

Arnold Cooper Interview

Conducted by Katherine Markee on April 15, 2008



The following interview was conducted with Professor Arnold C. Cooper (AC) for the Purdue University Oral History Program. It took place on April the 15th, 2008, in Stewart Center, room 263. The interviewer is Katherine Markee (KM), the Oral History Librarian.

KM: Welcome.

AC: Thank you.

KM: Tell us a little bit about where you were born and your early years, your parents, siblings.

AC: Okay. Well, I was born in Chicago in the depths of the Depression. My father had grown up on a farm, as generations of Coopers had beforehand, but in the '20s, he left the farm, joined the post office, became a railway postal clerk, working in the mail car on trains that went back and forth between Chicago and Cincinnati. And I was born in Chicago. When I was three, the family moved to Cincinnati, the other end of that circuit, and lived there for a while. And then my folks thought it would be easier to purchase a house in one of the smaller towns on that train line, so they moved to New Castle, Indiana, which was near where my parents had grown up. And it was in New Castle, then, where I went to school and where I basically did my growing up, and most of my childhood memories are centered there. I graduated from New Castle High School in 1951, came to Purdue that fall; I still remember that day. It was a great event for the whole family. My brother came, my grandmother came, everybody, to wish me well and wish me off. And I stayed in Cary Hall my first year. I was an engineering major. At the

end of the first year, I decided to enter Chemical Engineering, which I did. And had a very happy four years at Purdue. Joined a fraternity, was very active in speech and debate activities at Purdue, and enjoyed myself very much. Now, in those days, every young man faced military service, and, in fact, Purdue required ROTC of every able-bodied male student. And you would see lots of uniforms on campus. Since I thought I was going to be going in the military anyway, I thought I would rather go in as an officer, so I was in ROTC all four years. After graduating from Purdue, I worked for a few months. The company I worked for, which was in Minneapolis, Minnesota, I met with the Vice-President of Human Resources just before leaving to go in the Army. And he said, "While you're in the Army, why don't you try to get an MBA degree?" So that planted a seed in the mind of this engineer. I went in the Army in the Chemical Corps, and the Chemical Corps discovered it had too many Second Lieutenants. I had said goodbye to my parents for two years, and the Chemical Corps then announced "We're letting all of you who came in at that time," which was January, 1956 -- "We're letting you all out after six months. You'll have a Reserve obligation, but that'll be the end of your active duty." And I thought, maybe this is an opportunity to get that MBA degree. So I began to investigate MBA programs. I was on leave from the Army and happened to come back to campus and visited some of my old friends. And one friend said "They're starting a new master's program here at Purdue, a master's program in management, specifically targeted at engineers; why don't you go talk to Ron Stuckey?" Ron Stuckey was one of the early faculty in the school, he had been -- he was a faculty member in the School of

Agriculture, in Agricultural Economics. I interviewed Ron while I was on campus, and he made this new program sound so exciting that I decided not to pursue any of the other MBA programs I was looking at, and decided to enter that first program. And so it was that I was --

KM: Now what year would this be?

5:00 **AC:** This was 1956. And the program started that September of 1956, and I can say I was here the first morning of the first day when the school started. They had remodeled the back end of what was called the Biology Annex, or the Stanley Coulter annex. On the second floor, they had created a case classroom with two U-shaped rows of desks, one slightly higher than the other so that you could have about 35 or 40 people in that room, and we could all see each other, and there could be an interchange of ideas. The first class on that Monday morning was taught by Emanuel Weiler, who later became the first Dean of the school. It was Managerial Economics; he talked some about the program, and then he began to teach. And I suppose you could say that the course began, and the program began, and the school began, at that point.

KM: On that morning.

