

John M. Anderson 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 April 23, 2015
Kevin McLaughlin, 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 throughout the past century.

John Anderson Interview

This interview was conducted at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music on April 23, 2015 by Kevin McLaughlin.

Kevin McLaughlin

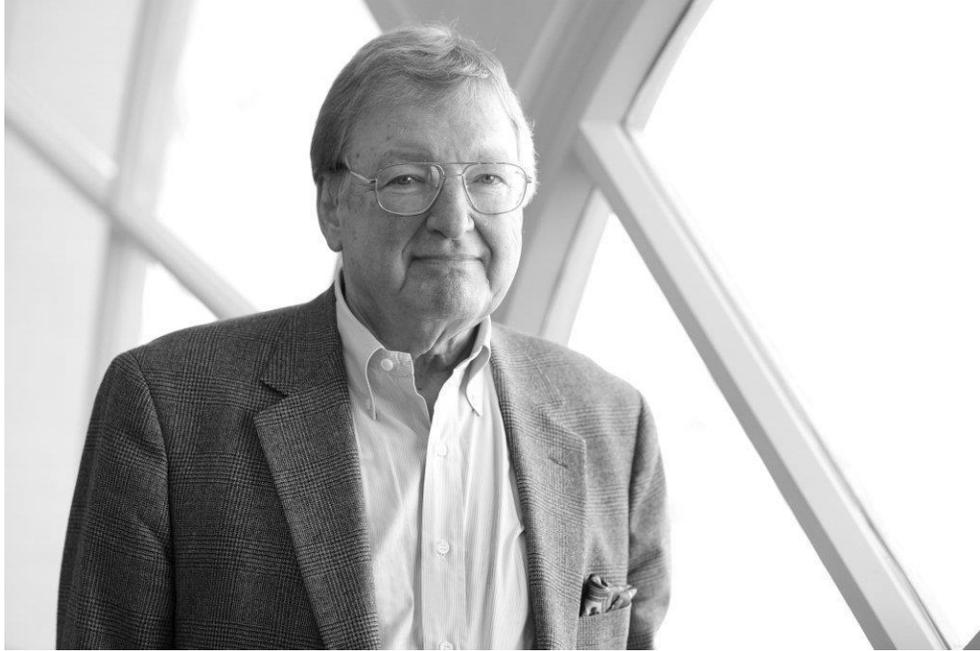
Kevin McLaughlin has an M.M. from Yale University, a D.M.A. from the University of Minnesota and a Master of Library and Information Science degree from the University of Washington. Before coming to the San Francisco Conservatory of Music in June 2007, he served for five years as the performing arts librarian at the California Institute of the Arts. In addition to his library career, McLaughlin has been active as a trumpet player, having worked professionally in Vienna, Los Angeles and the Twin Cities. He has also hosted a classical radio program for KSER in Seattle. He has served as chair of the Southern California chapter of the Music Library Association, and in 2009 he hosted the annual meeting for the MLA Northern California chapter.

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John M. Anderson

John M. Anderson was born in San Francisco, raised in Beverly Hills, graduated with a B.A. in Philosophy from Pomona College, and with a J.D. from the law school at U.C. Berkeley (Boalt Hall).

After graduating from law school, he first worked for the San Francisco Chronicle as a copy boy and feature writer; later as the news editor of the English-language newspaper in Geneva, Switzerland; and then as Administrative Assistant to the Chairman of the Democratic National Committee during the 1964 Presidential Campaign between Lyndon Johnson and Barry Goldwater.

In 1965 he began law practice in San Francisco, first with Johnson & Stanton, then as an associate and partner with Landels Ripley & Diamond, later as Special Counsel with Heller Ehrman, and now with Coblenz Patch Duffy & Bass. John has tried 45 jury cases and argued on three occasions to the Supreme Court of the United States. In 1986 he was elected a Fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers.

More recently he has been recognized as one of America's leading counsel to the advertising community. In a 2000 profile, Los Angeles' principal legal journal described John as a consigliere to his many clients in the U.S. and abroad. His counsel has included ad agency strategy, acquisition opportunities, and, most notably, merger and sale transactions. Over the years, his clients have included a wide range of advertising firms from multinational holding companies and major independent firms to innovative start-up agencies.

He has lectured widely at legal and advertising gatherings, including California's Continuing Education of the Bar, University of California's Hastings College of the Law, the American Association of Advertising Agencies, and The Clio Awards.

In addition to his service as Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, John has served on the Board of Trustees for the University of California Press Foundation, where he was president from 2001 to 2004; as a Trustee of the Sausalito Art Festival Foundation; and as a counsel to the San Francisco Ballet.

John is an amateur scholar on the life and works of Hector Berlioz. He was an original member of what is now The Berlioz Society, and has written and lectured on France's great 19th Century composer.

John and his wife of 54 years, Jola Anderson, have lived most of their married life in one the oldest houses in Sausalito. They have had two children, a daughter, Erika Anderson-Embley of Sonoma California, and Edward M. Anderson (1966 – 2013).

