

OREGON HEALTH SCIENCES UNIVERSITY HISTORY PROGRAM

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW

WITH

James E. Morgan, M.S.L.S.

Interview conducted April 17, 2001

by

Charles Morrissey

SUMMARY

In this interview, University Librarian James Morgan talks about his tenure at OHSU. The third director in the Library's nearly ninety-year history, Morgan led the Library through the implementation of the IAIMS grant that established the University's Biomedical Information Communication Center. He comments on the development of the BICC and the administration of its constituent parts.

The topic of library funding and past grant projects provides an introduction to a general discussion about the elements of successful grantsmanship.

Morgan also discusses library facilities and space allocation, giving a brief history of the Medical School library from its earliest incarnation at the Northwest Twenty-third and Lovejoy location.

The relationship of the OHSU Library to other campus and departmental libraries is explored, as well as its cooperative work with hospital libraries across the state.

Morgan talks at length about the staff he has been privileged to work with during his tenure at OHSU, declaring that he has "the best staff that anyone could ever want." Finally, he considers his longevity here and attributes it to his continual desire to make a contribution to the development of the Library.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Move to OHSU	1
Relationship Between Library and Administration	2
Library Funding	2
Information Technology	3
Getting into Biomedical Librarianship	4
Becoming a Librarian	5
Development of the BICC	5
Senator Mark Hatfield	8
Grant Writing	8
BICC Administration	11
Relationships with Other Libraries	13
Library Facilities	14
Early Impressions of OHSU	15
Recruitment of Staff	16
Biographical Information	17
Institutional Support	18
Library Staff	19
Comparing Oregon	21
On Staying at OHSU	22
Index	23

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Interviewed by Charles Morrissey
April 17, 2001
Site: OHSU History of Medicine Room
Begin Tape 1, Side 1

MORRISSEY: This is Charles T. Morrissey on Tuesday, the seventeenth of April in the year 2001. Thinking of Paul Revere's ride on the eighteenth of April in 1775. In a moment, I shall begin an oral history interview with James E. Morgan. This is an interview for the Oral History Project at the Oregon Health Sciences University. The interview will be recorded in the History of Medicine Room.

[Tape stopped.]

I noticed, in preparing for this interview, that coming up in about another ten weeks or so is your twenty-fifth anniversary of having arrived at what was then called the Oregon Health Science Center.

MORGAN: University of Oregon Health Sciences Center, I think.

MORRISSEY: In any event, what prompted you to leave the University of Connecticut Health Center for Portland, Oregon?

MORGAN: Well, a couple of things. As you notice, I was moving pretty regularly [laughing], about every three years, and it was about time to move from Connecticut. So the position came open, and I knew it was a situation that would—well, you could get in and do some good, hard work and bring the library up to the current decade, at least [laughs].

MORRISSEY: How did you know that?

MORGAN: Well, I'm trying to think what connections that I had. Joan and I, of course, were working together, Joan Ash; and I think it was through the mutual investigation of the position out here—and she had many more contacts in the profession than I had—that we learned that. I think they were into a second recruitment cycle. I don't think they were able to get anyone in the first recruitment cycle. So all of that just enticed me to apply and finally get invited for an interview, and being offered the job by Dr. Bluemle at the time. He was the first president of what we considered at that time to be a freestanding medical school here in Oregon.

MORRISSEY: What are your impressions of him?

MORGAN: A very cordial man, very formal in how he approached things. Very much involved in the recruitment process, but very soon thereafter—you know, the Library

was something that he wanted someone else in his administration to manage, so at that point I began reporting to Bob Stone, one of a number of Medical, Dental, and Nursing deans, actually, that the Library reported to in his tenure, and also in Dr. Laster's tenure.

MORRISSEY: How did that work out as an administrative arrangement?

MORGAN: I don't think it was a hindrance at all. Bob was very supportive, was not here very long, but during his tenure, you know, the Library, I think, received the kind of initial support that I was expecting. From there, when Bob left—Dean Terkla, from the School of Dentistry, I began reporting to him. A very fine man, I think a native of Montana, lived here in Oregon much of his life. I think he was actually a graduate of the Dental School here and worked up into becoming the Dean, and I think was the most savvy of the administrators that I worked with. He was just coming off of, you know, the integration of the Dental School into the Medical School environment.

MORRISSEY: What else made him a savvy administrator?

MORGAN: He was always able to get good funding for the School of Dentistry in a time that was pretty—you know, funding was very sparse, and I think as a result helped maintain the Library. You have to remember that from about '78, I guess, really until very recently, the Library has received modest increases, but nothing like we've received in the last three or four years. It's been pretty significant since reporting to Dr. Hallick, and the public corporation has come on.

Up until then, it's been a very maintenance kind of thing in which—over that period we lost approximately five hundred periodicals, had to drop that many; and a book budget of twenty, thirty thousand dollars annually, very small for an institution of this sort. And it was very difficult to maintain some of the staffing levels that we've had. But that was characteristic of a lot of OHSU at the time, so it wasn't just the Library that was feeling it.

I might mention that the third administrator, besides Dr. Hallick, that I've reported to was Carol Lindeman, Dean of the School of Nursing. Again, another fine administrator, very successful in pulling the Nursing School up by its bootstraps and then putting it on probably the best financial footing of the three schools today that we have. Very, very forward-thinking, very into distance education, the Web, delivery of classes, things like that, that the other schools are just now beginning to catch up with.

Those were the three in the Bluemle-Laster era that I reported to.

MORRISSEY: I want to focus on the improved situation of the last three or four years. Could you explain what has caused that?

MORGAN: Well, I think that, first and foremost, OHSU becoming a public corporation has had a great deal to do with it. We've now got a new budgeting model here at OHSU, and those changes, where we're sort of riding on our own as opposed to getting very much money from the State, have helped. The other thing that helped most recently have

been some major infusions, federal infusions, into the BICC, from the Department of Energy and, before that, National Library of Medicine, that the Library benefited from.

So those events, and also, I think, the fact that Dr. Hallick has really made the Library a priority, I think, in going after a realistic budget that we lost during the property-tax limitation era a few years ago in Oregon—that's when we lost the five hundred journal titles, for example—I think an attempt to try to build that back. So we've been able not only to maintain our journal collection and increase that print collection, but also in many ways adding new electronic journals and databases that we've never had before. And I think that really is culminating this year: this year and this coming year we'll have a very, very strong collection for the University and the state of Oregon to use.