AC: I suppose that looking back, someone should have blown a trumpet at that point, but that did not happen, and we started. There were, I think, 34 students in that first class: all male, all men. Mostly veterans, mostly Purdue alumni, mostly Purdue engineering alumni. A lot of crew cuts: back then I had some hair, so I could have a crew cut. And quite a few people had a good deal of experience,

and the initial faculty, kind of the nucleus of the faculty, were some people who had come from the Harvard Business School. Just to go back for a moment, Emanuel Weiler had been hired from the University of Illinois in 1953 to create a separate department of economics at Purdue. Prior to that time, economics had not been a separate department: it had been combined with history and government, and had primarily taught service courses. He came in 1953, initially hired a lot of very bright economists, and, then, three years later, began this new program in Industrial Management, the first management program at Purdue. The concept of the program was one of having an integrated program in which the faculty knew what was happening in all of the different courses. There was heavy use of the Case Method, which was a reflection of the methodology used at the Harvard Business School. The program also had a good deal of quantitative emphasis, reflective of the orientation they wanted to give to the program, and the faculty, very much, were seeking feedback. You almost had the sense that they would do something then would say, "What do you think?" And you'd give feedback and they'd continue. And all of that was -- made it exciting, you had the feeling you were participating in the new program, even as it was being designed and was taking place. And that first program finished -- it was what is today called the MSIA, Master of Science in Industrial Administration program. It was one calendar year in length. Most MBA programs were two years. The faculty felt, though, that if they coordinated the program tightly, if they had a heavy workload, and if they did not offer a lot of specialization, that one year would give a very solid grounding in management to these students, most of

whom were engineers, and, in a sense, had a specialty already. And during that program, Ron Stuckey called me into his office one day, and he asked, "Have you ever thought about being a professor?" And I said, "No," and he said, "Well, why don't you give it some thought? Might want to get a Doctorate and then come back here and teach." Well, that planted a seed, another seed. I guess in those days I was very suggestible, people would plant seeds and they would grow. And I thought about it, but I was not sure. And as I neared the end of that

10:00 first year, I was out of money, I was tired. I thought, well, some management experience beyond what I have would not be a bad thing, so I went to work for Procter & Gamble in Cincinnati. And that next year, I worked for P&G, enjoyed it, very nice people. Lived in a house with six other engineers; we hired a lady who cleaned it and cooked the evening meal, it was very pleasant. But as I looked ahead and looked at the jobs of people who were -- had been with the company longer, I thought, I think it would be more interesting to be a professor. And so I wrote back to some of the faculty here, and with their help then prepared my application. Now, you're supposed to apply to many different doctoral programs, but I was too naïve to know that, and only applied to one program; I applied to the Harvard Business School. Fortunately, I was admitted, and prepared to go, then, in the fall of 1958. I had gotten my Master's in '57, worked for one year in Cincinnati, and prepared to go to Boston in the fall of '58. Now as a side note, a personal matter, I had learned that, as a bachelor, it took a little while to meet girls in a new city. So I began to ask friends, "Do you know any girls in Boston?" and began to prepare a list. It just happens that I was in my hometown visiting

my folks, and my best friend from high school was visiting his parents. He had just gotten his PhD in chemistry from Harvard, and had just been married. And he and his wife were visiting his parents. We got together, we talked, and before we parted, I asked the question, "Do you know any girls in Boston?" And he and his wife said, "Well, Jean Lord is a nice girl, and she may still be there." So she went down as number four on the list, which we still joke about. We are nearing our 50th wedding anniversary. And so I entered the doctoral program at Harvard in the fall of '58, and Jean and I were married one year later in September of '59.

KM: What was she doing there? Was she from the Boston area?

AC: She had graduated from Wellesley College, and was working, initially, with a doctor who was doing public health research. But then, see, she switched -- she had been an English major, and she became an editorial assistant at the *Harvard Business Review*. And so we were married in September of '59, lived in a little attic apartment. I jokingly say I know she did not marry me for my money, because no one is poorer than graduate students. And we began our life together in that way, and I began to work in the area of new and small firms, particularly working with a senior professor named W. Arnold Hosmer. And he had taught accounting for many years, but in the last years of his career, he was working in a new course he'd developed called, Small Manufacturing Enterprises. And he had been involved in the founding of two such firms, and felt there really needed to be a course of that sort. Many of the companies that were studied were high technology, growth-oriented firms, and I began to work for him, as was typical of

