

An SfAA Oral History Interview with John A. Young Chinese Buddhist Philosophy to a Career of Service to the Society

John A. Young has had a distinguished career as an applied anthropologist at Oregon State University where he served as department chair for 18 years. During his service there he was a major factor in the development of the graduate program in applied anthropology. John's application research program involved Fiji, the People's Republic of China and rural Oregon.

His commitment to the Society can be seen in service as annual meeting program chair, secretary, and president and other important roles. His term as president saw effective implementation of a number of important initiatives. The interview was done March 29, 2017, at Santa Fe, New Mexico by Donald Stull and edited by John van Willigen with inputs from John Young and Donald Stull,

STULL: This is an oral history interview with John Young, past president of the Society. John, let me get started at the beginning. So what led you to anthropology in the first place?

YOUNG: I was a philosophy major in college, and I got a master's degree in Asian philosophy at the University of Hawai'i, before I decided to go into anthropology. There was no anthropology offered at Macalester College [where I did my undergraduate studies] back in the early 1960s when I was there, so I didn't really get exposed to it. I didn't like psychology because it was all Freudian, and I didn't like sociology much because I thought it was fairly superficial and uninteresting basically. So the most interesting subject I ran into was philosophy, and I just followed my interest, which ended when I got into anthropology. After I graduated, I read a book on physical anthropology by Robert Ardery called *African Genesis*. And that was a popular book at the time. That was the first book I'd ever read in anthropology, and I mean, now you could do a whole critique of it, but back then it was kind of inspiring to me. And then I went to graduate school in philosophy, and I met some anthropologists who were in the graduate program at the University of Hawai'i, [they] were my colleagues at the East-West Center. I lived in the East-West Center dorms, and there were some anthropology students there, both from Asia /Pacific and the US, and I came to admire what they did. I was reading more books on China because that was my specialty [which] was Chinese philosophy. And I read Edgar Snow's book which had just recently come out, and I began to get fascinated by the kind of cultural change and social change that was going on in China. I thought it was somewhat of a huge laboratory, a human experiment. And so I

switched my interests from philosophy basically to culture and anthropology. Instead of going on and getting a PhD in philosophy, which a couple of friends of mine did in two years, I took five more years, and I got a PhD in anthropology. I applied to Stanford. I got in there, and went into anthropology, and anthropology has been my passion, ever since. I mean, I never wavered from that. Applied anthropology came a little bit later.

STULL: Well, before we get there, I'm interested, you're from, you graduated from high school in Waukesha, Wisconsin. And then you got a BA in philosophy, and but you ended up in Taiwan in 1964 translating Chinese Buddhist texts. I mean, that doesn't really seem like a natural progression. And it's fascinating, so can you kind of walk me back as to how you went from Wisconsin, to philosophy and China.

YOUNG: As I said, my specialty was Chinese philosophy and, even more specialized, Chinese Buddhism. So I did a master's thesis on a particular school of Chinese Buddhism. It was, probably historically the most prominent one, called Hua Yan school of Buddhism. I worked with a monk in a monastery to get the text [I was working on] translated. He did the rough translation, and then I went back with my dictionary, and I did a more refined translation of it. I wrote a thesis of commentary on it because it was something that had never been translated into English before. And then did comparative analysis with that school of metaphysics and philosophy and several western philosophies.

STULL: What led you to China? I mean, Chinese philosophy. I mean, it's as good as anything else, but I'm just [curious] how you became interested in China.

YOUNG: Well, I took a course in Asian philosophy, two-semester course my senior year in college. And there was a professor by the name of David White, who taught that course. We met once a week in a seminar setting, small group. We only had eight or nine students, and no tests, and we wrote a big paper at the end of the term. I mean, I just, I liked it, I was just on a quest for understanding and knowledge. I had a lot of interests as an undergraduate I still do, but I think that course is what inspired me the most. He recommended me to the East-West Center, where they had a new Asian philosophy program there at the University of Hawai'i, a new master's, new PhD. I was in, I think it was probably the first cohort. My professors weren't too happy when I decided to go into anthropology and not finish the PhD. [My philosophy professor] Chung-Ying Cheng is still there at University of Hawai'i. About five or six years ago I met him there, and he said he was going to teach there for sixty years, but he was really glad to see me. I don't think there were

any real hard feelings about my leaving. I think philosophy prepared me for social science in having a basic understanding of knowledge, what kinds of knowledge are there? How do you arrive at knowledge? How do you get there? How do you consider the concept of truth or falsehood, or what's evidence, and what's not evidence and so on? So that carried over into an interest in methods in applied anthropology. I taught the methods course for a long time in our program at Oregon State.

STULL: You went from the East-West Center. Then you went to Stanford in anthropology. Stanford's really not known as an applied anthropology program. What kind of exposure did you get to applied anthropology at that time, or did you?

YOUNG: At that time, the department had just started a program with the medical school to give medical students an MA in anthropology. It wasn't called applied anthropology. And then in exchange for that some of the anthropology students went over to the medical school and took courses over there. I don't know what the courses were because I wasn't interested in [the] medical area at that time. And I think the first exposure I had to applied anthropology was taking a course by Benjamin Paul, who was an applied anthropologist and medical anthropologist. Paul's course helped me understand how culture's change or persist and influenced my thinking.

STULL: --right--

YOUNG: He was also chair of the department. Later I was a department chair for eighteen years at Oregon State--I tried to model myself after Ben Paul because I thought he had the right kind of compassionate approach to students in particular, but also to faculty and others. I mean, he never got in pitched battles with people. He was the mediator, the conciliator, the reconciler, and the guy who would give his ear and listen carefully, come up with solutions. And I think that has stood me in good stead.

STULL: I, of course, never met him. I read his work and always admired his work but didn't, know him personally. So what kind of discussions were there about applied anthropology? I mean, was it okay to go down that route.

YOUNG: I guess you'd have to say that the main orientation of the Stanford program was elitist, and I think you'd find that today too, although you might find more diversity there. But another faculty member [Roy D'Andrade] there inspired me, he was actually chair of my dissertation committee, and although he left that last year, I

had-- Bill [G. William] Skinner take his place. Roy D'Andrade was a methods specialist.

STULL: Oh yes.

YOUNG: Stanford was a leader in cultural semantics with Chuck [Charles O.] Frake, and he was another one on my committee, and so I had Bill Skinner for China, and then I had Roy and Chuck for the methods part of my study on business and interpersonal relations in Hong Kong. I don't think that was the best work I ever did, but it was what got me going. And some people thought it was okay. I was one of Roy D'Andrade's whiz kids in a way. I didn't really think of myself like that, but when you reflect back on it, I learned how to program computers and do some statistics and some other things from Roy, and I learned a lot of the linguistics from Chuck Frake. I started teaching at San Diego State. The first summer after I started teaching [there], I worked with Roy D'Andrade, [who was then at] University of California, San Diego. I did interviews to help him with a study he was doing on housewives. He and I were co-authors of a paper published in Canada [which] came out of my dissertation work in Hong Kong, the cognitive aspects of interpersonal relationships. And so early on, I was really impressed by what they call now--positivistic, scientific anthropology. We had a kind of optimism that we could use our methods to uncover some really interesting and exciting things. Then that whole cognitive anthropology movement just sort of died out. I didn't really continue with it much because it wasn't long after that I got interested in applied anthropology. Mainstream anthropology was starting to turn towards a postmodern orientation in their work. I didn't really grasp what that was until quite a few years after it started because I wasn't involved in it. I had never been exposed to it at graduate school.

STULL: Well you studied under some of the real giants then in anthropology, Frake and D'Andrade and Ben Paul, wow.

YOUNG: Yeah, it was exciting, and I had some classmates too, a number of them applied anthropologists--

STULL: Who were your classmates?

YOUNG: Well, Jerry Moles, Ted [Theodore E.] Downing, David Young, I'm thinking of ones who [were] friends of mine, and they've all been involved in applied. Dave was teaching up in Canada. One thing I remember about graduate school is, is the

discussions we had among ourselves as graduate students, about what we were learning. I mean, that was as important as anything else that we did.

STULL: Yes, we've all learned from our fellow students as much or more than we learned from our teachers, at least in my case.

YOUNG: My big shift to applied came when Harland Padfield called up Roy D'Andrade one day, and he said, "At Oregon State we're doing a big computer simulations project of agriculture and economy and forestry in the Willamette Valley in Oregon." And he wanted a quantitative kind of person, that D'Andrade could recommend. And so Roy recommended me, and then Harland called me up. San Diego State was just sort of a stopgap for me. I taught there for a couple years. I finished up my dissertation towards the end of the first year and I taught there again. And then I went up to Oregon State, and I worked in the Western Rural Development Center with Harland Padfield. Harland was the one who really introduced me to applied and essentially immersed me in it. It became my primary interest up until now.

STULL: So that's really how you got interested in applied was through Harland Padfield. Can you talk a little about your work in Fiji? I mean, I noticed on your vitae that you did a lot of research in Fiji, and I'm interested in how--I know you worked in Taiwan early, and then I guess when I got to know you in the mid to late eighties you were one of the early anthropologists involved in the People's Republic of China, and a trailblazer in that area.