MORRISSEY: When you had to drop the large number of journal subscriptions and you were perking along with a book-buying budget of less than thirty thousand a year, did that raise any problems with any accreditation review committees?

MORGAN: It did; it did. We've had a couple that have commented on that. And I think those comments have been heard and have been noticed, and certainly Dr. Hallick is well aware of that, being in charge of the academic health of the campus.

So, you know, I think that has certainly helped in kind of being in the back of people's mind at budget time, to give us a little extra boost.

MORRISSEY: I sense you see a positive result from a criticism by an accreditation board.

MORGAN: We've had a couple of librarians—Wayne Peay, most notably, from the University of Utah, that was here on the last accreditation was pretty brutal [laughs], I think, in his comments. Wayne and I know one another, and I think he hit the nail right on the head.

MORRISSEY: With respect to new technology, have you encountered any resistance to moving in that direction?

MORGAN: Boy, not a bit. The campus, at least—I mean, we have always been in the forefront. And that was one of the reasons why I came here, was to try to introduce—I mean, OHSU, in '76, was already doing some of the MEDLINE searching and the interlibrary loan using the TWX machine, T-W-X machine, and we just have, over the years, built on that. It wasn't until the BICC and until we moved into the new building in '91 that we really began to make computing and computers generally available to anyone who walked into the Library. The staff had been using it; and as a matter of fact, Joan Ash, I think, was one of the first people in the Library to use an old Apple 2 or Apple 2e and run programs like VisiCalc. I think she was one of the first Library staff members to actually do that.

But, you know, slowly—it was really a tough road to get all staff up on computers.

But I think we were a little ahead of the curve than most departments here at OHSU. And, again, partly it's because a lot of the tools that we have in libraries, you know, in general, are linked via computers. But as far as our users, I don't think we've had anyone that has objected to using an online catalogue as opposed to the catalogue drawers and things like—I take that back. We have one, Dr. Morton, who even to this day—he's an active faculty member here on campus—will not look up anything on the computer. He will always come to the desk and ask us if we have the material. A very, very fine supporter of the Library, by the way. He has donated a lot of books, journals, and other items to the Library.

MORRISSEY: Is it possible that one reason what this health sciences university has been responsive to new technology is its commitment to family medicine and outreach to remote, rural areas? Is there a correlation?

MORGAN: Yes, there is. [Pause] But when those were started, I don't think it was a strong correlation. I think it's developed over the years. And the Library has just tried to keep pace with that by providing all of the services that we provide electronically, not only on campus, using our own IP range for the Internet connections, but also through proxy servers that give, you know, Family Medicine, the AHEC, School of Nursing programs in four different locations around the state, all access to the materials that we have here as if they were sitting right here in the library.

We're really pushing ourselves out of a job [laughs], because, looking at the recent use statistics of people coming into the library, they continue to dwindle, and most of that is because what we're doing in providing desktop access to a large part of the material that we collect.

MORRISSEY: When you went to library school, did you foresee you might end up in a biomedical environment?

MORGAN: No. The last place I *ever* thought I would end up. No, I was pretty clear that I wanted to stay either in college reference work or perhaps—you know, when I was at Georgia College for a few years I took a summer internship program at the Georgia Department of Archives and History. I thought that might be another way or another path for me, partly because I knew—one of my library school colleagues was working there, and got me interested in it as well. But, no. You want to know how I got into it?

MORRISSEY: I would love to hear.

MORGAN: [Laughs] Actually, it was the chance meeting, I guess, that I had with Lee Jones, who at that point was in Galveston, and he had a friend that was in the Milledgeville area. I don't even recall the friend's name. But he called me up one day and wondered if I'd be interested in applying for a reference position there, head of reference. And I said, "Oh, I don't know. I don't know much about Galveston." But I went to Galveston; really, really liked it. I'm a water person, and was taken by a trip out, off its bayou that had the—it sounds grandiose, you know, the Galveston Yacht Club, but it was really for day sailors, very small watercraft. And I thought, "This is it. I've got to go there."

So it was really through that meeting that I started my career in health sciences libraries at Galveston.

Again, through a meeting with Sam Hitt, who was then at—I think was just taking over the position at Houston Academy of Medicine and was leaving Connecticut, that—you know, he encouraged me to apply for that position that I then got into, a directorship position, much earlier than I think I deserved, but still got into that position in Connecticut. I think I've done well since. I think both at Connecticut and here at OHSU, I think both libraries have matured. When leaving Connecticut—now Ralph Arcari is the director there. I hired him. I think both are very stable and operating well.

That's how I did it. Lee Jones, you can blame him [laughs]. Lee Jones, by the way, is now the director, library director, at Linda Hall Library in Kansas City, and we've stayed in touch over the years. As a matter of fact, he was out here a few weeks ago and we went out to dinner.

MORRISSEY: What explains why you chose to go to library school?

MORGAN: Well, I was at Arizona State College, now Northern Arizona University, but Arizona State College at the time, trying desperately to get my teaching degree and certificate. I even went so far as to do some student teaching, but very quickly realized that wasn't what I was cut out to do. So I was really thrashing around and fretting quite a bit in my last semester up there, and spent some time with Gil—oh, I'm blanking on his name now. The library director at the time up at Arizona State College. He actually gave me a job in the library and said, "You might want to think about doing this. There are not very many men in the field, and there are a couple of good schools," and Florida State was one of them, and that's where he got his degree [laughs]. You know how it went from there. It just seemed to fit together. And I thought, well, I would try it, and I haven't regretted it ever since. Going to Florida State was a good choice for me.

And that's where I met my wife, so even better [laughs].

MORRISSEY: With respect to BICC, and for the record, I want to say the acronym stands for the Biomedical... [pauses.]

MORGAN: Information.

MORRISSEY: Communications Center. Communication with an "s" on it?

MORGAN: No, just singular.

MORRISSEY: Was that idea already active on this campus before you came here?

MORGAN: No, I don't think so, although you can never be absolutely certain. Dr. Laster was the President at the time the AAMC and the National Library of Medicine collaborated and came out with the Matheson Report. I called Dr. Laster's attention to the

possibility of applying for a grant for an IAIMS setup, and he then took that and went directly to Senator Hatfield, and it's history from that point on [laughs].