the Harvard Business School doctoral program. I wrote cases for him for one year, and then did my doctoral dissertation under his supervision. And as I finished, I was interviewing -- it was primarily a three-year program, and as I was finishing, I was interviewing some schools, but then an opportunity developed to stay at Harvard and to teach with him in that -- initially with him -- in that area; it was a growing course. And so I thought I'd better take advantage of that opportunity, and stayed on at the Harvard Business School. Our daughter was born in that year, in 1961. We -- the salary went up some then, so we were able to buy some of our own furniture, and moved out of that furnished attic apartment, and felt our living standard was very high indeed. And then, from 15:00 1961 to 1963, I taught at the Harvard Business School. The second year, I added a course in Cost Accounting that I was teaching, and that was in a program called the Harvard-Radcliffe Program in Business Administration. At that time, Harvard did not, as a matter of policy, admit women to their MBA program, but Radcliffe College, which was affiliated with Harvard, had a one-year program, and many very bright young women went into that program and then did the business end. So I taught in that program. Incidentally, in 1963, when I left Harvard, that was the time they decided to admit women into the MBA program, and they did away with the Harvard-Radcliffe program. I had kept in touch with faculty here at Purdue, in the School of Management, now the Krannert School of Management, and they made a very nice offer to me to return and to join the faculty here. So I brought my wife out here to the wilds of the Midwest with our new baby girl, and I can still remember very clearly, as we drove up State Street,

and the new Krannert building was under construction at that time. A great improvement over the dingy old Stanley Coulter annex where it had all started. Much had changed by then. It was in 1958, it became a separate school. Prior to that, the faculty had been in the School of Humanities, Social Science, and Education, including the original economics faculty. But the Master's program was in the School of Engineering, and awkward setup, I'm sure. And in 1958, they created a separate School of Management. I believe it was 1962 that a generous gift from Herman Krannert, the founder of Inland Container Corporation, came to the school, and it became the Krannert School of Management. And some of that money went toward the construction of the new building, which was then underway. But I returned to the old Stanley Coulter annex, and that's where I taught initially, from '63 until we moved into the new building, which was during spring vacation of 1965: a year and three quarters after I had come back. Much had changed. The faculty had grown a great deal, the Master's program had more than doubled. There was an undergraduate program; I believe the first undergraduate students received their degree, I believe, in 1961. There was a PhD program; initially the economists were most active in that, and they were beginning to produce some excellent doctoral students who went on to do very well. And there was really a sense that the school was on the move. It continued to have an integrated approach to its programs, and I might add here, here was a way in which Purdue had evolved and developed that was different from many state universities. Many state universities who would set up business schools started with undergraduate

business schools; they often were departmentalized, highly specialized, and looked at things in the specialized point of view of, say, marketing or finance or accounting, and then later, added master's programs, which often reflected those diverse points of view. The Krannert programs -- and this was the case with the Bachelor of Science in Industrial Management program as well as the Master's program -- were started by a group of faculty who believed in an integrated general management program, in which each student would study a broad set of courses. "Don't tell me you're not interested in marketing; everybody studies marketing, everybody studies finance, accounting, operations." It was similar, I think, to law schools and medical schools, in the sense that, the thinking was, for a professional program, there was a broad core that any professional ought to know. The programs were highly integrated; one of the early faculty that played a very prominent role was John Tse, T-S-E, who was an early director of the Master's program. He would get the faculty together and we would go through each course, week by week, what are you going to cover, and they'd consider how to all fit together. So that philosophy was important in the early development of the school. There was not a lot of specialization at the master's or the undergraduate level. For a number of years, into the 1970s, the Master's program that was primarily offered was the one-year MSIA program, which offered little opportunity for specialization. The Bachelor of Science in Industrial Management was an undergraduate program that was pursued by many students who transferred out of engineering or science, and it had a technical minor as part of it, and that program was very popular with recruiters, and many

of those students did very well. There was also initially a Bachelor of Science in Industrial Economics, which was the oldest program at the school. And it was taught into the early '70s, I believe, and then that was phased out, and we had the Bachelor of Science in Management, which was a more general business program. But again, when compared to, for instance, many of our Big Ten counterparts, it was much less specialized than many of those programs, more integrated. There was a philosophy of emphasis on what I would call, active learning, in which many of the classes, cases, problems, projects were used, in which the students were expected to discuss what they had prepared when they came to class. And that's rather different from a passive, listen to the lecture kind of approach. So at any rate, those were some of the early aspects of my career and of the school.