McLAUGHLIN This is Kevin McLaughlin. Today is April 23rd, 2015, and I have the real pleasure of speaking with John Anderson, who joined the Board of Trustees for the Conservatory in 1978, I believe, and was Board president from 1987 to 1990. And so I thought we would start out by talking a little bit about your relationship to the Board – when did you first come to join it, and how would you describe the area back in the ‘70s?

ANDERSON Well, I first began to learn about the Conservatory through my wife, who was teaching dance at Tamalpais High School in Mill Valley. She herself is a former dancer. She trained as a ballet dancer, danced as a modern dancer, and danced with Merce Cunningham and Eugene Loring, and so forth. While I was starting to practice law, she was teaching at Tamalpais High School in what was then the gym – athletic department – but they had this dance program that she was in charge of. One of the students in the class was a woman named Karen Salkind, who was the daughter of Milton Salkind. They became acquainted through their teaching and student relationship, and she said, “You should really get to know the Music Conservatory in San Francisco.” There was some introduction – I’m a little vague – but it was something that I wanted to do, because I wanted to have some way to ... I started to say exploit, which is not quite the word ... but I wanted some way to find an outlet, if you will, for my interest in music.

McLAUGHLIN Do you remember what year that was?

ANDERSON That would have been about two years before I became a member of the Board; about 1976. Specifically, I proposed to someone (it was probably Milton Salkind) that they ought to have a low-cost support group. So we started a thing called “Friends of the Conservatory.” I say “we” because my wife volunteered and did a lot of early clerical work, and mailings of solicitations, and so forth. The idea was that if you contributed \$25 a year, you would be entitled to certain benefits, which probably included things like being admitted to the free concerts.

McLAUGHLIN Were they charging back then?

ANDERSON No, they weren’t. And then we had what in retrospect was a very cheesy idea, which was we signed up a bunch of merchants, mostly around the music school, who would give people who belonged to the Friends of the Conservatory a 10% discount to things like auto repairs, or shoe repair. In retrospect it’s kind of embarrassing because I don’t think this is how Juilliard raises money, but anyway, that’s how I became involved. And so at some point Milton asked me if I would be interested in joining the Board. I think there was one other lawyer on the Board, but the idea was that I would have some sort of professional experience to offer. So I joined the Board, and found a very nice outlet for my interest in music.

McLAUGHLIN Do you remember what it was like back then at the Conservatory and in the area?

ANDERSON Well, of course in retrospect it was a very, very small, local music school. I'd like to say that I knew and understood that it was a very small, local music school. But to me, I thought the three great music schools were Juilliard, Curtis, and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. It was just the idea of being around musicians ... for example, I had a modest friendship with Paul Hersh and Mack McCray, and I was just tickled to be involved in that.

McLAUGHLIN And you're still here, you're still around. What were the major responsibilities of Board members when you joined, and how have those changed?

ANDERSON Well, obviously the main one was to get financial support for the school. And it was to get financial support so that they could provide more scholarships. It was not raising money to build a building, or to do anything grand. It was to pay faculty members – recruit faculty members – and provide scholarships. That was the primary function. The secondary function was to gain community interest in and support for the Music Conservatory; because the Conservatory then was some music school out on 19th Avenue. It did not enjoy a lot of support or attention from the musical community in San Francisco. At that time, the dominant performing arts organization was the Opera, and the Symphony, of course. The Ballet was not what it is now. Let's see, were there any other musical organizations? Well, there were presenting organizations, and so forth. But in summary – the first thing was money, and the second thing was recognition, support, and visibility – that kind of thing.

McLAUGHLIN Was the Conservatory primarily a local phenomenon? You mentioned Juilliard and Curtis, but I wonder to a Bay Area audience – did they think of the Conservatory as their own – as opposed to Juilliard?

ANDERSON I don't think so. There were students, obviously. I remember particularly a lot of students from Oregon, and other places. Outside of San Francisco, I don't think it had much of an audience at all. It was the city's music school – but a lot of cities have music schools. That was the first thing – and the other thing was that if the students were really talented, and auditioned and could be accepted at Curtis, where they wouldn't have to pay tuition, or at Juilliard, they would go to one of those schools. Or even the New England Conservatory, or Peabody, or something like that. A lot of this certainly wasn't recognized by me, completely – I had a vague sense. But I don't think that people on the Board even saw this – people who were musicians and really into the business, like Jimmy Schwabacher, they understood that it was a community music school that they were supporting, and it was a nice

thing to do, but they didn't confuse it in their own minds with the prestige or stature of a top tier music school, which in those days was Juilliard and Curtis, and so forth.

McLAUGHLIN What were some of the major initiatives that you were involved in since joining?

ANDERSON Certainly the major one was the notion that we could build a building, or get a building, and so forth – 50 Oak Street would be at the top of the list. The second thing that I would say I was involved with initiating – during my presidency of the Board, Milton Salkind retired, and so it came time to select a new president. I was on that search committee; but it was chaired by Michael Savage, as I recall. So the change of leadership was obviously a major event. Another initiative was the number and nature of the fundraisers of the Conservatory grew – we had a race for two years in a row across the Bay Bridge, which was the first time that Bay Bridge lanes had been closed off. This was the height of the race running phenomena. We had barbeque brought in from Kansas City, and had a fundraising barbeque meal in San Francisco – that was pretty wild. They had music marathons – it was in that same year that they had different kinds of fundraisers, as opposed to a concert that you would ask someone to come to, and to make a contribution. There was nothing like a gala that takes place now.