So it was really Dr. Laster that really saw the vision, although he—as I think is true, he wasn't able to quite put it together at the very end; and that's the reason why the whole project languished for, oh, three or four years until Dave Witter came in as the Acting President and just, I think under pressure from the National Library of Medicine, because we weren't going anywhere with it, just took his year or year and a half that he was Acting to really push that project through.

So, while I think Laster saw the opportunity, it was Dave Witter that really put it together the way you see it today, in a single building with sort of a home for all the components, or a partial home. The Library is the only one that has a dominant amount of space, along with Informatics, in the building. But I think Witter was the one that kind of laid out the arrangement of the building and who was going to be in it.

MORRISSEY: Now, what it is about him that would motivate him to take the initiative on this?

MORGAN: Well, gee, I'm not sure [laughs], except, as I said, I think some of it was probably external pressure to do something.

MORRISSEY: Was the National Library of Medicine basically saying “fish or cut bait?”

MORGAN: Well, I think so, and I also believe that Witter was probably getting some pressure from Hatfield as well, because it didn't make Senator Hatfield look very good in the process. I think he was also wanting to leave a mark for himself, whether he was—he did apply for the presidency, but I think he wanted to be remembered whether he was able to stay or had to move on, which he—

MORRISSEY: Is he rightfully remembered for this achievement?

MORGAN: I think so. It's pretty significant, I think, for anyone that's been here while I've been here. I think he's seen as the one that made the BICC happen, and I think was involved in actually the hiring of Bob Beck as the director of the BICC. You know, it's hard for me to remember exactly when Witter left and Pete Kohler came. I know there was some overlap there. But I think that Bob's hiring was primarily Dave Witter as well.

MORRISSEY: I noticed, in preparing for this interview, the initial appropriation for BICC was \$20.4 million in 1983, and then we have, basically, a six-year period of languish, and the construction started in '89. So, again to focus in on why that time of languishing?

MORGAN: It's hard for me to remember exactly why Dr. Laster didn't—I think he had a lot of people, both local and national, maybe even beyond as far as—I mean, I just don't know—that were giving him conflicting ideas of what an IAIMS would be. I think the

units that needed to come together weren't ready yet, and I think that we were all—I mean, it was a good time, because we were all beginning to talk about it. We didn't know if it would ever happen, especially when Dr. Laster was here; but because of all that discussion, I think we were much better prepared when Witter came in and said, "We're going to do this." And we just did it, because I think it was time.

But OHSU was really an unusual institution to get an IAIMS grant. And, of course, the way we got it, you know, we were looked at by other institutions, by the National Library of Medicine, as not playing fair, but a lot of things happen in this world that aren't fair [laughs], and a lot of those institutions have done exactly the same thing. So, you know, it's whatever—whatever time. It was time, and certainly OHSU, I think, deserved it, and I think we've done a superb job at showcasing the concept and what it can do. And it's worked miracles here; it really has. It hasn't been easy, but—

MORRISSEY: Miracles?

MORGAN: [Laughing] Yes. It hasn't been easy, and it was rough for a lot of people, many of whom willingly left because they didn't want to be part of it. But I think those six years—I didn't realize it was that long, but I think those six years really allowed the University, I think, to become acclimated to the thought [laughs], that it just would not have succeeded had we implemented it at the front end as opposed to when it started.

MORRISSEY: In effect, then, and check me if I'm wrong, over time you were able to derive a consensus on an institution-wide basis that everybody understood the value of this?

MORGAN: Right. One thing that Laster...

[End of Tape 1, Side 1/Begin Tape 2, Side 2]

MORRISSEY: Number of meetings?

MORGAN: That Laster had with the leaders of major units here at OHSU: Hospital Computing; Academic Computing; the Library; what was then called Biomedical Communications, which was sort of our A/V-TV service; and, then, a smattering of faculty and administrators from around campus trying to come to grips with what we were to do. And you know, as we all met and became familiar with one another, some of which we hadn't even met before that, I think over that six-year period really began to jell.

MORRISSEY: Is it fair to say younger people tend to be more receptive to new technology, older people more resistant?

MORGAN: I've seen both, so I don't know—

MORRISSEY: Or does age have nothing to do with it?

MORGAN: I don't think age has a lot to do with it. I mean, if you're talking about—I think we've all been sucked in. I don't think there's very much that any of us do any longer that doesn't require some computing knowledge and skills. But the people who tend to be resistant today are older, however.

MORRISSEY: You mentioned Mark Hatfield. Can you think of other instances where he has been helpful to OHSU?

MORGAN: Lots. I mean, there are lots of examples. I'm not sure I can recite too many of them beyond the BICC, obviously. Some other bricks and mortars, the Neurosensory being the last building, right next door to the BICC. But he's just been part—I think he's been part of so much up here, and the University suffered a significant loss when he left the Senate. So I think OHSU certainly owes him more than any other academic institution in Oregon, for sure. I mean, even though he's left his papers and all to Willamette University—and, of course, he graduated from Willamette—OHSU by far has benefited financially from him.

MORRISSEY: Did you ever deal directly with him?

MORGAN: Sure. He's been in this room, sitting in here, looking at our Vesalius and Leonardo that we have purchased in cooperation with Reed and the University of Portland. Yeah, he's quite a bookman, very library-literate and an incredible supporter of libraries. LSTA and the other granting programs from the federal government to libraries are all his legacy.

MORRISSEY: He sounds like a man who didn't need to be educated on what a library is or does.

MORGAN: Not a bit, not a bit, just an incredible—I don't know. I don't think the State will ever have another senator like him in quite some time. I think you meet him and you just are in awe of his knowledge and—you know, just to be able to speak on any topic; and to appreciate his feeling about military and the wars and the waste. I think he's a politician—no, he's a statesman, not a politician [laughs]. Although he is a politician, because we got all the money. You know how that works.

MORRISSEY: Were any other members of the Oregon delegation helpful to you?

MORGAN: In the Hatfield era? No, I don't believe so.

MORRISSEY: How much of your time over the last twenty-five years has gone into either fundraising or grantsmanship?

MORGAN: The percent of my time?

MORRISSEY: If you could come up with a number.