YOUNG: China didn't really open up, mainland China, until about 1983 or '84, and then as soon as it did. I jumped into it, but I got interested in Fiji too at the East-West Center. I made a lot of Fijian friends, and I even married a Fijian.

STULL: Oh.

YOUNG: That was I guess part of it, but I was, I was just fascinated by those people, and through the friendships I made, I also got interested in island development and the particular problems that islands have, being isolated, with limited resources, limited capital.

STULL: Sure.

YOUNG: How can these places develop? How can people organize? The human organizations, how can they organize to be effective? And so I was looking at essentially different types of organizations. I looked at what in the old days we might have called a cargo cult. You would call it a social movement now. The group members were quite cordial to me and interested in me publishing about them, which I did through the *Pacific Studies Journal*. Did that, and then I did studies of sugarcane workers, and later village development in Lovoni, which happened to be my wife's ancestral village, which helped with rapport. It was a village where they were doing a big project on trying to improvetaro farming, and the experts wanted them to start growing cocoa and different crops. So I was looking at this ag development project where there was a collective community effort underway. It turns out there was a big disconnect between Fijians in the village and the development planning office about how things would proceed. I think concepts of modern economy are really hard to impress on villagers. Like we're going to give you this money, and then you have to pay it back over time. That was something they'd never heard of before.

STULL: No, it's not a gift.

YOUNG: I can't, with the time we have, I can't go into detail on all of the studies that I did, but basically, I was doing reports and giving them back to government people and saying, okay, here's what's going on, or publish them through local journals and trying to make a contribution, towards their development and development planning.

STULL: I saw on your vitae where you were the assistant coach of the Fiji men's national basketball team in 1983. I never thought of them playing basketball in Fiji. I mean, why shouldn't they? I just thought, wow, I'd like to know more about that.

YOUNG: Well I've been to a lot of Pacific Islands, and very few, if any, were without a Mormon church and a basketball court next to the Mormon church.

STULL: Really?

YOUNG: Mormons not only brought their religion to the Pacific Islands, they brought basketball to the Pacific. I don't know all the details of the history of basketball in Fiji, but I think that was the main influence. The Mormon church, their young men, they had a team, and I played for another team that was called China Club. Fiji had about 4,000 Chinese there. Some of them were shopkeepers. A few of them were

professionals, not very many farmers among them, but they sponsored our team. And then there were Fijian teams from different districts in the capital city, Suva, and outlying areas, and some of the teams had really strong reputations. People in the community would come and watch these teams. I remember there was one team from a district called Raiwaqa, and they probably had the best team. There was another team that was called Boston, not the Boston Celtics, just Boston.

STULL: (laughs)

YOUNG: That team was from a neighboring district to Raiwaqa and they played a real freewheeling, backyard kind of basketball. It was just an awful lot of fun. The military also had teams that they would put in there. That was getting very close to the end of my basketball career. I was about forty-one or something, but I managed to hang with them. (laughs) One of the guys that played regularly was a Samoan. He had played for the BYU [Brigham Young University] Hawai'i team a few years previously. I got to know him before he was selected as a coach of the national team that was going to go play in the South Pacific games in New Zealand. And so for two or three months after our basketball season ended, I was helping him coach this team that was going to play in New Zealand. The team didn't exactly ignite a blaze of glory. I wasn't with them when they played down there, but I don't think they embarrassed themselves either. It was a lot of fun--

STULL: --I'll bet it was--

YOUNG: --just giving them fundamentals of basketball, and then I would play against them and show them a move or show them plays because they were pretty raw talent. I mean, they had some really good basic talent, but they didn't have all the refined skills of Americans who play basketball from the time they're three years old. So it was just a lot of fun and something I could do for the community while I was there.

STULL: Well that's fascinating. I guess one of the things that's interesting is when people at our stage in life look back on our careers and think about how we got where we are and what were the landmarks or the turning points. As you look back now on your career in anthropology, you mentioned some of them, Harland Padfield calling, and you going to Oregon State.

YOUNG: What I didn't mention was my earlier international experiences, before Taiwan. When I was eleven years old my family went to Edinburgh, Scotland, to live

for six months from, I don't know, it was March to November or something, 1952. But anyway, I was in the fifth grade, so I missed the end of fifth grade and a little bit of the start of the sixth grade. And that was my first real encounter with another culture because I went to a Scottish school, and the boys there all talked with a pretty thick Scotch brogue. It was one of those schools where they wear uniforms and the teacher wears a robe like a minister, a black robe, and if the boys got out of line, he hits them on their hand with a barber's belt--

STULL: --whoa--

YOUNG: --or whacks their butt with a cricket bat. (laughs) Even if you say something stupid you could get whacked. Not even just sort of misbehaving, you could get whacked for being exceptionally stupid. (both laugh)

STULL: Well boy I would have never survived that school.

YOUNG: I didn't want to be stupid, that's for sure. (laughs) But I had to learn how to cope with that, and when I got back to Waukesha in the sixth grade, and school had already started for a month or two, I had my first experience with reentry shock. It was hard for me to readapt because previously I had lots of friends and I was in sports. I was into baseball and basketball and all this other stuff. All of a sudden somehow, I was an outsider. I had to prove myself over again.

STULL: So you came back to the same town?

YOUNG: I came back, same town, same classroom--not same classroom because it was a different teacher. And then I'd had these experiences in Scotland, and I realized, I couldn't--and it was sort of an intuitive realization. I wouldn't say I had it totally objectified--but I realized I couldn't communicate what I'd gone through, and that the kids around me had no reference points for understanding what I went through.

STULL: Sure.

YOUNG: So I had this early experience that anthropologists have all the time, and I didn't realize that it was preparing me to be an anthropologist at the time, but I think it did. And then I came home after my sophomore year in college, and I had been taking some philosophy courses and religion courses and history courses, other subjects. My dad was a Presbyterian minister, and I told him one day, I said, "Dad," I

said, "hope you don't take it the wrong way, but I decided I'm not going to be a Presbyterian anymore." (laughs)

STULL: Well, I know what my father would have said to that. What did your father say?

YOUNG: I don't know, but he wasn't one of those hellfire and brimstone ministers. He was tolerant. He used to organize interfaith services and do all that. He respected the Catholics and the Jews, even the atheists. He respected those people. He had friends among all those people, which is very unusual for a minister.

STULL: Sure.

YOUNG: But I picked up on what he did, not what the Presbyterians said. He had rewarding relationships with everybody, with all these people. He's not trying to stick to his own group. He's broader person than that. I think he probably was pretty shocked, but--

STULL: --well what--

YOUNG: --he didn't get in my face about it at all.

STULL: And what did they think about their son be--your parents think about their son becoming an anthropologist?

YOUNG: Well I think they were happiest about the fact that they could point to me and say, "This is my son the professor." But other than that, I mean, they had already embraced diversity in a big way, and when I was at college, they hosted a Nigerian student from Marquette University on weekends and holidays. He was from eastern Nigeria, and because that was when, my sister and I, my junior and senior year, we were both at college, they liked to reach out. I remember being host to some visitors from Hawai'i, and at that time, of course, Hawai'i was viewed as a foreign country, but they were interested in other people and other cultures. So, I really didn't get a lot of resistance that way. Plus my dad was, he was a minister until he was fifty-three years old, and for about ten or fifteen years of that ministry in Waukesha he was a member and then chair of the Governor's Commission on Human Rights in Wisconsin.

STULL: Oh, really?

YOUNG: That commission worked on issues of fair housing and other things with minorities, Native Americans, and inner-city residents, in Milwaukee and so on. He was a civil rights activist, for a long time, from the get-go, and I think that's what really defined his career and made him different probably from any other minister in that whole state. And then [at] fifty-three he quit being a minister, because he was hired as a paid executive director of that commission. That would have been 1963.

STULL: Just in time, of all the things going on with civil rights.

YOUNG: All the things going on, and he was, in Milwaukee and one other city, he was on two panels, that included Martin Luther King Jr. He was in on a lot of historical initiatives.

STULL: So you mentioned you going to Scotland when you were in the fifth grade as a seminal moment. And then your father's work in civil rights and diversity. Are there other things that you think prepared you for an anthropological career besides those two? Another anthropologist must see to be really important moments for you.

YOUNG: Well, let me just add one thing I found out. This was after the 1986 SfAA meeting in Reno, and I was program chair. The guy who won the Malinowski, Philleo Nash, was from Wisconsin and was Lieutenant Governor of Wisconsin.

STULL: He was the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. He was in the Truman administration, and many people credited him with Truman's integration of the armed forces.