KM: Very good, that's nice. Now go on and talk a little bit about some of the areas of... Strategic Management was one of the areas that you were involved in?

AC: Yes.

KM: And entrepreneurship.

AC: Well, in the early days, the faculty was small, and that meant often you taught a lot of -- more than -- a lot of different things. My second year, I came -- and the first year I was -- I joined the faculty, in 1963, I taught what was called, Business Policy, and that later was called Strategic Management. It was an integrated course that looked at problems that cut across a single functional area. It tended to be a course which made heavy use of cases, and tended to be toward the end

of programs, and that was the case here. I also, my first year, was asked to teach a report-writing course called Managerial Policy Reports, and in that course the students had to hand in a written analysis of the case every couple of weeks. The students and I had a lot in common. They did not like that course, and neither did I. [Laughter] But interestingly, alumni often said it was very fascinating, having to learn to write and to write concisely, and to boil the facts down and to assemble them in a way that they made -- presented coherent arguments in support of particular positions. My second year here, there was a crisis in the finance area, and I was asked to teach finance. So I taught finance. And then finally my third year here, things settled down more, in terms of what I was to teach, and, from that point forward, primarily, I taught courses in entrepreneurship and small business, and in business policy and strategic management. These were similar in that they tend to take a general management point of view to look at the total business. And in those days, both Entrepreneurship and what we now call

25:00 Strategic Management were in very early stages of development. There was not a lot in the way of cumulative research; there was not a lot in terms of the professional infrastructure, societies and journals. They were experiential courses, in which you gave the students cases and guided the students as they worked their way through that. And it was an inductive way of learning. It was later, though, that the bodies of research associated with these areas began to develop, and later that the professional infrastructures began to develop. It was in 1970 that I was involved in organizing what I think was the first academic research conference in entrepreneurship. The Krannert School put up some

money, and a foundation called the Center for Venture Management put up some money, and we organized a conference here at Purdue, found 12 faculty around the country who had been doing research relating to technical entrepreneurship, the founding, and developed technically oriented firms. They assembled here; it was an exciting conference. It was the first time that people were able to present research, interrupt each other and ask questions, compare findings and approaches. And I think might be viewed as one of the beginning points in the development of that field. We were hard-pressed to find 12 people who could present work. It was two years after that, in 1972, that the professional society, the Academy of Management, for the first time organized as divisions. Prior to that time, their meetings had been general ones in which papers on a wide variety of topics were presented. But after that time, divisions -- and the relevant one here was what was then called the Division of Business Policy; it later became the Division of Business Policy and Strategy. But their first program -- I remember attending in 1972 -- there were seven papers that [were] presented. There are now 5,000 members of that organization, but it was a humble beginning. Now, to go back to my own career, those were some things happening in the fields. It was very common in the 1960s and 1970s for faculty to be taking leaves of absence and going to other schools. It was easier then, two-career families were not so common. And in 1967, after I had been here for four years, I received an invitation to go to Stanford University to teach in the Graduate School of Business there. And Stanford was regarded as one of the very top business schools. I thought I would learn a lot there. And so we drove

west in 1967 to Palo Alto, and lived there for a year. By then we had two children, our son David had joined us, and I taught at the Graduate School of Business at Stanford. I also at that time began to do research on the founding of technologically based firms. I -- and when I had been in Boston, I had studied many of the companies that are sometimes referred to as the Route 128 firms, those founded around the outskirts of Boston, high-technology firms. I came here to West Lafayette, and I thought, "Where are the high technology firms?" This is one of the leading engineering universities in the world, but there doesn't seem to be much entrepreneurship. And that was a question that was going over my mind -- why does this happen at some times and places and not other times and places? The invitation to go to Stanford and to be located for a year in what was becoming Silicon Valley presented an opportunity to do research, and so that year, I began to study the -- through interviewing people and also gathering data about companies that had come and gone -- began to study the founding process, and trying to answer those questions. What influences the processes by which new firms are founded? Why does this occur at some times and places and not at others? And then, in the summer of 1969, I had support from a foundation, went back to Stanford for the summer with my family, and continued to study those firms. And in total, gathered data on the founding of 250 new high-technology firms, and was able, then, to develop some articles and some insights based upon that work. And in fact, that first entrepreneurship conference, which we organized here at Purdue in 1970, that became the first forum at which I presented some of that work I had done. Then for the family, in 1972, I had the