MORGAN: Oh, I don't know. [Laughing] Probably not as much as I'd like to say. But you know, we've had grants from the very beginning: '77-'78, to form the Oregon Health Information Network—with Steve Teich, who's still here—a program to foster libraries and promote library support throughout the state with hospital libraries.

There's been a very strong relationship with the University of Washington. It's our Regional Medical Library, and we've received numerous subcontracts, written and received numerous subcontracts, from their Regional Medical Library grant to do work here in Oregon.

Within the hospitals we've also had a lot of luck with consumer health. I think we were on the very forefront nationally with that. As far as I know, we were the first institution to receive National Library of Medicine funding to support a consumer health project, and now that's just a major part of NLM funding.

Joan wrote the CETA grant that we had to swell the staff by, oh, probably close to fifteen people at one point. Did a lot of work in this room organizing not only our historical collections but also inventorying and packing our Museum Collection that was in very serious disarray when we came here. So that's been done.

I participated in all of the grant writing that went into the BICC and all of the grants that followed. Joan has also done a lot of that, as well as others in the BICC at the time.

So, I guess if I had come up with a number, it would probably be under ten percent, but it's still—it's not a major part, obviously, but over the twenty years or so it's been, I think, a significant part.

MORRISSEY: I notice you got a Fred Meyer Charitable Trust grant in 1986 through '88 for a prototype electronic library network. Did you deal directly with the Fred Meyer Trust?

MORGAN: I'm really trying to remember what specific—I mean, we had a grant. It didn't sound like that. I'm blanking on that particular project. There were two Fred Meyer projects. The second one, perhaps other than that, was the conspectus project, one that was more of a grant to assess the collections, and we participated in that. My involvement in writing that was negligible; it was primarily written by a consultant that was employed by the Meyer Memorial Trust. But this other one on the electronic network? Can you read that to me again?

MORRISSEY: I'll show it to you from your own C.V.

[Pause.]

MORGAN: That's it, that's the one I just described; it's the same one. It was not a—I think "computerized network" was a misnomer. It was a way to assess the collections and to try to build, through cooperative collection development, a way in which materials could

be moved from library to library within the region, the Pacific Northwest region, in an interlibrary loan-type network. That's what it was. But we never really got beyond the assessment stage and never really got into the computer piece. It's not remembered as a very successful project.

MORRISSEY: From your experience, what constitutes successful grantsmanship?

MORGAN: Well, I think getting funding, certainly; but I think another thing that constitutes successful grantsmanship is being persistent, knowing when you've got a good idea and promoting. Also, I think it doesn't necessarily mean that you have to be the one that always gets the grant; that promoting the idea, like just communicating it to Dr. Laster, is also a way to consider it successful grantsmanship.

I'm constantly amazed with Bill Hersh in Informatics here at OHSU, on the fifth floor. I mean, that whole program that occupies all the fifth floor is run on grants, and I just don't understand how he can do it and how he can be so successful. He's just a master at it. I guess I am too mechanical, I'm too—I've got to be doing it, sort of touching it. I'm a fixer, I guess, if I could characterize myself, more than a visionary. But I don't think that I'm totally without vision either, but my preference is to get in there and do the work after those who have gone out to see the opportunity—you know, they've moved on to something else, the idea is still good, it has to be continued.

I think that's a lot of what libraries are, is they mop up and clean up and put things in order after some of these projects are envisioned and just worked on a little bit. They need somebody else to come from behind and clean up.

MORRISSEY: How does one determine if an idea is a good idea, with respect to grant possibilities?

MORGAN: [Pauses] I guess sometimes you see an idea in a different area and want to apply it to yours. Sometimes it's just intuition. Consumer health is one example I can point to that—you know, I had staff that really wanted to do that. And after talking about it for an extended period of time we began to realize that, gosh, it's just the thing to do. It's important. And NLM has been burying its head for a while, not thinking that we had a role in consumer health. So we stepped in and did it. That's, I think, probably the only time that I can point to that I think OHSU Library has taken an initial step and had a lot of support along the way from—for example, from the Regional Medical Library to do that; because they knew that taking an idea that we presented to them to the National Library of Medicine would not be received very well, but they went to bat for us and did it, and we got it. So we felt really good about that. So that's just an example of kind of using your own intuition.

But I think most of what we've done here at OHSU, if I can use that as an example, has been to kind of follow closely behind what we have noticed as the trends nationally in libraries. The Oregon Health Information Network: we were a natural because we were the only academic health sciences center in the state, so we could more or less—you know, when the BICC was formed, it did the same thing—we were able to more or less say “The state of

Oregon is us, and we need to provide these services, library or others, to all health professionals in the state.”

MORRISSEY: Have you spent a lot of time keeping tabs through your professional literature on what’s going on on other health science campuses?

MORGAN: Oh, sure.

MORRISSEY: Is that time well invested?

MORGAN: Well invested, yes. I’m not the meeting person that some library directors are.

MORRISSEY: By which you mean professional meetings around the country?

MORGAN: Attending professional meetings. But I do keep a very close eye on the literature. And there are a lot of people in the BICC that share information, not only about libraries but about other related areas: EDUCAUSE, the IT literature, and the like. Ron Schumacher and John Kenagy.

MORRISSEY: That would suggest a very open culture in terms of communicating ideas.

MORGAN: That’s what the BICC is. And that’s the real advantage that we have, I think, over so many other campuses, is the—for example, the Library is not isolated. Weekly, I meet with the Chief Information Officer, Ron Schumacher, and his assistant, John Kenagy; with one of my staff in Educational Communications, sort of the person who supports distance learning and digital communications around campus, Dr. Bill Smith; Bill Hersh; Lesley Hallick; and sometimes Joe Bloom, the Dean of the School of Medicine; and Jim Walker, the CIO. I mean, it’s really nice to have that opportunity—at least forced once a week—to get together and share ideas of what’s happening and what we’re doing, and the like. And yes, we’re all on the same mailing list and do share a lot of material back and forth.

MORRISSEY: Have you deliberately cultivated this culture?

MORGAN: I’m not the only one; we all have. And I think that Lesley Hallick deserves the lion’s share of the credit, because over this period since Bob Beck left, she’s been the one that I think has kind of nurtured a continual communication among those four or five groups. And it’s really paying off, because there’s too much work for any of us to do, and a lot of us now are overlapping into different areas to help out. For example, a lot of my staff provide training for the core applications that the IT people provide campus-wide. So that’s a way that my group can help out the IT group; and, you know, vice versa, they help us out. Bill Hersh and the IT group are working very closely on research projects and research computing.