YOUNG: My dad was already eighty-five years old, but he still had his memory and everything, and I asked him, "Did you work with Philleo Nash?" and he said yes, especially on the issues of Wisconsin Indian communities. And so I thought that was an interesting sort of full circle. And anyway, you asked me about other things that interest me about --or getting into anthropology. Well, I think another big one was going to Africa after my junior year in college. I spent three months, two months or so in Nigeria, and I did a project there for political science. I had a political science minor, and an English minor, and I did some investigations, without any anthropological training, I have to say, about regional politics in Nigeria. And I did interviews. I managed to worm my way into getting interviews with the chief of the Yoruba tribe, who was the most powerful western leader, a guy named Awolowo, and then another guy named Azikwe who was the head of the eastern tribes and their

major politician. And I think some of what I did was probably unethical according to anthropological standards because--

STULL: --well, that was a long time ago--

YOUNG: --because I didn't know much, but they were very nice to me, cordial, and they answered a few questions and, of course, my questions weren't very sophisticated. I think they saw me and thought, "Well here's a nice young guy. We'll just humor him along." It was in the middle of some fierce political battles. They had a physical fight a few months earlier, actually in the parliament, between those two factions. I managed to get in there and do that project, so I think that was something that also prepared me for anthropology, especially enduring the hardships of three months in Africa. I went through South Africa, and I toured those Apartheid ghettos in Johannesburg. That was a chilling experience actually, but then I went to East Africa, went through the game parks and connected with a friend there who was in the teacher's East Africa program, who graduated a year or so before me, and we climbed Mount Kilimanjaro together. I went to the top of Mount Kilimanjaro. Later I went up to Ethiopia and Egypt and then Europe and home. So it was another international experience, and it gave me the opportunity to meet an anthropology student who was in our group that went to Nigeria. I learned some things from him, just really elementary, a few basic things about anthropology and the anthropological perspective on things, which I didn't have at the time. And I realized I was really missing something. But I couldn't do anything about it at Macalester [College], so I continued in philosophy until I got to the East-West Center, and then at the East-West Center I made friends with classmates and fellow students. I don't know how many students were in our group, but we had a lot. There were two residence halls--one great big huge dormitory and another smaller dormitory. We may have had a couple of hundred of us in the dorms, and I felt like I was a kid in a candy store with all these people from different cultures. They told me about their homelands and their life there, and I'd observe behavioral differences in the way they did things. Then I met David Young, who persuaded me to apply to Stanford to study anthropology because he had already been admitted there. He just deferred admission so that he could be at the East-West Center first and do Asian studies. I read a few more anthropology books when I could squeeze it in. I was pretty busy in learning Chinese language and so on, which is not an easy task.

STULL: No.

YOUNG: But I figured if I finish philosophy, I'd be much better off. I mean, I'd have a master's degree anyway, and I would show that I'm not a quitter, and I knew I would benefit from it. I still like it, I just had greater interest at that time in pursuing anthropology, and so I stuck through the philosophy and made the best of it. I think I benefited, and I learned quite a bit of Chinese language from it. And then I was able to start the program at Stanford, and I mean, that first year was pretty tough because I didn't have any background in anthropology, but Stanford at the time was a fairly innovative program. There weren't that many students around who had graduated with majors in anthropology because there weren't that many anthropology programs. It wasn't until mid-late sixties--

STULL: --right--

YOUNG: --earlier seventies that it really blossomed. They were willing to take somebody who had potential--(laughs)--and train them up, which is what they did with me. And so they knocked some of the errant, --(laughs)--concepts out of my head and got me going.

STULL: How did you wander into the Society for Applied Anthropology? Or maybe wander is not the right [word].

YOUNG: My first teaching job, the job before I finished my dissertation was at San Diego State, and while I was there the SfAA held a meeting over in Tucson. And I had two students, Bob [Robert R.] Alvarez, who's very recently past president-

STULL: --sure--

YOUNG: I was his master's thesis chair.

STULL: Oh really?

YOUNG: Yeah, and then Jim [James J.] McKenna who later got his degree at U of O [Oregon]--he was a physical anthropologist. He went on to teach at Notre Dame, and he became a very prominent physical anthropologist because he did studies of higher primates looking at mothers and infants, and then did the same kind of studies with humans. He recorded biological rhythmic changes in mothers and infants, health changes that result from close bodily contact. Those two guys, they were the first two students I had, and they were among the best I ever had. I mean, I felt so lucky to have those students. Bob had done a thesis on a cooperative in

Guatemala, a women's cooperative that made embroidered blouses, *molás*. That was really my first exposure to applied anthropology because he had been an anthropology major. He worked on this project while a Peace Corps volunteer, collecting information about the cooperative and then used it later in his master's thesis, and I was really impressed with his thesis. I think that helped me decide to accept Harland's job offer at Oregon State, especially since I had been looking around for a research position. I was pretty young at that point. I started teaching at San Diego State when I was twenty-nine. I think the average age for a PhD is thirty-eight or something like that. I was determined to go through those first stages as fast as I could, but I was really more interested in doing research at that time than I was in teaching. And then Harland called, and those kinds of opportunities were there, with Harland. I went down to visit him in Tucson, and then he signed me up. At the end of that spring, that same spring after Harland hired me, I took Bob Alvarez and a couple of other students over to the Tucson meeting, and that was really my first exposure to SfAA, and what did I notice? Basically two things. I don't remember what the sessions were about so much as I remember how easy people were in conversation. You meet so and so, and talk to anybody, and it's sort of an ethos--

STULL: --yes--

YOUNG: --I think that we've carried right on to the present day. The entertainment on the last day was *ballet folklórico*, and I had never seen anything like that, and it was pretty spectacular, and I said, "Boy, -- (laughs)--I could go to more of these meetings."

STULL: The fun factor, yes.

YOUNG: The fun factor was part of what roped me in. And so, that was my first meeting.

STULL: Do you remember what year the Tucson meeting was.

YOUNG: I think it was 1972.

STULL: My first meeting was in Boulder in '70, I think. I did go to the Tucson. But so then you've been very active in SfAA, so you were program chair and, on the board, and secretary and of course president and--

YOUNG: --I've been on a number of committees.

STULL: And lots of committees, yes, yes. So you want to look back, I mean, on that and think about that a little bit?

YOUNG: I don't know. I think Harland in, when was it, 1982, he was president of SfAA.

STULL: He was president in 1982, right.

YOUNG: He was also president-elect the year before that and a past president, so he was on the board, and that's really when I first started to get involved at all with leadership. In 1981, I went to the annual meeting because SfAA paid my way, and that really cemented my relationship with SfAA. Peter New was president. And they had run a paper competition for [young professionals]. The best ones got their way paid to Edinburgh. I don't know where Peter found the money, from government somewhere. They selected my paper as one they wanted at the meeting.

STULL: Wow.

YOUNG: So I got my way paid to Edinburgh, and then Harland didn't want to go. Harland was not a big international traveler. So he said, "John." At that time he was president-elect. He said, "I'll call them up." He said, "Will you go to the board meeting in my place and represent me?" So that's another thing I did in Edinburgh. I remember Russ [H. Russell] Bernard was there, at that time the editor of *Human Organization*. I don't remember everything, but I remember feeling a little bit out of place because nobody elected me to be there. On the other hand I felt a duty to Harland to do my best, to come back with a report. Back in those days, for those three years, Harland was on the phone all the time about the SfAA business, because of the problem with Bergman Associates siphoning off a lot of money.

STULL: Why don't we talk about that for a little bit? Harland was president of SfAA in '82 when the Internal Revenue Service made the--told the American Anthropological Association that they were in violation of IRS regulations for nonprofits because they were managing the affairs of SfAA and a number of other anthropological associations. They maintained they were managing, they were doing it at cost, but IRS said, you're making money off this, and you have to do something. And so that was when AAA said to societies like SfAA and others that you've got to join us and become units of AAA or go your separate ways, and of course SfAA had always been independent, and--

YOUNG: --yeah--

STULL: --so we voted to retain that independence. But you had sort of a ringside seat at that moment in history.

YOUNG: Yeah, but my understanding of it was that the SfAA had contracted to--with AAA just for administrative services--

STULL: --right--

YOUNG: --not to be part of the AAA organization--

STULL: --that's correct, right--

YOUNG: --in any way. They were just doing accounting and various services.

STULL: Right.

YOUNG: But the executive director of AAA, Ed [Edward J.] Lehman had some other ideas that he wanted to control all the smaller anthropological societies, and I don't know if anybody ever did a complete audit, but I think Harland and some of the other leaders at that time, they had strong suspicions that the AAA had been siphoning money off the SfAA dues and not putting them back into our accounts. I think a lot of folks who were in AAA and also in SfAA got upset because SfAA was separating from AAA. Actually, we were always separate. The AAA only provided business services. There was never any unity. It wasn't anything anthropological that caused a split. It was the executive administration of the accounts that we took for ourselves. I don't know if some people ever understood that, but I think one result of that episode was that AAA started NAPA, *National Association for the-*

STULL: --right--

YOUNG: --*Practice of Anthropology*, which turned out to be a nice kind of sister organization to SfAA, I think, because they have a slightly different emphasis, and it's less international, with more emphasis on anthropologists who don't teach in universities. And SfAA tries to combine the two and get a synergy between people that work outside and the ones on the inside so they can strengthen, improve each other's missions. Anyway, I don't think that misunderstanding ever went away except

with time— people got old and retired. Still you can feel those resentments emerge every now and then.

STULL: Yes, I know.

YOUNG: And I didn't personally feel that way, [it] wasn't anything that I wanted to see intensify, and I don't think it did. I think it just sort of wore away.