McLAUGHLIN Was it a less formal school, in a less formal time?

ANDERSON I think so. Everything's a big deal now – you've got buildings on Van Ness – nothing like that. In fact, here's a story you might not know: Milton found himself on an airplane sitting next to Michael Graves. Graves was at the height of his fame at that time. He had done the big public building up in Portland, Oregon, and so forth. Milton found himself sitting next to him, and the next thing he knew he was being hired to come up with a plan to enlarge 19th Street. And he did – he presented some preliminary sketches and so forth of what they were going to do. Michael Graves, who was then famous for a style that was referred to as Neo Romantic, or neo Renaissance (because it captured elements of those designs), came up with a design and then we had a Board meeting. I remember very clearly, we had some preliminary cost figures – it was twelve million dollars to do this. At the Board meeting, I remember June Kingsley said, "We can't raise twelve million dollars for the Conservatory, this is impossible." And I agreed. So the project didn't go anywhere. It wasn't until Milton retired, and Colin and so forth, that 50 Oak Street was possible.

McLAUGHLIN I assume that finances, and raising money, has always been one of the biggest challenges. Can you think of any other big challenges that the Board has faced over the years?

ANDERSON Well, there's a very simple equation to success. If you can attract and pay the best faculty, they will attract the students. That seems to be the way music conservatories work. The great piano teacher at Juilliard attracts the great piano students. And so it all goes back to who you can attract. Now, San Francisco seemingly had some advantages – which was the city itself, and so forth – and the fact that it didn't have a bad reputation. But the big challenge always was to raise enough money to attract and pay the good faculty members, who would in turn become the draw for students all over the country, if not other places.

McLAUGHLIN Do you think that being in the outer Sunset, on 19th Avenue – was there a real mentality-shift when they came downtown?

ANDERSON Absolutely. It changed. Because all of a sudden, people who only had a passing acquaintance, or knew nothing about the Conservatory, said, "Wow, this is pretty good." I had friends that I would take to the new concert hall – it's an extraordinary space to walk into.

McLAUGHLIN I remember when I first saw it, it was pretty overwhelming. Do you have any comments, or memories to share, of anybody on this list here? Let's start with the ensembles. New Music Ensemble?

ANDERSON Yes. The New Music Ensemble really took off when John Adams was here. As a matter of historical interest, the very last concert that he conducted here as the director of the New Music Ensemble, was a performance of the Stravinsky piece *Reynard the Fox*. In that program, it was also my wife's last "professional appearance" – she danced the part of the fox. The other person who was involved as a dancer, or performer, was Karen Salkind – Milton Salkind's daughter. It was a performance given at the little theater at the Legion of Honor – the small theater out there. It's a very nice theater, but it only seats 300 or so. That was John Adam's last performance while on the Conservatory faculty.

Chamber music I never was involved in. I knew it was a specialty of the Conservatory, but I don't remember any particular involvement. The same thing would be true of the orchestra, the jazz, and the Baroque programs. In fact, in the old school on 19th Avenue, there was a room or something that was dedicated to Baroque – it had a pun having to do with the location. The Community Service Program – everybody I know in northern California who has dealings with the Conservatory – that is probably the best known thing that the school does, because they hire the kids for weddings, and things like that.

I always thought the library was terrific. For a school of its size, I thought it had a lot to offer. It was the one place I could come out and sit and read Notes [the MLA Journal].

Prep and Adult Extension – my comment there is – I took probably over the years a half-dozen courses in the Adult Extension Division, and enjoyed them immensely. They’d go from 7 to 9, or something like that, as I recall. There was one teacher in particular who was fascinating – a fellow named Charles Barber. He had some connection with Stanford, but he taught courses at 19th Avenue. He taught a wide variety of courses; his format was that he had access to these video tapes of famous performers – unbelievable stuff. He had Richter, the pianist ... almost anyone that anybody could think of ... great, great stuff. He would use that to illustrate talking about performers, talking about composers, talking about the period. And then he took a leave and wrote a very ponderous book about Siloti, a Russian musical figure that he spent a lot of time on, and eventually got published. Siloti knew everybody in the musical scene of the Nineteenth Century, apparently. You probably have his book, but it’s a tough go unless you’re keenly interested in Siloti.

ANDERSON But anyway, since moving to the new building, there’s nothing I’m interested in. Apparently, it’s a space problem, they don’t have the space to bring it – or do a class, or anything like that. If they gave a class on ... anything ... late 20th century ... I’d take it in a second.

McLAUGHLIN Or maybe basic music theory? Or history, or music appreciation.

ANDERSON These were mostly music history classes. There was one on American composers by a woman who really knew her business – the Romantics – Roy Harris, Sessions, that whole generation of composers – Howard Hanson. That was fascinating. But since they’ve been in the new building, I don’t see anything to study.

McLAUGHLIN Do you have any memories you’d like to share about Chamber Music West?