So, yeah, it works, and it's a chemistry among people. [Laughing] And I'm not saying we're all of the same chemistry, but I think that the mix right now—and that may change in a few years, but the mix right now is a very positive and powerful one.

MORRISSEY: As the library science student at Florida State University, did you have any training in grantsmanship?

MORGAN: A bit, except—you know, back then it wasn't really stressed. What was stressed back then was more or less the internal operations of the library. One of the things that kept me in library school, and I liked, was that I liked doing the kind of behind-the-scenes work. But at the time, grantsmanship, yeah, it was there, but it wasn't really touted as a necessary skill.

MORRISSEY: [Laughing] You were going to library science school at the very time that Lyndon Johnson's Great Society was being launched.

MORGAN: That's true.

MORRISSEY: So the prospect of federal money for library support was still basically a nascent idea.

MORGAN: But in library school, people who were starting out in libraries, that still hadn't filtered down as a major—library schools weren't creating people that at that time were going to go into directorships or the specialty of grantsmanship. I'm not saying it wasn't there, but at least at Florida State I didn't feel that it was a major stress point.

MORRISSEY: At Florida State, in library science school, did you have any training on how to create an organizational culture that would be open to new ideas?

MORGAN: No. I think—[laughing] again, what I heard was pretty much hierarchical, the whole time. I never liked that, never enjoyed it. And in the people that I started supervising—actually, my first job out of library school, at Georgia College, I did have some supervisory role. I tried to, not at that time, but I tried to work more in a team atmosphere rather than in a hierarchical way.

MORRISSEY: To put this bluntly, I sense that your library career has entailed an awful lot of seat-of-the-pants learning.

MORGAN: Pretty much. I think, again, I have been blessed with maybe an intuition of what I could or could not do, and I like to take on things that I think I can do well. So, yeah, I think I've learned a lot of things over the years, and to do a lot of things well, that I wasn't capable of doing years and years back. I guess all of us are that way.

MORRISSEY: How well have you been able to integrate the on-campus library with the various hospital libraries?

MORGAN: In the state?

MORRISSEY: Yes.

MORGAN: I think up until the time of the BICC, very well. The change in culture when BICC came about was so all-consuming that since then there has been a—it's not that there isn't support there, but it's not as close; there isn't as close a relationship with the hospitals as we had from about '78 to mid-'80s. That was the strong period, quite frankly. But again, those hospitals and the libraries that were formed there between '78 and the mid-'80s were a strong component, and we've provided backup support. But once they were built to a point, they wanted to maintain some independence as well, and I think we've tried to honor that. It just happened that the BICC came at the same time, and it probably was good because it broke the connection more directly than it would have otherwise.

MORRISSEY: Are there separate departmental libraries here on campus?

MORGAN: Many. They exist. There are only two major ones that we operate. One is the School of Dentistry library that we support with funds from the School of Dentistry and from the Main Library. We jointly support that setup. And then the Child Development and Rehabilitation Center, they asked us a number of years ago, about ten years ago, to start to manage their library, and we manage that for them, and they pay us. We bill them annually for that. Those are really the only two.

We've had some other attempts, I guess, at sort of folding in other large departmental libraries. One was at the Vollum Institute here. Again, the director there, Ed Herbert, shortly after he came, he asked us to manage his library for him, which we did for a number of years. He died, and the faculty at the Vollum Institute decided not to continue that; so we pulled the material that we had catalogued in our collection out, and it was all returned to them, but it was no longer in our central database. Department libraries are a necessary feature, and I think that any department that has one—you know, it's a good ready reference source. But it's one thing to just have a collection of items in a room that somebody just sort of straightens up every once in a while, and another to actually know what that collection includes, it's inventoried and controlled in some way.

Back during the late '70s, early '80s, when we did have that CETA grant, we actually went around and inventoried all of the departmental libraries and produced a little red book of those. It was pretty interesting and pretty useful for a number of years. But then, it's never been updated.

Now we have the Primate and the Science and Engineering, or the Oregon Graduate Institute library, that's going to be a part of us also. As far as the Primate Center is concerned, they're already a part of us, but OGI will come this July first. So those are the other collections.

MORRISSEY: For twenty-five years, have you faced a constant battle about preventing the dispersal of library resources, as opposed to centralizing them?

MORGAN: No. We took the stand early on that we would provide as strong a central library as we could, and if departments felt they weren't getting what they needed, their department libraries could develop. And I think, thankfully, we have probably done a fairly good job, because I think the departmental libraries that are on campus are not significant in terms of holdings. They seem to be more of an immediate, ready-reference-type help. For that matter, we've actually inherited a couple of collections of departments. There hasn't been much problem with departmental libraries developing beyond the scope that we had thought.

MORRISSEY: Any comment on space allocation within the Library, within BICC, or the reallocation of space, given the new technology as it arrives over time?

And while you think about that, I'm going to change from tape one to tape two.

[End Tape 1, Side 2/Begin Tape 2, Side 1]

MORRISSEY: April 17 interview, Charles Morrissey interviewing James Morgan.

MORGAN: You had asked about space issues. OHSU has always been plagued with space issues, at least for their library materials, since 1919 to the present. Every library move that we've had has been based on space need, from—oh, Northwest Twenty-Third and Lovejoy, they had a fire, but the library was in a room twelve by twelve with no windows. A lot of the books were moved down on the front porch, and then, you know, moved up to this campus in what's now our main building, Mackenzie Hall, before it was complete. And they moved into a larger quarters there on—I've forgotten which floor—and then shortly thereafter moved into yet larger quarters up on the next floor. And, out of space, opportunity came, much like the BICC building, to build this structure that we're sitting in today, the Old Library building, with—you know, Dr. Weeks, I think, had an opportunity to get some money from the Rockefeller Foundation; and that money, some Oregon money, some money from the WPA, I think, helped build this building. That took care of the space crunch for a while, and then this building was added on to in the Margaret Hughes era—my immediate predecessor—to accommodate yet more materials.