STULL: Well, that 1981 to '83 period when all of that happened was, I'm sure if Harland—if we were talking to him, he would say that was the issue that confronted him as president.

YOUNG: Yeah.

STULL: You were president from 1997 to 1999. Were there particular issues that confronted you at that time or?

YOUNG: In terms of the organization?

STULL: Um-hm.

YOUNG: My interest in being president was not so much to focus on internal dysfunctions and things like that but to try to expand the scope and responsibilities and the impact of SfAA as an organization. I've always seen myself as somewhat of an institution builder, facilitator, whatever, and so I think that's one reason why I was involved in the leadership in SfAA because I enjoy doing that kind of thing. And I hope people can see I wasn't out to get anybody or have any agenda. I got a lot of enjoyment out of strengthening the organization in any way we could, collaboratively doing it. So in a general sense, that was what I was after. But there were certain issues that cropped up, and there's always been a tension between executive director and the presidents and board and so on, duties not being clearly defined on each side and so on. Sometimes we had to clarify what those duties are, and then somebody might get a little upset about this or that. The relationship of the previous president with the executive director had been particularly contentious. I wanted to try to stabilize things, but I had my own contentious issues to deal with, as time went on. And I tried to deal with them as best I could, to keep some harmony, keep the organization going. I think one big challenge we had was a contract grant with the Environmental Protection Agency.

STULL: Um-hm.

YOUNG: When I was president-elect, Jay [Jean J.] Schensul, the previous president, had signed an agreement with the EPA, to put, over a period of, what was it, two, three, four years, to put, applied anthropologists and environmental anthropologists who were graduate students through young faculty, into communities to do ground-level ethnography on environmental issues and problems. Later we put out a report of our results that went back to the communities and to the EPA, and sent out digestible reports for people who were leaders in communities and the government in that area. And to me it was an extremely exciting project. I did--

STULL: --it was--

YOUNG: --as much as I could with that. There were contentious issues with the executive director too about budgets and money and so on, and also just the basic concept of identity--should the society be doing this kind of thing? So not so much a personal thing, it's just a matter of who are we? What is our identity? What should we be doing? We're facilitating individual careers here, but can we really move this profession forward and really kick start it, get it going. I think the project, it probably did, at the time, give us a real boost.

STULL: I think so, yes.

YOUNG: Barbara [Rose] Johnston managed the project. Barbara is a conscientious and productive worker. I always used to tell her she runs on jet fuel. I can't imagine the kind of work load she carries and the passion she has for her work. She stayed in touch with all those researchers in the field and got those investigations going, got the reports out, everything, pretty amazing. And then Rob [Robert H.] Winthrop--

STULL: --right--

YOUNG: --wound it out when I was a past president. But the height of that project was the two years, when I was president, so getting that thing shepherded through, it was very consistent with what I wanted to do to--

STULL: -it was a wonderful accomplishment-

YOUNG: --push the institution forward. I know it depends on who's president, whether you can do things like that in the future, but I think it gave our Society

another dimension. And what else? Well, let me say that another issue I faced, and this is not meant to be a criticism of any of my colleagues, but one of the fads in academics at that time was strategic planning. I had been, --(laughs)--bombarded silly, with Oregon State University administration requirements for strategic planning and reports, which were basically an exercise in whether or not department chairs and deans were going to be compliant with the wishes of the higher university administrators. So we had to do all these reports and analysis and everything else, but it was critical in keeping our program going because we couldn't just throw their directives back in their face. So I was skeptical of this kind of thing unless it was really sincere and genuine. I was also skeptical of it in SfAA because a new president takes office every two years. Now granted they have a four-year term including, president-elect and past-president, which gives some continuity, but I thought what I have here is two years where we can do something like the EPA project and other things. And then a new president comes in. Who knows who that's going to be? New board comes in. What are they going to think? Are they going to go along with this planning? We have much less continuity than there is in an academic department or business or organization that might benefit from this kind of planning. So anyway, Carol Hill did some planning. I don't know how much Jay [Schensul] did. I don't think she was too big on that, but Dennis Wiedman who came in as treasurer, was really enthusiastic, because he had worked for a provost, as an assistant provost on planning down at Florida International University. So he thought we should be doing it, and I had other things in my mind. I didn't want people to focus on a future that happens when they're out of office, and they're not a part of leadership, and so we did a little of planning, but I tried to manage it so that it could be productive to give us some guidance, but not get overwhelmed by it, and then just get stuck, and not be able to move, move forward with it. There was another initiative that started at that time. Linda Bennett and I may be the only people in this world, who really remembers it. For the last, what, fifteen, eighteen years, SfAA has had a relationship with SAR [School for American Research].

STULL: --yes--

YOUNG: I remember our members getting fellowships there, and they do plenary session at our meetings, and they publish--

STULL: --right--

YOUNG: --applied stuff and so on. Well, I'll tell you how that started. We were in a meeting in Tucson, that was my last meeting as president. After that Linda [Bennett] took over. So the year would have been 1999.

STULL: yes, 1999.

YOUNG: Tom Weaver and Art Gallaher, they came in with a proposal under new business at our board meeting. They said, "SAR wants to cosponsor the Malinowski Award." And we sat there a little bit stunned. Should we let them do it? Some board members were saying, "Well, we already have that award funded. We already have the endowment for that award." They wanted a piece of our major award as a way to get into applied anthropology. And I just thought, well, I mean, I'm really glad they're interested, but this way of doing it is totally inappropriate. And so we had a discussion right away with them there. Their proposal was fairly short, and I remember what I told them because I just came up with it right on the spot. I told them that cooperation with SAR would be a great thing for our Society and so on, but I suggested that we do something like what we're doing right now. I said, "If they want to put some resources into this, why don't we invite them to do a plenary session at our meeting every year. If they want to prepare for it, they can invite the panelists to be fellows at SAR, and then they can publish." I mean, just basically the kind of thing we're doing now.

YOUNG: I saw a window of opportunity because I remember it was at that same meeting when they gave an award to younger anthropologists for work that was very abstract.

STULL: Mead award.

YOUNG: Not the Mead award. It was their own award. I remember they gave it to a Japanese-American young woman, anthropologist, who was a dyed-in-the-wool, complete postmodernist. I mean, I had no idea how she could ever feel comfortable at an applied meeting. The award was given before our board meeting, when their proposal came up, and I thought, wow, I wonder. Maybe they should really reconsider what they're doing. (laughs) When their proposal came up in the meeting, I jumped on it because I knew they were kind of off on a tangent there and they really need to get redirected. Their board was trying to get them to work with us. Now I guess it's been a pretty successful collaboration. I wasn't really involved in the implementation of that initiative, except maybe a little bit. Linda Bennett and Noel Chrisman, they really got it rolling, and implemented.

STULL: One of the things that I remember about your many contributions to SfAA was we're meeting in Santa Fe, now, 2017. The first time we made it in Santa Fe was in 1989, and I was the program chair, and you organized a plenary session called "Ethnic Minorities and Applied Anthropology in China". And this year we have a whole day devoted to Santa Fe-called Santa Fe Day. It's been--it's very popular. People from the general public can come.

YOUNG: Yeah

STULL: There was an editorial in the *Santa Fe New Mexican* yesterday applauding that. We have a proclamation from the mayor. The whole week is declared SfAA week.

YOUNG: There was an article in that newspaper about our session in 1989 too.

STULL: Yes, and so this was open to the public.

YOUNG: Um-hm.

STULL: I mean, your session was open to the public--

YOUNG: --yeah--

STULL: --and it was really very avant-garde. It was something that we had never done before, and we invited, I mean, it was large--it was because of you, we invited everybody to come from the community, and it was, I think it was a really seminal event. And so I'd just like for you to talk about sort of how you put that together, and what inspired you and how.

YOUNG: I have to give you more credit than I give myself, for the public part of that. I don't really remember exactly in our discussions how that was decided, that it was going to be public--

STULL: --well we decided to open some sessions. We had some who were related to New Mexico.

YOUNG: I used to enjoy organizing sessions. Later in my career when I was involved in other things, I didn't organize that many sessions anymore, but yeah, that was one of the big ones. And there were a lot of people there. I don't know if it was a couple of hundred or whatever.

STULL: -- it was a huge turnout--

YOUNG: --big packed room, and that session originally came about because I had invited a scholar from China, a Tibetan scholar, Li Youyi, to speak to one of my classes and to our faculty in the department, and I hosted him at my house. With the exception of Fei Xiaotong coming in 1980, to Denver, and getting the Malinowski Award, he was the first anthropologist that actually came over from China after it opened up to the outside world. Professor Li happened to be attending the AAA meeting in Los Angeles. Harland Padfield met him, told me about him because I wasn't at that AAA meeting, and he said we should invite him up to Oregon State. And I said "Okay, we're going to invite him up." And so I established a relationship with him, and, when that visit ended, he made a suggestion, "I have a scholar in my institute, just about your age, who has very good English, very good," and so on. "And he could come over here." And I said "Okay, I'm going to write a Fulbright proposal, then we'll bring him over." And then we did. It was 1986 when Lui Xingwu came over. He was on that panel in Santa Fe too. Professor Liu helped me arrange to get the other panel members here in '89. Meanwhile, they had arranged for me to go visit Beijing, not just visit, but to spend a semester in their institute in China. I was going to take my kids over there and start them learning Chinese and everything, --(laughs)--and I was all excited about it. And then the crack down on demonstrators in Tiananmen Square happened.