ANDERSON It was, I thought, one of the more prestigious things that the Conservatory did. I thought it enhanced the school’s reputation in the musical world. The Sing-It-Yourself Messiah – it was not original to the Conservatory – other people had had the idea, but it was a big hit for a number of years, and raised money. Toward the end it was a lot of labor for not raising that much money. I guess the interest wore off – the novelty. But the first year I remember it was electric – people came in and said, “We’re going to sing in the Opera House!” It was just unbelievable. And the place was packed! It was a frenzy for tickets.

McLAUGHLIN I think Bruce Lamott used to conduct those.

ANDERSON Well, maybe he was later. The first conductor was ... I don’t remember. But it was quite wonderful. It put the Conservatory as an institution in the press. The Music

Marathons – again, I thought added a lot of prestige. I remember there was one on Russian piano music that went over a period of two and a half days, or something. I remember it because I kept badgering Milton Salkind at the time – “Tell me, when is the Scriabin? Because I don’t want to be there.”

McLAUGHLIN I’ve been reading a little bit about J. Archibald Calhoun, and was interested in this period because it seemed to predate the Shanghai Conservatory relationship.

ANDERSON I think it did. I wasn’t aware ... 1978 is when I joined the Board, and I wasn’t aware that he had apparently had a one-man mission to China, or something. I’ll tell you a funny story about Calhoun, since you mentioned it, though. It was one of the impolite jokes that were floating around the Conservatory at that time. He retired in a nice home in Mill Valley. He was a career diplomat. His last assignment for the State Department was that he was the ambassador to Chad.

McLAUGHLIN Well, here’s the moment where we get you to share some memories of various members of the Board.

ANDERSON Jimmy Schwabacher was a very close personal friend. We were guests of his, both here and at his home down in the Saratoga mountains. He was an ardent Berlioz enthusiast, and had sung part the lyric tenor part in *L’enfance du Christ*, it’s one of the major roles ... the minister or something. I had a long-time, very nice relationship with Jimmy both here and we were a guest in his house when he had a small dinner party for Régine Crespin, who was at the Opera. It seemed to me Jimmy took no leadership role, or sought to exert any influence with regard to the Conservatory. He was the founding leader of the Opera's Merola program, a musician who liked the idea of a Conservatory in town, and had been instrumental in recruiting Milton.

McLAUGHLIN Did he teach at the Conservatory?

ANDERSON He did. Late in his life – he had been pushing for a long time to get some kind of choral group at the Conservatory. Finally that’s come to pass at a certain extent, I guess. Was he on the faculty? I don’t know. He had some tenor students.

McLAUGHLIN After he passed, the library got a pretty sizable gift that came to us by way of Stanford. They had first crack at it, and sent us everything they didn’t take. There were dozens and dozens of operettas. I taught a class on operetta, and so I was happy to get those.

ANDERSON And this was Jimmy’s stuff?

McLAUGHLIN Yeah. We still have all of it – and I still get ribbed by a couple of our faculty that we have so many obscure, nineteenth century, English operettas that nobody’s ever heard of. I love them. Anybody else?

ANDERSON Michael Savage is a good friend, and I was instrumental in getting him on the Board. He arrived in San Francisco as head of British Petroleum. He was educated in Cambridge, became a petroleum engineer, went to work for British Petroleum and was stationed all over the world. He learned to speak Arabic. He went up the ladder of British Petroleum. He was sent to San Francisco to run their investment in the Alaskan oil fields. BP had at that point (I guess it still does) the largest share of the rights in the Alaskan oil fields. So they built a thirty story building here in San Francisco, and so on. Anyway, he was running that operation, but when he first arrived in San Francisco he didn’t have a place to live. And so the real estate relocation people – he said he would like to live in a home until he got settled and got something – somewhere along the line that company knew that my wife and I, and our kids, were going off on sabbatical to Europe, and our house in Sausalito might be available. We hadn’t thought of renting it, but that’s what happened. We ended up renting it to Michael. He moved in, and saw that I have a wall of LPs, and said, “This place will be all right.” So we became great friends, but he chided me because we had little Wagner. So he got very active with the Conservatory, and while he was on the Board (he became chairman of the Board at one point), he became friendly with Reed Dennis, who was a leader at the Opera, and they were looking for a new general manager, and offered it to Michael. So Michael basically quit British Petroleum, at the time when he was one of the seven international directors of British Petroleum. That’s like being the head of one of the major American auto companies or something. It was absolutely at the top of the British industrial pecking order. He resigned that position and took on the Opera, and was general manager there for several years. Amazing.

Donald Angus was the first openly gay leader in San Francisco to adopt the Conservatory. He loved music, arranged fundraisers with the gay community for the Conservatory, and they were very successful.

Ed Beck is still on the Board. Ed Beck came – I was chairman at the time – we had tried to recruit his boss, Gary Shansby, who at that time was head of a vitamin company. He was kind of a new name, and I tried to recruit him ... he said, “I don’t want to do this, but my lawyer is a guy who studied the bassoon at Eastman. He loves music, and maybe you can recruit him.” And that’s how Ed Beck came on the Board. He’s played a very important role in this because he’s the one who convinced the school’s search committee that Colin, who had been initially passed over to become president of the school, should be given the spot. He led the discussion and persuaded everybody that it was the best thing to do, and that’s how Colin got the job, to his eternal credit.

