got up to \$90,000 a year from the hotel tax fund at one time. And we also got money from CIFA, which was a work program. I collaborated with Steve Shapiro from the Community Music Center to write a CIFA grant. I don’t think we got it, but we became very friendly, and I’m still friendly with Steve, who is retired from the Music Center now. Other fundraising initiatives – we were always out raising money for endowment, we raised money for the building program, and no sooner did we finish one fundraising appeal than the next one started. I think that is the case today as well.

UPDIKE
Conservatory?

What do you remember about Milton’s retirement from the

BERKOWITZ I can’t actually remember when he said he wanted to retire, but it was during the chairmanship of John Anderson and John developed a search committee. I was the only staff member on the search committee. I remember there were several faculty members – Mack was on it, I think ... Nate Schwartz was on it ... maybe Joan Gallegos, and Michael Savage and John Anderson. It was a very intensive process, it really was quite thorough, I thought. We hired search consultants, but I think that the committee itself should have done more of the legwork, and should have made independent inquiries, which probably we didn’t do – we depended too much on the search consultants. I think Milton was not well, and he was anxious to retire, so it was a relief to him when we did get a replacement for him. Unfortunately it didn’t work out. You know, sometimes when you have a very strong leader you look for the opposite and you end up with the wrong kind of a person. But after that we got Colin, who turned out to be just the right person.

I was thinking about how Colin came to be at the Conservatory, and it was because Milton went to the NASM meeting just before Thanksgiving every year. That year [1988], he went to find a dean. He told me he found somebody he thought would be perfect. Robert Fitzpatrick, who was

here for a year and a half just now as acting dean told me that he actually was at a restaurant where Milton and Colin were having dinner and talking, and he was present at that time when Milton was courting Colin, and Colin was very interested in the Conservatory. I remember when Colin came out to interview with trustees and other members of the Conservatory community, he stayed at the house of the sister of one of our trustees, which happens to be on the block where I now live. And he came and was told that I would take him out for lunch the first day, and he couldn't figure out why they got the secretary to take him out for lunch. Then he found out that I wasn't the secretary. I remember we had a very nice lunch – Colin and I always got along very well. Once he found out I wasn't the secretary.

July 30, 2015

UPDIKE So, last time we left off with Colin Murdoch coming to the Conservatory and becoming president. When did you stop working at the Conservatory?

BERKOWITZ I think that I retired or resigned as of June 30, 1992. I just felt like I had other parts of my life that I needed to explore, and one day I was going to work and my family was waving me goodbye – they were on their way to go windsurfing – and I felt that I was missing something. So I retired in '92, and it wasn't very long afterwards that I was asked to join the board of trustees – but I didn't want to, I needed to establish some distance. I would be dealing with staff on a different level, and I thought it was important for the staff and for me to sit back and not do anything for a few years. At that time I went on the board of the Community Music Center, because Steve Shapiro – then the director – and I had been very friendly ever since the beginning of both of our tenures, where we had applied for a grant together. That was fun to see – the Community Music Center – and compare it with the Conservatory. They have different goals, a very different kind of student body, and of course the Music Center isn't a college, but they do very good work.

UPDIKE So what was it that convinced you to come on the board of trustees at the Conservatory?

BERKOWITZ Well, I had dinner with Colin and Didi, and they both wanted me to come on, and I was ready in 1997 to do that. I don't think that Didi had even been on the board of trustees when I left – or if she was, she was not the chair. I guess she was the chairperson when I first joined the board.

UPDIKE And what were the main responsibilities of the board at that time?

BERKOWITZ I think always the most important responsibility of the board is governance. We had to look into the future and see what the needs of the school would be, and were encouraged to do that by Colin, of course. We supported Colin, and he knew that he had to affect some kind of a move – that our physical plant just wasn't going to work for the long haul. But it wasn't right away that we started that push, it was coming, though.

The trustees have always been active and involved in the school. I think it depends a lot on who the president of the school is. In Colin's day he encouraged us to take part in whatever we could, but of course always recognizing that the board has an oversight role, and must not get into managing. One of the things that we did during his tenure was – in addition to having a performance at every board meeting, we also had sort of themes for the board meetings, and different faculty members would come and talk to us about how they saw the school and what

they taught in their classes, so it wasn't just instrumentalists – it was also people who taught music history and other things that we really didn't know much about. So it gave us an appreciation for the school from the inside.

UPDIKE Could you talk a little about how the Conservatory was different under Colin Murdoch than it was under the leadership of Milton Salkind?