STULL: Oh yeah.

YOUNG: And so travel was restricted. I did go over there to a big academic meeting and participated in honoring some of their senior anthropologists there in China who had been educated in the West before the revolution. And that was a great experience. They toured me around, and showed me the sights. I wrote another grant, this time to Wenner-Gren, to fund the panel at the SfAA meeting in 1989, and then we published those papers in *Practicing Anthropology*, with commentary to show this is applied anthropology in China. And as far as I know Wenner-Gren was pretty excited about being able to support this.

STULL: They should have been.

YOUNG: And in the session itself, I think everybody who came was really interested, but some of the community members included members of Tibetan Ashram--

STULL: --that's right--

YOUNG: – in Santa Fe, and they came in with their yellow and orange robes.

STULL: Yes.

YOUNG: We had one panelist presenting a paper on his work in Tibet, and they immediately stood up and marched around in protest and so on, and we had to quickly figure out a way to satisfy them and get them to sit down so that we could finish the paper and finish the session. So we let them work off some steam, and then I talked to the head monk and told him you'll have time at the end of the meeting. You can present your views or whatever you want to present about Free Tibet at that time, but let us get through the program first. And that we did, and they didn't protest at the end. I guess they had run out of steam, but at the end, the panelist, Zhai shengde, who had presented the paper on Tibet, went up to the head monk and hugged him, and bowed to him and smiled, and they exchanged a few words. And it was--I thought it was a nice ending to the whole thing that we had a reconciliation. .

STULL: Yeah, that was a very memorable end. In Memphis and then again in 2000 in San Francisco you brought social scientists from the People's Republic to the SfAA meetings. So you had this long trajectory of--

YOUNG: --and then we had another--well, I had a, a which one? I think it was ten years after that, for the meeting in San Francisco, I got another Wenner-Gren grant.

STULL: Yes, right.

YOUNG: I said, okay, now we're going to have another five or six--

STULL: --right--

YOUNG: --panelists, and they're going to present their work, and we're going to assess what the state of applied anthropology in China is ten years later. Sydel Silverman at Wenner-Gren just immediately kicked in the money. It was just before she retired from Wenner-Gren.

STULL: In looking back do you think that these three sessions where Chinese scholars, social scientists came to the US and presented their work to us had any effect on anthropology in general or applied anthropology in China, or are you in a position to know?

YOUNG: I'm not, I'm not really in a position to assess what's happened there very recently, within the last ten years or so, because I've been retired for that period of time. Of course, I'm pretty sure it had an effect. I was interested in both sides learning from each other. There was a stereotype of Chinese anthropologists as being lackeys of the government, who oppressed indigenous people. People in this country didn't understand, they didn't know about the kinds of studies that Chinese did on minorities, the kind of policies that they set in place in the early 1950s to deal with minorities, which were very much a kind of affirmative action for minorities to get them into the mainstream. Their emphasis was totally on bringing them into the modern world, modernization. At the beginning Chinese officials just thought old customs were burdens that stood in the way of progress. So if you get rid of them, the result is progress. It wasn't until the Cultural Revolution that Red Guards went around destroying temples, some of them in minority areas. I mean, that was part of a different phenomenon. Anthropologists weren't involved in that, but they placed a heavy emphasis on evolutionary anthropology. Lewis Henry Morgan was one of their heroes. And so they thought cultures went through certain stages of development, and they thought, well, okay, we're going to help these cultures get to a better stage of development, especially socialism, whatever it was. But the anthropologists themselves were pretty compassionate people, and I think they genuinely tried to understand these cultures, and I don't think that they shared all the same kind of prejudices as administrators and party officials. But even those party officials, I mean, they were pretty enlightened about the kind of rights and responsibilities they gave to minorities. They had a whole ministry in their government called the Ministry of Minority Affairs, which the minorities university was under. It was called the University for Minorities (or University for Nationalities) in Beijing where some of our panelists came from. Others came from the Institute for Nationality Studies, which was a government-funded research institute, started after 1949 to conduct research on minorities to find out who was there, identify them, what kind of needs these people had, and so on. So, I wanted American anthropologists to understand that although those anthropologists worked under a different system, different constraints, and so on, that there was a lot of common experience that could be shared and understood.

STULL: And do you think that over here that those three sessions and your other work, do you--what kind of impact do you think that has had on, on anthropological understanding of China or just people being interested in China?

YOUNG: Anthropologists over there, they've become very interested in American anthropology. That's one thing. And first thing they identify is who are the gurus, the old icons of American anthropology? I went to one meeting over there in 1998 or '99 in Beijing, sponsored by the minorities university, and Fei Xiaotong was associated with that university and that early research in 1949. But anyway, guess who their plenary speaker was? Walter Goldschmidt.

STULL: Really?

YOUNG: Yeah, and Wally, I guess he's had an interest in China for a long time, and he was already ninety-four or something. They just love that, to get their, oldest, most respected anthropologist up on a stage, even if they can't walk. Fei Xiaotong gave a presentation at that conference too. He could barely walk out on the stage, and he didn't finish his talk. He said you could read the rest because he was too tired. Anyway, I don't know how old he was. He was older than Wally, but yeah, sort of, even endearing, just to see how they honor their elders.

STULL: It is. We, we could learn from that.

YOUNG: Yeah.

STULL: I'd like to come back, Oregon State University is one of the prominent applied anthropology programs in the United States, and I think you had a lot to do with that. You came to Oregon State in 1972, as you already have said, as a research associate for the Western Rural Development Center, and then you joined the anthropology department as faculty member in '78. You coordinated the development of the MA program in applied anthropology, which was approved in 1991 and then the doctoral program in 2004. I'd like you to look back, and it seems to me that you made many contributions to applied anthropology, but your contribution to building that Oregon State program seems to me to be one of the lasting contributions, that we all can be thankful for and benefit from. So I'd like just for you to talk about that a bit.

YOUNG: Thanks, that was long term, institution building. There's a history to it, Tom [Thomas C.] Hogg and Court [Courtland L.] Smith were already there before I got

there. They had been doing some studies on the impacts of the dam built on the Umpqua River, and another study of cowboys in eastern Oregon. So they already had this applied research going in that department. And it was a fairly young department. They had just started it in 1965 or 6. because in the 1930s the state legislature had designated the campus at Eugene, University of Oregon, as the place that would offer the humanities and social sciences, then have PhD programs. Oregon State would place emphasis on science and professional schools for ag, forestry and engineering.

STULL: I see.

YOUNG: And then eventually they got their own majors in science, and we got ours in liberal arts, I think, '65 or '66. And so it was a situation where the department itself was late in coming, but they staffed it all at once with ten or so faculty members, who were all pretty young, and they were ambitious. They kind of resented the fact that Eugene had an MA and a PhD, and we didn't. And so even before I got there, working with Harland in 1972, they had put through a couple of proposals to have a PhD program, but then the administration always put the kibosh on it. I mean, they didn't really have a chance because U of O wouldn't stand for it, for one thing, because it broke the rules. Our college of liberal arts, including humanities and social sciences, had no standalone PhDs, and when our program was approved, what was it, in 2004, we had the first standalone PhD in our college, so we were pioneers in our own college in getting this PhD. By that time a lot of those old faculty at University of Oregon had retired, and younger faculty were no longer thinking of us as a second-class place. First, we participated in a Master of Interdisciplinary Studies program, which we shared with other departments in the College of Liberal Arts, and so the students could choose a major department and a minor in at least one other field. That program worked pretty well for us for a while. And we may have had, even had forty or fifty theses out of that or maybe more, maybe a hundred, I don't remember exactly, but we were the primary user of that interdisciplinary program. And so we, we put together based on our track record, a proposal for an MA in applied anthropology, and I educated administrators, particularly the dean of the College of Liberal Arts, Kay Schaffer, who was very supportive, about what this was all about. We brought past president Tom [Thomas C.] Greaves in there as one of our recommenders, evaluators. Who was the other one we had at that time? I don't remember, but anyway, we were able to get that degree approved, and then we did well with that MA program. I had been working with the dean, working up to a PhD program, for a long time before we actually got it, maybe five years. But she was on board, and she appreciated the job I did as chair, I think, and wanted to be

supportive. Other chairs were going to her and saying, "Okay, I want more salary. I want to make big bucks, and in order to keep me you're going to have to pay this and that." And when we got our raises, which we would most of the time (sometimes they didn't give us any raises), I would always thank her. I'd never argue with her about my pay. I'd always prod her about one thing, our graduate program. We're building a graduate program here, so what can you do for us? And so, I think the fact that I was interested in building a program as opposed to building my bank account or my reputation had quite a bit of effect. I mean, I hope that's not bragging or something, but --

STULL: --no, certainly not--

YOUNG: --but I mean, that's the way I felt and what satisfied me, at the time. And we started hiring younger faculty who were really excellent, like Bryan Tilt, for example, who's an SfAA member. He won, the Peter New Award and a few others, and he's a China specialist. He came in one year before I left, but I was in on hiring him, and several others, including Sunil Khanna, Melissa Cheyney and Loren Davis. So we got a really good group of young faculty in there who were very capable and productive. And then one or two of the older ones kind of resisted. I mean, in some ways that was the toughest battle. I also had to give justification and memos and everything to so many administrators and committees and departments.