McLAUGHLIN Has the Board been pretty collegial over the years?

ANDERSON Yes. The only time I remember something that was a pretty heated discussion was when the search committee came to the Board to recommend this fellow Brown become the president of the Conservatory. There were some very outspoken people on the Board, including Jack Stuppin, I remember particularly, and a couple others, who said, “No, no, no, it has to be Colin Murdoch, he’s the best.” But the search committee was recommending Brown. I was on the search committee, I was one of the people that thought (not necessarily enthusiastically) but I thought Brown would be fine. When it was recommended, it was a very heated discussion. And then Brown came, and he was not successful at all, in a very short order, and we were back to the drawing boards. Ed by this time had become – I’m not sure what the process was – but he had become the chairman of the search committee. The original search committee – Michael Savage had been, as I recall, the chair. But now, Ed Beck had become the chair, and he made a very, very memorable presentation. Very even, very level, no exaggeration of anything – and it was so persuasive that I, among others, thought, “Well, I think you’re right. We should try Colin.” And that’s how Colin became president.

McLAUGHLIN Do you want to share anything about the Stephen Brown year?

ANDERSON Well, I have a lot of negative feelings about it. I felt that the search consultant we hired let us down terribly, and came up with a bunch of not very impressive candidates – and that the best candidate all the time was Colin, who was the dean at that point – who the faculty liked, and people liked. The search consultant came up with I thought a very undistinguished crowd. I was unhappy with what we were left to choose from because, when we said to the search consultant, “Isn’t there anybody else out there we should consider?” , he said, “Well, you could look ...”. I was naïve, but I learned later that’s what consultants do. They give you the five candidates, and they’re not going to work anymore after that. And his answer was, “Well, you’ll look and look, but you won’t find anybody better than this.” We also got snowed into this, and of these types – I don’t know if you’re going to talk to Michael Savage, but he would agree that we all thought – actually Michael was enthusiastic because Brown was fairly young, and coming from a different – from Chicago Lyric Opera.

McLAUGHLIN Has the role of the president changed over the years, or has it pretty much stayed the same?

ANDERSON Well, I don’t think anybody would describe Milton as a strong administrator. He was a musician, he was a sweet guy, and everybody in town liked him. Colin had a lot of Milton’s qualities. The reason that Colin was so successful in raising money for the building was because he just oozed sincerity. He didn’t have an ounce of insincerity with him, and he came across as being such an advocate for a music conservatory. I think that’s why he

was very successful. And so the question was, how has the role changed? In a funny way, I think schools have a life in which the different kinds of leaders at different times serve them well. I think David Stull is serving the Conservatory well now. And maybe now if the president were Milton Salkind, it would not be what's needed.

McLAUGHLIN But still successful.

ANDERSON Very successful. Because everybody in town liked him. He was like one of those opera singers – we had about five going away parties for him. He was very, very popular with the older generation and establishment.

J. Patterson McBaine is famous because he was promoted and urged to be on the Board by Michael Whitman, who is now a very active and very valuable trustee – or, still is. He's famous because he was nominated, accepted, and he never came to a meeting. Never! At the end of his term, people said, "Thank you for your service," and it was a joke. I know that Michael was embarrassed. But McBaine was from an old San Francisco family.

Some people on here, like for example, Warren Hellman's wife, did not come to meetings either. She was a former dancer who loved music.

I always thought when talking about trustees that John Beckman was never adequately honored or recognized for his role in raising the money for Hellman Hall, and really getting the Conservatory on its feet. He came on board about the same time that Milton did, and they were a pair. They were very effective as a pair, raising money, but Beckman I thought never really got the recognition that he should have. I remember when I was chairman I made a big effort to get him involved and get him recognized as a key player in the financial wherewithal for the Conservatory.

Charles Russell is Madeleine Haas Russell's son. He's a very eccentric guy – lives in London. Very close to Milton; they knew each other for years, I think. Somebody would know better than I, but I think he was very instrumental at that point in contributions, and so on and so forth. And I'll tell you a funny story about Milton that it seems to me you've probably heard. When I became chairman of the Board, Milton called me into his office and said, "Now John, you have to remember," (I think this was in anticipation of going out on a fundraising call) he said, "John, this thing that you have to remember in San Francisco – there are the Haas and the Haas-nots." He said that the whole philanthropy, cultural *milieu* of the city sort of circles around the Haases and Levi Strauss. That was a great piece of advice.

McLAUGHLIN Is there anybody on this list of faculty and staff you'd like to mention?

ANDERSON Jeffrey Kahane – I grew up in Beverly Hills and Jeffrey Kahane and I had the same piano teacher at one point in our life. I had mine for about two weeks. He was from Beverly Hills and studied with a famous concert pianist, and went to Beverly Hills High School.

Krista Bennion’s father was the owner of one of the most prestigious wineries in California, down in Santa Clara County. They made some of the most famous Zinfandels ever, in the history of the state. He was a great sport when she was here.