By the time we had planned and were building the BICC building, we were already maxed out in this building, so in the '90s, early '90s. And what we have decided—because of the size of the BICC building, it couldn't accommodate everything in it, certainly couldn't accommodate the entire library collection; or, it could have, but it would have consumed the whole building—again, Dave Witter made the decision that the Library—well, and Len Laster. This was also one of the issues that Dr. Laster was fretting about, because he saw the Library, back in the mid-'80s, as being electronic, and there would be no need for book stacks, and all of this. We could just digitize the collection that we had and put it on whatever, [laughing] microfilm, we could put it on computer tapes, or what have you. Never happened. Witter also was pushing that.

We moved into a facility that was actually about the same square footage as this

building that we're sitting in. Sixty thousand volumes of material are over there, and we have to move, once a year, a year's worth of accumulation from that building to this building, and then about every fifth year we have to move five years' worth of material from this building to an off-site storage building. So we have three locations for the materials that used to be solely in this building, today.

So, yeah, space is—[laughing] to make a long story short, space has been a real problem for us, and continues to be. It's something that we're no further than a year away from at any one time, from now into the future. That's the way I see it.

MORRISSEY: You mentioned Margaret Hughes. Was she your predecessor?

MORGAN: Actually, yes. Bertha Hallam served until about '65—she was here forty-plus years, I think—and then Margaret ten years, from '65 to '75. And then Heather Rosenwinkel, the previous History of Medicine Librarian here was—

MORRISSEY: Who is an alumna of my oral history course at Portland State University.

MORGAN: Oh, all right. Great.

She was Acting for a year, and then I became the Library Director in '76, so I'm really the third Library Director in the history of OHSU. Pretty remarkable, I think, since 1919.

MORRISSEY: So when you first came here twenty-five years ago, what were your first impressions?

MORGAN: Oh, coming from Connecticut, I looked at the operation here and just knew there was a lot of work to do. All the systems were manual except for the TWX machine, which was used dually for some MEDLINE searching and for transmitting interlibrary loan requests around. That was the only technology that was here.

In Connecticut, both Yale and the University of Connecticut shared the state in providing the kind of outreach to hospitals. So that was a program that I initially saw that could be introduced here, that I know Margaret and others kind of had a yearning to do over the years; but, you know, with the help of the NLM grant that Joan and I wrote, we were able to start that program.

Good collection, much better collection than we had in Connecticut. Longer runs of material, I should say. Of course, Connecticut was only a few years—I mean, Sam Hitt was the first library director there, and he did a phenomenal job of building that collection from scratch, but this collection was much stronger, and was larger. The number of subscriptions and books at the time were larger.

And, then, the relationship that was developing, the knowledge that the Dental School

library was actually part of this, would be a branch of this Library—again, not part of the system; there wasn't a branch. We were the branch of the University of Connecticut, so it was just kind of flipping it a bit.

Staff needed a lot of training; and we saw a fair amount of turnover. A lot of the staff had been here for a number of years. It was a painful first couple of years because a lot of new staff were introduced, and old staff that had been here—and the systems were in place for a number of years—found it very difficult to make some of the transitions that I felt needed to be made. But we have a number of staff that remain, and that have gone on to other positions, two that are library directors here in the Portland area, in other types of libraries in the Portland area.

But it was pretty hard those first few years. This room didn't look anything like this. This has all been changed. New cabinets—not new cabinets, these were the original cabinets, but there was linoleum floor here instead of carpet; these were painted black. It was not a pretty sight [laughter].

MORRISSEY: Because you had to make those changes during your first couple of years here, was there a lot of badmouthing or backstabbing that you heard about?

MORGAN: Library directors don't hear about that very much [laughs]. I'm sure there was. Everything that I think I did, and I, you know, would have to say Joan as well—because Joan and I were working very closely at that point, trying to really figure out the best course—we tried to do with consideration, and I think we succeeded. And none of this was done in a very short period of time; it was done over an extended period of time. So I think people were maybe more comfortable than they would have been if we would have made all of the changes in the first year or two, which did not occur.

MORRISSEY: Turning that question around, has it been hard over the years retaining good people?

MORGAN: Absolutely not. I have the best staff that anyone could ever want. Sometime it's been hard to push people out the door [laughing] that you know need—just need to further their careers. As you know, when people eventually find their way to Portland, it's a very comfortable place, and it's often hard for people to part with.

MORRISSEY: [Laughing] I'm hearing that from more and more people as I do more and more of these oral history interviews.

MORGAN: I'll bet you are.

But I've been very fortunate in recruiting, some of which have been people who already have a significant career in the health sciences, but I think more so people who do not have a career in the health sciences. And sometimes the pool, the national pool, in trying to attract people with the wages that we could pay, either, at the time, has not been very great, so we've had to look for people that you think—like myself, who had a spark of interest and

would like to move into health sciences librarianship but may not have had the kind of educational background that would naturally put them in that position. But everyone has just been first-rate. We've had no—what I would consider to be no—

MORRISSEY: With respect to recruiting, have you recruited a lot of women?

MORGAN: Um-hmm. I've only recruited one assistant director, one systems librarian, and one outreach coordinator—I take that back, and one cataloguer that are male. Everyone else is female. So only four males have been recruited into permanent positions in the Library.

MORRISSEY: Has that been deliberate, or is that just the way it happened?

MORGAN: It's the way it happened, I think. [Pauses] You put out the ad, and, you know, you get males and females [laughs], and you try to select the one with the best knowledge and background and fit.

MORRISSEY: Have you tried to recruit minorities?

MORGAN: We've tried to over the years. There just aren't that many who apply for positions, and it's too bad, because it would be great.

MORRISSEY: Recruiting the disabled?

MORGAN: Well, the same thing. We have one person who's on our classified staff that is deaf. He's the one that does all of our binding work. We have another person that works for us part time that is near blind and does some of our routine shelving. He's got instruments that he can use that allow him to read the call numbers and all. Those are the only two examples that I can think of right off.

MORRISSEY: Looking at your curriculum vitae, I see you started out at Otterbein College in Ohio. Are you from Ohio originally? Where are you from?

MORGAN: You want to know where I was born?

MORRISSEY: Yes [laughs].

MORGAN: I was born in Wheeling, West Virginia, and that's where most of my family—[laughs] well, where they started. My parents—I was not the only child; I had an older sister who's deceased now. But we moved quite a bit for back then, to Ohio shortly after I was born, within, probably, two or three years, and remained there through my first two years of college education at Otterbein, at which point we moved to Arizona.