opportunity to go to England. And the British government had set up two new business schools, one the London Business School, the second the Manchester Business School, each somewhat separate from their University system, somewhat on the American model. And I had contacts at the Manchester Business School, and my family and I went there for six months. It was great fun for the family; our kids picked up British accents. And I had the opportunity to study and teach entrepreneurship there at that time. 1974, I had the invitation to go on a lecture tour of South Africa, and we left the children with grandparents, my wife's parents; my wife joined me for much of that time, and we went down to South Africa, and I taught primarily in the non-white universities, moving from one university to another. We set up a scholarship in each of the universities, and that was a very stimulating experience, looking at entrepreneurship in a very different-

KM: New environment.

AC: -- kind of setting. And then it was back to Purdue, and in 1977/78, I received an invitation to teach in Switzerland. And there was an International Management Development Center in Lausanne, Switzerland, on Lake Geneva, and it had been very much helped along by the Harvard Business School, which had played a role in recruiting faculty for the school, helping them to shape their curriculum. Much of their teaching was executive development with middle level managers and senior managers. And I had an invitation to go there for the academic year '77 to '78, so we went there. Our children went to international schools, and the program at the school is now called IMD, but it was very international. The typical

class would have men from maybe 25 different countries in the same class. I say men because all of the students were men. Incidentally, that was a characteristic of business education for a number of years, there were relatively few women. That, of course, has changed today, it's one of the many things that have changed. But being there in Switzerland for a year was a very stimulating experience, and I learned a lot from teaching these people who were facing management challenges in a wide variety of countries, and so at the end of the summer, the classes, I felt I'd probably learned more than the students.

KM: And probably a variety of industries as well.

AC: Oh, indeed, very much so. And so that was fun. And meanwhile, back here at the school, the programs were all developing. The Industrial Economics curriculum was phased out and the Bachelor of Science in Management program -- now, that is in addition to the Bachelor of Science in Industrial Management program, which continued. The BSIM program had the technical minor, many of the students had transferred out of engineering or science. Bachelor of Science in Management was a more general program, and it attracted large numbers of students. And, in fact, one of our challenges during the 1970s was how to manage our enrollment, because it was growing so rapidly, and it reflected a nationwide trend. The Doctoral program at the Krannert School was absolutely flourishing during that time. Many students were being placed at Ivy League
35:00 schools and the very best schools in the world. The Master's program was doing well. We -- during that time, I think, less emphasis was placed on trying to recruit

engineers and scientists, and it became a more diverse student body, in terms of academic background. And then, during the 1970s, the two-year Master of Science in Management program was put into place. And that was more like MBA programs at other schools. It did provide the opportunity for more specialization. Many of the faculty welcomed that, because they could teach electives also. And many of the students were interested in that, in acquiring, for instance, specialization in marketing or finance or other areas. And that program then, in time, began to cannibalize the one-year Master of Science in Industrial Administration. And I think that reflected primarily that the two-year MBA degree, at least in the United States, had become very well accepted. And, from the standpoint of many companies, many recruiters, that was what they expected. Another change that occurred nationwide was that whereas in the '50s and '60s when the school started, many students came straight out of undergraduate programs. Increasingly, recruiters and companies began to look for students with additional experience, and so MBA programs began to emphasize in their recruiting [admissions process] students who had experience. And so you had -- it became less common to have students who had come straight out of an undergraduate program. But those were some of the things happening during the 1970s.

KM: Okay. Very good. What -- do you want to continue on -- were there any other changes, or some other things that you were getting involved in?