I told you the story about John Adams. Mack McCray recorded a couple of pieces – *Phrygian Gates* – for Adams, and another one too. I remember they collaborated a lot.

Paul Hersh was one of the first faculty or staff that I got to know a little bit after joining the Board. I remember he was a guest in our home for dinner one night, and he wanted to play this game, which was that you press one note on the piano and the idea was to guess the piece of music. He had a great kind of energetic sense of humor, as you know.

Peggy Salkind and Milton were a piano duo – they made two or three recordings; if you don’t have them I do at home.

McLAUGHLIN I got to meet her when they dedicated the terrace. She was still moving around pretty well. I think she’s a little bit more frail now.

ANDERSON I was going to ask you because I haven’t seen her at events or anything. Her son, of course, is the head of the Urban School, Mark Salkind. We see each other at events, and so on and so forth. My law firm – of course we do a fair amount of work for the Conservatory, but also for the Urban School, so there’s kind of a vague connection there.

The sequence of events at the time that the search committee recommended hiring Brown – there was a small faction that was ardently in favor of Colin. Brown came on board, and very quickly (as I said, I was out on sabbatical – I was out of the country or something) but very quickly he was thought to be ... he wasn’t going to do the job. I’m repeating myself here a bit, but then they convened a new search committee. Beck was the chairman, he called a meeting together and said, “Look, instead of going out and hiring another search guy, let’s look at this situation.” And he went through all of the reasons why there might be a question about Colin. “Is he dynamic enough? Is he this or is he that?” To Beck’s credit, and the reason this presentation was so effective, was he said, “Well, we don’t know. You can’t say black or white here.” It was a very, very intelligent and persuasive recording of what should be considered. That was very good.

[Reading from list of interview questions.] Could you describe the Conservatory's 75th anniversary celebration? Here's something I thought the Conservatory could exploit and make more of their own – and that is that whole generation of American composers that I mentioned earlier – Roy Harris, Howard Hanson, Roger Sessions, Tobias Picker, more recently – these composers should be made a much bigger part of the celebration coming up. Or even generally. I've been badgering, with no success so far, to get the Symphony to perform Roy Harris's *Third Symphony*. It's a great piece of music. Bernstein once called it "the great American symphony." That was some quote of his in the '60s. It's a fantastic piece of music – not all of his stuff is that great, but that's a great piece of music. That whole generation of American Romantics, I think should be given more attention.

[Reading from list of interview questions.] What concerts or events over the years stand out to you? The Conservatory Orchestra was to give a performance of the *Symphonie Fantastique*, and Milton asked me if I would like to write the program notes, which I did. They had to be reviewed by a fellow who was teaching music history or musicology here ...

McLAUGHLIN Robert Greenberg.

ANDERSON Robert Greenberg. And Greenberg reviewed them, and said – I had read a statement at that time that Berlioz went to Paris as a medical student, a doctor – at the time that he arrived in Paris, he had never heard of symphony orchestra. I said that – which I got from David Cairns, or somebody. I was as sure as I was sitting here that I was right. But Greenberg said, "That can't be possible! There were touring orchestras." I was very unhappy that I had to leave that out because Greenberg had been writing for the events, or something. I had a very negative impression of Greenberg. And he didn't believe that [*Symphonie Fantastique*] could have been written that fast ... it was written in a short amount of time. Of course, unbeknownst to him (we didn't know at that time), I guess the first movement was recently discovered – the Berlioz mass – this was the one that everyone thought was lost, and some guy found it in a church in Belgium. He [Berlioz] says in his memoirs that he destroyed all the copies, but what happened was, he had given a copy of the score and had written a little dedication to one of the orchestra members – a cellist, or somebody. And this fellow had gone back to Belgium and had the score, then gave it to his local church, and they threw it up on a shelf, and that was the end of it. Somebody going through those papers in 1980 or 1985 pulled down and here was the Berlioz *Mass in C*, which everybody thought had been destroyed. A section of that Berlioz used – not completely intact – the mass from the mass in the *Symphonie Fantastique*. So Greenberg was actually sort of right – everything he didn't do in that short length of time.

Another thing I remember is that they played the final movement of the Tchaikovsky *Fourth Symphony* at the dedication of the building. A pretty exciting performance, led by Tilson Thomas.

McLAUGHLIN Did you write any other program notes?

ANDERSON No. First and last. It was a matter that I had to take things out – that Greenberg wouldn't sign off on. It was actually pretty bland, straightforward stuff.

McLAUGHLIN Do you remember the year?

ANDERSON It would have been sometime in the '80s. If they had any kind of records of the orchestra playing the *Symphonie Fantastique* ... in fact, I have a copy of those program notes. I'll try to remember.

McLAUGHLIN Could you comment on the Conservatory's finances when you first joined the Board in 1978, and what were some of the big financial challenges?

ANDERSON Frankly, I never paid very much attention to that. I wanted it to be healthy, but beyond that I didn't really care, and I wasn't going to fuss with it. They had a fellow who I guess will get interviewed, who was the chief financial guy then. He went on to have a nice career in Silicon Valley as a financial guy after he left the Conservatory. I didn't want to do anything that would overlap what I was doing as a practicing lawyer. And also, I thought that, if some of the Hellmans couldn't figure this out, it wasn't going to work. People like John Beckman paid very careful attention to that.