STULL: I'm sure you did.

YOUNG: I would like to thank Linda Whiteford, Linda Bennett and Meta [Marietta L.] Baba who came to Oregon State review our PhD program proposal. Our dean was impressed with their professionalism. One ploy I used to gain wider support in the university was to bring in five graduate faculty members from other departments, even some from outside of our college, to participate in that program. We were the core of it, but we got a guy from business who had done ethnography on Hell's Angels bikers for Harley Davidson, so he was similar to an applied anthropologist. And there was a guy in speech communication specializing in conflict resolution. He was very prominent in that field. And then a guy from engineering, somebody from forestry, somebody from water resources that Court [Smith] worked with. In this way concretely demonstrated that we had the support of faculty around the university in other colleges who figured our program was valuable enough that they wanted to participate in it. So I think it was really important. Our faculty in actually starting the program didn't pick up and run with the broader approach. I left when the program was barely implemented, after the first year when the students

actually came in. I've attended several SfAA meetings since then, and the Oregon State people have organized sessions for Oregon State graduate students.

STULL: --right--

YOUNG: And I tell you, I was in several of those, and it just blew my mind. I mean, I was so proud of them and the kind of work they were doing.

STULL: You should be.

YOUNG: I was, I felt like all that work was really justified.

STULL: No, you've left a lasting legacy. It seems to me, another important legacy of yours for our field is that you were a co-founder of, of COPAA, Consortium of Applied and Practicing Anthropology programs. That was organized in 2000 and it's going strong. I wonder if you could sort of talk about how that came to be and reflect a bit on that.

YOUNG: Well, my participation in that initiative came out of one of my own failures, I guess, because I had realized for a long time, probably starting from the time I was secretary of SfAA, that we lacked any liaison with academic departments, not only anthropology departments but interdisciplinary units that would have anthropologists in them. So when I came in as president, one thing I wanted to do was start a departmental services program. And again, there was some resistance from our executive people.

STULL: Yes, I know.

YOUNG: And so that never really got anywhere. James Beebe was involved in that. He was, he was an anthropologist, up at Spokane, Gonzaga University, former AID guy who did rapid assessment, and I thought he could do outreach to people in some of these departments, but I mean, the support just wasn't there for it at the time. Then Linda Bennett, who was president elect came along and proposed this idea about a consortium of departments separate from SfAA. Don't do it in SfAA if there's resistance in SfAA. I mean, let's do it outside of SfAA, and it could be like NAPA. It could be collaborative and support our SfAA members in their departments. I thought it was a great idea, and Linda was really the one who came in and ran with it. I was at that first organizing meeting in Memphis. I represented our department, and I think we had, we had eight, possibly nine at the meeting. Meta

Baba was there representing Wayne State, the business and anthropology applied program up there. And I think with them added it was nine, and then I think it grew into the mid-twenties pretty fast.

STULL: Yeah, I'm not sure how many there are now, but they're over twenty.

YOUNG: Over twenty, so I remember the other ones came on board within a fairly short period of time, but I can't say too much more about that. I gave presentations at a couple meetings during that time about promotion and tenure rules because Oregon State had a fairly progressive system that accommodated applied. I mean, not completely, but we had a much better system than other places. I lectured on that. I gave presentations, and then shared information about , how you do it, and so on, on a couple of panels.

STULL: At the University of Kansas a very traditional program, and we were a member of COPAA and maybe still are, I hope so, but we were late coming because pulling all those, traditional folks along the way, but one of the important issues, or one of the important contributions, it seems to me, of COPAA has been these statements about promotions and tenure for applied and practicing anthropologists and saying this is what we do is different than what, mainstream --

YOUNG: --right--

STULL: --abstract anthropologists do, and so that seems to me to be a very important thing--

YOUNG: --yeah, well you need something you can show to your dean or your provost, and you, you need a set of colleagues and departments elsewhere that you can trust to evaluate your work fairly. I don't remember what the guidelines actually say. It's been a long time since I looked at it.

STULL: They're saying it's not just refereed articles that, that are important to consider.

YOUNG: Well, it's not just full tenured faculty at Harvard that should be doing the reviews.

STULL: Right.

YOUNG: You know, that old game was you find the highest-level elite person you can to do your review, but that might not be a--someone who's really prominent in applied anthropology.

STULL: Right.

YOUNG: So you have departments, places, people to turn to, to do these performance evaluations for promotion and tenure. And I think that was a really important part of--

STULL: --certainly--

YOUNG: --it. And yeah, I'm not sure of the relationship with SfAA now.

STULL: I don't know that I could--I don't know. I think it's--I don't know the answer to that question.

YOUNG: Yeah.

STULL: Well you retired in 2006. Is that right? So you've been retired for about a decade.

YOUNG: About a decade, yeah.

STULL: So, how does that feel?

YOUNG: Well, I think I had exhausted myself on university politics--(laughs)--in trying to push the envelope and one thing and another, so I just felt, and my faculty probably felt too, because I had been a department chair for eighteen years, it was time to move on, and we had a core of younger people in the department. Let them roll with it now, because I was starting to lose a little steam, and I was even beginning to feel like I was compromising my health, which I think showed up in a minor incident a couple of years later. I think I needed at that point just to retire. I had done what I could do, and I just needed a break, and I needed to do something else. And so I moved to Hawai'i.

STULL: You went back there because you had had lived there before--

YOUNG: I had some ties there and I had gone to University of Hawai'i, and I liked the Big Island, and that was the age of computers and the internet, and I wasn't out of touch-

STULL: --sure--

YOUNG: --with everybody. I could just, I could fire off an email just as fast as anybody else could. Yeah.

STULL: One of the things you've done in your retirement, well, before you retired, is be the general series editor for the Wadsworth case studies in contemporary social issues.

YOUNG: I actually started that in 2001 when Lynn Marshall, from what was Wadsworth Harcourt, at that time--

STULL: --right--

YOUNG: --it changed companies several times, that series. Lynn walked into my office, and she said, "Well, we're starting a series of ethnographies on applied anthropology to go with our textbooks because we're putting an applied emphasis in our textbooks." And of course this was just when I was going out as past president of the Society, and immediately I was interested in it as a very different kind of project that I could enjoy doing. And I saw, even at that moment, whoa, this is something, if it works, I could carry it into retirement. And that's what I did. I worked with her, and we produced a set of guidelines for authors, and then we went about advertising that there was going to be a book series. I was carrying around a few fliers at the next meeting, and spreading the word that we were looking for authors. Lynn identified some. I identified some. I think it was a pretty good mix of resourcefulness between the two of us. The purpose of the series wasn't just, okay, we need more books. We didn't really need more books of the kind that were coming out because a lot of them were unreadable, especially by students. So the idea was, we're going to get some high impact, interesting books, well-written books, that students can relate to. Readers were to identify with the issues, learn what anthropology is all about, learn that anthropologists don't exist just to feed intellectual snobs, gazing at daises. (both laugh)

STULL: They aren't?

YOUNG: They are involved in communities and policy making, everything. And so that was really exciting to me to say, okay, well, we have an opportunity here. I don't know how many student theses plus a few dissertations from other fields I had supervised as a major professor, but I figured, that was really good training for me for this book series because I've done so much editing and given so many suggestions to students that I have pretty good concept of how things should be go. It offered me a chance to immerse myself in the author's work, so I felt like I was the luckiest guy on the face of the Earth because I got to immerse myself in other people's experiences in the field, working with their data. For those few months when I was involved in editing a book, my mind was just really preoccupied with it. Sometimes I might have gone overboard, but I hope I'm excused for that because I would get so into it and become enthusiastic about what that book could be.

STULL: No, as you know, I published, and then I was very grateful for your involvement and your contribution.

YOUNG: Thanks.

STULL: In your vitae you say you were--that you had a series editor from 2001 to 2017. Is the series still going on?

YOUNG: The series is on extended hold, and the books still in print are priced too high, out of the market. There are no books in the series in preparation right now or even in consideration, and there haven't been, maybe for four or five years. The company, I think it was in 2013, went through a chapter eleven bankruptcy, and--

STULL: --Wadsworth, and then they were Cengage Publishing--

YOUNG: And we didn't know what was going to happen to the series, but when they emerged out of it, they said, all contracts with authors and editors were still in place. And so we had a book about half way done , and then for 18 months, I mean, all work on that book was suspended. I called them up because I heard they were out of bankruptcy. I said, "Well, what are we going to do? You're under contract to this author, and we've got it partly done." They liked the concept of the book, so they said--"Okay, keep going." So we finished it. Actually, it was submitted for copy editing, the final version, in March 2015. The book was published in January 2016. The copyright date is 2017. Your book was finished in 2003, but the copyright is 2004, I mean, it came out in 2003. They bump the copyright up a year just so the book looks fresher, I guess. I don't know why they do those kinds of things.