BERKOWITZ Well, I think Colin Murdoch came from an academic background, so that was really the most important difference between them. Colin established certain governance – when he was the dean he started that. Faculty governance was very important to him, and he really sort of professionalized the school in a different way than Milton did. Milton was always interested in quality performances and quality music, but it wasn't from the academic point of view. Milton was really not interested in administration at all. He was very happy to let me do anything and everything, and I did do everything and anything for too long! But Colin was much more organized about what his own responsibilities were. He really did take all of the work of all of the committees very seriously. He educated himself about finance, and investment, and budgeting was very important to him. Milton was very happy to leave that to me. Although he attended meetings as the president, I think the trustees and I did more of the business work of the Conservatory than in Colin's day.

UPDIKE What can you tell us about the campaign for the move to 50 Oak Street?

BERKOWITZ I don't really remember when the campaign started, but I do know that Colin will be the one who can tell you the most interesting things about that. It was due to Mrs. Hume that the campaign became a reality, and that was because of Colin's intense focus on making it become a reality. Colin really knew we needed to move, and he spent a lot of time walking around the Civic Center area, trying to familiarize himself with all the little nooks and crannies and seeing how it would feel to be down there. I think at the same time he was talking to donors about this, and it was he who really got the gift from Mrs. Hume – I would say single-handedly, but you'll have to ask him.

UPDIKE And what about the relocation to 50 Oak Street? Were you there when the school was moving to Civic Center?

BERKOWITZ Just as a board member. I know that the first year after they moved into Oak Street was a disaster for the staff because the building wasn't really finished when they moved. There were lots of incidental things that happened during the construction that delayed the calendar quite a bit, so that when school started the building wasn't quite ready. They had to

put up with an awful lot. It was probably the hardest year that the staff went through, from what I hear. But the physical move – I was thankfully very far away from.

UPDIKE In your opinion, has the change to the Civic Center and the building that the Conservatory is in – has that changed the character of the school?

BERKOWITZ I think it's inevitable, because there's more square footage, so you just don't run into as many of the same people all the time. I think they've tried to maintain this feeling of intimacy and informality, but I don't think that it's quite as free-wheeling as it was in the Sunset District. Maybe it's for the better. I certainly think the students have much better facilities at Oak Street, and that can't help but improve the quality of instruction.

UPDIKE Shall we start talking about some Conservatory members? Should we start with Paul Resnick?

BERKOWITZ Paul Resnick, whom I think you have already interviewed, was the one who really convinced me to take the job. He's always had a soft spot in his heart for the Conservatory. He did a lot of work with Milton and John Beckman in the early days to get the school on a more business like footing. I am still amused to see that we use the same budget format that he developed all those years ago. But the budget has grown considerably since then.

UPDIKE Did you want to talk a little bit about Kay Coleman?

BERKOWITZ Kay is a wonderful person. She started working at the Conservatory I think in 1989. I hired her to be the secretary for Stephen Brown [president for a short time], and Colin [as dean] and me. She was always discreet and organized, but I would say the best thing about Kay was that she is just a wonderful human being. Colin also – they were a good pair, because they both cared a lot about people. Kay was friendly and warm with all of the people she had to come in contact with, and she was the one that if you wanted to know how someone was doing, you would call her. Yet she was very discreet. She managed the board meetings after I left, and all of the logistics and making sure all the materials were ready. She cared about people's comfort, she was just a wonderful person. She retired a few years ago, and she left Jen in her place, and Jen is doing a great job, but has even more responsibility now as being the assistant to the president.

UPDIKE And Diana Cohen?

BERKOWITZ Diana Cohen was somebody that we hired to do our PR. She's the one that developed the logo that's the swirl – if you see that, you can think about her. But I don't know what's happened to her.

Julie Karres. Julie was a typical telephone operator. At the time that I started working at the Conservatory, we had a manual switchboard, which means that there were cords that you plugged into sockets. So whenever you called, it was Julie or one of her student employees that answered. Julie knew my father's voice, and so when he called she was under instructions to try and dissuade him from disturbing me, but she would always call me and say, "Your father's on the phone! Do you want to talk to him?" She was wonderful. She also took very good care of our temperamental copy machines, and was always trying to make sure that we didn't misuse them. There was a sign over them saying, "Your mother does not work here. Please clean up after yourself." She was always cleaning up after everybody, she was the one that did the coffee all day long, and she was a very important person to everybody here at the Conservatory.

UPDIKE And Marcia Ehrlich?

BERKOWITZ Marcia was the secretary to me and the dean and Milton, but I think I mentioned before that she was really overqualified for doing that, and we gave her the job of overseeing the Community Service Program and Music To Go. She was very detail oriented, and was very good at that.

Do you want me to talk about Colleen [Katsowitz]? I'm sure you've heard a lot about Colleen. She was the director of student services, and Ruby Pleasure was the registrar. They had a little office where they took care of all the students. They knew where every student was every minute of the day. Colleen had an office that looked about like your archives, only things were not so neatly stacked. She had papers all over the place – your hair would stand on end! But, if she needed something, she could put her finger on it in a minute. Colleen was not only smart, but extremely wise, and if you wanted advice you would go to her. Milton often asked her for advice. I think she started out here as Milton's secretary. She was a very wonderful person, and we all missed her terribly when she passed away.