McLAUGHLIN Do you know – was the building campaign – to raise money for the new building – was that the largest of its type?

ANDERSON Yes. Keep in mind that twelve years earlier they had rejected the notion of remodeling. By the way – the architect, Michael Graves – they had rejected the notion of trying to raise twelve million dollars to remodel 19th Street. And then fifteen years go by, or maybe less, and they raise seventy-five million. Even allowing for inflation, that's a hell of a bump.

McLAUGHLIN Was that mostly Colin's doing?

ANDERSON I think it was. I think he kept people's attention on that thing – every single meeting – this is it. I remember coming down for the initial tour of what was the old CYO facility here – he kept people focused on this – “Don't let it go, keep your eye on the wall.” I believe that he, more than anyone else, far away – first of all, raising the money – and secondly, almost as important, keeping the notion you've got to keep going forward, you've got to do this.

McLAUGHLIN Any memories of individuals who supported the Conservatory? Agnes Albert, Ava Jean, Madeleine Haas or Gordon Getty?

ANDERSON I used to go with Milton – every year we’d make a pilgrimage to Gordon Getty’s house. He would give \$50,000 a year for many years. We’d go to his house – the years that I was chairman we would do that. The first time, the thing I couldn’t take my eyes off, whatever he was talking about, and Milton was there, but there was a wall of 78 records – he has an astonishing collection of 78s. When the LP started to come on the market, he was panic stricken that he wouldn’t have needles for the 78s – so he went up and apparently cornered the market on fiber needles, or whatever the hell they were, and he got all the needles, and was very proud of the fact that he had this thing almost under lock and key, of the 78 needles, so he could play his Artur Schnabel, and other 78s. That was very amusing.

When Peggy and Milton were still together, they had a home in Mill Valley, and Jola and I were involved. It was mostly people from the Conservatory – social friends and things like that. At some point, I think it was Paul, though it could have been Robin Sutherland, sat down with Mack and they started playing the Beethoven *Sixth Symphony* four-hand. It was fantastic! They were totally uninhibited, and Milton’s house was a beautiful old wooden Mill Valley house, and this music was just roaring! It was one of the most memorable experiences. They only played the first movement, but it just stopped everybody cold.

McLAUGHLIN Please describe your role in the campaign and move to 50 Oak Street.

ANDERSON I had a very small role. I may have once or twice recommended a potential donor, but I was not active. I’m not sure if I was an Emeritus member of the Board of that time, but I certainly was not taking any kind of leadership role in fundraising. And another thing, which I’ve explained to some people, which is accurate, is – lawyers are not, by virtue of their position (unless it’s a special circumstance where they have a lifelong connection to the world’s richest man or something) most of the time people who are your clients want you to focus on their problems, they don’t want you to be gallivanting around asking them for money. It’s a little awkward.

McLAUGHLIN Is there also a confidentiality issue there?

ANDERSON There can be, certainly. For example, I wouldn’t ask a client of mine (unless I had a really long thing which amounted to a personal relationship); I wouldn’t ask a client for a contribution to anything. The client could feel that there was some kind of breach of the confidentiality, with my knowing how much money he has. So lawyers are not the best type to do that, unless as I said, a very special circumstance.

McLAUGHLIN What have been the major changes to the school been since 1978 – academic or student life?

ANDERSON You probably could answer that better than I could, but my impression is that there are a lot more international students. I'm told by the faculty that the talent – the skill – of the student has risen – there are more good players now than ten or fifteen years ago. Do you think that's true?

McLAUGHLIN I think so. I remember when I interviewed, part of the day was talking to Colin. We just had fifteen minutes together. But I asked him one question, I remember, about the level of students at the Conservatory. And there was this change in his face – he talked about this violinist that he had just heard, and how he thought she was probably the most talented fifteen- or sixteen-year-old that he had heard in his whole career. He was really quite moved by it, and I became moved in hearing about it.

ANDERSON That was when the quality was going up, and they were attracting some real stars. The school has a lot to offer – it's San Francisco, it's small, it's not Juilliard. It's the anti-Juilliard, sort of.

McLAUGHLIN And it appeals to people who don't want to move to the East Coast, or a big city environment. What about relationships with other local institutions? We talked a little bit about the Opera and the Symphony.

ANDERSON I really believe, and I think this could be applied to any number of cities in the U.S. – maybe even in Europe, for that matter – that performing arts organizations have a cycle. It's not a beginning and end cycle, it's an elliptical cycle. I think now that the Conservatory is at a very high point in terms of the notoriety, attention, fundraising, and sort of general presence – the buildings that have been acquired, and the fact that the gala is now a credible event that raises over half a million bucks – 650, the last one. If you put that in the context of the other performing arts organizations, I think the Opera is in a flat period – I wouldn't call it a downturn, but it certainly is not the dominant cultural institution that it was in the 1950s or '60s – it just isn't, for whatever reason. The Symphony is pretty good, it seems that they're doing well with Tilson Thomas. The Ballet, without question, is the hottest thing in town. I'm prejudiced, but I think that's true. And I remember when the Ballet – when my wife first got involved on the board – it was a regional ballet company – it could have been the Portland Ballet. They had to some extent a stroke of good luck – that Helgi Tómasson, he'd never run a ballet in his life, and now he's got the hottest thing around. So the Ballet is really high, the Symphony is pretty healthy too, the Opera's a little down, but the Music Conservatory – if you put them in that mix – is certainly something that's having its moment in these elliptical

cycles that go. I say it's not an end, because the Opera could catch fire with a new director or something – for whatever reason.