AC: Well, let's see. During the 1980s, the school continued to grow. We put into effect in the early 1980s some policies related to what we called the Lower Division and the Upper Division of the undergraduate program. And the lower division was the first two years, and students had to have a certain grade average, typically about a B average, in a set of five courses, in order to move into the Upper Division. And this meant that weaker students who really were not maybe doing very well in the program tended to transfer out. They tended to be replaced by a lot of very good students who did come in. And it enabled us to have some control, some management, over the size of the program. And I think in the long run, that has been a very good thing. The master's program, the two-year Master of Science and Management program, which -- years later we changed the name to the MBA program, to correspond to the term most often used in higher education. But that program took a lot of students away from the one-year Master of Science in Industrial Administration program. And in that sense, we became more like other two-year MBA schools. We continued, though, I think, to have
40:00 more emphasis upon integration, a lot of emphasis on active learning, and I think we were more quantitative than many schools were. The Doctoral program continued to have a lot of success. In the early 1980s, we then added programs in Executive Education. And in American business schools this had been a very important development. And it reflected the fact that companies often would send their executives, not only to degree programs, but to short programs that might enable them to develop skills that would help them move ahead in their careers. Sometimes these were programs relating to particular topic areas. And that

program in Executive Education, it was initially headed by my colleague Dan Schendel, later it was headed by Bill Lewellen. And it led, then, in the 1980s to the construction of the new building to the west of the Krannert School, where Executive Education classes were held. And that kind of education is very stimulating for the faculty; you're working with managers who have a lot of experience. Part of the challenge in the classroom is trying to tap into that experience in a constructive way. Often those programs are financially rewarding for schools, too, because companies are -- the real cost for a company is giving up these people for a period of time, and they're often willing to pay pretty well for those programs, if the programs are well done. And so that became an important component of the programs in the Krannert School and continues so to this day. One of the challenges the Krannert School faced was we had a very visible faculty, a lot of very good faculty. And often other schools would come along and make very nice offers and hire these people away, and so that was a challenge. From my own standpoint, through the 1980s, I was here the entire time; I was not at other universities as I had been earlier. Partly that reflects where your family is in its life cycle. And coming back, then, to the development of these fields --

KM: Mhmm.

AC: -- of entrepreneurship and strategic management, it was during the 1980s that they really began to develop. The *Strategic Management Journal* was started by my colleague, Dan Schendel, in 1981. It became the leading journal in that field. In entrepreneurship, the *Journal of Business Venturing* was started in 1985; it

became the leading specialized journal in that area. The infrastructure of those fields, in the sense of the presence of professional societies, of specialized journals, and the accumulation of knowledge, knowledge about the educational process, knowledge about what we were studying, began to develop. And so it became possible to have a larger research component in the courses, and all of this was, I think, very good. Within Krannert, we were one of the early schools to have a doctoral specialization in Strategic Management. Many of our earlier students went -- did very well, and became, themselves, important contributors to the field. And we had at Krannert, we became the only school that had three different people who served as chair of the Division of Business Policy and Strategy of the Academy of Management. As I mentioned earlier, that organization, after very humble beginnings back in the early '70s now has about 5,000 members. And the entrepreneurship field was developing somewhat more slowly, but again -- and that was exciting to be in on these fields as they were developing. And you would meet and people would be talking about what should be the boundaries of the field, and how do you measure things, and what should be the focus of research. It was exciting, it was creative to be a part of those things. And then working with doctoral students to help them contribute, and they would go on with their careers, and that was exciting. So I feel very fortunate to have been in fields as they were developing. And the process continued through the '90s and into past 2000. I went on half-time, moving toward retirement in the year 2000. My wife said I was not very good at half-time, but it provided some transition. Some exciting things happened to me that I feel very fortunate about.

In Sweden, they had wanted to encourage entrepreneurship, and they set up an international award for lifetime contributions in the area of entrepreneurship and small business research. And the first year they awarded ... made that award to a man named David Birch, who had done some very influential work on showing that much of the new job generation had occurred, was occurring in new and small firms. And in 1997, I remember, in April of that year, I was at home that morning because our refrigerator was broken. And the refrigerator repairman was there working on it, and the phone rang. And it was a professor calling from Sweden to tell me that I had won that international award of \$50,000, and wondering if I could come to Sweden for a lecture tour and so on. And part of my mind was thinking, "Isn't this great?" and part of my mind was thinking, "My, I'm glad that refrigerator is getting repaired." But that led then that fall to a lecture tour in Sweden. My wife and I were fortunate, we were able then to take that \$50,000 prize and set it up as a scholarship fund for Krannert students. But that was a very nice capstone. And having been involved in the early stages of the development of that field, it was very rewarding to have that recognized.