STULL: I never figured that out.

YOUNG: But working with commercial publishers is a real chore sometimes because they have their own priorities that are very different from our academic priorities, and they don't understand us, and we don't understand them very well, and so you have to really be on your toes and you don't get a chance to immerse yourself or investigate or get very familiar with the way they do things because you only have these brief, communications and encounters with them. Lynne Marshall was the exception, really terrific to work with in getting the series started.

STULL: She was.

YOUNG: They told me, or Lynne did anyway, when that series started, "Oh, don't worry about the line-by-line editing. We, we do that. We just want your conceptual and organizational inputs. You don't have to do all that work, that editing." But after the first couple of books I realized they weren't going to do it. Things that I thought they would deal with, they didn't. And so I just decided, okay, if I'm going to keep doing this, I'm going to become their line-by-line editor too, and that's what I did with all the rest of the books. And you probably noticed the second time around, I was a little bit tougher. But I have to say I really enjoyed doing that series, and again, I don't know what kind of an impact it had, but I think if you have sixteen books out there over a period of twelve, fifteen years, that it represents some kind of accomplishment. Just showing how anthropologists are involved--.

STULL: --yes--

YOUNG: --and not, not skirting around it like, they're engaged, or they're communicating with the public or they're, who knows what. No, these authors were on the ground, doing all the nitty gritty work. Not all the books went completely through to advocacy like yours did, or working directly with the community, but at least they had to give the specifications for, okay, if you're going to deal with this issue, here's how. Here's what our study has shown. Here's how it relates to these recommendations we're making to these people. There's a direct relationship between what we learned from this study and what needs to happen here. So you show the value of that work on the ground to people in communities.

STULL: No, it was a big, very valuable contribution. Well John, we've talked for a couple hours. We could talk for some more.

YOUNG: I would like to mention a couple other things. I never got to the point following the 1981, '82, '83 crisis period, of what role I played in that myself.

STULL: Yes, please do.

YOUNG: When Ted Downing became president it was Toronto meeting in 1984.

STULL: --oh, I'm sorry. I don't mean to-- that was in, '85 and '86 in Washington DC and then in Reno.

YOUNG: Reno, I was program chair in Reno--

STULL: --you were program chair in Reno, right--

YOUNG: --'86--but '84 was Toronto--

STULL: --yes--

YOUNG: This was just after our treasury went bare, and the Toronto meeting had lost a lot of money, about 260 people were there or something like that. I mean, that was a real low point in terms of annual meetings, and I wouldn't blame the program chair or anybody else, because it was still a legacy of the Bergman [Associates] influence, scheduling a meeting in Toronto in March, give me a break. (both laugh) I don't know. Then the Washington meeting was more successful, but it also lost money. They had 500 or so there, but it lost money, and I thought to myself, okay, the society's in a financial crisis, and I'm program chair. I'm going to figure out a way so the society can make money on this meeting. And we were just getting into computer printing at that time, for publishing. And I said, okay, one thing I'm going to do, I'm not going to farm out this program. We didn't have an executive director or business officer or any office at that time. I was the whole thing. I mean, Tom May booked the hotel, but I had to go to the hotel and negotiate with the hotel about meeting rooms and this and that, and what they were going to do for us and everything else. So I decided we were going to publish this program in house in the department of anthropology. We were going to set it up on our own computer and send it over to OSU printing, and then they printed it out at cost, in house cost for OSU and so, we didn't have a big glossy program like we have now. We had a smaller, six by eight something, program, and it hardly cost anything, and the print may have been a little bit smaller or whatever, but you could still read it just fine and

carry it around, and it worked. I forget what else we did, but we didn't put many frills into the meeting. We figured the gambling in Reno would be enough to--

STULL: --that was a great meeting--

YOUNG: Thanks, thank you.

STULL: I remember that meeting well. I loved it. It was a great place, great.

YOUNG: I really went after members to come in and present at that meeting, and nobody expected it to be too much, but I think it was in the upward 300s, you know, 380 or 390 or more that we had at that meeting, which really beat expectations. Even with cutting costs and so on, we didn't make that much money, but I remember I went in and reported to the board. I forget when it was. It may have been in Reno or at the following meeting at the AAA [American Anthropology Association], but I had to do a final report on the program, and I reported, okay, according to my calculations, taking everything into account, our meeting made \$8,000. We did not lose money on the meeting. And I told them our concept should be that we give a great meeting to everybody, and if you do that, nobody's going to care what the cost of the meeting is for them, how much you're going to charge them to come to the meeting. Because the mentality, up to that time had been okay, we pay our dues, so you owe us a meeting, kind of a thing, and then if the meeting wasn't up to par-- they would say, "Oh, we don't want to pay our dues." I argued that if you have a great meeting, nobody's going to care about the cost anymore. They will just go home happy. We have a great meeting, and then the society makes money too. So after that the annual meeting became a money maker in the society. And I don't know about your '89 meeting, it may have made \$50,000 or something. I don't know.

STULL: We were the first meeting to top 1,000. Santa Fe is a great draw. I remember distinctly going in and reporting. We, I want to say, made about \$15,000. I don't remember. We, but we did make a profit and I was so excited, and to report that we made--

YOUNG: --but I think there were meetings--

STULL: --profit--

YOUNG: --after that made, probably made that much--

STULL: --oh, made a lot more than that, sure--

YOUNG: --maybe forty or fifty-- But that was the start of it right there, start of the recovery. So I played that role. Another thing I did sort of continuously through my time on the board was membership chair. It wasn't only my doing, but at least I implemented it, and it was at least partly my idea, but we thought we should have a student committee. We got Alison Bingham to head it up, she was a graduate student at that time. Thereafter we had an official student committee that could report to the board, and they would elect their own officers and so on. Later when I was president, we voted to have a student member elected to the board.

STULL: Right.

YOUNG: Carla Guerron [Montero] was the first one elected.

STULL: --was she the first one? Yeah, okay--

YOUNG: --and she was one--she had been one of my master's students, but she was a PhD student at University of Oregon at that time, when she was elected. So that's another thing that we did. And then of course there's the infamous World Bank visit by myself and Ted Downing and Erve Chambers, and Billie DeWalt, in 1997, when The World Bank had offended most of us in the anthropological community by not carrying out its responsibilities to the Pehuenche Indians on a dam project in Chile. It had created a furor in the AAA, a furor in the SfAA. Looking at The World Bank's own standards for how they compensate indigenous people, they had miserably failed, miserably failed these people. And so, of course, Ted is as, you know, an energetic person. He was a contractor at The World Bank, so was Billie. Erve Chambers helped with keeping things on an even keel. I'm sure Tom May at the business office was tearing his hair out because--(laughs) because here we were marching off to tell The World Bank what to do. But they had scheduled meetings for us throughout the whole day in Washington DC with their social scientists and their vice president and so on. The president was gone somewhere. Our final meeting was with their country representatives who funded The World Bank. I had never really been in the big time like that, frankly--(laughs)--but Ted sort of knew the ins and outs of it, and it, it was quite amazing. I mean we went in there and explained everything to all these people, and took turns adding things and so on. I mean, the meetings were pretty cordial, but the Bank was actually about ready to just sort of slice up their guidelines and throw them away. We tried to stop them and slowed them down for at least for a number of years. Now I think there's been a lot of back sliding by The World Bank on

their rules. That's another story in itself about big international funding banks, started by the Chinese and others, which are now in competition with The World Bank. The Bank can't compete with them and still be responsible to their own social standards, but that's, that's another story. Anyway, I think we had an effect there. I think we went in there, and if nothing else we said, "Okay, we're the SfAA. Don't mess with us,". (both laugh)

STULL: Well let me ask you, you have a long and distinguished career in applied anthropology, and you've been, I wouldn't say away from it, but you've stepped back from the day-to-day issues of it. So what, looking into the future, what do you think-- what do you see for our field in the future?

YOUNG: Well, I think for a long time we've been in a struggle to professionalize anthropology and make it in some ways equivalent to psychology, which has clinical psychologists and psychiatrists, who are licensed. We've never gone the licensing route. But then the other policy- oriented social sciences have. I mean the sky's the limit for applied anthropology because there are applied anthropologists everywhere in every other field, every kind of business, government agency making contributions. It really started, in World War II in the forties, and in fits and starts it's been expanding ever since. I see it continuing to expand, but I think we have to resist the tendency to do what people in the mainstream of anthropology do, which is to hive up in their own little narrow specialty. You know, "I study this little island," or whatever, and then at every conference you go to you get together with the same people, and you talk about that island and so on and so forth. Then that's the only thing you ever do. That's probably an exaggeration, but applied anthropologists are equipped to work anywhere, do anything. And that's one thing I've really enjoyed about applied anthropology is I've done it in all kinds of different places and settings and topics. I learned so much doing that, as opposed to just sticking to one little narrow thing where I'm supposed to be the world's expert. And so with my eclectic interests, it's been perfect, but I think that's the future of applied because I share that characteristic with a lot of other applied people.