MORRISSEY: Oh, I see. And that explains the change to Flagstaff?

MORGAN: Right, that does. They moved to Phoenix, or Scottsdale, to work there,

and I was there for about a year, working, and then decided to continue my education up in Flagstaff, so that's where I went.

MORRISSEY: When America committed troops to Vietnam, did Uncle Sam want your body?

MORGAN: Well, he did. When I was in—but the only call I received was for a physical in Florida, when I was in graduate school, and that was it. I wasn't called from that point on.

That was the only time, by the way—you asked a question earlier in the interview about working down South, but that was the only uncomfortable incident that ever occurred to me, and that was when I was on the bus. We got off at some cafeteria down there—

MORRISSEY: Lester Maddox was a cafeteria owner who refused to serve Afro-Americans.

MORGAN: Well, this—they did serve. I don't know what cafeteria chain it was. They did serve us, and of course, I was there. One of the people I sat with, though, at the table was black. And we were sitting next to one another and eating, and as the people near us got up to leave, [laughing] we just got a tongue-lashing you wouldn't believe about me sitting next to a black person. That was the only time that had ever happened to me in that part of the country in all the years I was down South. Unfortunate.

MORRISSEY: Thinking back on what you said earlier in this interview—I'm trying to phrase a generalization here, and I'm not sure I'm going to do it well, but the words on the tip of my tongue are: the best possible world for a library administrator is to have superiors who are totally supportive and empathetic and understanding of what you're trying to do and achieve in terms of the vision, and that seems to be a baseline in your story here. Is that true?

MORGAN: That is. I can say that—especially Lou Terkla, Carol Lindeman, and now Lesley Hallick, Lesley being kind of the culmination. She's, I think, a very overworked administrator, can't always show us the time that I think she would like, but has been extremely supportive here of late and gone to bat for the Library. I think part of it is because—also, the Senate, Faculty Senate, from time to time has been very supportive. I mean, when we took those big cuts, the Senate actually recommended that the schools take a larger portion of the cut, in order to spare the Library. And I think Lesley was always in the middle of that in some way, sort of advocating for library support. Yeah, I think—

MORRISSEY: So the road to success for a professional library administrator is to make sure the people above you are supportive?

MORGAN: That certainly helps; it helps a lot.

MORRISSEY: Over the years as this University has launched new degree-granting programs, have people understood that when you do this it impacts the library facilities of the

institution?

MORGAN: [Laughing] Yeah, it does. It's been hard to get the institution to recognize that. But, for example, this year we're launching a new Pharm.D. program, pharmacy doctorate, in connection with OSU. We're working with them, but you know, we're requesting—I've forgotten what that actual amount is in this year's budget. I think—it's not clear that we'll get it yet, but the reception, at least, that we got from Lesley is very positive on that; and now she'll carry that to Jim Walker to see if we can get funding.

But I think that we often have not—you know, we've been asked to sign off on program requests. No money has come to us directly, but at various points, now that I look back historically, you know, we have benefited from other things that kind of equalize it. One is, for example, when Dave Witter was here, he transmitted, I think, three percent of the indirect cost to support the Library. Now, today, with the budgeting and the way the finances work at OHSU, [laughing] we have no idea whether we're getting a portion of that or not. But, you know, we are getting better budgets now than we had before, so we assume we are.

So there have just been a lot of tradeoffs like that that, through some patience, we're still able to support the programs reasonably well. I mean, you talk to faculty, and we're either, you know, a reasonably good library or we're the worst library—you know, everything is better anywhere they go besides here. So we know that we can't please everyone, but we're, I think, making strides, better strides, and trying hard to communicate with faculty in a way that we haven't before.

MORRISSEY: What's been most rewarding for you during the past twenty-five years?

MORGAN: [Pauses] I think the most rewarding has been the staff that I've worked with. I really think that—I have a high regard for them, and, as I said, there have been a number of staff that have gone on to better positions. If you're going to ask me the reverse of this, it'll probably be staffing again, and I'll get to that in a minute [laughs].

But Millard Johnson, who was the assistant librarian here for a while, who's now the director of INCOLSA, a big library consortium in Indiana, was superb, did a lot for us in the automation arena. Nancy Hewison, who's now with Purdue, working there as a full professor, head of reference, extremely good; Leslie Wykoff, another head of reference that's now the librarian at Washington State University, Vancouver; Leonoor Ingraham, librarian at Clark College here; there's been quite a number of staff. Joan, who has taken her library knowledge and skills and moved it into the informatics arena, teaching arena, just incredible. I audited a course of hers last year. She always does a good job.

So just great people. Carrie Willman, on our staff currently, managing all the bibliographic services; Diane Carroll, the newest management-level staff person, a background in dairy science, actually, but got her library degree ten years ago—more than that, probably—but comes back into libraries with a fresh look, you know, doing things like “This is what the faculty needs to know about the Library,” has a program now where we

actually have a section in our University newspaper for library news every month, something we've never done, always wanted to do. She's doing those things, communicating with faculty, giving faculty a reason to appreciate the Library, as not just a place you go that probably doesn't have the item that you need, you know, when you need it.

MORRISSEY: Who is—

MORGAN: I've got one other person I want to mention, Cindy Cunningham, who's our access services librarian. She doesn't have a library degree, but she's been with us for quite a number of years, really a first-rate person, and shoulders a lot of the responsibility for just maintaining open hours of the Library and manages more individual people [laughs] than anyone else.

MORRISSEY: You brought a sheet of paper with you. Is there anything on there that you want to address in this interview?

MORGAN: No, not really. I was just thinking that if this was going to be a historical interview, I better be able to remember some of the names, and I—as anyone who knows me will tell you, I'm very poor at remembering names. I actually did better from memory today than I had ever imagined I would do [laughs].

MORRISSEY: Well, consider me to be your memory therapist [laughter].

MORGAN: Oh, it's been great, been great.

MORRISSEY: With respect to memory, I see a name here, Marie Wagner. Who was she?

MORGAN: Well, Marie was the circulation librarian during—probably was hired by Bertha Hallam, but was here also during the time Margaret Hughes was here. She retired, I think, in about 1970, and is just a dear person. She's still alive and comes in to the Library periodically for special events. Carrie Willman usually escorts her, from the staff. She and Margaret were quite the team when Margaret was alive. Marie is really a special person.