UPDIKE And Warren Hashagen?

BERKOWITZ Warren was a friend of mine from one of the first times I walked into the Conservatory. He was the head of the audit team from Touche Ross, that worked on our books. So I knew him when I was the business office manager, and I followed his career. He later became a partner at Touche Ross, I believe, and then he went to the Gap, who was one of Touche's clients. He worked at the Gap, and became a very important person there. I was the one who suggested – he served, I think, as a volunteer on one of either our budget or finance committee, and I think I suggested that he be named to the board. He was not only a good board member – he knew what a board member should do. He took over as chairman of the board at a crucial time – just when we were starting to gear up for our capital campaign. He just did a

fantastic job, and I thought he was a wonderful board chairman, as well as a wonderful person. It was one of the sorrows of my life when he died so young and so tragically from cancer. I saw him just a few days before he died, and I told him that, and I told him, “I know you have provided well for your family when you’re gone, but I’ll be watching.”

UPDIKE Archibald Calhoun?

BERKOWITZ Arch Calhoun was the chair of the board when I first started working at the Conservatory. He was a former diplomat, and was very interested in making the Conservatory appear to be very well run. I took minutes of the meetings, and I remember he corrected them and added a lot of adjectives, but nothing too substantive. He wanted things to be perfect. I think he followed John Beckman as the chair. John was ... I don’t think John was the chair when I started working at the Conservatory, I can’t remember exactly how it was. If he was the chair, he left a few months later. But in his book that he wrote a few years ago, he talked about me as a volunteer, and I was not a volunteer at the time he knew me.

UPDIKE James Schwabacher?

BERKOWITZ Jim was a very, very close pal of Milton Salkind’s, and he cared terribly much about the Conservatory – especially the voice department. He was very active in all musical circles in San Francisco during his lifetime. I’m sure he’s greatly missed.

Ava Jean Brumbaum ... I guess she was a board member when I first became involved with the Conservatory. She had been on the Symphony board for a long, long time, also. She had a tragic life, because she had four children – two of whom died of AIDS, and another died of an asthma attack when her children were very young. Ava Jean was a very courageous woman. I remember she came to talk to an assembly in Hellman Hall of our students about AIDS, and after having lost two sons I can’t imagine how she did it, but she did. She told the students about AIDS and how to prevent it. I know that she did a lot of volunteer work with AIDS patients, too. She was widowed during the time that I was employed at the Conservatory, and she remarried and it was so nice that she found another soulmate that she could have a happy life with.

UPDIKE Agnes Albert?

BERKOWITZ Agnes was just Milton’s advisor. Agnes was also on the Symphony board. Agnes herself was a concert-level pianist, but I don’t know if she actually ever performed. She was one of the great spirits behind the Conservatory. She helped with the Chinese students, and she was very generous with her time, her advice, and her money. I know that there was a scholarship she named called the Prevost Scholarship [Germain Prevost Viola Scholarship].

UPDIKE Michael Savage?

BERKOWITZ I think he was the chair right after John Anderson. Michael had a very interesting career – he was an oil company executive, and during the time he was the chair here he was working for an oil company. But after I left the Conservatory, and after he left the chairmanship of the board, he went to work for the San Francisco Opera, and was sort of the executive director of the Opera when they remodeled the Opera house, so he had a huge job there.

UPDIKE Peggy Salkind?

BERKOWITZ Peggy I didn't see that much, only when she came to talk to Milton, which she did quite often – she would stop by and say hello. But I didn't come across her that much, otherwise. I have a lot of nice letters that she wrote me, she was very gracious.

UPDIKE Bonnie Hampton?

BERKOWITZ Bonnie was such a wonderful teacher, and one of the sort of links in the chain of the cello faculty, because she had been a student of Margaret Rowell's, and she was such a dedicated teacher. You could always tell – her students were the ones that didn't look down at the cello when they were playing – they looked up. Her husband was Nate Schwartz, who served on the presidential search committee with me. Nate Schwartz was a wonderful, wonderful pianist, but he lived in his own piano world. He didn't know how to organize his life whatsoever, Bonnie did that for him. He didn't drive, Bonnie did that for him. I think the presidential search was kind of an eye-opener for him, but he was a very nice man, too.

UPDIKE John Adams?

BERKOWITZ John Adams. He taught at the Conservatory only for a few years when I was first involved. The only thing I can remember is one of his students was given a grade that she didn't think she deserved, and she also had some kind of mental disability and was not very stable. She threatened to kill John Adams. I was trying to make sure that didn't happen, but found out that there was really no way that we could prevent it. They told me if we ever saw her on campus, to call the police. Thankfully, we never saw her, and that was my most searing memory of John Adams here.