STULL: I would think Hawai'i would be a state where applied anthropology would be valued, I mean, places like New Mexico, Arizona, Hawai'i. Kansas, there is a struggle there. But what's going on Hawai'i with anthropology?

YOUNG: Well, anthropology at the University of Hawai'i is in transition to some extent. Most there are older faculty. They're retiring or have retired, but they always oriented themselves towards the Association for Study of Oceania, and they'd have

meetings around the Pacific. Sometimes they'd have one on the West coast, and once in a while they put together something for the AAA meeting, but they really have a very Pacific, Asian, and also local orientation in Hawai'i. And there's not, there's never been that much applied in their department, but just, before we started our conversation here, I went into Barbara Johnston's session on the Marshall Islands, and listened to a young guy there, Joe [Joseph H.] Genz, a very energetic young guy, giving a presentation, on his studies of Marshallese coping with the after-effects of their nuclear legacy.

YOUNG: I have another note here that I'll probably forget a few people, but there are a few folks that were sort of instrumental in boosting my career along.

STULL: Sure.

YOUNG: I've already talked about, about a few of them, but Harland first got me into applied.

STULL: I knew Harland to see him, and we probably spoke, but I never really knew him. I--that was one of my regrets. He seemed like he was a real, giant in the field.

YOUNG: At that time when he was younger, he had written some really interesting stuff. And I really enjoyed working with him. He wasn't an easy guy to work with. One economist at Arizona who worked very closely with him said—when I asked him about Harland—he said, "Harland was my best friend and my worst enemy at the same time." Because Harland is very intense, doesn't suffer fools for a second, he has a kind of confrontational style, but he also has a great sense of humor, and he was totally dedicated to applied anthropology. I think he was the perfect leader to bring us through that tough period back in SfAA's financial crisis because he was on the stick, and he just dedicated himself to that problem, worked really hard at it, and had some good ideas about how to get out of that difficult period. I really admired him for that, and I also admired him for what I learned about American culture, especially because I hadn't really studied American culture like, say, you have or whatever. He had done that. We were doing related work on American culture in the Western Rural Development Center. Before I got there, I had no idea about the power of big agriculture or what, what the extension service even was, or anything like that. And then I get plopped right in the middle of big ag, extension, education, forestry, and rural communities. Harland used to say about U of O's program in American studies, "They don't know what the hell American studies even is." He said, "They think it's about some poet." "It's all about the land grant system," he said. "The

land grant system of higher education changed America through the industrialization of agriculture resulting in the demise of rural communities. If you don't understand the land grant system you don't understand America."

STULL: Wow.

YOUNG: And he stuck me right in the middle of it. I had to drive all around the west, going to meetings with ag economists. That was, that was fun too because I was a--

STULL: --it was--

YOUNG: --gadfly anthropologist with these ag economists, and they would come up with some fancy explanation for something, and, of course, before they had their results, they had to have all their assumptions laid out, and I said, "Well, that's nice, that's really interesting, what you have to say, but as an anthropologist I have to say empirically your assumption is 180 degrees off." (both laugh) I used to argue, stand up and argue with them at meetings, and that was fun, but I learned a lot about economists and economics and how they can guide us or misguide us. That's why I think there is a niche out there for applied anthropology to overcome a lot of the nonsense that's promoted by economists and psychologists and other people who don't have our understanding, our broad understanding of human society and culture.

STULL: Well, I think anthropologists would always say that, but why is it that we don't get more. We always say that. You believe it. I believe it, but then when we look at consumers of knowledge, there's an awful lot of handwringing and complaining by anthropologists, applied and otherwise, that nobody pays any attention to us. So why do you think that is?

YOUNG: I think applied anthropology is not a discipline or an endeavor with an impact that is easily measured because it's very incremental. Now what do we have, maybe 2,000 people here at the meeting. They're all doing little, individual studies, everywhere in the world, and each one probably has some effect somehow, somewhere. Some of the better ones are going to have an effect in one place, and then it might spread to another place, especially if there's leadership that makes that happen. I think what we're involved in doing is a pretty slow process, and when we do these individual projects and interventions and advocacies, I mean, it's very satisfying, and we have some minor victories like our World Bank intervention. But most of the time when you go after those big institutions, it's like a mouse crawling up

an elephant's leg in a lot of ways. You can annoy it sometimes. But Ted did something very interesting. Ted Downing ran for the legislature in Arizona, and he was elected. He had four, four years in office, and from what I understand, he was very effective, both with Republicans and Democrats. I think a lot of it was because he was an anthropologist and understood where they were coming from. So, they would want to vote on a bill to put American flags in every school classroom. Ted would say--he was a Democrat, but flags are a Republican thing--and he would get up and say, "Well, I agree with you, but why don't we put a copy of the Constitution next to the flag--(both laugh)--and then all students can read the Constitution for themselves." And so he had a way of being really innovative about approaching people who had different views than his. And I think he had quite a few successes in a state that's basically pretty conservative, and-

STULL: --very conservative, yes--

YOUNG: -- but I mean politics isn't for everybody. So I don't think as a 501 (c3) organization, a nonprofit, we can't get involved in any way as an organization in the political arena, although I think Ted and some of our other members have done it successfully. Our ancestor Philleo Nash, certainly was involved.

YOUNG: I think at the same time, we have to stay true to who we are. We can't sort of fly off in all directions and get hysterical about things.

STULL: Well, John it's been a wonderful discussion. Glad we were able to do it. And we can maybe continue it at some point the next time you wander back to the mainland.

YOUNG: I still didn't get to all the people--

STULL: Well, I'm sorry. I don't want to shut you off.

YOUNG: Amy Wolf called me up one time and said, "We want to nominate you for president of SFAA." She was on the elections committee. I've always been appreciative of that because I think, at least for me, it was the right time and the right job. There are a lot of folks in the society to thank, including you, I thank you because you agreed to be editor of *Human Organization* when I asked you to do it. Who would have been better at it than you?

STULL: I was very honored and was it was a wonderful experience. I wouldn't trade it or anything in the world. And I appreciate your confidence in me. It was great. For me, it's been a, a professional and personal home that I couldn't begin to really describe how, how important it's been to me. And getting to know people I can work with, people like you and all the folks you've mentioned, it's been a special place.

YOUNG: Well, I keep thinking of others like Tony [J. Anthony] Paredes, When I became president, he was the guy that I looked to for a model. I appreciated his example, and one thing he did was to innovate with the president's column in the newsletter. You write eight of them over two years. He was humorous, and he commented on some important issues, in his own clever way, and I, I tried to follow in his footsteps and do a very similar thing—make it count.

Edited Volumes

Book Series Editor, *Slaughterhouse Blues: The Meat and Poultry Industry in North America (Second Edition)*, in *Case Studies on Contemporary Social Issues*. Belmont, CA. Wadsworth Cengage Learning. Authored by Donald D. Stull and Michael J. Broadway, 2013.

Guest Editor with Guan Jian, *Practicing Anthropology*, special issue on The Investigation of the Present Situation, and Development of Ethnic Minorities in China. Includes six papers by Chinese ethnologists. *Practicing Anthropology*24(1), Winter, 2002.

Guest Editor with Barbara Johnston, *Practicing Anthropology*, special issue on Environmental Anthropology Serving U.S. Communities. Includes eight papers illustrating technical (research) assistance provided under the SfAA/EPA Cooperative Agreement. *Practicing Anthropology*23(3), Summer, 2001.

Guest Editor, *Practicing Anthropology*, special issue on Applied Anthropology and Cultural Diversity in China. Includes seven papers with five by Chinese ethnologists. *Practicing Anthropology*13(1), Winter, 1991.

Articles

Situation and Time: Observations on the Chinese Way of Doing Business. *Practicing Anthropology*22(2) Spring 2000.

Social Protest and Spontaneous Development: A Contemporary Social Movement in Fiji. *Pacific Studies*15(3) July 1992.

Development Education and Social Stratification in Fiji. *Practicing Anthropology*12(1), Winter 1990.

Productive Efficiency and the Adaptations of Small-Scale Farmers. *Human Organization* 41(3), Fall 1982. Based on paper presented at SfAA Meeting in Edinburgh, April 1981.

The Institutional Processing of Human Resources: A Theory of Social Marginalization (with Harland Padfield). In *The Poverty Dimension of Rural Underdevelopment in America: New Perspectives*, Robert O. Coppedge and Carlton G. Davis, editors. Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1976.

Social Networks and Social Structure: A Comparison of Multivariate Techniques of Analysis (with Roy G. D'Andrade). *The Western Canadian Journal of Anthropology* 5(1), 1975.

Suggestions for oral history interviews are always welcome. The interviews in the collection include applied anthropologists with special attention to those that have made important contributions to practice, service to the SfAA including its officers, editors, and prize winners, and developers and graduates of applied anthropology training programs. The interviews become part of the SfAA Collection at the Nunn Center for Oral History at the University of Kentucky Libraries. It is easy to contact the project at johnvanwilligen@gmail.com.