KM: I would say so. Absolutely. You're also in the... one of the founding people in Great Book of Teachers, the one at Purdue.

AC: Yes. I always devoted a lot of time to teaching. The thing that really motivated me to go into the field was I thought I would enjoy teaching. And I found it demanding, but I found it rewarding. And I was very fortunate to win a number of teaching awards through the years, including the Murphy Award, which is the

university-wide award that's given for undergraduate teaching, the Salgo-Noren for master's teaching. The Academy management gave me the Coleman Mentor Award, which is more for working with doctoral students. And I was a founding member of the Teaching Academy, which was set up to encourage and support teaching. Here at Purdue, my name is engraved in the Book of Great Teachers in the Union. I was very fortunate. And I think one of the things that -- when you think in any career, okay, what is your monument, what --

KM: Your legacy.

AC: Yeah. What difference did you make? And I suspect that for many who have been professors, it is those thousands and thousands of students you have taught. And I would sometimes find, in traveling, I would happen to meet someone, they'd say, "Professor Cooper," and maybe it was someone I had taught 30 earlier. But that's very rewarding. You hope you have made a difference; you hope that -- I sometimes would say, "Well, I give lifetime benefits: if in the future, you have trouble going to sleep at night, imagine you're in my class, and you'll drop right off." But you also hope that --

KM: [laughter] That's an interesting --

AC: As your students think back, they'll feel that they got something from it; they developed skills that were useful to them. And I enjoyed teaching -- I gave essay exams -- I taught altogether for 44 years -- I gave essay exams, I graded them myself. That was the least enjoyable part of the job, to have a great stack, maybe 100 exams to grade. I learned that the best way to do that was to go home. Don't

stay in your office where there will be interruptions, because if you're halfway through a paper and get interrupted then you have to start it all over again.

KM: Right.

AC: So -- but I did that, that was part of the job, to provide feedback for the students. And, but, so I feel very fortunate, and the teaching is a very important, rewarding part of it. I tended to use a lot of cases, and the first day of class, and particularly with undergraduate students, I would talk to them that this may be different from some of the other courses they had had. I would say, some of the courses you
50:00 have had, you can study in spurts. You can come to class, take notes, and then the night before an exam, do a lot of reading, review your notes, and you can get along just fine. I would say, though, "This is not that kind of course. This is a course in which we'll learn primarily by working together and analyzing cases about real businesses and the problems they face. For this method to work, you have to come to class prepared. You have to come to class prepared to talk. And I want to warn you, I shall call upon you. Sometimes I call upon people who look like they don't want to be called upon. But -- and why do I do this? The night before, I know there are many demands upon your time. It would be very easy the night before to say, 'Well, I'll get a quick glance at this case, and then I'll go, and if something occurs to me, I'll volunteer. Otherwise, I'll just listen.' Well, if everybody prepares like that, we're going to have a very poor class, regardless of what I did. But if the night before, you think, 'That son of a gun looks like he's going to call on me; I'd better prepare this,' and you come to class having

analyzed and having thought about it, then you've got something to contribute, others have something to contribute, and we'll have an exciting class, almost regardless of what I do." Incidentally, I got an email a couple of years before I retired, and it was from a student I had taught, I think, 25 years earlier, and I still remembered it. I had made that talk the first day of class. And then the next class was the first case, and I called upon this student who was up in the top right-hand corner, and he said, "I'm not prepared," and I called on the student next to him, and he said, "I'm not prepared." Well, I stopped and chewed the class out, and we went on. And, interestingly, those students were prepared very well after that. And this email I received, which was 25 years later, was from that student I called on. And he said he still remembered that, and he said, "Every time I'm thinking about not being prepared on the job, I recall that."

KM: It stuck in there, right. In line with that, in entrepreneurship, could you comment on the Burton D. Morgan intern -- model competition [Burton D. Morgan Business Model Competition] for the researchers that...