UPDIKE That's hard to forget. Laurette Goldberg?

BERKOWITZ Laurette Goldberg – everybody loved Laurette Goldberg. She was really the first person in the Bay Area, and maybe in the country, who took original instruments

– who took that movement seriously. I do remember that every March when it was Bach’s birthday she would buy Bach Beer for everybody. She was the soul of the Baroque music department.

UPDIKE And Mack McCray?

BERKOWITZ Mack somehow got it into his mind that I was a Republican, and he used to tease me mercilessly about Reagan. I don’t know why, because I don’t think I was a Republican – but he just had it in his mind that I was. He loved to come in and tell stories – he told most of his stories to Colleen, but once in a while he told me a few. He and I always had a cordial but teasing relationship.

UPDIKE Willene Gunn?

BERKOWITZ Willene Gunn was the head of the opera program. I don’t know how she managed on the shoestring that she had to put on those productions. She did a great job – people liked her, and they were willing to work for her for practically nothing. She had these people year after year who put time and blood and energy into their program. I think she’s still around, and she comes by every once and a while. But she was a very nice person.

UPDIKE Joan Gallegos?

BERKOWITZ I think I did mention that when Joan wanted something, she was kind of boisterous. So sometimes she liked you, and if she didn’t like something you did, you heard about it.

Beulah Forbes ... I guess she taught piano, but what I knew her as was a jazz pianist. She used to do something called the Richard Howe Rag, where she stuck in snippets of classical music, and it was a very good inside joke, and I didn’t get all of it, of course. But she was a great jazz pianist.

UPDIKE Dorothy Steinmetz?

BERKOWITZ Dorothy Steinmetz was the head of the humanities programs – general studies, I guess they call it now. Dorothy – I think she taught German and also history. She was a very good teacher, very devoted, I think. Again, the staff was not quite as involved with the faculty and students as they probably are now. So although I served on committees with Dorothy, and I knew her, I didn’t know her as well as other members of the staff, for instance.

UPDIKE Are there any other members of the board, or the staff, that you can think of who you’d like to mention?

BERKOWITZ I just want to say one thing about Bess Touma, who just recently retired from the Conservatory. I knew her only in my role as trustee, since our employment at the Conservatory didn't overlap. Bess was somebody who ... I think she was on the staff for fifteen years, and she knew all of our donors. She knew everything about all of our donors, and our donors loved her. I think she did a great job for getting people really invested in the Conservatory.

UPDIKE We've talked about this a little bit, but I'll ask the question anyway – how is the Conservatory different today than when you first joined in the 1970s?

BERKOWITZ Well today it's going in new directions. I think we have a president who has come to the conclusion that the old conservatory model is not viable in today's world. And I think he's making sure that our graduates will have what it takes to make their way through the world after they leave the Conservatory, and that the Conservatory will have enough money to effectuate the programs that we need to educate our students. It's always been hard for musicians to make their way in the world, and I think it's becoming harder and harder. But there are also all kinds of new ways where musicians can serve in the digital arts and games and movies, and things that we haven't even yet thought of.

UPDIKE Our next question is – what has your association with the Conservatory meant to you?

BERKOWITZ I have tried throughout the years to talk about the Conservatory with as many people that I come in contact with that I can, because I think number one – I care about it, and number two – I think that's what a trustee should do. Because you're the mouthpiece in the community for the institution.

UPDIKE Is there anything you'd like to share about your involvement with other arts and music organizations in the area?

BERKOWITZ I mentioned that I was on the board of the Community Music Center. When I went on the Conservatory board, I resigned from the board of the Music Center. My husband has been involved for years with the Asian Art Museum, and that has been great for us because we've met a whole group of really interesting people, and we've gotten to travel in Asia, and learned a lot about Asian art. My husband was very influential during the building of the current Asian Art Museum in what was originally San Francisco's main library building. Some of the experience he had in that I was able to transmit to some of the people at the Conservatory when they were building this building.

UPDIKE
education today?

And is there anything you'd like to say on the importance of music

BERKOWITZ When I first started working at the Conservatory, the watchword was, "There have been so many cutbacks of music in the schools – there is no music in the schools – how are people going to learn to appreciate it?" You know what? They are still saying the same thing, and that's going to continue, I'm afraid, for a long time. I just want to say in general about education that I'm a great believer in a humanistic education. I think that there's plenty of time to specialize after you get your bachelor's degree, but I think it's really important to have a wide-ranging education. Unless of course you're a musical prodigy, which most of the Conservatory students are – or many of them are. But I think it's a shame that students are now being encouraged to study something that will lead directly to a job when they get out of college. Some of our greatest presidents and lawyers, and other people, are the products of a humanistic education.