MORRISSEY: Now, do I understand they both lived nearby?

MORGAN: They did; they both lived up here just a couple of blocks away and did a lot of volunteer work with the hospital, and all. Heather was very close to both of them. But, yeah, they were—[laughs] we would talk regularly of “Margaret and Marie” [laughter]. A good pair.

MORRISSEY: Anything else you'd like to say before we conclude?

[End of Tape 2, Side 1/Begin Tape 2, Side 2]

MORGAN: I don't think so. I think that's pretty complete.

The BICC period was fairly disruptive for the Library and for the Library staff. Lots of changes that just didn't seem like people could understand, always. You know, I had the staff rally behind me during that period at one point. That was just so wonderful. Any library director, anyone would appreciate that. So I feel like I've had exceptional support here at OHSU, not only from my own staff but also from the Administration here.

But I think that, even though it was a hard time to go through, we are a lot stronger and better for it, and that's—I guess that's all I want to say [laughs].

MORRISSEY: Let me throw one more out, and that is, you're basically a native of the Midwest who was familiar with northern Arizona and then spent time in Florida and Georgia, spent three years in New England, and now twenty-five in the Northwest, so you've seen a good bit of the United States. Any comment on the regional culture of the Pacific Northwest as it compares or contrasts with other areas of the country you've known?

MORGAN: It's hard to explain—for me, to explain Oregon. It's open, but it's also very—kind of closed as well. I think the place I enjoyed the most was Texas.

MORRISSEY: Which I left out of my litany, there.

MORGAN: Yeah. But it was just—you could kick up your heels and have fun, you know, in the library, library meetings. Connecticut and Georgia were also very enjoyable, different. Coming to Oregon, it took me a good year to two years to really feel comfortable here, so the adaptation time was longer. I'm not sure what all contributed to that, whether it was the fact that we were on the West Coast and everything that we knew before then was all East Coast and it just seemed like we were—I mean, we might as well have been in Japan [laughs]; it just seemed like we were so far away from everything. But that's not an issue, obviously, any longer. But the other thing was that everything out here just seems to be built around the outdoors and nature. Today, you know, having our son born out here and all, it just seems very natural; but I just remember the first couple of years how almost lonely it appeared coming here.

So I guess if I had to pick the area that I felt the best in, it would probably be Texas, but certainly I wouldn't be out here since '76 [laughs] if we didn't like it.

MORRISSEY: In the past twenty-five years, have you considered any invitations to go elsewhere?

MORGAN: Almost, but no.

MORRISSEY: And the almost was?

MORGAN: Oh, that was back probably in the late '80s.

MORRISSEY: But they couldn't entice you?

MORGAN: I just decided that it was—I think I just decided that I had too much invested. I think after you reach about your tenth year you're either gone or you feel like—I've never felt like I haven't had a contribution to make here. I think that's a sign of, you know, you're working for a good institution; and one that you know can't always provide everything that you want, but if you know that most things are cyclical and that—you know, if you just want to sit around and complain about it, it won't get better. I think we've always been willing to make do often with things, but also, I think, take good advantage of the opportunities that have been presented to us.

MORRISSEY: Anything else?

MORGAN: Not a thing.

MORRISSEY: Thank you very much.

MORGAN: Thank you.

MORRISSEY: I appreciate this.

[End of interview]

INDEX

A

Arcari, Ralph, 5
Ash, Joan, 1, 3, 9, 19

B

Beck, J. Robert, 6, 11
BICC (Biomedical Information
Communication Center), 3, 5-6, 13
administration, 2, 11
development, 6-7
funding, 5-6
planning, 6, 14
Bluemle, Lewis (Bill), 1-2
Bloom, Joseph, 11

C

Carroll, Diane, 19-20
CDRC (Child Development and Rehabilitation
Center),
library, 13
consumer health, 9, 10
Cunningham, Cindy, 20

F

Fred Meyer Charitable Trust, 9

G

grants, 8-10, 12

H

Hallam, Bertha, 15
Hallick, Lesley, 2, 3, 11, 18
Hatfield, Mark, 6, 8
Herbert, Edward, 13
Hersh, William, 10, 11
Hewison, Nancy, 19
Hitt, Sam, 5, 15
Hughes, Margaret, 14, 15, 20

I

IAIMS (Integrated Academic Information
Management Systems) program, 5-6, 6-7

informatics program, 10
Ingraham, Leonoor, 19

J

Johnson, Millard, 19
Jones, Lee, 4-5

K

Kenagy, John, 11

L

Laster, Leonard, 2, 5-6, 6-7, 14
library science, 12
Lindeman, Carol, 2, 18

M

Matheson Report, 5
Morgan, James (Jim),
becoming a librarian, 5
biographical information, 5, 17-18, 19
career, 1, 4, 11, 12, 18, 19, 21-22
education, 5, 12
impressions of OHSU, 15-16
move to OHSU, 1
Morton, William E., 4

N

National Library of Medicine (NLM), 5, 6, 7, 10

O

OGI School of Science & Engineering
library, 13
OHSU Library,
collections, 3, 13-14, 15, 18-19
facilities, 14-15
funding, 2-3, 18-19
grants, 8-11
historical collections, 8, 9, 16
relations with other libraries, 9, 12-13
staff, 16-17, 19-20
Oregon Health Information Network (OHIN), 9,
10-11
Oregon Health Sciences University,
accreditation, 3

INDEX

Faculty Senate, 18
Public Corporation, 2
Oregon Regional Primate Research Center,
library, 13

Y

Yale University, 15

P

Peay, Wayne, 3

R

Regional Medical Libraries, 9, 10
Rosenwinkel, Heather G., 15, 20

S

School of Dentistry, 2,
library, 13, 15-16
School of Nursing, 2
Schumacher, Ron, 11
Smith, William L. (Bill), 11
Stone, Robert (Bob), 2

T

technology, information, 3-4, 7-8, 15
Teich, Steve, 9
Terkla, Louis G., 2, 18

U

University of Connecticut Health Center, 5, 15
University of Washington, 9, 10

V

Vollum Institute,
library, 13

W

Wagner, Marie K., 20
Walker, James B., 11
Weeks, John E., 14
Willman, Carrie, 19, 20
Witter, David, 6, 7, 14, 19
Wykoff, Lesley, 19