AC: Well, now, often, in entrepreneurship courses, you ask students to come up with a plan for a business, an idea, and to develop a plan in support of that, a plan that could be presented to prospective investors. And so, through the years, I had many students who did that. A lot of excellent business plans, some went on to start this business -- most did not, because the typical student, while still a student, that's not the best time, usually, to start a business. And then later, Purdue developed business plan competitions, and today the Burton Morgan

Center, one of the set of things they do, and they do very well, is to have business plan competitions, and they are able to engage many of the students in engineering and science and across the campus. And I think those are great learning experiences. They also have business plan competitions which attract many people who are already out of school, and often you see opportunities connected with their work. And so those are great learning experiences. Those contests, sometimes they would bring in professional venture capitalists, experienced entrepreneurs, who can provide feedback and sometimes assistance.

KM: And it's been going on for a long time.

AC: Well, yes.

KM: He [Burton Morgan] started that --

AC: I don't remember what year would be the first year of that, but there have been such -- those plans connected with the Burton Morgan Competition have been going on for quite a few years.

KM: Even when he was -- I remember he used to visit, I used to read -- when he was still alive.

AC: Yes. Oh, Burton Morgan was quite a character. A successful entrepreneur and started -- and backed a number of businesses. Used to come to campus; he was
55:00 a real character. And he believed in what he was doing, and he was -- he set up a chair, which is in the Krannert School, and later funded the Burton Morgan

Center through his foundation. And so those programs continue, Burton Morgan is gone now, but some of those things that he had hoped for and wanted to support continue, and I'm sure he'd be very proud of what's been accomplished.

KM: I'm sure. That's right, yes. You received -- did you participate in the alumni here, because that was nice, you got the John S. Day Distinguished Alumni Academic Award.

AC: Well, the John S. Day Distinguished Alumni Award is given by the Krannert School to an alumnus of the school who has been active and has achieved some success in the academic world. And so I received that, I think it was 2002. That was satisfying also.

KM: Right. That's right. As you look, what is one of your fondest memories of Purdue? Do you have a fond memory of Purdue? Or more --

AC: Well, when I first came here as a freshman in 1951, 57 years ago, I certainly never expected that I would spend much of my life, my career would be centered here. But that is the way it's worked out. So there have been so many fond memories, and I believe in Purdue in so many ways. I think many of the Purdue students are very satisfying to work with. I think there tends to be a good work ethic. Many of them are upwardly mobile; they're moving up in the world, their parents are supporting them in this process. I can identify with that. And I think that sort of thing is just exactly what this state and this country needs. But there's so many fond memories. Many of them center upon students, but also on colleagues whom I've enjoyed working with through the years. And I remember

as a young man, almost every young person thinks, "What am I doing to do in my life? I wonder what path I may follow?" and I feel very fortunate. I think I ended up doing some things that were a good match with my abilities and interests, and that I've enjoyed very much. And now no longer -- I'm retired, I retired in 2005 -- but I continue to be somewhat involved, and to gain satisfaction from looking at the success of the university and of the school.

KM: Very good. Any -- and how about an outstanding event? Have you got one of those that you'd like to share?

AC: Well, it's hard to say. That award I got when I went to Sweden, was presented in the City Hall at Sweden, where they present the Nobel Prizes, and that was pretty hard to beat. When I retired in 2005, Purdue awarded me an honorary Doctor of Management degree, and that was very satisfying.

KM: Did you know in advance that you were going to get that, or did the conversation...

AC: I received a letter beforehand that advised me of that.

KM: Okay. I usually ask people that; sometimes it's a surprise and sometimes they know. It's interesting.

AC: Yeah. So my family was able to be here, and that was very satisfying. So there have been a lot of events. But then the last class that I had, my wife came and sat in on one of the last classes. She thought, well, this is one of the last chances to see what I do when I go off to work each morning. [Laughter] And the last

class, some of the doctoral students asked if they could come and sit in on the class also. These were master's students, MBA students, primarily, and taught the last class, the students stood and applauded. One of the doctoral students came down and presented me with a bouquet of flowers. The students, one by one, shook my hand.

KM: That's very nice.

AC: Yes.

KM: Very nice. I think on that note, I think I want to thank you very much for this interview.

AC: Thank you.

KM: My pleasure.

AC: It's been a pleasure.

KM: Thank you very much.

AC: Thank you.

End of Interview

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*Some proper names may be spelled incorrectly.