McLAUGHLIN Do you think it's director driven, or is it economics?

ANDERSON A good question. It's partially economics, but if you stop to think who the potential audience it – you imagine an opera, and then you imagine the younger people with a lot of dough in San Francisco, and they don't go together exactly, there's not the interest. I don't know what it is. It's a good question, because some organizations that have modest or restricted budgets enjoy enormous prestige and do really well. That's for sure. And so the question is – what makes it go? I don't know. It has an aspect of almost a faddishness – I think among the socialites in San Francisco, the Ballet has caught on. The Opera is something that their parents did. And they don't perform enough Berlioz. I do think that you have to see that, and the Conservatory I think is now in an upwardly mobile recognition cycle.

McLAUGHLIN Well, this next question leads in well. What are your thoughts on the importance of a musical education? Do you think that has something to do with it – this cyclical aspect?

ANDERSON You mean the fact that music education is died out?

McLAUGHLIN Or maybe the opposite, maybe it's a surge.

ANDERSON Actually, right before I got out of my car, I called my secretary and asked her to email me – it's probably in my phone – a piece that you may have seen in *The New York Times* by Nicholas Kristof – it's a terrific defense of a liberal arts education. I think that the success of all the performing arts, but certainly the musical arts, are dependent on some exposure to music. I know from my own experience, but also if I believe anything, it's that a liberal arts education is the best thing to have, always. How does the education that's now being offered around the country – I haven't thought this through very carefully, but maybe one of the reasons that the Opera is – for that matter, in New York they're suffering a little with the Met, and San Francisco seems to be in a flat space – is because it takes a little more than casual interest to really appreciate opera. Whereas to go and hear a symphony, you don't have to know much, other than you kind of like the collection of sounds. And in the case of ballet, human movement and dance is very fundamental, and you don't have to know a lot.

McLAUGHLIN Whereas opera, a lot of it is language based, and cultural, and historical. The stories, of course, if you know something about the French Revolution or whatever the milieu is, it gives you kind of a window.

ANDERSON Or, you could say the opposite with a Wagner opera, it's all hilarious! But it presumes a cultural awareness that you may not have otherwise, that's for sure. Let me ask you something, in the Conservatory now, does the person who goes, say, for four years – they have to take a music history course, don't they?

McLAUGHLIN Yes, music history is part of the core curriculum.

ANDERSON And is that a one year course?

McLAUGHLIN For graduate students, I think that it's five courses. But I believe for undergraduates it's two years.

ANDERSON And the two years are two different courses?

McLAUGHLIN Right. Semester long courses. They tend to discourage people from testing out of those, so I think everyone is required to take at least two years. Before we finish, is there anything else you'd like to add?

ANDERSON I want to lobby on two points. I hoped they would fix up the Adult Education – nighttime education – course – and on that, I mentioned this to Colin, I don't think I said anything to David Stull. The Conservatory is missing a bet. There are two (for lack of a better term) senior living facilities fairly close by here where people with broad cultural interests live, people with knowledge of and appreciation of music. They are in high rises, and they're right over there, and the Conservatory should invest time and effort to present concerts there. Piano, chamber music, or something, The people who live in those high rises are at least financially secure and could become Conservatory donors. My point is, the Conservatory needs to exploit its location and get people involved. Go over in a van and bring people here, or go there.

McLAUGHLIN I agree. I do know that one of the requirements is this Community Service requirement, where they get credit, and they may also get a little money, to go and play at senior homes and the like.

ANDERSON The other thing that I wanted to talk about – I'm on the centennial committee, but I think that's going to be kicked back to 2018 now, for some reason. The one pitch I have in that regard is that they find some way to pay formal attention to the American composers of the 20th century. Obviously there's Gershwin and so forth, but I guess what the musicologists call the Romantics.

McLAUGHLIN Yes, like David Diamond and Howard Hanson. I'm from Seattle, and they had Gerry Schwartz as conductor of the Symphony there ... all of those recordings they did ... he focused on that repertoire, and I just thought it was the best idea. They sold well, and they sold concerts well. I just thought it was a no-brainer.

ANDERSON I couldn't agree with you more. Then there was a group of recordings, the Louisville recordings, back in the '50s and '60s, where they would premiere pieces on records, and so forth. You're absolutely right, they've done a great job. I think that they should do that more, because there's some wonderful music there. I've been badgering the Symphony, I always get very polite answers – the Symphony says, "We have performed the Harris *Third*." And they have, six times, or something like that, but I guess it doesn't catch Tilson Thomas's imagination.

McLAUGHLIN Well, thank you very much, John Anderson, for your service to the Conservatory, and for your willingness to speak to me today.